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Promoting Intercultural and Visual Media Competence in the Foreign Language Classroom with the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters Through Visual Media*

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Abstract

Communicative approaches to foreign language education have a history of using visual aids in the classroom. However, the chapter proposes that

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generally and intercultural and visual media

competence in particular. Specifically, the authors of this chapter report on insights for teaching gained from using the Council of Europe's *Images of Others: An Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters Through Visual Media (AIEVM)* (Barrett M, Byram M, Ipgrav, J, Seurrat A: Images of others: an autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media. Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg. Retrieved from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/default_en.asp, 2013a) in an online intercultural exchange (OIE) that was conducted between preservice teachers of English at Dortmund University (Germany) and Jaén University (Spain). In this exchange, the *AIEVM* served as the central instrument around which activities were developed to help students reflect on the way cultural "otherness" is represented in and interpreted through images. An analysis of students' work during the exchange and post-exchange feedback suggests that the OIE learning environment enriched the experience of working with the *AIEVM* and helped in particular to heighten critical cultural awareness of visual media.

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1 Introduction

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from the introduction to *The Mind's Eye: Using Pictures Creatively in Language Learning* (Maley, Duff, & Grellet, [1980](#)) neatly summarizes why communicative approaches to foreign language education (FLE) have a history of using visual aids in the classroom. Beyond the common use of images as prompts for language production or to support reading and listening in the second language, educationalists in the field (e.g., Goldstein, [2008](#); Hecke & Surkamp, [2010](#)) have more recently seen a role for FLE in fostering visual media literacy,¹ which, according to Averginou and Ericson ([1997](#)), Eilam ([2012](#)), and Stokes ([2002](#)), involves developing in students the cognitive skills needed to engage critically with the myriad of print and digital images from all over the world with which they are confronted daily.

In view of the encounters with otherness that take place through these globally transmitted images, the authors of this chapter propose that language learners need not only visual media literacy but also intercultural competence to engage with images and articulate their reactions to them. Specifically, the authors of this chapter report on insights for teaching gained from using the Council of Europe's *Images of Others: An Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters Through Visual Media (AIEVM)* (Barrett, Byram, Ipgrave, & Seurrat, [2013a](#)) in an online intercultural exchange (OIE) that was conducted

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(Spain). In this exchange, the *AIEVM* served as the central instrument around which activities were developed to help students reflect on the way cultural "otherness" is represented in and interpreted through images. An analysis of students' work during the exchange and post-exchange feedback suggests that the OIE learning environment enriched the experience of working with the *AIEVM* and helped in particular to heighten critical cultural awareness of visual media.

The chapter opens with a brief overview of the role of visual media literacy in education, then considers more specifically the use of visuals in FLE. It is argued that, although visuals are widely used in FLE teaching materials today, visual media literacy generally and intercultural and visual media competence in particular are rarely promoted. The chapter then presents the *AIEVM* and the theoretical framework that underpins it. It shows how this educational tool is designed to encourage structured reflection on intercultural encounters through image, which in turn can activate intercultural and visual media competence to help users deconstruct images of "others" and "otherness" in relation to their own sociocultural context(s) (Barrett et al., [2013a](#); Barrett, Byram, Iprgrave, & Seurrat, [2013b](#)). The chapter explains the rationale for using the *AIEVM* in the FLE classroom and in language teacher training and then goes on

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...this learning scenario, excerpts from students' work and feedback are included to illustrate the learning opportunities afforded by the *AIEVM* in a multiliteracies approach to FLE.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Visual Media Literacy in Education

The term "visual literacy" is often ascribed to Debes (1969), who referred to the visually literate person as someone who can "discriminate and interpret the visible actions, objects, symbols, natural or man-made, that he encounters in his environment.

Through the creative use of these competences, he is able to communicate with others" (Debes, 1969, p. 27). It is this ability to "discriminate" and "interpret" visuals, on the one hand, and the "creative use" for the purpose of communication, on the other, that is central to visual media literacy, a conceptualization that is underscored by Ausburn and Ausburn (1978, p. 291) in the notion of "using visuals for *intentionally* communicating with others" (authors' italics). Visual media literacy is perceived here as a two-way process that, like text literacy, involves not only passive understanding but also active production. If we use visuals to communicate with others in this way, then we might say that (a) images, like text, possess a vocabulary and grammar through which meaning-making can take place and (b) a visually literate person is able to "read" and "write" this visual language, that is, they

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themselves.

Neither Debes ([1969](#)) nor Ausburn and Ausburn ([1978](#)) could have anticipated the manner and speed with which new technologies would transform our visual environment, making what Mitchell ([1995](#)) terms the “pictorial turn” so central to communication, and prompting Kress and van Leeuwen ([2006](#), p. 17) to argue that visual communication should be treated as seriously as linguistic communication in education. Indeed, the proliferation of images and the ways in which they are used through multiple media channels to capture or visualize experience on an everyday basis means that visual media literacy has become inseparable from media literacy in many contexts, and equally as important as text literacy for obtaining and filtering information, evaluating it critically, and constructing knowledge in both educational and professional environments.

Obinger and Obinger ([2005](#), 2.4) point out the significance of this development in producing a generation of visual learners – so-called digital natives who are “intuitive visual communicators.” Yet these “digital natives” often require pedagogical guidance to activate the higher-order cognitive skills needed for *critical* engagement with images (Averginou & Ericson, [1997](#); Eilam, [2012](#); Stokes, [2002](#)). This presupposes that teachers themselves

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visual media literacy (Elahi, [2012](#)). Taking the concept of literacy a step further, the New London Group ([2000](#), p. 9) argues that, in order to meet the learning needs of the twenty-first century, the concept of literacy must move beyond reading and writing “formalised, monolingual, monocultural, and rule-governed forms of language.” Instead, literacy pedagogy today has to take into account a “multiplicity of discourses.” It should do so firstly with regard to our culturally and linguistically diverse and at the same time globalized, networked societies. Secondly, literacy skills are needed to cope with multimodality and multimediality – that is, the “burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies” as well as the “proliferation of communication channels and media [which] supports and extends cultural and subcultural diversity” (New London Group, [2000](#), p. 9). A “pedagogy of multiliteracies” is therefore required in all educational spheres, including FLE, as has been cogently argued by Hampel and Hauck ([2006](#)). The role of FLE in promoting the acquisition of multiliteracies, in particular the acquisition of intercultural and visual media competence, is discussed in the next section.

