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MEXICAN-AMERICAN LEARNING STYLES IN A  
SOCIOLITERATE APPROACH TO WRITING  
FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
Education:  
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

---

by  
Natalia Pedersen  
September 2004

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by  
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September 2004

Approved by:

  
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Lynne Díaz-Rico, First Reader

*Aug. 9, 2004*  
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Date

  
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Barbara Flores, Second Reader

## ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this project is to address the need for the implementation of effective English training for speakers of other languages who are seeking to expand their oral and written English skills. The social construction of knowledge provides the context for the use of socioliterate approach to writing. Learning styles and Mexican-American cultural values form the basis of instruction. From this perspective, learners are able to expand their oral and written communication ability, as well as their intercultural competence.

The project consists of five chapters. Chapter One outlines the necessity, scope, and objectives of the project. Chapter Two reviews the related literature. Chapter Three presents a theoretical framework applicable to curriculum design. Chapter Four provides an overview of the proposed instructional unit plan and gives details about the lessons that comprise the unit of instruction. Chapter Five outlines the plans for assessments that evaluate the effectiveness of the lessons. The instructional unit is provided in the Appendix.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project is dedicated to all of my students, past, present, and future. I would also like to specially thank my best friends and peers, who supported my endeavor and who gave me strength and courage to fulfill my dream.

I would like to extend my gratitude to my MA coordinator and mentor, Dr. Lynne Diaz-Rico, who always believed in me, who guided me throughout the program, and who always challenged me to realize my potential.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Background of the Project

To learn a second language in today's global world has become crucial if an individual wants to advance in his or her career and become successful. Nowadays, the trend is to become global in business and international relations. To learn English, which is considered a universal language, has become essential for people who wish to integrate into an ever-more-global world.

Many students or immigrants who come to the United States to pursue a career or to go to school, and people in other countries who intend to become proficient in English in order to become part of a global world, need to engage in social situations where they can improve their oral and written English communication skills in order to successfully achieve their goals. Native-English speakers, English-as-a-second-language, and English-as-a-foreign-language learners often engage in additional study, such as learning about cultural differences, to facilitate the development of intercultural awareness and communication. Becoming

proficient in English has become essential to meet career, academic, and business objectives.

In addition, becoming effective communicators means that learners need to improve not only their oral and written language skills, but also their intercultural sensitivity. There is a pressing need for teachers to create educational environments that generate different social encounters and learning situations so that students can improve and expand their language proficiency and their cultural awareness. Students can interact with resources, including videos, magazines, and the Internet, that broaden their cultural self-awareness. Creating such learning environments generates opportunities for students to become more culturally sensitive and to integrate with the rest of the world.

#### The Influence of Globalization

Today's world economic situation is undergoing particular changes. People from all over the world are learning English to be able to effectively communicate and do business with one another. English is becoming a global language and an integral part of the globalization process. According to Crystal (1997), over a billion people in the world currently speak English, and English is the primary language of many communication resources

such as newspapers, magazines, books, technology, airports, and advertising.

The world has adopted English as a means for global communication. People who learn English share the language, but they need to become familiar with American culture, as well as with other people's native cultures in order to communicate effectively. American English and British English have exerted influence in English-language teaching; however, the most widely adopted vernacular currently is American English.

#### The Role of Culture

Learning how people from different parts of the world think is important when trying to effectively communicate. Peoples' culture reflects their language. In addition to their ability to speak in English, they need to be able to understand not only American culture, but also other cultures as well.

Culture plays a key role in English-language teaching. Learners exposed to different cultures become sensitive to others' ways of behaving, and can learn how to cope with diverse social encounters. Learning about how cultures differ can facilitate the appropriate means to communicate effectively. When a person is aware of a particular way of thinking, and of specific values that

characterize the other party's culture, it is easier to establish rapport, because that individual knows how to approach certain situations.

Becoming culturally sensitive goes hand-in-hand with developing language skills. Social encounters can facilitate both. By interacting with each other, students share their history and culture. During the interactions, learners negotiate meaning by using language to communicate their ideas. Talking--putting thoughts into words--is a means to improve language proficiency. Teachers and students can work together to understand how to address cultural differences and therefore adjust their oral and written skills to match specific communication endeavors.

The socioliterate approach puts emphasis on the social aspects of communication, helping students become familiar with the purpose and nature of socially constructed communication acts. Learning how a text or communication act is socially constructed helps students become aware of how cultural values are reflected in such cases. By being able to understand and identify the context and the purpose of a text, students can realize how to approach a communicative act and become more effective.

Learning what is expected from a culture results in more effective usage of the English language.

Language educators have the responsibility to create an atmosphere of support and respect for students' languages, as well as to encourage learners to understand the use of English as their second language and the cultures that it conveys.

#### The Purpose of the Project

The primary goal of this project is to provide a unit of instruction that addresses the following critical English skills: oracy, and written and intercultural proficiency. The intent is to provide an effective curriculum that engages learners in social interactions, provides productive and authentic practice activities, and assesses the success of the learning that occurs.

The curriculum features the social-construction-of-knowledge approach (psychology of learning), and the socioliterate approach (pedagogy) covered in the Review of the Literature. In addition, it includes an emphasis on Mexican-American values, learning styles, and intercultural communication, showing how they are interrelated and how they affect oral and written language proficiency and intercultural communication competence.

## The Content of the Project

Chapter One introduces the importance of improving oral and written language skills, and examines the role of culture and the understanding of cultural differences as a way of becoming an effective intercultural communicator in social situations. Moreover, the chapter describes the importance of globalization and its effects on learning English as a second language.

Chapter Two presents five relevant key concepts that affect the curriculum design: intercultural communication, learning styles, Mexican-American cultural values and schooling, the socioliterate approach to writing, and the social construction of knowledge.

Chapter Three provides a theoretical framework for the development of the instructional unit whose outcomes are oral and written language proficiency and intercultural communicative competence. The model is based on the five key concepts described in Chapter Two.

Chapter Four presents the content of the unit of instruction: five lessons that address the key concepts presented in Chapter Two and incorporate the theoretical framework presented in Chapter Three.

Chapter Five presents the assessment of strategies and procedures that are utilized in the unit of



instruction. Each lesson has a unique assessment activity that is designed to address students' learning progress. The assessments are fully discussed in detail in this chapter.

### The Significance of the Project

The unit of instruction is designed to provide English-language learners with a practical set of communication skills that will facilitate the following results: improved self-awareness of learning styles and cultural values; improved rapport with colleagues, peers, and professors; and improved intercultural communication in social settings.

The unit is designed to address the English learners' need for effective curricula that will assist them to achieve their communication needs. This can be valuable to both English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) learners, and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) learners, because both need to become aware of linguistic forms and contextual settings in order to become proficient in oral and written language skills as well as in intercultural communicative competence.

The key concepts reviewed in Chapter Two address relevant issues that are the basis for the design of the

instructional unit presented in Chapter Four. The concepts that form the theoretical model are comprised in the instructional unit and form the framework to help learners improve their oracy, literacy, and intercultural communication proficiency.

In summary, educators need to adapt to a fast-changing world and help students develop their cultural sensitivity. The implementation of authentic learning activities in which students can engage and participate generates opportunities for them to practice language and cultural skills. An enriching and supportive learning environment can help them successfully achieve their learning, academic, and professional goals.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Intercultural Communication

When I arrived in California a few years ago from Argentina, I realized for the first time that teachers need to make students aware of cultural differences. In spite of having achieved relative proficiency in the English language, I had some communication problems because I was not sufficiently aware of the cultural values of the target-language community. I realized that learning about culture is equally as important as learning language if one is to interpret the meaning of a communication act.

People in every culture of the world develop their own particular system of interests, attitudes, values, and beliefs within which they organize and interpret their life experiences. Therefore, what might be a good behavior in one country might not be considered as such in another country. By becoming sensitive to these cultural differences, people from one culture will be able to communicate successfully with members of other cultures.

## What is Intercultural Communication?

Ting-Toomey (1999) referred to intercultural communication as the communication process that takes place between members of different cultural communities. Ting-Toomey (1999) defined this as "The symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two or more different cultural communities negotiate shared meanings in an interactive situation" (p. 16). This researcher also stated that in intercultural communication, the degree of difference that exists between individuals is connected to cultural-membership factors such as values, beliefs, and norms. Intercultural communication takes place when these factors affect the communication process. Each part of the definition above will be examined in turn.

A symbolic-exchange process refers to the use of verbal and non-verbal behaviors that influence the communication process as messages are encoded and decoded. Negotiating shared meanings refers to the general goal of any intercultural communication encounter. It is an interactive situation because it includes goals, motivation, rules of behavior, different individuals' roles, physical setting and equipment, and cognitive and social skills. According to Ting-Toomey (1999), "When the decoding process of the receiver matches the encoding

process of the sender, the receiver and sender of the message have accomplished shared meanings effectively" (p. 16). Sometimes, however, intercultural encounters are filled with misunderstandings because of language barriers, communication styles, and different values and belief systems.

#### Why is it Necessary to Foster Intercultural Communication?

Today's world is considered a global village, a collection of many cultures. Different cultures are increasingly in close contact, and people need to develop cultural sensitivity to become more aware of each other's differences. In each of the contexts in which people conduct their daily life--neighborhoods, personal relationships, the family, and business encounters--intercultural competence is crucial. Spitzberg (1991) reported that "Various cultures of the world are far more accessible than ever before, and there are numerous forces bringing these cultures into contact at a rapid and increasing rate of interaction" (p. 353).

Lustig and Koester (1999) referred to the United States as a multicultural society. "Nearly 32 million people in the United States, about one in eight, speak a language other than English at home" (p. 10). By 2050, the

American population will increase from 262 million to 394 million. Continuing growth of the Latinos and Asian American population will lead this increase.

Cultural diversity is found in many places, including workplace and school settings. Developing cultural sensitivity can lead to effective intercultural communication. In the workplace, the economic success of many companies depends on the ability of employees to communicate competently with people from other cultures; this is especially true in the United States, where corporations hire a great number of people from other countries. In schools, diversity of languages and cultures is a major concern for educators. This mixture of cultures affects students' learning and interpersonal relationships. Teachers' interactions with students, parents' interactions with teachers, and students' interactions with other students are all mediated by linguistic and cultural differences displayed during verbal and non-verbal communication (Lustig & Koester, 1999).

This cultural mixing implies that people may feel uncomfortable when relating with others from different backgrounds. But as the world is transformed into a place where cultural boundaries cease to be impenetrable

barriers, differences among people become reasons to celebrate and share rather than to fear. Identifying and understanding how cultures differ can improve intercultural communication skills and behaviors.

