

The Flagship Exchange: Professional Language

Date	July 13, 2022
Panelists	Ebrahim Bamanger , Teaching Assistant and Instructional Designer at the Arabic Flagship Program at Indiana University Xiaoyan Hu , Academic Director of the Chinese Flagship Program at the University of Rhode Island Alexandra Shapiro , Lecturer of Russian at the Russian Flagship Program at the University of Georgia
Moderators	Julio C Rodriguez, Molly Godwin-Jones
Notes & Thoughts	Tech Center Team

Thoughts

A synopsis of some of the thoughts and further questions this panel raised:

1. In several instances, professional language is integrated in multiple courses in a program's curriculum, not just one course. Courses can either focus completely on one area of professional language, such as URI's Green Energy course, or be an overview of different domains of professional language, such as UGA's two-semester professional language courses. Sometimes students are encouraged to enroll in self-study courses, where they can explore a topic in more depth with a professional.
2. Bringing in specialists to discuss their expertise can help introduce professional language into the classroom. Another option instead of specialists is conversational partners who share students' interests—the connection at the student level can be a benefit.
3. PBLL presents opportunities for practicing professional language. Presentations are also a good way to give students the chance to showcase their knowledge of professional language (recording these presentations can be beneficial so that students can listen to it as many times as needed). A live Q&A may be more difficult for students, but also gives them the opportunity to practice their professional language skills.
4. Some challenges associated with teaching professional language include instructor knowledge of the content area, student engagement, and bureaucratic issues around sharing class materials among institutions.

Notes

What are some ways your program incorporates professional language into the curriculum?

URI Chinese – Thank you for holding this event. Today is our second time this week, meeting with our colleagues from Hawaii. While we can't be there in person, it's great to share resources and information with all our programs like this. Can we share our screen?



LSP Courses and Research Project at URI

1. CHN231,232, 233: Chinese culture through Calligraphy, Tai Chi and Calisthenics
2. CHN411, 412 Advanced Chinese for Chinese Flagship Program I & II (covers media Chinese, classical Chinese and Chinese literature.
3. CHN413 Advanced Technical Chinese (Green Energy)
4. CHN401 Topics in Chinese Civilization and Culture (current topic, business Chinese)
5. CHN421, 422 Modern Chinese Literature I & II
6. CHN485, 486 Seminar on Chinese Studies I & II
7. Domain Research Project (Directed Study/Senior Honors Project) (4th year Chinese)
8. Chinese major requires 6 credits Asian culture courses
9. Politics in China (Political Science course with a Chinese version)

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND Chinese Language Flagship Program

URI Chinese – At URI, we have cultural and professional language courses open to all students, as well as specific ones for Flagship students. We also have content courses taught in other departments, such as *Politics in China*; there's an English version and a Chinese version of this course. In cases like this, Flagship students are able to take content courses in Chinese relevant to their second major. That's one way we do this at URI, and we're trying to propose other courses to meet students' needs.

UGA Russian – I won't cover the program in general, but mainly focus on my course, let me share my screen:

Modules

- Economics
- Journalism
- Food, Cuisines, and Cooking
- Law and Human Rights
- Theater and Cinema

Tuesday, February 2, 20XX

Sample Footer Text

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UGA Russian – My course is part of a series. The first course, *Tutorial in Professional Russian*, is taught by my colleague, Olga Thomason. It covers topics like Environmental Protection, Mass Media, and International Relations (a majority of our students are International Relations majors). I teach the second course in the series, where we cover topics like Economics, Journalism, Food and Cuisine. This is not professional language in the strictest sense, but it's specific language students end up needing when they go to Russia (if they go to Russia), as well as Law, Human Rights, Theater and Cinema. I treat the topic of professional language somewhat broadly, but it turns out to be useful, all these topics do, for the students. Going back to previous courses, we do speak about Food and Cuisine in first and second year, but this is a deeper dive; for example in this course we talk about vegetarianism and cultural attitudes. Whereas in first year, students talk about, 'What's your favorite food?', at this level we talk about how to make it, how to cook it, the specialized vocabulary they need for that.

