



**VIDEO 2**

communication & **cultures**

## ABOUT COMMUNICATION & CULTURES

This 30-minute video takes an in-depth look at the Program Goal of Cultures. Following the eight-minute Communication Segment (included in each of Videos 2-5), there are several brief interviews and comments by teachers and others involved in LOTE education. These narratives present some important elements of teaching culture and provide real-world examples of how teachers implement Cultures into their language classrooms and why it is important to do so.

Also included is video footage of several classes where the current focus is the Cultures program goal.

- One teacher helps her students discover the significance of the café in French life through role-play and an innovative classroom setting.
- A teacher of Arabic discusses the importance of getting students to look beyond their preconceived notions of the Arab world in order to better understand its cultures which are rooted in civilizations that are thousands of years old.
- Teachers and students of Spanish celebrate *el Día de los Muertos*, using literature and other aspects of the holiday to gain a better understanding of the cultures behind it.

Throughout Video 2, the terms practices, products, and perspectives are used. Practices (what people do) and products (what people create, both tangible and intangible) are nothing new to the LOTE classroom. Language teachers know what these are for the cultures associated with the language they teach and integrate them into their lessons. The teaching and learning of perspectives (how people perceive things) is a more complex and somewhat new element in the teaching of culture. Connecting the three is important; there is simply no separating a culture's practices and products from its perspectives.

### Episode Breakdown



(0:00 – 1:19)  
I Portrayal of Culture



(8:29 – 12:24)  
II Reflections on Teaching Culture



(12:25 – 17:14)  
III Practices and Perspectives



(17:15 – 21:22)  
IV Dispelling Myths



(21:23 – 27:35)  
V Products and Perspectives

communication & cultures



### Use Video 2: Communication & Cultures to...

- Facilitate discussion about the elements and issues involved in teaching cultures.
- Review the concepts of practices, products, and perspectives and discuss their relative interdependence.
- Show several means of delivering cultural content in the LOTE classroom.
- Deliver the message that the learning of LOTE is inseparable from the learning of culture.

## CULTURES PROGRAM GOAL AND PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

**The student gains knowledge and understanding of other cultures.**

*The novice level student is expected to:*

- (A) demonstrate an understanding of the practices (what people do) and how they are related to the perspectives (how people perceive things) of the cultures studied; and
- (B) demonstrate an understanding of the products (what people create) and how they are related to the perspectives (how people perceive things) of the cultures studied.

*The intermediate (advanced) level student is expected to:*

- (A) use the language at the intermediate (advanced) proficiency level to demonstrate an understanding of the practices (what people do) and how they are related to the perspectives (how people perceive things) of the cultures studied; and
- (B) use the language at the intermediate (advanced) proficiency level to demonstrate an understanding of the products (what people create) and how they are related to the perspectives (how people perceive things) of the cultures studied.

### Goals for Participants

- To better understand the Cultures program goal in general and the concepts of practices, products, and perspectives in particular.
- To identify issues, concerns, and/or questions with regard to the teaching of Cultures.
- To practice identifying cultural perspectives associated with products and practices.

### Questions Addressed in Video 2: Communication & Cultures

#### Language and Culture are Inseparable.

*Teacher Arun Precash puts it well: “language is the portrayal of culture.”*

Why must culture be included as part of the LOTE curriculum? How much culture is enough? Do you see culture as an integral part of everyday lesson plans or as something separate to be done as its own unit?

#### The Learning of Cultures is Multi-Faceted.

*Students use their teachers’ knowledge, technology, study abroad, and their personal experiences to learn about target cultures.*

What local resources are there for delivering cultural content to students? If local resources are not plentiful, how else might teachers provide students with opportunities to learn about target cultures in meaningful ways? What are the benefits of making cultural content accessible in varied formats?

#### Cultures are Comprised of Practices, Products, and Perspectives.

*The study of cultures includes the observation and analysis of its products, practices, and perspectives.*

Do you integrate the concepts of cultural practices, products, and perspectives into language instruction? How do you see the relationship among the three? Can you identify the perspectives that influence the products and practices of the culture(s) associated with the language you teach? If you are not a native speaker, how do you verify your hypotheses about perspectives?

