

Open Architecture Curriculum and Transformative Language Learning Revisited

Part 1. The Relationship between Open Architecture Curricular Design and Transformative Language Learning

By Andrew R. Corin

OACD and TLLT: Overlapping Conceptual Innovations

Recent Front Page Dialogs by Betty Lou Leaver (2018: ACTR Letter 45/1), Irene Krasner (2018: ACTR Letter 45/2) and Elizabeth Lee Roby (2019: ACTR Letter 46/1, 2) have highlighted two recent conceptual innovations that have been attracting increasing attention especially over the past several years. The first of these—transformative language learning and teaching (TLLT)—represents the expansion into the field of L2 learning of an approach that has been gaining traction in the broader education community for several decades. The second—open architecture curricular design (OACD)—is a newly defined concept, though practices that it encompasses are in some instances far from new (as indicated, for example, by my own previous FPD contribution in ACTR Letter 20 (Corin, 1994, an expanded version of which appeared as Corin, 1997).

One reason why I am returning to both of these topics in a single FPD piece is that there are striking areas of overlap among the contexts in which they may be used. This can lead to uncertainty, especially when the terms OACD and TLLT are invoked in relation to one and the same L2 learning practice in a single context. It is perfectly natural, in fact, to speak of the design of a particular unit, module or course as implementing, at one and the same time, both TLLT and OACD.

While TLLT and OACD and their associated practices are, generally speaking, allied and mutually supportive, they differ in their purposes and scope of application. TLLT may be described as a philosophy of learning. It can refer both to the purpose of learning activities and to aspects of their design aimed at achieving this purpose. In regard to the purpose of learning activities (that is, the desired learning outcomes for either individual activities or broader instructional units, even entire programs of study), TLLT seeks to create bi-cultural individuals with maximally integrated conceptual frameworks as one component of the development of L2 proficiency. By this same token,

though, TLLT can also refer to aspects of the design of activities, specifically those that result in learners: a) being confronted with TL input that cannot be adequately interpreted on the basis of their existing conceptual frameworks; b) needing to recognize and confront these incompatibilities in order to effectively meet needs; and c) being stimulated to reflect critically concerning the sources of observed incompatibilities. The design must be such as to provide the greatest likelihood that learners will reassess and expand their existing conceptual frameworks, integrating these ultimately within a broader, more bi-cultural being.

OACD, in contrast, is a far more limited concept (but, for this same reason, also broader in its application) that concerns design parameters for curricula, whether they be transformative or not. OACD's purpose, in contrast to the broad philosophically rooted goals of TLLT, is to allow instructors and learners alike to operate with maximal flexibility to adapt to individual learner and cohort variation, address emerging challenges, and exploit opportunities as they arise. This flexibility, moreover, must exist in "real time," allowing nimble within-course shifts as well as between-iteration modification, all without the need for resource-intensive substantive change processes.

OACD, so understood, may be applied in TLLT contexts. It may, indeed, be considered a *conditio sine qua non* for the successful execution of TLLT (see especially Leaver, in press, Campbell, in press, and Corin, in press, on the OACD-TLLT nexus cross-linguistically; Evans-Romaine & Murphy, in press, as well as Davidson, Garas & Lekic, in press, with closer attention specifically to Russian). OACD is equally beneficial, however, in transactional communicative or proficiency-oriented language learning contexts (see, for example, Campbell et al. 2017, Leaver 2018, Leaver 2020). To back up slightly in order to avoid misunderstanding in describing OACD, we should define just what it is that we mean by curriculum design. According to the

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Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/curriculum>), "curriculum" has

two definitions:

1. the courses offered by an educational institution, e.g. "the high school curriculum"
2. a set of courses constituting an area of specialization, e.g., "the engineering curriculum" or "the biological sciences curriculum" or "the liberal arts curriculum"

The term is occasionally used more narrowly, though, to describe the series of topics and activities that comprise a course, or the materials that are employed for its execution (chief among the latter often being, traditionally, a textbook). It was in this narrower sense that "curriculum" was used in the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) context within which the terminological phrase OACD arose.

In discussing OACD, I will use the term "curricular design" to refer to design parameters, regardless of whether they are applied to any single course, to a component of that course, or to a series of courses. The relevant point is that "curricular design" refers not to the content (or desired outcomes) of study, but to the manner in which learners and their instructors interact with content. This applies regardless of whether content is presented to learners, whether they discover or even define it themselves, or whether learning proceeds through some combination of these approaches. In discussing OACD as an approach to curricular design, the focus is on the degree of flexibility of a design and how this flexibility is achieved.

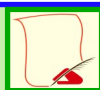
Why Focus on OACD?

Transformative learning is by now the topic of a broad-ranging literature external to the field of language learning, and a seminal work on TLLT (i.e., transformative learning applied to learning languages) is expected to appear later this year. The same, however, cannot be said for OACD, at least as it relates to L2 learning. To date, a number of articles and conference presentations have been devoted to OACD, but as yet no seminal book-length work on the topic has appeared (though one is currently in preparation). As a result, alongside considerable enthusiasm for the concept, there continues to be understandable uncertainty as to its definition, principles and common features, the range of practices to which it is most appropriately applied, and the scope of its application within L2 learning programs. My purpose here is to bring some clarity to these questions based on experience, literature and presentations to date.

In this FPD, I am therefore focusing on the OACD side of the TLLT -OACD relationship, and with two objectives. The first, addressed already above, is to define the relationship between these still novel (at least for purposes of L2 learning) conceptual frameworks, drawing a distinction between them while at the same time highlighting the points of contact between them. The second, following up on the first and drawing upon contributions to date, will be to approach a more limited definition of OACD. The purpose behind this second objective is to assist researchers and practitioners alike in discerning what phenomena properly fall within the scope of OACD and why, and thus to provide a common basis for discussion and research moving forward.

OACD at present faces a dilemma common to many emerging conceptual frameworks. On the one hand, it is proving attractive to L2 professionals working with a variety of languages, not the least within the Slavic (and especially Russian) language instructional community. Aside from developments at DLIFLC that are described in more detail below, we can

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ACTR President's Corner

This school year 2019-2020 began as an ordinary one, but exciting at the same time. In September teachers usually are asking themselves, “Which students will I have in my classes, how will I keep them challenged and motivated?”

In the middle of March of 2020 our list of challenges extended tremendously. How to teach Russian online to a class of 30 students? How to keep them engaged and motivated in a new world? For the regular K-12 teachers, online learning almost never was a way of delivering instruction. Many teachers in just a week or two moved from the full classroom of students to the black computer screen with just names of students on it. How could a teacher break this “wall”? How to reconnect with students? How to rethink and refocus the instruction? May I discuss a new reality in my virtual classroom? How do I ensure my students are still receiving high-quality education? Will I be able to track the learning that is taking place?

In response to this new reality, ACTR launched a Virtual Teacher's Lounge to help instructors of Russian get answers to their questions about on-line teaching and give an opportunity to come together as a community in this challenging time. Every Friday from the middle of March to June about 30 university instructors and pre-college teachers have been sharing their experiences about online teaching and learning. I would like to thank ACTR Board of Director members Evgeny Dengub and Irina Dubinina for this fabulous initiative and implementation.

I would like to invite all members to visit the ACTR Facebook page to watch a recording of the very informative webinar about online teaching and learning that took place on March 15, 2020 with 500 attendees from the USA and around the world and since then has had 7,000 viewers on the ACTR Facebook page.

ACTR is planning to continue supporting teaching and learning Russian Language in the USA. In the beginning of July, we will have a Russian Teacher Professional Development Workshop: “Давайте познакомимся!” Sessions will be facilitated by members of the ACTR Board of Directors with American Council of International Education staff participation. Announcements for the workshop and other ACTR professional development opportunities will be coming soon!

I would like to welcome new members of the ACTR Board of Directors: Colleen M. Lucey – an assistant professor of Russian at the University of Arizona, AZ and John R. Rook – a teacher of Russian and Spanish at Smith Middle School in Glastonbury, CT.

The new reality affected the ACTR Russian Language Olympiada of Spoken Russian this year. Many states were not able to run it in the spring. We hope that this very popular event among our high, middle and some elementary school students will resume next spring.

I would like to thank all the judges and program organizers for their continued support of our students.

At the end of this school year the ACTR Russian Scholar Laureate Program offered high school teachers the opportunity to recognize one or two of their best sophomores and juniors in the Russian programs. Like the National Russian Essay Contest, the program is available at both high school and post-secondary levels.

It would be great to include news about your Russian programs, your students, and school events in the ACTR Letter. The ACTR newsletter is the greatest place to share best practices, materials, and ideas.

I wish you a great restful summer!

~Nataliya Ushakova, Staten Island Technical HS

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point to a number of recent published articles (e.g., Dababneh, 2018; Krasner, 2018; Campbell, in press; and Corin, in press), as well as conference presentations which have been devoted in whole or in part to OACD over the past several years (e.g., Campbell et al., 2017; Weygandt, Bondarenko, & Kogan, 2020; Corin, 2020; Krasner, 2020; Leaver, 2020; Willis et al., 2020). On the other hand, the challenge inherent in such a situation, as practitioners and researchers strive to feel out the contours of a novel concept and its range of useful application, is that working definitions inevitably vary, as does the range of practices which they encompass. This makes it essential to maintain a dialog among dispersed groups of L2 professionals, so as to maintain a centripetal force in balance with the inevitable centrifugal forces that result as we explore and experiment. In the absence of ongoing dialog, “definitional drift” can more easily give rise to a kind of “mission creep,” with the range of practices encompassed by the concept growing ever broader. Generally speaking, the broader the range of phenomena encompassed by a concept, the more diluted its meaning becomes. After a certain point, the utility of the concept can be eroded, especially if it comes to be identified as essentially a synonym of some common noun or adjective.

In the case of OACD, the challenge is to ensure that the concept does not broaden to the extent that it comes to be applied to any and all manner or degree of flexibility, however minor—i.e., to any activities that fall outside the scope of what is defined in course textbooks. The challenge, in other words, is to ensure that OACD does not

devolve into a virtual synonym for “supplementary activity” or even into a synonym for the very concept of “flexibility.” What makes this challenge especially acute for OACD is that there currently exists a broad acknowledgement that at early stages of learning (ILR 0 – 1, ACTFL Novice – Intermediate Mid) it is indeed meaningful to speak of OACD that is combined with the use of a textbook. There are, however, other questions concerning the proper scope of OACD (which cannot be addressed here due to space limitations), including whether, and to what extent, it makes sense to include the use of electronic “instructor-owned” (and therefore variable at instructors’ discretion) textbooks as a form of OACD.

