

Teaching Culture through Writing

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Why culture and writing?

Writing across any discipline can foster critical thinking and reflection. When we are asking students to do cultural comparisons writing can give students the time to be reflective and meaningful in how they think about and react to another culture. Writing also gives them a permanent record of their cultural knowledge and is a valuable resource for future reference.

It also gives teachers and students an opportunity to multi-task. Teachers can teach culture through writing and students can improve their writing skills while deepening their cultural knowledge.

What constitutes writing in a foreign language class?

Writing does not have to be a formal essay and at lower levels it most likely will not be. Writing can be as simple as one or two sentences or as complex as a ten page research paper. Under this criterion you will probably find that you already do have your students do some writing.

Some writing in lower levels can even be in English (gasp!) if your goal is to have students engage in critical thinking and reflection about a cultural topic (article, film, custom, experience) that they are incapable of doing in the L2.

How do I teach writing?

Teaching writing in a target language can be challenging because students do not always have good writing skills in their native language. Sometimes students who are good writers have difficulty transferring those writing skills into writing in another language. Students often have to be reminded or taught what constitutes good writing in general. It will help your students to do modeling of good writing and to give them examples of both good and developing writing in your target language.

Assessment

The combination of writing and culture is efficient and effective for standards based assessment. Teachers can use one piece of writing to assess both culture and writing standards. However, not all writing has to be assessed. Some writing can be used as a way to gauge students' prior knowledge, as the basis for a classroom discussion, or as a way to give students' practice in proofreading and peer-review. There are many different ways that writing and culture can be assessed. Some sample rubrics can be found at the end of this packet.

Translation

Sometimes teachers worry about their students' use of translation programs. One way to help regulate this is to have a translation policy you discuss with the students at the beginning of the course. It is usually fairly obvious when a student has used a translator program. One thing that will help students is to encourage them to not write their papers in English first and then try to translate them into the target language. This practice is often common among lower levels students and will often lead to some horrible translations!

Scaffolding

When teaching culture and writing it is advised to scaffold your assignment. It is difficult for first year students to have very complicated writing assignments in the target language. By slowly building up their writing skills students will gain writing fluency and competency throughout their language study. Scaffolding assignments as part of a writing/culture unit can involve tasks, such as, pre-reading, pre-writing activities, and peer review. In this packet you will find an example of scaffolding similar writing assignments through various levels.

Culture/Writing/Reading

Good writers are often good readers. Students will profit by having examples of writing, especially authentic realia, both as writing exemplars but also as starting point for discussion. In this packet, you will find examples of combining reading, culture, and writing.

Beginning

Capital Poster Project

Rubric

Name _____

For this project you will be working with an assigned partner to prepare a travel poster for the capital of a Spanish-speaking country. Your goal is to highlight the fun and exciting places and things that can be found in your capital city. You will be writing this poster in English. You will be presenting your poster to the class. You need to include the following items:

- __1. The name of your capital and the country.
- __2. A map showing where the capital is located in the country.
- __3. A slogan for your capital. Your capital may already have a slogan (for example New York City is called the Big Apple) or you may create one that is appropriate.
- __4. At least four pictures of places that would be great to visit in the capital AND captions with what activities a visitor would do there.
- __5. One three dimensional object (please no food items unless you have approval from your teacher) with a caption as to why it represents the capital.

Remember your poster should be culturally appropriate, positive, interesting and attract people's attention. The following would be examples of BAD SENTENCES!

- a. The population of Madrid is 3.3 million.
- b. San José is 17.23 square miles.
- c. México City is very contaminated.
- d. This is a picture of a museum.
- e. Come visit Lima, the capital of Argentina!

This project will be assess on the culture standard according to the following descriptions.

3 (4)- The assignment is culturally appropriate and on task (shows positive image of capital). Student demonstrates knowledge of practices and products of the culture.

2- Assignment is somewhat culturally appropriate and on task but fails in one area or more. For example, it may identify a certain building as being located in a certain capital that actually is in another capital.

1- Assignment demonstrates some or little cultural information about the capital but is missing information and is failing in many areas.