At this point, we're just talking about the courses we have, and not about specific approaches, right?

Tech Center – Yes, we wanted to know more about the context, so this is great. Do you know if the program offers additional courses? These courses you've described sound almost like liberal arts education in one course. Are there other content courses in the target language?

UGA Russian – Both these courses belong to the *Tutorial in Professional Russian* series, which has a modular system. Over the course of the year, there are 10 topics that students look into, but both my colleague and I bring in other resources, like news presentations, that add to the topics students discuss.

Each student also has to participate in the [Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities Conference](#) (CURO), and give a presentation on a topic they choose, usually related to their studies in their second major, or in their other classes. That's always something that's parallel to their work in the course.

Tech Center – If I'm correct, this is for all students, not just business students in the Flagship Program, right? I ask because at the Tech Center, we don't teach classes, and curriculum integration at the different programs can be almost like a black box for us, so this is very informative.

UGA Russian – Right, this is for all students.

CHAT

Victoria Hasko (UGA)

CURO conference that Alexandra referred to is a UGA Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities Conference: <https://curo.uga.edu/>. Students present on professional topics in their majors; and we have a conference stream entirely in Russian for Flagship students

What have been some successful activities or practices for helping students acquire professional language that you think worked very well?

UGA Russian – Bringing in professionals from outside has been a great success. We bring in people from STEM, often from campus, but sometimes from outside, famous journalists who Zoom in from Russia to talk about what they do. They'll give an introduction and talk about their work, and then answer questions from students. Students always enjoy that, and when something changes their life trajectory they turn to journalism because they've seen how important this field can be.

Having conversation partners also helps. We try to tailor it for students where possible. We had a music student who we paired up with a music student in Russia. We've had students in STEM fields do internships at UGA. We can do that on an educational level, outside class time. During the coursework, everybody has to be at least introduced to as many professional fields as possible, and have an opportunity to practice the relevant language.

Tech Center – One thing before Xiaoyan tells us more about URI, you mentioned STEM internships, how are those set up, what is the role of language in those internships, could you describe?

UGA Russian – We were lucky to have a chemistry professor who is a Russian speaker, who had a lab on campus. Dr. Hasko can correct me if I'm wrong, but one of our students had an opportunity to work in the lab for a while, using Russian in that context, and that was a lucky coincidence.

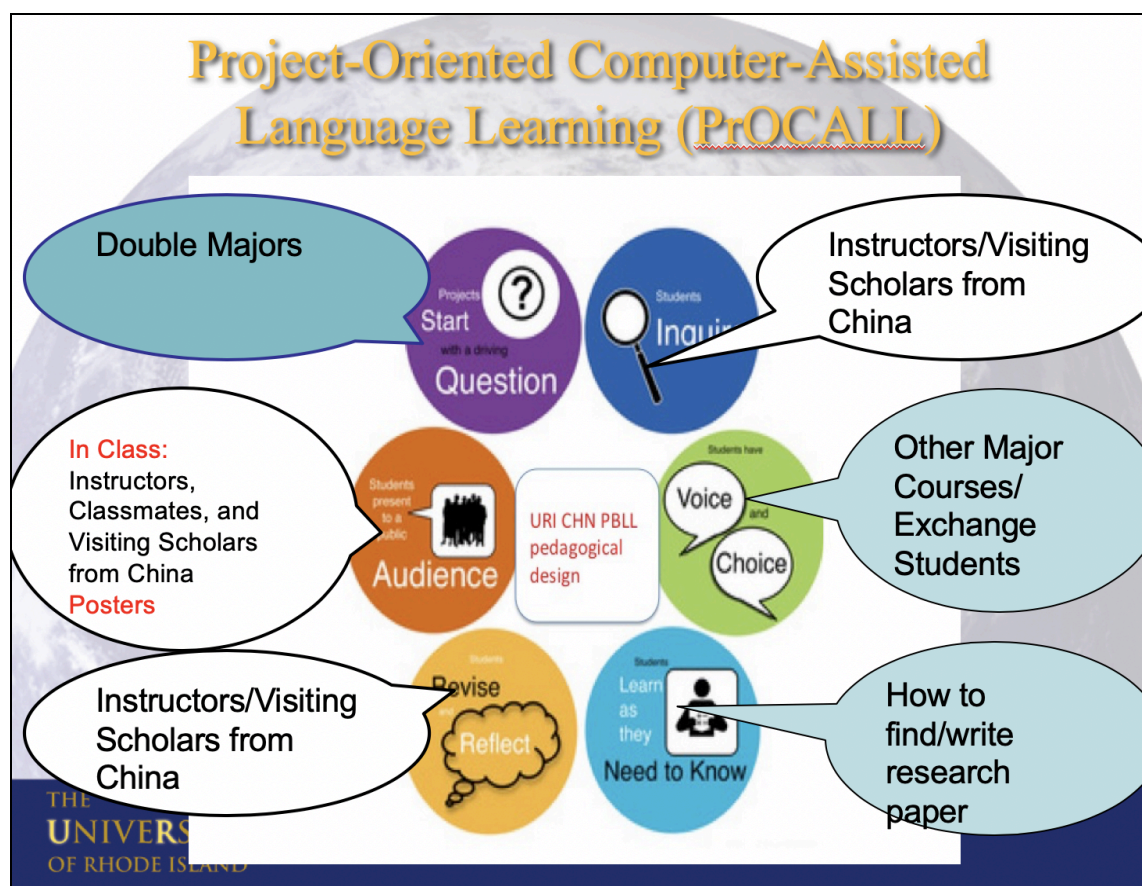
Tech Center – In terms of the program, does the program give credit?

