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## A Voyage to a Culture: A Special Collection of Teaching Techniques ( Imaginary trip Becomes Real in a Classroom)

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A VOYAGE TO A CULTURE:  
A SPECIAL COLLECTION OF TEACHING TECHNIQUES

Imaginary Trip Becomes Real In A Classroom

By

Silvana Hage

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Master  
of Arts in Teaching degree at the  
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This project by Silvana Hage is accepted  
in its present form.

Date 2 Sept 1981 Principal Advisor Patrick Moran

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## ABSTRACT

My project uses an imaginary voyage in a classroom as an introduction to second language culture. It consists of a special collection of teaching techniques for post-elementary language teachers of an advanced second language course. The purpose of this project is to help students get a glimpse of a culture in a situational, functional, and performing way. The students plan an imaginary trip to the second language culture of the country where the second language is spoken.

A description of my own experience with the project is given in order to give an overview of how long, when, where, and with whom the project was used. The project is specially designed so that each teacher may adapt it to her own syllabus and classroom situation.

The U.S.A. is used as the second language culture throughout this professional paper to exemplify my special techniques. A development of the different stages of the imaginary trip is given with a description and an explanation for each stage. The key to the success of this imaginary voyage and a memorable learning experience is the total involvement of the students in this project.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I present a special project which I developed while teaching a second language. I have called it "A Voyage to a Culture". This project is an imaginary trip planned in a classroom as an introduction to the culture of the language being taught. It consists of a special collection of teaching techniques for post-elementary language teachers of an advanced second language course. It is specially designed so that each language teacher may adapt it to her own syllabus and classroom situation. It is also intended for those teachers who find themselves teaching the second language outside the country or the culture. The whole imaginary trip is planned by the students themselves. I will be using the U.S.A. throughout my paper to exemplify the second language culture.

The paper is organized to give the What, Why, How, and Results of the project in accordance with what I have developed and used while teaching. The "What" section is basically a general description of the content of the project. I will include in this section some suggested materials and resources needed for the project. I will also describe the role of the teacher as well as the role of the students. The "Why" section will include the purpose of the project in terms of student learning. I will focus on the meaningful learning that takes place as a result of the experience of planning an imaginary trip in a classroom. The "How" section will have the different stages of the project with a purpose, an explanation, a teaching technique, and a description for each stage. As for the "Results" section, it will include the outcome of the project in reference to what I have seen and experienced when I used this project in my classroom. I will also give my concluding remarks in this section.

The origin of my idea for the project is an interesting one. It would be best to mention it here in order to get an overview of how long, when, where, and with whom the project was used. To begin with, I have often thought of how I learned a second language, in this case, French. Looking back at my past language classes, pictures of dialogues, substitution drills, language labs, tests, conjugations, and translations run through my mind. I cannot even begin to count all the hours that I have spent learning a second language. I love languages but somehow I do not remember my language learning experience in the classroom as being enjoyable.

In 1979, I did a student teaching internship at a suburban high school where I taught three French II and one French IV classes. In this situation, I found myself teaching the language the way that I remembered learning it. Fortunately, I had a highly motivated French IV class but my French II classes did not seem to enjoy or to want to learn the language with the same motivation.

I tried every possible approach that I could think of at the time to have the French II classes be more motivated and to change their unenthusiastic attitude toward learning the language. Unfortunately, nothing seemed to have an effect on them. Something had to be done. And that is when I hit upon the idea of developing my "Voyage to a Culture" project. It occurred to me that in order to learn a second language, it should be learned in the context of its own culture. I feel that language is part of a culture and it cannot be separated from it.

The concept of culture has so many meanings. It is not important which definition is the correct one. It all depends on which of its aspects that one wants to emphasize. Let us note the following:

Culture refers to the total of all material, social, and symbolic creations that members of a society incorporate into their design for living. Culture is the social heritage of a society that represents a people's accumulated solutions to the problems of living.<sup>1</sup>

The two key phrases in this passage are "heritage" and "design for living". This means that we learn to live or survive from an already existing knowledge. "This learning takes place in a group that defines the appropriate way of responding to the patterns of nature."<sup>2</sup> For this reason, if one finds himself in a certain culture, he has to know how to respond in the "appropriate way" within that particular culture.

What is "solutions to the problems of living"? The people, who live in countries where there is little water, have to organize themselves to solve this problem. They might take advantage of what water there is in different ways-- moving around from one water area to another, storing water, or whatever. Why then do eskimos have several words referring to the word "snow"? It is because they are in a geographical setting where snow is everywhere and they need to solve the problem of recognizing the different types of snow that surrounds their living situation. Therefore,

Cultural and social norms prescribe both the large and the small conditions of our lives: how much of

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<sup>1</sup>Melvin L. DeFleur, William V. D'Antonio, and Lois DeFleur Nelson, Sociology: Human Society (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1977), p. 120.

<sup>2</sup>Scott G. McNall, The Sociological Perspective, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1977), p. 58.



our bodies must be clothed in public, whether the language we first learn is English or Chinese, whether we eat with hands or with utensils, whether men or women take the initiative in courtship...<sup>3</sup>

In any case, my main concern for the project was the fact that I wanted somehow to have my students get a glimpse of the culture by having them study its history, geography, traits, configurations, created symbols, and materials so that they would be able to deal with the culture in a situational, functional, and performative way.

