

High School to College Articulation:

**Building Proficiency and Structural
Control at the Pre-College Level**

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Introduction

- My teaching background
- Acknowledge importance of local conditions
(fundamental difficulty in proposing models for curriculum design to Russian teachers from a variety of different local conditions)
- Describe my local conditions
(only teacher grades 9-12, a private, day school, class size under 18, 3 year unarticulated MS program b/c no HS 2nd point of articulation, 30 hrs. summer program for placement into 2nd year therefore MS has little explicit grammar instruction and 9th grade (2nd year Russian) is grammatical “start over,” HS classes – 70 min x 3/week w/HW expectation 40 min. for 9-10th grades & 60 min. for 11-12th grades, college guidance recommendation to continue language study through level 5 – no need to compromise rigor for enrollment)

Three guiding Essential Questions for tonight's webinar that should be relevant to us all regardless of differing local conditions

- 1. How are high school learners of Russian different from their post-secondary counterparts?**
- 2. What and how do we need to teach differently to meet them where they are?**
- 3. How may we do this while also preparing them for a smooth transition into a college program?**

How are high school learners of Russian different from their post-secondary counterparts?

- Class needs to be accessible to everyone
- HS Freshman are 14 years old (significant variation in maturity level: discipline, focus, attention to detail; lack sense of purpose and goals)
- Juniors are often more focused and motivated than the college students I taught
- First formal foreign language study
 - many don't have study skills for language study (how to learn from doing the HW, strategies for memorizing vocabulary,)
 - impacts ability to intuit language structure (thinking grammatically needs to be trained –what is agreement? But I am a girl – what isn't it моя? What is a direct object? – they don't naturally paradigm)

What and how do we need to teach differently to meet them where they are?

1. Make sure that we are moving at a pace that all can handle
2. To be fun and keep them actively involved
3. Teach them how to study (review every night, do and correct homework, strategies for mastery vocabulary)
4. Monitor their daily work more closely
5. Help them to see structural patterns
6. Develop a sense of purpose and goals [get buy-in]
7. Teach students about language proficiency development, so they understand where they are & where they are headed
8. Demands a slower, more deliberate and more explicit approach to grammar instruction – more repeated explanation and practice.

Should there be explicit grammar instruction?

YES! Students can't become solidly Intermediate level students (able to "create with the language") without this. They can repeat memorized information correctly, but cannot paradigm. And they cannot articulate into a college program without this.

Caveat: explicit grammar instruction must emerge out of a communicative framework and instructors must place the development of language proficiency (what students are ABLE TO DO using the language) as the final goal post. There must be a balance and constant interrelationship between a focus on building structural control and proficiency.

How can this be accomplished?

General Suggestions for Curricular Design

- Use a culture-rich textbook that employs a communicative approach to language acquisition
- Choose a text that provides good structure for accurate language production in a communicative framework and **good scaffolding** that builds (scaffolding ensures language accuracy and automaticity of form) (activities should build in scope from structured to creative)
- Teach target grammar within this context
- Teach and assess often all communicative modes (interpersonal, interpretive, presentational, and achievement)
- Consider adjusting grading standards to reflect the importance of balancing the modes.
- Encourage students to take the Prototype AP[®] Russian Language and Culture Exam which tests functional proficiency in different skills and across the modes of communication (while exam is intended to be used for college credit and placement, results can be used by instructors to gauge program strengths and weaknesses)

Questions?

**How can Prototype AP[®]
Russian Language and Culture
Exam scores be used to
inform curricular design?**

Evaluate Prototype AP[®] Russian Language Exam score reports per proficiency skill for program strengths & weaknesses

Prototype AP[®] Russian Exam Score Report

First Name	Last Name	Reading Proficiency	Listening Proficiency	Oral (OPI) Proficiency	Integrated Tasks Proficiency	AP Grade
Student 1		IL	IM	IH	IM	4
Student 2		IL	IL	IM	IL	4
Student 3		IM	IM	IH	IH	5
Student 4		IH	IH	IH	IM	5
Student 4		IL	IL	IM	NH	3
Student 5		NH	IL	IL	NH	3

How have the Prototype AP[®] exam results served me over the years?