UGA Russian – In self-study, when it's not a course, students can get credit for self-study.

UGA Russian Director – Students have the opportunity to register for a self study course. Sometimes students prefer an informal arrangement, and are mentored. In those cases we request funds to reimburse our colleagues, for their time and expertise, to show our colleagues respect, it's very important.

URI Chinese – I want to echo both Victoria and Alexandra's ideas: at URI we have specific courses for our students. For example, for our STEM students, we require our students to participate in the Green Ideas Professional Chinese Simulation. We helped develop it with the University of Hawaii and University of Oregon; we are so lucky to participate. We have a green engineering professor who works with us on this, this is working really well. And Chinese 401 is becoming a business Chinese class, working with our Tech Center colleagues.

At the same time, we also have project-oriented computer-assisted language learning, ProCALL:



We work with our instructors and visiting scholars if possible to do a research project because we understand if students have different majors, we cannot provide them as many courses as they ask. Students are working with tutors one-on-one, and presenting during a one-year project. It's 20% of the course grade. This is part of domain training for Capstone year in Taiwan.

CHAT

Stephen Tschudi (Tech Center)

Q: How can alumni experiences inform FS curricula in terms of professional language learning? Is there already a pathway for this?

Tech Center – In terms of alumni integration into Flagship activities, are there activities that have included that?

URI Chinese – We are trying, but we don't already have a pathway. But students have asked. Normally students graduate and they're too busy to reconnect. During orientation week before the semester, every year at the beginning of September we invite alumni back, and some attend, including two students who did internships in

mainland China: one who stayed after Capstone and one who came back to work in the US. I've found, curriculum-wise, we're trying to connect, not always very successfully, but if we're in touch with alumni who have the same major as some of the students, and they're engaged, it's easier, we can connect them. But that's an area we want to keep working on.

UGA Russian – I don't think we had anyone visit our class, but we've had students who came back for career days and special Flagship events for the whole program. It wasn't professional language oriented, just what we can offer as a program. We also have presentations that students decide at the beginning of the course, related to their other major or research. Another opportunity our course offers is talking to Russian students, like from Moscow State University. We try to give students opportunities to speak the language and discuss their professional interests. We don't record them, so I can't speak to the balance of everyday versus professional language, but they do have to report back about it, so there's that.

Tech Center – Those conversations are intimidating enough, without recording it.

UGA Russian – Especially with the current climate.

Tech Center – The idea you mentioned, like the UGA student who is studying music matched with a student studying music in Russia, that's kind of ideal because it's student to student.