### Understanding Cultural Differences

Even with limited exposure to different cultures, people can notice how individuals differ from one another in both overt and subtle ways. Differences range from clothing and foods to less visible factors such as shared perceptions within a culture. These shared perceptions lead people to act in certain ways, and are considered appropriate and effective behaviors within a culture. They have to do with collective assumptions about what the world is, with shared judgments about what it should be, and with widely held expectations about how people should behave. These expectations are called cultural patterns.

Cultural patterns are made up by beliefs, values, and norms, and provide a particular way of thinking about the world. These patterns provide the basis of interpreting the symbols used in communication; because no two people in the world think the same way, these interpretations will vary from one culture to another and even from one person to another within the same culture. However, there

are also patterns that can be essentially universal, such as the love and concern of a mother for the newborn.

Beliefs are ideas that people assume to be true about the world. They are a set of learned interpretations that form the basis for cultural members to decide whether something is correct and logical or not. Values consist of what a culture considers good or bad, right or wrong, fair or unfair, just or unjust, and kind or cruel. They are the desired characteristics or goals of a culture, even though they do not necessarily describe the actual behavior of a culture (Lustig & Koester, 1999).

According to Lustig and Koester (1999), norms are the outward manifestations of beliefs and values. Norms exist for a wide variety of behaviors and include typical social routines. They exist to guide people's interactions and indicate how people should engage in certain situations such as conversations. Norms are the surface characteristics that emerge from a culture's beliefs and values. Because norms are evident in the ways people behave, they are relatively easy to identify. People are expected to behave and communicate in a certain way and that makes them believe that their way is the right way of communicating. Norms, then, are linked to beliefs and values to form the patterns of a culture.



Analysis of the nature of cultural patterns facilitates the understanding of different approaches that describe variations in cultural patterns. Hall, Hofstede, and Bond's frameworks provide insight on how cultures differ. These are described as follows.

#### Hall's High- and Low-Context Cultural Patterns

Hall's theory of high- and low-context showed that there is a relationship between culture, communication, and the context or setting of the communication itself, regardless of the specific words that are spoken. According to Hall, cultures differ from high to low context. High-context cultures prefer to use high-context messages, in which most of the meaning is implied, and very little detail is provided in the message itself. Some examples of high-context cultures are Japanese, African American, Mexican, Latino, among others (Lustig & Koester, 1999; Goodman, 1994).

Unlike high-context cultures, low-context cultures prefer to use low-context messages, in which the majority of the information is provided in the coding of the message itself. European American, German, Swedish, and English are a few examples of low-context cultures.

Other characteristics that describe high- and low-context cultures include the use of covert and overt

messages, the importance of ingroups and outgroups, and the cultures' orientation to time. The use of covert and overt messages shows that in a high-context culture most of the information is taken for granted and assumed. The meaning of the message does not need to be explicitly and verbally transmitted. In low-context cultures, an important purpose in communicating is to convey exact meaning, and explicit messages are preferred. Goodman (1994) asserted that,

A high-context communication or message is one in which most of the information is either physical context or internalized by the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. (p. 43)

The opposite occurs in a low-context communication, where the message is invested in the explicit code.

Regarding the importance of ingroups and outgroups, in a high-context culture the commitment between people is very strong and deep. Responsibility to others takes precedent over responsibility to oneself, and loyalty is highlighted. However, in a low-context culture, the bonds between people are fragile and the extent of involvement and commitment to long-term relationships is lower (Lustig, & Koester, 1999).

Orientation to time in a high-context culture is seen as more open and less structured than in a low-context culture. In a high-context culture, time is more responsive to people's needs, whereas in a low-context culture, time is highly structured. People can communicate successfully if they are aware of and familiar with the major aspects of low- or high-context culture. Ting-Toomey (1999) said,

...when we use low-context communication we stress the importance of explicit verbal messages to convey personal thoughts, opinions, and feelings. When we use high-context communication we stress the importance of multilayered contexts that frame the interaction encounter. (p. 17)

The main characteristics that describe Hall's low- and high-cultures are summarized in Table 1.

Studying the cultural patterns related to high- and low-context cultures can make intercultural communication more easily achieved, fostering successful understanding among people from different cultures.

Table 1. Characteristics of Low- and High-Context Cultures

<u>High-context Cultures</u>	<u>Low-context Cultures</u>
Cover and implicit	Overt and explicit
Messages internalized	Messages plainly coded
Much non verbal coding	Details verbalized
Reactions reserved	Reactions on surface
Strong interpersonal bonds	Fragile interpersonal bonds
High commitment	Low commitment
Time open and flexible	Time highly organized

Source: Lustig & Koester, 1999

### Hofstede's Cultural Patterns

Hofstede based his work on the idea that people carry mental programs that develop during childhood. He proposed four different concepts to describe the dominant patterns of a culture, including power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, and masculinity-femininity.

Hofstede developed a power-distance index (PDI), which can determine a culture's approximate location on the power-distance dimension. The power-distance dimension focuses on the relationships between people of different status. People from high-power distance cultures experience a greater level of uncertainty when they have to communicate with people from a higher status than people from low-power distance cultures. Gudykunst (1994)

referred to power distance as "The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations accept that power is distributed unequally" (p. 46).

Cultures with a low PDI, such as Austria, Denmark, and New Zealand, show small power distances as a cultural value. These cultures highlight the importance of minimizing social or class inequality (Lustig & Koester, 1999). People that belong to a low-distance culture believe power should be used only when it is legitimate (Gudykunst, 1994).

Cultures with a high PDI, such as Arab countries, Guatemala, Malaysia, and the Philippines, show large power distances, and sustain that each individual has a place in the social order, that power is part of the society, and that authority voices should not be challenged. Inequality is not seen as a problem, and those who have power are allowed to use it for their own benefit (Lustig & Koester, 1999).

Hofstede developed an uncertainty-avoidance index (UAI) to measure how cultures cope with ambiguous situations. Cultures with low UAI, such as Danish, Jamaican, and Irish have a high tolerance towards these kinds of situations. These cultures accept deviant social behaviors, and are willing to try new things. "People in

low uncertainty avoidance cultures have lower stress levels and weaker superegos and accept dissent and taking risks more than people in high uncertainty avoidance cultures" (Gudykunst, 1994, p. 45). Whereas cultures with a high UAI, like Greece, Guatemala, and Portugal, present low tolerance to uncertain and ambiguous situations, and try to ensure security by implementing strict regulations. People tend to reach a consensus among society members to avoid any deviant behavior.

The individualism-collectivism dimension has to do with people's relationships to the larger social groups of which they are part, and this dimension explains crosscultural differences in behavior (Lustig & Koester, 1999). According to Brislin (2000) "One of the most important factors in a culture is the emphasis place on individualism and collectivism" (p. 53).

Hofstede created an individualism index (IDV), a measure of whether a culture is individualistic or collectivistic. High IDV cultures, such as the United States, Australia, Great Britain, and Canada, are highly individualistic. People are concerned about themselves and their close family members. Independence, self, and privacy are important. Decision-making is based on what is beneficial for the individual. People set and work toward

their own goals. When a conflict arises between an individual and those of a valued group, the individual considers his or her own goals first (Brislin, 2000).

In contrast, in cultures with a low IDV index, such as Japan, Guatemala, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Ecuador, people are very loyal to the group that they belong to, whether it is a nuclear family, a close family, a caste, or even a company. Decisions are made to benefit both the individual and the group. People are more likely to downplay their own goals in favor of goals set by a valued group (Brislin, 2000). "The Japanese consider it a brash for an individual to make definite decisions regarding himself or others. It is offensive for an individual to urge the acceptance of his opinion as a course of action" (Stewart, 1979, p. 4). Unlike the Japanese, Americans believe that "Responsibility for the decision is normally attached to the individual decision maker" (Stewart, 1979, p. 4).

The masculinity-femininity dimension refers to the preference of members of a culture in terms of achievement and assertiveness, or nurturance and social support. This dimension is useful in understanding cultural differences and similarities in opposite-sex and same-sex relationships.

Hofstede developed a masculinity index (MAS). Cultures with a high MAS believe in achievement and in judging others according to their performance; manliness is valued. Furthermore, "People in a high masculinity culture value things, power and assertiveness" (Gudykunst, 1994, p. 48). Cultures such as Austria, Italy, Japan, and Mexico, present a high MAS. Cultures with a low MAS, such as Chile, Portugal, and Sweden, believe in less external achievements and shows of manliness, and more in the importance of life choices that make the world a better place (Lustig & Koester, 1999). According to Gudykunst (1994), "People in cultures low on masculinity or high on femininity value quality of life and nurturance" (p. 48).

#### Bond's Confucian Cultural Patterns

Bond proposed four dimensions of cultural patterns: integration, human heartedness, moral discipline, and Confucian work dynamism. Integration refers to a sense of social stability. Those high on this dimension value tolerance, noncompetitiveness, interpersonal harmony, and group solidarity. This dimension relates to Hofstede's individualism-collectivism dimension (Lustig & Koester, 1999).

Human heartedness refers to a sense of kindness and compassion. It is closely related to Hofstede's dimension



of masculinity-femininity. Moral discipline has to do with a sense of moderation in one's daily life. This dimension is related to Hofstede's power-distance concept.

The Confucian work dynamism refers to a person's orientation toward life and work (Lustig & Koester, 1999). Confucian cultural patterns are quite different from the ones described by Hall and Hofstede. Confucianism is not a religion but a set of principles and ethical rules for daily life. It derived from a Chinese servant Kung Fu Ze, who was renamed Confucius by the Jesuit missionaries. These values are part of China, Japan, Korea, and other Asian countries' history.

Social order and stability are based on unequal relationships between people. These relationships presume the existence and legitimacy of a social hierarchy and the reciprocal obligations that each person has in such hierarchy. The family is the prototype for all social relationships. Ogawa (1979) said, "Filial piety can defined as the oath of empathy which links a person to the hierarchical order of the world" (p. 332). The virtues learned within the family are the central core that specifies how individuals should interact with others in their social relationships. Social obligations and

responsibilities are related to the concept of treating others as you would like to be treated.

Confucianism emphasizes that people should be skilled, educated, hard-working, modest, patient, and persevering. The goal of such practices is to help promote a world of peace, where everyone is equal (Lustig & Koester, 1999).

Considering the approaches proposed by Hall, Hoefstede and Bond broadens understanding and appreciation of cultural differences. Each approach provides multiple frames of reference that can be used to foster effective intercultural communication by helping people become aware of, and sensitive to, multiple dimensions of cultural differences. Analyzing different cultural patterns in the context of a particular culture expands communication skills.