1. By reinforcing the habit of thinking of language development in terms of proficiency development in a variety of skills
2. By providing an objective set of assessment standards by which to evaluate and reflect on program strengths and weaknesses
3. By reinforcing the need to consider the balance of different skills at different points
4. By driving curriculum development to support growth in a needed skill (need to do more authentic reading or listening)
5. By providing a measure by which to gauge progress in curriculum development. (Example of review after 2011 [freshman 2008, 6 of 15 Prototype AP scores of 3 were earned by this class of 9])

What do I need to do to get ALL students to a certain level?
Curriculum Review to better align with proficiency standards
(Beginning in 2012)

1. Emphasis on mastery over completion (schedule change)
2. Focus on question asking and answering at level 3 (10th grade)
3. Full class writing to build early narration skills (end 10th grade)
4. Transposition narratives to past and future time frame to facilitate growth of narration in all time frames.
5. Focus on elaboration in description and narration;
6. Grading in each mode
7. Greater integration of modes

Second Year High School (level 3):
Setting the Foundation for the Development of
Intermediate Level Proficiency

What does the marriage of Building Proficiency and Structural Control mean at this level on macro level?

Year-Long Curricular Goals: Focus on discourse functions

- 1. Ability to ask and answer a great variety of questions**
- 2. Focus on developing descriptive mode – How much can you say on interMEdiate topics?**
- 3. Focus on building skills of narration in present tense**
- 4. Introduction to narration in past and future time frames**

Goals for 2nd High School year (level 3)

Setting the Foundation for the Development of Intermediate Level Proficiency

Goal #1: Ability to ask and answer a great variety of questions

1. Questions – Answers (seeing the structural connections)

- **Statements -> generate as many questions as possible** (Таня учится на втором курсе на историческом факультете в Международном университете.)
 - Где учится Таня?
 - Кто учится в Международном университете/на втором курсе/на историческом факультете?
 - На каком факультете учится Таня? На каком курсе учится Таня? В каком университете учится Таня?
- **Use question as model to generate other similar but different questions**
 - Какие лекции у Тани в пятницу? Collect all questions in collaborative google doc. Interpersonal quiz.

2. Use answers to questions to build “string of sentence” paragraphs on personal topics (Olympiada topics for compositions)

Торіс: Дом, в котором вы живёте –

1. Вы живёте в квартире или в доме?
2. Какой у вас дом?/ Какая у вас квартира?
3. Сколько этажей в вашем доме?/ На каком этаже ваша квартира?
4. Сколько комнат в вашем доме/ в вашей квартире?
5. Какие комнаты, на каких этажах?
6. Чем занимаются разные члены вашей семьи в разных комнатах?
7. Подробно опишите вашу любимую комнату.
8. Подробно опишите район, в котором вы живёте. Чем можно там заниматься?
9. Вам нравится ваш район? Почему?

Goals for 2nd High School year (level 3)

Setting the Foundation for the Development of Intermediate Level Proficiency

Goal #2: Focus on developing descriptive mode

How much can you say on interMEdiate topics?

(Presentation Writing becomes presentational speaking for Olympiada . Demonstrates an ability to use a “string of sentence” paragraph to write/speak in some depth on a single interMEdiate topic [significant increase in scope since level 2]) ([show video](#))

Goal #3: Focus on building skills of narration in present tense

(retelling of current and past video episodes – collective chain stories) (direct to indirect speech and focus on case)

Goal #4: Introduction to narration in past and future time

frames (transpose present tense narrations to past and future time frames (verbal aspect in context of story-telling))

How much English can be spoken in the classroom?

ACTFL recommends 90% in target language.

I will admit that through this second-year of instruction (level 3), I probably only speak Russian 60% of the time. Not efficient or effective to teach Russian grammar in Russian. I acknowledge that there are other ways to provide instruction outside of class – a flipped classroom model.

