

# Comparing Cultures *Sans* Stereotyping

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# Learning Outcomes

Participants will examine representative free-response questions from past AP World Languages and Cultures exams then collectively develop classroom-ready graphic organizers to help ensure that their students avoid stereotyping on the Cultural Comparison task of the exam.

# Session Process

- ▶ Review of Cultural Comparison Task and Pitfalls (large group)
- ▶ Development of Classroom-Ready Graphic Organizers (small groups)
- ▶ Sharing and Debriefing (small groups and large group)

# Review of Cultural Comparison Task and Pitfalls

# Learning Objectives for Spoken Presentational Communication

Primary Objective: The student plans, produces, and presents spoken presentational communications.

- ▶ The student produces a variety of creative oral presentations
- ▶ The student retells or summarizes information in narrative form, demonstrating a consideration of audience
- ▶ The student creates and gives persuasive speeches
- ▶ The student expounds on familiar topics and those requiring research

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# Learning Objectives for Spoken Presentational Communication

Primary Objective: The student plans, produces, and presents spoken presentational communications.

- ▶ The student uses reference tools, acknowledges sources, and cites them appropriately
- ▶ The student self-monitors and adjusts language production
- ▶ The student demonstrates an understanding of the features of target culture communities
- ▶ The student demonstrates knowledge and understanding of content across disciplines

# Achievement Level 5 for Spoken Presentational Communication

## Discourse and development

- ▶ When planning, producing, and presenting spoken presentational communications, students at Achievement Level 5 use paragraph-length discourse with mostly appropriate use of cohesive devices to report, explain, and narrate on a range of familiar topics. They develop ideas by showing evidence of synthesis and interpretation of background information.

# Achievement Level 5 for Spoken Presentational Communication

## Strategies

- ▶ These students employ a variety of strategies to clarify and elaborate content of presentation; self-correction is mostly successful.

# Achievement Level 5 for Spoken Presentational Communication

## Language structures

- ▶ These students use a variety of simple and compound sentences and some complex sentences in major time frames. Errors do not impede comprehensibility.

# Achievement Level 5 for Spoken Presentational Communication

## Vocabulary

- ▶ These students use vocabulary on a variety of familiar topics, including some beyond those of personal interest. They use some culturally appropriate vocabulary and idiomatic expressions.

# Achievement Level 5 for Spoken Presentational Communication

## Pronunciation

- ▶ Their pronunciation and intonation patterns, pacing, and delivery are comprehensible to an audience unaccustomed to interacting with language learners.

# Achievement Level 5 for Spoken Presentational Communication

## Register

- ▶ Their choice of register is usually appropriate for the audience, and its use is consistent despite occasional errors.

# Achievement Level 5 for Spoken Presentational Communication

Cultures, connections, and comparisons

- ▶ These students identify the relationship among products, practices, and perspectives in the target culture(s) and demonstrate understanding of most of the content of the interdisciplinary topics presented in the resource material. They also compare and contrast geographical, historical, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities.

# Cultural Comparison Task

## Directions (French Language and Culture)

### Task 4: Cultural Comparison

You have 1 minute to read the directions for this task.

Vous aurez 1 minute pour lire les instructions de cette tâche.

You will make an oral presentation on a specific topic to your class. You will have 4 minutes to read the presentation topic and prepare your presentation. Then you will have 2 minutes to record your presentation.

Vous allez faire un exposé pour votre classe sur un sujet précis. Vous aurez 4 minutes pour lire le sujet de cet exposé et préparer votre exposé. Vous aurez alors 2 minutes pour vous enregistrer.

In your presentation, compare your own community to an area of the French-speaking world with which you are familiar. You should demonstrate your understanding of cultural features of the French-speaking world. You should also organize your presentation clearly.

Dans votre exposé, comparez votre propre communauté à une région du monde francophone que vous connaissez. Vous devez démontrer votre compréhension de réalités culturelles du monde francophone. Vous devez aussi organiser clairement votre exposé.

You will now begin this task.

Vous allez maintenant commencer cette tâche.

# Cultural Comparison Task

## Directions (German Language and Culture)

### Task 4: Cultural Comparison

You have 1 minute to read the directions for this task.

Sie haben 1 Minute Zeit, die Anweisungen für diese Aufgabe zu lesen.

