Chapter 5

HLTP #5: Focusing on Cultural Products, Practices, and Perspectives in a Dialogic Context

Teachers and learners must be aware of how language instruction can be integrated with culture in ways that go beyond simply describing behaviors, learning about cultural customs, and memorizing historical facts.

Enabling learners to reflect on and analyze the cultures of target language communities is one of the primary goals of language instruction. To this end, teachers need to be able to engage learners in thoughtful conversations during which they are guided to make cultural observations, hypothesize about and interpret cultural meanings, and compare and contrast cultural perspectives that are unlike their own. As Cutshall (2012, p. 32) states, "in the best language education programs today, the study of another language is synonymous with the study of other cultures." From the perspective of the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2015), to address the Cultures goal area, teachers must engage learners in target language-based investigations and explanations of cultural *products* and *practices* and their relationship to the cultural *perspectives* of the languages studied. The HLTP in this chapter is intended to provide a framework to support this goal.

The study of culture, as a topic in its own right, is often typically reserved for upper-level classes in which students are believed to have the level of language ability to handle critical cultural discussions. As a result, culture instruction for elementary-level learners is reduced to lessons that merely display **cultural *products*** (e.g., foods, monuments, currency, texts) or provide anecdotal information about **cultural *practices*** (e.g., greeting protocols, holiday celebrations, sporting events). This is not to dismiss the importance of introducing learners to various cultural products and practices that are different from their own. What this exclusive emphasis on the teaching of random cultural products and practices produces, however, is a view of culture as tourism or as behaviors that are strange, incomprehensible, or weird. An alternative to this limited approach to culture instruction is to view the study of cultural products and practices as the starting point for students to explore and interpret the deeper meanings of culture as a system of shared values and beliefs, i.e., **cultural *perspectives*.** In this way, culture teaching is directly related to reflection on and analysis of the worldviews, ways of interacting and speaking, and the historical and local circumstances of speakers of other languages.

In this chapter, the HLTP that will be detailed and deconstructed will enable teachers to explore the relationship of cultural products and practices to cultural perspectives with their classes in comprehensible target-language interactions (see Chapter 1) in the discourse community that they have created (see Chapter 2). Using the *IMAGE Model for Exploring Cultural Perspectives*, teachers will be able to conduct dialogic interactions that scaffold (see Chapters 4 and 6) learners' cultural observations and lead them to well-reasoned

conclusions about the deeper social and historical meanings of culture. This HLTP is applicable to all levels of instruction and is ultimately aimed at challenging stereotypical and negative views of culture that adolescent learners often bring to the task of learning new languages and cultures.

ACTFL/CAEP Standards addressed: #2a, 2b; 3a; 4a, 4b, 4c

Research and Theory Supporting the Practice

Conceptualizing Culture

The HLTP presented in this chapter is based on the concept of **culture as a system** of dispositions, values, actions, and assumptions that are located and reflected in various cultural products and practices—including communicative practices—of groups of people in sociocultural and historical contexts at particular moments in times and for specific social purposes (as discussed in Hall, 2012, and based on the work of Duranti, 1997, and Bhabba, 1994). This view contrasts sharply with the more traditional notion of culture as a fixed and stable body of knowledge shared by all members of groups living within the same geographical boundaries. As Hall points out, "culture is not located in an individual mind but in activity" (2012, p. 17). From this perspective, culture is not a universal property of nationalities but a dynamic system of beliefs, values, and worldviews that emerge in and are shaped by the shared social practices and products of a group or groups of individuals. To reflect on, analyze, and interpret culture requires uncovering, therefore, the *relationship* between the activities that people do, such as the products that they produce and use and the practices in which they engage, and the reasons for doing them. Examining this relationship leads to an understanding of cultural perspectives, that is, meanings, attitudes, values, beliefs, and concepts that underlie the cultural practices and products of a groups of individuals that are affiliated by a shared worldview.

Are Language and Culture Really Connected in Instruction?

It is often said that language and culture are intimately connected and one cannot be known without the other. However, as frequently as this claim is made, language and culture instruction is most often conducted as two separate instructional tasks with language reduced to the study of linguistic forms and functions, and culture reduced to factual knowledge about target language countries, periodic anecdotes from the teacher, or displays of cultural artifacts (Galloway, 1985). This separation of language and culture instruction is documented in a revealing study conducted by Kramsch (2012). In this study, Kramsch observed and interviewed an experienced German teacher and her students during and after a lesson based on a short authentic autobiographical account written for children on the bombing of Dresden. Prompts following the text asked teacher and students to engage in an interpretive discussion about the historical significance of the text, the symbolic value of the language used, and the author's cultural perspective reflected in his descriptions of the event.

Kramsch's analysis of the discussion and follow-up interviews with teacher and students revealed that, for this particular class, neither students nor teacher understood the language classroom to be a place where instruction engages the learners in the interpretive process of examining the values, symbols, and perspectives embodied in cultural products and practice, in this specific case the language and purpose of the authentic text, that is, the text as both product and practice. Rather, the teacher expressed the attitude that she

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had been trained to be only a facilitator of student talk and not as one who helps learners to understand the cultural values and authorial perspectives embodied in texts and other cultural products and practices. The students also seemed to believe that learning a language was totally distinct from learning about the culture of the speakers of that language. The students expressed the belief that the language instructor's role was to teach language forms and skills and their professors' role in other academic subject matter courses was to teach content. Although this is only one study, there is a great deal of anecdotal evidence that these beliefs about the learning of language and culture by both teachers and learners appear to be pervasive in language classrooms.

This traditional view underlying the relationship between language and culture underscores the fundamental importance of this HLTP to language instruction and the need to make teachers and learners aware of how language instruction can be integrated with culture in ways that go beyond simply describing behaviors, learning cultural customs, and memorizing historical facts (Kramsch, 2012).