But I think we are asking the wrong question here and focusing on the wrong person in the room. What we should be asking is **how much Russian do the students speak during class? 80%**

Most important to have a student speaking, not student listening classroom.

Third Year High School (level 4): **Building Solid Intermediate-Mid Level Proficiency and Beyond**

Year-Long Curricular Goals:

- 1. Provide increased opportunities to create with the language – need writing prompts that require storytelling and reflection**
- 2. ELABORATION is buzz word for the year**
- 3. What is the balance of structure and creativity? Structure gives way on the sentence level, as students can now independently create sentences. But model texts serve to ground students. Require the integration of communicative modes (Interpretive reading to presentational writing)** (read movie festival review ->highlight useful vocabulary and write on favorite film incorporating vocab., read restaurant review -> highlight useful phrases write a restaurant guide for visitors to Baltimore, do online research on favorite holiday and write on it (lifted phrases in red font))
- 4. View writing as process– have significantly more tolerance for accuracy errors (much more creative process) -correct anglicisms – have students comment on mistakes. ([show correction method](#))**
- 5. Need to do a lot of past and future time frame narration to develop fluency.** (story line projections, planning trips)
- 6. Reflective writing becomes base for memorized presentational speaking for Olympiada. ([show video](#))**

Fourth Year High School (level 5):

Building Solid Intermediate-Mid Level Proficiency and Beyond

Year-Long Curricular Goals –

Primarily the same as for level 4 in terms of discourse development (integrate narration and detailed description) but with increased fluency, sophistication, and spontaneity. Addition of cultural comparisons.

Level 5 Course Description:

The central goal of Level 5 Russian is to build proficiency and **fluency** in the use of the narrative mode (telling stories) in all major time frames and the **expression of cultural comparisons**. Student narration skills become more **sophisticated** as students focus on **utilizing a greater variety of syntactical structures**, more compound and complex sentence structure, subordinate phrases, verbal adjectives and adverbs, all **while integrating verbs of motion**, and **connectors** to develop fluid paragraph-length discourse. *Elaboration* is our catch phrase of the year, as students are challenged to **explain**, describe, narrate, **and share opinions** and reflections on characters, actions, and culture ***in great detail***.

How do we address fourth year (level 5) goals?

- Expression of cultural comparisons (trip, video, New Year's)
- Development of more sophisticated discourse (analyze reading, target in writing)
 - utilizing a greater variety of syntactical structures
 - Integrating connectors
- Integration of verbs of motion
- Sharing opinions and emotional reactions
- Explaining
- Developing fluency and spontaneity (significantly increase presentational speaking opportunities, remove presentational writing preparation) ([show video](#))