UGA Russian – Getting students to ask for those opportunities is a challenge. We offer it to students who we know need it. For example, if someone is unable to take the course at a higher level, but needs to keep up. Sometimes it's someone eager, who wants to do more. But we're looking for a way to encourage everyone to ask for these opportunities.

What are some of the challenges of integrating professional language in the curriculum, and how does your program address them?

URI Chinese – I love challenges, thank you. The first thing is we're creating global professionals, which means a high proficiency level, and we facilitate our students' progress from Intermediate to Advanced level, but that move from the Advanced level to being ready for a working environment is never easy. We have a lot of experts here, but a lot of students might think this is boring. From their perspective, it's not easy, it's a lot of work, especially enough getting communicative practice. And instructors may need more experience, knowledge, background to request these topics. And course enrollment may be low, so the school doesn't always want to support these courses. I complained a little bit, because I realized how these courses often go underappreciated, if I can use that word. From our Tech Center,

maybe we should work together. Each institution may have limited resources, but together we can create courses online, in different content areas, so students from different programs can learn about that material, and then do more communicative activities in class. We can collaborate together, and collaborative efforts are always better than working alone trying to cover ten subjects.

Tech Center – How does the relationship work with the energy course you mentioned, is the course taught from University of Oregon?

URI Chinese – It's taught from URI, but pedagogically, the professor at Oregon advised the professor at URI, because the Oregon professor was an Engineering professor. I went through all that information and taught some of it, it's about green energy like solar, and... I don't even know how to say this in English, only in Chinese!

Tech Center – That's the challenge with professional language!

URI Chinese – And discussion topics, like why do people choose to use or not use green energy. The professor recorded his talks and I transferred them into our class. It's a joint effort. Right now it's only URI students. We thought about opening it to other institutions, but there are questions with credit transfers and other bureaucratic concerns.

CHAT

Stephen Tschudi (Tech Center)

I think Hu laoshi just touched on a key mechanism... how transfer takes place from content-domain courses into language courses. In the instance she cited, she was the key person. As a skilled language teaching professional, Hu laoshi was able to make that transfer to the students' benefit. If we could bottle that magic (the skills Hu laoshi brought to bear in making the transfer happen) we could provide some valuable professional development for other teachers.

Tech Center – This relates to sharing resources, this is something we should explore. The energy course is very specific, imagine each Chinese program trying to do something similar. It would be more efficient to share the course from URI.

UGA Russian – Student engagement is one of the challenges. Sharing resources can help, so there's somewhere outside the course where they can practice. For example, I create Quizlets that they can use outside class, that they don't need me for, and then in class they can work on tasks together. Sharing resources would be nice, because it's challenging to come up with this stuff on our own, especially when it's a field outside our expertise.

Tech Center – we have a [resources page](#) where we are gathering resources we have created or collaborated on, including tutoring and culture resources.

Speaking of challenges, you were talking about the difficulty of sharing credits, for example, but in terms of how technology can help us share these things, how does your program use technology to help students gain access to professional language?

URI Chinese – The Tech Center is the platform for everyone to be on the same page. I think at least in the Chinese Flagship community, we use the language proficiency level, but we all know ACTFL Advanced proficiency level is still far away from professional level language. But we've learned methods from the Tech Center, like Project-Based Language Learning (PBLL), which we can take and incorporate in our courses in a flexible way. I'm not sure if these are open to the public. Technology was definitely noticed during the pandemic, and it's still a way for us to collaborate and share resources, so every school doesn't have to develop its own stuff. Everybody learns from everybody, and gets a piece, ten percent or eighty percent, depending on curricular capacity. We're learning so much from the Tech Center, thank you. It's a question of trying to put the resources together, which in itself is always a challenge.

CHAT

Stephen Tschudi (Tech Center)

In Project-Based Learning (PBL), the use of professional standards and practices is stressed. For example, if learners are making a video as a project, a skilled PBL teacher will direct the learners to resources that show "how the pros do it." So in this sense, PBL comes with a built-in orientation toward professional language and professional skills.

Tech Center – In the chat, Stephen mentioned PBLL and the URI connection. It has to do with professional language, in the sense that if students have projects that they can use professional language in, in the same sense you can have 5 students who are pursuing different professional areas. Do you have any insights into that, into connections between PBLL and professional language?

