

Jelena Williams-Pozdnjakova

Russian Language Tutor

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Contact details

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Qualifications

MA, Russian Language and Russian Literature Tartu University, Estonia (part of Soviet Union at time of degree)

Biography

Jelena qualified from Tartu University in 1977, and spent over twenty years teaching in Estonia (both before and after independence from the Soviet Union in 1991). During this time, she was a Russian Language Lecturer at Tallinn Teaching University and Tallinn Social Studies University.

Additionally, from 1993, she was involved in the establishment of the organisation responsible for the teaching of Russian to all Estonian schoolchildren following independence from the Soviet Union, and the creation of a Russian language syllabus for all Estonian secondary schools and colleges. In 1995 she became Senior Examiner, responsible for the preparation and marking of examinations sat by students at all colleges throughout Estonia. Part of this role involved the making of a video to be sent to all teachers in Estonia, giving guidance as to the correct methods to be used in the marking of exams.

As well as her work in Estonia, Jelena has also been invited by Universities in Sweden and Denmark to teach intensive Russian language courses during the summer holidays.

Teaching

Jelena is responsible for the teaching of Russian Language at all levels, from ab initio to postgraduate, with particular emphasis on Oral Russian. Additionally, Jelena designed a Business Russian module which she has taught successfully to Final Year students since 2004. This is a very popular module, which helps to prepare students for life after University in a business environment, working for or with Russian organisations.

Jelena's other main responsibility is as Year Abroad Tutor, being responsible for preparing all documentation for students who will spend the third year of their course in Russia, maintaining contact with students whilst they are in Russia (including two pastoral visits to check on progress), preparing and monitoring students during the year as they complete their Year Abroad Project, and helping to solve any problems that they might have whilst away.

Research

Research and academic interests

Jelena's main area of interest has always been the methodology of teaching Russian language to foreign students.

She has extensively studied the Galina Kitaygorodskaya method of intensive language teaching for foreign students. Professor Kitaygorodskaya is the leading Russian language specialist at Moscow State University, and her methods of teaching Russian to foreign students are held in the highest regard. Jelena has attended several courses in Moscow, to enable her to keep up to date with the latest developments in this method of teaching.

These methods of teaching Russian are also effective when used in short, intensive courses. These courses are proven to be the best way of offering a basic knowledge to students without any previous exposure to Russian (for example businesses that win important contracts with Russia, or Russian speaking countries, where there is a need to train one or more staff member, increasing the company's credibility as a result). Jelena is an expert in offering such training using these methods.

Jelena has also attended regular training courses at Moscow Pushkin Institute, which specialises in the methodology of teaching Russian language to foreign students.

Other activities

Other professional appointments

- Co-Director, Russian Language Undergraduate Services (a Registered Charity, based in London, the purpose of which is to send students to Russia for their Year Abroad)
- Member of the Higher Education Authority

Publications

Pozdnjakova, J (1992) "Two Way Russian English course for beginners" October Publishing Company, Tallin