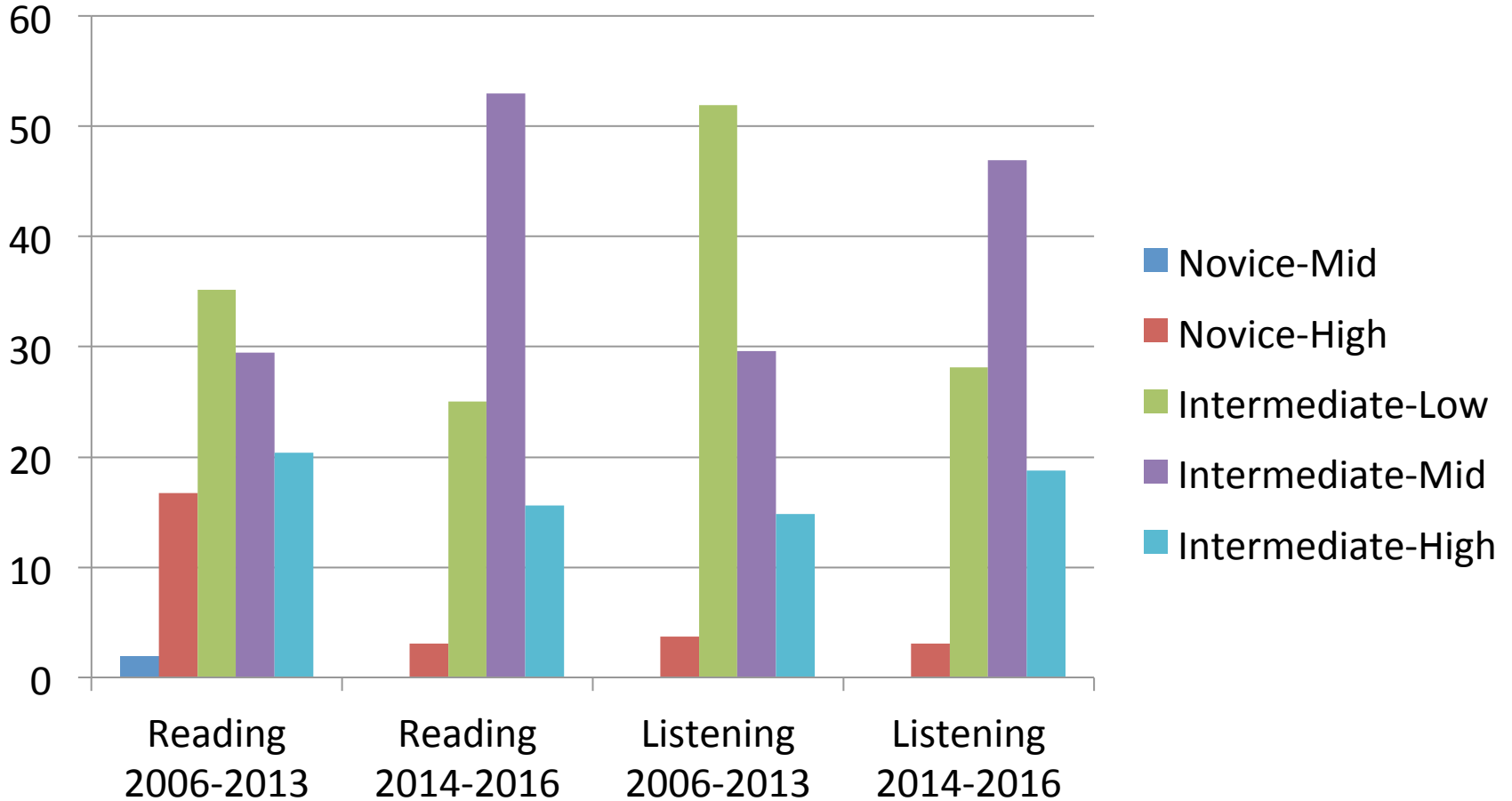
Questions?