URI Chinese – It's a great question, about PBLL and professional language. From the Annual Meeting it looks like most programs are starting to use PBLL, it's one of the possible ways to actually prepare our students for professional working environments. My observation is that it depends on the students' proficiency level. And especially when it comes to reading, the second major is also a factor. STEM majors are comparatively more boring, but it's also easier for them to handle the professional level vocabulary or communicate their skills. For humanities majors, these can be even more difficult to handle. With PBLL, students find it really helpful, but at the

same time it depends on the students, their majors and proficiency levels, as well as the topics and who they work with. Sometimes you have no clue; you thought it was a good fit and it didn't work out. And sometimes it's the opposite. But for the model, it's one of the most economical ways for us to train students.

UGA Russian – In our case, projects are the way we have the finals set up in the course, and the equality comes in because there are only 5 modules, 5 topics we discuss. Students are bound by those, and maybe everyone is not equally prepared to listen to a presentation on that topic, but they've had some work and exposure to that topic. The other thing I introduced during the pandemic was that students had to record their presentations, PowerPoint with voiceover or they could use other programs. So, students could listen as many times as they needed to understand it. And then after they watched all the presentations they had discussions, rubrics, questions they answered while they were listening, so it wasn't sprung on them in the same way as when it was in person. They're all exposed to the general topics the presentations are on, but the presentations are usually quite specific. So the recording is helpful, and then they have a spontaneous discussion, so it's not like everything is prerecorded.

Tech Center – Are their presentations to an external audience, or to the class?

UGA Russian – They're to the class. Students have a week to watch them and fill out the rubrics, and then there are two classes dedicated to the discussion, in pairs, so everyone gets to talk about each topic. They switch pairs; it reminds me of the poster model at a conference, where they talk about their presentation to multiple people. The STEM research they present to CURO; that presentation is limited to the professors, graduate students, tutors, it's the whole program, but limited to UGA, no outside audience.

Tech Center – How long are the presentations?

UGA Russian – Usually ten minutes, sometimes fifteen, they look like professional presentations at a conference. Some actually presented a thesis, their method, results, I was personally very impressed with the topics they chose, the way they presented. It looked very professional. The thing we have to work on is the spontaneous question and answer. We need to figure out how to do that in class before we have the presentations. The presentations in my class usually happen after. The CURO presentations happen in April, then the presentations and discussion in my class happen in May. The question is how to get the preparation in beforehand, because it would be helpful for them to get that practice with spontaneous Q&As before the conference.

Tech Center – For the Q&A, do I understand correctly that it's more challenging?

UGA Russian - Sometimes students don't understand the question, so their answer is off. Sometimes there's stage fright; the presentation has been practiced, but questions throw them off a little bit.

Tech Center – Yes, it's contextualized but it's extemporaneous. There could be value in sharing these presentations across programs. Stephen has worked in that area, using student materials as input for language learning. That could be an interesting direction to pursue.

UGA Russian – If students give permission, that could be great, because some were really outstanding, and could serve as a great example.

Tech Center – The Tech Center could help, Molly is working on the [Video Project](#). We have forms to get student consent to share their presentations. Maybe something to take into account for next year.

UGA Russian – In my lower level courses, students do cultural presentations and I ask permission to post those as examples for future generations, but it would be nice to share those to programs more generally. One thing that would be helpful would be a tutorial on how to use technology to record presentations with voiceover. There are so many programs I don't know about, that you may be more exposed to. If there were one place they could go to find programs to record themselves that would be great.

CHAT

Susan Kresin (UCLA)

It would be fabulous to have that in the target language as a language exercise!

Tech Center – It can be tricky all the same because students come up with big files that can't be uploaded.

UGA Russian – We rely on YouTube a lot and I don't think that's the safest way to share their work.

Tech Center – It depends. At the Tech Center, we have YouTube and [Vimeo](#), and in Vimeo you can password-protect videos, so that can be useful. And there's a consent form that students sign at the beginning. The problem with consent is that students may say later, "Oh I didn't imagine this was the extent of the consent I was giving!" So it's important to make it clear how it's going to be used and published.