#### Summary

Hall's Approach. Hall's concept of high- and low-context cultures determines people's behavior in certain situations. Meeting someone who belongs to a high-context culture is very different than meeting someone who belongs to a low-context culture. When dealing with someone who comes from a high-context culture, like the Japanese, it is necessary to use high-context messages

that emphasize indirect forms; as opposed to, if dealing with an American, the necessity to use low-context messages that emphasize direct forms.

Hofstede's Approach. Hofstede's approach leads to the evaluation of certain differences that can help achieve intercultural sensitivity and awareness. According to his theory, people within a collectivistic culture conceptualize themselves as interdependent with one another, emphasizing the idea of harmony and dependence in the ingroup. However, people within an individualistic culture think that their own goals are more important than those of the group, and usually tend to act according to their own needs.

Bond's Approach. Bond's concepts of Confucianism refer to the idea that in Eastern cultures social order is based on hierarchies, and status is based on age and position; whereas in Western cultures, social order is placed on the concept of equal treatment, no matter how old you are or which position you hold.

In conclusion, these are just a few examples to illustrate how the different approaches can be applied. When intercultural encounter occurs in people's lives, knowing and being aware of cultural differences will allow more effective communication. Expanding awareness and

understanding of cultural patterns will broaden people's cultural sensitivity. They will be able to adapt and adopt appropriate behavior according to specific situations, and therefore, strengthen their intercultural communication skills.

### Learning Styles

#### Why Are Learning Styles Important in English-as-a-Second-Language Instruction?

Learning styles can be used to predict what kind of instructional strategies or methods can be more effective for a given individual and learning task. Identifying different learning styles creates teacher awareness of individual differences in learning by addressing diversity, and helps the teacher to develop and implement different teaching curricula to promote each student's success in learning a second language (Diaz-Rico, 2004).

According to Ramirez III (1988), many institutional practices based on the assimilationist melting pot philosophy have disregarded minority students' cultures, rejecting at the same time students' established learning styles. The researcher mentioned that students are being asked to abandon these styles and to adopt new ones, instead of having their culturally unique learning styles reinforced. Ramirez III (1988) cited that "Culturally

unique learning styles represent a critical variable in education of the culturally different" (p. 199).

According to Dunn (2000), there has been a steady increase of minority students' enrollment in higher education throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The differences in age, culture, experience, and language skills among students suggest a diversity that is unlikely to find effective any single teaching style. If educators adopt different teaching styles, they will be able to tap each students' needs. Dunn (2000) stated, "Practitioners who have used the Dunn and Dunn learning styles approach reported statistically higher standardized achievement and attitude test scores among average, poorly achieving, and special education students at every academic level in urban as well as rural schools" (p. 4).

However, educators need to determine how students learn in order to adopt a wider repertoire of teaching styles. Once learning styles have been identified, instructors can expose students to resources that are likely to make learning relatively comfortable for each learner (Dunn, 2000). Several theorists have generated concepts related to learning differences that highlight how learning generally occurs and how students develop a learning preference.

## What are Learning Styles?

In 1979 a national task force sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals defined learning styles as a "Combinations of behaviors that are instrumental in perceiving, interacting, and responding to learning situations". (Clayton, 2003, p. 70). Learning styles are ways of approaching tasks that are characteristic of each individual. Styles are focused on the person, strategies on the task. "Theories of learning styles deal with how people like to learn" (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2001, p. 17). Dunn (2000) defined the term as "The way students begin to concentrate on, process, internalize and remember new and difficult academic information" (p. 8). Doolan (2000) asserted, "Learning styles address the biological uniqueness and developmental changes that make one person learn differently from another" (p. 136).

Clayton (2003) affirmed that "Three strands weave together to create personal learning styles: cognitive, affective, and physiological" (p. 70). The cognitive strand includes the ways in which an individual receives, processes, stores, and retrieves information. Different methodologies to present the materials are used by instructors, including direct instruction, verbal

instruction, and media presentations. The affective strand encompasses the emotional and personality characteristics related to attention, locus of control, interests, risk-taking, structure, and sociability. These aspects provide an overview of how students react during the learning process. Some students need a more structured environment than others. Some need to have directions explained more than once in a different manner, such as written instead of oral. The physiological strand consists of two different aspects: the preferred modality, including visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic; and the environmental context of light, temperature, room arrangement, and level of noise (Clayton, 2003).

Kinsella (1995) referred to a learning style as "An individual's natural, habitual, and preferred ways of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills" (p. 171). Learning styles are related to perception, cognitions, conceptualization, affect, and behavior. The concept ranges from preferred sensory modalities to cognitive-information patterns. Each existing model describes and focuses on a particular aspect that may shape an individual learner's perception and processing of new material.

By examining some fundamental components of a student's learning styles, teachers can broaden their own teaching style to accommodate a wider range of learner characteristics while helping them develop a more flexible, empowered approach to diverse learning. Many of the elements that form an individual learning style are bipolar. However, "Students should not be labeled or stigmatized for having any set of learning strengths" (Kinsella, 1995, p. 171). Among the most significant elements that characterize a learner's learning style are perceptual strengths, brain hemispherity, analytical versus relational learning" (Kinsella, 1995, p. 172). These elements are described as follows.

#### Perceptual Strengths

Riding and Raynert (1998) developed a model called Edmonds Learning Style Identification Exercise that reflects "An attempt to identify individuals' natural perceptual modality as they respond to the learning environment" (p. 72). Their model yields information about four categories of learning modalities, including visual, verbal, auditory, and activity-based. The significance of this model lies primarily on its conceptual content, and on the students' preferred modes of responding to learning stimuli.



## Brain Hemispherity

By gaining insight on the specialized functions of the brain's two hemispheres, educators can better understand student learning styles. Dunn (2000) affirmed that Braco's research led him to propose that the two hemispheres of the brain have different functions. Dunn (2000) expressed,

Subsequent research by the Russian scientist Alexander Luria and the American scientist Roger Sperry demonstrated that the left hemisphere appeared associated with verbal and sequential abilities, whereas the right hemisphere appeared to be associated with emotions and spatial, holistic processing. (p. 11)

According to Kinsella (1995), there are significant differences between one side of the brain and the other. The left hemisphere is referred as analytical; it reduces the whole to its meaningful parts. It is also linear and sequential in its mode of processing information. It has the ability to move in a step-by-step fashion. These characteristics suggest that the left side of the brain deals most efficiently with processing mathematics, musical notation, and language. The interpretation of

speech depends on analyzing the sequence in which sounds occur and of the order in which words occur.

Unlike the left hemisphere, the right side specializes in combining parts to create a whole. It tends to seek out multiple relationships among information. Kinsella (1995) affirmed, "Because of its image-making power, the right hemisphere operates most efficiently for the majority of spatial and visual tasks; in terms of language learning, it is capable of processing and interpreting linguistic ambiguity, irony, and metaphor" (p. 177). Some characteristics of both hemispheres are described in Table 2.

Analytical (Field Dependent) and Relational (Field Sensitive)

Research about brain hemisphericity is paralleled by, and to an extent subsumed by, another widely researched style that refers to analytical versus relational thinking. Kinsella (1995) stated, "Witkin and his colleagues demonstrated the usefulness for educators in placing a learner on a continuum with regard to the extent of their tendencies to perceive the environment in an analytical (field-independent) way or a relational (field-dependent) way" (p. 180). According to Ramirez III (1988), Witkin has identified two styles:

Table 2. Brain Hemisphere Information-Processing Styles

<u>Left Hemisphere</u>	<u>Right Hemisphere</u>
Interested in component parts; detects discrete features	Interested in wholes, integrates component parts and organizes them into a whole
Analytical: figures things out step by step and part by part	Relational, constructional, and pattern seeking
Linear-sequential processing of input	Global, simultaneous integration of input
Abstract: takes a small bit of information and uses it to represent the whole thing	Concrete: relates things as they are the present moment
Logical: drawing conclusions based on reasons and facts	Intuitive: making leaps of insight, often based on hunches, feelings, or visual images
Temporal: sequencing one thing after another	Spatial: seeing where things are in relation to other things, how parts go together to form a whole.
Verbal: encoding and decoding speech, using words to name, describe, and define	Nonverbal: visual-spatial, minimal connection with words.

Source: Kinsella (1995)

In a field dependent mode of perception, the organization of the field as a whole dominated perception of its parts: an item within a field is experienced as fused with organized ground. In a field-independent mode of perception, the person is able to perceive items as discrete

from the organized field of which they are part.

(p. 200)

The field-dependent learner tends to perceive the whole visual field or situation rather than its individual parts. Witkins used the term field-dependent with a negative connotation associated with being dependent; therefore, the term was replaced by field sensitive, which denoted a learner's sensitivity toward the social and physical environment (Kinsella, 1995).

The field-independent learner is more apt to identify elements independently of a context or field. Furthermore, this type of learning refers to students who are likely to notice details, and are task oriented (Clayton, 2003). Table 3 summarizes field-sensitive/field-independent students' preferences.

Moreover, educators need to be aware that the comprehensive and complex variables that comprise students' preferred learning styles could be analyzed through different perspectives by different theorists. Some of the learning-style typologies are presented below.

#### Typologies of Learning Styles

Hruska-Reichmann and Grasha. The style of learning proposed by Reichmann and Grasha presented a "Social and affective perspective on patterns of preferred behavior

Table 3. Field-Sensitive and Field-Independent Students

	<u>Field-Sensitive Behaviors / Relational Learning</u>	<u>Field-Independent Behaviors / Analytical Learning</u>
Interpersonal Relations	Likes to work with others to achieve a common goal	Likes to work independently or with a partner who has same learning style
	Self esteem dependent upon peer opinions	Self esteem less dependent upon peer opinions
	Socially-oriented	Task-oriented
Instructional Relations	Right-brain strengths: Relational, holistic, pattern seeking, intuitive, subjective, concrete, emotional, visual, musical	Left-brain strengths: analytical, linear, sequential, abstract, mathematical, verbal, objective
	Experiences a distinct item as fused with its context, as part of an overall impression	Finds it easy to detach a perceived item from its given background
	Impulsive in thinking tasks, trusts intuition	Reflective and cautious in thinking tasks
	Responds to rich, varied input	Responds to low-intensity stimulus

Sources: Clayton, 2003; Kinsella, 1995

and attitude which underpin learning in an academic context" (Riding & Rayner, 1998, p. 70). Reichmann and Grasha (1974) identified three dimensions, including participant (e.g. wants to learn) versus avoidant (e.g. dislikes learning), collaborative (e.g. cooperative) versus competitive (e.g. self-centered); and independent (e.g. individual work) versus dependent (e.g. relies on

teacher guidance) (Diaz-Rico, 2004; Riding & Rayner, 1998).