**Compare 2006-2013
proficiency scores to
2014-2016 scores**

**(note general rise and less
variation; OPI)**

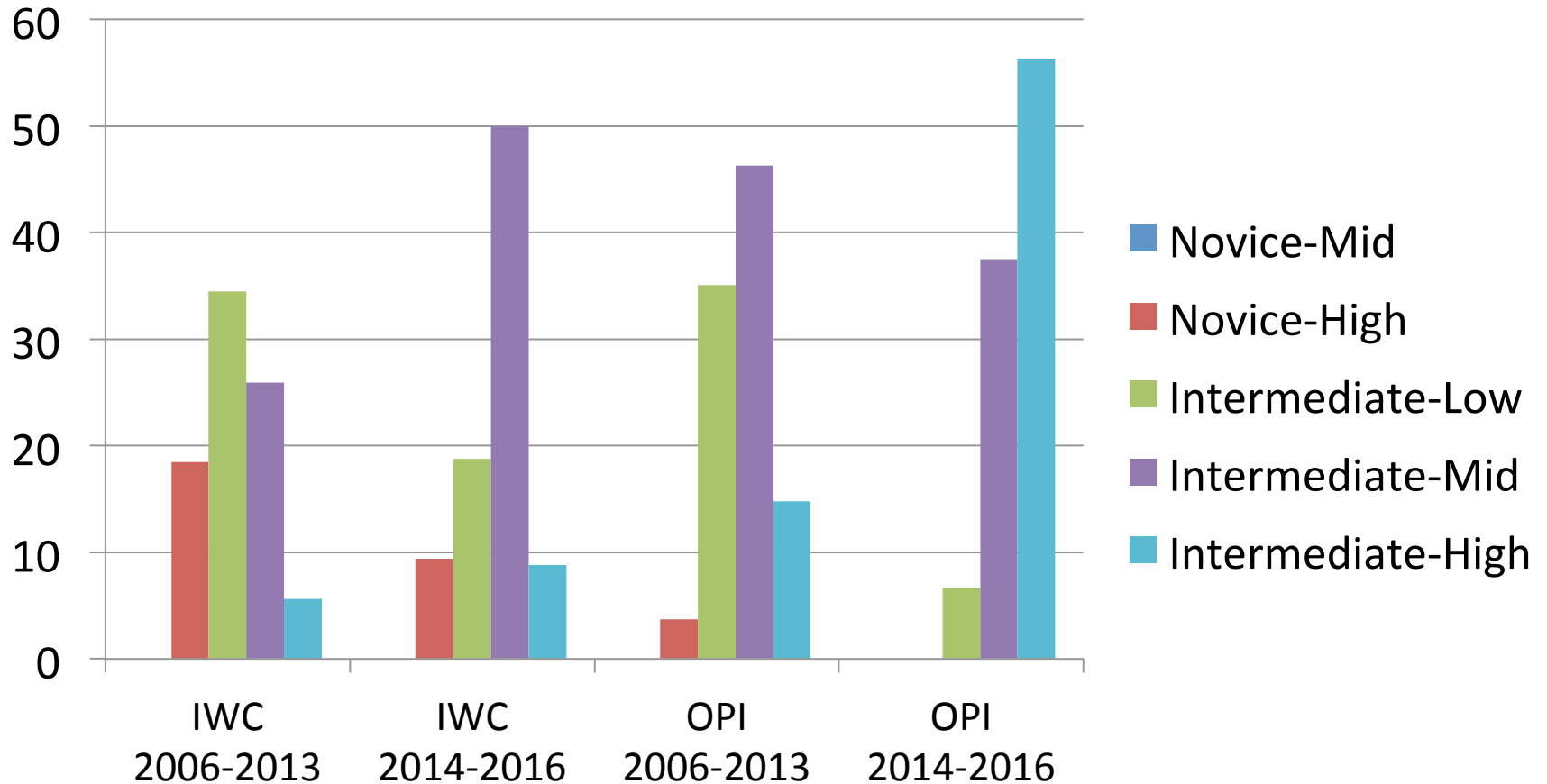
Growth in Reading and Listening Proficiency

Comparison FSB Prototype AP[®] Russian exam results:
2006-2013 (N=54) vs. 2014-2016 (N=32)



Growth in Writing and Speaking Proficiency

Comparison FSB Prototype AP[®] Russian Exam results:
2006-2013 (N=54) vs. 2014-2016 (N=32)



Speaking Proficiency Comparison (OPI results):

FSB Prototype AP[®] Russian proficiency results vs. post-secondary proficiency results (after 4 & 6 semesters of instruction)

Marshall, C. (2009). The Online Prototype AP Russian Examination: An Evaluation of Its Reliability and Validity, in Mnemosynon: Studies on Language and Culture in the Russophone World, Publishing Company: Azbukovnik, Moscow.

Proficiency Level	Friends School Speaking 2006-2013 (N=54)	Friends School Speaking (OPI) 2014-2016 (N=32)	Post-Secondary Speaking (OPI) (after 4 semesters) (N=325)	Post-Secondary Speaking (OPI) (after 6 semesters) (N=699)
Novice	0%	0%	3.3%	1.1%
Novice-High	3.7%	0%	13.2%	9.9%
Intermediate-Low	35.1%	6.3%	26.0%	22.6%
Intermediate-Mid	46.3%	37.5%	39.7%	42.9%
Intermediate-High	14.8%	56.3%	12.4%	17.0%
Advanced	n/a	n/a	4.1%	6.0%
Advanced-High	n/a	n/a	.8%	.2%

Listening Proficiency Comparison:

FSB Prototype AP[®] Russian proficiency results vs. post-secondary proficiency results (after 4 & 6 semesters of instruction)

Marshall, C. (2009). The Online Prototype AP Russian Examination: An Evaluation of Its Reliability and Validity, in Mnemosynon: Studies on Language and Culture in the Russophone World, Publishing Company: Azbukovnik, Moscow.