The culture, in a situational way, prescribes a condition of living in regard to circumstances or locality. In a functional way, culture refers to what people do in order to organize themselves in their "design for living". And in a performative way, culture prescribes the various processes in which people undergo within their "design for living". The project has the students work with or experience a certain situation within the culture, such as fast food restaurants in New York City. It also helps them gain some knowledge and insights in a functional way, such as recognizing what to do and what to see in Boston. Finally, it further helps them perform within a given situation in the culture such as asking for directions to go to a certain place.

If the "total" is culture, then the "part" is language. I feel that one cannot learn the part without the whole. In order to learn the language, I felt that my students needed to get an introduction to the second language culture. For this reason, I decided to introduce the French culture into my classroom by having the students plan an imaginary trip to France.

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<sup>3</sup>Clifford T. Morgan, A Brief Introduction to Psychology (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1977), p. 406.

For the remaining six weeks of my student teaching period, I had the students work on the project for 45 minutes each day in class and also outside class for homework. It turned out to be very successful. My classroom took on a new look. I was amazed to find the change in my students' attitude toward coming to class. They kept on insisting that they work on the project. They all wanted to get involved in all the planning stages. The truth was that I had never seen a more enthused group of language students in my life. It is interesting to note that I had the approval of the parents as well. The students, apparently, carried their enthusiasm home. In fact, one parents' night, I had nothing but praise from every parent. The most important thing was the fact that in developing this project, I was able to finally get the students motivated to learn. I tried the same project again during a second internship using the same type of set up and time period. It again proved to have the same successful results.

## II. WHAT

"A Voyage to a Culture" is a project designed for post-elementary teachers of advanced English as a Second Language who are teaching outside of the U.S. culture. Since the students are outside of the target culture, it is the teacher's task to create or bring the context of this culture to the classroom. To do this, the students will plan a trip to the U.S.A. by being totally involved in all the stages of the planning.

There are four major parts to the planning of the trip. First, there is the itinerary with the time schedules; second, there are the chosen places of interest to visit in the U.S.; third, there are the hotel accommodations; and fourth, there is the restaurant/food section. The whole project has approximately sixteen stages to it. These can, of course, be cut down or expanded depending on each teacher's as well as students' needs, time limits, purposes, and/or objectives. Each stage is a lesson plan in itself and it, in turn, can be shortened or expanded. There is a special teaching technique in each one. The teacher has to give a brief general description of each stage. She will explain the activities involved and the materials needed. The students will then fulfill their task under the supervision and guidance of their teacher. It is up to each teacher to incorporate any other or further lesson plan that she so desires within each stage to teach or develop any language development skills.

In order to facilitate the proceedings of the project, it is highly recommended for the teacher to have many resources and materials available

for the students' research. This is especially important in the case of the teacher who finds herself in a situation where the availability of resources for the project is uncertain, scarce, or simply nonexistent. She should get the needed materials before leaving the U.S. or otherwise, as in some cases, by mail from travel agencies, book stores and/or friends in the U.S. or, perhaps, in the foreign country itself. Whatever the case may be, it is always a good idea to have available in the classroom some U.S. travel, historical, geographical books, pamphlets, post cards, records, magazines, newspapers, posters, pictures, or whatever other items that might be used as references to acquire information on the U.S. culture. The basic idea is to have things available for the project in case they are inaccessible.

I have compiled a suggested list of books with their contents and approximate costs which might be helpful or of interest to have in the classroom (see annotated bibliography). Most of them can be obtained from most book stores in the U.S. I would also recommend writing the Chamber of Commerce in each state as well as travel offices throughout the U.S. continent. It is up to each teacher to seek her own resources according to the needs and the time limits of her class. It is important to note that all this should be done before the start of the English as a Second Language course. The teacher might want to have the students send away for the information but I would advise against it since this might slow down the process of the project and it might also be time consuming as well. Again this is only necessary if the information and the materials have to be sent away for by mail and are not accessible at the teaching site.

Beside securing materials, resources, and/or information, the teacher is the one who initiates and stimulates the learning process within the project. She is the resource person, the consultant, and the facilitator. She leads and guides the learners toward their goal at each stage of the project. She corrects mistakes, listens with a critical ear, evaluates the students' progress, is sensitive to the students' needs, and provides suggestions. In sum, the teacher is the one who directs the project.

Since the students will be totally involved in all the stages of the planning, they will be asked to try to do all of the activities in English. They do the necessary work to bring the context of U.S. culture to the classroom in order to learn the English language. The classroom should take on an atmosphere of the U.S. culture. As the students work on the project, they will develop their language skills. This will include all the four basic areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They will gain some knowledge of the geography and the history of the U.S.A. They will also get into other insightful areas such as learning to convert their money into dollars as well as learning the metric conversion chart. Although the whole class will organize the trip, each student will be responsible for contributing his share.

The project is, therefore, a living drama. The students are the actors. The teacher is, in turn, the director of the show.

### III. WHY

Why the project? Its main purpose is to introduce the U.S. culture in the classroom. Using a simple theme such as planning an imaginary trip, the students will get to know the U.S.A. This will require the total involvement of the students. It will become an experience for them. That, in turn, will become memorable. As the students progressively explore certain aspects of the American culture, they will become more and more familiar with it.