One purpose of this contribution is therefore to approach a constrained definition of OACD—one that can serve as a meaningful baseline from which further research and application can move forward within a common frame of reference. Toward this end, the second part of this FPD, to appear in the Fall 2020 issue, will revisit the history of the concept and its emergence in practice. I will then suggest a definition that is currently being applied by one group of researchers, together with the motivations which gave rise to that definition, and will then go on to sketch principles and common practices of OACD arising from that definition. Finally, I will draw upon the preceding discussion to address what is perhaps the knottiest question facing OACD at present: the question of its applicability (both in terms of appropriateness and potential manners of application) at early stages of proficiency—ILR 0-1 (Novice – Intermediate Mid).

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Познакомьтесь



Andrew R. Corin (Ph.D. in Slavic linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles) is Professor Emeritus at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), where his most recent position was Associate Provost and Director of the Office of Standardization and Academic Excellence. He served previously as Dean of Resident Education and Dean of Educational Support Services in the Directorate of Continuing Education (DLIFLC's directorate for advanced courses, distance learning, and non-resident education). Previous positions included Research Officer with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia; Adjunct Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures, UCLA; and Assistant Professor of Russian and Linguistics at Pomona College. Among his recognitions, Dr. Corin has been a Public Policy Scholar of the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, a Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Fellow, and recipient of the Department of the Army Commander's Award for Civilian Service. Dr. Corin is the author of numerous publications and presentations on Slavic linguistics, philology and cultural history, foreign language learning and instruction, and investigation of violations of international humanitarian law.

Support America's Languages

Readers of this newsletter have an opportunity to support language education in the United States by signing a petition that is available at

<http://chnng.it/LBfk6kTk2P>

The online petition is one initiative of the America's Language Working Group, convened by the American Academy of Arts & Sciences. ACTR is represented on the working group by Richard Brecht and Dan Davidson, and the group also has representation from the language profession, academia, government, business, NGOs, and heritage and indigenous communities. The petition is one of a number of initiatives that the group will sponsor over the next few years.

We urge you to raise your voice through the online site, and to encourage your colleagues, parents, and administrators to do the same. Everyone's voice, and every signature on the petition, is important.

Submitted by Jane Shuffelton

Congratulations to Professor William Craft Brumfield, whose latest book is now in print.

Journeys through the Russian Empire: The Photographic Legacy of Sergey Prokudin-Gorsky is a publication of Duke University Press. Brumfield describes the book as "the work of a lifetime." Brumfield is Professor of Slavic Studies at Tulane University.

He has been photographing Russia since 1970. His previous publications include *Architecture at the End of the Earth: Photographing the Russian North* and *Lost Russia: Photographing the Ruins of Russian Architecture*, also published by Duke University Press. Information about the volume is available at https://www.dukeupress.edu/journeys-through-the-russian-empire?utm_source=kentico&utm_medium=hero.

There is another good description at: https://www.amazon.com/Journeys-through-Russian-Empire-Prokudin-Gorsky/dp/1478006021/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=brumfield+journeys&qid=1591313301&s=books&sr=1-1

From the ACTR Board Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee serves to fill vacancies on the Board as new positions become available; new members are sought from the membership at large. The Committee welcomes nominations (including self-nominations) from instructors of Russian of all levels and from a variety of teaching environments, including elementary schools, dual-immersion schools, online schools, and community schools. Please submit nominations at any point before January 1, 2021 to Lee Roby (eroby@friendsbalt.org). For a self-nomination, submit a statement describing your past involvement in ACTR programs and your interest in serving on the ACTR Board of Directors. Please indicate specific ways that you could envision serving the Board. In nominating others, please submit a statement describing the nominee's contributions to the field and/or record of professional service and what you believe the nominee would bring to the ACTR Board.

Lee Roby

Chair, Nominations Committee

Русский язык в вопросах и ответах

This column is Hosted by Alina Israeli, American University

This question and Professor's Israeli's answer is the third of a planned series to be published in the newsletter. Please direct your own questions to her at: aisrael@american.edu. Future issues of the newsletter will continue this feature.

I have been asked about a number of particular quasi-synonyms, and they are indeed very difficult, both for native speakers and students of Russian.

польза vs. выгода

Dictionaries of synonyms list them as synonyms, together with a long list of other nouns that I would not consider synonyms. So one has to use these dictionaries very carefully.

Польза relates to the usefulness of something. We say:

Полезно для здоровья. — It's good for you.

An advice column à la Martha Stewart would be called

«Полезные советы,» as would a book of common household advice.

Выгода relates to what one gets out of something, so it is close to the meaning of 'interest,' as in *What's his interest in this?* **Выгода** could be translated as *benefit, gain, interest*, or even *profit*.

Here are two translations from English to Russian and from Russian to English done by professional translators:

And June would be pleased; of this he saw the advantage. [John Galsworthy. *The Man of Property* (1906)]

И Джун останется довольна; а в этом есть известная выгода. [Джон Голсуорси. *Собственник* (Н. Волжина, 1946)]

А может — за ними другие есть, которым — лишь бы выгода была? [Максим Горький. *Мать* (1906)]

But there may be people behind them who are looking out only for their own selfish interests. [Maxime Gorky. *Mother* (D.J. Hogarth, 1921)]

Why translators add adjectives is a topic for a very long dissertation.

прибыль vs. доход

Доход means 'income,' and anyone who works has some. Most of us pay подоходный налог — income tax. When speaking of businesses, доход is the total revenue, while прибыль is the revenue minus the expenses, that is the profit. Consequently, businesses pay налог на прибыль which in the US is called 'corporate tax.'

старее vs. старше, моложе vs. младше.

Бостон старше Нью-Йорка (или все-таки старше?)

Моложе means only 'younger' by age, while младше in addition to that may mean 'lower in ranking.' That is why младше is used among siblings (although моложе is also possible, especially with adult siblings) as well as in all kinds of designations of ranking:

Он учился классом/курсом младше.

Младший лейтенант, младший научный сотрудник.

Старше means 'older' and 'higher rank' — старший брат, курсом старше, while старее means 'более старый' in the sense of older in appearance or condition. In the next example

"he" looks older than 43 or older than he did before as well as more aged in appearance.

Ему 43 года, выглядит старше (и старее), но когда спокоен ... [Эмма Герштейн. *Мандельштам в Воронеже* (по письмам С. Б. Рудакова) (1985-2002)]

Sometimes two people with the same name are identified as "father" and "son," as in *Alexandre Dumas père* — Александр Дюма (отец) and *Alexandre Dumas fils* — Александр Дюма (сын). But there are instances when they are not direct descendants of one another, and in such cases старший and младший are used, for example uncle and nephew Pliny the Elder and Pliny the Younger are Плиний Старший and Плиний Младший, or two Belgian brothers both with the (pen) name of Rosny, are Рони-старший and Рони-младший.

In some instances (not with people, of course) the opposite of старый is новый:

— У них новая машина? — Нет, старая.

And if we compare cars one might say:

в Новосибирской области налог на автомобили ... высчитывается с учетом года выпуска автомобиля: чем машина старше, тем меньше ставка. (https://altai.aif.ru/auto/auto_details/341295) — in the Novosibirsk region the tax on automobile is calculated based on the model year: the older the car, the lower the rate.

But when speaking of the absolute age of a car, one would say:

Какие машины старше 15 лет можно смело покупать?

Стоит ли покупать машины старше 2000-го года?

Cities like to be old in age but look new. A Google search (February 2020) yielded 6330 examples of "Ереван старше Рима" and 10 examples of "Ереван старее Рима." In other words, it is good to be older in age but not in appearance. Also note that cities like to be older in age, not younger. A search for "Петербург моложе/младше Москвы" yielded 29/7 examples respectively. For comparison, "Москва старше Петербурга" yielded 269 examples a ten-fold difference.

Совсем vs. полностью: "совсем" используется в отрицательных предложениях (я совсем ничего не понимаю), а "полностью" в положительных (я полностью тебя понимаю). Почему все-таки говорим "совсем другая история." а не "полностью другая история?"

Полностью means 'fully,' and with the Russian love of repetition we often hear (and read) the phrase целиком и полностью, although in many instances just one of these words would be enough, for example целиком согласен or полностью согласен:

И размер рекламного бюджета целиком и полностью будет зависеть от того, чего вы хотите добиться.

[Семь раз отрежь -- один заплати // «Рекламный мир», 2003.04.28]

Совсем has several meanings, one of which is 'totally' with negation: **совсем не знаю**. The other means '(almost) absolutely' or '98%.' For example, no one would say *совсем новая* about a brand new book from a bookstore, but one would say it if the book had been bought in a second-hand bookstore and was in excellent condition. In the next example, the snow is probably not absolutely white, otherwise why would it be compared with the sky?

На улице снег поблескивал, как нафталин. Он лежал на крышах совсем белый и был по тону светлее, чем небо. [Виктория Токарева. «Уж как пал туман...» (1964-1994)]

'Absolutely white' (100%) would be **совершенно белый**, and 'whiter than white' would be **белый-белый** (I already mentioned our love of repetition). Or consider a description of an 'absolutely dead person' who did not look dead:

И был он совсем мертвый. Не дышал, не моргал, но подмазанный, и цвет, как у живого, а сам чистый мертвяк. [Владимир Войнович. Монументальная пропаганда // «Знамя» 2000]

The next example with **совсем маленький** shows that it does not mean 'absolute,' Lësha might have been smaller than a six-year-old or smaller than anyone else there (but there are boys smaller than him):

И вот, в самый разгар конфликта, кто-то замечает шестилетнего Лешу... Совсем маленький мальчик, сушая кроха, одни косточки, коленочки торчат, — сидит и горько-горько плачет. [Александр Щеголев. Черная сторона зеркала (2014)]

The next example shows that in addition to not indicating an absolute (what is an absolutely soft meat?) **совсем** may also mean an approximation to an absolute (whatever it means):

Незадолго до того, как мясо станет совсем мягким, влить разогретые сливки. Подавать на подогретом блюде. [Рецепты национальных кухонь: Скандинавская кухня (2000-2005)]

Совсем другой also means only 98% different at best. The opera singer Arkhipova compares two different opera parts:

Приглашение на эту роль [партия Шарлотты в "Вертере" Массне] было для меня неожиданным. В то время я была занята совсем другой работой: готовился к постановке новый спектакль — опера Тихона Хренникова "Мать." [И. К. Архипова. Музыка жизни (1996)]

ACTR Supports Remote Instruction during COVID-19

In mid-March, with precious little warning we were swept into the sea of emergency remote teaching. Most of us had had little experience with online instruction and needed to learn quickly. ACTR responded within days of the announcement by a number of educational institutions that they would be shifting to remote learning, and organized a preparatory crash course in remote teaching through a webinar series. The first such webinar, Особенности проведения онлайн-занятий РКИ, was conducted in Russian on March 15 by Julia Amlinskaia, founder and director of the international online Russian language schools "Russificate" and "Russificate Kids" and the administrator of large international Facebook group "Преподаватели РКИ." Amlinskaia provided a strong introduction to online teaching and learning with practical tips and strategies for managing online classes, information ranging from available online platforms and methods for teaching the various modes of communication remotely to online tools, websites, and apps that may be used to support such teaching and learning. Amlinskaia's wealth of information shared in a 23-page document, beautifully organized by topic, became a resource that presumably many in attendance returned to repeatedly over the course of the semester. Two days later ACTR hosted a roundtable discussion in English. Colleagues who had been using technology in teaching Russian for number of years in various contexts (Shannon Spasova, Thomas Garza, Nataliya Ushakova, Irina Dubinina, and Ekaterina Severts) shared their strategies, best practices, "do's and don'ts" of blended and online teaching, providing advice and guidance and responding to specific questions posed by participants. This "emergency professional development" pointed us all in the right direction, but it was clear that Russian instructors would benefit from the opportunity to continue the dialogue, as we all dove into teaching in this new context. Consequently, ACTR organized a Virtual Teachers' Lounge, opening a Zoom meeting each Friday evening from 5-6 PM, for all ACTR members to come together as a community to discuss issues related to online lan-

guage teaching, to pose questions and brainstorm solutions for common challenges, and to share successful remote teaching strategies.

