

## Introduction

Chances are good that if you are reading this guide, you speak a language other than your mother tongue. That process of learning another language is what you are being asked to guide your students in. If you have spent any time in a foreign language classroom, you probably remember some interesting lessons and some less interesting ones. If you have left the area of your mother tongue and gone elsewhere, you probably remember a few days where you had communication successes and the ever memorable days of communication failure. This guide has been put together to help you, the teacher of a less commonly taught language (LCTL), use authentic materials in your classroom. Two questions often asked are, “What is an authentic material?” and “Why should I use it in my classroom?”

### What is an authentic material?

Nunan and Miller (1995) define authentic materials as those which were *not created or edited expressly for language learners*. This means that most everyday objects in the target language qualify as authentic materials. The following list, although not exhaustive, provides a wide sampling of authentic materials that can be used in the LCTL classroom.

Day to day objects:

- train schedules
- pictures of road signs
- business cards
- labels
- menus
- brochures
- receipts
- currency

Broader:

- music
- literature
- newspapers
- television programs
- radio broadcasts
- film
- internet websites

### Why should I use authentic materials in my classroom?

Teachers of less commonly taught languages have the advantage of generally having more motivated students who have looked beyond the field of commonly taught languages. These motivated students may enjoy the interesting facets of grammar and vocabulary, but probably eagerly anticipate being able to communicate and interact in this new language. Teaching grammar and vocabulary in isolation may produce good

readers and listeners, but without guided exposure to authentic language samples students may be less able to reach their goal of using the language.

On the level of day to day teaching, authentic materials can make individual lessons more interesting or salient. Teaching commands is a common part of language instruction and can be done straight from a grammar text. However, a more motivating, rich source of commands is also found in advertisements and instruction manuals. Using these authentic materials to teach the same point may help students remember the grammatical construction better and give them a sense of how the construct can be used in various contexts. Similarly, language classes often begin with greetings, but it may be difficult for students to grasp or remember how to greet whom as the social norms dictate. A video clip may be a helpful means of presenting these concepts and forms.

On a broader level, consistent use of authentic materials in the classroom keeps students grounded in the reality of the language, helping them to recognize that there is a community of users who live out their lives in this other language. Exposing students to authentic materials can also help them better understand the target culture and envision how they might participate in this community. For example, instead of introducing food vocabulary in the target language by providing equivalent translations in the students' native language, the teacher can instead introduce students to food vocabulary via an authentic menu, asking students to deduce the meanings of unfamiliar food items from context. Once meaning has been established, the vocabulary words can become part of a communicative exercise where students describe what is in a dish or role play a restaurant scene, requesting certain items. In this way not only do students acquire new vocabulary but they also are exposed to typical ethnic foods found on menus.

### **How do I get authentic materials?**

There are various resources available online (some on this website even). But many authentic materials can be small items that can either be mailed by friends from the language area or picked up by you the teacher as you travel. With a little forethought, this does not have to be a major expense or hassle.

### **How do I use authentic materials?**

Often times the printed book seems like an easier teaching tool than adding in authentic materials. This may not be the case. With a little practice and creativity (or idea borrowing), incorporating authentic materials into your lesson will not take you more time than lesson planning would in general. This website has an annotated bibliography that can direct you to some books and articles that can serve as a valuable source of guidance. It also contains sample lesson plans designed around a variety of authentic materials.

### **Using the lesson plans on this website**

The sample lessons on this website are intended to stimulate your thinking on using authentic materials in *your* language classroom. For each authentic material type, you will find a cover page with an overview or rationale. Following this will be several lesson plans that use the material type in different ways. These lessons are formatted according to the *TESOL New Ways* guidelines. This includes a helpful caveat and options

section at the end of each lesson to help you think about how to modify the sample lesson to fit your needs. Additionally, some lesson plans include sample worksheets. These may be helpful to see different ideas for creating worksheets to guide student activities. A certain amount of planning will still be necessary on your part in order to adapt them for your use. For example, you will note that the lesson plans are not written with any specific LCTL in mind. This means that in adapting the lesson, you will need to locate appropriate materials in your LCTL and make adjustments in the lesson procedures based on factors such as the proficiency level of your learners, their needs and interests, etc. With that caveat in mind, we sincerely hope that the lesson plans on this website will help you arrive at new and innovative ways to use authentic materials and make your teaching more enjoyable. Best of luck!

*If you would find it helpful to print this guide out in its entirety, a copy is available in [pdf format](#).*

## Annotated Bibliography for Authentic Materials Use

### General

Larimer, R. E., & Schleicher, L. (Eds.). (1999). *New ways in using authentic materials in the classroom*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Nunan, D., & Miller, L. (Eds.). (1995). *New ways in teaching listening*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Both of these books from TESOL's New Ways series are well organized and creative. *New Ways in Using Authentic Materials in the Classroom* has lessons covering a wide range of authentic materials from television and radio to newspapers, maps, and recipes. This book is perhaps one of the best introductions to using authentic materials. *New Ways in Teaching Listening* devotes part III to "Listening to Authentic Materials." Like the rest of the New Ways series, each lesson is formatted so that you can quickly see the targeted level, aims, class time, preparation time, and resources. Lesson procedures are detailed step-by-step; and are followed by caveats and options, references and further readings, and appendices as appropriate.

Penfield, J. (1987). *The media: Catalysts for communicative language learning*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

While a bit older, this book still provides many low-tech authentic material ideas in an organized fashion. Perhaps the best feature of this book is chapter four, *Adapting Media to the Classroom*. For teachers who are unfamiliar with using authentic materials in the class, this chapter has good suggestions. The actual lessons in this book cover a variety of everyday media: TV, radio, magazines, newspapers, freebies, telephone tapes, etc.

### Print

Grundy, P. (1993). *Newspapers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Newspapers are increasingly posting their content on the internet. This provides fresh, accessible, authentic materials for teachers of LCTLs. So while this book was published for English language teaching, teachers of LCTLs can find various creative ideas for using newspapers in the classroom. Grundy's book is part of a series by Oxford University Press, *Resource Books for Teachers*. This entire series is helpful, but this book is particularly recommended because the lessons are easily adapted to the LCTL.

Steinberg, J. (1992). *Watcha gonna learn from comics*. Markham, Ontario: Pippin.

Comics are not necessarily the first thing that come to mind when one thinks about authentic materials; however, they can be great fun for a class providing

concise glimpses of a particular grammatical feature or cultural value. If you have access to comics in your LCTL, this is a good book to thumb through. The first section has general suggestions while the remainder of the book has specific comics the author has compiled. LCTL teachers probably don't want to buy this book, but it is worth a look if you are interested in incorporating comics into the classroom.

## **Literature**

Bassnett, S., & Grundy, P. (1993). *Language through literature: Creative language teaching through literature*. Singapore: Longman.

Collie, J., & Slater, S. (1987). *Literature in the language classroom: A resource book of ideas and activities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

If you love your LCTL, it is likely that you will have some of the works of literature from your LCTL. Literature is classic "authentic" material. These books give lesson ideas that make literature accessible. Collie and Slater focus on particular works of literature in English which are certainly adaptable to LCTLs; however, unless you are really committed to teaching literature you may not wish to spend your money here. If you are looking for an extensive example of different lessons that may be developed from one piece of literature, Bassnett and Grundy devote a chapter with sixteen lessons illustrating this. This book is more focused on poetry and is light on grammar. However, if you aren't teaching a course in literature but would like to incorporate it in some fashion, this is a good starting point.

## **Video**

Altman, R. (1989). *The video connection: Integrating video into language teaching*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Lonergan, J. (1984). *Video in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stempleski, S., & Tomalin, B. (1990). *Video in action*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Stempleski and Tomalin have compiled an easy-to-peruse set of lessons using authentic video materials. These materials may range from advertisements to music videos to whole feature films. If you are simply looking for ideas, *Video in Action* is a great place to look.

Altman and Lonergan have written books that are not focused on the ESL/EFL classroom, which makes these books that much more accessible to teachers of LCTLs. Altman, in particular, is good at raising issues to consider for teachers new at using video material. There is a three-chapter-long general introduction to using videos in the classroom as well as chapters on "Video in Lower-Level

Language Courses,” “Composition and Conversation Courses,” and “Video and the Law.” Lonergan takes a slightly different focus with sections on note taking skills, differing registers for different situations, as well as controlled language practice.

## **Music**

Cranmer, D., & Laroy, C. (1992). *Musical openings: Using music in the language classroom*. Essex: Longman.

Griffiee, D.T., (1992). *Songs in action*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Music can be both near and dear to LCTL teachers’ hearts and a profitable classroom venture for their students. These two books approach music in the language classroom from two different, helpful angles.

Griffiee’s book is an excellent resource for teachers seeking to use the language in songs to highlight features of the LCTL. It has sections on “Vocabulary Extension,” “Listening Development,” “Writing Development,” and so on. Particularly helpful is its lack of reliance on specific songs. Some books for EFL/ESL teaching concentrate too much on English language pop songs that would not be useful for teachers of LCTLs.

Cranmer and Laroy, on the other hand, intend for music to be used to springboard students to language use. They suggest activities in which students listen to music and respond with specific grammatical structures or by creating narratives. This book is particularly appropriate if the teacher has instrumental music available from the culture of the LCTL.

## **The Internet**

Boswood, T. (1997). *New ways of using computers*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Dudeny, G. (2000). *The Internet and the language classroom: A practical guide for teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Windeatt, S., Hardisty, D., & Eastment, D. (2000). *The Internet*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

English still seems to dominate the Internet, but LCTLs are starting to make their appearance. Most notably [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) has taken the challenge head on and allows searching in quite a number of languages. Thus if you have reliable Internet access personally and/or for your class, these books will give you ideas and point you in directions you may not have previously considered. It helps if you yourself are already comfortable with computers and with surfing the

Internet. If your LCTL does not have an alphabet that corresponds with the keyboard you have available, realize that this may pose an added challenge to your lesson plans and students.

Boswood's collection of lessons is probably the most generic and general. Dudeney's collection is quite original and inventive but dependent on the variety that is available in English and may not be in your LCTL. Windeatt et al. include lessons that have a grammar focus, which lends a valuable perspective.

## **Annotated Bibliography of Selected Journal Articles on Authentic Materials Use**

### **General**

Pino, B.G. (1990). *Culture-authentic materials in the foreign language classroom*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED340235)

Sawicki, G. (1992). *Teaching foreign languages in a multicultural setting. A Ford Foundation diversity initiative project. Instructor's reference manual*. New York: Queens College of the City University of New York. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED360853)

These two articles give a general overview of authentic materials use. Pino has a particularly good list of what constitutes authentic materials. Sawicki provides rationales for their use and some samples of authentic materials in a variety of languages.

### **Technology, computers, Internet**

Brandl, K. (2002). Integrating Internet-based reading materials into the foreign language curriculum: From teacher-to student-centered approaches. *Language Learning and Technology*, 6(3), 87-107. Retrieved July 12, 2003, from <http://lt.msu.edu/vol6num3/brandl/>

As the author writes, "This article focuses on the exploration of authentic materials as available on the WWW in primary visual and verbal/textual modes." In a concise, thoughtful article, Brandl helps foreign language teachers consider ways to integrate authentic materials found on the Web into their classroom. This article has the additional convenience of being readily available online.

North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction. (1999). *Technology: The common language. A guide for integrating technology in the foreign language class*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED445554)

At 396 pages, this guide is far more exhaustive than Brandl's article. It provides sample lessons for various forms of media such as films, video, and audiocassettes. It also describes lessons that may be created from different forms of software from word processing software to databases, spreadsheets, and presentation software. Like Brandl's article there is a section on the Internet.

