

## Fostering Critical Thinking and Academic Language through Visual Images: A Hands-On Approach

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*Description:* In this workshop, we will present a framework for helping students develop critical thinking and academic language skills in their foreign language with the goal of training them to analyze a variety of texts relevant to CLAC courses. The presenters draw on the lessons learned from FLAC at St. Olaf that informed the reconceptualization of a third-semester Spanish course that, in turn, sparked other curricular reforms. Presenters will take participants through a step-by-step process using texts and tasks from their classrooms. Then participants will have the opportunity to apply the principles of the approach to sets of images pertinent to various disciplines. The goal is to illustrate how images can be one point of entry into a larger web of other images and texts embedded within a disciplinary context whose analysis fosters critical thinking and the use of academic language in the foreign language.

1. *Introduction:* Outline of the morning session
2. *Warm-up activity:* Exploring participants' instructional settings
3. *From foreign languages to Content and Languages Across the Curriculum and back:* Definitions and principles
4. *Understanding our students' frame of reference:*
  - **Activity 1.** We are going to examine rural life in [COUNTRY X] from the perspective of the discipline you teach. What would your students associate with "rural life"? What vocabulary, concepts would they bring to the task? What challenges would the phrase "rural life" perhaps present?
  - **Activity 2.** What Kinds of images would help your students put the topic of "rural life" in a more accurate context for your discipline?
5. *Our context and our students*
6. *Our Journey:* From Images to Academic Language
7. *Our approach:* Images as one point of entry to foster critical thinking and use of academic language (See handout)
  - **Activity 3.** From your disciplinary perspective, what does this group of 4 images from Peru evoke? How could they relate to your field?
8. *The Challenge of developing a "secondary Discourse" in a foreign language:*
  - **Activity 4.** Food, Family, and Nutrition around the Globe. You will receive a set of images related to eating habits of people in several countries. At first glance, what conclusions would your students draw from them? What additional images or texts would your students need to contextualize these images? What types of "bricks and mortar" would your students require to carry out a descriptive and an analytical task? *How would analyzing the image as a text in itself change the initial analysis?*
  - **Activity 5.** Images from the Conquest of Mexico (indigenous perspective) (See Handout)
10. *Brainstorming:* Applications to your field? What language support (bricks/mortars) do you need to provide your students?

## **History 242: Mexico's Conquest through the eyes of the Florentine Codex**

The *Florentine Codex* gathers together a series of drawings made by indigenous people who had been converted to Christianity by the Spanish Franciscan Friar Bernardino de Sahagún, who arrived in Mexico in 1529. The pictures, reproduced in these extracts from the codex, were drawn by various indigenous persons. The narration that accompanies the drawing is based on one history of the Mexican Conquest written in the Nahuatl language (by Sahagún's indigenous disciples) but using the Latin alphabet. The narration was later summarized in Spanish by Sahagún.

We can characterize these drawings as being somewhere between “la tradición indígena de la imagen como escritura y la [tradición] europea de la imagen como ilustración,” (“*the indigenous tradition to treat images as writing and the European [tradition] to treat images as illustration*”) (*La conquista de México según las ilustraciones del Códice Florentino*, México, DF: Nueva Imagen, 1978 [p. 10])

### **Before Wednesday's class session:**

- Read the Spanish narration. Who are the main characters? What actions are they carrying out in the narration?
- Describe the language of the narrations, taking into account the following linguistic characteristics:
  - The sentence structure (Are these simple or complex sentences?)
  - The most frequent verb tense
  - The use (or lack) of descriptive adjectives

### **In class: With the members of your group, analyze the drawings one by one according to the following questions:**

- Describe what is in each drawing. ¿Who are the different characters in each one?
- Are there elements from indigenous culture? Are the images of elements that seem to reflect the European influence on the indigenous culture?
- Read aloud the verbal text. What seems to be the relationship between the drawing and the verbal text? What seems to be the tone of the drawing? Why?
- In your opinion, which drawing is the most striking? Why?
- In general, ¿what is the tone of the narration in terms of how it depicts the Mexican Conquest?