eyeVocab and Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition:

Distinctive Affective Image in Isolation

This project leverages human memory for **Distinctive Affective Image** presented in **Isolation** to radically improve the speed, depth, and permanence of second language vocabulary acquisition. In U.S. State Department funded Critical Language Scholarship Program intensive language courses that have taken full advantage of the method over the last three years, the achievement of beginners and advanced beginners - in terms of pre and post course OPI scores and levels advanced - were on average 60% or more greater than equivalent CLS courses which did not.

Human recognition memory for image is extremely powerful, particularly when that image is graphically striking and emotionally engaging, and further when it is presented in isolation. In various studies subjects exposed to such an image for a only a few seconds were able to select it from a group of similar images weeks or months later, even in studies where many thousands of images were presented in this way. The studies which explored this phenomenon did not go on to

investigate whether the memory for image could be leveraged - by attaching other information to it. We have found that it most certainly can.

The images we use are from classical art, both western and eastern, from photojournalism and historical photography, great book illustration, and other sources. The images are selected for their graphic power, and for their ability to engage emotionally. They rarely simply depict the meaning of the target word, but rather evoke it, as tropes, or as keys to a brief narrative involving that meaning. This enables function words and abstract nouns to be expressed as or more effectively than concrete nouns. The overall power of the approach is increased by the presentation of the images and attached information in isolation, without distraction in the visual field, enabling heightened focus and concentration. We term the approach **Distinctive Affective Image in Isolation**.

One characteristic of the method is the speed with which material is learned. As important perhaps is the fact that the correspondence of L1 to L2 is not textual. While on the one hand the textual correspondence is learned, the understanding of the target language concept derives from the visual

and emotional implications of the image, which are deeper, more complex, and far more permanent. Further, the phonological memory is fully engaged and bound, as is memory for the target language orthography, and the relationship of the two. Finally, the bound memory -image, meaning, phonology and orthography, the presentation of any one of which triggers the rest - is extremely persistent - enabling the maintenance of strong declarative memory indefinitely with minimal review.