## Fair Use

*The purpose of the following explanation is to raise the issue of fair use; it should not be construed as legal counsel.*

Teachers are seldom the creators of the authentic materials they incorporate into lessons. This being the case, how to fairly and legally collect and use authentic materials becomes a salient issue. The laws governing proprietary rights in America are robust but not without ambiguity. The laws governing the authentic materials that the LCTL teacher uses will vary from originating country to originating country. Here, American law will serve as the basis for discussion.

Duane Goehner has written an overview<sup>1</sup> of the general issue in which he explains that there are three primary arguments supporting copyright laws: “to reward authors for their creative works; to encourage availability of the works to the general public; and to facilitate access and use of the works by the public in appropriate situations.” While there are incentives that motivate us to protect the copyrights of creators, the US Copyright Act of 1976 explicitly allows the fair use of copyrighted material *for teaching and research purposes*.

Generally speaking, using realia such as newspapers, cereal boxes, and song lyrics does not pose a legal problem for teachers. The University System of Georgia has posted a lengthy document<sup>2</sup> that highlights how quickly a relatively simple legal use of copyrighted material can become a murkier situation. Currently, the biggest complication in the U.S. these days is related to the Internet broadcasting of lessons. If you teach distance education classes that are being broadcast over any media, please consult your institution for further guidance on the issue.

Whether this applies to your language context or not, in the U.S. great consideration is given to the effect the use of the copyrighted material has on the potential economic value of the copyrighted work. Thus it behooves the teacher to tread lightly or not at all in the realms of mass dissemination and profit making. If the use of the material returns a profit to the teacher or allows many people to access the material without paying the creator, the teacher may be beyond the limits of fair use.

Meanwhile much of the realia used by LCTL teachers will originate from countries outside of the United States and may be subject to a different set of laws.

## Links

➤ [www.copyright.iupui.edu](http://www.copyright.iupui.edu)

This site contains “New Copyright Law for Distance Education: The Meaning and Importance of the TEACH Act” Teachers involved in distance education will find this pertinent and useful.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.goehner.com/copyright.htm](http://www.goehner.com/copyright.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.usg.edu/admin/legal/copyright/>

➤ <http://www.cetus.org/fairindex.html>

The electronic version of *Fair Use of Copyrighted Works*. It also contains links to fair-use guidelines and other resources that are intended to promote a fuller understanding and appreciation of copyright laws.

➤ <http://james-boyle.com/>

Extensive site by James Boyle, Duke University Law School on public domain and copyright issues.

## Using Signs in the LCTL Classroom

### Sample Lesson Plan Overview

**Level:** Beginning

**Aims:** Promote literacy in languages where learners are encountering either a non-alphabetic language or a language that uses an alphabet they are unfamiliar with

**Class Time:** Variable (30 min-several class periods)

**Preparation Time:** Variable (20 min-1 hr.)

**Resources:** Pictures of street signs; shop signs, billboards, etc.; activity related worksheets

Encountering a language that is written with an unfamiliar alphabet or symbols can be very frustrating for learners since it causes them to feel illiterate. To lessen the feelings of frustration, it is useful for teachers to focus on literacy skills using familiar contexts such as street or shop signs. Such an activity has a dual focus: It allows learners to use their deductive skills to decipher and sound out words while at the same time enabling them to acquire high-frequency vocabulary.

The following two lesson plans promote literacy skills using a fun, game-like atmosphere.

- **Bob's Pizzeria—Literacy bingo with street or shop signs**
- **Shoe Repair—A mad dash for spelling**

## **Bob's Pizzeria—Literacy bingo with street or shop signs**

**Level:** Beginning

**Aims:** Practice literacy

**Class time:** 30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Resources:** 16-24 pictures of street and shop signs mounted, worksheet

The game bingo, with its universal appeal, is used here to provide a game-like atmosphere for students to practice their developing literacy skills in the LCTL. In the first phase of the activity, students decode words related to street or shop signs, transcribe them using a familiar alphabet, and assign meaning to each word. They then prepare individual bingo boards and play literacy bingo to enhance their mastery of the unfamiliar alphabet/symbols and to reinforce mastery of new vocabulary.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, locate 16-24 pictures of street signs.
2. Prepare a worksheet for the activity (see appendix).
3. In class, post the pictures around the room (using tape or blue gum).
4. Handout worksheets to pairs and have students go around to all the pictures to fill out the top portion of their worksheet (providing a transcription and a guess at what the word is).
5. After students finish, go over the words with the students.
6. In the bingo phase, explain the rules for the game and pass out bingo cards to all students.
7. Have students fill out their grid by randomly placing the numbers corresponding with words into the bingo grid without duplicating numbers.
8. Put all the words on slips of papers and drop them into a hat
9. Call on student volunteers to come to the front of the room and select a slip from the hat to read aloud. Seated students should mark the square on their bingo grid that corresponds with the word they hear.
10. The first one to a bingo wins. Bingo is achieved when a row of squares are filled either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. Mounting them on heavy construction paper or cardboard and/or laminating them will increase their durability.
2. As an alternative to tape or blue gum, small magnets can be used to affix posters to most blackboards or whiteboards.
3. With minimal pairs, this activity could be easily modified to become a pronunciation drill.

4. If you don't have enough pictures of signs, use cognates or recognizable names (Lenin, Dar es Salaam, etc.)
5. Distributing small prizes (e.g., candy, pencils) to the bingo "winners" adds to the fun of the activity.

## Appendix

Word	Transcription	Meaning		
1. <b>автомойка</b>	av <del>v</del> f <del>f</del> tomoika	car wash/ gasoline station?		
2.				
3.				
▮				
-etc.				
▮				
Fill in the following boxes with numbers between 1-24 in any order without repeating numbers.				
		<b>Free Space</b>		

## **Shoe Repair—A mad dash for spelling**

**Level:** Beginning

**Aims:** Practice literacy and spelling

**Class time:** 20-30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Resources:** A handful of pictures of street and shop signs mounted and legible at a distance; two sets of alphabet letters that correspond to the words on the signs; a certain amount of free space to move around in

This game-like activity gets students out of their seats, thus employing their kinesthetic sense to promote literacy acquisition. Students compete in teams to line up and correctly spell the street or shop signs. In this way, they enhance their mastery of the unfamiliar alphabet/symbols and reinforce mastery of new vocabulary.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, locate 5-6 pictures of street and shop signs which are visible at a distance (3-4 meters away). It is best if the target words on the signs have been previously presented.
2. On index cards or small pieces of tag board, prepare two sets of letters that correspond to the words on the signs. Put one letter of the alphabet (or, if desired, consonant clusters) on each card.
3. Separate students into two groups and hand each group a set of letters to distribute amongst themselves.
4. Present a sign and read it.
5. Have students rearrange themselves to spell the sign. When they are in order, ask them to pronounce the word in unison. The first team done scores a point.
6. Repeat this procedure for each sign.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. This activity will not work well for languages without an alphabet (e.g., Chinese).
2. Mounting the signs on heavy construction paper or cardboard and/or laminating them will increase their durability.
3. It is important that the students have adequate letters to spell the words, especially if there are many duplicated letters.
4. If there are multiple words on a sign, highlight verbally or visually the target word.
5. Giving bonus points for meaning can add to the fun of this activity.
6. If you don't have many students, give each student a letter per hand. This makes the game rather like twister.

## Using Magazine Pictures in the LCTL Classroom

### Sample Lesson Plan Overview

**Levels:** Beginning-Advanced

**Aims:** Introduce vocabulary and grammatical forms; serve as a discussion stimulus of cultural practices

**Class Time:** variable (30 min-several class periods)

**Preparation Time:** variable (20 min-1 hr.)

**Resources:** Magazine pictures, with or without captions; activity related worksheets

Visual aids do not have to simply be side adornments for lessons. With a little thought, they can be the basis for lessons on a wide variety of topics--ranging from culture to idioms to grammar. Well-chosen pictures have a larger context with a wealth of implicit vocabulary and forms that can be exploited for language teaching.

**What do we have here?—using magazine pictures**

**Let's explore together - Using magazine pictures to inspire research**

## What do we have here?—using magazine pictures

**Level:** Beginning-advanced

**Aims:** Provide students with the language necessary to express uncertainty, practice descriptive adjectives

**Class time:** 30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** Magazine pictures

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but which thousand words? It may not always be immediately clear what “story” the picture/advertisement is telling. In this lesson, students practice describing what they know and inferring what they don’t know.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, locate engaging magazine pictures (see example in appendix). It may help to mount them for durability.
2. In class,
  - a. Present a picture. Ask students for a description of the picture, encouraging them to ask questions about the scenario.
  - b. Note student responses on the blackboard or overhead.
3. Turn the questions into statements of various degrees of certainty.
  - a. “Are they at a party?” → “They could be at a party.”
  - b. “Is the boy his son?” → “The boy probably is his son.”
  - c. “Why is the man wearing a suit?” → “The party might be very formal.”
4. Formally introduce ways of express uncertainty (e.g., modal verbs, adverbials of uncertainty).
5. Tell students that this is a picture taken at a local wedding, and include any relevant information about local wedding traditions.
6. Elicit hypotheses about the picture using the forms presented.
  - a. That man probably is a friend of the groom.
  - b. The boy might be his nephew.
  - c. They could be playing a game they often play.
7. Groups students into pairs or groups of 3-4,
  - a. Give each group its own picture
  - b. Tell students that the pictures are a clue about the people in the picture.
  - c. Have students pretend to be detectives and ask them to write out 3-4 possible conclusions about the people in the pictures.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. This activity can be tailored to any level by simplifying (or making for complex) the questions asked about the picture or the language focal point.

2. Multiple pictures can help beginners use adjectives describing color, emotion, weather, etc.
3. The lesson could be part of a larger lesson on local wedding traditions or celebrations.

Acknowledgements:

Picture used with permission from Andrea Wong.



## Let's explore together - Using magazine pictures to inspire research

**Level:** Beginning-advanced

**Aims:** Provide students with opportunity to find out more about a cultural landmark, practice descriptive adjectives

**Class time:** 10 minutes for the first phase of the lesson, 25 minutes for the second phase

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** Magazine picture

Virtually all cultures have a famous image that is known beyond its borders such as Mt. Kilimanjaro, the Taj Mahal, the Great Wall of China, or Lenin. In this activity a famous picture from the culture is used to inspire students to do some outside research and collaborate to gain mutual understanding.

### **Procedure:**

1. Phase one
  - a. Before class, locate a large picture of a famous cultural image from the target language culture. This may be a building, geographical feature, person, etc.
  - b. Present the picture to the class. Elicit descriptions of the picture and its significance. If students do not know the image at all, ask students to guess what the picture is and why it might be an important cultural symbol. List student contributions on the board.
  - c. For homework, ask students to do research to find out more about this image. They may do the research in any language, but class discussion will be conducted in the target language as always.
2. Phase two
  - a. In the following class period, put students into groups of 3-5. Have students write a list or paragraph on what they found out about the history of the image, its location (unless it is a person), its role in contemporary society, etc.
  - b. Have groups send one representative to the blackboard (or overhead) and take turns to list interesting information about the picture.
  - c. When the list is complete, ask students what was the most interesting fact presented and why.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. This activity can be tailored to any level by simplifying (or making more complex) the questions asked about the picture or the language focal point. It may be good to send students home with specific points to try to find.
2. A grammar focus can be highlighted for the writing section of the lesson.

## Using Postcards and Greeting Cards in the LCTL Classroom

### Sample Lesson Plan Overview

**Levels:** Beginning through advanced

**Aims:** Develop literacy skills; expand cultural knowledge base

**Class Time:** Variable (30 min-several class periods)

**Preparation Time:** Variable (20 min-1 hr.)

**Resources:** Postcard and greeting cards

Postcards and greeting cards are a readily available and low cost source of authentic materials. They are also particularly adaptable for a wide variety of teaching purposes. For example, they can be used to develop students' literacy skills and to acquaint students with important sites, monuments, and attractions in the target culture. As well, they can also be used as a springboard for class discussion of humor, holidays, etc. in the target culture.

The following two lesson plans provide ideas for using these formats in the LCTL classroom.