Sonbuchner. The term learning styles is defined by Sonbuchner (1991) as a combination of information-processing styles and work-environment preferences. Information-processing styles refer to the students' tendency to like reading, writing, listening, speaking, visualizing, or manipulating. Work-environment preferences deals with differences in concentration, amount of noise, level of organization, motivation, and involvement with others (Diaz-Rico, 2004).

Keefe. The model presented by Keefe depicts learning styles variables into four groups: cognitive, physiological, affective, incentive (Diaz-Rico, 2004). Cognitive deals with aspects of information processing activity such as analysis, spatial, sequential, and memory (Riding & Rayner, 1998). Physiological refers to time, health, and environment. Affective encompasses anxiety, persistence, and curiosity. Incentive relates to motivation, competition, cooperation, control, rewards, and punishments (Diaz-Rico, 2004).

Kolb. In his model, Kolb (1976) identified four basic learning styles that can be grouped into two dimensions, including concrete experience and abstract

conceptualization, and reflective observation and active experimentation. Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis (2001) stated, "Learning requires abilities that are polar opposites, and that the learner must continually choose which set of learning abilities will use in a learning situation" (p. 228).

According to Torrance and Rockenstein (1988), Kolb defined four types of people based on their learning styles according to the results obtained through the implementation of his model, the Learning Styles Inventory: divergers, assimilators, convergers, and accommodators. Divergers take information concretely, process it reflectively, and make generalizations; they prefer concrete experience and reflective observation. Assimilators begin with an idea or abstraction and process it reflectively; they are abstract conceptualizers and reflective observers, and like theoretical models and inductive reasoning. Convergers take in an idea and test it through experimentation; they are active abstract conceptualizers. Accommodators perceive experience concretely and process it actively (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2001).

McCarthy. Following Kolb's model, McCarthy (1980) found four similar styles of learner: innovative,

analytical, common sense, and dynamic. The innovative learner gets involved and participates in social interactions. The analytical learner values facts and the opinions of experts, and thinks through ideas. The common sense learner wants to know how things work, and seeks meaning through hands-on experiences. The dynamic learner is a risk taker, and relies on intuition (Torrance & Rockenstein, 1988; Diaz-Rico, 2004).

Gregorc. The Gregorc Style Delineator, a self-report instrument, was designed by Gregorc (1982) to identify an individual's learning style as being one of four categories: abstract sequential, concrete sequential, abstract random, and concrete random. "The concrete sequential person is objective, persistent, and careful with detail. The abstract sequential person is evaluative, analytical, logical, and oriented to research. The abstract random person is sensitive, aesthetic, aware, and spontaneous. The concrete random person is intuitive, experimenting, creative, and risk taking" (Torrance & Rockenstein, 1988, p. 278).

Myers/Briggs. The basis for Myers/Briggs model is Carl Jung's theory of personality. There are four opposing pairs of personalities that make up the sixteen personality types. The pairs of personality dimensions



include introversion-extroversion, sensing-perception, thinking-feeling, and judging-perceiving (Diaz-Rico, 2004).

Different typologies of learning styles give teachers and educators the necessary tools to identify student learning preferences. Understanding how individuals learn allows instructors to plan their teaching accordingly to students' needs. It is said that every person adopts different learning styles throughout their lives. According to Clayton (2003), culture plays an important role in students' adopting different learning preferences.

Learning Styles, Culture, and Mexican-Americans

Learning is not just an individual effort; it is influenced by culture. Clayton (2003) stated,

Some children will have grown up learning by observation, not exploration; some will have learned to be submissive to authority, not assertive; some will have learned to depend on group support, not rely on their own ideas; some will need close identification with the teacher, not independence; some will have kinesthetic or spatial intelligences more developed than linguistic; some will respond to Socratic

questioning, while others will prefer visual stimulation. (p. 88)

Lesser (as cited in Ramirez III, 1988) has demonstrated that members of different ethnic groups exhibit different learning patterns, each group showing better performance in some areas than others. According to Ramirez III (1988), such observed patterns are manifestations of culturally unique learning styles. Ramirez III (1988) stated,

Each culture emphasizes the importance of achievement in certain areas. Parents and other agents of socialization employ culturally sanctioned teaching styles to develop certain interests and aptitudes in their children.  
(p. 199)

Culture represents the guidelines and rules groups develop to guide their interaction with the world. Such guidelines derive from shared historical experiences. Mexican-American students are influenced by their culture. Among the values that they share are close identification with family members, their community, and ethnic group; sensitivity to other people's feelings; status and respected role definitions; and achievement or success dependent upon cooperative efforts. These cultural

characteristics are combined and labeled as field sensitivity, which suggests that Mexican-Americans are field-dependent in their perceptual processing and very social in their interactional style (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974).

According to the results yielded by the Rod-and-Frame Test administered to Mexican-Americans, which measures the differentiation of the body from the environment, Mexican-American individuals do appear to be field-dependent when assessing their physical or social relationship to the environment. These results may not apply to the examination of visual perception which is the primary modality used in the school and testing situation (Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997).

Another important cultural value is social interaction and the relationship to the group, which seems to generate a need for the Mexican-American community to be involved in collective or cooperative rather than individualized efforts. This value surfaces in classroom interaction, where children of Hispanic descent attempt to work together on assigned tasks. This type of behavior may result in teachers' complaining that students are copying from their partners, and are dishonest. However, Shade, Kelly, and Oberg (1997) stated that this attitude of

sharing and working together is an effort on the part of Mexican children to collectivize and maximize their learning experience. Moreover, this is consistent with their sociable value system. Mexican-American children prefer to work under some classroom authority rather than working alone; these styles differ significantly from the competitive, individualistic classrooms usually promoted in the United States (Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997).

Because each individual has a unique culturally based learning style, educational institutions should respect such cultural differences and try to implement a cultural democracy, where the "Right of each individual to be educated in his own learning style must be explicitly acknowledged" (Ramirez III, 1988, p. 200). This philosophy suggests that a person should keep a bicultural identity, maintaining identification with the ethnic group, while simultaneously adopting mainstream United States values and life styles. Furthermore, institutions are encouraged to adopt teaching style policies that are sensitive to the uniqueness each student brings into the classroom.

Learning Styles Information Applied to the  
English-as-a-Second-Language Classroom

Eliason (1995) expressed the importance of the "Alignment between student's learning style and

environmental" (p. 29). The researcher stated, "Students who can align themselves easily use their preferred learning styles but also adapt well to other learning styles" (p. 29). According to Eliason (1995), because students who have learning-style flexibility are higher achievers, teachers should not only align students' learning styles with the instructor's teaching styles, but also encourage students to develop their weaker areas.

Grasha (1984, as cited in Eliason 1995) emphasized the importance of "stretching" the learner, and the advantages of encouraging students to experience different ways of learning. For example, students who are comfortable working individually, who are introverted and field-independent, could be encouraged to participate into group activities after having discussed the positive aspects of working in groups. "Students need to be taken beyond their comfort zones" (Eliason, 1995, p. 29). Another example is to have field-independent learners move from memorizing grammar rules to reading a book for meaning without looking up vocabulary words. Field-dependent learners, on the other hand, can discipline themselves to study structure and rules. Moreover, visual learners can practice working with audiotapes. Furthermore, teachers can organize the same

learning task in a way that students can practice a wide range of different learning styles by rotating through different modules featuring visual, auditory, and kinesthetic preferences. Another way to tackle various learning-style differences includes providing concrete and abstract experiences, such by reading-for-facts versus reading for inferences; or by processing material step by step versus using a big-picture approach (Eliason, 1995).

It is necessary that teachers study students' culture to identify learning styles and better plan their teaching style so that it matches their students' learning preferences. However, teachers need to encourage learners to experience and to become comfortable with as many learning styles as possible to ensure that students will achieve academic success.

#### Mexican-American Culture and United States Schooling

The United States has faced a dramatic increase in linguistic and cultural diversity during recent decades. One in three children belongs to an ethnic or racial minority group. One in seven children speaks a language other than English at home, and this situation is expected to increase in the future (Lustig & Koester, 1999).

Educating Mexican-American children is a major concern across America, with evidence suggesting that this group has a history of poor school achievement. It is necessary to get a deeper insight on this issue in order to foster equal educational opportunities and promote school success among Mexican-American students.

#### An Overview of Mexican-American Values

There are many cultural values that characterize Mexican-Americans. One of the most important values is the primacy of the family. According to Catalano (1988), "The Mexican-American family traditionally includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, related either by blood or marriage" (p. 64). The family is the place where a child learns not only survival skills, but also how to live a meaningful life. Children grow up "Having their place and role in their collective families" (Villenas & Foley, 2002, p. 204). The family teaches a child how to be a well-educated human being, basing the teachings on respect, humility, hard work, and family loyalty. Knight, Bernal, Garza, and Cota (1993) referred to the definition of well educated as "Being raised in a cooperative and respectful way. Literally translated, *bien educado* means well educated, and refers not to a person's education but to their upbringing" (p. 228). Families'

efforts to socialize children according to certain values is reflected in a child being well educated. If children have internalized the families' value of being well educated, they can generalize their behaviors to other areas of interactions, such as their relationships at school.

As children learn to fit in their families, they learn to share responsibility for the economic sustenance of the family, to share with siblings, and to cooperate with the family toward the success of the whole. Loyalty to the family is very important among Mexican-Americans. Such characteristic refers to the value of familialism. Knight, Bernal, Garza, and Cota (1993) described familialism as a "Strong identification with and attachment to individuals within the nuclear and extended family" (p. 229). They believe and value more people's ability to create ties across generations rather than people's individual success and accomplishment.

Other cultural value is that of the "Collective responsibility toward the social network" (Villenas & Foley, 2002, p. 204). Family and community members play a significant role among Mexican-Americans. Catalano (1988) stated, "The family is the essential preserver of Mexican-American customs and culture" (p. 67). The family



and also the community members are in charge of transmitting cultural values to the next generations by telling stories and advice-giving narratives. These ways are the most common means by which parents teach their children morals and cultural values, providing them with the right tools to become a good person. Being a good person is a highly appreciated trait that is part of the Mexican culture. People will be considered successful if they share their word and thoughts, as well as material things with the people they love.