The best way to learn a language or to learn about a culture is by being in the target country itself. In most cases, however, this is not always possible. And so the next best thing to being there is to bring the culture to the classroom. This is what "A Voyage to a Culture" provides for the students-- a way of making culture become real in the classroom.

Learning about a culture becomes fun through the project. The students are active in the learning process. There can be no project if they do not participate. Learning becomes a group affair. Each student contributes to the whole group's needs and the whole group, in turn, contributes to each student's needs. Since each student has to contribute to the project, it will get him motivated to learn. For this reason, each one plays an important part in this real drama. Each person's contribution is a major factor for the success of the project.

Learning is done informally. The teacher does not provide all the new information. It is up to the students to research and to seek their own materials. This is what makes the learning more fun. The students

must work in order to learn. They also learn at their own pace within the time limits of the project. They are free to move around the classroom in any way they wish. This creates a more relaxed and secure atmosphere that is conducive to learning. This will, then, enable them to enjoy the learning process.

## IV. HOW

I am now ready to explain in detail all the stages of the imaginary trip. I have set up each stage in an outline form to include: 1) the purpose of the stage with the aspects of culture addressed and the language skills addressed; 2) the techniques/activities with the procedures and materials; 3) notes to teachers with suggestions; and 4) descriptions of students' reactions.

Here are then my "Voyage to a Culture" stages to that place called the United States of America.

STAGE I

1. Purpose: This stage is a brief introduction to the project. The teacher explains what the project is and what the students have to do. The students have to become familiar with all the materials, information, and directions before they can start researching to plan their trip. The idea is to bring to the classroom the U.S. cultural atmosphere. The students need to look at the materials of the culture. It is the first leap into the new realm as they emerge into a new experience of a whole new culture.

As part of this stage, the students develop their listening, speaking, and writing skills. In order to understand what the project is all about the students need to listen carefully to the directions and the information that are administered by the teacher in the foreign language. They need to ask questions about the project. They also have a writing skill exercise to practice writing in the foreign language.



2. Techniques/Activities: The teacher provides all the necessary needed materials and resources for the project. She makes them all available in the classroom for the students' use. These should include any information concerning the U.S. culture. Travel books and/or brochures are ideal (see suggested list in the annotated bibliography). U.S. post cards, stamps, magazines, or posters are also some good examples that could be of use. The teacher should also provide a clothes line, some clothes pins and some index cards (pieces of paper could be substituted for cards) which are necessary for the project. Stage II will explain the reason for their use.

Having already provided the materials, the teacher's first task is to explain the project to the students, basically telling them that they are to plan an imaginary trip to the U.S. and that this involves research on their part. The teacher lets them know that there are several stages to the project but that there are four major parts to it. These are the itinerary with the time schedules, the chosen places of interest to visit in the U.S., the hotel accommodations, and the restaurant/food section. The teacher explains to the students when they are allowed to work on the project. She also lets them know that they are free to move around the classroom and that they each have to contribute to the project. The teacher should also tell the students that she will be explaining each stage as they work through the project. The students are also told that they may only speak English throughout their task.

Next, the teacher tells the students about the resources available to them for their work. She points to all the materials that she has provided for them in the classroom. She might also let them know that the information for their task could also be acquired from the library

at school or at the city, village, or town of the teaching site or from the nearest travel agency. Of course, these places can only be consulted if they are to be found in the teaching area.

At this point, the teacher has the students help in decorating the classroom with the cultural resources that she has provided for them. She can have them put up posters, post cards, and maps and also have them arrange in order the different books, such as putting all the travel information together, the cook books and restaurant information together, and hotels and inns information together. At the same time, the students should be browsing through the materials so that they can become familiar with what is available for them to use.

3. Notes to teachers: The teacher could give the students some time to think up and to write down some questions that they might have concerning the project. This is helpful to get them to ask questions in English and also to clarify any questions that they might have about the project. The teacher could go over and answer the questions with or for the students. She could also have them write a composition in English on the topic "what does planning an imaginary trip to U.S. mean to me?".

4. Descriptions of students' reactions: When my students heard about the project, they were ecstatic. It is always exciting to start something new. While browsing through the materials, they got so fascinated and interested that they could hardly wait to start on the project. I found myself trying to answer a hundred questions all at once. To answer them all would have only confused them. And so I had to assure them that most of their questions would be answered as the project progresses.

## STAGE II

1. Purpose: Stage II is setting up the clothes line in the classroom. It is the visible reference line of the progress of the new information gathered for the trip. It lists in order the cultural information (to be collected by the students): history, geography, materials, food, and so on.

This stage is not intended to have any language development skills interwoven in it. But this is not to say that some of the skills are not incorporated within it indirectly. The organization of the index cards with the appropriate titles for each card does involve some writing skills. Giving directions and answering questions also involve the development of the listening skills.

2. Techniques/Activities: The teacher with the help of the students sets up the line in an out of the way area within the classroom. Index cards or ordinary paper are to be hung on the line with clothes pins. (I recommend index cards because they are sturdier than ordinary paper.)

The teacher explains the purpose of the line beforehand. It is basically an organized list of information of the progress of the project. All new necessary information for the trip from the stages should be placed in the appropriate order on the index cards.