Proficiency Level	Friends School Listening 2006-2013 (N=54)	Friends School Listening 2014-2016 (N=32)	Post-Secondary Listening (after 4 semesters) (N=325)	Post-Secondary Listening (after 6 semesters) (N=699)
Novice-High	3.7%	3.1%	0%	0%
Intermediate-Low	51.9%	28.1%	72.0%	24.6%
Intermediate-Mid	29.6%	46.9%	17.3%	63.5%
Intermediate-High	14.8%	18.8%	6.3%	8.8%
Advanced	n/a	n/a	1.4%	1.4%
Advanced-High	n/a	n/a	.3%	1.1%
Superior	n/a	n/a	.3%	.4%

Reading Proficiency Comparison:

FSB Prototype AP[®] Russian proficiency results vs. post-secondary proficiency results (after 4 & 6 semesters of instruction)

Marshall, C. (2009). The Online Prototype AP Russian Examination: An Evaluation of Its Reliability and Validity, in Mnemosynon: Studies on Language and Culture in the Russophone World, Publishing Company: Azbukovnik, Moscow.

Proficiency Level	Friends School Reading 2006-2013 (N=54)	Friends School Reading 2014-2016 (N=32)	Post-Secondary Reading (after 4 semesters) (N=325)	Post-Secondary Reading (after 6 semesters) (N=699)
Novice-Mid	1.9%	0%	0%	0%
Novice-High	16.7%	3.1%	0%	0%
Intermediate-Low	35.2%	25.0%	11.6%	16.4%
Intermediate-Mid	25.9%	53.1%	23.0%	18.1%
Intermediate-High	20.4%	15.6%	50.7%	43.7%
Advanced	n/a	n/a	9.6%	13.6%
Advanced-High	n/a	n/a	2.1%	2.7%
Superior	n/a	n/a	2.9%	5.4%

Proficiency Comparison Conclusions

While almost all students meet proficiency targets suggested by this research for entrance into third-year college Russian in listening, and significantly exceed the performance levels in speaking, only 18.8% meet the performance level in reading comprehension.

This is reflected in Prototype AP[®] Russian exam grades and placement recommendations.

Friends School Prototype AP[®] Russian Exam grades and placement recommendations

Prototype AP Grade	Friends School Results (2006-2013) (N-54)	Friends School Results (2014-2016) (N-32)	Friends School Results (2006-2016) (N-85)	Recommended College Placement
2	0 (0%)	1 (3.1%)	1 (1.2%)	2 nd semester, first-year
3	15 (27.8%)	0 (0%)	15 (17.6%)	1 st semester, second-year
4	30 (55.6%)	21 (65.6%)	53 (62.4%)	2 nd semester, second-year
5	7 (12.7%)	9 (28.1%)	16 (18.8%)	1 st semester, third-year

Why is reading proficiency lower? And what needs to be done?

It is NOT because, they have:

1. **inadequate skills for reading** (knowledge about how to “attack” a text, morphological competence)
2. **Inadequate practice reading** (news articles, cultural texts)

It IS because, they have:

1. **inadequate exposure to all intermediate lexical domains** (issue of vocabulary scope vs. depth) (need to cover more intermediate topics)
2. **Inadequate exposure to authentic reading of the genre of “intermediate” level target texts** (announcements, advertisements) (rather than news articles and cultural texts) (at the intermediate level we have been focused on expressive rather than receptive language development)

What needs to be done to increase reading proficiency?

Dilemma: lack of time to do it all throughout the curriculum.