The Virtual Teachers' Lounge discussion was hosted each week by ACTR Board members representing instructors at both pre-college and post-secondary level (Evgeny Dengub, Irina Dubinina, John Rook, Lee Roby, Betsy Sandstrom and Nataliya Ushakova) and attended by a diverse range of instructors spanning traditional K-16 programs as well as community-based and online learning programs. Attendance was usually between 25-50 members. Among the topics discussed were: online classroom management, the balance of synchronous and asynchronous instruction, ways to structure a synchronous class, methods for a flipped classroom approach to instruction, managing large classes on Zoom, how to motivate student participation, formative and summative assessment strategies, methods for practicing and assessing different modes of communication, how to prepare high school students for the NEWL exam in this context, grading policies and practices, specific online tools to facilitate language learning (Kahoot! Quizlet, Flipgrid, Padlet, Pear Deck), and methods and activities to promote and build joyful learning communities through "off-the-beaten classroom path" cultural learning.

The first meeting of the Virtual Teachers' Lounge made apparent the great diversity that exists in terms of how remote teaching is being conducted across the country, often due to different institutional mandates regarding the recommended or required balance between synchronous and asynchronous instruction or privacy concerns that place restrictions on online face-to-face synchronous instruction, particularly for many, but not all, instructors working in K-12 public institutions. Despite the great variety in local conditions that necessarily shaped possible instructional methods, instructors found much in common and much to share and gain from the joint discussion.

The Virtual Teachers' Lounge also provided significant benefits for participants even beyond the intended and immediate goal of sharing strategies for remote teaching.

This forum provided a bridge for increased understanding and professional collaboration among instructors across what has historically been an unfortunate pre-college and post-secondary divide. Cross-institutional professional collaborations emerged, whereby instructors participated in virtual classes led by colleagues at other institutions and students. Also, instructors across institutions were invited to participate in virtual cultural activities hosted on Zoom, such as a weekly Sunday evening discussion of a Russian film-of-the-week hosted by the Russian club at Friends School of Baltimore, and a weekly Thursday evening phonetics through singing master class offered by Kimberly DiMattia, with the participation of Sibelan Forrester, and administrative support provided by Irina Kogel and Lee Roby. Registration for DiMattia's master class each week exceeded Zoom capacity of 100 participants, including students of all ages, as well as instructors from both U.S. and European institutions, who were eager to observe. There was clearly a desire among many to engage in Russian activities beyond the traditional classroom at their own individual institutions.

ACTR is now looking forward to summer and to how it may continue to serve the needs of language instructors for continued dialogue and professional development as we plan for an uncertain fall. Specific summer offerings for both continued professional dialogue as well as a more extensive professional development workshop are in the works. An email with registration details will be sent out soon to the ACTR membership list.

ACTR would also like to continue to update language instructors on innovative practices in remote teaching through future issues of the newsletter and encourages ACTR members to submit articles on successful instructional practices and helpful tools for inclusion in future issues of the *ACTR Letter*. Submissions may be sent to Lee Roby at eroby@friendsbalt.org.

Submitted by: Elizabeth Lee Roby, Friends School of Baltimore

ACTR 38th National Russian Essay Contest

First and Second Round Results

In November 2019 1,188 high school students of Russian wrote essays in the 38th Annual ACTR National Russian Essay Contest on the topic: «Работа, профессия и карьера в моей жизни». This talented group of traditional learners, heritage learners, and native speakers represent 49 schools and 55 teachers in 19 states and the District of Columbia.

New participating schools and teachers in the contest included: Academy for Math and Science—Desert Sky (AZ), Joseph Schlegel; Gatton Academy of Math and Science (KY), Ekaterina Myakshina; Maggie L. Walker Governor's School (MD), Michael White; Russian School #1 (GA), Yana Kastosova; Russian School of Woodridge (CT), Ekaterina Sive; Winston Churchill High School (MD), Nazelie Nersesian.

Judges for the first round of the NREC this year were:

Anna Czczulin, Goucher College, MD

Olga Gotta, Whitby School, CT

Jill Lederman, Berkshire Country Day School, MA

Lisa Steffen, State University of New York at Brockport, NY

Mara Sukholutskaya, East Central Oklahoma University, OK

Marina Sweany, Rochester Institute of Technology, NY

Bozena Szulc, Linden Hills High School, NJ

Dawn Stuart Weinraub, Emma Willard School (emerita), NY

Evgenia Wilkins, University of Texas at Austin, TX

Judith CB Wobst, Amherst Regional High School (emerita), MA

In the table you can see the distribution of awards for the first round of the Thirty-Eighth Annual ACTR National Russian Essay Contest. Congratulations to all the medalists and their teachers!

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Honorable Mention	No Award	Total
Beginner	61	122	184	88	8	463
Beginner Heritage	8	14	6	4	0	32
Intermediate	56	86	93	67	0	302
Intermediate Heritage	41	37	24	13	0	115
Advanced	28	53	61	49	0	191
Advanced Heritage	18	22	12	4	0	56
Native Speaker	8	11	8	2	0	29
Total	220	345	388	227	8	1,188

FIRST ROUND GOLD MEDAL ESSAYISTS, 38th NATIONAL RUSSIAN ESSAY CONTEST

(Teacher names in bold)

The coronavirus pandemic delayed disbursement of first and second round medals. Medals and certificates will be sent to teachers as soon as possible. We are pleased to present the names of first round gold medal essayists and their teachers.

Anglo-American School of Moscow - **Nina Nazarenko**: Mikaela Moskowitz (A), Isaac Aleman Magdaleno (B), Kyoo Bum Han (I), Ilmo Lipponen (I), Kaitlyn Whitsitt (I), Anna Ilicheva (NS), Maria Kosta (NS), Anna Webb (NS)

Bruriah High School for Girls, NJ - **Nina Vaykhanskaya**: Avagail Kaplan (B), Melitta Oppenheim (B), Avagail Sokol (B), Elana Weissman (B), Aliza Wittels (B)

Buckingham, Browne and Nichols School, MA - **Joshua Walker**: Aaron Rasin (A), Elizabeth Savage (A), Simru Sonmez-Erbil (A), Daniel Cudkowicz (B), Charles Druker (B), Andrei Buchatskiy (IH),

By the Onion Sea, IL - **Julia Kriventsova Denne**: Ekaterina Kelenina (BH), Irina Schroeter (BH), Olga Shinkarev (BH), Leah Ashby (I), Morgan Emery (I), Illia Svirinovskyi (NS), Iuliana Tingaeva (NS)

C. D. Hylton High School, VA - **Maria Goebert**: Sofia Simonian (IH)

Cherokee High School, NJ - **Marian Barnum**: Gavin Ritter (A), Yana Smolyanaya (IH)

E.R. Murrow High School, NY - **Yuliya Garmil**: Yulia Hubitska (A), Anna Kudina (A), Yana Prokopechko (A), Tetyana Rimaryuk (A), Yana Sapunkova (A), Bekzod Khayrullaev (AH), Ekaterina Naumova (AH), Frida Rakhimova (IH), Ulyana Shyrokaya (IH),

Friends School, MD - **Lee Roby**: Joseph Badros (A), Katrina Brazhnikov (A), Dan Musachio (A), Abby Reiner (B), Nathan Renard (B), Alice Riley (B), Alexander Tawes (B), Margaret Vale (I)

Gatton Academy of Math and Science in KY, KY - **Ekaterina Myakshina**: Tristan Clement (B), Margot Hare (B), Mario Hernandez (B)

George Washington High School, MD - **Emma Reznik**: Malika Otorbayeva (A), Andzhur Termikeev (A), Maninja Bakhridinova (I), Shahobiddin Saidmuratov (I), Kateryna Sulima (I), Zarina Tolibova (I), Aliaksandr Valadkevich (I),

Glastonbury High School, CT - **Jan Eklund**: Larisa Esposito (A), Shayna Lebowitz (A), Gwenyth Ross (A), Allison Desmarais (I), Maddison Edwards (I), Tom Fahey (I), Preston Hunt (I), Zac Lebowitz (I), Francesco Ossino (I), Jamie Schwartz (I), Catherine Zak (I)

Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, IL - **Paavo Husen**: Grace Federici (A), Maximilian Hellrung (A), Ishanpepe Jagusah (A), Lily Levrault (A), Marcus Ludwig (A), Angela Wang (A), Alejandro Carrillo (I), Olivia Dambrauskaus (I), Matthew Dinwiddie (I), Madeline Fields Halva (I), Jonathan Gao (I), Evelyn Lee (I), Julianna Padilla (I), Madhav Parthasarathy (I), Shambhavi Punjala (I), Charles Schreiber (I), Krystian Szczech (I)

Langley High School, VA - **Valentin Cukierman**: Aidana Akibaeva (AH), Stacia Datskovka (AH), Tasmin Makhmudova (AH), Ava Sautters (IH)

Langley High School, VA - **Nazalie Nersesian**: Joshua Guinn (B), Clare Selton (B)

Lexington High School, SC - **Jessica Kelly**: Grace Fairchild (I)

Maggie L. Walker Governor's School, VA - **Michael F. White**: Helen Hopkins (B)

Newton South High School, MA - **Jill Christensen**: Danielle Berdichevsky (BH), Yarden Shestopal (IH)

Pritzker College Prep, IL - **Phillip Stosberg**: Frida Arroyo (B), Noel Candalaria (B), Exavier De La