3. Notes to teachers: Why use the index cards on the clothes line? These are easily taken off the line. This facilitates the plugging in and out of the new information. This also helps to facilitate the final management of the itinerary (Stage XIV). Instead of having the students search all over the place for the progress of the project, they can just refer to the line to see where they are. It is also the place where students can add or subtract any new information.

The teacher might ask the students to label the index cards in any order they wish. They might want to arrange the cards as to have all the places to visit in one section, all the restaurants to visit in another, and the hotels still in another (It is up to the students or the teacher to decide on that). The students should break up in groups to do this task in order to avoid confusion. One group might work on labeling the cards for restaurants-- this would include names of restaurants' section, menus' section, and so on. While another group might work on the places to visit--this would include the cities, sites, and the like.

4. Descriptions of students' reactions: At this point, the students were eager to start with their work. The classroom took on a lively atmosphere. Almost all of the students were willing to work within their group.

### STAGE III

1. Purpose: It is in this stage that the students decide when to go and for how long. The seasons/months/days are important aspects of a culture. The calender is a rich resource of a culture. It tells us how people organize within their "design for living", the seasons, months, days-- this includes the holidays, the special season/month/day, or any other eventful days.

In this stage, the students learn or review the names of the seasons, months, and days. They will get to know the different holidays that are found in the particular country. For example, the 4th of July is an important day in the United States. So that if the students decide to plan their trip in early summer, they will be able to participate in the

events that take place during that date. In doing research on this subject in the foreign language, the students expand their reading comprehension skills.

2. Techniques/Activities: Students are asked to look at the calendar year of the U.S. They are to do some research on the different important dates by browsing through the materials that are available. A U.S. calendar which includes all the special dates is ideal. The students can then decide on the season, month, and exact dates for travel. If it is possible, the teacher might have some students refer to a travel agency at the teaching site to get some information for exact dates and time schedules thereby making the situation more real. The dates should be chosen within the season and month that the class agreed upon. If going to a travel agency is not possible or if the class does not wish to consult an agency, the students can always invent their own exact dates and time schedules.

3. Notes to teachers: It is important to note that stage III makes a lot of difference to the length of the project. If, for example, the students decide upon a one-week trip, they will have less to plan than if they choose to plan a one-month trip. Thus, given the time limits for the duration of the project, the decision for the length of the trip becomes important. The teacher should explain this factor to the students before they decide on the exact dates of the trip.

4. Descriptions of students' reactions: At the time of working within this stage in my classroom, it became a little bit confusing. I had several different choices for exact dates. To remedy this, I put on

the board the several options and I had the class vote on them. This worked out well.

#### STAGE IV

1. Purpose: Stage IV is the money stage. The dollar is part of the U.S. culture. Lots of insightful cultural information might be learned from this. For example, who are these faces on the U.S. currency? How are they important? Here we are referring to the "heritage" of a country. The students learn how the U.S. culture organizes its money system within its "design for living".

Converting money into U.S. dollars is addressed in this stage. Research on this subject in the foreign language increases the students' reading comprehension skills. They also get to learn to organize and budget their money.

2. Techniques/Activities: Students need to research the cost estimates for the trip. They can start researching for this by referring to the books that might be available in the classroom. They can also consult, if it is possible, a travel agency to find out the cost of the round trip air fare. Otherwise they can try to estimate the cost for themselves. With or without the consultation of travel resources, they are to decide on the amount of money to allow per day for spending, food, and emergency money.

Moreover, students can try to estimate the amount of their money to equal one U.S. dollar. For example, if the students are Mexicans, they can try to estimate how many pesos will equal one U.S. dollar. In doing this, they can then try to figure out the number of pesos that they would need for spending and food money per day, week, or even for the whole duration of the trip.

3. Notes to teachers: Beside incorporating a lesson on converting money into U.S. dollars, the teacher might want students to examine more carefully the U.S. dollar to get the cultural insightful information that can be drawn from this currency. Students can do further research on this.

4. Descriptions of students' reactions: During my student teaching internship, I used French currency to illustrate some aspects of this stage. The students remarked on how different the money was from theirs. They mentioned the fact that it looked as if it was fake money. It was interesting to note how this reaction enabled me to realize how much emphasis we put on the symbol of our money that other cultures' money somehow becomes unreal.

#### STAGE V

1. Purpose: The students get to know the U.S. geographically in this stage. They become more familiar with its size, climate, and natural wonders. The location of circumstances of living is very important in terms of getting to know the inhabitants' "design for living".

The language skill that can be developed within this stage is again reading for comprehension through researching for the information in the foreign language. Developing the listening and speaking language skills also take part here (see Notes to teachers of this stage).

2. Techniques/Activities: The students research the geography of the U.S. First of all, it will be an interesting lesson for them to find out that the U.S. is a big country and that it has several time zones. For example, when it is 8:00 p.m. in New York City, it is only 5:00 p.m. in Los Angeles. Besides its vastness, the U.S. has different climates. It also has many natural wonders ranging from caves, canyons, and lakes to

mountains, forests, and seashores. The students also need to know the number and size of each state. One can cross through several states in the East in one day by car whereas in the West this is not always the case.

3. Notes to teachers: A geographical lesson is no doubt educational. The teacher might ask the students for lots of geographical facts about the U.S. She might want to have the class name all the states in the U.S. She might also try to have them name the different parts in the country or, perhaps, have them give the different location of each state. Since the U.S. is big, the students can also learn the metric conversion chart to figure out the kilometers in miles or the like.