Goals and Objectives for Integrating Language and Culture

Byram (1997, 2008) argues that an important goal of integrating culture instruction with language learning is to develop **cultural know-how** in learners, that is the ability to analyze, understand, and participate in cultures unlike their own. Among several features of know-how that he presents, three features are particularly relevant to the goals of this HLTP: (1) knowing *how to be and feel* when faced with cultures unlike one's own, (2) knowing *how to understand* cultural differences, and (3) knowing *how to engage* the self with cultures in contact. Knowing *how to be and feel* in cross-cultural situations involves a learner's disposition about cultural differences and includes curiosity, openness, and sensitivity to the perspective of others. Knowing *how to understand* cultures requires the knowledge and skill to observe, identify, interpret, and analyze cultural patterns, leading to an acceptance of difference where potential sources of misunderstanding, or even conflict, might occur. Finally, knowing *how to engage* the self with cultures requires learners to be committed to evaluating critically and rationally their own cultural perspectives compared to those of other sociocultural groups.

To achieve these goals, Schulz (2007) synthesizes various approaches to culture instruction, including Byram's know-how schema presented above. She identifies several fundamental objectives for culture learning that should guide instruction. These objectives include understanding the sociocultural, historical, and geographical conditions that influence cultures, dispelling cross-cultural stereotypes with information and evidence, and exploring culture-specific images and culture-specific uses of language. As will be shown, the approach to integrating cultural and language instruction through images, as presented in this chapter and enacted in this HLTP, is related closely to these goals and objectives outlined by Byram and Shultz.

Considerations about the Teaching of Culture

(1) *How do I approach culture so that my students don't dismiss the target culture as being "weird"?* Students may initially express negative attitudes and stereotypes when they learn about cultural differences. It has been shown that when learners experience a new culture, either during study abroad (Oberg, 1960) or during language instruction (West & Donato, 1995), they may pass through stages of resistance before understanding and accepting certain cultural ways of being and believing. Teachers need to realize that students' negative reactions are the first stage in developing cultural

understanding. Over time and with appropriate instruction, students can learn how to approach cultural differences with openness and understanding rather than resistance and negativity. For learners to develop this positive attitude, culture instruction must assist them to reflect on, hypothesize about, and analyze meanings and beliefs from the cultural insider's point of view. In this way, the learners' initial reactions to cultural differences as weird or unnatural will be gradually replaced with the ability to analyze and understand the complexity of cultural differences and, in so doing, to develop into true global citizens.

(2) *What if my students do not have enough target language to discuss cultural topics?* Teachers often think that addressing culture as a topic of discussion can only be achieved in advanced-level classes. Elementary-level classes are often restricted to discussions of cultural topics in English, displays of cultural artifacts, or anecdotes about the teacher's latest trip to a target language country. Chapters 1 and 2 emphasized the importance of comprehensible language use, target language interactions with students, and the need to develop a classroom discourse community from the start of instruction. The principles that were introduced and explained in these two chapters also apply to the teaching of culture lessons.

Teachers must ask themselves three important questions about the use of the target language during culture instruction. First, is the culture lesson appropriate for the level of the class or are the cultural concepts being introduced too complex for learners to talk about in the target language? Whenever instructional objectives are not appropriate to the level of the class, instruction will always degenerate into the learners' first language. When this occurs, it is a clear sign that the lesson objective was not well suited for the level of the student. Second, once an appropriate cultural investigation has been decided upon, how can the language be made comprehensible to promote talk-in-interaction about culture? Students can understand more than they can produce and seemingly complex cultural topics can be mediated in ways that are clear using the language that the students already know or that can be learned in the context of the culture lesson. Third, has the lesson been analyzed carefully for the language resources that learners need to allow for target language participation in the lesson? Related to planning for language is whether the teacher has identified discourse strategies to use for providing essential content language and grammatical structures as part of the culture lesson (see Chapter 1). The framework described below is intended to address the issue of language use during culture instruction through careful language planning and scaffolding of language production.

(3) *Is it sufficient to feature a cultural point in one lesson per week?* No. Culture permeates language teaching and cannot be reduced to isolated facts presented in a linear sequence one day a week during each week of a course. Culture is dynamic and the products and practices of a culture are interconnected in such a way that isolating one culture point prevents learners from understanding how various aspects of culture are the result of a rich network of historical, geographical, and social factors. Additionally, this approach may lead to learners' negative reactions to cultural differences since the culture is presented in a way that does not address the underlying reasons and insider perspectives on the culture fact being featured in the lesson. All language instruction must be embedded in cultural contexts. Even language itself is a reflection of cultural perspectives, which are made visible in the expressions, metaphors, and ways of describing the world that are unique across cultural contexts.

(4) *Is culture sufficiently addressed if the textbook has a cultural reading in each chapter?* In the traditional paradigm of language teaching, instruction was primarily about learning how to generate accurate language forms with the occasional note about culture as a diversion from the "real work" of the class. This approach manifests itself in the use of culture capsules, or short readings that are provided in textbooks about topics such as the history, customs, literary traditions, famous people, or geography of the target language being studied, to name a few. In much the same way as devoting one day a week to culture, relying only on these readings to address culture is not sufficient to develop the ability to interpret and understand deeply the sources and reasons for certain cultural practices and products. What is more, in the hands of teachers who do not understand how to address culture instruction, these texts are often used exclusively for reading instruction. The cultural content of the text is viewed only as a means for checking reading comprehension, not as core material for cultural exploration and discussion. Certainly the types of culture readings found in textbooks are useful as a starting point for learning about culture, but they are not sufficient for teaching culture in the ways described in the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2015).