Cruz (B), Jordan Hernandez (B), Cristian Ortiz (B), Emily Pereznegron (B), Jonathan Rodriguez (B), Jennifer Roman (B), Priscilla Segura (B), Christopher Ticas (B), Valeria Uzcatagui (B), Vanessa Valdez (B), Arianna Valentin (B)

Pushkin School of Houston, TX - **Katia Pronina**: Evelina Tcherniak (AH)

Roland Park Country School, MD - **Eliza Frost**: Anna Bakina (IH)

Russian Kids Club, CA - **Ilona Tombu**: Dasha Shevchenko (AH)

Russian School #1, GA - **Yana Kastsova**: Oleg Kolesnikov (AH), Natalia Stareeva (AH) Russian School Ckyku Net, CA - **Lyudmila Andreyeva**: Christina Dorofeev (IH), Lyosha Genzel (IH), Alexey Gribok (IH), Veronica Iamanova (IH), Michelle Kotlyar (IH), Barbara Levshakova (IH), Diana Petrenko (IH), Nicholas Poplavskyy (IH), Mikhail Pronin (IH), Kuzma Shepelev (IH), Alexander Shkolnikov (IH), Yael Shpits (IH), Yakov Shur (IH), Alexandra Sokolova (IH), Alex Stavnitser (IH), Nicole Stepanenko (IH), David Veksler (IH), Maria Velikhovskaya (IH), Nikita Cheblovok (NS)

Russian School House, MD - **Lidia Krasnov**: Arturo Salvalaggio (A), Daniel Moyseyev (AH), Sacha Karpova (IH)

Russian School of Woodbridge, CT - **Ekaterina Sive**: Julia Maria Sive (IH)

Russian School Olympus, DC - **Nathalie McGregor**: Sofia McCardle (AH), Elise Nicole Barber (BH), Irene Pykhtin (BH), Zlata Bobykina (IH), Anna Kuzmina (IH), Natalie Ann Sazonova (IH)

San Diego Russian School, CA - **Maria Ezhevskaya**: Sophia Kaluzhny (I), Alexandra Rodionova (I)

Shaker High School, NY - **Anna Shkaf**: Alexa Labella (I)

Smith Middle School, CT - **John R. Rook**: Margaret Madeline Delucia (B), Josephine Frances Desmarais (B), Jacqueline Elizabeth Dudus (B), Kamryn Elizabeth Herrick (B), Brianna Marie Jordan (B), Kaylin Samantha Ostuni (B), Andrew Thomas Stranko (B)

St. Louis University High School, MO - **Robert Chura**: Keegan Cantwell (I)

St. Thomas Aquinas High School, NH - **Mary Chamberlain**: Cameron Cassidy (I)

Staten Island Technical High School, NY - **Natalya Levina**: Alan Mamayev (BH), Dominika Shkoruta (BH)

Staten Island Technical High School, NY - **Veronika Maslyukova**: Angela Chan (B), Eric Cholika (B), Donau Labdouri (B), Angie Mohamed (B), Isabella Ng (B), Fahad Shafat (B), Alyssa Simone (B), Sarah Vafiadis (B), Kevin Zou (B), Iram Liu (I), Lacey Rose Delucia (I)

Staten Island Technical High School, NY - **Elena Sokolovski**: Mila Karimov (IH), Leah Livin (IH), Maya Lyatunovskiy (IH), Nicole Reyblat (IH), Olivia Zadvinskiy (IH)

Staten Island Technical High School, NY - **Nataliya Ushakova**: Beata Verkhovets (AH), Angel Lee (I), Alvin Xiao (I), Anastasia Bulgakova (IH), Simone Livit (IH), Jackalin Shvidky (IH), Ellie Vaserman (IH), Ekaterina Bushueva (NS)

Tallwood High School, VA - **Ludmila Yuzhbabenko**: Collin D. Hayes (B), Gavin A. Ventura (B), Vanessa L. Homer (I), Elizabeth Vanorder (I)

Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, VA - **Betsy Sandstrom**: Daniel Healey (A), Maria Abramova (AH), Michael Kyrychenko (AH), Caroline Smiltneks (AH), Nabihah Islam (B), Anwitha Kolipara (B), Sudiksha Konanki (B), Hasita Nalluri (B), Vivikta Rau (B), Anisha Talreja (B), Haytham Alsayed (I), Daniel DeConti (I), Maria Izzi (I), Matthew Rosenthal (I), Sadhana Thirumazhusai (I)

Thunder Mountain High School, AK - **Svetlana Filkova**: Jorge Cordero (B), Keleolani Luerra (B)

Vineland High School, NJ - **Vlada Jackson**: Daniela Kaplunovska (IH), Katerina Maruseichenko (NS)

Walnut Hills High School, OH - **Johanka Hart-Tompkins**: Nadya Ellerhorst (AH), Quincy Barrett (B), Alice Lundgren (B), Louis Schneider (B), Selima Aousheva (I), Nicoloz Tsertsvadze (I)

West Anchorage High School, AK - **Yelena Reep**: Colton Copelin (A), Savanna Lee (A), Lubava Vessels (AH), Daria Wilcox (AH), Mason Beiler (B), Norah Brown (B), Kristoff Beagley (I), Athena Clendaniel (I), Kaitlyn Hanson (I), McKenna Piekarski (I), Daphne Sagan (I), Ali Strand (I)

Report on the 2020 National Post-Secondary Russian Essay Contest

Nina Bond (Franklin and Marshall College), Jennifer Bown (Brigham Young University), Alla Smyslova (Columbia University), Co-Chairs

The contest took place February 1 – February 15, 2020, on the following topic:

Please write a short essay based on the following topic:

“Who or what changed your life? / Кто или что изменил(о) вашу жизнь?»

Category A Level 1

Karolina Partyga, Columbia University-Gold
Meghana Bharadwaj, Smith College-Gold
Jasmine Ding, Vanderbilt University-Gold
Isaac Parlin, Columbia University-Gold
Alexander Lee, Harvard University-Gold
Erin Magill, Brandeis University-Silver
Susie Williams, Bucknell University-Silver
Brendon Kinney, Temple University-Silver
Jennifer Price Price, Boston University -Silver
Natasha Gaither, Yale University-Silver
Annling Wang, Columbia University-Bronze
Jonathan Forrester, Temple University-Bronze
Katrina Fuller, Columbia University-Bronze
Emily Nelson, Columbia University-Bronze
Emma Pope McCright, Mount Holyoke College-Bronze
Ezequiel Finkelman Bramati, Purdue University-HM
Rebecca Burns, Mount Holyoke College-HM
Celeste Johnson Johnson, Boston University -HM
Indira Ramgolam, Columbia University-HM
Eric Jiefei, Columbia University-HM
Brian Choi, Yale University-HM
Madeleine Medina, University of Wisconsin-Madison-HM

Jace Jordan, Brigham Young University-HM
Liam McNett, Bowdoin College-HM
Julia Houser, Harvard University-HM
Kate Yeager, Yale University-HM
Claire Chang, Pomona College-HM
Savannah Eklund, Columbia University-HM
Jaida Cowan, Columbia University-HM
Andrew James Honold, Harvard University-HM
Cade Williams, Harvard University-HM
Bella Phillips, Pomona College-HM
Fanjing Kong, Vanderbilt University-HM
Cole Reish, Bucknell University-HM
Kathleen Gorman, Columbia University-HM
Mason Smith, Columbia University-HM
Nolan Bledsoe, Vanderbilt University-HM
Anna Rumpz, University of Arkansas-HM
Rebecca Dial, Mount Holyoke College-HM
Kendall Owens, University of Pennsylvania-HM
Jack Sullivan, Yale University-HM
Kyrolos Georgey, USAFA-HM
Katelyn McPaul, Columbia University-HM
Alexander Kleitz, USAFA-HM
Doga Unlu, Yale University-HM

Category A Level 2

Stanley Kanevsky, DLIFLC-Gold
Nadia Matin, Vanderbilt University-Gold
Shannon Wersh, DLIFLC-Gold
Daniel Aguda, DLIFLC-Gold
Benjamin Struve, DLIFLC-Gold
Eric Chang, Brandeis University-Silver
Lucia Gordon, Harvard University-Silver
Michael Yadron, DLIFLC-Silver
Gac Filipaj, Columbia University-Silver
Mikhail Valyer, DLIFLC-Silver
Elise Chi Man Liu, University of Rochester-Bronze
Jiashi Yang, Columbia University-Bronze
Paul Michalak, DLIFLC - UEL - Basic Course-Bronze
Isaiah Kaplan, Temple University-Bronze
Yihong Zhang, University of Rochester-HM
William Hickein, DLIFLC - UEL - Basic Course-HM
Griffin Holt, Brigham Young University-HM
Kolya Selmer Bough, Harvard University-HM
Kasey Senatore, Smith College-HM
Vladyslav Yakobchuk, DLIFLC-HM
Rasnaam Singh, Portland Community College-HM

Muning Wang, Pomona College-HM
Claire Crossman, UCLA-HM
Anyia Ireson-Janke, UCLA-HM
Amelia Fay, Columbia University-HM
Theresa Haunold, University of Chicago-HM
Brooke Horsley, UC Santa Barbara-HM
Abigail Anderson, University of Notre Dame-HM
Claire Beezley, Georgetown University-HM
Hannah Humphrey, DLIFLC - UEL - Basic Course-HM
Ethan Beaty, Vanderbilt University-HM
Afra Ashraf, Columbia University-HM
Audrey Unverferth, University of Chicago-HM
Joseph McDonough, Harvard University-HM
Elizabeth Kolb, University of Notre Dame-HM

Rowan Towle, UCLA-HM
Atacan Demir, New York University-HM
Elisabeth Incardona, University of Chicago-HM
Ian Reinke, Dartmouth College-HM
George Mason, DLIFLC-HM
Patrick N. Domenech, West Point - United States

Category A Level 3

Evan Thieme, Brigham Young University-Gold
Martha Hamilton McCafferty, University of Mississippi-Gold
Colby Peterson, Brigham Young University-Gold
Nathan McGhie, Brigham Young University-Gold
Anna Carlson, Brigham Young University-Gold
Nathaniel Hibbert, Harvard University-Silver
Samuel Griffiths, Brigham Young University-Silver
Lily Gregson, Brigham Young University-Silver
Luke Stoerger, University of Wisconsin-Madison-Silver
Martin Adamian, UCLA-Silver
Elizabeth Bybee, Brigham Young University-Bronze
Caden Carter, Brigham Young University-Bronze
Dalin Stone, Brigham Young University-Bronze

Isaac Kendell, Brigham Young University-Bronze
 Nora Cyra, Mount Holyoke College-Bronze
 Paul Glenn, University of Pittsburgh-HM
 Jared Beckstrand, Brigham Young University-HM
 Christina Harward, Columbia University-HM
 Brennan Henderson, Brigham Young University-HM
 Matthew Kuzel, DLIFLC-HM
 Levon Shmavonyan, Georgetown University-HM
 Chela Aufderheide, William & Mary-HM
 Helen Poe, Georgetown University-HM
 Cody Giddings, UCLA-HM

Jessica Jensen Mitchell, Harvard University-HM
 John Sanders, Rutgers University-HM
 Elen Yang, Columbia University-HM
 Nathaniel Decker, Indiana University-HM
 Trevor Oldham, Brigham Young University-HM
 Emma Patterson, Indiana University-HM
 Andrea Palmer, Brigham Young University-HM
 Truman Perry, Brigham Young University-HM
 Ryan Hardy, Pomona College-HM
 Vita Frohlich, Indiana University-HM

Category C Level 1

Anna Temchenko, Columbia University-Gold
 Maximilian Ozerov, Columbia University-Gold
 Sergey Komzyuk, UCLA-Gold
 Anthony Ozerov, Columbia University-Gold
 Sophia Model, Portland State University-Gold
 Janna-Julia Crooijmans, Columbia University-Silver
 Tim Moukhametzianov, Columbia University-Silver
 Zachary Boroda, Brandeis University-Silver
 Fedor Yurov, Purdue University-Silver
 Regina Wagner, Columbia University-Silver
 David Berkovich, Columbia University-Bronze
 Leeza Barstein, Brandeis University-Bronze
 Gregory Fedorov, Columbia University-Bronze
 Sarah Dubnik, Columbia University-Bronze
 Dennis Aronov, New York University-Bronze
 Vladyslav Manzhilyi, UCLA-HM
 Svetlana Danilin, Portland State University-HM
 Jessica Kuleshov, Columbia University-HM
 Alina Jones, Vanderbilt University-HM
 Kamilya Rasshina, UCLA-HM
 Erica Levin, University of New Haven-HM
 Eva Machlis, University of Arizona-HM
 Daniel Blindman, UCLA-HM
 Anna Moskaleva, Carnegie Mellon University-HM

Category A Level 4

Cambry Slight, Brigham Young University-Gold
 David Jun Lee, Georgetown University-Gold
 Charlie Robinson, University of Utah-Gold
 Emily Herring, Harvard University-Gold
 Rebecca Ann Deitsch, Harvard University-Gold
 Augustus Gilchrist, Bowdoin College-Silver
 Jack Lawlor, Harvard University-Silver
 Carter John Martindale, Harvard University-Silver
 Larissa Golovanev, Brigham Young University-Silver
 Anthony Stoner, University of Notre Dame-Silver
 Nicholas Conlon, Georgetown University-Bronze
 Ghazaryan Sofiya, UCLA-Bronze
 Tom Fairholm, Brigham Young University-Bronze
 Kaden Rawson, University of Utah-Bronze
 Alejandro Perez-Reyes, Georgetown University-Bronze
 Grady Vaughan, Columbia-HM
 Ceila Metzger, William & Mary-HM
 Megan Burnham, Indiana University-HM
 Carly Zilge, University of Montana-HM
 Jodi Parkinson, Columbia University-HM
 Galen Quiros, West Point - United States Military Academy-HM
 Sabrina Hernandez-Lampron, Georgetown University-HM
 Sophia Freuden, Harvard University-HM
 Black Alexa, UCLA-HM
 Jessie Saeli, University of Notre Dame-HM
 Rachael Neidinger, Harvard University-HM
 Jacob W. Samit, West Point - United States Military Academy-HM
 Connor Hardy, University of Pennsylvania-HM
 Catherine Tyson, William & Mary-HM
 Jennifer Bassett, Brigham Young University-HM

Category B Level 1

Iryna Mykhaylivna Zyma, New York University-Gold
 Andrew Zanazanian, UC Santa Barbara-Silver
 Elen Karapetyan, UCLA-Bronze
 Emily Terian, University of Chicago-HM
 Daniil Tourashev, USAFA-HM

Category B Level 2

Ilona Letran, DLIFLC-Gold
 Oksana Ivaniv, DLIFLC-Silver
 Mirwais Ahmad Shah, DLIFLC-Bronze
 Alina Arama, UCLA-HM
 Brandon Kalika, Rutgers University-HM

Category B Level 3

Aziz Tashpulat, DLIFLC-Gold
 Oksana Honcharyk, Temple University-Silver
 Thomas Poszonyi, Arizona State University-Bronze
 Jan Nowak, University of Pennsylvania-HM
 Orest Mahlay, Georgetown University-HM

Category B Level 4

Katarina Nesic, Dartmouth College-Gold
 Aigerim Belmergen, UCLA-Silver
 Asset Alibekov, DLIFLC-Bronze
 Aigerim Toleukhanova, UCLA-HM
 Hryhorii Drohanov, University of Rochester-HM

Category C Level 2

Maria Guseva, Purdue University-Gold
 Ruth Rosenblum, Brandeis University-Gold
 Elizabeth Pankova, Georgetown University-Silver
 Maryia Oreshko, Carnegie Mellon University-Silver
 Polina Vorobyeva, UCLA-Bronze
 Ariadna Demkov, University of North Texas-Bronze
 Olga Boukhalova, USAFA-HM
 Jacob Baltaytis, Bowdoin College-HM
 Katya Frangulova, Vanderbilt University-HM
 Larry Guindine, University of Chicago-HM

Category C Level 3

Boris Ardemasov, Bowdoin College-Gold
 Kristina Zaslavskaya, New York University-Silver
 Georgiy Alexander Kent, Harvard University-Bronze
 Serhiy Dubenko, DLIFLC-HM
 Diana Sahibnazarova, University of Kentucky-HM

Category C Level 4

Filipp Bochkov, DLIFLC-Gold
 Olga Kuderyavets, DLIFLC-Silver
 Alexey Iakovenko, DLIFLC-Bronze
 Kamilla Azbel G., Rutgers University-HM
 Maria Bulanova, Vanderbilt University-HM

Part 2: To Speak or Not to Speak:
**An approach in Developing Conversational skills
 in Russian Language Outside of the Classroom**

Elena Lapitsky, Boston College (Retired)

The **third** conversation was between Thanksgiving and the beginning of December, almost the end of our semester. The Russian semester ends December 30. This conversation was based on chapter 3 in the textbook *Начало* (Sophia Lubensky, Gerard Ervin, Larry McLellan, Donald Jarvis, McGraw Hill, 1996): my family, my family history, and weddings. By this time my students as well as the Russians felt very comfortable to speak with each other on Skype. They were prepared to talk about topics such as family and holidays, including how we celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas or New Year. They were also able to talk about other things such as winter sports and the Winter Olympics in which Russia was not allowed to participate.

The **fourth** conversation took place at the end of February/ beginning of March. The discussion this time, based on chapter 6, was about friendship and traits of character. This chapter had a very large new vocabulary, especially adjectives, on personal traits and personal relationships. Prior to this Skype conversation we had a discussion in class about friendship. We also discussed science: students' interest in science, favorite scientists. The students were introduced to several Russian scientists and their discoveries, and then each of them chose one scientist for a presentation. It was interesting to find out that, not only in Russia but also in the US, there is a strong division between humanitarians and hard science followers, *лирики и физики*. Most of my students major in hard science: physics, chemistry, economy, finances, computer science, etc. They were aware of famous Russian scientists; one of my students even shared his knowledge about three of them with a Russian student. Four or five, political science majors, were not interested in science, but presented a report. A big difference is that regardless of one's major, in American colleges there are core subjects that everyone takes. Students have more balance in their education and therefore, not only *лирики* read poetry in America.

Not all Russian students were interested in science and only three of them knew one or two names, such as Popov, Mendeleev, or Lomonosov. Other topics that interested the Russians were related to American college education: the cost gave them a shock, but they learned about our fair scholarship system. They find our educational system superior simply because after graduation one will be able to get a good job with high pay, although they became aware that there is a lot of competition to find a job: "It's pretty hard to get a job with a degree as the job market is saturated with degree-holding people," wrote one of the Russian students. They learned from my students how difficult it is to be accepted to a good university, and that there are public universities where cost is significantly less. They were bewildered that a student can call his professor by first name or come to classes in pajamas and slippers, or that one doesn't have to declare a major right away. One Russian student wrote: "It's such a pity that we study in different

ДЕЛИМСЯ ОПЫТОМ

corners of the world, as I think that we could be best friends." This Skype conversation about American college education, as one student put it "was one of the most surprising and informative. I really was glad to find out so many new and unusual facts about studying in America."

The last, **fifth** conversation, took place at the end of April. For my students it was about culture, theater, ballet, classical music, and famous Russians at the beginning of the 20th century such as Stravinsky, Diaghilev, Nizhinski, Bakst, Anna Pavlova, and Tchaikovsky, all from chapter 7. In addition, this chapter included history, the first Russian state, the great waterway, and the first Slavic cities in Kievan Rus'. From chapter 8 came travel, vacations, camping, fishing, and other activities they like, interesting places in one's town, or around the city where the university is.

The Russian students were required to talk about appearances and personalities. Some of my students had difficulty answering the question: Do you come to a certain conclusion based on how someone looks? In a time of political correctness, we are trying to avoid judgment based on appearance, and as a result of this discussion some of my students pointed out that they will now look at contemporary American culture differently. All the Russian students who went to music school, which is very popular, were familiar with classical music and names like Tchaikovsky, but only a few had heard about Stravinsky. Most of them like to go to concerts but not to theaters. Ballet wasn't something that interested any of them and the names that are popular in the West and artists who introduced Russian ballet to the world were unknown to them.

A new course on Russian Culture was offered by the Russian university the following year. It came about as a reaction to Russian students' lack of familiarity with art forms that were introduced to the West at the beginning of the twentieth century, such as ballet, often with music by Russian composers, and often on Russian historic themes, with unique decoration and costumes the world had never seen before. The eruption of new Russian art that fascinated the West took place at a time when the October Revolution and Civil War had disrupted Russian society.

The Russian students knew major facts about Russian history and something about their city and Siberia. Many Russian students travel within the country and abroad, many of them have visited countries like China, Thailand, Vietnam, Korea, and Turkey. They all want to go to America and see cities like Chicago, even though it's "the most violent city in the world" as one Russian student put it. They want to see Los Angeles, and of course they want to go to New York. Camping,

fishing, hiking, and all kinds of sports were also popular topics and, of course, the Russians introduced mushroom picking.

There were surprises on sides, for the Russians: being almost face to face with bears in the woods during camping, their place in history: "we are the first generation after political prisoners," political judgment about horrible mistakes in the Baltic States, personal experience: "I quit fishing because I feel sorry for the fish," or personal observation: "My town is slowly getting fewer and fewer people because the mineral springs that attracted many people before are getting dry and the spas are closing," or the serious bullying problem in America, or sudden realization: "I know more about famous American people, cities, and other things than about Russia."