2.2 Visual Media Literacy and (Inter)Cultural Learning in FLE

Since the introduction of more communicative forms of language teaching, visuals have been a

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and grammatical concepts that had formerly been taught through translation, as prompts for language production, as clues in information gap activities, or to provide sociocultural cues for reading and listening. In recent years, the use of both still and moving image has increased significantly, reflecting the ubiquity of visuals on the Internet and the ease for both teachers and students of retrieving, editing, creating, and posting them. Yet despite this development, the authors agree with Goldstein (2008, p. 1), who suggests that images seem to remain peripheral to the main activity of teaching and practicing the language.

If this is the case, how might image be foregrounded in FLE? For a start, inspiration can be found in Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) seminal book on "reading images," which shows how visual communication works in comparison to linguistic communication. They argue that critical discourse analysis, an approach to language learning that is used to develop students' awareness of how social relations, identity, knowledge, and power are constructed through written and spoken texts, should be extended to visual communication. This would help students analyze and reproduce the "complex interplay of written text, images, and other graphic elements ...[which] combine together into visual designs, by means of layout" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 15). In other words, images

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deconstruction, however, depends on the cultural makeup of the person viewing the image.

It is this socially and culturally constructed-deconstructed dimension of visuals that is of particular interest to the authors of this chapter because it has hitherto received relatively little attention in FLE, despite significant developments in the field that foreground the (inter)cultural dimension of communicative competence (e.g., Byram & Zarate, [1997](#); Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, [2002](#)). Exceptions include Corbett's ([2003](#)) application of Kress and van Leeuwen's ([1996](#)) work on "reading" visuals to intercultural awareness raising activities in FLE. Pegrum ([2008](#)) shows how moving images (i.e., film) can be used in the foreign language classroom for the critical exploration of visual media literacy from an intercultural perspective. In their teaching materials and techniques to help students understand images, Stenglin and Iedema ([2001](#)) make the link between visual media literacy and the cultural perceptions that are at play in multimodal FLE learning environments. Similarly, Royce ([2007](#)) provides examples of multimodal classroom activities – for example, text together with still or moving image in different media channels – that aim to foster visual media literacy. He argues that images used in the foreign language classroom must be understood as "culturally bound" because their interpretation

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that include such multimodal activities may provide a “doorway” to the target culture (Royce, [2007](#), pp. 366–367).

Perhaps the most obvious multimodal doorway to the target culture is the Internet. One way in which language teachers are increasingly using this doorway is in online intercultural exchange (OIE), an activity for “engaging language learners in interaction and collaborative project work with partners from other cultures through the use of online communication tools” (O’Dowd, [2007](#), p. 4). OIE originally became popular within a communicative approach to FLE because of the opportunities it provides for authentic interaction with so-called native speakers of the language. Parallel to developments in the field toward a more *intercultural* communicative approach to FLE, many accounts have been published of institutionalized online exchanges between student groups in different countries who work together on scaffolded tasks with cultural themes aimed in particular at developing intercultural competence (e.g., Belz, [2002](#); Furstenberg, Levet, English, & Maillet, [2001](#); Müller-Hartmann, [2000](#); O’Dowd, [2003](#); Woodin, [2001](#)).

Some of the exchanges reported on refer to the use of visuals in the tasks completed by participants. The Cultura Project (Furstenberg et al., [2001](#)), for

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secondary and tertiary education, includes an “images module” which is designed to help students “discover how to communicate their own culture with images” and “to compare their respective cultural realities and reflect about the meaning and impact of visual information” (Cultura website: <https://cultura.mit.edu/educators-guide/images-module>). Students might choose images to illustrate a concept, an aspect of their lives, or product advertising. They reflect on the chosen images on their own, in their home classes, and then in intercultural dialogue with their exchange partners before finally discussing in their home groups the cultural insights they gained from comparing and discussing images with their exchange partners.

The pedagogical notion behind the Cultura methodology is that iterative reflection on different media (images, film, text, etc.) in different constellations draws on multiple perspectives which may, under teacher guidance, encourage students to construct and refine their understanding of both their own culture and that of the exchange interlocutor (Furstenberg et al., [2001](#)). Language learning is intrinsic to this process because students are in continual authentic dialogue with one another, sharing, comparing and reflecting, accessing, and working with “raw materials” from

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Although the Cultura website does not explicitly mention the development of multiliteracies, in many respects, it paves the way for a current trend in OIE, which sees its potential for facilitating the development of a wider range of literacies in the acquisition of a second language (e.g., Guth & Helm, [2010](#); Hauck, [2010](#); Helm, [2014](#); Lindner, [2011](#)). The authors of this chapter, both of whom work in the field of FLE and were involved in the development of the Council of Europe's *Images of Others: An Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters Through Visual Media (AIEVM)* (Barrett et al., [2013a](#)), were interested in harnessing this potential by using the *AIEVM* in an online exchange between preservice teachers of English in Germany and Spain. The next section of this chapter discusses the *AIEVM* and the theoretical framework of intercultural and visual media competence that underpins it.

2.3 The AIEVM

The *AIEVM* (Barrett et al., [2013a](#), http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/default_en.asp), like its sister tool the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters (AIE)* (Byram, Barrett, Ipgrave, Jackson, & Méndez García, [2009a](#), http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/default_en.asp), was designed under the auspices of the Council of Europe to help the user develop

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on individual encounters with otherness – whether face-to-face (as addressed by the *AIE*) or mediated through images (as in the *AIEVM*) – can be instrumental in fostering the intercultural competences required for living together in culturally diverse societies (Barrett, Byram, Lázár, Mompoin-Gaillard, & Philippou, [2014](#)).

Intercultural encounters, as defined in both the *AIE* and the *AIEVM*, occur when people with significantly different cultural identities meet. Perceived “significant difference” may stem from different affiliations, for example, national, ethnic, regional, religious, linguistic, gender, class, sexuality, political, generational, workplace, and so on. The user of the *AIE(VM)* is asked to select one such personal encounter, which may have made either a positive or a negative impact on them, and to analyze it systematically by answering questions that draw on a framework of intercultural competence. This theoretical framework encompasses four “subsets.”²

Subset 1 addresses the *attitudes* required by the interculturally competent person, including respect for otherness, empathy, acknowledgment of identities, and tolerance of ambiguity.