Another cultural value that is present among Mexicans is that parents believe in the importance of getting a good education and want their children to go to school. Moreno and Valencia (2002) found, "Mexican-Americans place great importance on their children's education" (p. 237), and that Mexican-American parents showed the same ideals of children's academic attainment as do whites. Trueba (1999) stated, "Immigrant families commit to educational excellence, because they believe that a good education in the United States will create future opportunities" (p. 137). Mexican-American parental involvement and concern for their children's education supports children's achievement and success in school.

## Factors that Influence Mexican-Americans' School Success

Research showed that there is a large number of Mexican-American students who do not do well in school and withdraw or drop out (Rumberger & Rodriguez, 2002). However, being poor or of Mexican or Hispanic background does not cause a person to drop out of school. Each case is different, and there is a wide range of factors to be considered in order to evaluate why some students decide to drop out, including personal or individual factors, as well as institutional.

Individual Factors. According to Rumberger and Rodriguez (2002), dropout incidence is associated with the result of a process of educational disengagement. The framework presented by the researchers reflects the relationship among three important aspects of educational achievement, including educational mobility, academic achievement, and educational attainment.

Rumberger and Rodriguez (2002) reported that student mobility is an important factor that influences students' dropout behavior. These researchers showed that there is a strong relation between dropout rates and students' changing schools and residencies. Rumberger and Larson (1998) reported in one study that the majority of high

school dropouts changed school at least once before withdrawing, whereas the majority of high school graduates did not.

Rumberger and Rodriguez (2002) stated that numerous studies have proven that poor academic achievement and attainment is a strong predictor of dropping out. The possibility of students dropping out is also related to students' engagement. Absenteeism, social and academic experiences of students are associated with this issue (Rumberger & Rodriguez, 2002). Dropping out is not simply a result of academic failure. There are also other demographic aspects that are connected with Mexican-American withdrawal from school, such as gender, race, and ethnicity, immigration status, and language proficiency. Ballesteros (1980) reported,

The trend has been to force these students to repeat grade levels and to postpone all serious academic work until they learn English. This approach commonly leaves Spanish-speaking students three to five years behind their Anglo counterparts. According to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission there is a strong relationship between grade level repetition and low student achievement. (p. 153)

Institutional Factors. Each student's attitude and behavior are influenced by the institutional settings in which schooling takes place, including families, schools, and communities. Families exert a powerful influence on students' withdrawal from school. Rodriguez and Larson (1998) found that family income and parental education are predictors of dropout rates. According to Rumberger and Rodriguez (2002), families influence the educational achievement of children by becoming more involved in their children's school life, such as increasing their participation in activities such as monitoring homework, and attending school and teacher conferences; by encouraging their children academically trying to foster children internal motivation to learn; and by providing social support while developing a balanced relationship between parents and children.

Like families, schools can make a difference in students' dropout behavior because children spend so much time at school. Poor schooling conditions and experiences, failure to engage students in academics and school activities, and exclusion of problematic or difficult students are some aspects that pose a risk for Mexican-American students.

According to Rumberger and Rodriguez (2002), there are four components among schools that affect students' performance and student dropout behavior, including student composition, school resources, structural characteristics, and school processes and practices.

School composition is related to student characteristics that influence student achievement at an individual level as well as at a social level. School resources are connected to pupil and teacher ratio. School structures deal with class size and conditions such as academic tracking. School processes and practices refer to rules concerning bad grades, misbehavior, poor attendance, suspension, expulsion, or transfers.

#### The Importance of Education and the Struggle for Equal Educational Opportunity

Mexican Americans have struggled throughout history to gain access to equal educational opportunity. According to Moreno and Valencia (2002), Mexican Americans have tried to obtain a better education by means of five historical processes: litigation, advocacy organization, individual activists, political demonstrations, and legislation.

Litigation has taken place since the 1930s. In their efforts to improve the education for their future

generations, Mexican Americans have brought to court cases involving segregation, special education, school closures, undocumented children, and high-stake testing issues. Litigation has shown that Mexican Americans value education (Moreno & Valencia, 2002).

Several advocacy organizations, founded by parents, lawyers, and youths, have promoted educational opportunity. Mexican-American activists have pursued educational equality. Some activists involved in the process of achieving equal education are university professors, lawyers, students, parents, community organizers and teachers. Catalano (1988) stated that "Ernesto Galarza, 1905, is one of the many Mexican-American scholars who made significant contributions to American education. He has been dedicated to the promotion of bilingual and progressive education" (p. 76). Political demonstrations such as public confrontations have shown Mexican Americans' interest and value on promoting better education for their children.

According to Moreno and Valencia (2002), legislation, such as the long struggle for bilingual education, and the increase in enrollment of minority students proves that Mexican Americans are willing to struggle for equal opportunity. Among the people who have fought to attain

this goal is Mexican-American educator Lupe Anguiano, who being a nun, a teacher, and a social activist, organized the Mexican-American division and development of the Bilingual Education Act (Catalano, 1988). Striving for an equal education shows how important and valuable it is for Mexican Americans to have the same educational resources as everybody else.

#### Mexican-Americans' School Success

Parental involvement plays a key role in promoting school success. According to Moreno and Valencia (2002), the degree a parent can be involved in their children schooling has to do with different factors at the personal, contextual, and sociocultural levels.

Factors at the personal level are related to the individual's values, and beliefs, which can influence parent's behavior and therefore, and children's development. As these researchers reported, Mexican Americans value education as much as whites do. In addition to values and beliefs, parents' educational aspirations, role definition, and school-related knowledge have shown some effects on parental involvement. For example, some parents who have not progressed in their own schooling may feel that they do not have the skills to help their children with school homework.

Regarding the contextual level, Moreno and Valencia (2002) suggested that the school and the neighborhood could affect the nature and the ability of a parent to be involved in their children's education. The creation of a school-favorable climate has had a great impact on parental involvement, including the teachers' encouragement of parents to participate in school life (Moreno & Valencia, 2002). These researchers suggested that if teachers believe in their ability to change students' behavior, that attitude could foster student achievement, school change, and parental involvement. Teachers can create opportunities to generate parental involvement, including activities such as parent-teacher conferences, volunteering tasks, and home tutoring (Moreno & Valencia, 2002).

Sociocultural factors can facilitate and foster parents' level of participation in their children education. Such factors include characteristics as family income, parental education, race, ethnicity, and level of acculturation.

According to Pearl (2002), another factor in promoting Mexican-American school success is the creation of an optimum environment for learning. There are some characteristics that are essential to an adequate learning



environment, such as encouragement to take risks, relief from unnecessary pain, meaningful activities, sense of competence, belonging, usefulness, hope, excitement, creativity, ownership, and equality.

Pearl (2002) also said that creating a risk-free environment assures students' willingness to take risks in order to learn. Promoting a safe environment allows students to feel at ease and to learn in a more relaxed manner. Fostering an environment that eliminates any unnecessary pain caused by teachers, administrators, and students helps to create a more comfortable place for every one. Feeling comfortable encourages positive relationships and learning. Developing and promoting a sense of belonging, membership, and affiliation between the students and the school makes teaching and learning a more fruitful experience.

Students should feel that by going to school they are exposed to useful experiences and learning that can help them encounter future situations. Learning and school are two useful resources that can help them face problems on a day-to-day basis as well as in the future. Teachers should foster optimism and hopefulness in their students to encourage them to solve problems. Teachers should make

sure that their students are not feeling overwhelmed by their problems (Pearl, 2002).

Excitement is a very important factor to achieve an adequate learning environment. Experiencing a feeling of discovery promotes students' participation, integration, and involvement. All students should be encouraged to be constructively creative, and to use their creativity for community building. Being inventive makes learning more fun and exciting.

Fostering ownership allows students to feel proud of their intellectual product. They feel more motivated and eager to accomplish their assignments (Pearl, 2002).

Promoting equality is one of the most important issues; however, it is very difficult to achieve in a society. The United States prides itself on equality. Pearl (2002) described equality as equal encouragement to an optimum learning environment. The researcher also referred to equality "As a symbol and as an organizing vehicle to combat inequality" (p. 361). Any teacher can promote equality in the classroom by making sure that every student is given the same opportunities to learn in an adequate and safe environment, and enjoys the same benefits of such environment.

In summary, Mexican-American school failure and success are related to several social issues. Failure is linked to flawed policy and inequitable educational practice, as well as the lack of access to power. School success is related to democratic education that has as its ultimate goal to empower every student.

Parental involvement, teachers' participation, and the power of school administrators can create the same educational opportunity for all children, no matter what ethnicity or race they are. Each child should have the same right to equal and adequate type of education that will foster his or her school achievement and success in life.

#### The Socioliterate Approach to Writing

Throughout their experiences in the United States, language-minority students, who sometimes feel caught between different worlds, need instructors that can help them accommodate to a new language and culture and meet new, foreign literacy demands with strategies for success. It is the responsibility of ESL composition instructors to provide students the tools to acquire an enhanced literacy-strategy repertoire. Implementing a socioliterate approach (SA) in teaching writing will help ESL students

become more self-confident and able to successfully negotiate a variety of literacy tasks.

### Defining Socioliterate Approaches

Johns (1999) stated that the most common trends in composition classes are expressivist and personal-identity approaches. In such approaches the focus is on developing individual voice and identity, personal interests, and personal meaning-making, generally through a limited number of pedagogical and literacy genres. Some students find these approaches pleasant and rewarding because much of what they write is considered successful and interesting by composition teachers. However, students' pleasure and success can present problems later. Leki (1995) said that if students feel that their writing is considered to be successful too easily; they will eventually lose interest and will not find the future writing experiences challenging.

Johns (1999) proposed that it is not good for students to experience only personal identity and expressivist approaches. Students need to be exposed to a socioliterate approach that will allow them to examine the unfamiliar social and rhetorical contexts in which they will be attempting to succeed while working within their second language and culture. Johns (1999) stated, "A

socioliterate approach is based on the contention that texts are social; important written and spoken discourses are situated within specific contexts and produced and read by individuals whose values reflect those of the communities to which they belong" (p. 160). The principal focus of a socioliterate approach is on understanding how individuals are shaped by the social nature of language and texts. The purposes of such approach are to bring this understanding to the forefront and to encourage student flexibility and creativity in negotiating and processing texts in new social settings.

According to Van Duzer and Florez (1999), this approach encourages learners to expand their critical and analytical skills and attitudes used in the process of understanding and interpreting texts. The researchers also stated that by developing critical skills, students can go beyond the surface meaning of a text by questioning who, what, why, and how a text is created and then interpreting the meaning that lies behind the texts. Moreover, learners can start recognizing that language is not neutral, and analyzing different language and power interactions that exist in a specific text. Students can also identify the intended purpose of a text, such as to persuade, justify, entertain, inform, and argue, among others. By developing

and broadening such critical skills, students can apply them not only while reading but also when writing their own texts.