Deconstructing the Practice

The *IMAGE Model for Exploring Cultural Perspectives* in Figure 5.1, one approach to the teaching of culture, is based on (1) the work of Barnes-Karol and Broner (2010) on the use of images as a springboard to teach cultural perspectives, and (2) the work of Johnson and English (2003) on student analysis of images and texts about France to examine culture through a critical lens. The acronym *IMAGE* represent 4 steps of the model: **I**mages and **M**aking observations, **A**nalyzing additional information, **G**enerating hypotheses about cultural perspectives, and **E**xploring perspectives and reflecting further. The *IMAGE* **Model** guides the teacher through the planning stage, the enactment of the culture lesson itself, and follow-up tasks and assignments. The lesson is developed around a series of cultural images that will lead students to make cultural observations and draw conclusions. Dialogic interaction in the target language is promoted by a series of carefully scaffolded teacher questions in two categories: Fact Questions and Thought Questions. **Fact Questions** are those that ask students to make specific observations about what they see in the images, such as descriptions of settings, people, actions, and objects. **Thought questions** move the learners to a new level of analysis and require sharing opinions, hypotheses, and ideas. These two terms reflect clearly the function of these questions in the culture lesson and how the questions need to be designed based on the kind of information and ideas that learners are expected to provide at certain points in the lesson. The *IMAGE* culture lesson is structured around three major tasks that ask students to state what they *see*, what they *think*, and what they are still *wondering* about.

Deconstruction of this practice involves examining it from two perspectives: (1) planning the lesson and (2) enacting the lesson with learners in four steps, which will be explained in detail in the deconstruction section of the chapter. The deconstruction that follows will include concrete examples of ways in which novice teachers have enacted the instructional moves in the target languages they teach.[8]

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[8] These novice teachers were graduate student teaching assistants in the Department of French and Italian Languages and Literatures and the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Pittsburgh in Fall 2015.

The IMAGE Model for Exploring Cultural Perspectives

PLANNING STAGE: PREPARING FOR THE LESSON

A. <u>Who are the students?</u>

> For what course is your culture lesson designed? What year/semester of study is this course? What is the time frame for the lesson—A single class? Divided across several days? A week?

B. <u>What is the cultural content of lesson?</u>

> State the cultural product and/or practice you will show in the lesson and its/their relationship to a cultural perspective (that is, a value, belief, or meaning). What perspective(s) might your students explore? What images will you use?
>
> **Product/Practice** [Note: It is best to begin with a single product and/or practice; however, others may emanate in the lesson]:
>
> **Perspective(s):**
>
> **Images:**
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> Set 1: _____
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> Set 2: _____

Figure 5.1. The IMAGE Model for Exploring Cultural Perspectives

(Adapted from Donato, original material, 2015)

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C. <u>What vocabulary do students need to participate in the lesson?</u>

List any **specific vocabulary** that students will need in this culture lesson. That is, what are the **essential vocabulary words** that are needed to understand your lesson? List this vocabulary. NOTE: Students will learn new vocabulary through your talk-in-interaction.

What **formulaic phrases** will you give to students to allow them to express opinions during a discussion? For example: "In my opinion," "I think that...," "I believe that...," "My opinion is...," "In general..." (for more examples, search on-line for *language for expressing opinions*).

D. <u>What grammar structures do students need to participate in the lesson?</u>

Are there any **specific grammatical structures** that will occur often in this lesson? **Be specific**, e.g., if students need *to describe*, what kind of **adjectives** or **adjectival phrases** will they use to achieve this function? If students need *to compare*, what **comparative forms** will be used in the lesson?

Figure 5.1. **(continued)**

ENACTING THE CULTURAL IMAGES LESSON

Step 1: <u>Images and Making Observations</u>

Begin the lesson by asking students to describe **the product** and/or **practice** that they see in the first set of images. Ask **FACT questions in the TL** (*What do you see?*). Write **THREE to FIVE FACT questions** here for each image. (*Space provided for three images but it is up to you to decide how many. Use as many or as few images as you like for this step*).

Image 1 is a picture of _____

Fact questions:

Image 2 is a picture of _____

Fact questions:

Image 3 is a picture of _____

Fact questions:

Step 2: <u>Analyzing Additional Information about the Product and/or Practice:</u>

At this point in the lesson, what **additional information** will you provide in the form of **TEXT** or **DATA in the TL** on the cultural product or practice? What will you ask students to do with this information? This information should help students to **BEGIN TO THINK ABOUT PERSPECTIVES**. (*Space provided for two sources of information but it is up to you to decide how many*).

Informational source #1 is _____

With this information, I will ask students to _____

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Informational source #2 is _____

With this information, I will ask students to _____

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Figure 5.1. **(continued)**

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Step 3: <u>Generating Hypotheses about Cultural Perspectives</u>

Now show the second set of image(s) that prompt hypotheses about possible perspectives conveyed by the product and/or practice. Ask students to begin to **REFLECT** on perspectives. Ask **THREE to FIVE THOUGHT questions in the TL** (*What do you think?*). THOUGHT questions prompt students to think about possible **MEANINGS** of the product or practice. Since students are seeing the second set of images for the first time, you may begin this step with a few **FACT questions** to begin the interaction and encourage participation. (*Space provided for one image but it is up to you to decide how many. Use as many or as few images as you like for this step*).

Image #1 is a picture of _____

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<u>Option 1 for Intermediate- or higher-level language classes:</u>

Ask students to use the thought questions to hypothesize about and to state in their own words the *relationship of the product or practice to a cultural perspective*. This step should be carried out in pairs or small groups followed by a report back to class.

(a) How you will carry out this part of the lesson?

(b) What directions will you give to the students?

(c) Can you anticipate any misinterpretations or cultural stereotyping that might occur? If yes, what might they be?

(d) If misinterpretations occur or if students express cultural stereotypes, how will you respond?

<u>Option 2 for Elementary-level language classes:</u>

If you think your students will not be able to state a perspective in the target language on their own, provide a multiple-choice task. Write for the students *three possible perspectives* in the TL and ask students in pairs or small groups to (a) *select* one based on the images and information they have seen and analyzed and/or (b) *rank order* the three perspectives from the most to least important, obvious, comprehensive, interesting, etc. If possible, ask students to tell you WHY they selected or rank ordered the perspectives in this way.