Subset 2 describes the *skills* that the interculturally competent person demonstrates

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discovery, skills of interpreting and relating, behavioral flexibility in new situations, and the evaluative skill of critical cultural awareness.

Subset 3, action orientation, refers to the willingness to undertake positive action either as a result of the intercultural encounter itself or as a result of reflection on the encounter (e.g., through working with the *AIEVM*).

Subset 4 is concerned with the *knowledge* of a culture (e.g., about social processes and their products), and specifically in the *AIEVM* with *visual media knowledge in an intercultural context*. This aspect of intercultural competence involves understanding implicit messages about people from other cultures that are transmitted through visual media, whether print or digital, still or moving. Having knowledge of the media requires awareness of how images are produced and portrayed and possessing an understanding of media discourse. It involves being able to analyze both the intended audience(s) of the image and one's own cultural and social background and the expectations that these bring to bear on the intercultural encounter through the image (Barrett et al., [2013b](#), p. 5).

Similar to other models for structuring reflection (e.g., Gibbs, [1988](#), or Bain, Ballantyne, Packer, &

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user's thinking about the image and the person they encountered in that image, from description to evaluation to analysis and finally to action. Before answering the questions, the user is invited to define themselves in terms of their own identity (e.g., in terms age, gender, nationality, ethnic group, country, region, community, religion, or languages), interpersonal relationships (son/daughter, brother/sister, best friend, etc.), or membership of local groups (school student, member of a club). By completing this self-defining *Who I am* task before working through the questions on the image, users focus their gaze on themselves and their own cultural positioning, against which the person or people in the image can be compared. After engaging with some or all of the questions, users can return to their initial description of themselves and revise it if reflection on their encounter prompts them to perceive themselves in a different light. Thus, similar to the Cultura Project methodology outlined above, the learner may refine their understanding of their own cultural identity in relation to their "interlocutor" (i.e., here the person or people in the image). In the process of working through the *AIEVM*, the user is engaged in reflection on themselves and the person or people in the image in all their cultural complexity. Iterative reflection of this kind may inform the critical and culturally sensitive appreciation and

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Although it is not specifically designed as a tool for FLE, there are both ethical and pedagogical reasons that support the *AIEVM*'s implementation in the language classroom. The pedagogical rationale for using the *AIEVM* within a multiliteracies approach to FLE has already been outlined in the previous sections. The process of describing, interpreting, and analyzing intercultural encounters through image by systematically answering the questions in the *AIEVM* either in written or oral form provides ample language, intercultural, and visual media literacy learning opportunities. The ethical consideration lies in the importance the Council of Europe attaches to intercultural dialogue as the key to promoting tolerance, preventing conflict, enhancing societal cohesion, and thus supporting the core principles of human rights, democracy, and rule of law on which the Council of Europe was founded (Barrett et al., [2014](#); Council of Europe, [2008](#)). The Council specifically acknowledges the role of language educators in supporting this purpose since intercultural dialogue is so intrinsically linked to language. The educational tools that the Council has therefore created, such as the *AIEVM*, and the learning methodologies that the Council supports, such as OIE, are intended to facilitate the development of intercultural competence both in and beyond the language classroom. However, teachers must also acquire the

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sense to incorporate them into language teacher training.

As the piloting of the *AIEVM* had been conducted in face-to-face environments only, the authors of this chapter, both of whom are active in FLE teacher training, decided to make it the main task of an OIE. The next section describes the exchange context and the phases of the exchange, shows how the *AIEVM* was used, and provides excerpts from students' work and post-exchange feedback to illustrate their response.

3 Methodology

3.1 Exchange Context and Participants

The online exchange took place between preservice teachers of English from the Universities of Jaén (Spain) and Dortmund (Germany). Although some of the German students spoke Spanish, English was used as the lingua franca of the exchange. All students had approximately C1 proficiency, so the authors anticipated no significant problems regarding linguistic communication and the ability to work with the English version of the *AIEVM*. For the Dortmund students, the exchange was a mandatory aspect of a course they were all taking on teaching and learning with educational technology. The exchange partners from the University of Jaén were participating on a voluntary basis. There were 23 students in total: 11 from Dortmund University and 12 from Jaén University

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perceptibly weaker and the researchers estimated that, in this particular case, a group of three would benefit all its members). There were 18 women and 5 men from 19 to 30, 22 being the average age (J.W., in tandem 11, did not indicate her age). Table [11.1](#) shows the coding used to denote students (their initials), their age, gender, university, and their tandem partner.

Table 11.1 Participants

3.2 Research Questions

The authors of this chapter were interested in finding out whether an OIE could enhance the potential of the *AIEVM* for developing intercultural and visual media competence. The research questions were:

1. Does working with the *AIEVM* benefit from online exchange in which it is framed within a wider analysis of images?
2. In what ways does using the *AIEVM* impact on intercultural and visual media competence in online exchange?

3.3 Telecollaboration Framework

In a series of blended-learning task phases considered effective for telecollaboration (Dooley, [2008](#); Müller-Hartmann, [2000](#)), students were

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exchange was conducted in a wikispaces wiki (<https://www.wikispaces.com/>), which allowed both facilitators and participants to upload, compose, and edit multimodal text, incorporating image, film, and links, and to conduct discussions either in the wiki pages themselves or using the forum facility. For data collection purposes, the students were asked to conduct their exchanges within the wiki and not to move to other communication tools. In the initial phase of the exchange, participants were introduced to the purpose of the exchange in the home classes. In the first online week, participants worked in plenary with more intensive teacher moderation; the second online week involved tandem discussion of the *AIEVM*. Before, during, and post exchange, the participants in the respective cohorts at Jaén and Dortmund universities discussed procedural, conceptual, and experiential issues relating to the exchange.

Barrett et al. (2013b) note that some learners may find using the *AIEVM* difficult if they have not paid enough prior attention to encounters with otherness in the visual media. Therefore, working in plenary, students completed two preliminary tasks that aimed to sensitize them to the underlying cultural meaning that may be intentionally “written” into an image by the image’s creator or “read” into the image by the viewer. For the first task, the facilitators selected two images, the first portraying

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the second portraying an Australian indigenous person in front of Ayers Rock

(<http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/blogs/on-this-day/2010/10/on-this-day-aboriginal-australians-get-uluru-back>).