- **Happy New Year!—Celebrating holidays through greeting cards**
- **Dear Susy, I'm having a great time in Venice... - Using postcards to introduce letter writing**

## **Happy New Year!—Celebrating holidays through greeting cards**

**Level:** Beginning-low intermediate

**Aims:** Practice literacy, learn holiday greetings and cultural icons

**Class time:** 30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Resources:** 4-5 holiday greeting cards

Discussion of holidays in the LCTL is an important teaching practice since knowledge of the origins of local holidays and the customs and practices associated with them is an integral part of students' cultural competence in the target language. This entertaining lesson, aimed at beginning to low intermediate students, uses greeting cards to focus on the language used to celebrate holidays in the target culture.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, do the following:
  - a. Locate 4-5 greeting cards;
  - b. Make overhead transparencies of the cards;
  - c. According to the number of students, make sets of the greetings on slips of paper;
  - d. Prepare a worksheet for the activity (see appendix).
2. Using the overheads, present the greetings and practice reading the greetings with the class.
3. Pass out the slips of paper and have the students stand up, move around the room, and simultaneously read out their greetings until they find the other students with matching greetings. The other students with matching greeting are now their new group mates.
4. In their groups, give them the original of their card and ask them to fill out the worksheet.
5. Follow up by asking each group to present details about their cards.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. If you do not have an overhead projector available, you can write the greetings on the whiteboard or blackboard.
2. For more advanced learners, make the worksheet activity more complicated.
3. If students have already learned holiday greetings, this can be a warm of activity before having students write a holiday letter.

Appendix

**Holiday Greetings!!!**

1. What holiday is this card for?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

2. What colors are on the card?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name the main items on the card (e.g. boy, girl, dog, etc.)

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Dear Susy, I'm having a great time in Venice... - Using postcards to introduce letter writing**

**Level:** Intermediate--advanced

**Aims:** Learn letter writing forms, practice writing short notes

**Class time:** 30-40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Resources:** Several postcards from the target language area or greeting cards, set of sample text cut up

Postcards are an excellent means of acquainting students with major sights and attractions in the target culture. They also provide an excellent point of departure for simple letter writing activities. In this introductory writing lesson, students are familiarized with the genre of postcard writing through an information exchange activity.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, do the following:
  - a. Locate several postcards or greeting cards;
  - b. Write several sample letters which correspond with the cards, cut them up, and put the pieces in an envelope (see appendix).
2. Put students in groups of 3 and pass out an envelope to each group. Have the students arrange the parts of the letter in correct order.
3. Once the letters have been arranged, ask volunteers from each group to take turns reading their complete letters.
4. Highlight to students the different greetings and closings used.
5. Ask students for alternate greetings or closings they already know; list these on the board.
6. Hold up the original cards and have students guess which letter goes with which card.
7. Give each group its matching original card and ask them to write their own letter using the greetings and closings presented.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. If the letters are significantly different, you may pass out the parts of all the letters to all the students in the class and have them move around the classroom to find the students holding the matching parts of their letter.
2. As a follow up writing assignment, have students find their own postcard and write a greeting to a friend.

**Acknowledgments:**

This lesson plan was inspired by Andrea Kahn.

Appendix

Sample letters:

<p>Hi Sam,</p> <p>I'm sending you a postcard from the beach. My brother and I went swimming yesterday. Have you gone swimming lately?</p> <p>Have a great summer! Yours truly, Ted</p>	<div data-bbox="1192 417 1338 539" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 90px; height: 58px; margin-bottom: 20px;"></div> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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*Dear Shirley,*

*Happy New Year! I celebrated the new year with my family in Detroit. As we do every year, we spent all day in the kitchen making food. I hope you're having a great time with your sisters and brothers in Grand Rapids.*

*Best wishes,  
Martha*

## Using Product Labels in the LCTL Classroom

### Sample Lesson Plan Overview

**Level:** Beginning-intermediate

**Aims:** Increase food-related vocabulary; foster literacy and critical thinking skills

**Class time:** 30-40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** Assorted product labels

The following two lesson plans exemplify ways in which recipes can be used promote general literacy and critical thinking skills while enhancing students' knowledge of food and nutrition-related vocabulary.

- **Can you eat this? - Using product labels to hunt out allergic ingredients**
- **Does everything have salt in it? - Thinking about ingredients**

## **Can you eat this?—Using product labels to hunt out allergic ingredients**

**Level:** Beginning-intermediate

**Aims:** Practice literacy and problem solving

**Class time:** 30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** multiple product labels, worksheet

Food allergies are a fact of life. For people with these allergies, it is critical to know the ingredients in their food. This lesson, aimed at beginning to intermediate students, sends students on a product label hunt to find food that are safe and acceptable for people with allergies.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, do the following:
  - a. Locate five or six food product labels from different sorts of products. These labels must include the ingredients of the item.
  - b. Mount the labels (or a photocopy thereof) on something sturdy (e.g., construction paper or cardboard) and place them on the walls around the room.
  - c. Prepare a worksheet to guide students through the activities (see appendix)
2. In class, present a sample food product label with the graphic first. Have students guess what the product is. If students know any food words, ask students to guess the ingredients in the product. Otherwise, present the ingredient portion of the label. Highlight the primary (non-chemical) ingredients and review their pronunciation with the students.
3. Pass out the worksheet to pairs of students and have students move about the room to fill it out.
4. When students have completed the worksheet, wrap up by asking them to share their conclusions.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. Beginning students will not know what the ingredients are but can practice literacy by skimming for information.
2. For more advanced students who already know the meanings of the ingredients, this can be transformed into a gap activity where some students are given allergies and other students are given ingredients. Student move around the room to find out what allergic students can eat.

## Appendix

The following people have allergies and cannot eat certain foods. Put a check mark under the foods that the person can eat and guess what their allergy is.

<b>Person</b>	<b>Peanut M&amp;M</b>	<b>Bread</b>	<b>Sausage</b>	<b>Cheese</b>	<b>Guess the allergy</b>
John (peanuts)					
Susy (milk)					
Mark (eggs)					
Alice (wheat)					

## **Does everything have salt in it? - Thinking about ingredients**

**Level:** Intermediate—advanced

**Aims:** Practice generalization, learn food words

**Class time:** 30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** One product label, blackboard, overhead, worksheet

Because of growing government regulations, more and more food products today list the ingredients on the product label. This, in turn, helps inform the food-consuming public of the nutritional value of the product's contents and helps to alert consumers to ingredients that may harm their health in the long run. This lesson involves a fun brainstorming activity that stretches students' knowledge of food ingredients, increases their food-related vocabulary, and raises their consciousness as consumers.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, do the following:
  - a. Locate a product label for a food product that is comprised of one primary ingredient. (e.g., tomato sauce, peanut butter, bread, etc.).
  - b. Prepare an overhead or poster of the ingredients.
  - c. Prepare a worksheet (see appendix) for group work.
2. Present the product label. Discuss the product with the students, asking questions such as...
  - a. What is it?
  - b. What is their opinion of it? Do they like it or not?
  - c. What is the primary ingredient in it?
  - d. What other ingredients might it have
3. Note student contributions to the above discussion on the board.
4. Present the overhead or poster of the ingredients for comparison
5. Ask students to name other products that contain the primary ingredient.
  - a. Note contributions on the board
6. Pair students and pass out the worksheet (see appendix).

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. As a follow up activity, ask students to write a paragraph or two about their favorite food and which ingredients makes it their favorite
2. For a competitive class, group students and have students brainstorm in their groups the other products that contain the primary ingredients.

Acknowledgements

The lesson plan was inspired by Victoria Holder.

## Appendix

Choose 3 products we named with flour in it. Answer the following questions.

1. List the three products you have chosen:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name two other ingredients that all three have in common:

a. *Salt* \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name three other ingredients that are unique to each product:

a. Product 1:

b. Product 2:

c. Product 3:

4. Which product would you be willing to eat every day?

## Using Recipes in the LCTL Classroom

### Sample Lesson Plan Overview

**Level:** Beginning through advanced

**Aims:** Learn food names, cooking verbs, target-culture-specific units of measure, become familiar with some target culture meals, practice imperatives (or other grammatical points), etc.

**Class Time:** Variable (30 min-several class periods)

**Preparation Time:** Variable (20 min-1 hr.)

**Resources:** Recipes in target language, activity related materials (handouts, poster, overhead, etc.)

Who doesn't like to eat? Who doesn't like to know what's in what they're eating? Knowing a few simple dishes from another culture can go be fun and exciting. Being able to go home and make it is even better. Learning through recipes makes all this possible. Recipes are a great authentic material because they tend to be written with a limited set of vocabulary and grammatical forms. They are also an integral part of the target culture and can easily become the springboard for different language and culture-related learning opportunities.

The following two lesson plans exemplify ways in which recipes can be used to achieve specific language teaching objectives.

- **“Do you have 60 milliliters of miso?”—A recipe ingredient exchange**
- **Poach, boil, or sauté?—How to make a meal**

## **“Do you have 60 milliliters of miso?”--A recipe ingredient exchange**

**Level:** Beginning--intermediate

**Aims:** learn units of measure, practice food words, practice making requests, confirmations, and denials

**Class time:** 40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Resources:** sets of four recipes, ingredient cards, blank recipe cards, visual aids of food, blackboard

In this activity, students need to negotiate with their partners to determine which ingredients are needed to make a given dish. They then describe in detail the process whereby the different ingredients are combined to make the dish.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, locate four simple recipes (e.g., from target language cookbooks or magazines). Using index cards, write the names of all ingredients in the recipes each on a separate card. You will need a set of 4 complete recipes and ingredient cards for each group of 4 students. (e.g., for a class of 20, you will need 5 sets of recipes and ingredients).
2. In class, review with students already familiar food words. You may do this through flashcards or games such as pictionary. You can also go around the classroom round robin style asking students to complete the sentence, “I like to eat \_\_\_\_\_” and list the students’ contributions on the blackboard.
3. As needed, introduce new food words and units of measure relevant to the chosen recipes.
4. Divide students into groups of four, giving each member of the group a different recipe. Then have the students evenly deal out the ingredient cards among the group members.
5. Within their groups, have students ask each other questions to find the ingredients needed on their card by asking, for example, “Do you have 60 milliliters of miso?” Students trade cards back and forth until all students have the ingredients they need.
6. In their groups, have students write out the ingredients necessary for a dish of their own choosing. Using either a dictionary or pictures, have students describe how to put the ingredients together and cook it.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. Be careful to choose recipes according to level of the students or you may be teaching too many new food words.
2. You may wish to split the class up into buyers and sellers and have students “shop” for their ingredients

3. This activity can easily be made more complex for more advanced students by incorporating the grammar and vocabulary that describes the mixing and cooking of the ingredients.

**Acknowledgments:**

This lesson plan was inspired by Bonita Hagman.

## Poach, boil, or sauté?—How to make a meal

**Level:** Intermediate

**Aims:** learn cooking verbs, practice food words, practice imperatives (or other salient grammatical feature)

**Class time:** 40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Resources:** sets of four recipes, worksheet, blank recipe cards, visual aids of food, blackboard

This lesson combines a grammatical/lexical focus (imperative forms of verbs used in cooking) with familiarizing students with the target language cuisine. Student creativity is also tapped in that students are asked to create their own recipes and share them with other members of the class.

### Procedure:

1. Discuss with students whether they prefer to use recipes or not when they cook. Ask for volunteers to describe how to cook their favorite dish.
2. Review already familiar cooking verbs and present new ones, as needed.
3. Divide students into groups of four giving each member of the group a different recipe from the target language culture.
4. In their group, have students fill out a worksheet grid showing which recipes use which cooking verbs (See Appendix).
5. On a blank recipe card, have students write their own recipes.
6. Collect recipes and redistribute randomly for students to continue filling out the worksheet.

