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Oral History in the Russian Language Curriculum:
A Transformative Learning Experience

I will present a theoretical framework for the development and implementation of oral history interviews in the Russian language curriculum, connecting this framework to the World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning, the Proficiency Guidelines, and the Liberal Education and America's Promise Program of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. I will demonstrate how oral history interview activities at each level of the curriculum address all five of the world-readiness standards (communication, culture, comparisons, connections, and communities), and show how such activities match the liberal arts learning goals of the LEAP program of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. In that context, I will demonstrate how the Russian language curriculum can serve the larger liberal arts curriculum. I will argue that in accordance with the theory of significant learning (L. Dee Fink) the human connection of the oral history activity makes this learning experience transformative. Ultimately, I argue that the addition of oral history activities to the Russian language curriculum positions a language program in the center of the liberal arts enterprise and helps increase enrollments and enhance retention from year to year.