## TO THE SESSION LEADER

*Use a variety of grouping and processing strategies to lead participants through the activities associated with the **Video 2: Communication & Cultures**. Provide participants copies of the TEKS for LOTE and the worksheets referred to in the directions that follow, and gather any additional supplies needed to complete the activities.*

### PREPARATION

*Refer to worksheet 2.1 for the following activity.*

This video focuses on issues related to the teaching and learning of the Cultures program goal.

- Ask participants to take a few minutes to reflect and then write down three ways in which they currently use cultural content in the classroom for language practice and growth.
- Form small groups to compare these and list the different strategies they find.

### OBSERVATION

*Refer to worksheets 2.2.1 to 2.2.3 for the following activities.*

#### I Portrayal of Culture (0:00 – 1:19)

The teacher at the beginning of the video states that “language is the portrayal of culture.” Ask participants to think of specific examples or anecdotes to illustrate this statement and share with the group.

#### II Reflections on Teaching Culture (8:29 – 12:24)

In this segment, five individuals discuss various elements important to cultural content instruction. Ask participants to jot down what they think is the key point that each individual makes. Use the follow-up suggestions below to draw out their responses.

- Helen Nakamoto describes the Japanese business card and a perspective underlying it. Ask if there is a parallel example of such a product in the culture(s) they teach.
- Arun Precash demonstrates a greeting extended to women in India and tells why it is important to know about it. Elicit perspectives behind the tacit rules for greeting in American culture.
- Dan Bolen makes the point that learning about other cultures helps students increase their knowledge of their own culture, but he doesn't give any specific examples. Ask participants for examples, or have them tell about an “aha” experience they have had with regard to American culture as a result of learning something about another.
- Rose Potter mentions that the study abroad experience has benefits beyond those of a linguistic nature and refers to the broadened perspective that travel affords. Ask participants to think back on a learning experience they had in another culture that could not have been replicated in the classroom and to share it with a partner.

- Marybeth Hughes talks about how communications technology has enabled today’s LOTE students to learn in real time about the life experiences of someone from another culture. Ask about other kinds of technology besides e-mail that participants use to help learners connect with the target culture(s) in meaningful ways.

### III Practices and Perspectives (12:25 – 17:14)

In this segment, participants hear about the French classrooms of Rosalon Moorhead and Yvette Heno.

- Ask them to take a few minutes to list authentic materials they use or would like to use that could prompt a better understanding among students about target culture practices and perspectives.
- Encourage the whole group to share as you list their responses on a flip chart or an overhead transparency.

### IV Dispelling Myths, Encouraging Knowledge (17:15 – 21:22)

Two teachers discuss the importance of dispelling stereotypes in this video segment.

- After viewing this section, elicit examples of stereotypes they have heard their students express about members of the target culture(s).
- Elicit stereotypes they have heard about the “typical” American, and ask participants to discuss the misconceptions upon which they are based.
- Ask for volunteers to describe the types of activities they use to enhance knowledge and reduce stereotyping with regard to the target culture(s) they teach.

### V Products and Perspectives (21:23 – end)

In this video segment, several Spanish teachers share how they incorporate target culture products and perspectives on traditional Mexican holidays into their classes.

- After participants have viewed this portion of the video, tell them to fill in the chart on worksheet 2.2.3, hypothesizing about the target culture perspectives related to sample target culture products selected.
- Ask participants to reveal what new things the exercise helped them learn about the target culture.

## REFLECTION

*Refer to worksheet 2.3 for the following activity.*

Role-play can be an effective means for learning about a culture while practicing language skills.

- Prepare strips of paper, each with one of the products or practices listed below. Assign or allow groups to select one strip of paper about which they will prepare a role-play dramatizing the American perspectives associated with that product or practice.
- After each role-play is performed, ask observing participants to discuss the perspectives of American culture that they believe were portrayed. For example, for the product “fast food”, a role-play might show people gulping tasteless food in order to hurry back to work, illustrating the perspective that Americans consume fast food because time is valued more than the quality of their food.