Intermediate

Proyecto de un país hispano con el pretérito y el imperfecto Nombre _____

By yourself or with a partner you will be creating a powerpoint about a Spanish-speaking country. You are to imagine that you have visited this country on vacation and you are writing a travel diary about your activities there. You must include at least ten pictures on ten different slides about the places you visited there and the activities that you did. You will be presenting this presentation to the class next week (most likely Thursday or Friday).

On each slide you must include:

1. An appropriate picture-make sure this is of a place that is in YOUR COUNTRY!
2. Two sentences-one sentence in the preterite and one sentence in the imperfect.

For example: Fuimos a ver una corrida de toros en Madrid.

Era muy emocionante!

You may not repeat any verb more than three times.

You will receive three grades for this assignment for each of the three standards of culture, speaking, and writing.

(10 points)For speaking you must have good pronunciation, appropriate pauses, and rate of speech. Would a native speaker understand you? If you work with a partner you must both speak.

(20)For writing you must use the preterite and the imperfect correctly. You must use a variety of vocabulary and verbs that would be appropriate for a Spanish 3 student.

(10) For culture you must include places and activities that can be seen/done in your country. For example, Bolivia is landlocked so it would be inappropriate to include a picture of the ocean in a presentation about Bolivia.



Slide example

Intermediate/Advanced

Presentación de la República Dominicana

In groups of three or four you are going to create a presentation about the Dominican Republic. You may create a Powerpoint or a prezi. You need to write in complete sentences in Spanish.

Your group will be randomly assigned either a resort or a community service project as the topic for your presentation. After you have received your topic follow the instructions for the corresponding topic below. You will be presenting your project to the class.

Resort- 4 slides/ 4 photos

1. A map of where the resort is located Un mapa de dónde está el resorte
2. What luxuries does the hotel have
3. How much does it cost to stay a week
4. What activities does the resort offer

Community service project- 4 slides/4 photos

1. A map of where the project is located
2. What problems does the location have
3. How do the volunteers help
4. How much does it cost to be a volunteer

Follow up questions: Is it okay for the Dominican Republic to have these extremely expensive resorts while there are people on the same island who are in severe financial need? What are the benefits and negatives to these resorts? Some of the community service project volunteers pay thousands of dollars to be a volunteer. Would it be better for them to just donate the money?



Resort in the Dominican Republic

Reading Example – University advanced beginner

S132 Lectura 1

¡A LEER! CAPÍTULOS 6 y 7

VENEZUELA Y ARGENTINA

Tú quieres viajar a Venezuela o Argentina y quieres leer más información actual (current) sobre el país. **Elige (Choose) un artículo actual (not older than one month old) de uno de estos periódicos** y escribe un resumen (summary) **en inglés** de las ideas más importantes y tu opinión sobre el artículo.



Before your summary, you should first include the article you read (copied and pasted from the original newspaper). The article should have at least 200 words. The purpose of this reading is to see how much you can understand of a Spanish language article using your language background and context clues. The article can come from any section of the paper but must have to do with some news event or person in that country; not reporting news about foreign people or countries. Your summary should be a recap of the main ideas of the article in your own words (not run through online translation program) and your reaction to the reading (what did you think of the news, was it difficult for you to understand, etc.) and will be written in **English**. As you work on this project, please keep in mind that the IUPUI Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct also applies to the use of translation software (for more information refer to the class syllabus).

Once you write your review and have copied and pasted the article, please submit a printed copy by the due date posted in the syllabus.

Venezuela

<http://www.eluniversal.com/>

<http://www.el-nacional.com/>

<http://www.laverdad.com/>

Argentina:

<http://www.clarin.com/>

<http://www.revistaenie.clarin.com/>

<http://www.clarin.com/deportes/>

Reading Example – S132 (university advanced beginner)

Lee la leyenda de “la china poblana” y complete las actividades que siguen **en español**.

A. Escribe de siete a diez palabras desconocidas y defínelas o da una traducción.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

B. Escribe una descripción de Catalina con frases completas.

C. Escribe un resumen (summary) de la leyenda (100-125 palabras)

University advanced beginners (I also have a version in English for beginners)

Webquest para “La Historia Oficial”

Usa el internet para contestar las siguientes preguntas en preparación para la película “La Historia Oficial” que vamos a ver el 27 de septiembre. Tienes que entregar este webquest en Oncourse para las 12:00 pm del 27.