You will make an oral presentation on a specific topic to your class. You will have 4 minutes to read the presentation topic and prepare your presentation. Then you will have 2 minutes to record your presentation.

In your presentation, compare your own community to an area of the German-speaking world with which you are familiar. You should demonstrate your understanding of cultural features of the German-speaking world. You should also organize your presentation clearly.

Sie halten vor Ihrer Klasse einen Vortrag über ein bestimmtes Thema. Sie haben 4 Minuten Zeit, das Vortragsthema zu lesen und Ihren Vortrag vorzubereiten. Dann haben Sie 2 Minuten Zeit, Ihren Vortrag aufzunehmen.

Vergleichen Sie in Ihrem Vortrag Ihr eigenes soziales Umfeld mit dem einer deutschsprachigen Region, die Sie kennen. Zeigen Sie dabei Ihre Kenntnisse der deutschsprachigen Kultur. Sie sollten Ihren Vortrag übersichtlich gestalten.

You will now begin this task.

Sie beginnen jetzt mit dieser Aufgabe.

# Cultural Comparison Task

## Directions (Italian Language and Culture)

### Task 4: Cultural Comparison

You have 1 minute to read the directions for this task.

Hai 1 minuto per leggere le istruzioni relative a questa attività.

You will make an oral presentation on a specific topic to your class. You will have 4 minutes to read the presentation topic and prepare your presentation. Then you will have 2 minutes to record your presentation.

In your presentation, compare your own community to an area of the Italian-speaking world with which you are familiar. You should demonstrate your understanding of cultural features of the Italian-speaking world. You should also organize your presentation clearly.

Fai una relazione orale alla tua classe su un argomento specifico. Hai 4 minuti per leggere e preparare la tua relazione. Poi, hai 2 minuti per registrare la tua relazione.

Nella tua relazione, fai un confronto fra la realtà che hai osservato e in cui hai vissuto fino ad oggi e una realtà italiana che conosci bene. Devi dimostrare di conoscere aspetti culturali di quella realtà. Organizza la tua relazione in modo chiaro.

You will now begin this task.

Adesso inizia questa attività.

# Cultural Comparison Task

## Directions (Spanish Language and Culture)

### Task 4: Cultural Comparison

You have 1 minute to read the directions for this task.

Tienes 1 minuto para leer las instrucciones de este ejercicio.

You will make an oral presentation on a specific topic to your class. You will have 4 minutes to read the presentation topic and prepare your presentation. Then you will have 2 minutes to record your presentation.

Vas a dar una presentación oral a tu clase sobre un tema cultural. Vas a tener 4 minutos para leer el tema de la presentación y prepararla. Después vas a tener 2 minutos para grabar tu presentación.

In your presentation, compare your own community to an area of the Spanish-speaking world with which you are familiar. You should demonstrate your understanding of cultural features of the Spanish-speaking world. You should also organize your presentation clearly.

En tu presentación, compara tu propia comunidad con una región del mundo hispanohablante que te sea familiar. Debes demostrar tu comprensión de aspectos culturales en el mundo hispanohablante y organizar tu presentación de una manera clara.

You will now begin this task.

Ahora vas a empezar este ejercicio.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2016 (French Language and Culture)

Thème du cours : Les défis mondiaux

**Sujet de présentation :**

Quelle place est-ce que le recyclage occupe dans votre communauté ? Comparez ce que vous avez constaté ou remarqué dans les communautés où vous avez vécu avec ce que vous savez d'une région du monde francophone. Dans votre exposé, vous pouvez faire référence à ce que vous avez étudié, vécu, observé, etc.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2015 (French Language and Culture)

Thème du cours: La quête de soi

**Sujet de présentation:**

Comment est-ce que l'immigration et la présence d'immigrés ont touché la vie des gens de votre communauté? Comparez vos observations des communautés où vous avez vécu avec vos observations d'une région du monde francophone que vous connaissez. Dans votre exposé, vous pouvez faire référence à ce que vous avez étudié, vécu, observé, etc.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2014 (French Language and Culture)

Thème du cours: La science et la technologie

**Sujet de présentation:**

Comment est-ce que les innovations scientifiques récentes ont touché la vie des gens dans votre communauté? Comparez vos observations des communautés où vous avez vécu avec vos observations d'une région du monde francophone que vous connaissez. Dans votre exposé, vous pouvez faire référence à ce que vous avez étudié, vécu, observé, etc.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2013 (French Language and Culture)