- PRODUCTS: microwave ovens, HMOs, amusement parks, school-sponsored activities (e.g., sports, clubs), hired dog walkers, talk shows (e.g., Jerry Springer, Oprah), concealed weapons, “dry” counties, SUVs, storage units, NASCAR, all-you-can-eat buffets
- PRACTICES: one-stop shopping, road rage, going to a dog park, tailgating, working overtime, telecommuting, hiring a wedding planner

*For the Investigating Further (follow-up) activities, remember to obtain copies of the suggested readings and distribute them to participants in advance of the workshop. Participants will need to have studied some or all of the chapters/articles in order to complete most of the Exploration and Expansion activities. Evaluation worksheets should be provided at the end of the workshop.*

### EXPLORATION

*Refer to worksheets 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 for the following activities and readings for further study.*

Participants work in pairs or small groups to consider issues and concerns related to Cultures, to reflect on their own classrooms, and to choose from the readings for further study for more in-depth study of the issue.

- Ask participants to share ideas from the readings that they find most stimulating.
- To follow-up, pairs or groups select an authentic text. Suggest that they look back at their responses to Observation III on worksheet 2.2.2 where they list some authentic texts.
- They then develop a student-centered activity using the text they have chosen that will allow learners to compare an element of the target culture with their own culture.

### EXPANSION

*Refer to worksheets 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 for the following activities and recommended readings.*

Guide participants to read the teaching scenario and to reflect on it using the activities and discussion questions on the worksheet.

- The first three tasks ask them to reflect on what they have read, the use of the target language in their own classroom to discuss complex topics such as literature and culture, and the use of the target language with beginning-level learners. Use a variety of facilitation techniques from Appendix D to vary the discussion formats.
- In the final task, language groups develops a sequence of activities to allow learners to discuss a cultural topic at the appropriate proficiency level. Leave time for each group to share its sample activity sequence.

### EVALUATION

In Appendix E, you will find a self-assessment tool for teachers to use in evaluating their strengths and identifying areas for growth with regard to helping their students meet the Cultures program goal. Pass out photocopies of the *Teacher Competencies for Professional Development: Cultures Strand*. Allow time for participants to complete it on their own at the end of the workshop, or encourage them to reflect on it and fill it in at home.



## **PARTICIPANT WORKSHEETS**

**Video Viewing Worksheet**

**Investigating Further**



**PREPARATION**

Video 2 focuses on concepts related to the teaching and learning of the Cultures program goal.

Take a few minutes to reflect and then write down three ways in which you currently use cultural content in the classroom for language practice and growth. Compare answers with other participants, and see how many *different* strategies you find.



A large rectangular box containing 25 horizontal dotted lines for writing.





### III Practices and Perspectives

Rosalon Moorhead has converted her classroom into a French café in order for her students to learn about the important role that the café plays in French life. Yvette Heno uses information from the French news to host an American-style talk show, thus bringing a French perspective to American issues and media formats.

Take a few minutes to list authentic materials you use or would like to use to promote an understanding of target culture practices and perspectives. Share how you have gained access to useful target culture documents.



A large rectangular box containing 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

#### IV Dispelling Myths, Encouraging Knowledge

The cultures of less commonly taught languages such as Arabic are often enigmatic or completely unfamiliar to American students. Yvette Heno and Fadwa Saqer work to encourage knowledge of the Arab world and its long history as well as to dispel cultural stereotypes and misconceptions.

Share some stereotypes students may have about the peoples who speak the language you teach. Identify some stereotypes others may hold about the “typical American.” Provide examples of activities you use to enhance knowledge and reduce stereotyping with regard to the target culture(s) where that language is spoken.

#### V Products and Perspectives

Spanish teachers Aurora Hansis, Teresa Tattersall, and Yolanda Solíz talk about how they incorporate the products and perspectives of *el Día de los Muertos* into a classroom celebration of this traditional Mexican holiday. The products their students learn about and create (e.g., the satirical poems and skull/skeleton puppets) reveal information about Mexican perspectives on death (e.g., it is not necessarily scary and can be humorous).

Reflect on perspectives of the target culture(s) you teach as you complete the chart below.

**TARGET CULTURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

PRODUCT CATEGORY	EXAMPLE OF A PRODUCT FROM A CHOSEN CULTURE	WHAT THE PRODUCT REVEALS ABOUT UNDERLYNG PERSPECTIVES
Culinary Items		
Religious Artifacts		
Clothing		
Works of Art		
Educational System		
Transportation System		
Government		
Other		

## video viewing **worksheet**

2.3.1

### REFLECTION

Consider an American product or practice from among those offered by the session leader. Then think about the American perspective(s) reflected in it. Working with a partner, develop a brief role play involving the product or practice selected that dramatizes an associated American perspective. Present each role play to the whole group who will try to identify the perspective(s) portrayed.

PRODUCT	PRACTICE	RELATED PERSPECTIVE(S)

**EXPLORATION**

- Hoecherl-Alden (2000) says that “[t]hose who have attained basic knowledge of a second language alongside a list of cultural facts remain, for all intents and purposes, monolingual, having merely glimpsed the target culture and the language informing it.” Think about the degree to which the Cultures program goal is reflected in your classroom. To begin, consider the following questions:
  - Do you feel confident in your knowledge of a variety of target culture products and practices and your understanding of target culture perspectives related to them? Are you readily able to use technological resources to keep up-to-date?
  - Is culture a foundation of your curriculum or is it more of an “add-on” component? How much of what goes on in your classroom is based on the target culture and related products, practice, and perspectives? To what degree are themes approached from the perspectives of the target culture(s)?
  - Do you guide your students to explore the target culture through the observation and description of it? Do you guide them in hypothesis formation and refinement? Have you attempted to instill self-awareness in students with regard to their own culture? Do they also have access to target culture reflections on their culture?
  - How do you avoid stereotyping members of other cultures and help students to do so also? Is the target culture portrayed from a middle-class, mainstream perspective in your classroom or from a variety of social, economic, and geographic identities?
- Choose one or more of the readings for further study on page 46, and discuss with other workshop participants the ideas you find most stimulating.
  - What ideas did you uncover related to any concerns you might have had as you reflected on the preceding questions? Share one idea that stimulated you to want to undertake a new activity or unit of study with your students. Were there any ideas you did not agree with or understand?
- To follow up, based on ideas that you have gathered from the readings and discussion, choose a theme that your students would enjoy exploring. Imagine ways in which target culture products, practices, and perspectives could form the core of students’ exploration of the theme.

List four authentic texts (oral or written, including any technological resources such as the Internet, film, CDs, etc.) that you could use to introduce the theme. Choose one authentic text and, based on it, create a student-centered activity through which learners explore an element of the target culture and hypothesize on the related perspectives.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**For Further Study**

Galloway, V. (1999). Bridges and boundaries: Growing the cross-cultural mind. In M. A. Kassen (Ed.), *Language learners of tomorrow: Process and promise* (pp. 151-187). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook company. In this chapter, Galloway asserts that the traditional approach to teaching culture by “bridge-building” should give way to what she calls “growing the cross-cultural mind.” To this end, she proposes a complete paradigm shift from information sharing about other cultures to an individual process of inquiry and reflection, of hypothesis-testing. Culture becomes the sub-text for all “language” learning and for all other program goals. Galloway discusses the cross-cultural inquiry model through the lens of the 5 Cs and provides examples of many useful activities for engaging learners in this reflective process.

Lange, D. L. (1998). Planning for and using the new national culture standards. In J. K. Phillips & R. M. Terry (Eds.), *Foreign language standards: Linking research, theories, and practice* (pp. 57-135). (ACTFL Series) Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company. Lange contends that in spite of the attention devoted to it in the past forty years, the teaching of culture remains a superficial component of the language classroom. The National Standards Project and standards developed by individual AATs lead us away from an information sharing approach to culture learning and toward one in which culture is seen as an integral part of language learning. There are, however, issues related to national, state, and AAT standards for culture. These are discussed along with theoretical models for teaching culture, curricular organization, assessment, instruction, and research related to culture learning.