Write the three perspectives for your images that you will give to students for their selection. Use comprehensible target language.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Figure 5.1. **(continued)**

Step 4:   Exploring Perspectives and Reflecting Further

Ask students what they are *wondering* about the cultural product or practice. That is, what do they want to learn more about?

Students or student teams may be given *a homework assignment* or *project* to explore the cultural product, practice, and perspective(s) more deeply. Students may use Internet tools (e.g., websites, YouTube, blogs, Google images, texts) to expand their cultural knowledge and find additional cultural images and/or information related to the theme. Students bring the *findings* of their cultural exploration to class and present in the target language. Another option would be to engage students in making cultural comparisons between their own culture and the culture(s) of the target language users.

What homework assignment or project will you design to engage students in exploring in more depth the relationship of the cultural product and practice to the cultural perspective(s)?

Figure 5.1. **(continued)**

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Planning the Lesson (In this chapter's Appendix A, External Mediational Tool #5a)

1. <u>Consider the level of the class and anticipate the time frame for the lesson</u>. This information will become important as you develop the plan for the specific tasks at each stage of the lesson. After planning the lesson, review the time frame to see if it is realistic.

2. <u>Decide on the cultural content of the lesson to be explored and the images you will use</u>. State the cultural product and/or practice that will be shown in images in the lesson and its/their relationship to a cultural perspective (or perspectives) that may emerge in the discussion. It is important that the teacher is clear on his or her views of the relationship of products and practices to cultural perspectives in order to support student thinking and interpretations later in the lesson. In other words, what specific cultural perspective(s) might students investigate, explore and reflect on in this lesson? How will your images (typically 4-5, but the number may depend on the scope of the lesson) lead students from observation to reflection and analysis.

Once the topic for cultural investigation has been identified, use the image function found in various Internet search engines to find appropriate images and information for each step of the lesson and/or use pictures that you or others have taken in places where the target language is spoken. It is important to note that we use the term *image* to mean all forms of visual representation, e.g., artifacts from target language countries, photos, and videos.

Two different sets of carefully sequenced images are necessary for the culture lesson. The first set of images used in Step 1 should clearly present the product and/or practice so that students can *identify* the focus of the cultural investigation and *describe* the product and/or practice. For example, in a lesson on the cultural meaning of the Chinese fan and its development over time (K. Y. Hua, personal communication, June 2016), several authentic Chinese fans (product) were shared with the class in addition to PowerPoint images of paintings from Ancient China in which fans were depicted and used (product and practice) as symbols of elegance and wisdom.

The second set of pictures to be used in Step 3 goes beyond static images of the product and/or practice and allows students to *explore* and *hypothesize* about possible cultural meanings and perspectives associate with the topic. In the Chinese lesson described above, a second set of images was used in this step showing images and artifacts of the uses of fans in contemporary Chinese society, for example, as household decorative art, as promotional material and advertisements, and as a tool for Tai Chi and Kung Fu.

3. <u>Anticipate the language that will be needed to participate in the culture discussion</u>. Keeping in mind what was learned in Chapter 1 about learning language through comprehensible talk-in-interaction and in Chapter 2 about how to promote oral interaction in a classroom discourse community, think about the kind of language that students will need to participate actively in the lesson. This language consists of vocabulary and formulaic phrases that learners may need to express opinions and ideas during the lesson—this language will need to be entered and re-entered in teacher presentations— and any specific grammatical structures that learners will use to explore the content of the culture lesson.

As an example, in a culture lesson that a teacher designed for an intermediate class on observing the differences between French comics and graphic novels and comic books in the US, she anticipated that students would need specific words to deal with the images she selected and the topic. For example, she selected words such as a "comic strip" (*une*

bande dessinée) in anticipation of establishing the meaning of this word in the French context compared to her students' interpretive frame for this word. A few other words that she selected were "the readership" (*le lectorat*) to compare those who read comic books in each country, "a poster" (*une affiche*) for indicating the ways that comic books and comic conventions are advertised, and vocabulary pertaining to bookstores to describe the interiors of French bookstores that are devoted exclusively to comic book sales. This teacher also decided to provide students with more advanced ways of expressing opinions because, as she stated, "they have a tendency to always use the same ones when they speak so I will provide different expressions they may use on the board." She understood that expressing opinions would be very important in this lesson focused on exploring critically the perspective on French comics as commentary on serious social issues through the use of humor. In terms of grammatical structures, she did not anticipate many unfamiliar structures given the level of her class but realized that to describe what is observed in French and US comic books and then to compare them, students may need prepositions of location, ways of summarizing content, and comparative forms of adjectives and nouns.

Enacting the culture lesson in 4 steps

Step 1. <u>Images and Making Observations</u>. (Appendix A, External Mediational Tool #5b) In Step 1 of enacting the lesson, the teacher, using a PowerPoint presentation, shows the class the first image (or images) of a cultural product or practice to launch the interaction. Here the teacher should ask three to five Fact Questions in the target language to allow students to make detailed observations of the product or practice under investigation. Questions phrased with *what, where, when,* and *who* are useful ways to begin this interaction. The teacher could ask the questions to the whole class or provide a handout with questions for students to answer in small groups for later reporting back to class and for comparing responses.

For younger learners who may not find it engaging simply to sit, look, and describe, the teacher should plan activities that could be done in conjunction with image description. For example, middle school learners could dramatize the scene depicted in the image (see Chapter 4), point to various parts of the image in a TPR-type activity, display their comprehension using signaling activities (see Chapter 1), or be shown real objects that are found in the images to manipulate.

The goal of Step 1 is for students to have a clear understanding of the practice or product that they observe. For example, in a Spanish lesson beginning with an image of a 10 soles bill from Peru, students needed to identify the cultural product as currency, describe the symbols on the bill, and identify, with the help of the teacher or Internet resources, the portrait of the famous Peruvian air force hero, José Abelardo Quiñones Gonzáles. Knowing this information was important before students could move to a discussion of how national identity and history are reinforced through the image of this aviator who sacrificed his life during the Ecuadorian-Peruvian war and who today is honored as a national hero symbolizing the strength and sacrifices of the Peruvian people.