### Caveats and Options:

1. It would be helpful to ascertain how much your students know about cooking.
2. You can give culinary-inclined students one or two ingredients (i.e. chicken, potatoes, plantains) and have the group create different recipes using that one ingredient.
3. You may wish to use the worksheet to highlight a particular grammatical feature (e.g., imperatives) pertaining to the form of the verbs in recipes
4. Bringing one of the dishes among the recipes is always exciting for students.
5. Visual aids such as actual pots, pans, and stirrers may be helpful.
6. A total physical response (TPR) lesson is possible if some dough is pre-made and students are taught the verbs associated with making dumplings, pies, etc. Each student could have his/her own piece of dough to work with, or may work in groups.

Appendix: Worksheet

Recipe name	Boil	Sauté	Fry	Bake

**Acknowledgments:**

This lesson plan was inspired by Bonita Hagman.

## Using Menus in the LCTL Classroom

### Sample Lesson Plan Overview

**Level:** Beginning-intermediate

**Aims:** Increase food-related vocabulary and descriptive adjectives; practice pronunciation; practice language related to decision-making

**Class time:** 30-40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** Assorted product labels

Menus provide an easily accessible source of authentic materials that can be used to teach a wide variety of skills. They also provide a point of departure for talking about target language cuisine and can lead to experiential learning, with students either sampling local cuisine or following recipes to make dishes themselves.

The following three lesson plans exemplify ways in which recipes can be used promote general literacy and critical thinking skills while enhancing students' knowledge of food and nutrition-related vocabulary.

- **Excuse me, what's xiao long bao? - Practicing pronunciation with menus**
- **Where should we eat tonight? - Practicing problem solving with menus**
- **How much are fish and chips? - Menu gap activity**

## **Excuse me, what's xiao long bao? - Practicing pronunciation with menus**

**Level:** Beginning

**Aims:** Practice pronunciation, learn food-related vocabulary

**Class time:** 30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** Menu, prepared food (optional), pictures of a popular dish (e.g., of food items, restaurant settings) (optional)

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, do the following:
2. Locate a menu in the target language
  - a. Prepare enough copies of the menu for students to work individually or in pairs;
  - b. (Optional) Where possible, located a visual (e.g., a photo, a magazine picture) of a popular dish on this menu.
  - c. (Optional) Prepare one of the dishes on the menu to bring to class.
  - d. Begin class by passing out copies of the menus to students.
3. Draw their attention to the selected dish on this menu.
4. Elicit student reactions in the following manner:
  - a. Ask if any students are familiar with this dish and/or have ever tried it?
  - b. If so, have them share their experience with the rest of the class.
  - c. Elicit general reactions to the dish from the students using their available vocabulary (e.g., delicious, too spicy).
  - d. If you have actually prepared the dish, allow students to sample it and again elicit descriptions or opinions (e.g., hot, cold, tasty, disgusting)
5. Configure students into pairs or small groups.
6. Allow 2-3 minutes for them to study other dishes on the menu and circle any food vocabulary that they are unfamiliar with.
7. Going around the room, elicit from students the food items they were unfamiliar with. Have them guess what these words might mean, noting the new food vocabulary on the blackboard.
8. Practice pronunciation of these items with the whole class, drawing attention to stress, tone, differences between spelling and pronunciation etc.
  - a. For further literacy and pronunciation practice introduce the form:
  - b. "What is \_\_\_\_\_?"
9. Have students take turns asking this question of each other, using the newly-learned food vocabulary.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. Certainly making a dish and bringing it into class is optional, but usually fun for students to see this sort of "authentic material".

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2. Once this activity is completed, it would not be difficult to convert this into a bingo game.

## **Where should we eat tonight? - Practicing problem solving with menus**

**Level:** Intermediate—advanced

**Aims:** Practice the language of decision making

**Class time:** 30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 40 minutes

**Resources:** Menus, cue cards

Deciding among friends where to dine out can be a difficult endeavor since different people's preferences provide limits on what restaurant to select. The process is even more complicated when attempted in a foreign language. Using restaurant menus, this activity helps students acquire the necessary language to negotiate this decision-making process and reach an agreement on where to go for dinner.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, do the following
  - a. Locate 3-4 menus in the target language
  - b. Using index cards make cards expressing different
    - i. Budgets
    - ii. Food preferences (type or even allergies)
  - c. Make enough copies of the menu so that each group of 3-4 students has one of each menu.
2. In class, introduce culturally appropriate words of negotiation such as:
  - a. "In my opinion..."
  - b. "Let's not forget to consider..."
  - c. "What do you think?"
3. Present the decision-making activity to the students.
  - a. Each group has a set budget (either total or per person) as noted on their group index card
  - b. Each person in the group has a set of preferences as noted on their individual index cards
  - c. Each group has several different restaurants and menus to choose from.
  - d. The goal of each group is to decide on the best place to have dinner that night.
4. Pass out the necessary materials.
5. Move around the classroom to monitor and assist groups.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. If the activity needs to be made more complex, information about the restaurants can be provided (e.g., how near or far away it is, how many people are there at dinner time, whether there is outdoor seating, live music, etc.)

2. Depending on the level of the students more vocabulary or phrases may need to be introduced.

## **How much are fish and chips? - Menu gap activity**

**Level:** Intermediate

**Aims:** Practice exchanging information

**Class time:** 30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** Menu, worksheet, index card

Being able to ask targeted questions about food dishes, prices, ingredients, etc. is an almost necessary survival skill in foreign countries. It is also a particularly difficult skill for learners to acquire as they need to overcome their hesitancy to ask information questions in the target language. This activity uses an information gap technique to help intermediate-level learners acquire a repertoire of basic questions they can ask in the LCTL about menu items.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, do the following
  - a. Locate a menu in the target language
  - b. Make two sets of the menus, each set with different descriptions and prices erased.
  - c. Make a worksheet (see appendix).
  - d. Prepare index cards with preferences on them (preferences should be broad and simple (e.g., You want beef for dinner. You have \$10 in your pocket and you want a dessert.)
2. Present how to ask clarifying questions
  - a. "Excuse me, what is in \_\_\_\_\_?"
  - b. "And how much does that cost?"
3. Pair students up and give each student a different menu copy and a different preference card.
4. Working together, students should fill out the worksheet.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. At the minimum, you can use two different preference cards giving every pair the same different preferences. For variety, you can make many different preference cards and have students share their different discoveries.
2. Depending on student exposure to restaurant terms and local food, you may need to present those as well.

## Appendix

You and your partner have menus with missing information. Working together, ask each other questions so that you can fill out the following blanks.

1. Name your budget \_\_\_\_\_.
2. List 4 dinner items that are within your budget.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Name your preference \_\_\_\_\_.
4. List 4 dinner items that fit your preference.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
5. If your budget is large enough name a dinner and dessert that you could order.
  - a. Dinner\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Dessert\_\_\_\_\_

## Using Brochures in the LCTL Classroom

### Sample Lesson Plan Overview

**Levels:** Beginning-advanced

**Aims:** Practice skimming for information; reinforce key vocabulary; call attention to grammatical patterns; practice requests for information

**Class Time:** Variable (30 min-several class periods)

**Preparation Time:** Variable (20 min-1 hr.)

**Resources:** Brochures, activity-related materials (handouts, poster, overhead, etc.)

Brochures pervade almost all aspects of our lives. We look at them in doctors' waiting offices, pick them up at travel agencies or airports when we travel, request them from educational institutions when enrolling in courses, receive them (unsolicited) in the mail, etc. Although we tend to often view brochures as a nuisance, they remain an important source of information. In fact, comparing the information in brochures is one of the main ways we arrive at decisions about which services are the best given our needs. Armed with carefully selected brochures, the teacher of LCTLs can easily transform the authentic activity of comparing brochure copy into a useful, pedagogical task.

The following two lesson plans exemplify ways in which brochures can be used to achieve specific language teaching objectives.

- **A place to rest our weary heads--Selecting accommodations using hotel brochures**
- **Getting down to the basics – Determining key information from medical brochures**

## **A place to rest our weary heads--Selecting accommodations using hotel brochures**

**Level:** Beginning-low-intermediate

**Aims:** Scan for specific information; make decisions based on comparison of data

**Class time:** 30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Resources:** Class sets of hotel brochures, preferably with pictures; handout (see appendix); overhead transparency of the blank information table

Being caught in a foreign city with no accommodations can be a frustrating experience. For this reason, travelers frequently plan in advance where to stay and book their accommodations in advance, either by telephone or (increasingly today) via the Internet. Hotel brochures (available through travel agents or at airport hotel desks) provide travelers with important information on which to base their decisions. In this activity, students scan assembled hotel brochures and arrive at a group decision where to stay in a foreign city.

### **Procedures:**

1. Before class, do the following:
  - a. Locate a variety of hotel brochures for a given city in the target country. Try to find brochures in the LCTL that do not contain a translation into English. See Caveats and Options 5 if these are unavailable.
  - b. Prepare enough copies of the brochures to distribute sets to groups of 3-4 students.
2. Ask students what kind of planning they do when they travel to a foreign city. Do they consult a travel agent? Write for travel information? Consult the Internet? Etc.
3. Brainstorm with them what features they typically look for when they make hotel reservations. List the information you elicit on the board.
4. Instruct students that the activity they are about to do concerns reading hotel brochures, filling out an information table with comparison data, and making a decision where to stay in a foreign city. Tell them they will have 10 minutes to complete the activity and should be prepared to present their decision to the rest of the class.
5. Put students into groups of 3-4. Give each group a set of hotel brochures and a copy of the appendix.
6. After 10 minutes (or when students have finished), ask for volunteers from different groups to come up to the overhead projector and fill in the blank information in the columns.
7. Ask other groups if they want to add additional information or if they disagree with what has been presented.
8. Ask groups which hotel they decided to stay in and why.

9. For homework, ask students to locate 2-3 hotels in the target country that have Internet sites. Ask them to print out the information and come prepared to class to make a brief report on their findings. (Optional)

**Caveats and Options:**

1. If no overhead projector is available, the teacher can reproduce a blank information table on the blackboard while students are busy working in their groups.
2. Since brochures are readily available, it is a good practice to collect enough of any given brochure to compile a class set. This saves on copying costs and also has the advantage of appearing more authentic to students.
3. Besides hotels, any number of other brochure types also work equally well (malls, restaurants, nail salons, massage parlors).
4. In lieu of brochures, you can also have students search the Web to find relevant information sites. Directions for the activity and links to the various hotels can be posted to the class webpage.
5. To make the activity more interesting, teachers can give different “identities” to each group. For example, “You are a group of businessmen who are only staying the night in the city before departing for your next appointment. You prefer a hotel near the airport.” In this option, students will also have to provide a rationale for why this hotel was best for their group.
6. Many brochures may be written in English as well as in the LCTL since brochures are often produced with tourists in mind. In this case, you may wish to give the students copies with the English translation deleted. Alternatively, for advanced students you may wish to have them comment on the translation and/or locate portions of the original text that were not included in the English translation.

## Appendix

**Directions:** For each hotel brochure, fill in the missing information. An example is provided.

<b>Hotel Name</b>	<i>The Mayflower Hotel</i>	<b>Hotel A</b>	<b>Hotel B</b>	<b>Etc.</b>
<b>Address</b>	<i>Yafet St., Hamra Beirut</i>			
<b>Contact #s</b>	<i>T: 961 1 340680 F: 961 1 342038 mayflo@dm.net.lb</i>			
<b>Room Rates</b>	<i>\$US 65-120</i>			
<b>Size</b>	<i>85 guest rooms/suites</i>			
<b>Special services:</b>	<i>Tours, car rental, on call doctor, currency exchange</i>			
<b>Amenities</b>	<i>Rooftop pool; Duke of Wellington English pub; restaurant; guest access to the St. Georges private beach club</i>			
<b>Location</b>	<i>In Hamra shopping district close to the cornice area and the American University of Beirut</i>			

## Getting down to the basics – Determining key information from medical brochures

**Level:** Beginning-low-intermediate

**Aims:** Become acquainted with target-culture norms for educating the public about health related issues, learn related grammatical forms and vocabulary; make requests for information

**Class time:** 30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Resources:** Brochures, preferably with pictures

Health agencies often publish informational brochures on health-related topics (e.g., exercise, nutrition, specific conditions or diseases) in the belief that health concerns can be addressed through education. What makes these brochures particularly attractive for language teaching purposes is that they are concisely written (i.e., tending to focus on only the most important aspects of the topic) and are often accompanied by clear illustrations to help the reader better understand the issues. They may also make repeated use of certain grammatical features (e.g., imperatives, information questions) that can be targeted for instruction. In this activity, medical brochures are used to help students learn how to make requests in a medical setting.