No contextual information was given, the caption beneath the former image only stating “This is my land,” whereas the second picture was given the caption “This land is me.” By juxtaposing the images in this way, the teachers purposefully suggested an underlying stereotypical assumption that the students were challenged to deconstruct.

For the second task, photographs from a blog post entitled “Muslim rage” linked images of people from other cultures to media stereotypes. Students were first asked to predict what the blog post might be about before following the link

(<http://gawker.com/5943828/13-powerful-images-of-muslim-rage>) and exchanging their thoughts on the photographs. The photographs echo

Newsweek’s report on violent anti-American protests, with the common image of angry Muslim men on the cover page. The blog images, on the other hand, are ironically entitled “Muslim rage” because they represent Muslims engaged in everyday peaceful activities. For example, the image of an Egyptian man sitting by the door of his shop reading a newspaper is said to be “Filled to the brim

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bias of media reportage, which may manipulate readers by repeatedly showing a particular kind of image so that, over time, people associate certain concepts with certain images in their mind's eye.

The experience of decoding images in cultural terms in these initial plenary tasks fed into the main task or phase of the exchange. Students were introduced to the *AIEVM* and asked to complete it on their own, engaging in individual reflection on an image of their choice. In their home classes, they compared and discussed the images they had chosen and their reflection on those images. Students from the two participating classes were then assigned tandem partners with whom they shared their *AIEVM* and worked together to explore similarities and differences in the interpretation of each other's images from their different cultural perspectives. Finally, tandems wrote a joint reflection in the wiki about the insights they had gained from working with the *AIEVM* in this way. In the final phase, debriefing took place in the home groups by discussing and presenting tandem insights and evaluating the exchange with a Google Docs survey.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were gathered from the initial plenary discussions in the wiki forums, the *AIEVM* completed by each student and uploaded to the

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intercultural and visual media competence, the Google Docs survey which was completed anonymously by the exchange participants, and the authors' notes on the in-class debriefing conducted at each institution. The questions in the survey that were particularly revealing were those about students' experience of working in the OIE environment, their reflection on intercultural learning through completing the *AIEVM* on their own, and their reflection on intercultural learning through discussing their *AIEVM* with their tandem partner.

Grounded theory, also referred to as constant comparison (Mackey & Gass, [2005](#)) or thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, [2006](#)), was the methodology used for data analysis as it allows for qualitative analysis without following pre-established categories. Emerging categories were identified through the stages of familiarization with the data, searching for indicators of categories or themes, labelling and coding categories, reviewing and comparing codes to find similarities and differences, and locating central categories. The data were analyzed, marked, and assigned to categories by both authors independently and then through comparison of independent results in order to arrive at a joint understanding of the findings.

4 Project Outcomes and Discussion

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development of intercultural and visual media competence through working with the *AIEVM* in online intercultural exchange. Although this was a small-scale study, there is some evidence that students were indeed critically engaged with the images, that the project facilitated the exploration of visual media literacy from an intercultural perspective, and that the scaffolded tasks triggered intercultural reflection and learning. The structure of the project – as outlined above in the previous section – may in itself have played a significant role in the learning process.

4.1 Framing the AIEVM Within a Wider Analysis of Images

Preliminary task phases in an OIE are recommended to ease students into dialogue with one another and to sensitize participants to aspects of learning addressed by the exchange. The pre-*AIEVM* tasks “This is my land – this land is me” and “Muslim rage” (outlined in the previous section) were intended to raise students’ awareness to issues involved in the portrayal of culture in media images to prepare them for the main exchange task of working with the *AIEVM*. The following findings are drawn from data from the plenary wiki discussions on these tasks and are analyzed under three subthemes: firstly, the relevance of prior knowledge and critical cultural awareness to analyze visuals; secondly, the necessity to suspend belief about the

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by the media.

4.1.1 Using Prior Knowledge and Critical Cultural Awareness to Analyze Captions, Color Schemes, and Layout

Plenary discussions on the task “This is my land – This land is me” show that participants were initially influenced by the captions. Their comments draw on prior knowledge about Australian history, culture, and society and center on white man’s eagerness to possess land compared to the Aborigine’s symbiotic relationship with nature. Both men are considered to be proud of their land, but their views on what “the land” means vary depending on whether “man” possesses or is at one with it (J.V. and V.P.³), and this leads students to question whether these mindsets, which seem to contribute to social and cultural misunderstandings in Australia, can be reconciled (J.S). Student contributions that illustrate this point are as follows:

They seem to have a different opinion or perception of “possessing land.” (J.V.)

The captions may tell us about the possessive attitude versus the notion of identification with the land. (V.P.)

The two pictures mean a demonstration of social and cultural misunderstanding. (J.S.)

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are able to grasp the underlying cultural assumptions that they perceive to be intentionally “written” into an image by the image’s creator. J.B., for example, notes that there are different ways of feeling attached to the land and different ways of showing respect to it.

It may seem that the tribal attitude is more acceptable than the farmer one, yet I don’t agree. They both respect the land and feel dependent on it. (J.B.)

Once students start thinking beyond the captions, they also note the composition of the images and how the viewer’s interpretation is affected by the color scheme and layout. The tonality of the first photograph (“This is my land”) is contrasted with the bright colors of the second image, in which the Indigenous person is perceived as blending in with the background (I.C). The color scheme is considered an indicator of an intentionally positive message about aboriginal culture on the part of the photographer. On the other hand, reflecting on the layout, the elements foregrounded, and the positioning of the men, students come to the conclusion that the subjects are posing for a professional photographer and that the image of the farmer is probably closer to reality. The second picture is therefore considered stereotypical of western perceptions of nature-bound cultures

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become the other in their own land (V.P.). S.G.

concludes that the illustrations were manipulated to create a particular reaction in the viewer.

In the first picture there are no vivid colours compared to the second picture where the sky is perfectly blue. (I.C.)

The second image is not depicting the reality of aborigines in Australia – being the “Other” in Australia due to social problems such as drug abuse. (V.P.)

It displays a highly romanticised image which European people tend to have about nature-bound cultures. (S.G.)