A good reader makes use of background knowledge to evaluate what is being read. Adult English-language learners can benefit from instruction that helps look critically at texts, by discovering cultural knowledge, social attitudes, or views of a particular segment of society that are hidden in texts. Students are encouraged to find, explore, reflect, and question the social, political, cultural, and ideological aspects of what they read, hear, or write (Van Duzer & Florez, 1999). Hyland (2000) stated,

Discourse is not uniform and monolithic, differentiated merely by specialized topics and vocabularies. It is an outcome of a multitude of practices and strategies, where what counts as convincing argument and appropriate tone is carefully managed for a particular audience. These differences are a product then of institutional and interactional forces, the result of diverse social practices of writers within their fields. (p. 3)

In a socioliterate-approach classroom, the teacher becomes a leader and an informant, as builders of schema due to his or her expertise in teaching (Reid, 1989). The teacher helps the students to set learning goals, develops and implements a variety of assignments that encourage an understanding of the social construction of texts, and promotes text analysis and peer review in light of the social forces that surround the particular discourses at issue (Johns, 1999). Students are encouraged to read and write texts in a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar genres. This is done because "Second language learners must be able to construct meaning from these kinds of materials if they are to achieve academically in American classrooms" (Hudelson, 1991, p. 109). Analyzing different kinds of genres that highlight a social contextual framework can help students focus on language and can encourage them to become more independent and analytical readers (Burns, 2001).

According to Paltridge (1997), the concept of genre is linked to a particular communicative event. It incorporates particular notions and situations that may derive from previous experiences with other similar events. These concepts and situations encompass a common set of interactional and conceptual characteristics. Some

of the interactional characteristics of a genre include specific author and audiences of the text, a particular channel of communication, and a certain level of abstraction for particular topics.

Paltridge (1997) said, "The communicative event occurs in a particular social and cultural setting and has a particular communicative function" (p. 106). To achieve communicative competence during a communicative event, students need to use appropriate language in their writing; this includes audience awareness, which involves different types of prose such as writer-based prose wherein writers are mainly addressing themselves, and reader-based prose, wherein writers have altered their texts to fulfill and adapt to readers' expectations (Mangelsdorf, 1989).

Besides the interactional characteristics, there are conceptual or cognitive aspects, including certain roles, patterns of textual organization and shared understandings of the text. Moreover, there are lexical items associated with a particular genre. The nature and condition of genres may change through time. Social and cultural contexts in which they occur shape such changes and evolution (Paltridge, 1997). Swales (1990) described a communicative event as "Consisting of not only the



discourse itself and its participants, but also of that discourse role and the environment of its production and reception, including its historical and cultural associations" (p. 46).

A variety of different genres are brought to class by students who are encouraged to bring texts from their first languages and cultures and are asked to discuss the nature and purpose of such texts according to the social environment where they have been produced. After analyzing texts, students come to know what are the purposes of the texts, whether to inform, persuade, criticize, invite, make a claim, or a complaint. Students study the uses of language, the layout, the visual presentation, and organization of the texts, and see how the texts meet the writer's purposes (Johns, 1999).

Instructors can also bring other materials that highlight the importance of social factors in the construction of texts. Analysis of roles, languages, uses, and purposes and contexts for writing, as well as format and text organization employed by both reader and writer in attempting to achieve their ends, are some aspects that will help students to expand their genre repertoire and enhance their future writing experiences.

The purposes of a socioliterate approach are for students

...to approach all texts as socially constructed, to free themselves of their sometimes limited theories of pedagogical and other genres, to analyze and value the genres from their first cultures, and to reflect on their experiences with text processing. (Johns, 1999, p. 162)

These goals can be described in detail as follows.

#### To Approach all Texts as Socially Constructed

Barton and Hamilton (2000) stated that literacy is a social practice. The researchers referred to the notion of literacy practices as a powerful way of describing the connection between activities of reading and writing and the social structures in which they are embedded and which they help shape. Within the frame proposed by the researchers, literacy is best understood as a set of social practices that can be inferred from events, which are in turn mediated by written texts. According to Barton and Hamilton (2000), "Texts are a crucial part of literacy events, and the study of literacy is partly a study of texts and how they are produced and used" (p. 9).

### To Expand Students' Pedagogical and Genre Theories

Learners need to be exposed to more than one text from a genre to realize that texts that fall within the same genre tend to differ in various ways, because the situations in which the texts are produced are considerably different. Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) expanded this idea by making a distinction between two forces, a centripetal force that contributes to text conventions within a genre that are carried across situations; and a centrifugal force that causes changes in content, reader and writer roles, use of language, and other features. Johns (1999) exemplified these influences by introducing a pedagogical genre called summary. The researcher cited that different types of summary can be found across different disciplines, depending on the particular rhetorical situation in which the literacy event takes place. A summary can be short, including just main ideas from a text; or one main idea and a personal critique.

### To Analyze and Value Genres from Students' First Cultures

According to Johns (1999), teachers should draw from students' knowledge of genres and encourage students to apply that knowledge to analyze and critique known and new

texts. Language learners are themselves valuable resources in teaching and learning. Students' knowledge about socially constructed discourse, and students' discussion of familiar texts from their languages and cultures facilitate the understanding of conflicts and convergences among some first-culture texts, as well as majority-academic-culture texts.

#### To Reflect on Experiences with Text Processing

Students need to assess, expand on, and revise strategies for approaching literacy tasks. Johns (1999) stated, "Individual processing of texts is complex and strategies may differ from task to task" (p. 164).

Instructors can emphasize to the students that there is no single writing process; instead, there are a wide range of processes depending on the importance of the text to the writer, the purposes, the roles, the audience, the task, the topic, and the context. To reinforce this range, instructors can expose students to a variety of tasks.

#### Socioliterate Tasks

If instructors provide students with different assignments that vary in terms of task complexity and constraints, contexts, roles, purposes, and genres, they will have an opportunity to expand and reflect on the

strategies used, and find out which strategy works when approaching different types of literacy tasks.

Learners should be encouraged to develop abilities to research texts, tasks, roles and contexts to become successful in attempting to read and write texts. Teachers can implement and discuss with students a myriad of reading and writing strategies. Students should be allowed to ask questions on how to approach an assignment. They can share their experiences with peers or faculty members. By thinking and analyzing their own ways of approaching the texts, students should be able to identify the strategies being used, to broaden their learning practice, and to become successful readers and writers (Johns, 1999).

Moreover, instructors can teach students the grammar and lexicon needed to cultivate a metalanguage that will help them discuss texts and their textual experiences. Learners will be able to talk about the language used in their texts. They can develop a metalanguage by using handbooks or creating with the class their own terms to refer to language, structure, and social purposes of texts.

## Implementing the Socioliterate Approach in the Classroom

In a SA classroom, students and teacher work as a team. They decide together to study the social construction of texts and the ways in which individuals might process or evaluate them. Some important aspects that need to be emphasized are the audience to which a writer is writing, the constraints of the contexts in which the writing is taking place, and the possible topics that are of the writer's interest. Moreover, it is necessary to discuss and study different ways of approaching the writing task; including, for example, how to make an argument, to discuss an issue, to implement strategies, as well as to take into account other factors influencing success, such as identifying audience, topic, and purpose (Mangeldsdorf, 1989).

Another important aspect is to make the writing experience as meaningful and authentic as possible. An authentic writing task is one in which the learners can experience assuming different roles and purposes. In a SA classroom, the teacher and students together learn to understand task requirements of different types of assignments, and how to construct a written response (Johns, 1999).

In conclusion, it is important to keep in mind that students' cultural backgrounds affect their writing styles. Both teacher and students working together can help the teacher identify ways in which students see the world and how that affects the way they express themselves (Fox, 1994).

### The Social Construction of Knowledge

Learning takes place beginning the moment a person is born. An individual is born into a social world, and learning occurs through interaction with other people. By interacting with others, people begin to make their own sense of the world. Individuals learn a language through interacting meaningfully with other people. The knowledge is acquired by each individual, rather than transmitted from one person to another. Such constructions always occur within specific contexts, mainly as a result of social interactions. Social constructionism is linked with Vygotskian theory (Wink & Putney, 2002).

According to Wells (2000), social-constructionist theory has a great influence on education because it helps educators characterize the relationship between human development and the social and material environment that influences how individuals learn. Vygotsky emphasized that

construction of knowledge is a dynamic process wherein those with more knowledge, known as mediators, influence and are influenced by those with less knowledge; this occurs in teacher-learner, student-student, and peer interactions. This is often achieved by responding to the various attempts a learner makes to accomplish a variety of assigned tasks. Furthermore, the environment in which the event takes place influences the outcomes of the learning experience (Williams & Burden, 1997). According to Wells (2000), Vygotsky's theoretical framework is based on historical and cultural perspectives that are explained as follows.

#### Historical and Cultural Perspectives

Ardichvilli (2001) stated, "Vygotsky referred to his theory as cultural historical, stressing that the factors determining the individuals' life activity were produced by the historical development of culture" (p. 35).

According to Wells (2000), the environment wherein individuals interact is constantly changing and "The history of an individual's development could therefore not be understood without also considering the history of the social group or groups of which the individual is becoming a member, and of the actual unfolding over time of the



particular social events in which he or she successively takes part" (p. 53).

Human development cannot be understood in isolation; it can be understood in relation to historical change on a number of other levels, including those particular events in which an individual is directly involved; changes in institutions like schools and workplaces; and changes in the wider culture in which such institutions are embedded (Wells, 2000).

Two types of inheritance affect human development: biological and cultural. Biological inheritance refers to the genetic aspects that are passed on to generation after generation and that represents unique aspects of each individual. The cultural inheritance is the environment, which has been influenced by the activities of previous generations. In such an environment, people are surrounded by artifacts that carry the past into the present. By mastering the use of these artifacts and the practices in which they are employed, individuals can assimilate the experiences of humankind.

The assimilation of cultural history comes from the interaction among people (Wells, 2000). Interactions between people and the society of which they are members generate a continuous growth for both the individual and

the society. A society is maintained and developed by the individuals who participate and contribute to its activity systems at a particular time. Furthermore, the formation of human beings occurs through their participation in such activity systems, as those involving family, school, work, and leisure (Wells, 2000).