For American students the biggest surprise was that many Russians graduated from music schools, that American movies and musicians are so popular and well known in Russia, that the city of Krasnoyarsk where the Russian university is located has many factories but also has several theaters, that a majority of Russian students travel not only in Asia but in Europe as well if their family can afford this, that some of them came from small cities/towns that didn't have a theater. They talked about tattoos and how different societies treat them. In Russia one will lose one's job, even if it is serving food. They also talked about nontraditional sexual orientation and how people respond to this. A Russian student asked about bullying or offensive comments at school. The answer made him realize that "compared to Russia, conditions for such people are really good." The Russians asked about disabled people and concluded that "America is sensitive to such people" and that "Russian authorities should take an example." They discussed the struggle of being a teenager and how difficult and dangerous peer pressure can be.

They shared music in iTunes and suggested what to listen to. A Russian student helped my student work on his pronunciation of "Cочна" by Lermontov, which he memorized to recite on his oral exam. They gave each other advice on how to avoid boring people; they laughed together when they found out that a dog's name, Franz Ferdinand, is also the name of a band that one of my students enjoys.

This whole experience through Skype conversations, and the essays that students wrote gave us much hope for future development. In our second year of collaboration we were able to use more ideas to improve our relationships and bring an "alive" experience to our classes and to our students' lives. During the second year I used several varieties of written reports, such as: a letter to a friend (about a new Rus-

sian partner), an interview with a Russian student with follow-up questions, and an overview essay to analyze the information. This past year we had three Skype sessions per semester. Both sides added a new topic for discussion: a healthy lifestyle. At the very end every Russian student created a personal, very colorful menu to host their American partners if they visit them. My students even decided to create a wall newspaper "Russian Connection," with pictures and articles from both sides. The friendship between the two groups of students hasn't stopped with the end of the school year. Students still continue their personal Skype conversations and that is the best outcome we, the educators, could wish for.

This experience created challenges for myself and my Russian colleague, it added more, uncompensated work for us, and the biggest challenge -- how to grade the students' work, and what to grade? We approached this differently. She added points to the final semester grade - presumably reflecting participation in conversation and writing a report about it or presenting information to the class. I treated the reports as a term paper, which comprises 15% of the final grade. Specifically, I counted how much information about the Russian partner there was in each written report. If there was very little information in someone's essay, I would ask the student to get in touch with their Russian partner again so they could get more. Most of the reports contained enough information for an A or a B. The other challenge was whether to evaluate a tape or a videotape of students' conversation and not a written report. There are companies that provide services like this. I strongly believe that conversations should be private and rejected this idea. Privacy helped my students to be more creative and to feel completely free and unrestrained.

After the first years' experience with Skype conversation five out of twelve students decided to continue with Russian beyond Intermediate level. Two went to former Soviet republics to improve their language, and one spent a whole year abroad studying Russian. Three or four students declared minors in Russian. After the second year one student went for his internship to one of the former Soviet republics. Two went to study Russian, one in Latvia and the other in Kirgizstan.

A composition by a Russian student states, "As for me, our last conversation was out of the ordinary as we both felt confident. I remember our first chat when we both were shy and scared, and now I can say that everything (has) changed." The project gave them a better vision that they are on the right track to master Russian language, not merely encouraged to continue study of the Russian language. What else can we wish for!

Elena Lapitsky is retired from Boston College, where she was a lecturer for 19 years. She taught four levels of Russian language and conversation. She earned her Master of Arts in Russian Language and Literature from Boston College and her Bachelor of Arts from Omsk Pedagogical Institute. Prior to teaching at Boston College, she was a Russian language and literature instructor in Framingham High School, grades nine through twelve, a tutor for non-English language students, and Russian Language instructor for faculty (course credit) as part of the pilot program from Framingham State University. She also worked as a translator for patients at Metrowest Medical Center in Framingham, MA and for Framingham District court. She was on the Board of Directors and was an interpreter/translator for a Sister City organization FLAME (Framingham/Lomonosov Association for Mutual Exchange), a humanitarian organization. She took an active part in several student and teacher delegations between the US and Russia. She also taught Russian Language at Lincoln/Sudbury Regional High School and worked at Berlitz School of Modern Languages. She was a founder and a director of Metrowest Russian Culture Club for New Americans of Metrowest.



GO BEYOND ORDINARY WITH AMERICAN COUNCILS

Advanced Russian Language & Area Studies Program (RLASP)

Study Russian language and culture through intensive instruction, conversation partners, regional field studies, volunteering, and internships. Offered in Moscow, Vladimir, St. Petersburg, and Almaty, Kazakhstan.

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Scholarships available for all programs.

Applications for Spring 2021 programs are due by October 15. Eligibility requirements, financial aid, and applications are available at:

www.acStudyAbroad.org

Questions? Contact us: outbound@americancouncils.org

ACTR SERVICE AWARD—2020

This award, originally established in memory of Jane Barley and Fred Johnson, is given annually to recognize outstanding service to ACTR. The award is traditionally presented at the annual ACTR membership meeting.

Nominees must be members of ACTR in good standing. They should have demonstrated prominent service to ACTR in the form of active involvement in the work of the organization and promotion of its goals. Additional considerations include demonstrated devotion to the profession in terms of activities such as teaching, professional involvement, and activities in the field beyond ACTR and the classroom. Those were qualities exemplified by Jane Barley and Fred Johnson.

Members of the awards committee are Elena Farkas, Betsy Sandstrom, and Jane Shuffelton. Nominations for the award may be addressed to Elena Farkas: Russianaz@alaskan.com. Nominations for future awards may be forwarded at any time, but the deadline for the 2020 award is November 1, 2020.

Past recipients:

1995 – George Morris

- 1996 – Marian Walters
- 1997 – Zita Dabars
- 1998 – John Schillinger
- 1999 – Irwin Weil
- 2000 – Elizabeth Neatrou
- 2001 – Renate Bialy
- 2002 – Jane Shuffelton
- 2003 – John Mohan
- 2004 – Halina Danchenko
- 2005 – John Sheehan, Richard Brecht
- 2006 – Robert Channon
- 2007 – Betty Leaver
- 2008 – Elizabeth Sandstrom,
- Vitaly G. Kostomarov*
- 2009 – Maria Lekic
- 2010 – Patricia Zody
- 2011 – Thomas Garza
- 2012 – Peter Merrill
- 2013 – Benjamin Rifkin
- 2014 – Dan Davidson (special lifetime award)
- 2015 – Cynthia Ruder
- 2016 – William Rivers
- 2017 – Camelot Marshall
- 2018 – Olga Kagan (in memoriam)
- **2019 – Paavo Husen**

*special award

Greetings from SLAVA!

High school Russian language programs are finishing the school year from home but that has not stopped SLAVA chapters from continuing their work around the country! Many are including inductions and projects in their virtual meeting space.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Shannon Moe Johnson of Friends School, Baltimore, who has served SLAVA and helped so many schools start new Chapters of SLAVA during her four years as Executive Secretary-Treasurer of SLAVA. We will miss Shannon but wish her all the best as she retires from her teaching position and from SLAVA.

Please help me welcome Olga Gotta to SLAVA as the new Executive Secretary-Treasurer.

Olga Gotta holds an MA in linguistics from Moscow State University and a PhD from Moscow Linguistic University. Before receiving her teacher's certificate through the ARC program in Connecticut in 2013, Olga worked as a translator in Russian, English, and Danish. Her last translator position was for NYC Department of Education serving its large Russian community. She has been teaching Russian in various private schools in Greenwich, CT for different levels and ages of students, including independent course studies for high school credit. Olga has taught in Glastonbury's STARTALK student program since 2013 and is actively involved in many ACTR programs including the NYC Olympiada of Spoken Russian and the National Russian Essay Contest. Olga was invited to be a guest presenter at "MGU Russian, Russian Language Center," an accredited Russian language center for preparing teachers of Russian as a foreign language. In the summer of 2019, she led seminars on various topics, including standards, practices, and trends in teaching Russian language in the US, the three modes of communication and its implementation, curriculum, and lesson plan design.

Consequently, Olga was asked to return for another series of lectures, as well as to develop an online professional development course for the center. Welcome to SLAVA, Olga!

Olga and Shannon have been working closely together to ensure a smooth transition of the SLAVA tasks. We are all ready to assist schools in starting new chapters, inducting new members, or sharing ideas from other SLAVA Chapters. We can be reached at this email address: actrslava@gmail.com.

Betsy Sandstrom, SLAVA President

38th NREC results, continued from p. 9

Уважаемые коллеги, дорогие друзья (по-другому не пишет рука)!

Каждый раз с особым волнением открываю страницы, присланные из, казалось бы, далёкой, Америки и написанные на русском языке, и каждый раз меня охватывает чувство необыкновенного волнения, теплоты и благодарности к тем, кто преподаёт русский язык, и к тем, кто русский учит. И это чувство трудно передать словами. Спасибо всем вам: и учителям и прекрасным детям, которые в своих сочинениях признаются вам в любви. Ведь это именно вы не только учите их русскому языку, но и помогаете выбрать жизненный путь, учите прекрасному. От вас, от учителей ученики воспринимают любовь к окружающему миру, к другим людям, приходят к пониманию, что мир разный, но люди одинаковы в стремлении жить в мире в окружении близких и понимающих людей.

Удивительно, как серьёзно относятся ученики к своей будущей профессии, в выборе которой трудно переоценить вашу роль. Часто именно пример учителя помогает сделать важнейший выбор дальнейшего жизненного пути (А-024). Удивительно, как много в сочинениях слов о том, что прежде всего в будущей жизни нужно приносить пользу, служить другим людям: «Работой может быть любое дело, которое в дальнейшем принесет пользу» (АН-042). «Хочу найти работу, чтобы приносить пользу другим людям» (А-027). Ощущается вполне взрослое понимание, что, в принципе, любая работа достойна уважения, если она хорошо выполняется: «Нет плохой работы, а есть плохой работник» (АН-011).

Когда читаешь сочинения школьников, сердце наполняется радостью и уверенностью, что пока дети пишут такие сочинения, то в жизни всё будет хорошо. Трудности, конечно, будут, но они будут и преодолеваются, потому что растут прекрасные дети. И, главное, есть учителя, которые помогают найти правильные ориентиры на жизненном пути.

Сейчас, когда мир впервые за многие десятилетия встретился со вполне серьёзной проблемой, особенно важно осознавать, что мы все люди на одной планете, что только вместе мы можем противостоять большой беде. Сочинения дорогих, теперь уж можно так сказать, американских школьников вселяют уверенное чувство: пока дети пишут такие сочинения, всё будет хорошо!

Низкий всем поклон, Вохмина Лилия Леонидовна.