Thème du cours: L'esthétique

Sujet de présentation:

Quelle est l'attitude des gens de votre communauté en ce qui concerne l'importance des arts visuels tels que la peinture, la photographie, la sculpture et le dessin? Comparez vos observations des communautés où vous avez vécu avec vos observations d'une région du monde francophone que vous connaissez. Dans votre exposé, vous pouvez faire référence à ce que vous avez étudié, vécu, observé, etc.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2012 (French Language and Culture)

Thème du cours: La quête de soi

Sujet de présentation:

Quelle est l'attitude des gens de votre communauté en ce qui concerne l'importance de la diversité culturelle? Comparez vos observations des communautés où vous avez vécu avec vos observations d'une région du monde francophone que vous connaissez. Dans votre exposé, vous pouvez faire référence à ce que vous avez étudié, vécu, observé, etc.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2016 (German Language and Culture)

Thema: Naturwissenschaft und Technologie

**Thema des Vortrags:**

Welche Rolle spielen Autofahren und öffentliche Verkehrsmittel in Ihrer Umgebung? Vergleichen Sie Perspektiven, wo Sie wohnen, mit Perspektiven in deutschsprachigen Regionen! Sie können in Ihrem Vortrag Beobachtungen, Erfahrungen oder das, was Sie gelernt haben, beschreiben.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2015 (German Language and Culture)

Thema: Familie und Gemeinschaft

**Thema des Vortrags:**

Welche Bedeutung haben Feste und Feiertage für die Menschen in Ihrer Umgebung? Vergleichen Sie Perspektiven, wo Sie wohnen, mit Perspektiven in deutschsprachigen Regionen! Sie können in Ihrem Vortrag Beobachtungen, Erfahrungen oder das, was Sie gelernt haben, beschreiben.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2014 (German Language and Culture)

Thema: Persönliche und Öffentliche Identität

## **Thema des Vortrags:**

Welche Rolle spielen Nebenjobs für Jugendliche in Ihrer Umgebung? Vergleichen Sie Perspektiven, wo Sie wohnen, mit Perspektiven in deutschsprachigen Regionen! Sie können in Ihrem Vortrag Beobachtungen, Erfahrungen oder das, was Sie gelernt haben, beschreiben.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2013 (German Language and Culture)

Thema: Alltag

Thema des Vortrags:

Welche Rolle spielen berühmte Personen (z.B. Schauspieler, Sportler, Politiker, etc.) in Ihrer Umgebung? Vergleichen Sie Perspektiven, wo Sie wohnen, mit Perspektiven in deutschsprachigen Regionen! Sie können in Ihrem Vortrag Beobachtungen, Erfahrungen oder das, was Sie gelernt haben, beschreiben.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2012 (German Language and Culture)

Thema: Schönheit und Ästhetik

Thema des Vortrags:

Welche Veranstaltungen oder Aktivitäten in Ihrer Umgebung haben etwas mit jungen Künstlern (z.B. mit Schauspielern, Musikern, Malern) zu tun? Vergleichen Sie Perspektiven, wo Sie wohnen, mit Perspektiven in deutschsprachigen Regionen! Sie können in Ihrem Vortrag Beobachtungen, Erfahrungen oder das, was Sie gelernt haben, beschreiben.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2016 (Italian Language and Culture)

Tema del corso: Vita contemporanea

**Argomento della relazione:**

Quali tipi di eventi o di attività sono visti come momenti di relax e tempo libero nella realtà in cui vivi? Fai un confronto fra la realtà che hai osservato e in cui hai vissuto fino ad oggi e una realtà italiana che conosci bene. Nella tua relazione, puoi fare riferimento a cose che hai studiato, visto, conosciuto, ecc.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2015 (Italian Language and Culture)

Tema del corso: Identità privata e pubblica

## **Argomento della relazione:**

Qual è l'opinione della gente nella realtà in cui vivi riguardo all'importanza di fare bella figura? Fai un confronto fra la realtà che hai osservato e in cui hai vissuto fino ad oggi e una realtà italiana che conosci bene. Nella tua relazione, puoi fare riferimento a cose che hai studiato, visto, conosciuto, ecc.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2014 (Italian Language and Culture)