4. Descriptions of students' reactions: In doing this stage, my students were fascinated by the location of the different regions and cities. They were also fascinated by the different climates. However, because of the need for the use of the map, its location in the classroom became a congested area. This caused chaos. I solved this situation by having the students take turns to look at the map in small groups.

#### STAGE VI

1. Purpose: This stage is a specific study of the different places of interest within the country. It is educational for the students to learn about these places to help them understand the "people's accumulated solutions to the problems of living"<sup>4</sup> in those areas.

The development of the four skills are already incorporated here. Both the oral and the written reports that have to be done by the students

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<sup>4</sup>DeFleur, D'Antonio, and Nelson, p. 120.



within this stage provide the development of the speaking, reading, listening, and writing skills.

2. Techniques/Activities: The students are asked to research the different places of interest. Each student is responsible for acquiring information about one or two specific places of interest in the U.S. It is then his task to give an oral report in English on his findings to the whole class. In doing this, the whole class might find out about these places in a shorter, more convenient, and less confusing way. Each student has to then hand in a written report in English on his findings for the teacher to correct.
3. Notes to teachers: The teacher should correct the reports as soon as she can. The class will need to use them as references for stage VII.
4. Descriptions of students' reactions: My students were excited to learn about the different places of their interest, but they were not too thrilled about doing the reports. Nevertheless, most of them surprised me by giving some excellent reports that were rich insightful information for the whole class.

#### STAGE VII

1. Purpose: Again this stage refers to locality. Here the class makes a decision of the places to visit. It is a follow up of stage VI. It is intended to further help the students understand the "design for living" of the culture's inhabitants.

An emphasis on developing the students' writing skills is involved here. A writing exercise is included (refer to Notes to teachers in this stage).

2. Techniques/Activities: The students are first given time to browse through the written reports before making any decision of the places to visit. Then, once they decide, they are to organize the order of visits. They can refer to the U.S. maps in order to do this. These visits are to be put up in order on the clothes line on the index cards. To give a brief example, the students might plan to visit Boston, Massachusetts; Providence, Rhode Island; New Haven, Connecticut; New York, New York; and/or Washington, D.C. in that order or vice versa.

3. Notes to teachers: It is in this section that the teacher might ask the students to justify their choice of visits by having them write an essay about it. She might also ask the students to draw a map of the whole tour of their visit. It would be nice to have these posted on the walls of the classroom.

4. Descriptions of students' reactions: The best part of this stage was the creativity aspect. My students enjoyed making their own maps of the tour. These maps were quite impressive and they certainly added more color to the classroom's decor. At the same time the students' motivation to go on with the project was still a major factor.

### STAGE VIII

1. Purpose: In this stage, the students decide on what to visit in each place of interest. The emphasis here is more on the historical aspect of culture. Since "heritage" is one important aspect of a society, it is worth looking at.

Beside a history lesson, a discussion exercise within this stage helps the students develop their speaking and listening language skills. Once again reading for comprehension can also be expanded here through researching for the new information in the foreign language.

2. Techniques/Activities: Students decide on what to visit in each place of interest. This needs some research. For example, if the students decide to visit Boston, they need to know what to do or visit in this city and why. Once the specific places have been picked out, the students might then organize the visits as to have the whole class visit the same places all together or they might choose to split up in different groups. Whatever the case may be, all this information should be placed on the index cards.
3. Notes to teachers: Here the teacher might decide to give a history lesson. She might want to ask the students to discuss a historical event that occurred in one of the particular visiting site. For example, the class might discuss the incident of the Boston Tea Party which occurred in Boston sometime before the American Revolution. The class might want to discuss the causes and effects of this incident or they might also want to discuss the causes and effects of the American Revolution. This stage can, therefore, be a good place to have a lesson on some of the historical events that occurred in some parts of the U.S.
4. Descriptions of students' reactions: It is within this stage that my class was starting to get tired of doing research on places to visit. However, the discussions were quite lively and interesting. The most important thing was the fact that I still held their interest to move on to the next stage.

#### STAGE IX

1. Purpose: How to get around from place to place is the subject of this stage. The modes of transportation are important aspects of a culture. These

are the material traits in a culture that people "incorporate into their design for living".<sup>5</sup>

All the four basic skills are developed within this stage. There is a great emphasis here on developing the oral language skills (see Notes to teachers of this stage).

2. Techniques/Activities: Students decide on the modes of transportation for the trip. They can try to check out the costs for all types of transportation available by inquiring at any travel agency. They can then decide on the cheapest way to get around. If there is no travel agency available, they can choose on their own how they want to travel. This includes chartering a bus, going by train, renting a car, going by bike, or simply flying from place to place.

3. Notes to teachers: The teacher might want to have the students study or review a lesson on how to get a taxi. She might do this by creating a situation where the students have to ask for or get a taxi. There can also be a lesson on how to rent a car or a bike. Again a situation might be created where the students have to go and try to rent a car or a bike. The teacher might also have the students simply write some dialogues to be acted out in class concerning these different types of situations.