CHAT

Stephen Tschudi (Tech Center)

“Professional-level language” is a key concept in the Flagship. How much has the term been unpacked at the level of FS collectively (versus individual programs’ own definitions)? For example, is it broken out into content-area knowledge vs workplace interactions, functions in spoken vs written channels, formal presentations vs water cooler chat? How to map this large concept?

In your program, how does tutoring help students learn/practice professional language?

IU Arabic – In the tutoring program at the Indiana Arabic Flagship Program, we have materials for tutors to work with students every week. There are scenarios, and at the beginning of every scenario, there’s a classification for the level of language that students should use. For example, the student is an expert invited to deliver a speech about immigration to Europe. The language is Modern Standard Arabic. Versus the student has traveled to Morocco and has to rent an apartment, where the language would be the Moroccan dialect, so we always specify the level of language. In the Arabic Flagship, there are courses where students only use Modern Standard Arabic, professional language in specific areas. We have an advanced course in Arabic and there are two content courses, they are specific for student needs, like literature, hospitality, one of the project-based courses delivered by Dr. Attia. They do PBLL, they give presentations and there are criteria and rubrics to follow.

At Middlebury, all the levels study Modern Standard Arabic this year. They don’t teach the dialect, which is a change; they feel it’s easy to go from formal to dialect, rather than teaching and confusing the student with the dialect. There are challenges we discuss. Students ask why we study a language that is limited. We explain that it is easy to make a shift. I am Yemeni, and Dr. Attia is Egyptian, but we can meet in the middle with Modern Standard Arabic. There are weekly clubs to study the different dialects, where we explain the change from the standard that leads to this dialectal word. They give two presentations: at the beginning there is one presentation, and in 3 weeks they’ll give another. At the advanced level, they present on political issues like the war in Ukraine, or Biden’s visit to the Middle East. They take the role of a TV presenter who is expected to present in Modern Standard Arabic, rather than the dialect.

Tech Center – You mentioned a couple of courses. Naiyi has been working on that [Moroccan Darija course](#) that is shared among Arabic programs. I was thinking of

models of language for specific purposes (LSP). The Moroccan course is not LSP, it's a dialect course. There's a similar one for Russian, on the Kazakh language.

IU Arabic – I know that at IU, they have started courses in Egyptian and Shami dialect, spoken in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan. This year they started the Moroccan dialect course, and students know they study in Morocco, so there's a two credit course, where they achieve those goals and get some credits as well. There are also Arabic media courses, which require specialized language.

Tech Center – I think everyone [in Arabic Flagship] has to take the Moroccan course. It's an example of a resource created by one Flagship, in this case University of Arizona, which is shared to all Flagships. We could do something similar with content courses, as well. For example, Xiaoyan was mentioning the Green Energy course, taught at URI, and Xiaoyan knows it works well, so if we made courses like that available, and students could choose whether to take Green Energy in Chinese or Pre-Med Chinese, that could be a good model. Similar to the Arabic course. It would be great to be able to share content courses the same way.

And in the chat, I see Susan Kresin also mentioned it would be great to be able to share a video on how to record presentations with voiceover, in the target language.

UGA Russian – If we had a depository of presentation videos, we could create exercises on those. It could be a teaching resource, not just for people to brag, but we could build exercises that were professionally oriented. If someone's already done the work for us, we could build on it.

Tech Center – If you'd like to look at videos, take a look at the [Video Project](#). They're all at a higher level. I think we could do something like that, if students do give permission. Storage is not a problem.

CHAT

Victoria Hasko (UGA)

Some of our instructors works with VEO; we have accounts for all students

CHAT

Xiaoyan Hu (URI)

We use flipgrid which can be password protected

UGA Russian – It might also be important to annotate them correctly, so people who don't know those students can find something relevant to their course.

Tech Center – Absolutely. Well, thank you so much to all our panelists for spending some time with us today. I think we're past the time. Thank you everybody, we hope to be in touch, this is a great motivation for us to do more with professional language.

Resources and References

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