Tema del corso: Bellezza ed estetica

## **Argomento della relazione:**

Qual è l'opinione della gente nella realtà in cui vivi riguardo all'importanza di vestirsi alla moda? Fai un confronto fra la realtà che hai osservato e in cui hai vissuto fino ad oggi e una realtà italiana che conosci bene. Nella tua relazione, puoi fare riferimento a cose che hai studiato, visto, conosciuto, ecc.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2013 (Italian Language and Culture)

Tema del corso: Famiglia e società

Argomento della relazione:

Quale ruolo hanno gli anziani nella realtà in cui vivi? Fai un confronto fra la realtà che hai osservato e in cui hai vissuto fino ad oggi e una realtà italiana che conosci bene. Nella tua relazione, puoi fare riferimento a cose che hai studiato, visto, conosciuto, ecc.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2012 (Italian Language and Culture)

Tema del corso: Famiglia e società

Argomento della relazione:

Qual è l'opinione della gente nella realtà in cui vivi riguardo all'importanza di abitare in città? Fai un confronto fra la realtà che hai osservato e in cui hai vissuto fino ad oggi e una realtà italiana che conosci bene. Nella tua relazione, puoi fare riferimento a cose che hai studiato, visto, conosciuto, ecc.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2016 (Spanish Language and Culture)

Tema curricular: Las familias y las comunidades

**Tema de la presentación:**

¿Qué tipo de eventos o actividades se consideran una expresión de la identidad cultural en tu comunidad? Compara tus observaciones acerca de las comunidades en las que has vivido con tus observaciones de una región del mundo hispanohablante que te sea familiar. En tu presentación, puedes referirte a lo que has estudiado, vivido, observado, etc.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2015 (Spanish Language and Culture)

Tema curricular: La vida contemporánea

**Tema de la presentación:**

¿Cómo ha afectado la comida rápida la vida de las personas en tu comunidad? Compara tus observaciones acerca de las comunidades en las que has vivido con tus observaciones de una región del mundo hispanohablante que te sea familiar. En tu presentación, puedes referirte a lo que has estudiado, vivido, observado, etc.

# Cultural Comparison Task

2014 (Spanish Language and Culture)

Tema curricular: La belleza y la estética

**Tema de la presentación:**

¿Qué opinión tienen las personas de tu comunidad con respecto a la importancia de aprender otras lenguas? Compara tus observaciones acerca de las comunidades en las que has vivido con tus observaciones de una región del mundo hispanohablante que te sea familiar. En tu presentación, puedes referirte a lo que has estudiado, vivido, observado, etc.

# Cultural Comparison Task

## Past AP Spanish Language Exam Questions

The College Board provides free-response questions from **past AP Spanish Language and Culture Exams**. These questions do not reflect the redesigned AP Spanish Language Exam administered for the first time in May 2014, but the question types are the same and the topics similar, making them a valuable resource for students and teachers. Included with the questions are scoring guidelines, sample student responses, and commentary on those responses, as well as exam statistics and the Student Performance Q&A (Chief Reader's Report) for the May 2013 administrations and before.

# Cultural Comparison Scoring Guidelines

## Clarification Notes

- ▶ The term “community” can refer to something as large as a continent or as small as a family unit.
- ▶ The phrase “target culture” can refer to any community large or small associated with the target language.

# Cultural Comparison Scoring Guidelines

## 5: STRONG performance in Presentational Speaking

- ▶ Effective treatment of topic within the context of the task
- ▶ Clearly compares the student's own community with the target culture, including supporting details and relevant examples.
- ▶ Demonstrates understanding of the target culture, despite a few minor inaccuracies

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# Cultural Comparison Scoring Guidelines

## 5: STRONG performance in Presentational Speaking

- ▶ Organized presentation; effective use of transitional elements or cohesive devices
- ▶ Fully understandable, with ease and clarity of expression; occasional errors do not impede comprehensibility
- ▶ Varied and appropriate vocabulary and idiomatic language
- ▶ Accuracy and variety in grammar, syntax and usage, with few errors

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# Cultural Comparison Scoring Guidelines

## 5: STRONG performance in Presentational Speaking

- ▶ Mostly consistent use of register appropriate for the presentation
- ▶ Pronunciation, intonation and pacing make the response comprehensible; errors do not impede comprehensibility
- ▶ Clarification or self-correction (if present) improves comprehensibility

# 2016 Pitfalls (French Language & Culture)

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*What were common student errors or omissions?*

Too many students did not read the advanced organizer or the question carefully enough. Other students, because they lacked the pertinent vocabulary about recycling, used English words (garbage, bins, landfills...) or mainly discussed general environmental issues and failed to give specific examples. When they did discuss the topic, their responses were often superficial or limited to stereotypes or they reflected a striking lack of knowledge about the target culture (poor people in Haiti or Africa do not recycle). Some students did not clearly identify their community, just saying *ici* or *chez moi*, or the target community. Others discussed recycling, but in one community only, and thus did not fulfill the task which is a comparison between two cultures. Yet others did not explicitly make a comparison but rather presented a series of facts characteristic of each culture mentioned. There were also unbalanced responses in which too much time was devoted to one of the two cultures. Finally, some students, especially those currently in a francophone environment, did not understand that they had to compare their community to a different area of the French-speaking world.

# 2015 Pitfalls (French Language & Culture)

## *What were common student errors or omissions?*

A common error was that students did not read the question carefully. They discussed the immigration issue in their community and in a Francophone community rather than deal with the impact of immigration on those communities. Some mentioned the impact of immigration, but on one community only, and thus did not fulfill the task, which is a comparison between two cultures. Others did not explicitly make a comparison but rather presented a series of facts that are characteristic of each culture mentioned. Others gave an unbalanced response, spending too much time on one of the two cultures. Some students, especially those currently in a Francophone environment, did not understand that they had to compare their community to a different area of the French-speaking world. In addition, most responses were filled with cultural stereotypes and revealed a disheartening lack of knowledge about the Francophone world (for instance, all French people are racist).

# 2014 Pitfalls (French Language & Culture)

## *What were common student errors or omissions?*

- One of the most common errors is that the student did not identify his/her own culture as a point of reference.
- Many students did not explicitly make a comparison but rather presented a series of facts that are characteristic of each culture mentioned.
- Many students gave an unbalanced response, spending too much time on one of the two cultures.
- Instead of elaborating or developing specific examples of scientific innovations, many students just gave a list of technological devices that can be found in each culture. The discussion of iPhones/Apple products were mentioned by many students.
- A large number of students presented cultural stereotypes rather than specific examples about the particular culture. Stereotypes may also lead to inaccurate information (i.e., there is no internet in Africa or Haitians are poor and do not have cell phones). Speaking about stereotypes of a specific culture does not equate to knowledge about a particular culture.
- Some students, especially those currently in a Francophone environment, did not understand that they had to compare their community to a different area of the "French-speaking world."

# 2013 Pitfalls (French Language & Culture)

## *What were common student errors or omissions?*

- Many students did not explicitly compare the attitude vis-à-vis the visual arts of the members of their community with that of people in a Francophone region and therefore did not complete the task.
- Instead, many students made comparisons based on their own opinions of art in their community versus art in a Francophone area, but neglected to discuss the attitudes of people toward the visual arts in these communities. This type of response did not respond to the precise topic provided in the prompt.
- In some cases, students simply made general comparisons between their community and a Francophone area without focusing on the topic of the presentation, i.e., the attitudes of peoples in these communities concerning the visual arts.

# 2012 Pitfalls (French Language & Culture)

## *What were common student errors or omissions?*

Many students did not read the prompt itself. They apparently assumed that the instructions given in both French and English were the prompt, and they made comparisons that had nothing to do with the topic.

Students did not speak to the attitudes of people toward cultural diversity. They found it difficult to express values, beliefs, and attitudes.

# 2016 Pitfalls (German Language & Culture)

## *What were common student errors or omissions?*

In general, students understood the topic of the presentation and were able to talk for two minutes about the theme of driving and public transportation in their own communities and in German-speaking cultures. While the vast majority of students were able to describe or list cultural differences with regard to transportation, many failed to address the *role* that various forms of transportation play in the two communities, as called for in the prompt. In some of the weak or poor performances, students understood only the word “Auto” and described specific cars rather than issues related to driving. Some students opened their presentations with lengthy introductions that limited the time they were able to devote to the topic itself. Other students spent a disproportionate amount of time discussing their own community and culture and as a result were not able to elaborate adequately on the target culture.

# 2015 Pitfalls (German Language & Culture)

## *What were common student errors or omissions?*

In general, students understood the topic of the presentation and were able to talk for two minutes about holidays and festivals in their own communities and in German-speaking cultures. Most students were able to list a number of holidays and festivals in both cultures, but many failed to address the *meaning* of holidays and festivals in their own culture and German-speaking culture, or they were unable to compare them in more than a superficial manner.

# 2014 Pitfalls (German Language & Culture)

## *What were common student errors or omissions?*

Most students understood the topic of the presentation and were able to talk for two minutes about part-time jobs for young people in their own communities and in German-speaking cultures. Some students, however, failed to make an adequate comparison or did not address the topic at all. Others attempted a comparison but were not able to give specific examples, or they provided inaccurate information.

# 2013 Pitfalls (German Language & Culture)

## ***What were common student errors or omissions?***

A number of students, much like last year, overlooked the specific topic (*Welche Rolle spielen berühmte Personen in Ihrer Umgebung?*) and instead presented a general comparison of perspectives in their own community and those in a German-speaking region. In addition, students who did attend to the specific topic had difficulty speaking specifically to the role that famous people play in their community. Students mostly described celebrities, for example, actors, athletes, or musicians in both the U.S. and in Germany, but said little about the position or status they might have in their own and the target culture.

# 2012 Pitfalls (German Language & Culture)

## *What were common student errors or omissions?*

A number of students did not respond to the specific topic prompt about activities and events that relate to artists but instead presented a general cultural comparison of their community and what they perceive as features of German-speaking communities. In alignment with the scoring guideline, students who did not treat the specific topic at all received a score of 0. Students who provided this kind of unacceptably general comparison ranged from linguistically weak to strong students, including heritage and native speakers.

# 2016 Pitfalls (Italian Language & Culture)

## *What were common student errors or omissions?*

Common errors or omissions included the following:

- A few students did not address the topic and often made a general and generic comparison between Italy and their own country.
- Some students talked in general terms with no reference to any culture/community.
- Some students did not demonstrate a complete understanding of the Italian context to which they were comparing their own culture.
- Some students did not provide an organized presentation with a clear and orderly comparison of the two communities.
- A few students are still attracted by the “*Tema del corso*” and tend to focus on it, instead of developing the “*Argomento della relazione*”. In their presentation some students in fact talked about the Tema del Corso (Vita contemporanea) instead of the Prompt (“Quali tipi di eventi attività sono visti come momenti di relax e tempo libero...”). Students should be trained to read the instructions throughout.
- Some students did not provide an accurate response containing variety in grammar and syntax; frequent grammatical and syntactic errors made comprehension difficult.
- Some students’ lack of correct pronunciation, intonation, and pacing impeded comprehension.

# 2015 Pitfalls (Italian Language & Culture)

## *What were common student errors or omissions?*

Common errors or omissions included the following:

- Some students did not address the topic and often made a general and generic comparison between Italy and their own country.
- Some students talked in general terms with no reference to any culture/community.
- Some students did not demonstrate a complete understanding of the Italian context to which they were comparing their own culture.
- Some students did not provide an organized presentation with a clear and orderly comparison of the two communities.
- Some students are still attracted by the "*Tema del corso*" and tend to focus on it, instead of developing the "*Argomento della relazione*." This year the "*Tema del corso*" ("*Identità pubblica e privata*") proved to be somewhat helpful and guiding students towards the concept of "*figura privata*" vs. "*figura pubblica*." Nevertheless, paying too much attention to the "*tema del corso*" might be "dangerous" in that it might tempt students to develop a presentation which is partially or totally off topic, causing them to run out of time before they develop the correct topic effectively. Some students were not able to verbalize a comprehensible response with ease and clarity of expression, instead providing a series of disjointed words, phrases, or expressions that lacked cohesion and clarity.
- Several students misunderstood the prompt, and instead of talking about the importance of "*fare bella figura*" they talked about the importance of "*avere una bella figura*." This misinterpretation led many students to produce a response that was completely off topic.
- Some students did not provide an accurate response containing variety in grammar, syntax, and usage; frequent grammatical and syntactic errors made comprehension difficult.
- Some students' lack of correct pronunciation, intonation, and pacing impeded comprehension.
- Even some students whose performance was quite good were not free from stereotypes and were unable to treat the topic (within the context of the task) in depth.