1-ое мая 2020 г.

**SECOND ROUND GOLD MEDAL ESSAYISTS,
38th NATIONAL RUSSIAN ESSAY CONTEST**

The NREC has been privileged to collaborate with the A.C. Pushkin Institute of Moscow over the years on the evaluation of the second-round essays. The essays which were awarded gold medals at the Native Speaker, Advanced Heritage, and Advanced levels in the first round were forwarded to Professor Liliya Leonidovna Vokhmina at the A.S. Pushkin Institute in Moscow for the second round of judging. Here is a message from Liliya Leonidovna Vokhmina, in which she reflects on this year's topic, the essays, the student writers and the future in which they will hopefully realize their ideal jobs and careers.

Results of the second round of judging are reported . All students whose essays were sent to Moscow will receive certificates. In addition, gold medalists in the second round of judging will also receive commemorative pins. Congratulations to these talented students and their remarkable and dedicated teachers!

ADVANCED GOLD*Anglo-American School of Moscow***Nina Nazarenko**

Mikaela Moskowitz

*Buckingham, Browne, and Nichols, MA***Joshua Walker**

Elizabeth Savage

Simru Sonmez-Erbil

*E. R. Murrow HS, NY***Yuliya Garmil**

Yulia Hubitska

Yana Prokopecchko

Tetyana Rimaryuk

Yana Sapunkova

*George Washington HS, MD***Emma Reznik**

Andzhur Termikeev

*Illinois Math & Science, IL***Paavo Husen**

Lily Levrault

*Russian School House, VA***Lidia Krasnov**

Arturo Salvalaggio

*Thomas Jefferson High School**For Science and Technology, VA***Betsy Sandstrom**

Daniel Healey

Buckingham, Browne, and Nichols, MA

Joshua Walker

Aaron Rasin

Cherokee HS, NJ

Marian Barnum

Gavin Ritter

E. R. Murrow HS, NY

Yuliya Garmil

Anna Kudina

Friends School of Baltimore, MD

Elizabeth Lee Roby

Joseph Badros

Katrina Brazhnikov

Dan Musachio

Illinois Math & Science, IL

Paavo Husen

Grace Federici

Maximillian Hellrung

Ishanpepe Jagusah

Marcus Ludwig

Angela Wang

West Anchorage HS, AK

Yelena Reep

Colton Copelin

Savanna Lee

ADVANCED SILVER

George Washington HS, MD

Emma Reznik

Malika Otorbaeva

Glastonbury HS, CT

Jan Eklund

Larisa Esposito

Shayna Lebowitz

Gwenyth Ross

ADVANCED HERITAGE GOLD

E. R. Murrow HS, NY

Yuliya Garmil

Bekzod Khayrullaev

Ekaterina Naumova

Langley HS, VA

Valentin Cukierman

Aidana Akibaeva

Stacia Datskovska

Tasnim Makhmudova

Pushkin School of Houston, TX

Katia Pronina

Evelina Tcherniak

Russian Kids Club

Ilona Tombu

Dasha Shevchenko

Russian School #1

Yana Kastosova

Oleg Kolesnikov

Natalia Stareeva

Russian School House

Lidia Krasnov

Daniel Moyseyev

Russian School Olympus

Nathalie McGregor

Sofia McCardle

Thomas Jefferson HS for Science and Technology, VA

Betsy Sandstrom

Caroline Smiltneks

NATIVE SPEAKER GOLD

Anglo-American School of Moscow

Nina Nazarenko

Anna Ilicheva

By the Onion Sea, IL

Julia Kriventsova Denne

Ilia Svirinovskyi

Iuliana Tingaeva

Russian School Ckyku Net

Lyudmila Andreyeva

Nikita Cheblokov

Vineland HS, NJ

Vlada Jackson

Katerina Maruseichenko

ADVANCED HERITAGE SILVER

Staten Island Technical HS, NY

Thomas Jefferson HS for Science and Technology, VA

Walnut Hills HS, OH

West Anchorage HS, AK

Nataliya Ushakova

Betsy Sandstrom

Johanka Hart-Tompkins

Yelena Reep

Beata Verkhavets

Maria Abramova

Michael Kyrychenko

Nadya Ellerhorst

Lubava Wessels

NATIVE SPEAKER SILVER

Anglo-American School of Moscow

Nina Nazarenko

Maria Kosta

Anna Webb

Staten Island Technical HS, NY

Nataliya Ushakova

Ekaterina Bushueva

The NREC Committee would also like to extend special thanks to Lisa Choate and Yuliya Socolova of American Councils and Cynthia Ruder/University of Kentucky and Treasurer/ACTR for their logistical assistance with the second-round judging and compensation for judges.

The NREC Co-Chairs look forward to the 39th National Russian Essay Contest and would like to extend an invitation to Russian teachers to participate in November of this year. Registration materials will be posted and made available for download on the ACTR website in September 2020.

-- John Rook, Paavo Husen, and Phillip Stosberg, Co-Chairs of the 2016 NREC

Statistics on enrollment

Four-year comparison

YEAR		REGISTRATIONS	UNIVERSITIES	Number of registrations at each level in 2020			
2017	1326	67			A	B	C
2018	1291	60		1	308	19	75
2019	1434	67		2	287	18	37
2020	1260	56		3	243	14	29
Number of medals by level in 2020				4	206	7	17

Number of medals by level in 2020

	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	HM	TOTALS
A1	5	5	5	30	45
A2	5	5	5	28	43
A3	5	5	5	19	34
A4	5	5	5	15	30
B1	1	1	1	2	5
B2	1	1	1	2	5
B3	1	1	1	2	5
B4	1	1	1	2	5
C1	5	5	5	9	24
C2	2	2	2	4	10
C3	1	1	1	2	5
C4	1	1	1	2	5

Smith	1			1		8
Temple		2	2		4	14
UC Santa Barbara		1		1	2	11
UCLA	1	2	3	10	16	61
University of Arizona				1	1	18
University of Arkansas				1	1	7
University of Chicago				5	5	56
University of Kentucky				1	1	1
University of Mississippi	1				1	14
University of Montana				1	1	12
University of New Haven				1	1	3
University of North Texas			1		1	17
University of Notre		1		3	4	15
University of Pennsylvania				3	3	6
University of Pittsburgh				1	1	29
University of Rochester			1	2	3	24
University of Utah	1		1		2	16
University of Wisconsin-Madison		1		1	2	44
US Air Force Academy				4	4	12
Vanderbilt University	2			6	8	27
West Point-US Military Academy				3	3	48
Yale University			1	4	5	29
43	33	36	33	102	117	

Number of medals by universities

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	HM	Total	Participants
Arizona State University			1		1	8
Boston University		1		1	2	9
Bowdoin College	1	1		2	4	14
Brandeis	1	3	1		5	32
BYU	5	6	5	8	24	60
Bucknell		1		1	2	18
Carnegie Mellon University		1		1	2	18
College of William and Mary				4	4	26
Columbia University	5	4	7	14	30	73
Dartmouth College	1			1	2	19
DLIFLC	7	4	5	6	22	32
Georgetown	1	1	2	5	9	112
Harvard	3	4	1	8	16	62
Indiana University				4	4	30
Mount Holyoke College			2	2	4	5
New York University	1	1	1	1	4	47
Pomona College				4	4	21
Portland Community College				1		3
Portland State University	1			1	2	33
Purdue University	1	1		1	3	25
Rutgers University				3	3	46

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF RUSSIAN
Saturday, February 8, 2020
Omni Hotel, San Diego, CA, Gallery 3A

ACTR President Thomas Garza called the meeting to order at 5:28 pm and thanked everyone present for their attendance.

Minutes: The minutes from the Membership meeting February 9, 2019 (New Orleans) were approved. (Ben Rifkin, seconded Bob Channon)

Announcements: President Thomas Garza expressed his thanks to the membership and said that it has been an honor to have served the last four years as ACTR President. Tom began to study Russian in 1976 at Bryn Mawr and that was the start of the best things in his career.

Membership Secretary's Report: (in absentia) Membership Secretary Irina Dubinina reported that membership remains steady and slightly growing. Irina reminded colleagues that ACTR membership brings benefits: participation in programs, contests, activities, newsletter, and *Russian Language Journal*.

Report from the American Councils Board of Trustees: The November 7, 2019 meeting convened with the annual review of finances and audit report. Again this year, American Councils received a fully clean audit, continuing its more than 15-year history as a "low-risk" audit organization. Dr. David Patton (Ph.D, Slavic, the Ohio State University, ACTR alumnus) was confirmed in July of 2019 as the third President of American Councils. Irwin Weil continues as elected representative from ACTR to the AC Board of Trustees, as does Tom Garza as ACTR President. Dan Davidson thanked Tom for his four years of service on the Board of Trustees as well as President of ACTR, in particular his successes in raising awareness of the importance of ethnic and gender diversity in both organizations.

Report on ACTR programs: 2019 was an eventful year! Dan Davidson reminded us that ACTR has been represented at MAPRYAL since 1975. The 2019 XIII Congress of MAPRYAL marked a change in the leadership of the international organization. Almost 700 participants from 60 countries were present, including 12 delegates from the United States. Lyudmila Alekseevna Verbitskaya (Saint Petersburg State University) stepped down

as president of MAPRYAL in 2019 and was succeeded by Vladimir Il'ich Tolstoy, long-time curator of Yasnaya Polyana Museum complex. Tolstoy, in turn, nominated Dan as First Senior Vice-President, and that nomination (along with other officers of the international organization) was confirmed by a written balloting of the full General Assembly. The next MAPRYAL International Congress will be hosted by St. Petersburg University in 2023. Dan urged the meeting to think about how we can be more involved in the work of MAPRYAL.

There was also sad news to report from MAPRYAL: two long-time friends of ACTR and pillars of Russian studies, Lyudmila Alekseevna Verbitskaya (1936-2019) and Ol'ga Danilovna Mitrofanova (1930 – 2019) passed away in late 2019.

Dan then presented a report on the Overview of 2019 Trends in AC/ACTR US-Russian Exchange Activities, with emphasis on language study and research opportunities. Reflecting on a meeting he and David Patton held with the new US Ambassador to Russia, John Sullivan, he noted that official relations remain at a 40-year low, but highlighted the following points:

1. The Department of State Travel Warning against Russia was lifted in 2019, pace and intensity of sanctions has slowed, and anti-American media stream in Russia was toned down;
2. Established AC programs like RLASP, NSLI-Y, Scholar and Teacher Programs, CLS, Open World, Professional Fellows, and [EdUSA](#) are continuing to operate normally. The CLS summer program in Nizhny Novgorod was reinstated in 2019, after a one year interruption;
3. Dan was pleased to report on several new non-federal programs, including the re-instatement of the ACTR Summer Language Teacher (SLT) Program at Herzen State Pedagogical University in 2019 and the announcement of a new competition for 2020; ongoing collaboration led by AC focused on Engineering Entrepreneurship Education in Russia in partnership with the Bauman Moscow State Technical University, [the Higher School of Economics \(Moscow\)](#), and the

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Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs; a successful launch of a new pilot in fall of 2019 of a US-Russia High Schol Partnership Program (pilot), and initial plans to develop the SLT into a two-way exchange of American teachers of Russian and Russian teachers of English, to be reported on further next year.