While knowledge of a culture is a fundamental aspect of intercultural competence, it is important for students to be able to critically evaluate and reinterpret that knowledge “on the basis of explicit criteria, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries” (Byram et al., [2009b](#)) and, in terms of intercultural and visual media competence, to apply this critical cultural awareness to the media landscape (Barrett et al., [2013b](#)). The plenary exchange of perspectives on the first task seems to have helped students move from assumptions based on prior knowledge of the culture to a more nuanced, critical cultural awareness of the images themselves, of the

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stances. This involves suspending belief about one's taken-for-granted assumptions and about the media.

4.1.2 Suspending Belief about the Media

The interplay between text and image is also the starting point for discussions about the "Muslim rage" task. V.P. writes about her anger concerning the way the media combines language and image to manipulate people's cultural associations, and S.G. notes her own susceptibility to such manipulation:

The term makes me very angry. It shows the power of language and how quickly such terms go viral through the media. (V.P.)

I got to recognise that I had a very similar image in mind about the term Muslim rage. (S.G.)

At the same time, students are intrigued by the effect of irony in the accompanying captions (V.P.), which engenders a desire to investigate the phenomenon more objectively (A.K.):

The whole idea desperately needs to be ridiculed in order to make the term lose its power to produce wrong images of Muslims, unnecessary fear, and prejudice. (V.P.)

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J.S. reflects on sensationalism as a criterion for news selection. Some events tend to be brought to the fore and emphasized by the media, even though they may only be carried out by a very small percentage of the population and do not represent, as sometimes seems to be implied, the group reported on. This may lead to overgeneralization and the "stigmatization" of particular groups (V.P.):

As long as people don't think about what they are told, or maybe research some facts, media can cause an incredibly far reaching damage! Only 0.001–0.007% of Muslim population are actually taking part in these violent protests the media hypes. (J.S.)

The danger of stigmatization is great and "Muslim Rage" just reinforces prejudices. Christians would feel terribly offended if they were considered abusers and rapists because Catholic priests have misused their power. (V.P.)

When encountering otherness through media images, it is therefore necessary to arrive at an informed understanding of what these images portray by asking questions (J.S.) and contrasting the information that appears in different sources (A.K. and J.S. above and J.B. below):

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We should try to compare different newspapers.

(J.B.)

In these comments, students demonstrate intercultural and visual media competence as defined by Barrett et al. (2013b) in various ways. Firstly, they show awareness of how the media uses language and image to manipulate perceptions of cultures, and they recognize the need to suspend belief about what is seen in the media and the need to acquire knowledge of a culture from different sources before passing judgment. Students may have had this awareness prior to the exchange, or it might also have been gained through the previous “This is my land” task, but they demonstrate their ability to apply this awareness to the new task. Secondly, students are able to relate the misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the “Muslim rage” example to other cultures or situations, as demonstrated by V.P.’s comment on the risk of stigmatization above, and J.B.’s account below of the *New York Times*’s misrepresentation of how the economic crisis affected Spain, which in turn had a negative effect on the Spanish stock market and the global perception of Spain:

The New York’s Time published an appalling article about the crisis in Spain and added a set of 15 gloomy and dismal photos
(<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/25/world/euro>

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affected. The USA and therefore most of the world kept these images in their minds. As well as in the “Muslim Rage,” the damage is already done. (J.B.)

In this forum contribution, J.B. demonstrates the skill of interpreting an event from a culture and explaining and relating it to events in his own culture (Byram et al., [2009b](#)). In the OIE learning scenario, J.B.’s contribution also gave the German participants a new take on Spanish society and culture.

4.1.3 Questioning the Messages Conveyed by the Media on the Basis of Personal Experience

The discussion of the “Muslim rage” images led students to analyze how stereotypical assumptions about a culture engendered by media images may disappear when a personal relationship is established. For example, N.M. asserts that the media negatively influenced her impression of Eastern Europeans until she met people from there:

The image I had about people from Eastern countries was not good. I met people from these countries and had the opportunity to know about them. I became aware of how big mass media can influence people. (N.M.)

Similarly, other students comment on experiences, such as meeting or sharing a flat with somebody as

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media images. Through these examples, participants show a positive change in what is referred to in the *AIEVM* framework of intercultural competence as “attitudes,” such as respect for otherness and acknowledging the identities of others, as well as behavioral flexibility, that is, the ability to “adjust and adapt your behavior to new situations and knowledge as they emerge in interaction with others” (Barrett et al., [2013b](#)). These examples may also be related to Allport’s Contact Hypothesis ([1954](#)), the theory that personal contact (as opposed to mediated contact) with a culture minimizes conflict. What participants seem to ignore, however, is that face-to-face encounters are only effective under certain conditions, such as the need for cooperation, a similar status (real or perceived), or sharing a common goal (Allport, [1954](#)).

These findings suggest that the plenary discussion of images selected by teachers may start an awareness-raising process in which students are not only sensitized to the cultural agenda of the makers of images but also to how their own cultural assumptions influence their interpretation of images. Plenary exchange of this kind between all students participating in an OIE may therefore improve subsequent work with the *AIEVM*.

4.2 Intercultural and Visual Media Competence through Working with the *AIEVM* in an Online

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AIEVM in the online exchange impacted on learners

intercultural and visual media competence. It is organized into four categories: students' image of the other; critical thinking and knowledge discovery; considerations of identity, self-awareness, and perspective-taking; and finally students' views of the impact of the OIE context on working with the *AIEVM*.

4.2.1 Students' Image of the Other

When working with the *AIEVM*, students are invited to select an image which, for them, represents a meaningful intercultural encounter. An analysis of the images chosen by the OIE participants for their *AIEVM* reveals noteworthy underlying patterns, with six major categories emerging:

- (a) Social exclusion in the western world is portrayed in the image of a homeless man and his dog (TD6).⁴
- (b) Famine in the third world is represented in the photograph of a vulture watching a black child in the savannah (TD1) plus a photograph contrasting a black child suffering from malnutrition (probably in Africa) with a dog eating out of a full bowl in a western setting (TD8).
- (c) Tenderness and affection are the major emotions in a photograph of Gandhi kissing a

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walking leisurely while the father is holding and looking at his son tenderly.

(d) Cultural traditions of Africa and New Zealand are present in the illustration of a Mursi woman with the traditional lip plate (TD3, TD6) and two Indigenous people in New Zealand performing the hongi or nose-pressing greeting (TD5).