4. Descriptions of students' reactions: My students decided on chartering a bus for the trip. They enjoyed writing the dialogues together as well as acting them out. This turned out to be a fun exercise for them.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

STAGE X

1. Purpose: Here we discuss the cultural "materials" to pack in order to respond in the appropriate manner to "the patterns of nature"<sup>6</sup> within the new culture. The students learn the names of the items to pack for their trip. The tasks that are included as part of this stage help to develop both the oral and the written language skills of the students.
2. Techniques/Activities: Students are asked to make a list of vocabulary words of items to pack for the trip. They can refer to stages III, V, VII to find out what they need to include on their list. Knowing the season and month of their trip and the type of climate that each chosen site has, they ought to know what type of clothing they would need to pack. Of course, the students can take advantage of the dictionary to do this task. After the lists have been constructed, the teacher can then collect and correct them.
3. Notes to teachers: It would be advisable to have in class an already packed suitcase for the class to refer to as a visual aid within this stage. The teacher can incorporate the vocabulary words from the students' lists in her lesson plans. She can use them in a grammar lesson by having the students construct sentences to learn a specific grammar point. Students can also use the vocabulary words to write a specific type of composition. For developing the oral skills, the words from the lists can be used in an oral conversation exercise or in a question-answer type of an activity.
4. Descriptions of students' reactions: I brought a suitcase with some items in it to my class for this stage. The students thought it was a

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<sup>6</sup>McNall, p. 58.

good idea. They all wanted to take a look at what was packed. I included some funny items such as hair curlers and bedroom slippers. This added a touch of humor to the lesson which the students enjoyed very much.

#### STAGE XI

1. Purpose: It is in this stage that the students decide on the lodging at each different place to stay. Lodging is an important aspect within the "design for living" framework. Depending on the country and region, there are different types of lodgings for foreigners. In some countries, one would probably have to lodge in a tent, in another in a hotel, still in another in someone's house or in a guest house. In any case, this has to be accounted for in taking any trip to any country.

As part of this stage, new vocabulary words are introduced in order to broaden the scope of the students' spoken foreign language. A writing task is included to aid the students to further develop their writing skills.

2. Techniques/Activities: Students decide on the different hotels, motels, and inns available in each visiting site. There are several books written about the U.S. hotels, motels, and inns (refer to annotated bibliography). Students might also want to consult with a travel agency. They, furthermore, decide on the number of people per room. A list could be made to assign people to share different rooms at each different stop.

3. Notes to teachers: The students can make a vocabulary work list of objects in a hotel room. The teacher can incorporate this in her lesson

plans. She might want to have the students write a descriptive paragraph describing an imaginary hotel room or describing what to do in case of fire or robbery. Students can study or review a lesson on how to get room service. A situation can be created to enact this orally. The whole class can also write a dialogue about a situation that takes place in a U.S. hotel.

4. Descriptions of students' reactions: My students enjoyed browsing through the travel brochures and pamphlets with the hotel and the motel information that I had available for them in the classroom. Since hotels and motels are symbols of vacationing in our society, working within this stage reminded the students of that. They also enjoyed describing their hotel rooms.

#### STAGE XII

1. Purpose: Because of the different "patterns of nature" at each different country, different types of food are produced as part of the inhabitants' diet. The reasons differ-- it could be accounted for by climate, the kind of plant life that the soil produces, or the type of animals that can be found within the area of living. The way in which people prepare their food is sometimes passed down from generation to generation. How people eat the different types of food is also important. It prescribes a social norm of that particular group of people. What and where the different types of foods are available in the U.S. is, therefore, a cultural lesson for the students.

Lots of conversation is incorporated in this stage. The students need not only to taste the food but they also need to speak about it in order to keep developing their oral skills.

2. Techniques/Activities: To find out the what there is to eat and where, the students can refer to cook books and U.S. restaurants (see annotated bibliography). If the students wish, they can specifically plan what and where to eat each day at each meal during the trip. They can then plot this information on the index cards.

3. Notes to teachers: This stage, if done right, can be a lot of fun. Students can make creative menus. The teacher can split up the class into three groups: the first group can plan a breakfast menu, the second group can plan a lunch menu, and the third group can plan a dinner menu. These can be posted up on the wall once they are finished. The students or the teacher can also cook a meal. In this manner, the class gets a chance to sample a certain dish or meal. It might also be best to have an American dinner party.

4. Descriptions of students' reactions: When it came to food preparation, I had lots of volunteers. The students also showed lots of creativity in planning the menus. As a matter of fact some were quite artistic with an elaborately decorated cover.

#### STAGE XIII

1. Purpose: The students find out here about the different important documents necessary for the trip. These again are "material...creations that members of a society incorporate into their design for living".<sup>7</sup> Necessary steps must be undertaken before entering into any culture such as obtaining a passport, visa, and/or medical papers.

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<sup>7</sup> DeFleur, D'Antonio, Nelson, p. 120.



New vocabulary words are interwoven into this stage to develop the speaking and the writing skills of the students. While researching for the materials discussed here, the students can broaden their reading for comprehension skills.

2. Techniques/Activities: The students with or without the help of their teacher need to find out about the necessary important documents for the trip. They also need to find out the procedures to obtain them. They need a passport and, perhaps, a visa too. They also need a medical paper. This includes knowing about the different types of vaccinations which are necessary to have before going on a trip to the U.S. For this task, they might want to consult a doctor or a nurse, the American embassy in the country, any pertinent books (if available), and/or the dictionary.
3. Notes to teachers: It might be of interest to research the different types of popular diseases. The students can make a list of these diseases. The teacher corrects these lists and gives them back to the students. A discussion on these diseases can follow. This might prove to be an insightful discussion for the class.
4. Descriptions of students' reactions: Because of my students' enthusiasm about working with the project, any new information was welcomed. For this reason, the information that they acquired while working within this stage was quite insightful for them.