In each activity system, a person interacts with others. By interacting, an individual adopts and develops specific values, knowledge, and skills (Lave & Wenger, 1999) that later are carried on to new situations; new knowledge is built upon these interactions. These activities shape not only culture and history but also the development of human species itself. These activities are potential sites of change and renewal for human development (Wells, 2000). Every situation poses challenges that require the participants to construct solutions. According to Williams and Burden (1997), it is through language that people interact and negotiate learning.

In conclusion, culture as well history influence the development of each individual. In addition, the interactions of individuals generate culture and history that is passed to future generations. The means of communication in these interactions is language, a tool

that allows people to negotiate meaning and create knowledge.

### Thought and Language

Vygotsky studied the relationship between thinking and speech, rather than viewing them as distinct functions. This idea underpins the notion of teachers' and students' interactively shaping their worlds, and each other's worlds, through their active speech. Ardichvilli (2001) stated that, in opposition to behaviorism that supports the idea that inner speech is merely a silent speech, Vygotsky supports the idea that the mind evolves to reflect social reality.

According to Vygotsky, the process of trying to communicate with others results in the development of word meanings that then form the structure of consciousness. Inner speech cannot exist without social interaction. In a gradual developmental process, symbols first used in communication are turned inward to regulate behavior in the interests of social cooperation (Ardichvilli, 2001).

Wink and Putney (2002) described Vygotsky's point of view: children are social beings from the beginning, and their inner speech is an attempt to verbally figure out an answer to a problem; this factor led him to start studying the relationship between thinking and speech. Vygotsky

constructed this relationship with the concept of verbal thought (Vygotsky, 1986). The notion of verbal thought is made visible with a Venn diagram, in which one circle represents thought, another represents speech, and the overlapping portion represents verbal thought. To explain the meaning of verbal thought, Vygotsky (1986) took the most elementary form of the unity of thought and speech, word meaning. Verbal thought is achieved when there is reciprocity between speech and thought, when things make sense. Vygotsky (1986) said, "Thought undergoes many changes as it turns into speech. It does not merely find expression in speech; it finds its reality and form" (p. 219).

Moreover, according to Wink and Putney (2002), Vygotsky said that language informed thought, and that language and thought were influenced by people's sociocultural experiences. The entire process is dynamic and is situated in the interactions and connections with the sociocultural context. As students learn how to use new language, the process influences their thinking, and vice versa. It is through the combination of thinking, speaking, and experience that students construct knowledge (Wink & Putney, 2002).

## Mediation and the Zone of Proximal Development

Learning occurs through mediated social interactions. One of the main aspects of Vygotsky's social constructionism theory lies on the concept of mediation, but first it is necessary to establish the relationship between thought, language, and cognitive development.

"Mediated action involves a relationship between an agent and a mediational means or cultural tool" (Light & Littleton, 1999, p. 11). The notion of cultural tool extends to symbolic tools existing within a culture. Language itself can be considered as a cultural tool. Cultural tools become part of how people construe the world, how they approach new problems, and even how they relate to one another.

The concept of mediation refers to the use of tools, which are used to help solve a problem or achieve a goal.

Wells (2000) said that through the process of interaction, students become active participants in their learning through the use of language. Learning takes place in the context of purposeful activity as the learner and teacher work together to create a product that has its own intrinsic value. The purposeful activity constitutes a social process, with participants bringing to the process their own lived experiences from their own sociocultural

contexts. Furthermore, according to Kozulin (1990), language is one of the most important tools that can help learners move into and through their zone of proximal development (ZPD).

The ZPD has to do with the difference between what a learner can do with assistance and she or he can later do alone. Vygotsky views the learner as a "Social and cultural being who learns through interaction with others as they socially construct meanings through the use of the mediational tool of language" (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 31). Collaborating with one another, learners construct knowledge. In the ZPD, effective learning lies on the nature of the social interaction between two or more people with different levels of skills and knowledge. The one more knowledgeable, the mediator, i.e. a teacher or peer, needs to find ways to help the other to learn. "This involves helping learners to move into and through the next layer of knowledge or understanding" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 40). The upper edge of the ZPD represents the layer of skill or knowledge that is just beyond that with what the student is currently capable of coping. By working with a peer or someone who has different skills and knowledge, a learner can move into this next layer. Vygotsky (1978) defined the ZPD as "The distance between

the actual developmental level as determined by individual problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). "The performance of individuals cooperating with more knowledgeable others is characteristic of their future development: it reveals the results of tomorrow" (Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991, p. 338).

If peers can assist performance, learning will take place. The most common form of guidance that supports learners in the progress through the ZPD is that of deliberate mediation (Diaz & Flores, 2001). Others call it scaffolding (Diaz-Rico, 2004). A student can be supported in mastering a task or achieving understanding through encouragement, demonstrations, suggestions, and reminders. Scaffolding provides the framework to allow the learner to learn (Garton & Pratt, 1998). Scaffolding is a process in which students, who are given support until they master a task, can apply new strategies independently (Larkin, 2002).

According to Diaz-Rico (2004), during scaffolding, the peer helps the student to pay attention to relevant parts of the task by answering questions that determine the ZPD. By answering these questions, learners are

encouraged to think and talk about knowledge, and effective learning takes place.

Vygotsky's theory of social construction of knowledge deals with the idea that

After a student receives instructional support from someone, who happens to be more capable in that particular context, the learner will internalize the new idea and will be more able to perform independently in the next similar problem-solving situation. (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 86)

Furthermore, interpersonal-intrapersonal communication plays a significant role in social construction of knowledge. Development starts as an interpersonal process of meaning making, and then becomes an individualized process of making sense. When students have the possibility to discuss and meaningfully interact with others, the whole process moves from inter- to intrapersonal communication. Prompts, questions, and explanations exist in the realm of interpersonal communication. Participants are interacting in the ZPD and are doing what they can do with the assistance of others. Once they are able to solve the problem by themselves, words, ideas and concepts have been internalized (Lipman,



1996). At this point, internalization has occurred, and learners are able to talk to themselves about what they know; they are now able to "Write about their new ideas, and converse with others about these concepts that have been actively internalized" (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 91).

In summary, mediation helps learners achieve learning goals. Mediation takes place during interactions and learners construct knowledge in collaborating with others. During these interactions, learners use language to create knowledge. Working with a peer or a more knowledgeable other helps the students reach their potential and pass the zone of proximal development.

#### Social Construction of Knowledge: Teachers, Learners and the Classroom

Vygotsky's social, cultural, and historical perspective highlights the concept that learning is first accomplished through the language that flows between individuals. "Language and action for Vygotsky are tools of mediation of learning" (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 28). Speaking shapes thinking, and language comes to individuals as a cultural heritage through interactions with others. Students use language, and language changes thinking, and thinking and actions change language. Moreover, from a Vygotskian perspective, teachers and

bully and is always tense and ready to fight. The Godfather on the other hand is shown as dominant by his relaxed confidence in his ability to overcome adversity. During the wedding scene, Sonny sees a black sedan pull up outside the compound and some guys get out and start taking down license plate numbers on the cars of the wedding guests. He says to his dad the Don, "Those guys over there must be cops," (17). The Don shrugs saying, "I do not own the street. They can do what they please." But that is not good enough for the tough guy Sonny. "Those lousy bastards, they do not respect anything," (17). Sonny goes to chase them away or kick some ass or both if he has his way. The Don is not concerned. He knows who the outsiders are and knows they are of no consequence to him or his guests.

Another of Puzo's characters is Virgil "the Turk" Sollozzo, who meets Mehrabian's hypothesis of a relaxed posture suggesting a more dominant personality. Puzo describes Sollozzo: "He also had an impressive dignity"(69). This is a relaxed confidence in his deportment. He, like the Godfather, Michael Corleone and other Dons in the novel, knows he does not have to prove his abilities. Confidence is where this relaxed posture comes from. A person with power can afford to relax, whereas the weak must always be acutely vigilant. This comes from ancient times where life or death depended on how our ancestors offered respect to the powerful.

In some cultures the submissiveness of a person may be indicated by speaking softly, bowing and keeping hands close to the body. Submissive people will be quieter, shy, agreeable and more often than not will avoid confrontation. This is implied by

Table 4. Social Constructionist Theory

<u>Component</u>	<u>Description</u>
Knowledge	Changing body of knowledge, mutually constructed with others
Learning what	Collaborative construction of socially, culturally defined knowledge and values
How	Through socially and culturally constructed opportunities, tied to students' experiences
Where	In collaboration with others through the social and cultural setting
Teaching	Co-construct knowledge with students by sharing expertise and understanding (actuator of learning)
Motivation	Collective and individual development through collaboration
Role of teacher	Mediator, mentor, actuator
Teacher's actions	Construct with students opportunities for interacting with meaningful ideas, materials, etc.
Role of peers	Assume part of knowledge construction, contribute to definition of knowledge, help define opportunities for learning
Role of student	Active construction with others and self-negotiation of meaning
	Co-generate, co-construct, re-formulate
	Active thinker, explainer, interpreter, inquirer, active social participator
Evidence of learning	Process of inquiry, socially competent participation, ongoing assessment

Source: Wink & Putney, 2002, pp. 33-34

experiences. The first three features are related to all learning tasks, whereas the last nine can be applied according to the learning task and situation. The first

three characteristics are significance, purpose beyond the here-and-now, and shared intention. Significance deals with the teacher's making sure that students understand the importance of the learning task, so that learners can see the value of it to them personally, and in a wider cultural context. Purpose beyond the here-and-now is related to the relevance of the learning experience; the learners must be aware of how important the task is beyond the immediate time and place. Shared intention deals with the way the teacher presents the task, provides instructions in a clear fashion, and makes sure that each student understands the learning task (Williams & Burden, 1997).

The other nine features have to do with the teacher's ability to foster students' sense of competence, control of their own behavior, goal-setting, challenge, awareness of change, belief in positive outcomes, sharing, individuality, and sense of belonging. It is the teacher's responsibility to generate students' self-confidence and feelings of being capable of doing any particular task that they are asked to face, to promote students' ability to control and regulate own learning, to set realistic goals and to plan how to achieve them, to foster an internal need to respond to challenges, to promote

learners' understanding that change is constant, and to encourage students' development of positive feelings, willingness to cooperate, and sense of belonging to a community and a culture (Williams & Burden, 1997).

Social construction of knowledge generates learning that is exploratory and collaborative. Central to this theory is the concept of mediated activities, which involves the following implications: the classroom is seen as a collaborative community, activities are situated and unique, curriculum is a means not an end, outcomes and the process to reach to such outcome are equally important, and activities must allow diversity and originality (Putney, Green, Dixon, Duran, & Yeager, 2000).

