Title: Teaching Elementary Czech with Distance Learning Technology
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Abstract:
In academic year 2017-2018, Czech language instruction at Columbia University was extended to students at Cornell University for the first time through the Shared Course Initiative (SCI), which enables shared instruction of less commonly taught languages across the campuses of Columbia, Cornell and Yale University through the use of high-definition video-conferencing technology. The inaugural year of the Czech language's inclusion in the SCI was a relatively modest experiment, with only a single Cornell student joining the elementary Czech language class that I teach at Columbia in three 75-minute sessions per week. Even as such, shifting to the SCI format forced me to rethink almost everything I do in the classroom for elementary Czech. In this presentation, I describe the process of my adaptation to the new teaching environment and highlight the most notable changes in teaching methodology that the new format forced me to make. I comment on how adjustments made by necessity in the distance learning classroom suggested ways I could enhance my teaching in the conventional classroom. Finally, I discuss some further improvements I hope to make in my second year of teaching elementary Czech through the SCI, this time with at least two students from Cornell joining the class.