#### STAGE XIV

1. Purpose: This is the final organization stage of the clothes line. It is the itinerary for the trip. Now that the students are familiar with what to expect in traveling in the new culture, they can organize the plan for their journey. In knowing some aspects of culture, they can now figure out:

whether to eat meat or fish on Friday, whether to take the bus or train on Saturday, whether to see Boston or New York on Monday, whether to tour Washington during the day or at night on Tuesday, whether to camp or stay in a hotel on Wednesday.

All the four areas of language development skills can be developed here.

2. Techniques/Activities: The class breaks up in groups to work on the final organization of the itinerary. Each group will work on one section of the itinerary at a time. For example, Group A can work on the itinerary for Monday and Tuesday; Group B can work on it for Wednesday and Thursday; and so on. After everything has been organized, the final itinerary is then written up. This can be posted up on the wall.

3. Notes to teachers: At this point, the teacher might want to have the students review any lesson that came out of the project. This might be a geographical or historical review lesson. This might also be a review on the vocabulary lists. An overall review might, therefore, be incorporated here.

4. Descriptions of students' reactions: My students worked hard in this stage to put together their "masterpiece". They were extremely proud of what they had done. And they deserved to feel that way.

#### STAGE XV

1. Purpose: To study or review "the appropriate way of responding"<sup>8</sup> to what to do in certain circumstances and situations within the particular culture and how to go about doing it is the purpose of this stage.

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

Moreover, all four language skills can be developed here through the listed activities and suggestions.

2. Techniques/Activities: The teacher helps the students to study or review important vocabulary words, phrases, or idioms that are necessary to know for travel. They need to have a lesson on how to ask for directions, how to talk on the telephone, and how to ask for information. They need to study or review a lesson on how to handle being in a certain situation in the U.S. such as being at the store, bank, movie, and/or post office.

3. Notes to teachers: All of the above activities can be done by acting out the different situations and by using the already learned necessary vocabulary words, phrases, or idioms. The teacher might want to have the students write up a skit. She might also want to have them read different stories regarding the U.S. culture that she might have available.

4. Descriptions of students' reactions: My classroom was quite lively during this stage. My students were energetic, and they felt at ease with what they were learning. Reviewing the different vocabulary words, phrases, and idioms was fun for them especially when they were able to apply them in the different circumstances and situations within their skits.

#### STAGE XVI

1. Purpose: Knowledge of a culture makes one able to become more familiar with the "design for living" framework of a society. An evaluation of what the students know of a culture is the purpose of this final stage. At the same time, it is intended to test the students in all four areas of language skills.

2. Techniques/Activities: The students and the teacher evaluate the project. A feedback session is called for here. The students express their

views on the pros and cons of the project. They get a chance to evaluate the different stages and to talk about what they might want to add or change within the project. They are encouraged to orally share openly what they have learned from the experience. The teacher may choose instead to have the students fill out an evaluation form or write out their own evaluation of the project.

3. Notes to teachers: As a suggestion, the teacher may choose to test the students on any of the materials that came up during the project. This includes the vocabulary words, phrases, or idioms. She may also choose to ask them to write an essay on or discuss a certain geographical, historical, or cultural question.

4. Descriptions of students' reactions: The feedback session was quite positive. My students loved the project. They also gave me a lot of suggestions which I kept in mind in organizing on paper this project.

## V. RESULTS

The task of going beyond one's cultural heritage is quite an assignment. Lots of research on and familiarity with the new culture need to be done. It is not an easy process. The purpose of "Voyage to a Culture" project is to give students a glimpse of the new society's "design for living" framework. It is a leap into a new realm which differs with what went before in one's own realm. The different concepts of culture that are looked at in this project are only part of that big framework. In using the simple theme of planning a trip, the students became familiar with these concepts in order to be able to predict some of other society's responses to certain "patterns of nature"<sup>9</sup>, to understand some of "a people's accumulated solutions to the problems of living"<sup>10</sup>, and to learn some of "the appropriate ways" of behaving in that particular culture.

I must admit that the project is only a collection of teaching techniques which I have developed for my own personal teaching to introduce culture in my classroom. It is in no way an end in itself. It is designed to be flexible and to be used by each language teacher in her own way. She is to adapt it to her own teaching situation. It is meant to be expanded or revised in accordance to each teacher's and students' needs and/or objectives.

In any case, the learning that took place within the planning of a trip was fun and meaningful. As a result, the students became quite

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<sup>9</sup>McNall, p. 58.

<sup>10</sup>DeFleur, D'Antonio, Nelson, p. 120.

proficient in the four areas of the language skills. Their speaking/listening ability in the target language was highly improved. Their reading/writing ability became quite proficient. As for cultural awareness, the students became familiar with the new culture's "design for living". In studying the history, geography, traits, configurations, created symbols, and materials of the new culture, the students developed an ability to deal with the new culture in a situational, functional, and performative way. They also developed an understanding of the different reasons for the "why" of the new culture's inhabitants' behavior. The students were able to identify with the new culture's way of life.