### Procedure:

1. Before class, locate brochures (e.g. from public health services) on a range of health topics
2. In class, set up the brochures around the room. Put students in small groups (2-4) and have them go around the room looking at the brochures trying to deduce the topic of each brochure. (see appendix for worksheet)
3. Present vocabulary covering the topics of the brochures. Presenting the brochures one at a time, call on different students to practice the vocabulary with the sentence, “This is a brochure about \_\_\_\_\_.”
4. Present the parts of a dialogue needed to acquire a brochure.
  - a. “How may I help you?”
  - b. “Are you looking for information about \_\_\_\_\_ ?”
  - c. “Do you have a brochure about \_\_\_\_\_ ?”
  - d. “Yes, I need information about \_\_\_\_\_.”
5. In their groups, have students write a dialogue or create a role play in which a person seeks information about a specific topic.

### Caveats and Options:

1. In lieu of brochures, you can also have students search the Web to find relevant medical information sites.

2. The more extralinguistic cues there are, the easier it will be for students in the first part of the exercise to determine the content of the brochure. However, even with a small vocabulary, students may be able to deduce the topic.
3. You may also have the students discuss the possible target audience of the brochure (e.g., pregnant women, farmers, urban dwellers, children, etc.).

**Acknowledgments:**

This lesson plan was inspired by Tom Griggs.

Appendix

<b>Brochure</b>	<b>Guess the topic</b>	<b>Reason for the guess</b>
A		
B		
C		

## Using Maps in the LCTL Classroom

### Sample Lesson Plan Overview

**Level:** Beginning-intermediate

**Aims:** Learn and practice directional vocabulary and forms; gain exposure to important geographical locations; learn and practice prepositions of location

**Class time:** 30-40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** Maps, charts, overhead transparencies, placards

Being able to read maps is an essential part of basic literacy. Knowing the key cities in a country and being familiar with its important geographical features is an integral part of knowing about the target culture. Finally, commanding the language of direction giving is critical to communicative competence.

In the following three lesson plans, maps are used to familiarize students with the geography of the target country. They are further used as a point of departure for focusing on the language of directions and providing targeted practice in asking and giving directions.

- **Where am I? – Learning prepositions with a map**
- **Red Rover--Geography style**
- **It's just past the market on the right – Giving landmark directions**

### Where am I? – Learning prepositions with a map

**Level:** Beginning-advanced

**Aims:** Learn and practice prepositions associated with location

**Class time:** 30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** Map, chart, overhead transparency

Describing one's exact location in a city is a discourse act that native speakers perform on an almost daily basis, especially in telephone conversations with another person. It is also a popular activity in the language classroom, with teachers employing maps for a

variety of purposes. In this activity, students practice describing their location and “find” one another in a game-like format using a city map.

**Procedure:**

1. Before class, do the following:
  - a. Locate a map in the target language, preferably a simple street map.
  - b. Prepare either an overhead transparency of the map or an enlarged version that can be posted on the wall of the classroom.
  - c. Prepare enough individual versions of the map to distribute to all the students in your class. These maps should have 4-5 locations (e.g., buildings, monuments, street intersections) circled or marked.
  - d. In class, present prepositions of location (e.g. beside, between, near, behind, in front of, through, on). Use the map to illustrate the meanings of those prepositions that students are unfamiliar with.
2. On the overhead or enlarged version of the map, point to a location and ask the students “Where am I?” Have them describe to you where you are, using the targeted prepositions: in front of the museum, beside the embassy, between Abay Prospect and Bukhar Zhyrau Blvd., on Lenin Street, next to the park, etc.
3. Model the guessing activity for students by telling them that you will describe your location and they should find where you are. Ask for volunteers to provide the answer.
4. Pair students and pass out the individual copies of the map.
5. In pairs, have students alternately choose the marked locations and ask one another “Where am I?”
6. Ask for volunteers to describe the locations.
7. Provide feedback on any non target-like use of language.

**Caveats and Options:**

1. Tourist maps (i.e., those with famous buildings and monuments marked) are especially nice for this activity.
2. Maps of larger areas may also be used; i.e. regional or national maps, students would then be whole countries or provinces.
3. If pairs finish ahead of other students, students may “hide” themselves in the map and describe where they are for their partner to “find” them
4. This can also develop into a lesson that focuses on yes/no questions if prepositions are too easy. “Are you on Lenin St?” “Are you west of the river?” etc.

## **Red Rover--Geography style**

**Level:** Intermediate-advanced

**Aims:** Learn and practice directional vocabulary and forms; gain exposure to important geographical features; practice making requests

**Class time:** 30-40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** map, pictures/visual aids, overhead, place name placards

Sometimes games help students to shift their focus from grammatical perfection to language use, thereby promoting language fluency. In this exercise, students practice using directional vocabulary in conjunction with geographical place names in a game-like format. They also gain familiarity with the country's geography and major attractions.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, locate a map in the target language, preferably one with a variety of cities and geographical features (lake, mountains) clearly marked.
  - a. Make an overhead or other visual display of the map for the class.
  - b. Collect as many visuals as possible that represent various places on the map. For mountains and rivers, it may not be necessary to have a picture of the exact place, although that would be nice. If a city's primary industry is mining or fishing, it would be appropriate to use such visuals as well.
  - c. Make placards each with the name of a place on the map. Make one for each student.
2. In class, present the geographical figures on the map along with their visuals.
3. Present directional vocabulary (north, south, east, west) as necessary.
4. Engaging the whole class, ask them to name places that are
  - a. East of the capital
  - b. South of the mountains
  - c. Along the river
  - d. Etc.Note their responses on the blackboard.
5. Split the class into two teams for geography Red Rover
  - a. Give each student a placard with the name of a place on the map (you may choose to simply reuse the visuals). These placards represent where the students are "located."
  - b. Explain the "rules" of Geography Red Rover:
    - i. Teams take turns making requests of the other team. For example, Team A can make the following request of Team B: "Please send over all students who are south of the capital." Those members of Team B who have been "requested" must then join Team A and it

- is Team B's turn to make a request. This procedure is repeated until each team has had 4 turns.
- ii. Team members should collaborate in forming the questions, using a different spokesperson each time
  - iii. Requests cannot be repeated.
  - iv. Requests that include every person from the opposing team are not allowed (e.g., "Please send over all students in Asia.")
  - v. The winning team is the team with the most people at the end of the game.
- c. Begin the game, having each team take turns asking for opposing team members with requests such as...
    - i. Please send over all the students who are north of Mt. Kilimanjaro.
    - ii. Please send over all the students between Hanoi and Hue.
  - d. After each turn, have the "requested" students join the opposing team.
  - e. At the end of the game, tally the scores and declare the winning team.  
Repeat additional rounds if students express interest.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. The World Wide Web and tourist brochures are excellent sources of pictures of a country's major attractions and/or geographical features.
2. Those unfamiliar with the children's game Red Rover (after which this activity is modeled), should check out the following website:  
[http://www.gameskidsplay.net/games/strength\\_games/redrover.htm](http://www.gameskidsplay.net/games/strength_games/redrover.htm).
3. Depending on the level of the students, fewer or more phrases may need to be presented for the activity.
4. The number of questions that are asked can vary, but four is probably the minimum for flow and interest's sake.
5. Students may wish to take time out at the beginning of the game to strategize questions and pre-determine their order of request (i.e., in order to gain the most team members).
6. An alternate objective to gaining the most team members can be to capture the capital of the country. In this case, one student would be in the capital. The other teams would not be allowed to ask directly for the capital but instead would vie for areas which include the capital, e.g.,
  - Team 1: Please send over students west of the mountains. (includes the capital).
  - Team 2: Please send over students south of the river. (includes the capital).

## **It's just past the market on the right – Giving landmark directions**

**Level:** Intermediate-advanced

**Aims:** Learn vocabulary for and practice giving directions

**Class time:** 30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** Map (overhead transparency or wall map); individual copies of map

Outside of the U.S., few cities follow a vertical grid pattern. As a result, directions usually include reference to a prominent building or landmark (e.g., “Turn right at the clock tower, then walk toward the palace”). Learning to follow and give instructions in this manner is an important part of communicating with locals, especially when lost in a city! In this activity, students are instructed how to give landmark instructions; they then work in pairs giving and following these directions.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, do the following:
  - a. Locate a map in the target language; a tourist map indicating with popular sights is ideal.
  - b. Prepare either an overhead transparency of the map or an enlarged version that can be posted on the wall of the classroom.
  - c. Prepare enough individual versions of the map to distribute to all the students in your class. These maps should have 4-5 prominent locations (e.g., buildings, monuments, street intersections) circled or marked.
2. In class, present directional vocabulary and phrases
  - d. Turn right at the first street
  - e. Go past the park and turn left after the shoe repair kiosk.
  - f. Go down the street away from the 10 story hotel.
  - g. Walk toward the palace and turn right after the fountain.
3. On the overhead, present the map with two markers somewhere on the map. Ask students to use the presented phrases to give directions from one point to the next. Use a bean or penny to actually move along with students' directions.
4. Pair students and pass out copies of the map with 4-6 points marked on it.
5. Have each pair choose two new points on the map (Points A and B). Ask them to collaboratively write out directions from Point A to Point B using the presented phrases.
6. Have students change partners. Each new pair should consist of a student who has the written directions and one who doesn't. Hand out a bean to each new pair, asking the student with the written directions to direct his/her new partner from Point A to Point B. As directions are given, the student who is listening should guide the bean through the streets from starting point A to the final destination B.

7. While this activity is in progress, circulate and provide feedback to students especially when the directions become unclear.

**Caveats and Options:**

1. If a map is not available, one can be drawn on the board, butcher paper, overhead transparency.
2. More complex phrases can be introduced to more advanced students.
3. This process of pair writing and pair switching can be repeated, especially if more points are marked on the map.

## Using Transportation Schedules in the LCTL Classroom

### Sample Lesson Plan Overview

**Levels:** Beginning-advanced

**Aims:** Learn to tell time; become acquainted with geography; deduce information about major cities and attractions; plan a trip

**Class Time:** 30 minutes-several class periods

**Preparation Time:** 30 minutes

**Resources:** Transportation schedule (e.g., bus, train, airline, boat); area map; slips of paper; handout

Transportation schedules offer a wide variety of language teaching possibilities, including (but not limited to) teaching students how to tell time, acquainting them with the geography of the country, and providing practice asking for and giving directions. In conjunction with other travel information (maps, travel brochures), transportation schedules can provide the raw materials for an extended class project involving planning a trip, writing a travel journal, and the like.

The following two interactive lessons present concrete suggestions for using travel brochures in the LCTL classroom.