(e) Political persecution, protest, and violence are the most prominent themes. The provocative YouTube image of the Chinese artist Ai Wei Wei, "F*** you, motherland," provides the background for reflecting on political persecution (TD2). Interestingly, war is ridiculed in two images: "The war and the guitarist," which in the context of struggles between despotic governments and rebels, portrays a guitarist next to people fighting with firearms, and "The man with the power to convince," which, against the backdrop of hostilities between Tunisian protesters and armed policemen, shows a demonstrator holding a baguette as if it were a weapon (TD3). A completely different view of war is expressed by two well-known photographs: children (some naked) fleeing a devastated area in the Vietnam War (TD9) and a western female soldier holding a leash attached to a

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(7) Race and intercultural relationships

constitute another key theme. Interracial tension is demonstrated in "Don't bring home a white boy," which features a white boy kissing a black girl's smiling face in spite of her family's disapproval (TD4). A further element emerges in "Bride market for Asian girls," an advert for western men looking for Asian brides (TD7). A more positive view of interracial relationships emerges in the picture of a white woman in her western wedding dress marrying a Massai in his homeland (from the film "The White Massai," TD11) and an image from a Spanish TV program portraying a white man shaking hands with a black man surrounded by members of his tribe⁵ (TD5).

Despite learners' common European background and the teachers' emphasis on the fact that cultural difference can be expressed in many ways (e.g., sociocultural status, gender, or regional variation), most images – with the exception of the "homeless" – portray otherness far away from Europe (e.g., in Africa or New Zealand). Students therefore seem to perceive the "other" as somebody remote, sometimes "exotic" (e.g., the Mursi lip plate), somebody desperately needing western help (pictures of famine), somebody fighting for social justice and human rights (represented by the Chinese artist Ai Wei Wei), or somebody who has

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...this distant other and the violence against them committed by the western world – the students' world – as portrayed in the images of Vietnam or Abu Ghraib. The same pattern underlies the violation of dignity and rights in the image of a bride market for Asian girls. Notably, then, students focus on the remote, not the local encounter with otherness, with images ranging from stills to moving image, usually sourced on the web, in film, or in social media, where such images are easily accessible and equally easily brought into the OIE context.

Students' engagement with the "remote other" may be an indication of how they are touched by global problems or of how they are developing global, international (Fantini, Arias-Galicia, & Guay, [2001](#)), and intercultural competences (Soria & Troisi, [2014](#)). Indeed, the encounter with intercultural remoteness in some cases triggers empathy that draws on real-life experience. For example, "Don't bring home a white boy" had a special emotional significance for the participant whose friend had experienced similar interracial relationship problems. It is, however, also possible that the frequency of emotive images of the "remote other" selected by students was influenced by the discussion in the equally emotive "Muslim rage" task and that the selected images of the Arab world depicted in various contexts continued students' engagement

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its emphasis on indigenous life and values, inspired the selection of the Mursi lip plate or the Hongi greeting images. Furthermore, the ironic tone of the "Muslim rage" blog post to address serious intercultural topics is echoed in some participants' selection of similarly ironic images of violence, war, and protest (e.g., the guitarist or the man holding a baguette). The choice of images for plenary discussion in the pre-*AIEVM* tasks therefore seems to determine, to a certain extent, students' choice of image when working with the *AIEVM*. In this study, "the other" mainly remains remote, exotic, and often somehow sensationalized by the media. On the other hand, it may simply be the case that more sensational images are those that remain in our minds or intrigue us most and therefore represent, for many people, the most meaningful intercultural encounters through visual media. What becomes clear to students after completing their *AIEVM* tandem discussions, however, is that not all images are equally useful for intercultural learning:

The result of the *AIEVM* is strongly determined by the image/encounter it deals with. (TD9)

It might therefore be worth investing more input time into clarifying in pre-*AIEVM* activities what an intercultural encounter through visual media is, perhaps through discussion of images that are less commonly associated with cultural difference or

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surprising lack of visual literacy on the part of so-called digital natives, it might also be necessary to provide students with more guidance in selecting *AIEVM* images to ensure fruitful exchange on the image.

4.2.2 Critical Thinking and Knowledge Discovery

Referring specifically to the *AIEVM*, students note that the inventory of questions that make up the *AIEVM* sharpened their intercultural and visual media competence by prompting them to reflect in depth on different cultural contexts (SR8, TD2, and TD9). Consequently, the *AIEVM* is perceived as an effective framework for critical analysis of images as it guides the user's stream of thought, helping them transfer partially formed impressions of an image into a logical and coherently organized written document (TD11):

Through working with the *AIEVM* I sharpened the way of "reading" and regarding different pictures that show people from different cultural backgrounds. (SR8)

The *AIEVM* inspires you to think critically. (TD2)

Some abstract or complex questions are hard to answer or you must think about it considerably. (TD9)

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from our messy stream of thoughts. (TD11)

As a result, students noted gains in detecting implicit or “hidden” information in the image (SR6) and were inspired to conduct further research into the background of the image (TD2 and TD3), thereby activating the intercultural competences of knowledge discovery and action orientation (Byram et al., [2009b](#)).

Some hidden things can be discovered when you answer the questions. (SR6)

The *AIEVM* offers a great opportunity to “look behind” a given image, investigate further. (TD2)

I just tried to find out more about Mursi in order to avoid prejudices. I sat nearly an hour on the Internet. (*AIEVM*, TD3)

In answer to the *AIEVM* question whether working with the *AIEVM* had changed their way of thinking about images, some respondents did not believe that the *AIEVM* makes any difference while others observed significant gains beyond the image itself.

First, I can see now differently and deeply any pictures, films, or books. Secondly, it also reinforced my way of seeing and thinking about the world. Thirdly, it has been quite useful to re-analyse myself, to find out things which I had

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This comment suggests that the *AIEVM* has the potential to help the user depart from the image and employ it as an opportunity to reflect on or research cultural issues that they had not considered before, activating their critical thinking. Furthermore, the *AIEVM* also invites individuals to ponder different perspectives that may cause them to reexamine their points of view, hence paving the way to perspective-taking and self-awareness.

