



Constructing a Space for Learning about Languages in New York City

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This assignment is based on the National Standards in Foreign Language Education; it is adapted for learning about a language or languages spoken in New York City and not learning the language itself. The logo on the left is that of the National Standards.

(http://www.actfl.org/files/public/StandardsforFLLEXecsumm_rev.pdf)

Introduction and First Steps:

1. Select a language spoken in New York City
2. Research where this language is spoken in New York City and in the world
3. Answer questions such as those posed in our Nancy Foner reading:
 - a) When did speakers of this language arrive in New York City in significant numbers?
 - b) What is the history of the community in New York City?
Where did the speakers of this language first settle?
Where do they live today? What kind of work do they do?
Use Nancy Foner's books and other works in the course bibliography to begin your research. Use St. John's Library sources to find books, scholarly journal articles and primary sources as well as reputable Web sites to continue your research.
 - c) List questions you have as a result of preliminary inquiries and be prepared to ask these questions during the library session on February 15.

The following five parts are based on the 5C's or the interconnected rings or areas in the above logo which will guide you towards acquiring more knowledge about the language you are researching. Use this document to keep a journal or log of your research, answers to questions, visuals, films, links under each part. You will be adding information to your log from class discussions and readings, your classmates' presentations and the study of the history of New York City in the second half of the class.

Part One: Communication

1. Research the structure, syntax and aspects of non-verbal communication in this language
2. Interview a speaker of this language on campus or in your community and ask questions that you have prepared as a result of your inquiries. Interview a classmate, a professor or someone you know. If you have permission, make a little film of the interview.
3. What essential information should a non-speaker of this language know about it, particularly as it is used in New York City?

Part Two: Cultures

The language you have selected may be spoken by a number of cultures in one or more countries. This is true of Spanish or French, for example. Select one or more of these cultures to study in greater depth. You will be studying practices, perspectives and products *as they are evident in New York City*.

“Cultural practices refer to patterns of behavior accepted by a society and deal with aspects of culture such as rites of passage, the use of forms of discourse, the social “pecking order,” and the use of space. In short, they represent the knowledge of “*what to do when and where*.” (Standards, 2.1)

“Products [of the culture] may be tangible (e.g., a painting, a piece of literature, a pair of chopsticks) or intangible (e.g., an oral tale, a dance, a sacred ritual, a system of education). (Standards, 2.2)

Identify how these products are linked to “the underlying beliefs and values (perspectives) of that culture, and [how] the cultural practices involve the use of that product.” (Standards, 2.2)

Take photos, attend cultural events, find objects in museums, stores, etc. which provide cultural information about the language and culture in New York City.

Part Three: Connections

How does knowledge of this culture and language connect or relate to another subject you are studying or have studied: theology, art, music, literature? (Standards 3.1)

What distinctive viewpoints are you aware of because you have researched this language and culture? As a result of this research, do you have “a new window on the world?” (Standards, 3.2)

Can you compare the information you have learned to information available about your own language and culture? (Standards, 3.2)

Part Four: Comparisons

Can you compare and contrast what you have learned about the language you are studying to English?

What understanding have you gained on how languages work? (Standards, 4.1)

Based on your understanding and comparisons of products, practices and perspectives of the other language and culture in New York City as well as your own, what have you learned about cultural systems in general? (Standards, 4.2)

Part Five: Communities

Explore the communities at St. John's University and New York City based on information you have received from the speaker(s) of your selected language and culture you interviewed. (Standards, 5.1)

Identify what aspects of this research you will continue exploring or enjoying in the future. For example, you may continue attending cultural events, plan to stay in touch with members of the community, travel to the country of origin. (Standards, 5.2)

Glog: Presentation due February 22

Review your answers to the questions above and list the most interesting and important aspects you have learned about the language and culture of your inquiry. Reflect on how you have learned these. What connections have you discovered among the 5 C's of the standards in the diagram? If you have completed your Academic Service-Learning, how does your experience factor into the 5 C's?

Incorporate multi-media sources of your research of the 5 C's in learning about languages and their interconnectivity in a glog which you will present to the class.

When presenting your glog, explain the rationale for your selection, organization and placement of various sources and how you have chosen to express interconnectivity of the 5 C's.

Conclusion/ Reflection: Due on March 7

Review your log and your glog. Consider the questions and comments of your classmates and professor. Select the subject you would like to explore further and write a three-page research/reflection paper about this language and community in New York City.

Cite your sources using in-text citations, MLA style and prepare a Works Cited Page. Write a sentence describing each source, what was most useful about it, etc.

Remember that sources must include at least one book, a scholarly (peer-reviewed) article, a primary source and a reputable Web site.