- **The train leaves at 10:34 - Practicing telling time with schedules**
- **A weekend off – Planning a trip with a transportation schedule and map**

## The train leaves at 10:34 - Practicing telling time with schedules

**Level:** Beginning-intermediate

**Aims:** Practice telling time

**Class time:** 30-40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Resources:** Transportation schedule; overhead transparency; slips of paper

In the language classroom, we often encounter learners whose aim is to travel to the country in which the target language is spoken. What activity could prepare them better for such travel than working with transportation schedules? In this motivating activity, students practice working with a transportation schedule to formulate information questions. They then share their questions with peers, whose responsibility it is to answer the questions based on the information provided in the transportation schedule.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, locate a transportation schedule. Make a class set and an overhead transparency.
2. Using the overhead transparency, model how to read the schedule, pointing out relevant vocabulary (e.g. departure, arrival, ticket, platform, etc.)
3. Present how to ask and answer the questions, e.g.,
  - a. What time does the train arrive in Baku? [It arrives at 9:45 pm.]
  - b. When does the plane arrive in Beijing? [It arrives at half past 8 in the morning.]
  - c. What time does the ticket office open? [It opens at 7 am.]
4. Pair students and give them a schedule. Give each pair three slips of paper and ask them to write three of their own questions asking for a time from the schedule.
5. Collect and mix the slips of paper up; then redistribute the questions to the groups. Have students orally ask and answer the questions using the schedule.
6. Have some pairs present their questions and answers to the class.
7. Provide feedback on language accuracy.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. Transportation schedules are free and readily available in airports, train stations, etc. When travelling, consider collecting class sets to keep on hand for future classroom use.
2. Because schedules often assume that the user already knows the geography covered, it may be helpful to have a map of the area available for reference.
3. Prepositional use with time telling is often difficult for learners (e.g., “The train arrives *at ten past* four. The bus arrives *at a quarter to* six, etc.) Calling attention to form during the initial presentation can help ensure that learners pay more attention to accuracy in their subsequent oral work.

4. With less advanced students, the number and complexity of questions asked will be limited (e.g., What time does the train for Aleppo leave? When does the plane from Yerevan arrive?). With more advanced students, encourage more creative questions (e.g., What time does the train for Xining depart from platform 6? When is the \_\_\_ for Beijing departing from terminal 2? When does the last bus on Sunday depart from Samarkand to Nukus?)
5. During the oral activity, it will help to circulate around the room to assist and monitor students.

## **A weekend off – Planning a trip with a transportation schedule and map**

**Level:** Intermediate/advanced

**Aims:** Learn about local geography; deduce information about major cities/attractions; use available resources to plan a trip

**Class time:** 40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes-several class periods

**Resources:** Transportation schedule, area map, chart, overhead

Transportation schedules and maps are indispensable aids for the traveler. Alone or in combination, they are also highly useful authentic materials for the teaching of language. In this activity, these materials provide an educational discussion stimulus for students, who, as they study them, are able to deduce information about the major cities and attractions and use the information they glean to plan a trip.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, locate a transportation schedule and map that covers the area of the schedule. Check that the cities on the map match the stops of the train.
2. Using the map, review directional/geographical vocabulary and phrases.
  - a. North, East, South, West
  - b. Northern/southern provinces, cities, regions, etc.
  - c. Mountains, valleys, lakes, etc.
3. Displaying the schedule, ask the whole class to find on the schedule stops that correspond with
  - a. Northern cities
  - b. Mountainous regions
  - c. Coastal areas
  - d. Western lakes
  - e. etc.
4. Put students into groups of three and provide each group with a copy of the schedule and map. Ask students to deduce from both pieces of information which regions and cities are of greater importance (e.g., more traveled to, more populous). You may choose to use the optional worksheet included.
5. Have students develop the following role play to be presented to the class: A traveler asks a local to recommend a nice place to visit for the upcoming 4 day holiday. The local should persuade the traveler that one city is a good place for certain reasons. Then the traveler goes to a ticket counter to find a ticket to the place. The ticket agent should help the traveler find a suitable route.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. The World Wide Web is an excellent source of both timetables and maps.

2. This lesson actually has quite a few components and may be best stretched over more than one class period especially if students are not as advanced.
3. A subway schedule and a city map with subway stops would be a good alternative.

Appendix: Optional Worksheet

In your groups, using the given map and schedule, try to find or deduce the following

1) Trains arriving to the capital before noon

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

2) Cities west of [Bangkok]

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

3) Important cities

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

4) Cities with some point of geographical interest and a train line (lakes, mountains, rivers, etc.). Include the interesting feature.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

## Using Print Media in the LCTL Classroom

### Sample Lesson Plan Overview

**Levels:** Beginning-advanced

**Aims:** Practice critical reading and discussion skills; become acquainted with target-culture norms; expand knowledge of vocabulary and related grammatical forms

**Class Time:** Variable (30 min-several class periods)

**Preparation Time:** Variable (20 min-1 hr.)

**Resources:** Newspaper articles or classified advertisements (either newsstand copy or downloaded from the World Wide Web)

Newspapers, many of which are now available through the Internet, provide an easily-available source of authentic language materials. Through newspapers, teachers can access a wide range of materials, from articles to classified advertisements to comics to letters to the editors. These authentic sources provide an ideal venue for students to acquire and practice critical literacy skills. They can also serve as an excellent discussion stimulus.

The following three lesson plans exemplify ways in which newspapers can enrich language teaching and provide learners with new insights into the target culture.

- **He did what?!!—Reading headlines**
- **Did you know that?? – Skimming for information in a newspaper article**
- **For sale, cheap: Reading classified ads**

## **He did what?!!—Reading headlines**

**Level:** Beginning

**Aims:** Practice literacy, make inferences about meaning

**Class time:** 5-10 minutes

**Preparation time:** 5 minutes

**Resources:** Newspaper headlines, possibly with accompanying picture

Many of us make it a daily habit to scan newspaper headlines. This is also a very useful activity in the language classroom as it promotes literacy and expands students' knowledge of the target culture. In this activity, students are asked to use their literacy skills and knowledge of current events to infer meaning from known words in a given headline.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, do the following:
  - a. Locate a headline (or multiple headlines) from a recent edition of the newspaper. Headlines should correspond to events that students would have heard of in their own language/cultural setting. Choose headlines in which students will understand at least one important word. (ex. Lance Armstrong wins 6<sup>th</sup> Tour De France; North Korea disarms, Britney Spears retires).
  - b. Prepare a display of headline (e.g., an overhead transparency, sign, etc.).
2. Tell students you are going to show them a current newspaper headline.
3. Display the headline and ask students to read it aloud. If a picture is available, use it as a reference point.
4. Solicit recognized words from the students and write these on the blackboard.
5. Ask students if they can infer the meaning of the headline.
6. Ask for volunteers to share what they know about the event.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. For a more extended exercise, multiple headlines may be used.
2. For group work, groups of students may each be given a headline (and picture) and asked to infer the meaning of the headline. They should then be asked to present their headline to the rest of the class and share what they discussed in their group.
3. Headlines are also excellent for focusing on difficult sounds (i.e., as a pronunciation exercise).
4. Students may discuss which section of the newspaper this headline would fit in.
5. For more advanced groups, you can select a short article and ask students in groups to create appropriate headlines. You can then ask students to vote on the most interesting headline.

## **Did you know that?? – Skimming for information in a newspaper article**

**Level:** Intermediate-advanced

**Aims:** Practice skimming for main ideas

**Class time:** 40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Resources:** Newspaper articles, information table, overhead transparency

Another habit of newspaper readers is to skim articles for main ideas before deciding to read the article more carefully. Modeling this practice and training students to skim for information is a useful activity for the LCTL classroom. In this activity, students practice skimming multiple articles for main ideas and transferring these ideas to an information table.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, locate newspaper or magazine articles with content that might appeal to the interests of the students.
2. In class, present the idea of skimming for specific content.
3. Tell students that they will be asked to quickly skim several newspaper articles.
4. Distribute the information table (see appendix) and explain to students that for each article they read, they should fill in the missing information under the column headings. Stress to students that they are reading for main ideas only and that they will *not* need to spend time understanding every word (or even all of the article).
5. Present the newspaper articles, having students skim each article successively in a set amount of time (e.g., 3-5 minutes per article). There are several options for this step:
  - a. The articles can be posted around the room, with students asked to circulate and individually fill out the information tables.
  - b. Students can be divided into groups of 3-4 each, with different students in the group receiving different articles. Once they have read the article and completed the associated task, they can then trade articles with another member of the group. This process continues until all students have read all articles.
6. Have students fill out their charts while skimming the articles.
7. Either as an entire class or in groups, have students compare the information they gathered.
8. Ask students which article they found most interesting and why.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. For more advanced students, the time allowed for skimming can be shortened. Alternatively, lengthier or more complex articles can be chosen.

2. It may be helpful to provide a limited list of relevant vocabulary words, being careful that the list does not distract students from the goal of skimming
3. Get feedback from students on words, concepts, or information they observed. For lapses in comprehension, examine where the lapse occurred (a vocabulary problem, a grammar problem?) and discuss.

**Appendix: Information Table**

<b>Article</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>What?</b>	<b>Where?</b>	<b>When?</b>	<b>Interesting fact</b>
Article A					
Article B					
Article C					

## **For sale, cheap: Reading classified ads**

**Level:** Beginning

**Aims:** Read classified ads, practice asking consumer questions

**Class time:** 40 min

**Preparation time:** 10-15 min

**Resources:** Newspaper classified ads

Who hasn't used classified advertisements at some point in their life to buy a needed item cheaply? Using classified ads in the LCTL classroom provides students with a motivating opportunity to practice their reading and speaking skills while acquiring high-frequency vocabulary. In this activity, students become acquainted with the genre of classified advertisements, learn important abbreviations, and take on the role of consumer in a role play transaction.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, locate classified ads, preferably those selling common items (i.e., covering vocabulary the students already know). At least 10-12 ads should be selected (using an entire page of ads is preferable as it is a more authentic task).
2. Ask students to locate the commonly used abbreviations and guess their meaning. On the blackboard, make a list of these abbreviations and their meanings.
3. Present an outline of a guided dialogue between a buyer and seller:
  - a. "Hello, are you selling a \_\_\_\_\_?"
  - b. "Yes, I want to sell a \_\_\_\_\_."
  - c. "No, the \_\_\_\_\_ has already been sold."
  - d. "How much is the \_\_\_\_\_?"
  - e. Etc.
4. Model this dialogue with a student volunteer.
5. In pairs have students create their own dialogues.
6. Ask for volunteers to role play the purchase transaction.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. The lower the level of the students, the more guided their dialogue will need to be.
2. This activity can easily be made more advanced by introducing bargaining terms and strategies.
3. This lesson can be used to focus on questions, numbers, or even idioms.

## Using Comics and Political Cartoons in the LCTL Classroom

### Sample Lesson Plan Overview

**Levels:** Beginning-advanced

**Aims:** Become acquainted with target-culture norms that are exploited for humor; provide writing/discussion stimulus; reinforce grammatical forms and vocabulary

**Class Time:** Variable (30 min-several class periods)

**Preparation Time:** Variable (20 min-1 hr.)

**Resources:** Comics from target-culture magazines or newspapers; activity related materials (handouts, poster, overhead, etc.)

Why is that funny? What's going on? Understanding the humor of comics and political cartoons requires in-depth background knowledge and cultural awareness far beyond a simple understanding of grammar and vocabulary. Comics are great ways to introduce students to the subtleties of language, including idioms, double entendres, and the like. They are also an excellent way to sensitize them to the nuances of the target culture as well as to reinforce grammar and vocabulary.

The following three lesson plans exemplify ways in which comics can be used to achieve specific language teaching objectives.