4.2.3 Considerations of Identity, Self-Awareness, and Perspective-Taking

The tandem exchange enabled students to view their images from multiple perspectives, with a constant shift from the personal perspective to the perspective of the tandem partner and to the imagined perspective of the people portrayed in the images. TDs and SRs show that shifts in perspective helped them consider identity, their own cultural affiliations, and worldviews in more depth (TD9 and SR1), all of which are paramount for intercultural competence in terms of self-awareness (Glaser, Guilherme, Méndez García, & Mughan, [2007](#)), cultural knowledge, and critical cultural awareness (Byram et al., [2009b](#); Barrett et al., [2013b](#)). The tandem partner's interpretation of the image in comparison with the culture-bound perspective and personal experiences of the student who originally selected a particular image led to self-reflection on how human beings become

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a basic intercultural competence that does not surface until one person is confronted with the other (Glaser et al., [2007](#)) as the students state:

The *AIEVM* not only made me think about the image, but also about myself and my relation to the culture I was raised in. (TD9)

I became aware of why I am the way I am. Through the *AIEVM* one had to automatically reflect and [understand] how far the cultural background influences one's way of thinking and acting. (SR1)

To learn about and to understand "the other" one should be aware of oneself. The questions in the tool are a good guideline to ask questions about one's own biography and culture. They help to understand where our individual points of view come from. (SR4)

Through empathizing myself with the people in the image I got a better understanding of their situation. (SR9)

Self-awareness is facilitated by working with the *AIEVM* and is recognized as a prerequisite for understanding or empathizing with the other. It encourages retrospection and reflection on the influence of an individual's own cultural

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4.2.4 Students' Views of the Impact of the OIE Context on Working with the AIEVM

Students generally see the potential of an exchange of perspectives on images, even though a similar degree of commitment is needed on the part of both members of the tandem to exploit the *AIEVM*, as this SR emphasizes:

My tandem exchange partner did not answer my messages. I was really curious about her opinion of the image I selected. If she had answered me I would have learned more. (SR3)

Nevertheless, participants generally report on the positive effects of working with the *AIEVM* in the online exchange because it balanced individual reflection and collaborative learning (SR1), providing a learning environment beyond the regular classroom in which students had new opportunities to question or even reinforce their views (SR3a), the intercultural competence of unlearning and relearning (Glaser et al., [2007](#)).

Answering the questions on your own and then sharing it with your partners guides the direction of the discussion/project and leaves enough freedom for individual thinking. (SR1)

This kind of activity helps you to realize how different people's ideas can be, and it also makes

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not that different and the impressions on images
have been quite alike. (SR3a)

Despite differences in their cultural backgrounds,
students discovered that there are many
commonalities in feelings, ideals, and opinions
when discussing their images (SR3b and SR8):

German and Spanish culture differ so much, yet
the kind of ideals and opinions are mostly shared
(SR3b)

We both had chosen completely different
pictures but our feelings were nearly the same.
(SR8)

From a different perspective, students note that the
exchange contributed to improving their language
skills and to acquiring cultural knowledge (both
through their tandem partners and through the
tasks), two of the intercultural competences in the
AIEVM framework: communication skills and
cultural knowledge.

It has been a good opportunity for me to
improve my English and to know new things
about other cultures. (SR6)

The scaffolding of the project in the wiki, with pre-
AIEVM tasks followed by the completion of the
AIEVM and the post-*AIEVM* tandem discussion, is

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We have gone through from the most basic and simplest elements to the most complex or concrete parts, passing through different blocks of similar but at the same time different topics. We dealt with controversial issues. Finally, I liked the idea to work with a partner, since it favors cooperation. (TD9)

Finally, SR2 suggests that projects of this kind not only improve English skills but also foster respect for otherness and shape participants' attitudes and behavior toward others:

I learnt that we can be quite understanding and receptive when we have to talk to people from different countries. And the most vital element, to respect one another. It does not only favour our use and level of English, but also our attitudes, behaviours or manners to the rest of people. (SR2)

Online exchange with the *AIEVM* therefore involves the development of communication skills on different levels. Linguistic and intercultural communication skills can be put into practice and enhanced at an initial level through respectful dialogue with the tandem partner. The act of collaborating on tasks focuses the dialogue and engages the tandem partners in their joint purpose. However, the use of a tool that is specifically

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structured, systematic reflection of intercultural encounters through image, namely, the *AIEVM*, significantly enriched the tandem exchange of perspectives and prompted several of the students to reexamine their own cultural position(s), to engage in further enquiry into the images, and ultimately to achieve a better understanding of the underlying cultural message(s).

The findings are therefore consistent with research in the field of FLE that suggests OIE can be used not only for fostering linguistic and intercultural communicative competence but also for a wider range of literacies. Taking as its starting point the premise that interculturally sensitive visual literacy is required to critically engage with the profusion of images that have become so central to communication in our networked society, the findings of this study suggest that the *AIEVM*, which is specifically designed to develop intercultural and visual media competence, can enhance OIE. At the same time, OIE provides a useful framework for multiperspectival reflection on and verbalization of encounters with otherness through images, thus enriching the learning experience of working with the *AIEVM* and heightening critical cultural awareness of visual media.

5 Teaching Implications and Applications

Diverse implications and applications for language teaching and learning contexts may be derived

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alternative courses of action are suggested below.

Firstly, this study showed that work with the *AIEVM* can benefit from preliminary tasks in which students consider and discuss images together. However, it was also found that the choice of image for *AIEVM* analysis was influenced in several cases by the choice of visuals used in preliminary tasks. Teachers could therefore use a wider range of images for initial discussion to demonstrate the breadth of possibilities of intercultural encounter as it is understood by the *AIEVM*. Exotic or sensationalized images of other cultures with which students are likely to be familiar may be discussed critically to draw attention to the role of the media in manipulating perceptions, but these might be compared with local images with people from different cultures to show that intercultural encounters can take place anywhere, or images of people from different social groups, different religious groups, different generations, or different social strata to broaden the concept of culture. Subsequent guidance in selecting the *AIEVM* images might ensure a more effective learning experience.

Secondly, when working with the *AIEVM*, tandem partners may be encouraged to agree on a single image (rather than selecting an image each) so that the same image is analyzed individually before

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CONSIDERATIONS OF OTHERNESS CAN BE DISCUSSED WITH
"the other" (i.e., the tandem partner), which in turn
entails examining different standpoints.

Intercultural dialogue and awareness of one's own
and the other's culture may likewise be fostered by
inviting learners to discuss images that would be
considered appropriate and/or inappropriate in
their culture, either these days and/or in the past.
By incorporating the notion of appropriateness into
a historical perspective, learners need to explore
and present their culture to their tandem partner
within a wider framework, thereby heightening
awareness both of their own and the target culture
in the image.

