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**FLARR Pages #18: The Sensual Approach to Presenting Culture: Using the Five Senses to Gain Knowledge and Understanding of the Products and Perspectives of Culture II**

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Using Senses
-Cultural Products in the Classroom
-Macrologue
-Rassias Methods

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Simply passing around cultural media will not necessarily create a meaningful understanding of the relationship between products and perspectives of a culture. Of the various Rassias Method techniques that lead to a deeper understanding of culture, the Macrologue is especially effective for high novice to intermediate levels. Students analyze an item of cultural realia on three levels. A Spanish coin will be the item used for this example. First, the students identify the "concrete" level by describing the object in simple, physical terms: for instance, the item in question is a small, round, flat silver object with numbers, words, a picture of a man and a coat of arms. Second, students identify the "relative" level by actually describing the function of the item and its relationship to the world. Our item is a Spanish "duro" worth five pesetas. The peseta is the currency of Spain. Finally, students identify the "abstract" level by extrapolating a higher meaning from the object. The abstract inferences for our item could range from money being at the root of all evil, to Fernando and Isabel funding Christopher Columbus’s exploration, to identifying the man on the coin as King Juan Carlos, the monarch of Spain who helped restore democracy after the Franco dictatorship.

Assessment of cultural understanding can be done in myriad ways. Assignments include students writing reaction papers to culture days, writing their macrologues as individuals or in groups, answering culture questions on exams, and including realia from cultural experiences (e.g. recipes or menus), as well as videos and audio tapes in portfolios.

By intentionally including culture in the curriculum, instruction and assessment, and by providing learning experiences that appeal to students’ senses, national content standards are met creatively and student learning is significantly enhanced.

Rassias often cites Nikos Kazantzakis’ quote, “Look, listen, smell, taste, and
touch all things with all your heart.” Rassias adds, “Look, and really see; listen, and hear; smell, and really inhale; taste, and really savor; and touch all things with all your heart so that you, too, may be touched in return.”

Cultural realia we have used to entice the senses include “mate” from Argentina, fine perfumes from Spain, coffee from Colombia, maracas from Mexico, and a brightly colored handpainted fan from Spain.