- **He said, she said - Interpreting comics**
- **How's it going?--Greetings**
- **What in the world is going on? Political cartoons as a discussion/writing stimulus**

## **He said, she said - Interpreting comics**

**Level:** Intermediate

**Aims:** Practice creating dialogue, become acquainted with target-culture norms of male-female interaction, review expressions of emotion

**Class time:** 60 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Resources:** 5 comics with men and women interacting in them--a set with the words left out, a set with the words

The meaning and humor of cartoons depends heavily on their visual style—the artist’s depiction of the setting, the characters, etc. It also depends on the captions and dialogue. In this genre, very few words can carry significant impact, especially when reinforced by the visual image the artist has chosen to convey meaning. In this activity, students respond to a wordless version of a popular comic, inferring from the visual cues what may be happening and why it may be funny. They then write their own version and compare their interpretation with the cartoonist’s original intent.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, locate five comics (e.g., from target language newspapers or magazines) in which there are men and women interacting. Photocopy two sets of each comic. With one photocopied set cover over the words or white them out. Make a class set of both the wordless and original comics.
2. In class, review with students already familiar words of emotion (e.g., angry, distressed, anxious, terrified, etc.).
3. As needed, introduce new emotions or actions.
4. Show one wordless comic and solicit responses from students with questions such as:
  - a. Who is in the picture?
  - b. What are the people doing?
  - c. How are they feeling?
5. Have students suggest a caption for the cartoon or write the dialogue between the characters.
6. Divide students into four groups, give each group a different comic asking students to create their own caption(s) or dialogue(s) for the comic.
7. Ask each group to present one of their ideas.
8. Show the example comic in original format. (This may be in the next class period.) Introduce new vocabulary or idioms. Ask students similar questions.
9. Give groups the original version of their comic. Have them read the comic and explain it to the class.
10. Ask students to discuss the differences between their version and the original (which do they like better, think is funnier, etc.).

**Caveats and Options:**

1. Magazine pictures may also work
2. Students may ask what is funny about a particular comic if this isn't immediately apparent. Close monitoring of group work will be necessary.

**Acknowledgments:**

This lesson plan was inspired by Janet Goodwin

## **How's it going?--Greetings**

**Level:** Beginning-intermediate

**Aims:** Learn greetings used in different situations; heighten awareness of register

**Class time:** 30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Resources:** Overhead transparency of 3-4 comics containing dialogues in which people greet each other; handout containing 3-4 similar comics in which the dialogue has been deleted.

In the world of comics, we can often find a microcosm of a given societal system. We see people in their homes or workplaces, displaying a variety of emotions. In this lesson, students' attention is called to the way in which people use forms of greetings to indicate their familiarity (or lack thereof) with the other conversational participant. The lesson combines a grammatical/lexical focus (polite and informal forms used in greetings) with familiarizing students with the target language norms for such situations.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, locate 6-8 comics (e.g., from target language newspapers or magazines) in which the characters are greeting each other--preferably in different relational contexts. Make an overhead transparency of 3-4 of these comics with the dialogue intact; make a photocopied class set of 3-4 additional comics in which the dialogue has been deleted.
2. Review greetings by having students provide any greetings with which they are already familiar. Write student contributions on the board and discuss the meanings of any greetings that other students might be unfamiliar with.
3. Discuss the different situations in which the different greetings may be used. (e.g., with family, friends, strangers, teachers, bosses, etc.).
4. Using the overhead transparency, present half the comics one by one, asking students to infer the relationship between the characters.
5. In pairs, distribute the handout containing the "wordless" comics. Ask students to make up their own dialogue, paying special attention to the greetings used.
6. Ask for volunteers to read their dialogue. Discuss.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. Not every language has an elaborate system of greeting. This lesson may be modified to introduce other everyday phrases.
2. For languages with particularly elaborate systems of greetings, this lesson may help students understand the salient distinctions.
3. An alternative to step 6 above is to have the students role play the characters in the comics using the appropriate greetings.

4. If you don't have that many comics, instead of giving students roles from comics, you may write down roles on index cards and give each student one and have them greet one another.

**Acknowledgments:**

This lesson plan was inspired by Janet Goodwin

## **What in the world is going on? Political cartoons as a discussion/writing stimulus**

**Level:** Intermediate-advanced

**Aims:** Provide a stimulus for issues-oriented discussion and/or writing activities

**Class time:** 20-40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Resources:** Overhead transparency of one or more issues-oriented political cartoons; questions to write on the blackboard

Political cartoons present amusing viewpoints (and sometimes scathing indictments) of current issues in a country's political arena or social life. As such, they are culturally embedded objects requiring both knowledge of current issue and an understanding of the target culture in order for readers to understand them. In this activity, students arrive at an understanding of issues-oriented political cartoons through guided discussion. They then report back their findings and write an optional reaction journal.

### **Procedures:**

1. Before class, do the following:
  - a. Locate one or more political cartoons in the target language, preferably on an issue of current interest/debate.
  - b. Prepare an overhead transparency of the cartoon(s) and/or a class set for students.
2. Begin class by asking students to explain the difference between a comic and a political cartoon.
3. Using the overhead transparency, display the political cartoon(s). Begin by asking students to identify the issue depicted and discuss why this issue is of current importance. Write key vocabulary on the board, explaining the meanings of those words that are unfamiliar to other students.
4. Write selected key questions about the cartoon on the board. Some sample generic questions follow: Teachers can also tailor their questions to the specific political cartoons(s) that they choose to use.
  - a. One cartoon only: Discuss these questions and be prepared to explain your answers to the class.
    - i. Who/what is depicted in this political cartoon? What is their relationship to the issue?
    - ii. Is the cartoon funny? Why/why not?
    - iii. Does the cartoon depend on stereotypes for its humor or impact? If so, how?
    - iv. Is there a symbolic image in the cartoon? What is it and what does it depict?
    - v. What is the cartoonist's point of view/message? Do you agree or disagree with the point of view being made?

- b. Multiple cartoons: Discuss these questions and be prepared to explain your answers to the class.
  - i. Who/what do the cartoons depict? How are they related to the issue?
  - ii. Do all cartoons depict the issue in the same way? If not, what are the similarities/differences?
  - iii. Do the cartoonists share a point of view on this issue? If you think they disagree, group the cartoons into those which take a positive view of the situation and those which take a negative view. Which point of view do you agree with?
  - iv. Are the cartoons funny? Why/why not?
  - v. Are there any stereotypes depicted? If so, what are they? Why do you believe the cartoonist chose to use this stereotype?
  - vi. Do any of the cartoons wrongly or unfairly depict the situation? If so, in what way/why?
  - vii. Are there symbolic images in the cartoons? What are they and what do they depict?
  - viii. Which political cartoon makes the strongest point about this issue? Why?
5. Put students in groups of 3-4 and ask them to answer the questions. Give a time limit (5-10 minutes).
6. Either in class or as homework, have students write a reaction journal in which they discuss their own point of view on the issue. (Optional)

**Caveats and Options:**

1. The cartoons should be selected on the basis of visual clarity as well as clarity of meaning. It is also important to keep in mind students' background knowledge as they will not understand the "point" of a cartoon if they are unfamiliar with the world issue it depicts.
2. Selecting cartoons on the same topic from different newspapers around the world can add interest to this activity as differing perspectives are available. (Note: The monthly news magazine World Press Review is an excellent source of thematically-related cartoons as it usually selects an issue of world interest and publishes cartoons on this issue from a variety of newspapers around the world.).
3. In the group activity, it helps to assign each student a role (e.g., discussion leader, note taker, reporter). This ensures that all students are held responsible during the activity.
4. Selecting one or more relevant news articles on the topic of the cartoon provides this activity with a more in-depth reading focus.
5. A possible follow-up activity is to give students a political cartoon on the same subject with the caption/dialogue removed. Ask them to write their own caption/dialogue and share it with the rest of the class.

**Acknowledgments:**

This lesson plan was inspired by James Yamamoto.

## Using Songs in the LCTL Classroom

### Sample Lesson Plan Overview

**Level:** Beginning-advanced

**Aims:** Improve listening skills, increase knowledge of the target culture, focus on selected grammatical forms and vocabulary

**Class Time:** Variable (30 min-several class periods)

**Preparation Time:** Variable (20 min-1 hr.)

**Resources:** Recorded songs with lyrics; audio tape recorder, handout/worksheet, accompanying picture

Folk or popular songs with easy-to-understand lyrics are a rich resource for the LCTL classroom. Songs provide an excellent means of reinforcing vocabulary and grammar and of stimulating issue-oriented discussion. They also raise awareness of cultural issues. Finally, by exposing learners to universal themes with which they can identify, songs increase student interest in learning.

The following four lesson plans exemplify the diverse ways in which songs can enhance motivation, provide learners with insight into the target culture, and in general enrich classroom language learning.

- **Details, details--Cloze listening**
- **Who did what to whom? Reinforcing grammar through song**
- **Making order from chaos—Scrambled song lyrics**

### Details, details--Cloze listening

**Level:** Beginning-advanced

**Aims:** Practice listening, make inferences about meaning

**Class time:** 30-40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30-60 min

**Resources:** Recorded song, cloze passage with lyrics; audio tape player, accompanying picture (optional)

Students' listening ability is greatly enhanced when adequate context is established. By providing students with the majority of the song's lyrics, this cloze listening procedure establishes such context, thereby allowing students to relax and focus only on the missing details.

**Procedure:**

11. Before class, do the following:
  - a. Locate a song and its lyrics in the target language. Choose one that has familiar vocabulary or content that your students will be able to understand.
  - b. Optional: Locate a photo or picture that captures the mood or theme of the song.
  - c. Prepare a cloze passage (lyrics with selectively deleted words) using one of the following two strategies:
    - i. Delete every n<sup>th</sup> word (e.g., every 7<sup>th</sup> word) of the lyrics.
    - ii. Delete selected items (e.g., already familiar vocabulary) only.
12. Optional: At the beginning of the lesson, present the photo and elicit from students what they see (e.g., what the mood of the photo is, what theme is depicted, etc.). Write relevant contributions from students on the blackboard.
13. Play the song once through and elicit from students what they have understood.
14. Distribute the cloze passage. Play the song 1-2 additional times while students fill in the missing words in the cloze.
15. Ask for student volunteers to read the answers to the cloze passage.
16. Ask students about the content of the song to see what they understood on their own.
17. Answer any follow-up questions that students have about the meanings of words or the content of the song.

**Caveats and Options:**

6. The difficulty level of this activity depends largely on the complexity of the song lyrics, the speed of delivery, the singer's enunciation, and the students' familiarity with the vocabulary.
7. Singing the song together can be a fun additional activity.
8. Another option is to focus on difficult sounds as a pronunciation exercise.

## **Who did what to whom? Reinforcing grammar through song**

**Level:** Beginning-intermediate

**Aims:** Practice listening, reinforce a grammatical feature, make inferences about meaning

**Class time:** 30-40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30-60 min

**Resources:** Recorded song with lyrics; audio tape recorder

Songs can provide an excellent authentic example of grammar in action. This activity employs the medium of song to motivate students and encourage them to make inferences about the song's meaning. It further uses the song's lyrics to reinforce a previously taught grammatical point.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, do the following:
  - a. Locate a song in the target language. Choose one that will allow you to focus on a particular grammatical feature, e.g., yes/no questions, the past tense, imperatives.
  - b. Prepare a handout of the song lyrics.
2. Play the song once through and elicit from students what they have understood.
3. Distribute the song lyrics.
4. Play the song again, asking students how seeing the lyrics has added to their understanding of the song.
5. Briefly review the selected grammatical feature, eliciting both the rule and examples from students. Put relevant information on the blackboard.
6. Ask students to underline in the lyrics instances of the targeted grammatical feature.
7. In pairs, ask students to compare their findings.
8. Ask for student volunteers to write the examples they have found on the blackboard.
9. Have students discuss whether these examples follow the rules they have learned.
10. Provide further explanation of any examples that do not appear to fit the rule.
11. For homework, assign students to create example sentences of their own to illustrate the grammatical rule.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. Take care to choose a song that contains enough instances of the grammatical feature that you wish to reinforce.
2. For a follow-up writing activity, students can be asked to write an additional stanza of the song incorporating the selected grammatical feature.
3. Instead of a grammatical feature, idioms or cultural/historical facts can be presented.