The total involvement of the students was important. They all worked together and they each contributed to the whole group. It was a community working together to make its imaginary trip real. The trip became their own creation. As a result, the students became familiar with the second language culture.

As the project comes to an end, I cannot help but wonder how great an effect it had on my students during both of my teaching internship experiences. The students were simply having fun all throughout the planning of the trip. In fact, almost all of the students actually wanted to go on the trip. What better way to learn than when the learning is meaningful and fun? It was indeed rewarding for me to see and watch the students strive to learn and to search for new information. My "Voyage to a Culture" project helped me motivate my students to learn.

The students worked hard to do their task for each stage. When it was time to research for the information, most all of them were eager to go about doing it. Planning the trip motivated them to learn. They wanted to

find out about the different concepts of a particular culture. They were curious to know about the what, why, where, and how of other culture's "conditions of living": history, geography, modes of transportation, diet, lodging, transportation, and so on. In short, they wanted to learn about the culture through planning the trip. They set out to do it by fulfilling the task for each stage of the project and they enjoyed doing it. The success of the project motivated some of the students to pursue even further their studies in learning more about it.

By way of conclusion, I might add that this project provides a practical learning experience for foreign language students. It is one key to a memorable introduction to a culture. It might, therefore, prove to be worth a try.

## VI. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

## 1. U.S. Travel Books.

- The Editors of America Magazine and Rand McNally. Road Notes: A Student's Guide to North America's Adventures and Delights. New York: Rand McNally & Company, 1980.

Cost: \$6.95.

Contents: 1. Great Outdoors; 2. Snow; 3. Beaches; 4. Wild and Quiet Waters; 5. Nomadics; 6. Big Cities; 7. Incredible Places; 8. Celebrations.

- Birnbaum, Stephen, ed. United States 1981. Boston: A Houghton Mifflin Publication, 1980.

Cost: \$9.95.

Contents: 1. Getting Ready: When and How to Go, Preparing, On the Road, Sources and Resources; 2. The American Cities; 3. Diversions: For the Body, For the Mind, For the Spirit; 4. Directions: East, South, Midwest, West.

Front Cover: "The Get'em and Go Travel Guides bring you the very best of the United States 1981. Cast your line in a trout filled stream, enjoy the finest in 40 cities, find a haven at a historic inn, feast on food from seven continents, ride the range under starry skies, disco 'til dawn..."

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Cost: \$9.95.

Contents: 1. To be a Vagabond: The Trip is Within; 2. The Magic of Vagabonding Reality Transformation; 3. Looking for America: Have You Seen It?; 4. Howdy Stranger! A Foreigner's Guide to the U.S.A.; 5. Meet the Natives: They Speak Your Language; - 6. Food and Lodging: A Vagabond Perspective; 7. Making Your Moves: Costs and Means of Vagabonding; 8. Camping and Car-Camping: The Outdoors Is In; 9. America By Car: Outwitting Your Auto; 10. Motorcycle Touring: Two-Wheel Wandering; 11. Basic of Bicycle Touring: Invitation to Individualists; 12. Adventuring By Thumb: The Complete Hitchhiker's Guide; 13. Hiking and Backpacking: The Best of Vagabonding; 14. Working and Settling: Some Alternative Approaches; 15. Sports and Other Sorts: A Miscellany By Way of Conclusion.



- The Editors of American Heritage. Natural Wonders of America: An American Heritage Guide. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980.

Cost: \$6.95.

Contents: (State by State).

Back Cover: (The book) "annotates over 1,000 forests, mountains, seashores, geysers, lakes, caves, buttes, canyons, and other natural spectacles-- from Yellowstone National Park to Georgia's Okefenokee Swamp. Each entry covers the geography, topography, flora and fauna of the sport, whether it's a wild, primitive and challenging area or an easily accessible location..."

- Council on International Educational Exchange. Where to Stay U.S.A.: From \$2 to \$20 a Night. Ed., Margaret E. Sherman. New York: Frommer/Pasmanier book, 1980.

Cost: \$4.95.

Contents: 1. Getting Around; 2. Staying Awhile; 3. Especially for Foreign Visitors; 4. State by State.

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- Crossette, Barbara, ed. America's Wonderful Little Hotels and Inns. New York: Congdon & Lattès, 1981.

Cost: \$8.95.

Contents: 1. New England; 2. Mid-Atlantic; 3. South; 4. Midwest; 5. Plains, Northwest and Alaska; 6. Southwest and South Central; 7. Far West and Hawaii; 8. Canada.

- Christopher, Bob and Ellen. America's Favorite Restaurants & Inns From Budget to Luxury: \$15 to \$25 a Night Budget/\$30 to \$40 a Night 1st Class. Milford, CT: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1980.

Cost: \$8.95.

Contents: 1. State by State Listing of Best Value Restaurants, Motels, Inns, and Hotels.

## 3. Cook Book,

- Kent, Louise Andrews. Mrs. Appleyard's Kitchen. New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, Inc., 1974.

Cost: \$3.95.

Contents: (250 Recipes and More).

Front Cover: A joyful celebration of good cooking and family eating-- with more than 250 recipes.

4. Road Atlas,

- Rand McNally & Company. Road Atlas! New York: Rand McNally & Company, 1980.

Cost: \$5.95

Contents: (U.S. Road Maps-- State by State).

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