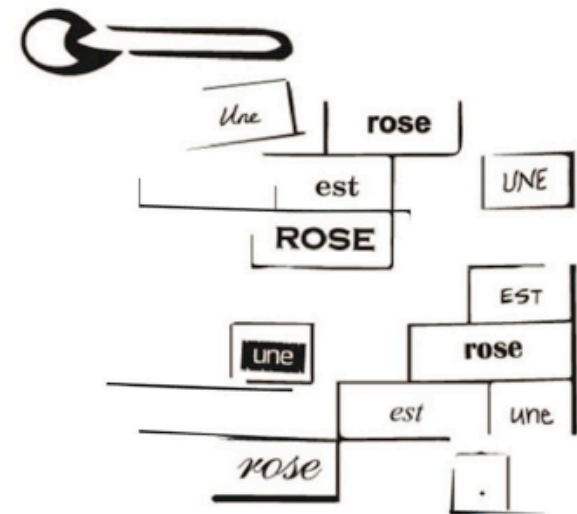# Beyond the Frame:
Becoming Teachers and Students of Meaning

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WORLD-READINESS STANDARDS FOR LEARNING LANGUAGES

GOAL AREAS	STANDARDS		
COMMUNICATION Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes	**Interpersonal Communication:** Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.	**Interpretive Communication:** Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.	**Presentational Communication:** Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers.
CULTURES Interact with cultural competence and understanding	**Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives:** Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.	**Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives:** Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.	
COMPARISONS Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence	**Language Comparisons:** Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.	**Cultural Comparisons:** Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.	
COMMUNITIES Communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world	**School and Global Communities:** Learners use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world.	**Lifelong Learning:** Learners set goals and reflect on their progress in using languages for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement.	

Activity from ACTFL *Language Educator*

1. Students receive a web link to the Munich Oktoberfest that embeds several live webcams and a worksheet for finding information about products and practices: what the hours are, how many tents there are, and what kinds of souvenirs are available.

2. Students watch one of the webcams and note down what they see.

3. Students then write an essay, addressing the following points:

   – **Describe** what you saw on the webcam.

   – **Compare** what you saw **with what you expected to see**.

   – **Explain** what you realized about the Oktoberfest event and the role it plays in Munich, Germany, and the world.

Presentation Objectives

- Present an approach for developing cultural competence borrowed from the field of Ethnography

- Utilize this approach to *reframe* the learning outcomes for the example activity

- Provide a quick look into the beyond for further implications

Principles of ahypothetical research from Ethnography

The essence of the ethnographic approach is the idea of **radical empiricism**: engaging with the particular as your interlocutors explain it, which allows you to be *surprised* by findings you could not have anticipated. The goal is understanding how key words and concepts are defined by cultural participants and then comparing this to your own categories and perspectives.

To carry out interpretative research, the ethnographer strives to adopt a stance of **intentional innocence**, which involves suspending your own interpretations, meanings and assessments.

- Begin by identifying your framing notions about the cultural event.

- Prepare to carry out a **depth interview** to document cultural participants' native categories/local meanings, assessments and interpretations.

- Compare your data to arrive at a 3rd dimension of understanding, interpretations that come to light from the interplay between insider/outsider perspectives.

Notes from lecture by Johanna Schoss, Cornell, 2007

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Reframed Activity:
Task 1 – Developing questions for a depth interview

- Students work in small groups to note down their assumptions and expectations about the cultural event. (*framing*)

- Groups watch a webcam and note observations. Afterwards they identify *tension points* in their observations: products/practices that were different from expectations and products/practices that *might* be different from their expectations.

- Groups identify who/what types of people they would interview (raising questions about **possible differences of perspective** within the national culture: generational, socio-economic, gendered...).

- Groups write a list of **questions** they would ask their cultural participants in order to get at **native categories/perspectives**.

- Class compares and compiles a master list of questions.

Reframed Activity:
Task 2– Gathering data to arrive at perspectives

1. Groups carry out one of the following activities:

   – Interviewing cultural participants in the community or via Skype (using the depth interview questions from Task 1)

   – Reading an L2 news article or sociological study about the phenomenon

   – Reading an L2 passage from a literary text or watching a scene from a film that addresses the phenomenon

3. Groups note tentative responses to the master list of questions, providing evidence from their native sources for their responses.

4. Groups report findings and the class compiles a set of interpretations about cultural perspectives plus any further questions that might seem useful. (*reframing*)

Social reading via eComma:
Evaluating the meaning of foreign words

"We are limited, here, by our ability to work with a word in French while not knowing exactly what it translates to in French. Does *interminable* [have] the exact same [meaning] in French as it does in English? If so then 'Un baiser interminable' carries a negative connotation: a kiss that's unbearably, almost annoyingly long and dragged out. But, in French, *interminable* may also translate to other, less loaded words, such as perhaps "endless." Then, connotation changes: perhaps the author isn't put off by the extravagance of the kiss but, rather, admires it?"

Student comment from case study – Luks, "Using L1 in L2 Reading":

https://ecomma.coerll.utexas.edu/l1/

Questioning a text

The National Reading Panel concluded that teaching students to generate questions is the most effective single-strategy approach for enhancing and monitoring comprehension.

Generating questions:
1. Stimulates active participation in the reading process.
2. Activates background knowledge.
3. Helps students monitor comprehension.
4. Helps the reader discover and process multiple conceptual levels of a text.

Urlaub, "Questioning the Text: Advancing Literary Reading in the Second Language Through Web-Based Strategy Training," *Foreign Language Annals*, Vol. 46, 2013, p. 510

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