1. ¿Qué fue la “Guerra Sucia” de Argentina? ¿Cuándo ocurrió? ¿Quién tiene el poder?

2. ¿Quiénes eran “los desaparecidos?” ¿Cuántas personas calculan que desaparecieron?

3. ¿Quiénes son “las abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo?”

4. ¿Qué castigo, si hubo, recibieron los líderes de la Guerra Sucia?

Ve a los siguientes sitios lee información acerca de los desaparecidos y las adopciones forzadas de los bebés de los desaparecidos. Después, escribe 2-3 párrafos acerca de lo que aprendiste.

<http://www.yendor.com/vanished/s-index.html>

<http://www.desaparecidos.org/arg/victimas/index.html>

University Intermediate Low

Composición 1 - “cajas de cartón”

En una redacción de un mínimo de 15 oraciones completas, explica los varios significados del título del cuento. Incluye detalles del texto para ilustrar tu interpretación.

Composición 2 - “Un lugar en el mundo”

En una redacción de un mínimo de 15 oraciones completas, explica la importancia de los estudios para el doctor y el joven en el cuento. Luego, explica tus propias creencias acerca de una educación universitaria.

“Sin nombre”

Prueba de redacción

Con ayuda de diccionario escribe una redacción de 15-18 oraciones por 30 minutos sobre uno de los siguientes temas:

A. El momento climático

Explica cuál es en tu opinión el punto decisivo de la historia y por qué. Incluye ejemplos específicos de la película.

B. Otro fin

Imagina que los maras no encuentran a Willy en México y que llega a los EEUU. ¿Qué le pasa? ¿Adónde va? ¿Cómo es su vida?

C. La jornada de Sayra

Cuenta de lo que crees que le pasa a Sayra después de que termine la película. ¿Qué le pasa? ¿Cómo será su vida? ¿Ha mejorado su situación?

Movie Pre-viewing Reading Example

También la lluvia es sin duda la gran aventura cinematográfica de Icíar Bollaín (Madrid, 1957). Después de historias intimistas y de personajes - *Hola, ¿estás sola?*, *Flores de otro mundo*, *Te doy mis ojos* o *Matahari*, - Bollaín se ha enfrentado con *También la lluvia* a su película más ambiciosa. El filme, el primero que no escribe ella, es parte de un guión de Paul Laverty, el guionista habitual de Ken Loach y compañero sentimental de la realizadora. Rodada en Bolivia, en la selva del Chapare y en la ciudad de Cochabamba, el filme es una gran producción que ha movido miles de extras, 4.000 en total, de ellos cerca de 300 indígenas, un equipo de 130 personas y más de 70 localizaciones, casi todas ellas en exteriores. *También la lluvia* es una película dentro de una película. Narra el rodaje en Bolivia de un filme de época en torno al mito de Cristóbal Colón, un hombre obsesionado por el oro, cazador de esclavos y represor de indios. Es el año 2000 y la población boliviana, una de las más pobres de Suramérica se levantó contra las autoridades políticas y la multinacional norteamericana Bechtel que intentó subir de manera disparatada el precio del agua. El oro y el agua. El pasado y el presente. La lucha por la dignidad de un pueblo. "Los bolivianos nos enseñan que hay bienes que no son privatizables" declaraba la directora Icíar Bollaín que firma su película *También la lluvia*. Un film que enmarca una historia dentro de la historia. Un equipo de cineastas desembarca en Bolivia en abril del año 2000 para rodar una película que pretende retratar el papel de los conquistadores explotando a los nativos para llenar de oro las arcas españolas. Así el equipo desembarca en Cochabamba, la tercera ciudad del país en importancia de Bolivia. Pero, justamente, al mismo tiempo los habitantes del país se enfrentan a la decisión del Gobierno boliviano de privatizar el agua. En septiembre de 1999, impulsado por el Banco Mundial, la multinacional Bechtel firmó un contrato con Hugo Banzer, presidente electo y antiguo dictador de Bolivia, para privatizar el servicio de suministro de agua de Cochabamba. El contrato fue adjudicado a la empresa Aguas del Tunari, un consorcio empresarial en el que Bechtel participaba casi en un treinta por ciento. Como consecuencia de esta privatización se elevaron los precios sobre el 50 % y se prohibió la recogida de agua de lluvia. Así se desencadenó una protesta masiva entre los meses de enero y abril del 2000 en el que se impuso la ley marcial y la policía boliviana mató al menos a seis personas e hirió a casi doscientos manifestantes. La respuesta popular fue de tal calibre que en medio del colapso de la economía nacional y el aumento de los disturbios sobre el estado de la misma, el gobierno de Bolivia finalizó el contrato de aguas. Este episodio se conoce como La Guerra del Agua de Cochabamba.