By the same token, to promote awareness of self,
one's own culture, and other people's cultures, it is
possible to use the *AIEVM* to consider specific
aspects of "otherness." For example, tandem
partners may discuss their first experiences of
otherness through images, how otherness may be
portrayed in local images, or the most recent, the
most impartial/partial, or the most thought-
provoking image of otherness portrayed by visual
media about a "distant or faraway other."

Both online during the exchange and in the
debriefing conducted in the individual classes,
participants in this study wondered whether their
tandem partner expressed their own perspective or

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the individual and the collective conception of otherness by filling in the *AIEVM* individually and then inviting family or friends to comment on their understanding of otherness as conveyed in their *AIEVM*. The ensuing tandem debate would thereby raise issues of individual versus collective interpretation of otherness in both partners' communities.

Finally, the benefit of OIE for developing intercultural and visual media competence depends to a large extent on engagement on the part of both tandem partners. To minimize the effects caused by one tandem partner's lack of involvement in the task, facilitators may wish to choose other groupings, such as four students, two from each culture, to facilitate small group discussions rather than tandem debates and to ensure the exchange of different perspectives.

6 Conclusion

This chapter started with the assertion that, despite the wide usage of visuals in FLE, visual literacy pedagogy as such is rarely properly incorporated in the teaching process. It proposed that, if images are understood as socioculturally constructed "messages," visual media pedagogy might be fruitfully integrated into intercultural learning at its intersection with FLE. The *AIEVM* was developed by the Council of Europe for precisely this purpose – that is, to facilitate the development of intercultural

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ties in its design (the sequence of sections, questions, and prompts) and in the theoretical framework of competence subsets that underpins the design. Structured narration of and reflection on intercultural encounters through image is meant to foster the development of intercultural and visual media competence; at the same time, the theoretical framework should enable FLE teachers using the *AIEVM* to guide and evaluate this aspect of their students' learning. Because the *AIEVM* had been piloted in face-to-face FLE, this study explored its efficacy for developing intercultural and visual media competence in online exchange and, vice versa, the affordances of OIE for enhancing the learning potential of the *AIEVM*.

With regard to the first research question, the findings provide evidence that the *AIEVM* benefits from online exchange in which it is framed within a wider analysis of images. Compared to working with the *AIEVM* individually or in the classroom as suggested in the *AIEVM's Notes for facilitators* (Barrett et al., [2013b](#)), online exchange with students from another country provided further dimensions to learning. Multiperspectival opportunities for reflection, collaborating with tandem partners and sharing results in the wiki, motivated students not only to critically reflect on their own intercultural encounters through visual media and to consider other points of view but also

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In the course of reflecting on self in relation to the mediated other – that is, the tandem partner mediated through the wiki or the person mediated through the image – students demonstrated a number of the competences on which the *AIEVM* draws, including media literacy as it pertains to empathy, respect for otherness, behavioral flexibility, knowledge of other cultures, skills of discovery and interaction, skills of interpreting and relating, critical cultural awareness, and action orientation. This process was supported by the initial activities in preparation for working with the *AIEVM*, with images chosen by the authors. However, as discussed in the previous section, the potential for such activities laying the foundations for subsequent work with the *AIEVM* may be exploited better through discussion of a wider range of images that helps to clarify what is meant by an intercultural encounter through image and to rehearse critical analysis of the image.

In relation to the second research question, the findings also provide evidence that a multiliteracies approach to OIE might be enhanced by using a theoretically grounded tool which is specifically designed to support the development of intercultural and media visual competence. Firstly, similar to the approach used in the Cultura Project, the design of the *AIEVM* helped students in this

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reflection on their own and with students in another country. The *AIEVM*'s sequence of questions fostered a process of engagement with images that progressed from describing to narrating, evaluating, and analyzing an encounter with otherness. This process prompted several participants to reexamine their own cultural position(s) and to undertake further enquiry into the images, thereby arriving at a better understanding of the underlying cultural message(s). Secondly, the robust theoretical framework of intercultural and visual media competence that informs the sequence of questions in the *AIEVM* proved effective in guiding, identifying, and evaluating the development of intercultural and visual media competence in the participating students. It might therefore provide valuable theoretical underpinning for other OIE projects aimed at developing multiliteracies.

Both the Council of Europe and other people working in the field of visual media literacy argue that there is a need for teachers, too, to acquire intercultural and visual media literacy. The *AIEVM* was therefore trialed in this study with preservice non-native teachers of English with at least C1 proficiency in the language. These participants seemed to have little difficulty in articulating their reflections. However, similar projects with less linguistically proficient students would require more specific language input and perhaps more focus on

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Finally, although media awareness can inform the culturally sensitive creation of images, the current study did not exploit the multimodal affordances of the wiki for exploring the two-way process of decoding and encoding – reflecting on *and* creating image. Designing activities that support the move from reflection to production would therefore be a logical step in further developing a multiliteracies approach to OIE.

Notes

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referred to separately, sometimes – in more recent years – together as “visual media literacy” or “visual and media literacy.” In this chapter, except when citing specific authors, the term “visual media literacy” is used, in line with the authors of the *AIEVM*. Visual media are understood to be any context in which image is used. This could be a photograph or a painting seen in a book, at an exhibition, or in outdoor advertising; it could equally be a moving image seen on television, at the cinema, or on the Internet. Also in line with the authors of the *AIEVM*, the terms “intercultural and visual media competence” and “intercultural and media literacy competence” are used interchangeably as an extension of intercultural competence to incorporate visual media literacy.

2. A detailed description of the theoretical framework underpinning the *AIEVM* can be found in the *AIE*'s explanatory context, concepts, and theories document (Byram, Barrett, Ipgrave, Jackson, & Méndez García, [2009b](#), pp. 23–25) and in the *AIEVM*'s facilitators' notes, both of which are available on the Council of Europe's website at https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/default_en.asp

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name and surname.

4. SR stands for survey response, and TD means tandem discussion. Both abbreviations are followed by a number indicating the number of tandem discussion or the number of the survey response.
5. "*Perdidos en la tribu*" ("Lost in the tribe") put members of Spanish families in contact with members of tribes in different countries so that the Spanish family can spend some time in the tribe and vice versa.

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