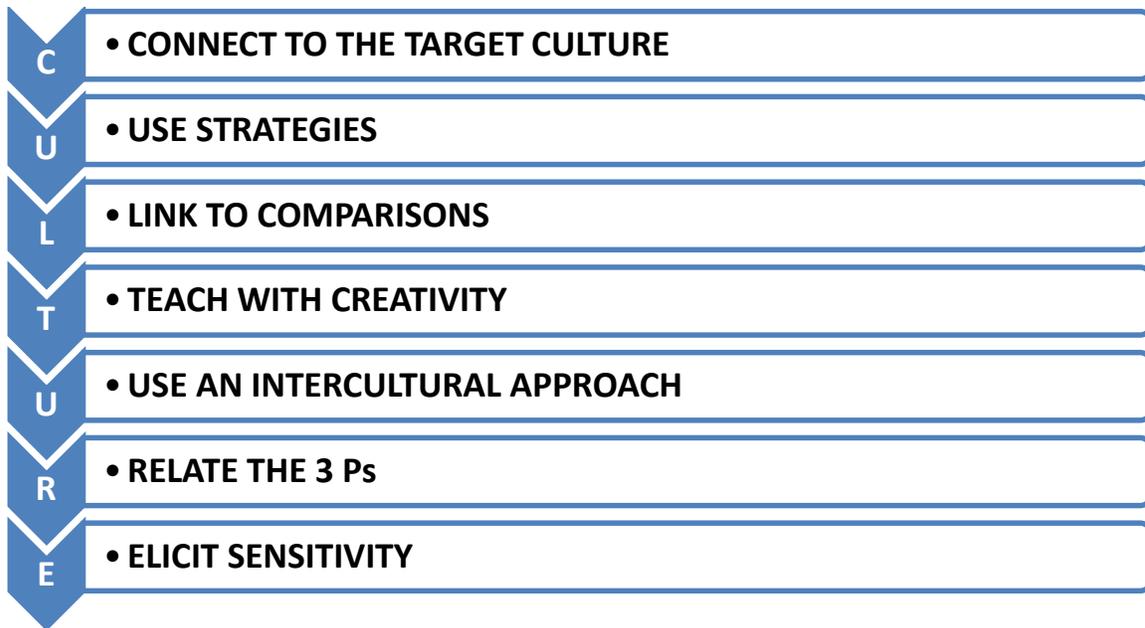


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## Seven Successful Strategies for Integrating Culture into the Curriculum

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## Culture in the L2 Classroom: Supporting Research and Literature

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The sheer volume of research articles on culture is overwhelming, for this reason this literature review is selective rather than exhaustive.

**Focus on 3Ps—** The World Readiness Standards (2014) define culture as the examination of the relationship between cultural products, practices, and perspectives. Research from Byrd, Hlas, Watzke, & Montes Valencia, (2011) suggest that teachers emphasize products and practices more frequently than perspectives. There is a need for more balance in order to tie all three together (Schulz, 2007). Encouraging students to compare and reflect upon all three Ps would be a worthy endeavor.

**Connect to self.** Fact-based approaches to teaching culture are still prevalent in the teaching and learning of languages. Research from Wright (2000), however, suggests using an intercultural approach may lead to more flexibility, openness, and autonomy. In his study, students completed culture projects and portfolios where students were asked to reflect about their personal lives, make connections, and discuss culture in relation to their own learning.

**Collaboration.** Learning collaboratively shapes development. What learners can do with help from others is an indication of what they will be able to do by themselves later (Vygotsky, 1978). This is called the zone of proximal development (ZPD). It is “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Planned L2 environments can stimulate that development through meaning-making activities, problem-solving, and participation in culturally relevant activities.

**Intercultural citizens.** Intercultural competence (Byram, 1997) includes skills related to interaction, relating, discovery, and awareness. Wagner & Byram (2015) argue that teachers assist students to become “intercultural citizens’, individuals able to respond to the internationalization and globalization of our and other societies” (p. 29) quotes in original. To do so, students need a toolbox to interact with native speakers and other speakers of the language and skills to help them reflect upon their culture.