<http://somos-agua.blogspot.com/2011/04/tambien-la-lluvia.html>

http://www.scribd.com/fullscreen/54000644?access_key=key-vl8s2nytrzbh4o1qapv

University Intermediate Mid/Intermediate Advanced

Composición 1 – S204

También la lluvia

Escoge uno de los siguientes temas para escribir una composición de un mínimo de 200 palabras. Recuerda que va a escribir la primera versión de la composición la próxima clase en un laboratorio de computadoras. Puedes tomar apuntes durante la película y usarlos para ayudarte en la redacción pero no puedes escribir la composición en casa.



1. ¿Qué crees que es el mensaje fundamental que la directora, Ecíar Bollaín, nos quiere transmitir con la película? Da ejemplos concretos de la película para mostrar eso.
2. Usando ejemplos de la película, ¿Qué conexiones podemos hacer entre las dos partes de la película, o sea, lo que pasa en la película de Cristóbal Colón y en el mundo moderno? Puede ser las conexiones entre los personajes, temas, etc.
3. ¿?

Reading assignment #1 rubric

(English summary of newspaper article)

OVERALL CONTENT

1 2 3 4 5	little or no information given on topic
6 7 8 9 10	weak summary; demonstrates a lack of understanding of the article; provides little or no reaction to the article's content
11 12 13 14 15	summary could be more thorough; demonstrates some understanding of the article; provides little or no reaction to the article's content
16 17 18 19	a somewhat thorough summary with good supporting details; demonstrates a good understanding of the article; provides reactions to the article's content
20 21 22 23	a thorough summary with strong supporting details; demonstrates an excellent understanding of the article; provides thoughtful reactions to the article's content

ORGANIZATION

- 1 unclear and not sequential; mainly a series of choppy, disjointed or incomplete sentences
- 2 somewhat unclear and not sequential; choppy or disjointed; may not have complete sentences
- 3 fairly clear and sequential
- 4 clear and sequential

ARTICLE CHOICE

- 1 article met neither the required content nor length
- 2 good article but did not meet requirements in both content and length
- 3 excellent article that met requirements in content and length

Total _____ (out of 30)

Comments:

Composition rubric – first draft

OVERALL CONTENT

- | | | | | |
|----|----|----|---|--|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | little or no information given on topic |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | | covered little of the required topic with few supporting details |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | | required topic not well covered with supporting details |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | | covered all or most of the required topic with good supporting details |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | | covered the required topic thoroughly with strong supporting details |

ORGANIZATION

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | unclear and not sequential; no paragraphing; no introduction &/or conclusion; no transitions |
| 2 | somewhat unclear and not sequential; poor paragraphing; weak or missing introduction &/or conclusion; transitions weak or missing |
| 3 | fairly clear and sequential; fairly good paragraphing; slightly weak introduction &/or conclusion; transitions weak or missing |
| 4 | clear and sequential; good paragraphing and use of transitions; good introduction and conclusion |

LANGUAGE ACCURACY

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1-2 | frequent use of English words or phrases; many very basic vocabulary and grammatical errors |
| 3-4 | occasional use of English words or phrases; many basic vocabulary and grammatical errors |
| 5-6 | many phrases seem directly translated from English; some basic vocabulary and grammatical errors |
| 7-8 | use of mostly Spanish phrasing; good attempt at grammar and vocabulary accuracy |
| 9-10 | generally accurate Spanish phrasing; errors few and/or expected in first draft quality |

COMPREHENSIBILITY

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | many errors in grammar, vocabulary, and structure impair comprehensibility, less than 1/2 understandable |
| 2 | many errors in grammar, vocabulary, and structure but still mostly comprehensible |
| 3 | occasional phrases may be difficult to understand due to errors in grammar vocabulary, and/or structure |
| 4 | totally comprehensible |

Total ____ (out of 33)

Comments: