Short Assignment for
Reading Texts, Reading Life
Spanish 320

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Introduction for Faculty Colleagues

SPN 320 is a new, multi-section, fifth-semester course that develops students’ Spanish-language (L2) reading skills for all types of L2 texts (written, visual, and aural) of increasing length. We understand the word “text” broadly, and students may “read” films, graphic novels, myths, paintings, newspaper articles, songs, poems, internet blogs, TV and radio broadcasts, and so on. Course goals include: learning strategies to facilitate L2 reading in multiple genres, increasing L2 vocabulary, and furthering students’ cultural literacy about the Spanish-speaking world. All coursework, discussions, and assignments are in Spanish throughout the course.

Small group discussions and task-based activities of many types dominate our class sessions and promote oral and aural fluency in a low-risk, collaborative environment. Writing fluency in Spanish, which is implicitly encouraged via the modeling provided by many of the texts students read, is actively fostered through required responses to written prompts on all readings. These must be typed before class and submitted at the end of each class. Verbal communication and process are valued over grammar, which means that grammar mistakes are addressed only when they are inappropriate for this more advanced level, or they impede communication. The course is capped at 22 students.

There is no published textbook that incorporates the variety of texts we seek to examine, and so each instructor selects course content according to personal expertise. My class focuses on modern Mexico, with a special interest in Mexican women’s situations in the 20th and 21st centuries. During the semester, students complete three individual “linguistic tasks” that relate to three genres they have worked with. Students also complete a “personal learning journal” for which they select new items (culled from readings) to learn, and they read one on-line text (e.g., a BBC broadcast in Spanish, a Spanish-language TV program, an on-line blog) most weeks. They become accustomed to focusing on what they do understand (rather than unknown words), and they are encouraged to reflect on cultural differences.

This short assignment comes near the end of the course; I designed it to accomplish several objectives:

- to review strategies for analyzing poster/billboard texts
• to practice identifying audience and text purpose of a poster, and relating those elements to how specific messages are constructed

• to practice communicating to others in Spanish, by writing and speaking effectively (giving evidence to support each observation)

• to consolidate students’ cultural literacy regarding human trafficking in Hispanic countries

• to practice writing constructive critiques of peer presentations (a part of the final exam project)

I used this assignment one time, thinking it would be a simple class activity. Students were extremely engaged in the activity, and enjoyed seeing each others’ posters, and so I decided to expand the activity, and turn it into one of 4 linguistic tasks that they complete during the semester. Changes I made include:

• Establishing threshold elements, to provide a base-line for rudimentary expectations

• Adding a written essay of 250 to 350 words, to give students practice in organizing evidence for all observations, and encourage vocabulary and transition usage in Spanish

• Specifying the use of one 3” by 5” note card to be used when speaking, so students organize their thoughts ahead of time, and prepare remarks

• Requiring 2 81/2” by 11” printed color copies of the poster, to document appropriate preparation

• Including a rubric, so students know what’s being evaluated

• Adding 2 anonymous peer critiques, to encourage close listening, objective evaluation, and making constructive suggestions. The critiques will also help them prepare for the 2 anonymous peer critiques required in the final exam project.
The Assignment I Distribute to Students

SPN – Reading Texts, Reading Life

Linguistic Task #3: Poster Assignment for Human Trafficking Unit

Overview
Early in the course, we spent time reading posters and billboards in and around Mexico City, to evaluate how aspects of visual imagery (image type, quantity of each, coloration, arrangement) and small amounts of text (text type, amount, coloration, arrangement) communicate meaning.

During the past few classes, we have learned about human trafficking in Mexico. We have consulted Mexican government reports, YouTube testimonies, two graphic novels and a newscast report to learn about:

- the nature and extent of the problem
- how human traffickers operate
- who their victims are, and
- what strategies are being used to combat the problem

Linguistic Task
Find a compelling poster or billboard from the Hispanic world that speaks to human trafficking. Analyze it for audience, purpose, and strategies used in the message, and then present your findings in writing (to your instructor), and orally (to your peers). You will also compose brief, handwritten critiques of two oral presentations in your group.

The written analysis of your poster will be 250-350 words long, and it should consider all elements of the poster. Your written analysis will:

- Identify the specific audience the poster addresses (e.g. all or some victims? traffickers? the general public? another group?)
- Explain how poster evidence—specific aspects of imagery and text, and their arrangement—support your identification of this particular audience
- Determine the explicit purpose or goal of the poster (e.g. to raise general awareness? to fundraise? to offer information?), using evidence from the poster to support your assessment
- Indicate why you consider this poster compelling and effective, referring to specific elements in it
For the in-class oral presentation and discussion of your poster, you will be divided into groups of 7 to 9 students. You will summarize your poster orally (in timed, roughly 3-minute remarks), and allow 2 minutes for questions and comments from your group, and listen to and comment on the posters and oral summaries of other group members. You don’t need to memorize the presentation---you may jot notes on one 3”x5” note card (not a full sheet of paper). However, you cannot read to your group.

After the oral presentations and discussions are completed, you will have 10 minutes to compose a guided written critique of 2 oral poster presentations from your peers. One evaluation will identify a poster critique that you found particularly effective, and you will explain how and why it was successful. The second critique will discuss one presentation for which you have one or two suggestions about what that author might consider doing for a future presentation of the material, to make it even more effective. Both critiques will be anonymous.

You will need to make TWO color copies of your poster; one copy will be stapled to your analytical essay, and one copy will be used with your group oral report and discussion with peers. I will collect the written analyses at the beginning of class.

**How does this Relate to Course Goals?**
This assignment will:

- Help you review and sharpen your strategies for understanding and analyzing Spanish language “poster-genre” texts
- Practice identifying the specific audience and purpose of a poster
- Practice writing and speaking effectively (offering evidence for each observation) about a serious poster-text from another culture
- Extend your cultural literacy regarding human trafficking in Hispanic culture
- Practice offering constructive, evidence-based critiques of peer presentations

**Who is the Audience for Your Essay and Oral Summary?**
Your classroom peers, educated young adults who speak Spanish and have learned about human trafficking in Mexico, are your audience.

**Threshold Elements**
To be accepted for grading, the written and oral assignment components must have:

Your Written Component:

- a typed analysis in Spanish of 250-350 words
- an 81/2” by 11” color photocopy of a poster that addresses human trafficking in the hispanic world, stapled to your analysis

- consideration of any cultural differences you perceive (How would this message be handled in US English-language culture?)

- at the very end, your source for the poster, listed according to MLA conventions

Your Spoken Component:

- an exact copy of the 8 ½ “by 11”color photocopy that was attached to the written analysis, which you hold up as you speak

- the summary comments of your analysis lasts roughly 3 minutes, followed by 2 minutes of group discussion

Your Written Critiques (5 minutes each):

- One handwritten critique (double spaced) comments on what you considered to be the most effective oral presentation in your group. (What elements made the presentation so effective? What interested you most?)

- One handwritten critique (double spaced) comments on one poster presentation that you feel could be improved. (Was more preparation needed? Were there aspects that should have been mentioned, or considered in more depth? Could remarks have been better organized?)
**Poster Assignment Rubric**

The completed poster assignment for human trafficking must meet each of these requirements to be accepted for grading:

**Written Component**
- a typed, double-spaced analysis in Spanish, 250-350 words
- an 8½” by 11” color photocopy of poster, stapled to analysis
- consideration of perceived cultural differences
- bibliographic citation, in MLA style

**Spoken Component**
- an exact copy of the 8 ½ “by 11” photocopy attached to written analysis
- oral comments, discussion for 3 minutes

**Handwritten Critiques**
- Listens to all peer presentations
- One handwritten critique on most effective presentation, with evidence
- One handwritten critique offering suggestions to one presentation

All elements must be submitted on time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>WRITTEN ANALYSIS OF YOUR POSTER</strong></th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
<th>Your Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content:</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifies audience of poster, giving textual and visual evidence from poster that supports this conclusion. (Why not a different audience?)</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Explains purpose/message of poster using textual and visual evidence that supports this purpose. Comments on cultural differences (Why and how does this message emerge, like this?)</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>How do the poster organization and visual elements convey the message? (What makes this poster compelling?)</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
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<td><strong>Expression:</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within each paragraph, sentences follow logically, with effective transitions</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agreement of subject-verb and noun-adjective has 80% accuracy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary is precise, and uses synonyms where possible</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPOKEN COMPONENT</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shows 8 ½” by 11” color copy to group while speaking</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>May refer to notes, but does not read, for roughly 3 minutes Makes eye contact with all members of group</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WRITTEN CRITIQUE OF TWO PEER PRESENTATIONS</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handwritten critique of one poster presentation, citing evidence of what made it effective</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Handwritten critique of one poster presentation, offering specific suggestions for how to make the presentation more effective</td>
<td>5</td>
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