**Technology as a tool.** Technology is critical to supporting student learning/discovery. As such, the technology must be used intentionally and meaningful so students are not just wandering aimlessly in the web. Well-planned technology activities can enhance cohesive 3P studies (Dema & Moeller, 2012). In addition, tools available via the internet facilitate interaction with native speakers, provide real time texts, and offer authentic resources (Garza, 2010).

**Strategies-based instruction (SBI).** Strategies-based instruction is a way to teach learners how to learn and how to understand their own thinking. Wenden (1985) suggests that learning strategies are a key to building learner autonomy. Two widely used instruments to identify general learning strategies are Oxford’s Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (1990) and Cohen, Oxford, & Chi ‘s (2005) Language Strategy Use Inventory. Savignon & Sysoyev (2005) suggest culture and comparisons strategies such as anticipating sources of cross-cultural misunderstandings, making analogies between cultures, and reviewing authentic materials among others.

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## CULTURE

### Connect to the Target Culture

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**Hotel Phone Call.** As even the most advanced language student knows, making a phone call can be a daunting experience given the lack of visual input and the possibility of a dropped call. To overcome this fear and build confidence, students will complete a series of carefully paced activities and then use Skype to contact several hotels in the target culture. During the call, they will obtain information on amenities, cost, availability, and location. For beginning students, multiple scaffolded activities build up to placing the phone calls while fewer supporting activities may be needed for more advanced learners. The scaffolded activities support vocabulary development, listening skills, question formation, and information gathering, as well as strategies for researching prospective hotels in the target culture. After successfully calling several hotels, the project culminates with students presenting their findings and explaining what hotel they ultimately chose and how.

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**I say—you say.** Based on the CULTURA project (Furstenberg, Levet, English, & Maillet, 2001), students compare cultural associations based on key words. Based on the learning targets of the lesson, the teacher creates a word list such as School, Friends, Education, Teachers. Then, members of the TC are contacted and asked the first words that come to mind when they hear these words in their culture. Once this information is collected, the teacher asks her own class which words they associate from their own culture. After the words have been generated, the two lists are compared for similarities and differences. This activity works well synchronously (e.g. via Skype) or asynchronously. To summarize the data and focus on explicit strategies, a semantic map could be generated to visually examine the word associations (<https://popplet.com/>).

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**Activity Menu (during study abroad).** Provide a menu of different communicative tasks that fosters respectful, authentic exchanges between students and locals. If the students' communicative choices are culturally insensitive they are unlikely to get the service or help they need. Examples of tasks include: order food, buy a souvenir, and ask directions. Decide how many of the tasks students should do. Write a reflection at the end.

Variation: the instructor plans ahead and meets with small business owners, tour guides, etc that students will come in contact with (sort of like *The Amazing Race* TV show where people travel around the world doing different challenges). Arrange with the locals to have students get a certain product, piece of info, etc and report back to the group at the end of the day. Reflection: what word choices, gestures, non-verbal things did they do to get their ideas across.

---

**\*Treasure Hunt.** Reaping the benefits of authentic materials produced not for language learners but those of the TL culture. At the end of a unit on a substantive aspect of culture such as marriage, employment or diversity offer students a menu of artifacts to examine and note cultural features that indicate their origins: Blog post, newspaper article, film review, restaurant review, song, film, TV show, commercial, advertisements, instructions accompanying an electronic device, a brochure for medication or health opportunity. Questions they should consider: are the images different than you would see in similar artifacts in your own culture? What might explain the differences? Are the word choices, tone, rhetoric, etc different than what you've observed for similar artifacts in your culture? Again, what might be the reason. Ex: the French are generally less prudish about the human body so an advertisement for women's health might show a naked woman's torso. This is not the norm in the U.S.

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CULTURE  
**Use Strategies**

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**Portrait of a Monster.** Savignon et Sysoyez (2005) recommend creating a sociocultural portrait of the TL culture to foster comprehensive understanding of a substantive topic such as marriage or religion. In this activity students examine the social constructions of monsters such as zombies which are very different in Hollywood than those portrayed in France or Haiti. In an upper level class where students are familiar with the cultural context for a given TL country they can examine how monsters are cultural constructs. In Haiti zombies are a legit part of the vodou religion. It's possible to zombify an individual as a means of control if their behavior is deemed inappropriate. This goes far back to the slave trade. Do American zombies have a similar cultural origin? What about in France? In a given film, graphic novel, etc how do the zombies' (or other monsters' like werewolves and vampires) behaviors reflect their society and therefore culture.

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**Stereotype Busters.** Based on the work of Byon (2007), students use the strategy, "investigate cultural truths," to examine cultural stereotypes. The instructor will provide common stereotypes, such as Mexican men always have mustaches. Then students build a portfolio that includes the following types of evidence supporting and negating the stereotype, from both the home and target cultures.

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**\*Cultural Strategies Inventory.** Students look at a list of strategies based on the work of CARLA, 2009 for working with concepts and ideas that may differ from their own culture(s) and brainstorm other strategies to use. For example, an inventory item asks if a student has reflected on cultural values as the possible source of a conflict as a possible strategy to reach an understanding. The student indicates if s/he has used the strategy, would like to, or it is not of interest. In pairs or small groups, students discuss the strategies and brainstorm additional options. This can be a useful way to begin an academic term or prepare for a unit that may differ from students' cultural identity and values.

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**\*Sayings.** Students are presented with a saying in the target language and use the strategy 'making inferences' to guess meaning. For example, "That is not my cup of tea" or in Spanish "Tirar la casa por la ventana." Next, students research one of the words or the entire phrase. Then, they complete the following steps to discover more about the word: a) they use a site like [<http://www.linguee.com/>] to research the word in context b) they complete a specific search of target countries to search for the word in advertisements/images using Google Advanced Search c) students present the saying to the class with a skit demonstrating the literal and the actual meanings.

---

**\*Follow a Floor Plan.** Savignon & Sysoyez (2005) suggest role plays to establish and maintain intercultural contact. In this activity students play the roles of architects and prospective home buyers. Each student finds an image of a different TL culture home. In pairs one student describes it out loud to the other without showing the image. The student listening (the architect) draws the layout and furnishings as the partner (home buyer) describes the home they plan to build. The architect asks why the buyer wants those features. Ex: we prefer the toilet be separate from the sink and shower for cleanliness. Then they switch roles. At the end they make a list of differences between types of homes. Finally, they draw a sketch of a floor plan they will pitch to a prospective buyer and explain why the features are important to buyers in that market.

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## CULTURE

### Link to Comparisons

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**Ad Analysis.** Advertising, especially about food products, often evokes images of families, traditions, and values. In the age of globalization, ads for products such as Coke or McDonalds are available in numerous languages. Advertisements, whether documents or videos, are good authentic materials for any proficiency level given their imagery and students' background knowledge. An example in Spanish is a Kraft Macaroni and Cheese commercial [<http://tinyurl.com/latinomac>] that targets Latinos in the United States. The commercial's play on (multi)cultural pride makes a first viewing without audio a good introduction for the students. Students use a graphic organizer to note what they see, answer questions about comprehension, and then analyze the cultural representations in the commercial.

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**Front pages.** Using the website Newseum [<http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/>], students analyze a top news story from three different target culture cities to compare how the same event is reported. Students are able to note the space it occupies on the front page, the image selected, the tone of the article, etc. Students can complete a Venn diagram to compare the news story. An extension activity involves students creating their own first page or the first page of their lives.

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**\*Interrogating Media.** Pick a topic that relates to the TL culture. Example: dealing with sexism like in the Dominique Strauss-Kahn affair which took place in NYC in 2011. How is the TL culture portrayed in the media in the U.S.? In its own country? In other countries? What accounts for these differences (intended audience, commercial or political gain, distribution concerns, etc). This has great interdisciplinary potential and also relates to T. See worksheet in handout for ideas to scaffold this activity.

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## CULTURE

### Teach with Creativity

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**Challenges.** Students study a cultural product such as common buildings in the target culture (e.g. fire station, government building). They specifically study the physical features of the building and learn some practices as well. For example, pharmacies have green crosses on them in Spain and do not require prescriptions. Next, students are given a set of random materials such as spaghetti, tin foil, crayons, paper, 12 inches of tape, paper plates, and cups. In groups of 3-4, students are given 15 minutes to create a target city from Spain with at least two typical buildings. Students work to create a target culture city, working to construct a simple replica of the buildings. Next, they present their city discussing layout and describing the buildings and some key practices in their city.

---

**Visual Art.** Students use imitation to recreate a piece of artwork from a target language culture. Make a large color copy or use a poster and cut it up into pieces approximately the size of half a sheet of paper. Students will each get a piece and will go home and try and recreate their piece on paper using pencil. They then bring their copy of the piece; you put all the pieces together and see if you can recreate the original painting. The class then discusses the work of the artist, the technique, the significance of the piece culturally and historically. A deeper examination can consider whether the artist is from that culture or an outsider inspired by it (such as Eugène Delacroix who painted *Les Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement*). If he or she is an outsider, how does that change their treatment of the subject and what qualifies someone to be an insider? If time allows the class can focus on details within a painting such as the presence of certain objects, clothing choices, and inclusion of certain individuals or groups. For example, murals by Diego Rivera, a Mexican artist, include figures of black slaves.

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**Ambassador Project (the whole project).** Each student signs up for a different country where the TL is spoken. Over the course of the semester or a given period of time each is responsible for independently finding information about his or her country. Each unit, chapter or concept can be tied to the project so they find information about employment in a unit on professions, for example, weaving together the course content and culture. This requires the students to find sources, verify their credibility, organize it thoughtfully, reflect on it, and engage in discussion with peers to share and learn from each other. As time goes on students will discover more and more about their own countries and those their peers chose. The attached worksheet asks students to consult two sources, one in their native language, the other in the TL. This can be modified for more advanced students. Similarly, discussions in class can take place completely in the TL for advanced students and with adequate scaffolding, for beginning and intermediate students as well.

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**\*Street Art.** Street art has garnered more attention in recent years as have those who create it. It is common around the world and is viewed as anything from a subversive, criminal act to a highly artistic means of expression. In this series of activities, the teacher leads students in a discussion about street art, particularly in the target culture. Students visit an online collection of street art, such as one found on Google's Art Project [<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/project/art-project>]. The students' art viewing experience is scaffolded by a series of tasks, including using a graphic organizer, and ultimately use the presentational mode to share their favorite piece of art with the class.

*Extension:* Working in pairs, students select the piece of street art they would most like to reproduce. The students will then make their own "street art" on large sheets of paper to be hung around the school. Students will also write an artist's statement in the target language to be posted next to the art, explaining the piece and how they chose to interpret it.

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## CULTURE

### Use an Intercultural Approach

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**Ambassador Project (Reflection and Presentation).** During the wrap up at the end of the semester or ambassador unit give students a graphic organizer with space for each of the countries studied by the students. Each student presents on his/her country and those listening fill in the information they hear. For example: use of natural resources, clothing, breakfast foods and habits, etc. Any blank spaces can be filled in by interviewing the student responsible for that country and asking questions. This gives students practice listening and speaking in an authentic situation. Finally, students can work in pairs to describe their country's Ps and compare them (obviously related to L and R).

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**Reverse Travel Tips.** Students will read travel information about the U.S. that is produced by the target culture and categorize the travel tips as those that specific for the target culture and which those that could also apply to U.S. tourists. Students will then examine the cultural-specific tips and discuss why they exist (e.g. you don't need to order water in U.S. restaurants, it is brought to you automatically. This tip may mean that in other cultures, water is not always brought without a request). Students will also analyze the tone of the article and the attitude(s) it suggests toward the U.S. as well as the possible values of the target culture.

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**Selfies.** Begin the lesson activating prior knowledge about our cultural practice of selfies. Ask students to reflect on when they take selfies, with whom, how they share them, etc. Then, transition to selfies from the past, or self-portraits, introduce students to different artist's self-portraits that are posted around the room like a gallery. Discuss features such as colors (vibrant/muted), lines (thick/fine), and light (dark/illuminated). Other artistic styles can be introduced such as tenebrism and compared to the use of filters on modern selfies. Encourage students to focus on our culture's selfies to help make a connection to selfies from the past. Ask students to circulate the gallery analyzing each piece of artwork and inventing a possible title for the piece. Use the attached worksheet to guide the gallery walk.

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Extension idea: Students invent the "selfie" of someone from the L2 context (e.g. draw or paint a selfie of Kahlo)

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**\*Multiple Angles.** Describe a situation that displays cultural differences from different perspectives. For example: a man compliments a woman walking on the street. The man might be thinking he is boosting her ego and being thoughtful since he's taken the time from his busy day to compliment her. From her point of view his comment amounts to harassment because he has focused on her looks and assumes she cares about his opinion. How would each person in the scenario react if they were in one TL country versus another? If they were in their own country?

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## CULTURE

### Relate the 3 Ps

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**WTWE.** In *What the World Eats* Menzel (2005) challenges us to think about what our culture and others eat. Menzel takes a picture of families around the world in their kitchen with their family. In front of them, they have a weeks' worth of food. These pictures can be used to focus a discussion around the 3 Ps. Students can first identify products they see. For example, they could label food items pictures. Then they can be asked to hypothesize about the cultural perspectives such as making predictions regarding the availability of drinking water? fresh food? What does the picture suggest about the cultural perspectives of food consumption in one week? This assignment could be followed by a research project to further investigate the location of grocery stores (google maps), the availability of drinking water, or target language news sources about food.

[ <http://time.com/8515/hungry-planet-what-the-world-eats/>]

Variation: NY Times: "What's going on in this picture?"

[http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/02/27/10-intriguing-photographs-to-teach-close-reading-and-visual-thinking-skills/?\\_r=0](http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/02/27/10-intriguing-photographs-to-teach-close-reading-and-visual-thinking-skills/?_r=0)

Students work on predictions and conjectures based on culturally relevant pictures, can post their comments on NY Times website!

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**Matching Squares.** This puzzle can be a fun way to review information. On the grid you can make final "puzzle" put together. Fill in the grid by writing a cultural product, practice, or perspective (e.g. painting, artist, or fact on one side of the line and a matching word on the other side of the line (paintings matching to artists, style or characteristics matching to artists, etc.) When every line has a word written on it (they will appear upside down and sideways as well) you can make copies, cut it apart and have students put it back together in pairs or individually as a puzzle.

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**Cultural Values Assessment.** In *Remapping the Foreign Language Curriculum* Janet Swaffar and Katherine Arens offer different types of charts to help students identify, critique and organize cultural information in authentic texts. In this activity inspired by their book, students work with a text (article, podcast, video, poem, etc) and then fill out a worksheet with 3 columns: cultural value/specific manifestation/product, perspective or practice. They then identify the cultural values presented in the text. For example: women are expected to be submissive. Next, they find a specific example including page number or other reference to support that value. Ex: the main character is punished for questioning her father (Pg 3). Finally they identify which P it is. Ex: practice (women do as they are told). The implied perspective is that men are better decision makers and women should not be involved.

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**Art Historian.** Students find a painting or other work of art from a TL culture (product). What clues indicate it's from that culture? What aspects challenge our assumptions of that culture? What clues does it offer to the time period, place, climate or geography of that culture/country? Identify a practice and hypothesize the perspective. For ex: in Monet's painting "Essai de figure en plein air" (1836) a woman is holding a parasol (practice). It is designed to shelter her from the sun, presumably that was bad at that time. She might be wealthy and want to protect her complexion lest she be mistaken for working class (perspective).

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## CULTURE

### Elicit Sensitivity

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**Parts of a Whole.** In this activity, adapted from Mantle-Bromely (1992), students explore the multifaceted nature of culture. First, the teacher asks teams of students to define culture and puts key words on the board. The teacher then hands each team an opaque bag and asks students to feel it and determine what common object it represents. The object should be something that can be broken down into different pieces so that each team receives a different piece. Students discuss what they think the item is and what additional information they may need to be sure. The teacher reveals the item then asks the students how their process may compare to studying cultures (e.g. only had a part of the whole, couldn't see it all, the pieces come together in a different way).

*Extension:* Show a clip of the fable "The Blind Men and the Elephant" in the target languages. See website for fully developed activity in Spanish.

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**Circles of My Multicultural Self.** From the University of Maryland, students fill out a graphic organizer based on multiple aspects of their identity. The activity encourages them to more closely examine stereotypes, labels, and identity. For example, students may write female, soccer player, Mexican American as part of their identity. Then, they are asked to share stories of when they were proud to identify with this descriptor. Next, they identify stereotypes based on those descriptors and mention a time that the stereotype was not consistent with their identity. Finally, they complete sentences such as I am a female but I am not passive. The teacher then debriefs the conversation by asking questions such as How did it feel to stand up to a stereotype? Where do stereotypes come from?

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**\*Do Over.** Students brainstorm a list of stereotypes of the TL culture. Then they imagine the reactions someone from their culture would have to someone behaving according to one of the stereotypes on the list. In small groups or pairs they hypothesize where the stereotype comes from and create a more sensitive reaction. For ex: a stereotype of Haitians is, as practitioners of vodou, they are into witchcraft and sacrifice. A reaction would be that Haitians are "wacked out" (direct quote from a past student) and their religion sounds crazy. The assumption about vodou comes largely from Hollywood which capitalizes on ignorance. Witchcraft and sacrificing an animal sound extreme, but belief in a religion that asks its followers to "drink of my blood" and "eat of my body" (communion in Christianity), might seem pretty crazy. The more sensitive reaction might be to ask if it's true that....., do you know when that belief started, how does your family participate (do they participate?)

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**\*BARNGA.** In this game from the Central States Conference ([Mary Lynn Montgomery from the University of Minnesota](#)), students learn about cultural sensitivity and culture shock. First, students form groups of 4-6 and each group receives rules in English to a card game (See instructions). They practice once with spoken output and then are asked to play again without speaking and only actions. After they play another round, the winners move right and the losers left to join other circles. Some members stay put. The groups play another round without speaking but soon realize that that each group has been given different rules to the game and they have to negotiate the game. The students continue to play a few rounds until the groups are well mixed. After the game, ask students to write on the board the emotions they were feeling throughout the exercise. Then, relate the game to developing cultural awareness and ask questions like: What happened during the tournament? How did you cope when others did not understand? How does this game relate to language learning? To intercultural communication?

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## Appendix

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### Appendix 1: I Say, You Say

I say...you say.



**I. Self-reflection:** Think about your native culture and then complete the following sentences:

1. A good neighbor is

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2. A rude person is

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**II. Other perspectives.** Now, share your sentences with someone around you. Also, read how members of other target cultures completed some of these sentences.

A good neighbor is...

- someone who fits in and doesn't disturb the neighborhood (Germany)
- someone who minds their own business and doesn't talk to you (France)
- someone who invites you to dinner and shares food (China)
- someone who is polite, chatty, and shares community life (Spain)

A rude person is...

- someone who is late (Germany)
- someone who makes direct loud comments (France)
- someone who does not look you in the eyes, but rather looks you up and down to judge (China)
- someone who does not greet each person with hello and good bye (Nicaragua)

**III. Reflection.** Note at least two things that are the same and that are different.

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Appendix 2: Portrait of a Monster

1. Context	2. Observed cultural patterns	3. Relationships between 1 & 2?
<i>Haiti was colonized by France who forced Africans into slavery to work the plantations there.</i>	<i>In the novel Reflections of Loko-Miwa light skinned Haitian are better off than darker skinned ones.</i>	<i>Whites were the colonizers and plantation owners. They were financially better off and had more freedom. Having light skin was equated with economic and political privilege.</i>
<p>Using the information above create a portrait of the monster in this particular culture.</p> <p><i>When Violaine’s mother got married she deliberately picked a man whose light skin color would mean her children would also be lighter skinned and thus become part of Haiti’s elite. Although Violaine had light skin her behavior was considered inappropriate for her social class so her mother had to take additional measures.</i></p>		

### Un anuncio: macarrones y queso patrióticos

**Paso 1.** Vamos a mirar el anuncio sin audio. Dibuja un círculo alrededor de las cosas de la lista que ves en el clip. Después, escribe una oración sobre tu interpretación de lo que pasa en el anuncio.

Personajes				
una abuela	un padre	un hijo	un chef	un amigo
Objetos/Cosas				
una águila	unas maracas	un menú	un video musical	un sombrero
Descripciones				
la alegría	el patriotismo	el hambre	la tristeza	el amor

Interpretación:

**Paso 2.** Vamos a mirar el anuncio con audio. Apunta más objetos, descripciones, y/o personajes del video.

**Paso 3.** Conversación e interpretación.

1. Según el anuncio, ¿son los macarrones y queso latinos? ¿Americanos? Explica.
2. ¿Por qué decide Kraft hacer un anuncio en español? ¿Piensas que es buena idea? Explica tu opinión.
3. Se dice que “la comida es la cultura.” ¿Qué significa?

Appendix 4: Ambassadors

INFORMATION	ANGLOPHONE SOURCE	FRANCOPHONE SOURCE
Your country		
Stereotypes or assumptions? Ex: Haiti is really poor, no one has a job, etc		
Article title (ex: "Haiti is Modernizing")		
Source title (ex: New York Times)		
Author (ex: Edwidge Danticat)		
Date produced (ex: Feb 10, 2011)		
Summarize the main ideas		
Note one thing that was remarkable (surprising, disturbing, contradicted what you previously thought, etc)		
How does this differ from the U.S. and any other country with which you're familiar?		

**Consejos para turistas extranjeros en los Estados Unidos**

**Antes de leer**

Haz una lluvia de ideas sobre los consejos típicos para turistas. ¿Son diferentes si viajes dentro de o fuera de los Estados Unidos?

**Mientras lees**

Consejo	¿Estás de acuerdo con el consejo o no? ¿Por qué? (Responde con oraciones completas.)	El consejo aplica a: turistas extranjeros o todos los turistas (incluso los de EEUU). ¿Por qué? (Responde con oraciones completas.)

**Después de leer**

1. ¿Cómo es el tono del artículo? ¿Cauteloso? ¿Positivo? Etc. Descríbelo.
2. ¿Qué puedes inferir del artículo sobre las actitudes hacia los estadounidenses?
3. ¿Qué puedes inferir del artículo sobre los valores culturales de los españoles?

Appendix 6: Art Historian

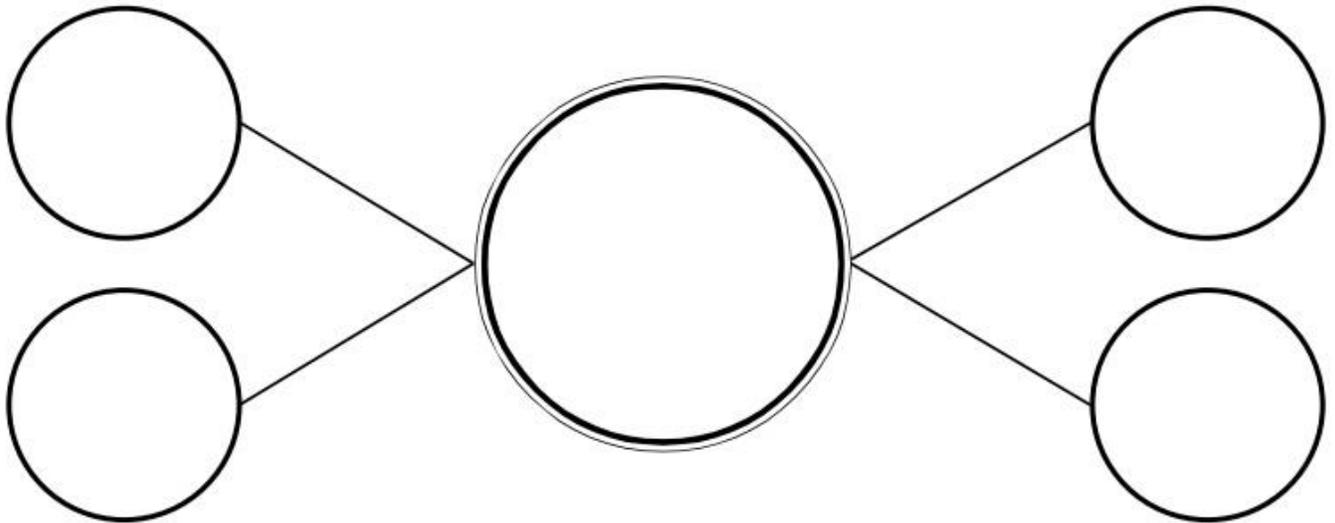
Students find a painting or other work of art from a TL culture (product). What clues indicate it's from that culture? What aspects challenge our assumptions of that culture? What clues does it offer to the time period, place, climate or geography of that culture/country? Identify a practice then hypothesize the perspective (less advanced classes may need more support from the instructor for this part). For ex: in Monet's painting "Essai de figure en plein air" (1836) a woman is holding a parasol (practice). It is designed to shelter her from the sun, presumably that was bad at that time. She might be wealthy and want to protect her complexion lest she be mistaken for working class (perspective).



<p>What kind of product is this? Do you think French culture values this product? Give an example to support your answer</p>	
<p>What clues indicate this product is French? (geographic features, clothing, apparent time period, historical figures, etc)</p>	
<p>Identify a practice in this piece (ex: why hold this object or wear a certain kind of clothing)</p>	
<p>Why do you think this practice is important to the culture and time period?</p>	

### **Part 1**

Place your name in the center circle of the structure below. In each of the satellite circles, write an aspect of your identity - an identifier or descriptor - that you feel is important in defining you. This can include anything: Asian American, female, mother, athlete, educator, Taoist, scientist, or any descriptor with which you identify.



Questions:

1. Share a story about a time you felt “included” or “respected” in relation to one of the descriptors used above.
2. Share a story about a time you felt “excluded” or “disrespected” in relation to one of the descriptors used above.

### **Part 2**

Name a stereotype associated with one of the groups with which you identify that is not consistent with who you are. Fill in the following sentence:

I am a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ but I am NOT a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.

## Appendix 8: Excerpt: The Blind Men and the Elephant

By Donelle Blubaugh - Peace Corps Volunteer: India (1965-1957)

Long ago six old men lived in a village in India. Each was born blind. The other villagers loved the old men and kept them away from harm. Since the blind men could not see the world for themselves, they had to imagine many of its wonders. They listened carefully to the stories told by travelers to learn what they could about life outside the village....

The old men argued day and night about elephants....Finally, the villagers grew tired of all the arguments, and they arranged for the curious men to visit the palace of the Rajah to learn the truth about elephants. A young boy from their village was selected to guide the blind men on their journey. The smallest man put his hand on the boy's shoulder. The second blind man put his hand on his friend's shoulder, and so on until all six men were ready to walk safely behind the boy who would lead them to the Rajah's magnificent palace.

When the blind men reached the palace, they were greeted by an old friend from their village who worked as a gardener on the palace grounds. Their friend led them to the courtyard. There stood an elephant. The blind men stepped forward to touch the creature that was the subject of so many arguments.

The first blind man reached out and touched the side of the huge animal. "An elephant is smooth and solid like a wall!" he declared. "It must be very powerful."

The second blind man put his hand on the elephant's limber trunk. "An elephant is like a giant snake," he announced.

The third blind man felt the elephant's pointed tusk. "I was right," he decided. "This creature is as sharp and deadly as a spear."

The fourth blind man touched one of the elephant's four legs. "What we have here," he said, "is an extremely large cow."

The fifth blind man felt the elephant's giant ear. "I believe an elephant is like a huge fan or maybe a magic carpet that can fly over mountains and treetops," he said.

The sixth blind man gave a tug on the elephant's coarse tail. "Why, this is nothing more than a piece of old rope. Dangerous, indeed," he scoffed.

The gardener led his friends to the shade of a tree. "Sit here and rest for the long journey home," he said. "I will bring you some water to drink."

While they waited, the six blind men talked about the elephant.

"An elephant is like a wall," said the first blind man. "Surely we can finally agree on that."

"A wall? An elephant is a giant snake!" answered the second blind man.

"It's a spear, I tell you," insisted the third blind man.

"I'm certain it's a giant cow," said the fourth blind man.

"Magic carpet. There's no doubt," said the fifth blind man.

"Don't you see?" pleaded the sixth blind man. "Someone used a rope to trick us."

Their argument continued and their shouts grew louder and louder.

"Wall!" "Snake!" "Spear!" "Cow!" "Carpet!" "Rope!"

"Stop shouting!" called a very angry voice.

It was the Rajah, awakened from his nap by the noisy argument.

"How can each of you be so certain you are right?" asked the ruler.

The six blind men considered the question. And then, knowing the Rajah to be a very wise man, they decided to say nothing at all.

"The elephant is a very large animal," said the Rajah kindly. "Each man touched only one part. Perhaps if you put the parts together, you will see the truth...."