Step 2. <u>Analyzing Additional Information about the Product and/or Practice</u>. In Step 2 the teacher provides additional information in the target language about the cultural product or practice in the form of a *short text* or *data*. This additional information provides knowledge that students do not bring to the task and have probably not acquired elsewhere. Further, this information should help students begin to think about a cultural perspective embodied in the product or practice. Short texts, brief and carefully selected extracts from articles, or data in the form of graphs and charts are excellent ways to deepen cultural understanding and provide a new lens on the images that have been observed and

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described. There are many websites for finding short explanatory texts and accessible data charts about particular cultural practices and products. For example, in an ESL class on the cultural differences of coffee drinking in the US and in other parts of world, images of the interiors of coffee shops in the US and in Europe and Asia were complemented with a short text from the *Scientific American Blog Network* (D'Costa, 2011) on the culture of coffee drinkers. In a few well-chosen sentences cited from this article displayed on a PowerPoint slide, students' interpretations were confirmed, indicating that coffee drinking has become synonymous with work in the US compared to other countries where the perspective on coffee drinking is viewed as leisure-time activity for socializing with friends. In an Italian lesson on the culture of family mealtime in Italy, two pie charts comparing the frequency of meals at home vs. meals in restaurants in Italy and in the US showed graphically the importance of establishing family ties through meals in the home in Italy in contrast to a higher percentage of meals outside the home in the US. A final example from an ESL class, compared the types of side dishes that were ordered with McDonald's Happy Meals for children in 2011 and 2013. The bar graph used for Step 2 of the lesson indicated that in 2013 apples were ordered more frequently as a side dish for children compared to only french fries in 2011. What the data on these consumable products showed, therefore, was a changing perspective on what was considered healthy eating habits for children from 2011 to 2013. The important point is that clear and unambiguous **data visualization** and well-chosen texts that complement image analysis are powerful ways to engage learners in exploring cultural perspectives and the worldviews of other cultures and their own. Moreover, data are readily available on-line and can be found in a variety of comprehensible and accessible displays. Data displays are also excellent ways to promote observation and discussion in the target language. As illustrated in the *IMAGE* model, this new information is not provided in a unidirectional fashion (i.e., from teacher to students in the form of a lecture), but rather serves as an impetus for discussion and hypothesizing of cultural perspectives.

Step 3. <u>Generating Hypotheses about Cultural Perspectives</u>. Step 3 in the enactment of the culture lesson asks students to analyze, reflect, and hypothesize. After the first set of images and any text or data provided (Steps 1 and 2), the teacher shows a few new image(s) that will move the lesson forward, maintain student interest, and stimulate further reflection. Based on the scaffolding of the lesson up to this point and information provided, learners should be ready to begin to delve deeper into their cultural analysis. The teacher should prepare three to five target language Thought Questions for this step of the lesson. Thought Questions prompt students to think about possible meanings of the product or practice in their own terms and to elaborate on ideas and information that have been presented up to this point in pair or small group discussions using in the target language.

For example, in the French comic book lesson, the teacher addressed this stage of the lesson by asking students to discuss what message was represented by different cover illustrations on French and US comic books. In the Peruvian soles lesson, students were asked to compare symbolic images of heroes in the US with the depiction of the aviator on the 10 soles bill. In the ESL class, learners speculated on why eating habits of children changed between 2011 and 2013.

Two options are available for this part of the lesson. Option 1 is based on practices that were presented in Chapters 2 and 3—Building a discourse community and engaging students in interpreting and discussing authentic texts (here text can also be understood as images). For intermediate and advanced classes, teachers should design a prompt for discussion in pairs or small group. The discussion prompt should indicate that learners should share interpretations, support them with evidence from the lesson, and prepare

a report of the contents of their discussion to the class for comparison, elaboration, and further discussion.

Option 2 can be used for elementary-level classes in which learners may not have all the language they need to state their hypotheses and interpretations adequately. To address the challenge of language use in elementary classes, it is suggested that teachers provide a list of three plausible perspectives in the target language. From this list, learners select one perspective that best reflects their thinking. When reporting back to the class on their choices, teachers can summarize the most popular interpretation, ask for justifications for choices, and elaborate upon them, if necessary. What is important if using this option is not to make the task into a multiple choice quiz with only one correct answer. As with all cultural interpretations, multiple readings of the data may be put forth, evaluated, and supported with observations and information. Learners should not be lead to believe that interpreting culture is simply a matter of stating the right answer. Rather, it is a process of arriving at an interpretation based on evidence allowing learners to explore the beliefs and values of various cultural communities and to move beyond their own cultural frames of reference, beliefs, and norms (see Brenner, 2010 on critical pedagogy and foreign language/culture education).

Step 3 brings closure to the lesson and provides learners with the opportunity to synthesize what they have seen and read, to state in their own words the relationship of the product and/or practice with a cultural perspective, and to compare observations. If the lesson has been carefully sequenced and scaffolded, learners should be able to make intelligent comments that go beyond stereotypical views of culture and superficial observations. What must be remembered during all phases of the culture lesson is that target language use is important and that the class should not devolve into an anthropology class taught in the learners' first language. The *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* states clearly that to address the Cultures goal area, learners must use the *language* to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship of products and practices to cultural perspectives (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2015, p. 72).