- **Lack of desire to compromise on oral proficiency development** (focus on presentational speaking on relevant to ME themes in relevant contexts) to provide time for exposure to a greater variety of intermediate lexical topics throughout the curriculum.
- **Student interest is in more sophisticated cultural topics senior year** (*My Perestroika*, discussing films, reading articles from the press of personal interest or on cultural topics of interest). Including more reading on “random” everyday life topics and particularly intermediate level genres (announcements, advertisements) feels like a step backwards and an inauthentic task.

Possible Solutions

- 1. Accept that students have a lot to gain by taking an intermediate level (second-year) college course** in order to develop a broader base of intermediate level vocabulary and exposure to more authentic texts (language proficiency development as a winding road). **Counsel students to see the pros of this.** (Advice from alums about program and curricular decisions). Limited success of this approach (80% of students take college Russian, 50% drop after a year)
- 2. Spend the final quarter senior year prior to the Prototype AP® Russian exam doing readings and listening** from *Golosa* (Давайте почитаем/ давайте послушаем sections) and then through current online sources both to expand the intermediate lexical base, to give students additional practice reading authentic sources on a wider variety of intermediate topics, and as a general review of intermediate topics. Supplement with individual speaking conferences.

Concluding Suggestions for Pre-College Teachers

- **Teach to high school students, but be aware of the content covered by college students** and incorporate that content into your program in a dynamic and exciting way that meets local conditions. (know current textbooks)
- **Use a textbook** (with major excursions away from it – pre-college teachers have the privilege of time) (Textbook provides: Balance - in skill development, in modes of communication, structural control and proficiency; Provides- scaffolding, spiraling, model language)
- **Participate in your state/regional Olympiada and focus on language development for performance**
- **Learn more about the Prototype AP[®] Russian Language and Culture Exam** (recently endorsed by The College Board[®] and advertised as NEWL[™] Russian [the National Examinations in World Languages]). Attend a two-day professional development seminar (Feb. 11-12, 2017) at American Councils to gain an understanding of the core design and content of the NEWL[™] assessment exams (register by January 31, 2017 for early bird rate at <https://www.americancouncils.org/services/testing-and-assessment/NEWL/Professional-Development-Seminar>)
- **Administer the NEWL[™] Russian (Prototype AP Russian) exam**
- **Use the language proficiency subset scores for feedback and curricular design and revision.**

Concluding Suggestions for Post-Secondary

- **Increase awareness re: of the Prototype AP[®] Russian Language and Culture Exam (NEWL[™]Russian)**
(<https://www.americancouncils.org/services/testing-and-assessment/newl/russian>)
- **Trust the validity and reliability of the exam for college placement purposes**
(Marshall, Camelot. “Examining the Validity of the 2010 Prototype AP Russian Exam through a College Comparability Study.” Russian Language Journal / Русский Язык, vol. 60, 2010, pp. 317–329. www.jstor.org/stable/43669190 ; Marshall, C. (2009). The Online Prototype APR Russian Examination: An Evaluation of Its Reliability and Validity, in Mnemosynon: Studies on Language and Culture in the Russophone World, Publishing Company: Azbukovnik, Moscow.)
- **Review proficiency scores earned in the various subsets of the exam** in order to better understand incoming students’ strengths and weaknesses.
- **Do departmental proficiency testing** to better understand your own proficiency targets and outcomes and where pre-college students fit in.
- **If you don’t accept the recommended placement, have a valid reason** regarding your program that you can communicate and a positive vision for continued study for an incoming student that validates the years of experience that they already have with the language.

Final Queries for Post-Secondary

Russian is a critical need language. For limited professional proficiency one needs Advanced language skills.

How successful is your department at taking non-heritage students who start at zero to Advanced? Wouldn't it be easier if you met the high school students where they are, rather than asking them to start over to "fill in the holes"? Many, even with holes, are at least Intermediate-Low, and therefore appropriate for placement above first-year.

1291 pre-college Russian students from 40 pre-college Russian programs and 50 teachers across the country participated in the National Russian Essay Contest last year. How many of these students are in your program? How many were discouraged by low placement? How many will continue beyond one year of study?

Questions?