# 2014 Pitfalls (Italian Language & Culture)

## *What were common student errors or omissions?*

The following are some of the common errors, omissions, or problems experienced by students:

- Responses did not effectively treat the topic within the context of the task.
- Responses were conducted in general terms and made no reference to any culture/community.
- Responses did not provide a clear comparison between the student's community and some aspect of the target culture and did not offer supporting details and pertinent examples.
- Responses did not demonstrate a complete understanding of the Italian context to which students were comparing their own culture.
- Responses did not consist of an organized presentation with a clear and orderly comparison of the two communities.
- Responses demonstrated an inability to verbalize a comprehensible response with ease and clarity of expression, and instead provided a series of disjointed words, phrases, or expressions that lacked cohesion and clarity.
- Responses did not contain varied and accurate grammar, syntax, and usage; frequent grammatical and syntactic errors made comprehension difficult.
- A lack of correct pronunciation, intonation, and pacing impeded comprehension.
- Successful self-correction was lacking, or self-correction did not clarify a response so as to enhance comprehension (e.g., an attempt to self-correct merely repeated an incorrect word or phrase).
- In lieu of focusing on the actual prompt, some responses merely referred to beauty because the Course Theme of this task was "*Bellezza ed estetica*."

# 2013 Pitfalls (Italian Language & Culture)

## *What were common student errors or omissions?*

Common errors or omissions included the following:

- Some students did not provide an effective treatment of the topic within the context of the task.
- Some students did not provide a clear comparison of their community with that of the target culture and did not offer supporting details and pertinent examples.
- Some students did not demonstrate a complete understanding of the Italian context to which they were comparing their own culture.
- Some students did not provide an organized presentation with a clear and orderly comparison of the two communities.
- Some students were not able to verbalize a comprehensible response with ease and clarity of expression, instead providing a series of disjointed words, phrases, or expressions that lacked cohesion and clarity.
- Some students did not provide an accurate response containing variety in grammar, syntax, and usage; frequent grammatical and syntactic errors made comprehension difficult.
- Students did not consistently employ the appropriate formal register.
- Some students' lack of correct pronunciation, intonation, and pacing impeded comprehension.
- Some students did not engage in successful self-correction or did not clarify their response to enhance comprehension. For example, when attempting to self-correct, they merely repeated an incorrect word or phrase.

# 2012 Pitfalls (Italian Language & Culture)

## *What were common student errors or omissions?*

Common errors or omissions included the following:

- Students did not provide an effective treatment of the topic within the context of the task.
- Students did not provide a clear comparison of their community with that of the target culture and did not offer supporting details and pertinent examples.
- Students did not demonstrate a complete understanding of the Italian context to which they were comparing their own culture.
- Students did not provide an organized presentation with a clear and orderly comparison of the two communities.
- Students were not able to verbalize a comprehensible response with ease and clarity of expression, instead providing a series of disjointed words, phrases, or expressions that lacked cohesion and clarity.
- Students did not provide an accurate response containing variety in grammar, syntax, and usage; frequent grammatical and syntactic errors made comprehension difficult.
- Students did not consistently employ the appropriate formal register.
- Students' lack of correct pronunciation, intonation, and pacing impeded comprehension.
- Students did not engage in successful self-correction or did not clarify their response to enhance comprehension. For example, when attempting to self-correct, they merely repeated an incorrect word or phrase.

# 2016 Pitfalls (Spanish Language & Culture)

# 2015 Pitfalls (Spanish Language & Culture)

## *What were common student errors or omissions?*

Many responses did not clearly establish the two communities being compared, or only spoke about one community, leading to a cultural presentation rather than a comparison. A few students erroneously focus exclusively on the *tema curricular* instead of the prompt itself. In some student responses, the “effects” of fast food were not addressed explicitly as the prompt requires, but rather students limited their responses to the availability/absence of fast food in each community. When some students spoke about the effects of fast food, they got sidetracked on issues of health and exercise and disregarded to some extent the focus on the cultural comparison regarding the effects of fast food.

# 2014 Pitfalls (Spanish Language & Culture)

## *What were common student errors or omissions?*

Some students misinterpreted the question and addressed the curricular theme of *La belleza y la estética* rather than the question. Others often gave their opinion rather than expressing the perspective of their community. One error was that some students only addressed one community and did not make any comparison to a target culture community.

## Past AP Spanish Language Exam Questions

The College Board provides free-response questions from **past AP Spanish Language and Culture Exams**. These questions do not reflect the redesigned AP Spanish Language Exam administered for the first time in May 2014, but the question types are the same and the topics similar, making them a valuable resource for students and teachers. Included with the questions are scoring guidelines, sample student responses, and commentary on those responses, as well as exam statistics and the Student Performance Q&A (Chief Reader's Report) for the May 2013 administrations and before.