Step 4. <u>Exploring Perspectives and Reflecting Further</u>. Step 4 extends the culture lesson beyond the classroom while providing additional opportunities for reflection and discussion about cultural perspectives. Learners should be given the opportunity to state what they may still wonder about, what questions remain, and what more they would like to learn about the topic. Observations of learner performance during the lesson and the lingering questions that the learners may have can lead the teacher to design out-of-class work for exploring the cultural product(s), practice(s), and perspective(s) more deeply. Individually or in teams, learners may be given an out-of-class assignment requiring the use of Internet tools (e.g., websites, YouTube, blogs, Google images, texts) to expand their cultural knowledge and find additional cultural images and information related to the lesson. Students then bring the findings of their independent cultural investigations to class and present their findings in the target language for class discussion. For example, in the Italian lesson on family, students were directed to a series of YouTube Italian commercials to explore the image of the Italian family further projected in the media. In a Spanish lesson on the symbolic value of the chili pepper in Mexican cuisine, students visited a Latino delicatessen and interviewed the owner on the uses of the chili pepper in his recipes, why he thought chili peppers were important to Mexican cooking, and why the use of the chili pepper was a characteristic of Mexican cooking. In the Spanish lesson on the Peruvian aviator represented on the country's 10 soles bill, learners researched other heroic figures in Latin American countries and compared the qualities of a hero in Latin America with their cultural concept of hero in the United States. These investigations

have the potential to encourage critical thinking, motivate learners to reflect on cultural perspectives, and stimulate sharing of opinions and ideas in the target language.

Rehearsing the Practice

The following tasks reflect various steps of the planning tool and are intended to help you prepare a culture lesson with the assistance of instructor and peer feedback. Rehearsal Tasks 2-7 are based on a cultural product, practice, and possible perspectives that you want to explore with the class identified in Rehearsal Task 1. Therefore, selection of a series of images on a single cultural product or practice is required in order to complete all other tasks. Images should be put on PowerPoint for easy viewing and should be of high quality and clear. To prepare for the following tasks, first complete the two sections of the tool under planning—who are the learners and what is the cultural content of your lesson? The language of the lesson will be handled in a separate task below.

1. Identify a cultural product or practice that you want to explore with the class; then (a) select 3-5 images or other types of visual representations (e.g., manipulatives, artifacts, video) that you might use for your lesson and (b) describe how each image builds on the other and how the sequence of images leads students to making observations about cultural perspectives. Also, (c) state how the images help prevent cultural stereotyping that you anticipate that students may have. Share images with your peers and explain your rationale for image selection and sequencing. Listen to their reactions and suggestions and make refinements accordingly.

2. Practice writing *fact questions* and *thought questions* using the images you have selected in Rehearsal Task 1. Write 3-5 fact questions that you will ask for describing your images. Write 3-5 thought questions that move students beyond description to interpretation. Using your images, test your questions with the class to see if they elicit the kind of responses you expect.

3. Based on your cultural theme and your images, search on-line for data in the form of a chart or graph that can be used to add information to the lesson. Share the data with your peers to ensure that it is accessible and interpretable. If the data visualization is not easily understood, ask your peers why and, based on their feedback, find a replacement.

4. Realizing that you want the class to use the target language for the majority of the time in the lesson, complete the language section of the planning tool. Identify specific vocabulary related to your culture theme, any grammatical structures that reflect the functions of talk (e.g., compare and contrast, stating actions, providing descriptions) that will take place in the lesson, and a few well-chosen formulaic expressions that you will give to the students for expressing opinions and making observations. Explain how the language you have identified relates specifically to the lesson and provide an example in the context of the lesson of each language element you have listed.

5. Imagine your lesson is designed for beginners (first-year students or first-semester university students). You have decided that turning them loose on a group work discussion will result in a discussion in English. Write three plausible cultural interpretations about your images (and data) in language appropriate and comprehensible to the learners to be used for Option 2 in Step 3.

6. What types of interactive activities might be used during the culture lesson and where might these activities be located? In other words, in addition to class discussion and

pair and group work tasks, what other types of class involvement strategies beyond observation and discussion might be used in this lesson (e.g., role play, demonstrations, interpersonal communication tasks)?

7. Thinking beyond the classroom lesson, what assignment or project might you design to allow for further investigation and elaboration of the cultural content of the lesson? Design the assignment and decide how long it might take the learners to complete, what resources they might use to complete the assignment, and what form the assignment can take (e.g., report, presentation, visuals, additional data, selected texts). Finally describe how the project relates directly to the contents of the lesson and expands upon it.

8. If you are currently teaching, present your culture lesson to one of your classes. If videotaping is permitted in your school, record the lesson and show it to your colleagues for discussion of what worked well and where improvements are needed. If videotaping is not permitted, write a brief report and share your reaction to the lesson with your colleagues indicating where you thought the lesson went smoothly and as anticipated and where you noticed parts of the lesson that need to be re-worked. If you are not yet an in-service teacher but are enrolled in a practicum course, present your lesson to a class of your peers and elicit their reactions and suggestions.

Assessing the Practice

Use Rubric #5 in this chapter's Appendix B to self-assess your culture lesson. As an alternative or in addition, you could ask a colleague or peer to observe the lesson that you facilitated and provide feedback using the rubric.

Putting the Practice into a Larger Context: Instructional Goals and Challenges

We teach in an age in which global education and internationalizing the curriculum have become increasingly important and necessary. The world has become a smaller place due to social media, the Internet, and chat applications that connect people from all over the world with each other. To be prepared to live in today's world, students need to be global citizens and not just members of insular communities, unaware of a world beyond their own community boundaries. Foreign language education is well positioned to address the mandate of our schools and universities to internationalize curriculum and develop global understandings. But to achieve this goal, we must move beyond thinking about language instruction as only nouns, verb paradigms, and grammatical rules.

As the *Modern Language Association (MLA) Report* (Modern Language Association (MLA) Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007) states that a major goal of language instruction is ***transcultural competence***, Kramsch (2012, p. 29) argues that transcultural competence does not mean the bland and meaningless co-existence of cultures under the happy banner of diversity. Rather, this concept means that learners are willing to engage in cultural explorations and are able to make informed and intelligent observations about patterns of cultural behavior unlike their own. To be transculturally competent, therefore, requires that our learners need to interact with others unlike themselves and work toward understanding difference rather than simply ignoring or tolerating it. As the *MLA Report* states emphatically, transcultural competence means that learners are taught to "comprehend speakers of the target language as member of foreign societies and to grasp themselves as Americans—that is, as members of a society that is [also] foreign to others" (Modern Language Association (MLA) Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007,

p. 4). In this way, students can be emancipated from restrictive worldviews imposed on them by their own culture and can critically examine their place in the world and their relationship with others (Regan & Osborn, 2002).