Results of the Kettering Report: Dan shared slides (prepared by American Councils Research Center for the Kettering Foundation), that provided data on the US enrollments at Russian universities and Russian enrollment at US universities between the years of 2011-2018. Numbers show much higher enrollment of Russians at US universities. The number of Americans studying Russian overseas has remained relatively stable over the past eight years, but the breakdown among those studying in Russia and those studying Russian in another Russian speaking country has reduced the overall number of Americans enrolled at Russian universities for short-term or year-long study by approximately one - third since 2014.

The Report offered the following **recommendations** for improving the declining state of US-Russian academic exchanges:

1. Re-open the US and Russian consulates which have been closed since 2018.
2. Develop a new US-Russia Exchange Agreement.
3. Establish a US-Russia bilateral commission to encourage public- and private-sector support of US-Russia academic and professional exchange, based on the model of the Bi-Lateral Presidential Commissions of 2009-2014.

Federal Relations and Legislative Priorities for 2019

American Councils supported advocacy for federal programs that support the study and teaching of Russian at all levels, including: Increased support for existing programs that have proven their value to the field: USED: Title 6, Fulbright-Hays; Department of State: Academic and Citizen Exchanges Title 8, Russian/Eurasian Assistance Programs in Education DoD: Flagship Programs; STARTALK Dan noted new legislation for education in America's Languages *World Language Advancement and Readiness Act* (H.R. 1094), authorized in 2019. This law would establish a competitive grant program to support WL in K-12 schools *Biliteracy Educa-*

tion Seal and Teaching Act – H.R. 3119, now in Health, Education, and Welfare Committee

Publishing Announcements: Dan welcomed partners who were first-time attendees at an ACTR Meeting. They were invited to join ACTR if they are not already members!

Dan thanked Robert Largets from Kendall-Hunt publishing for being here with us and was recognized the long history of the tri-lateral relationship of ACTR-Kendall-Hunt-Издательство Русский язык. They shared several new releases with us:

Political Russian (7th Edition), Simes and Robin
Unlocking Russian Pronunciation, Kim (Fedchak) DiMattia
Kostomarov Festschrift, Flint (2020). Exchanges at the Crossroads (IU Press)
Transformative Language Teaching and Learning (2020) (Cambridge Univ. Press)

ACTR Olympiada of Spoken Russian: Summary of report submitted by co-chairs Ruth Edelman and Mark Trotter. In 2019, 1244 students from more than 80 schools participated in the ACTR Olympiada of Spoken Russian at one of the 17 region/state Olympiada sites. This represents an increase of participation by more than 10% from 2018 and the greatest overall participation since 2010. The 17 regions selected participants to be recognized with the ACTR/SLAVA Award for Outstanding Achievement in the study of Russian. An International Olympiada will not take place during the 2019-2020 school year. The materials revision committee has completed a new version of Level 3 which is available on the website. The committee is currently revising Levels 4/5.

National Russian Essay Contest: report submitted by co-chairs Paavo Husen, John Rook, and Phillip Stosberg. The chairs report that 1333 students from 55 teachers representing 49 schools participated in the 38th Annual ACTR National Russian Essay Contest. Included among the 49 were four new schools from Arizona, Georgia, Kentucky, and Virginia. Welcome! The topic was: *Работа, профессия и карьера в моей жизни*. Medals and certificates will be delivered to the schools.

National Post-Secondary Russian Essay Contest – taking place at the time of the AATSEEL Conference.

ACTFL Assembly of Delegates: Jane Shuffelton and

Betsy Sandstrom attended this year's Assembly in Washington, DC, which was renamed Assembly of Advocates. They met with the staff of their senators and representatives to advocate for the passage of two bills. They talked up the initiative to create America's Languages Caucus and in some cases, had a word or photo with an elected official.

2019 Nominations Committee Report and Elections to the ACTR Board of Directors: Alla Smyslova, Chair Directors whose terms were expiring: Karen Evans-Romaine, Elena Farkas, Paavo Husen, Lee Roby, Mark Trotter, Nina Bond, Dan Davidson.

Karen Evans-Romaine and Paavo Husen informed the Executive Committee that they are stepping down from the Board.

Last February, at the membership meeting the Board of Directors invited nominations, including self-nominations, from the membership at large. The Nominations Committee received 24 nominations and self-nominations.

The Nominations Committee evaluated thoroughly every nominee's brief description of their involvement with ACTR programs and of ideas and initiatives they could bring to the Board. As a result, the committees put forth two names to fill Board vacancies.

Colleen M. Lucey – an assistant professor of Russian at the University of Arizona, AZ

John R. Rook – a teacher of Russian and Spanish at Smith Middle School in Glastonbury, CT .

At the meeting on February 7, 2020, the ACTR Board of Directors accepted the slate of nominees to the Board for a three-year term (2020-2023): Nina Bond, Dan Davidson, Elena Farkas, Colleen Lucey, Lee Roby, John Rook, Mark Trotter.

The slate was presented to the membership. There were questions and discussions on the ACTR procedures for voting. As a clarification: the membership votes on the slate as a whole. There were no additional nominations from the membership.

Vote: The slate was elected unanimously. Bob Channon took over as Nominations Committee Chair for the duration of the meeting.

Nominees for President and Vice President:

The ACTR Board of Directors approved the slate for a two-year term (2020-2022):

President: Nataliya Ushakova

Vice-President: Alla Smyslova

There was a call for nominations from the floor.

There were none.

Vote: President and Vice President were elected unanimously. Their terms begin at the conclusion of the meeting.

History was made! This is the first time in the organization's history that we have two women, two native speakers of Russian, and two from NYC as President and Vice President.

Old Business: it was brought to the attention of the Board that membership for institutions was eliminated and that is a cause of concern. The Board agreed to revisit and revise. A vote is expected by the Board in the spring.

New Business: ACTR is interested in moving to online voting. Discussion followed, with recommendations from the floor to look at Qualtrix and the costs that would be involved.

Warm thanks and congratulations were extended to Dr. Thomas Garza for his service as ACTR President. Thank you, Tom.

ACTR Service Award: Jane Shuffelton presented the Service Award to Paavo Husen. The full citation will appear in the *ACTR Letter*, but let the minutes reflect Paavo's extensive contributions and service to the field through his impressive classroom teaching, exchange with a school in St. Petersburg, participation in AATSEEL conference presentations, and co-chair of the ACTR National Russian Essay Contest.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm.

--Membership fee can be paid online through PayPal or fill out this form with information about your credit card and send it to Irina Dubinina.



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ACTR OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Officers elected for two-year terms, beginning with election at ACTR membership meeting

President: Nataliya Ushakova (2020-2022¹), Staten Island Technical H. S., Staten Island, NY <nushakova@gmail.com>

Vice-President: Alla Smyslova (2020-2022²), Columbia University, New York, NY <as2157@columbia.edu>

Secretary: Elizabeth Sandstrom (2019-2022), Thomas Jefferson H.S. of Science and Technology, Alexandria, VA <betsy.sandstrom@fcps.edu>

Treasurer: Cynthia A. Ruder (2018-2021), University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY <cynthia.ruder@uky.edu>

Executive Director: Dan Davidson (2017-2020), Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA, and American Councils (ACIE) <ddavidson@americancouncils.org>

Chair of ACCELS: Richard Brecht (2019-2022), University of Maryland, College Park, MD <rbrecht@casl.umd.edu>

¹Term as President ² Term as Vice-President

Nina Bond (2020-2023),

Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, PA <nbond@fandm.edu>

Tony Brown (2019-2022),

Brigham Young University, Provo, UT <tony_brown@byu.edu>

Robert Channon (2018-2021),

Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN <rchannon@purdue.edu>

Evgeny Dengub (2018-2021),

University of Massachusetts Amherst and Smith College, MA <edengub@gmail.com>

Irina Dubinina (2018-2021),

Brandeis University, Waltham, MA, <idubinin@brandeis.edu>

Ruth Edelman (2019-2022),

Tenafly H.S. Tenafly, NJ <rpedelman@hotmail.com>

Elena Farkas (2020-2023),

Project Light of Manatee, Inc. <RussianAZ@alaskan.com>

Thomas J. Garza (2019-2022),

University of Texas, Austin, TX <tjgarza@austin.utexas.edu>

Colleen M. Lucey (2020-2023),

University of Arizona, AZ, <luceyc@email.arizona.edu>

Peter Merrill (2019-2022),

Whittle School & Studios, New York, NY <pmerrill54@gmail.com>

Diane Nemec-Ignashev (2019-2022),

Carleton College, Northfield, MN <dignashe@carleton.edu>

Elizabeth Lee Roby (2020-2023),

Friends School, Baltimore, MD <eroby@friendsbalt.org>

John R. Rock (2020-2023),

Smith Middle School, Glastonbury, CT <RookJ@glastonburyus.org>

Elizabeth Sandstrom (2019-2022),

Thomas Jefferson H.S. of Science and Technology, Alexandria, VA <betsy.sandstrom@fcps.edu>

Jane Shuffelton (2018-2021),

Brighton H.S. (emerita), Rochester, NY <shuffelton@aol.com>

Alla Smyslova (2018-2021),

Columbia University, New York, NY <as2157@columbia.edu>

Mara Sukholutskaya (2019-2022),

East Central University, Ada, OK <msukholu@ecok.edu>

Mark Trotter (2020-2023),

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN <martrott@indiana.edu>

Nataliya Ushakova (2018-2021),

Staten Island Technical H. S., Staten Island, NY

Irwin Weil (2018-2021),

Northwestern University (emeritus), Evanston, IL <i-weil@northwestern.edu>

(Terms for Board members are for three years, beginning with election at the ACTR membership meeting.)

SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE:

John Schillinger, American University (emeritus) Washington, DC

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* *Russian Language Journal*

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ACTR Membership Secretary:

GRALL, MS 024, 415 South Street, Waltham, MA 02453

ACTR Letter

Newsletter of the American Council of Teachers of Russian

Elena Farkas, Chair, Editorial Board

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Contact Information for

Elena Farkas

E-mail: RussianAZ@alaskan.com, phone (cell) 907-227-5514

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1828 L Street, NW, #1200

Washington, DC 20036-5104

Phone: 202-833-7522

<www.americancouncils.org>