## We see that improvement can be made in...

- ▶ The comparison itself
- ▶ The organization of the presentation
- ▶ The language used in the presentation
- ▶ The understanding of the target culture

# Predictable consequence: clichés and stereotypes

- ▶ French people are racist
- ▶ People in Haiti neither recycle nor have cellphones
- ▶ There is no internet in Africa

# This is not surprising, however

- ▶ Through the media, students are “bombasted” by “essentializing” commentary, as well as “myths of national homogeneity or cultural superiority”\*
- ▶ “La France devient-elle raciste?” (*Le Parisien*, 6 November 2013)
- ▶ “Is France Becoming Racist?” (*Washington Post*, 7 November 2013)

\*Murphy, John P. “Unsettling Stereotypes: Approaches to the French Culture and Society Course.” *The French Review* 89.1 (2015): 98, 100.

# How might students avoid them?

(continued on next slide)

Through More Nuanced AP World Languages and Cultures' **Instruction**

- ▶ Culture is not a “given,” not a “primordial essence” (Murphy 109)
- ▶ Push students toward a “more critical engagement” with the notions of culture, difference, and diversity in their AP World Language course/s\*
- ▶ How, for example, are “keywords” (“immigration,” “diversity,” “identity”) used, by whom, and to what ends?

\*Epstein, Beth S. *Collective Terms: Race, Culture, and Community in a State-Planned City in France*. New York: Berghahn, 2011. 139-40.

# How might students avoid them?

(continued)

Through More Nuanced **Cultural Comparisons**

- ▶ While following Cultural Comparison directions, students are urged also to expose possible cultural “fault lines” (ambiguities, contradictions, and tensions)\*

\*Murphy 101

# Reminder of Cultural Comparison Task

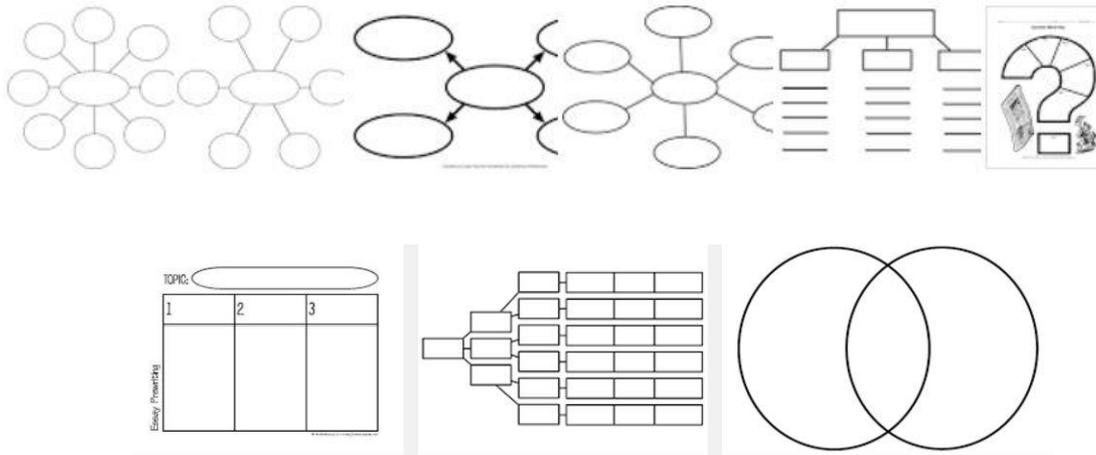
In your presentation, compare your own community to an area of the X-speaking world with which you are familiar. You should demonstrate your understanding of cultural features of the X-speaking world. You should also organize your presentation clearly.

# Development of Classroom-Ready Graphic Organizers

# For the Graphic Organizer

- ▶ Comparison of student's own community to an area of the X-speaking world with which s/he is familiar
- ▶ Demonstration of student's understanding of cultural features of X-speaking world
- ▶ *Nuance through exposure of cultural "fault lines" (ambiguities, contradictions, and tensions)*
- ▶ Clear organization

# For the Graphic Organizer



Comparison  
Understanding  
(*including nuance*)  
Organization

# Sharing and Debriefing

Questions?

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# Session Evaluation