A second educational concern related to the teaching of culture in foreign language classrooms is the importance of providing students with **culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP)** (Hall, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2006) and **culturally responsive teaching**. Today's classrooms are linguistically, racially, and culturally diverse environments in which a teacher's understanding of the culture of his or her students and their frames of reference and students' understanding of each other are of paramount importance to build classroom community and to provide relevant instruction. Although CRP emphasizes that instruction must start where the students are and be grounded in their cultural realities, it cannot remain there, as Milner (2010) argues in his award-winning book *Start Where You Are, But Don't Stay There: Understanding Diversity, Opportunity Gaps, and Teaching in Today's Classrooms*. Enabling foreign language students to investigate, reflect on, and explain target language cultures (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2015) can be made relevant by designing instruction based on the cultural worlds that students bring to the classroom while simultaneously introducing and investigating cultural perspectives unlike their own. And this relationship moves in two directions. As students learn about their role as citizens in their own communities, the more they learn about being global citizens, and as they learn about the world, the more they understand their own local community.

Aronson and Laughter (2016) summarize the features of culturally relevant instruction gleaned from various approaches to CRP found in the literature. What is striking is that these features, described briefly below, parallel closely the goals of culture instruction in the foreign language classroom. For example, culturally relevant educators build on the knowledge and cultural assets that students bring with them into the classroom making the classroom inclusive of all students. The *MLA Report* (Modern Language Association [MLA] Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007) also points out that teaching for transcultural competence involves enabling students to relate to fellow members of the students' own society (including the classroom community) who may speak languages other than English or who come from diverse familial heritages. In other words, culture instruction creates inclusive classrooms by its emphasis on critical reflection on the cultural diversity that exists in classrooms, schools, and in the world.

Culturally relevant educators are also said to have the ability to create instruction and classroom environments in which students learn both about their own and others' worldviews. Culture teaching, as an HLTP that all teachers must know and be able to carry out, supports this concept through critical reflections on cultures that are not always in the immediate classroom or community environments of the students. As described in the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2015) and in the *MLA Report* (Modern Language Association [MLA] Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007), classrooms need to be safe spaces where students reflect on the world and themselves in it from the perspective of other languages and cultures.

Finally, culturally relevant educators work in pursuit of social justice for all members of society and in the world. As described in the introduction to this chapter, language and culture are intimately connected and cultural values and worldviews can often be revealed in the metaphors and expressions that are commonplace in one's cultural world. Students can, therefore, explore culture through the lens of how language is used in a society's daily conversations, media, slogans, advertisements, and texts of various kinds,

such as foreign language webpages, newspaper articles, and literature. Additionally, these discourses are often taken for granted but when analyzed closely can reveal deeply rooted ways of behaving and believing that include some social groups but marginalize others. Not all cultural practices and the perspectives that they engender are benign. For this reason, culture instruction is not just about knowledge of cultural facts. Culture lessons must also develop learners' ability to think critically about important equity and social justice issues in the world.

Developing students' critical thinking ability about culture is perhaps the most challenging to enact in the classroom (Brenner, 2010), but it is not any less important than other aspect of foreign language instruction. Reflecting on culture and conducting cultural investigations in the foreign language classroom, in the way described in this HLTP, contributes directly to this challenge and moves education closer to developing informed individuals who can operate with awareness and insight across languages and cultural boundaries.

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Appendix A

External Mediational Tool #5a:
The IMAGE Model for Exploring Cultural Perspectives

PLANNING STAGE: PREPARING FOR THE LESSON

A. <u>Who are the students?</u>

> For what course is your culture lesson designed? What year/semester of study is this course? What is the time frame for the lesson—A single class? Divided across several days? A week?

B. <u>What is the cultural content of lesson?</u>

> State the cultural product and/or practice you will show in the lesson and its/their relationship to a cultural perspective (that is, a value, belief, or meaning). What perspective(s) might your students explore? What images will you use?
>
> **Product/Practice** [Note: It is best to begin with a single product and/or practice; however, others may emanate in the lesson]:
>
> **Perspective(s):**
>
> **Images:**
>
> Set 1: _____
>
> Set 2: _____

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C. What vocabulary do students need to participate in the lesson?

List any **specific vocabulary** that students will need in this culture lesson. That is, what are the **essential vocabulary words** that are needed to understand your lesson? List this vocabulary. NOTE: Students will learn new vocabulary through your talk-in-interaction.

What **formulaic phrases** will you give to students to allow them to express opinions during a discussion? For example: "In my opinion," "I think that…," "I believe that…," "My opinion is…," "In general…" (for more examples, search on-line for *language for expressing opinions*).

D. What grammar structures do students need to participate in the lesson?

Are there any **specific grammatical structures** that will occur often in this lesson? **Be specific**, e.g., if students need *to describe*, what kind of **adjectives** or **adjectival phrases** will they use to achieve this function? If students need *to compare*, what **comparative forms** will be used in the lesson?

External Mediational Tool #5b:
The IMAGE Model for Exploring Cultural Perspectives

ENACTING THE CULTURAL IMAGES LESSON

Step 1: <u>Images and Making Observations</u>

Begin the lesson by asking students to describe **the product** and/or **practice** that they see in the first set of images. Ask **FACT questions in the TL** (*What do you see?*). Write **THREE to FIVE FACT questions** here for each image. (*Space provided for three images but it is up to you to decide how many. Use as many or as few images as you like for this step*).

Image 1 is a picture of _____

Fact questions:

Image 2 is a picture of _____

Fact questions:

Image 3 is a picture of _____

Fact questions:

Step 2: <u>Analyzing Additional Information about the Product and/or Practice:</u>

At this point in the lesson, what **additional information** will you provide in the form of **TEXT** or **DATA in the TL** on the cultural product or practice? What will you ask students to do with this information? This information should help students to **BEGIN TO THINK ABOUT PERSPECTIVES**. (*Space provided for two sources of information but it is up to you to decide how many*).