## **Making order from chaos—Scrambled song lyrics**

**Level:** Intermediate-advanced

**Aims:** Practice critical listening and sequencing skills, make inferences about meaning

**Class time:** 30-40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30-60 min

**Resources:** Recorded songs with lyrics; audio tape recorder, scissors, envelopes with scrambled lyrics; overhead transparency or class set of complete lyrics

Songs often tell a story or use repetition as a device for special effect. In this activity, students use their critical listening and sequencing skills to correctly arrange the scrambled lyrics of a song. They then discuss the meaning of the song along with any stylistic devices the songwriter has employed for special effect.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, do the following:
  - a. Locate a song and its lyrics in the target language. Choosing one that tells a story or has a distinct narrative strand will make the task easier for students.
  - b. Transcribe the song's lyrics and make a handout with the complete lyrics. Make multiple copies of the lyrics (see step c below).
  - c. Prepare materials for the scrambled lyrics activity (see below). You will need multiple copies of the lyrics, scissors, and envelopes. Cut the lyrics into strips, scramble them, and put them into envelopes. Assuming groups of 3-4 students, make enough sets of the scrambled lyrics for the entire class. Also prepare an overhead transparency or a class set of the complete lyrics.
2. Introduce the song by playing it 1-2 times. Ask students what they have been able to understand and write pertinent details on the board.
3. Assign students to groups of 3 or 4 students each and provide each group with an envelope containing the scrambled lyrics. Tell them that their task is to listen to the song and correctly order the lyrics.
4. As a preliminary step, ask students from memory to arrange the lyrics as best they can.
5. Play the song 2-3 additional times (more if necessary) while students reorder the lyrics.
6. Using the overhead, display the correct ordering of the lyrics and have the groups check their answers. Alternatively, pass out the complete lyrics and have students check their answers.
7. Ask students to comment on the song (e.g., did they like it, what didn't they understand, etc.)

8. Have them comment on any stylistic devices the songwriter used (e.g., repetition of words, lines, stanzas) and the overall effect of these devices on the song's meaning.

**Caveats and Options:**

1. Take care to select a song that is appropriate for the students' level of proficiency; otherwise, be willing to adjust for comprehension difficulties and provide more support in terms of vocabulary explanation.
2. A fun additional activity is to have students create new stanzas for the song. This can be done by asking students to randomly select from the envelope of scrambled lyrics a new first line of the stanza. In small groups, they then brainstorm the additional lines of the stanza, taking care to use the same rhyme scheme as in the original song.
3. Another fun expansion activity is to have students in their groups create a word poem by selecting certain lines from the song and creatively rearranging them. Groups can then be asked to read their word poem aloud and provide an explanation of its meaning.

## **What's love got to do with it? Songs as discussion prompts**

**Level:** Intermediate-advanced

**Aims:** Practice listening, make inferences about meaning, discuss issues

**Class time:** 30-40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 30-60 min

**Resources:** Audio tape recorder, recorded song, lyrics, possibly an accompanying picture

Songs are a powerful means of conveying messages about societal issues. The songwriter's stance toward the issue is seldom ambiguous, and the song's intent is generally to bring attention to the issue and/or to convince the listener of a particular point of view. In this activity, students' attention is first focused on the message of the song. Subsequently, the songwriter's stance is used as a point of departure to explore student opinions on the issue.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, locate a song and its lyrics in the target language. Choose one that will allow you to focus on a particular issue, e.g., gender roles, traditions, love, freedom, etc.
2. Prepare a worksheet of comprehension questions, e.g.,
  - a. Who are the main characters in the song?
  - b. What does the singer want?
  - c. What is the singer's attitude toward \_\_\_\_\_?
  - d. What is the conclusion of the song?
3. Introduce a few (7-10) relevant vocabulary words, idioms, or cultural facts.
4. In class, play the song 2-3 times and ask students to take notes on what they understand. Following this, ask students to share what they have understood in whole group format. Write relevant vocabulary on the blackboard.
5. Pair students and distribute the worksheet. Allow them 5-10 minutes to answer the questions; then have the pairs share their answers with the class as a whole.
6. Assign students to small groups. Ask them to discuss and debate the key issues in the song. Examples:
  - a. "This song is the singer's response to a friend committing suicide. Why does he respond in this way? How do others respond to such a situation? Do you agree?"
  - b. "In this song two young lovers have been forbidden to see one another by their parents. Why would the parents make such a demand? Defend the parents (or lovers)."
7. Have the groups report back the main points of their discussion.

**Caveats and Options:**

1. Take care to choose a song with appropriate complexity in vocabulary, speed, or grammar or be willing to adjust for comprehension lapses.
2. Be sensitive to the places where the discussion might lead, especially if the topic is more controversial.
3. Have students act out the story (if it is a story)
4. Consider including a follow-up writing activity. For example, ask students to discuss their opinion on the topic as homework. Alternatively, have them write a journal from the perspective of one of the characters in the song.

## Using Weather Reports in the LCTL Classroom

### Sample Lesson Plan Overview

**Level:** Beginning-advanced

**Aims:** Listen for numbers, geographical terms, and vocabulary associated with weather; discuss leisure activities and their relation to weather conditions

**Class time:** 20-30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 40 minutes

**Resources:** Television/radio clip of weather report, video/tape player, handouts

Weather reports are a popular source of authentic language and lend themselves especially well to teaching vocabulary and culture. Not only do these reports reinforce students' knowledge of numbers and weather terminology—they also add to their understanding of the host country's geography.

The following two lesson plans present ideas for using weather reports to teach LCTLs.

- **Did you hear that?—Listening for details in a weather report**
- **It's raining again? What can we do?**

## **Did you hear that?—Listening for details in a weather report**

**Level:** Beginning

**Aims:** Listen for geographical terms and vocabulary associated with weather

**Class time:** 20-30 minutes

**Preparation time:** 40 minutes

**Resources:** Television/radio clip of weather report, video/tape player, map of the region (optional); handout

Knowing the weather conditions is important to many aspects of our lives. In this activity, students listen for details (e.g., temperature, cities, weather conditions) in a weather report, eventually matching the weather conditions to specific cities or geographical regions. The three-part listening process suggested in the lesson plan breaks the listening materials into more digestible segments, thus facilitating the listening process and easing students' anxiety about the listening act.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, locate a weather report on tape (either audio or video).
2. Prepare a handout (see appendix for an example) to use in class. According to the tasks specified in this handout, students are to listen for one specific type of information (e.g., cities mentioned, temperatures, weather conditions) each time the tape is played.
3. Post a large map of the region on the blackboard or wall of the classroom. Ask student volunteers to point out key cities and/or geographical points of interest (e.g., lakes, mountain ranges) on the map and write the names of these cities or points of interest on the board (optional).
4. Elicit from students information that is typically given in a weather report and note student contributions on the blackboard.
5. Review already known vocabulary relating to weather. Write these terms on the board as well.
6. Present any missing or key weather vocabulary.
7. Play the weather report three times, each time having students listen for key information and asking them to fill out a different section of the handout.
8. Go over answers with students and ask them what was difficult for them to understand.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. Because weather reports are densely packed with information and often delivered at a very fast speed, they tend to be hard for learners to process. Playing them multiple times (and/or asking learners if they want to listen again) can lessen learners' anxiety and help them build listening skills.

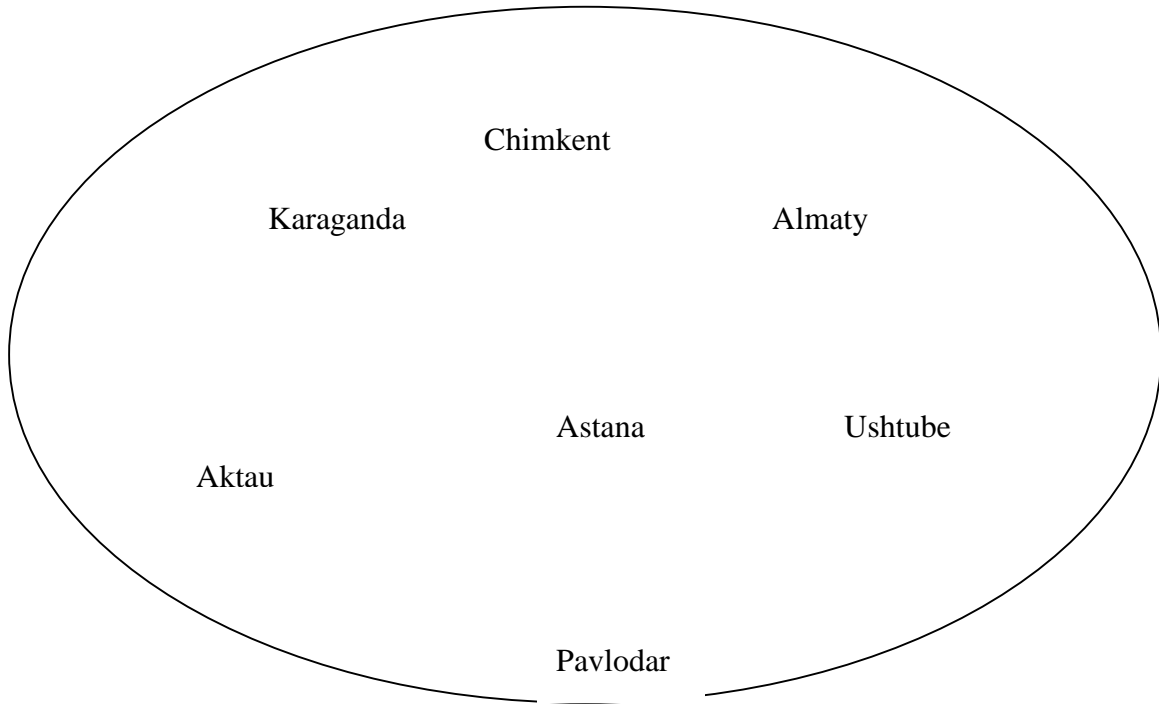
2. For each of the three listening phases, learners may want to hear the tape more than once. The teacher should feel free to play it multiple times to assist learners in their quest for information.
3. A possible follow-up activity entails breaking the students up into groups and asking each group to prepare a “weather report” for the region. Using the map of the region as a prop, they can then present their report to the rest of the class.

**Acknowledgments:**

This lesson plan was inspired by Kazumi Kimura.

## Weather

1. Listen and circle all the cities that you hear in the report



2. Listen and check the types of weather you hear

Rainy

Sunny

Windy

Cloudy


Hot

Cold



3. Listen again and draw lines to match the weather with the city

Chimkent	rainy
Almaty	sunny
Pavlodar	cloudy
Aktau	cold
Karaganda	hot
Ushtube	windy



## **It's raining again? What can we do?**

**Level:** Intermediate-advanced

**Aims:** Learn and practice vocabulary associated with weather

**Class time:** 30-40 minutes

**Preparation time:** 40 minutes

**Resources:** Television radio clip, TV and VCR

What we do in our leisure time often depends on the weather. In good weather, outdoor activities are appealing and feasible. In bad or inclement weather, most people favor indoor activities. This activity, in which students use a weather report to plan their upcoming day out, uses authentic weather reports as a point of departure for student discussions of the types of activities they prefer to do in their leisure time.

### **Procedure:**

1. Before class, locate a weather report on tape (either audio or video).
2. Elicit from students information that is given in a weather report and note student contributions on the blackboard.
3. Ask students to name things that they do for fun on a weekend and note those on the board.
4. Play the weather report asking students to pay attention to the local weather.
5. From their list of weekend activities, ask students to name those that could be done during the upcoming weekend given the weather report.
6. For the activities that wouldn't be good for a region, ask students to name an alternative place where the weather would allow that activity. Play the report again for students to check their answers.
7. Break students in to pairs and have them write a dialogue between two people discussing what to do for the weekend. Have some students role play their dialogue for the class.

### **Caveats and Options:**

1. It is always good to model activities before turning students loose to do them on their own.
2. For a writing assignment ask students what their favorite rainy day activity is and why.

**Acknowledgments:**

This lesson plan was inspired by Kazumi Kimura.