**EXPANSION**

In this video, a teacher explains that she uses only French in her classroom and insists that her students do so as well. How do you feel about her comments? Do you consider target language use in the classroom as a cultural “text”?

Read the following teaching scenario and then reflect on the questions that follow and/or discuss your reactions with your group. The suggested readings should help you prepare your responses.

**Learning Scenario**

The French teachers at George Washington High School have had numerous discussions lately in light of their desire to increase their students’ oral proficiency. Ms. Williams teaches Advanced Placement French IV classes at her school. She is quite pleased with her students; they do excellent work on their written assignments and read at an advanced level. They have no trouble understanding what she says in class, even though she conducts the entire lesson in French.

Ms. Williams feels it adds cultural authenticity to speak only French with her students. Her only disappointment is the students’ reluctance to use the language for what she considers real communication. They do not hesitate to read their answers to comprehension questions or to ask for a hall pass in French, but when she introduces discussion questions based on a reading, for example, she is hard-pressed to get anyone to make eye-contact, much less say anything in French.

Ms. Lane, the Level I teacher says she uses French for classroom management with her students who are beginners. When she uses French for other purposes, her students become frustrated and complain that they have no idea what she’s saying. Perhaps after they’ve studied the language longer...?

Mr. Carlson, the Level II teacher also uses French for classroom management; he conducts the class in French about half the time. He feels it is too difficult to teach grammar and especially culture using the target language; he does not want to slight those important components of the curriculum.

- 1) Do you agree that speaking only the target language adds to cultural authenticity of the classroom? Why do you think the AP students in Ms. Williams’ class do not respond to the discussion questions that she proposes? At what ACTFL proficiency level would you expect a language learner to be able to participate in an extemporaneous discussion: intermediate? advanced? superior? What do learners need to know and be able to do before they discuss a topic? What steps could Ms. Williams take to prepare her students to discuss a literary passage they have read?
- 2) What percent of the time do you expect a teacher to use the target language in a first year class? Why would learners get frustrated and/or complain when the instructor uses the language that they are there to learn? What are some strategies you can use to help students understand when you use the target language in class? What are some strategies your students need to acquire to help them understand when you are using the target language?

- 3) Do you believe the target language should be used with beginning students to talk about such potentially complex issues as cultural perspectives? If not, at what level do you expect students to be able to understand such an explanation? If so, are you willing to use English if your students simply don't "get it"? How have you been able to use the target language to help students learn about the target culture?
- 4) Think of a cultural topic you would like your students to be able to "discuss"—at the appropriate proficiency level. Use suggestions from the readings listed below to develop a sequence of activities that would prepare the students to be able to do so.

Include background knowledge students would need to understand the topic, related vocabulary and structures, communicative small group practice, etc. Share your ideas with other participants

### Recommended Readings

**David, R. L., & Siskin, H. J. (1994).** *I can't get them to talk: Task content and sequencing in the advanced conversation course.* In G. K. Crouse (Ed.), *Meeting new challenges in the foreign language classroom* (pp. 39-54). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company. Advanced oral skills are not an automatic outcome of having mastered the structures and lexicon of the target language. Nor does providing learners with an interesting topic of conversation necessarily lead to a lively discussion. Essential to the learners' ability to "discuss" a topic according to the authors is appropriate design and sequencing of tasks. The authors provide a sample unit that can be used as a model for teachers who wish to design speaking activities for their students.

**Omaggio Hadley, A. (1993).** *Teaching language in context, 2nd edition.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle. [See especially Chapter 5, "A proficiency-oriented approach to listening and reading" as it relates to the development of the listening skill (pp. 162-195) and Chapter 6, "Developing oral proficiency."] In chapter 5, Omaggio discusses the processes and skills involved in listening comprehension and recommends a plan for designing listening activities. The chapter provides numerous specific examples of activity types: pre-listening, listening for the gist, listening with visuals and many more. Chapter 6 addresses the development of learners' ability to speak the target language. Omaggio discusses characteristics of learners "interlanguage"—that less than perfect production of the target language that gradually approaches the "real thing"—and comments on its implication for instruction. Once again she recommends a plan for designing speaking activities and provides many specific examples.