Informational source #1 is _____

With this information, I will ask students to _____

_____

_____

Informational source #2 is _____

With this information, I will ask students to _____

_____

_____

Step 3: <u>Gen</u>

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(d) If
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Option

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2. _____

3. _____

Step 3:   Generating Hypotheses about Cultural Perspectives

Now show the second set of image(s) that prompt hypotheses about possible perspectives conveyed by the product and/or practice. Ask students to begin to **REFLECT** on perspectives. Ask **THREE to FIVE THOUGHT questions in the TL** (*What do you think?*). THOUGHT questions prompt students to think about possible **MEANINGS** of the product or practice. Since students are seeing the second set of images for the first time, you may begin this step with a few **FACT questions** to begin the interaction and encourage participation. (*Space provided for one image but it is up to you to decide how many. Use as many or as few images as you like for this step*).

Image #1 is a picture of _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Option 1 for Intermediate- or higher-level language classes:

Ask students to use the thought questions to hypothesize about and to state in their own words the *relationship of the product or practice to a cultural perspective*. This step should be carried out in pairs or small groups followed by a report back to class.

(a)   How you will carry out this part of the lesson?

(b)   What directions will you give to the students?

(c)   Can you anticipate any misinterpretations or cultural stereotyping that might occur? If yes, what might they be?

(d)   If misinterpretations occur or if students express cultural stereotypes, how will you respond?

Option 2 for Elementary-level language classes:

If you think your students will not be able to state a perspective in the target language on their own, provide a multiple-choice task. Write for the students *three possible perspectives* in the TL and ask students in pairs or small groups to (a) *select* one based on the images and information they have seen and analyzed and/or (b) *rank order* the three perspectives from the most to least important, obvious, comprehensive, interesting, etc. If possible, ask students to tell you WHY they selected or rank ordered the perspectives in this way.

Write the three perspectives for your images that you will give to students for their selection. Use comprehensible target language.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Step 4: **Exploring Perspectives and Reflecting Further**

Ask students what they are *wondering* about the cultural product or practice. That is, what do they want to learn more about?

Students or student teams may be given *a homework assignment* or *project* to explore the cultural product, practice, and perspective(s) more deeply. Students may use Internet tools (e.g., websites, YouTube, blogs, Google images, texts) to expand their cultural knowledge and find additional cultural images and/or information related to the theme. Students bring the *findings* of their cultural exploration to class and present in the target language. Another option would be to engage students in making cultural comparisons between their own culture and the culture(s) of the target language users.

What homework assignment or project will you design to engage students in exploring in more depth the relationship of the cultural product and practice to the cultural perspective(s)?

RUBRI

Cultural
Content of
Lesson

Selection of
Images

Target Langu
Scaffolded fo
Learners

Appendix B

RUBRIC: HLTP #5: Focusing on Cultural Products, Practices, and Perspectives in a Dialogic Context

	EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	DEVELOPING	UNACCEPTABLE
Cultural Content of Lesson	Lesson features a cultural product and/or practice that convey(s) a cultural perspective. Content is engaging, interesting, and relevant to learners.	Lesson features a cultural product and/or practice that convey(s) a cultural perspective. Content is relevant to learners.	Primary focus of lesson is on a cultural product or practice rather than on a cultural perspective. And/or content may lack interest and/or relevance to learners.	Lesson consists of discrete pieces of cultural information not presented within the 3P cultural paradigm.
Selection of Images	Images are culturally authentic and illustrate a cultural product and/or practice. Images provoke a reaction and stimulate interest and discussion.	Images are culturally authentic and illustrate a cultural product and/or practice. Images stimulate discussion.	Images are culturally authentic but do not illustrate an obvious cultural product and/or practice. Images might not stimulate either much interest or discussion.	Images are not authentic and may be taken from a textbook. Images either promote cultural stereotyping or do not illustrate an authentic cultural product or practice.
Target Language Scaffolded for Learners	Using talk-in-interaction, the teacher scaffolds vocabulary words, formulaic expressions, and grammar needed for students to participate in lesson. Teacher elicits and builds on students' previously learned language in the context of the lesson.	Using talk-in-interaction, the teacher scaffolds vocabulary words, formulaic expressions, and grammar needed for students to participate in lesson.	Teacher introduces vocabulary words, formulaic expressions, and grammar needed for students to participate in lesson through partial scaffolding and providing of lists of vocabulary and grammatical structures.	Teacher either provides a list of vocabulary, formulaic expressions, and grammatical structures in the absence of a context OR makes little attempt to scaffold new language for learners.

RUBRIC: HLTP #5 (*continued*)

	EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	DEVELOPING	UNACCEPTABLE
Guiding Learners to Cultural Perspective(s)	Teacher asks questions sequenced from fact questions to open-ended thought questions. Learner discussion, interaction, and hypothesizing about cultural perspectives are central to the lesson.	Teacher asks questions sequenced from fact questions to open-ended thought questions. Provides some opportunities for learners to discuss questions, interact with one another, and hypothesize about cultural perspectives.	Teacher asks fact and thought questions although fact questions may be more prevalent. Provides opportunities for learners to discuss questions but opportunities to interact and hypothesize about cultural perspectives with peers are limited.	Teacher asks only fact questions in a teacher-centered fashion. Learners are given information regarding cultural perspectives in the absence of hypothesizing with their peers.
Use of TL in Lesson	Target language is used exclusively in the lesson and is supported by comprehensible input and interactions with learners.	Target language is used at least 90% of the time in the lesson and is supported by comprehensible input and interactions with learners.	Target language is used at least 50% of the time in the lesson and is supported by comprehensible input and interactions with learners. OR target language is used 90% of the time but is only partially comprehensible to learners.	English is used for the majority of the lesson OR target language used is not comprehensible to learners.

HLTP #6:

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