In summary, the social construction of knowledge concept encompasses a theory that combines human development with the social and material environment where acquisition of knowledge takes. Knowledge is constructed socially as individuals interact with one another using language to create new knowledge. Learners carry on these interactions within the zone of proximal development where they can reach their potential with the mediation of a more knowledgeable other.

In conclusion, the concepts covered in this chapter are relevant to the model that is developed in Chapter

Three. These key concepts cover five important aspects that are interrelated and form the basis for the design of the unit. Each concept has a unique value and contribution to the model. The first component, intercultural communication, refers to the need of becoming aware of cultural differences to avoid miscommunication problems. The second key concept, learning styles, explains the importance of understanding the culturally unique learning styles that represent a critical variable in educating students who belong to different cultures. The third concept, Mexican-American culture, is introduced to set the tone of the project and describes this group's situation in today's American schooling and society. The fourth key concept, the socioliterate approach to writing, describes how texts are socially constructed and how that affects learning and students. This approach comprises the methodological level of the unit of instruction. The fifth key concept, the social construction of knowledge, explains how learning takes place as a result of interaction and mediated instruction. All the key concepts introduced in the review of the literature comprise the basis for the design of the instructional unit.

Finally, from the key concepts reviewed in this chapter, intercultural communication, learning styles,

Mexican-American cultural values and schooling, the socioliterate approach, and the social construction of knowledge, a theoretical framework can be drawn. The purpose of this model is to develop learners' proficiency in oracy and literacy, and to improve their intercultural communicative competence so that they can successfully accomplish their personal and professional goals in today's global world. The model is introduced and explained in great detail in Chapter Three.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### Key Concepts that Influence Adult English Learners' Oral and Written Language

The topics presented in the review of the literature can be combined to form an interrelated framework that applies to pedagogy for developing oral and written language skills. When considering the contents of Chapter Two, a theoretical model can be synthesized from the concepts that were reviewed: intercultural communication, learning styles, Mexican-American values and schooling, the socioliterate approach to writing, and the social construction of knowledge. A graphic representation of the proposed theoretical framework is provided in Appendix A.

A curriculum design will be presented in Chapter Four that is consonant with social-construction theory and informs the pedagogical framework introduced in this chapter. The interrelatedness of intercultural communication, learning styles, Mexican-American cultural values, the socioliterate approach to writing, and the social construction of knowledge creates the basis for the instructional unit.

Intercultural communication, learning styles and Mexican-American cultural values, although different



aspects of the framework, according to the review of the literature are interrelated and exert influence on one another. People's cultural values have an impact on how they approach learning, and each learning style, in turn, reflects people's cultural values and beliefs. The main reason for having chosen to describe Mexican-American values is that this group represents one of the largest minority groups in the United States.

How people from different cultures approach learning influences the way they approach the total learning experience; therefore it is important for the teacher to be aware of students' cultural backgrounds in order to plan instruction to meet students' needs. By analyzing cultural values, the teacher can facilitate a better learning environment in which each student will feel comfortable enough to succeed in learning. Cultural values, customs, and beliefs affect and are reflected in an individual's behavior. For example, Mexican-Americans' strong sense of other-directness conflicts with the United States mainstream-culture's emphasis on individualism. The Hispanic culture's emphasis on cooperation in the attainment of goals can result in Hispanic students' discomfort with the conventional classroom competition of mainstream America.

Based on the research examined in Chapter Two, teachers can expect larger numbers of Mexican-American students to prefer peer-oriented learning situations, kinesthetic instructional resources, variety as opposed to routines, late-morning and afternoon peak energy levels, and a field-sensitive styles. Instructors should be aware of cultural group characteristics, but responsive teaching should emphasize the learning-style strengths of each individual and try to match instructional practices to individual preferences, including emotional, physiological, psychological, and environmental styles (Griggs & Dunn, 1996).

Cultural differences and students' approaches to learning can improve the way in which students communicate interculturally. Students from all over the world come to the United States to pursue a career, and need to learn how to communicate with people from different cultures as well as with Americans. They need to adapt to the American culture, and to other classmates' cultures, in order to effectively communicate and relate with each other. By learning others' cultural values, students become culturally sensitive and able to build intercultural rapport.

Improving intercultural communication will create successful learning opportunities both in the classroom and throughout students' professional careers. The teacher can make students aware of these cultural differences, so that they can successfully cope with different social encounters. By expanding their intercultural competence, students will prevent misunderstandings and will improve their communication skills with faculty members, as well as with students from different backgrounds.

Therefore, both learning styles and Mexican-American values can influence and improve intercultural communication. Improving intercultural communication can consequently affect academic success. Academic success is seen from a socioliterate perspective and it is affected by how students learn to analyze texts from a social perspective. By learning about the context, the historical and cultural background of the author, and the purpose of the text, students can start developing their own writing skills appropriately, and can learn to effectively communicate their intentions and reach their audience.

By introducing a socioliterate approach in language teaching, the teacher can generate learning experiences that foster students' academic competence. Learners will become familiar with different social and cultural aspects

that can affect their language performance, especially to fulfill academic purposes.

Becoming aware of cultural differences can affect the way teachers and students approach the learning experience. Learning styles that learners apply to the learning task can improve their intercultural-communication skills. This can be reflected in their writing skills to fulfill academic purposes. Because learning is socially constructed, students are encouraged to participate in learning experiences where they can learn from each other. By interacting with each other, and mediating a learning task, students can gain learning strategies that they will apply to new situations, thus improving their language competence.

The social construction of knowledge characterizes the domain in which learning takes place. When a student works with another student, he or she learns not only about the content of the task involved, but also how to use language to negotiate. Language represents the medium that allows learners to generate knowledge. Language passes on the cultural and historical background from one individual to another, developing cultural awareness as well as knowledge.

## A Model for Developing Adult English Learners' Oral and Written Language as Well as Intercultural Competence

The key concepts presented in Chapter Two are combined to form a theoretical model that will improve oral and written language proficiency and intercultural communication competence. The model in Appendix A is explained as follows.

### Psychology of Learning: The Social Construction of Knowledge

The whole theoretical paradigm is informed by the psychology theory of learning, the social construction of knowledge. Knowledge is socially constructed by individuals. Learning takes place within the zone of proximal development in which students interact, mediate with each other, and communicate through language. Language acts as a means of learners' sharing with each other their cultural and historical heritage. A person's cultural and historical background affects that person's way of learning, relating, and communicating with others.

### Methodological Level: The Socioliterate Approach to Writing

The methodological principle of this model is the socioliterate approach to writing. Students are encouraged to write texts to develop their own identity and their own voice. In addition, it is necessary to encourage students

to explore different genres so that they can learn that texts are social, and communicate and reflect the values of those individuals who produce and read or hear the messages.

The principal focus of the socioliterate approach is on understanding how the social nature of language and texts influence and transform individuals. The main objective of this approach is to develop students' flexibility and creativity in negotiating and processing texts in different social settings. Helping students to improve their critical and analytical skills when interpreting and creating texts can make them aware of certain aspects that lay behind the text, including different language and power interactions as well the purpose and audience of a text. Moreover, becoming aware of such aspects and of what they bring into the situation can help students make the most of the learning experience.

#### Self-Awareness: Learning Styles and Cultural Values

The key concepts, Mexican-American cultural values and learning styles are two important aspects of the whole theoretical framework. Both components refer to what the students bring to the learning experience. It is the

teacher's responsibility to help them become aware of their cultural capital and to help them respect one other's backgrounds. Becoming aware of cultural differences can allow teachers and learners to realize how culture influences the way students learn.

Learning styles are unique to each individual. Learning styles vary according to age, culture, and task. Learning styles reflect the way students prefer learning. Teachers need to make sure that all learning styles are met and that all students are participating using their strongest and weaker learning styles. The more flexible a student becomes when choosing a learning style to perform a certain activity, the more that student will learn.

#### The Process of Instruction

Students' writing and intercultural communication are increased and expanded by the teacher's implementation of the socioliterate approach through the social construction of knowledge. By analyzing how texts are socially constructed using mediated instruction, the students expand not only their written and oral communication skills but also their intercultural competence.

Through mediated instruction, students negotiate meaning and talk using language to analyze and interpret language. Students are developing intercultural competence

because they are interacting with students that have had unique life experiences, and those experiences are reflected in how they learn, how they communicate with each other, and how they process new material. These interactions help students improve knowledge about a certain content area as well as oral and written skills, because learners are using language to talk as well as to write, analyze, and interpret different types of text. Through these interactions carried out by mediated instruction, learners can help each other develop critical and analytical skills applied to communicating a message. Students can interpret how messages reflect social values, and how they can implement that in their own ways of writing and speaking.

#### Outcomes: Oral and Written Proficiency

Through the social construction of knowledge (the psychology of learning) and the socioliterate approach (the teaching methodology), the teacher facilitates instruction that helps students become aware of their cultural values and learning styles; in addition, students develop their writing and oral proficiency and their intercultural communication.

Negotiating, interacting, and learning from each other through mediated instruction, students develop and



expand their oral skills. Language is improved because language is used throughout the whole learning process. By interacting with each other, learners come to realize the nature and purposes of texts, and how they reflect power in society. Students work with each other, discussing and trying to carry on tasks using language as a means of communication, expanding their oracy.

After reaching an agreement, students need to create a final product, a piece of writing, including but not limited to a reflection, a summary, or a report. Writing down their thoughts helps students develop their written skills, because they are asked to think through the process of writing.

#### Outcome: Intercultural Communication Competence

Oral and writing skills are expanded by becoming aware of cultural differences. Culture shapes people, and it is reflected in the way they communicate. When students become aware of such cultural values, they learn to deal with different social encounters more effectively, because they know how to cope with different cultural and historical backgrounds.

While interacting with each other, students are learning from one another. Learners are sharing their

heritage, and are improving their intercultural communication competence.

In summary, intercultural communication competence helps students become more proficient in speaking and writing because learners need to be aware of cultural differences to be able to communicate with different audiences. Speaking and writing improves students' intercultural communication competence because they use language to communicate and language passes on culture and historical heritage.

The theoretical model presented shows how the key concepts introduced in Chapter Two are connected. The psychology of learning (the social construction of knowledge) depicts how knowledge is constructed in the mediation zone of proximal development. The methodological level (the socioliterate approach) encompasses the domain in which the teacher implements instructional techniques according to what the students bring to the learning experience, their prior knowledge, cultural values, and learning styles. By considering each unique students' characteristics, the teacher can provide learning opportunities for each learner to meet individual needs. By implementing the socioliterate approach, the teacher can help students improve their analytical and critical

skills while encouraging them to expand their oral and written language. Moreover, by interacting with each other, students can also expand their intercultural competence, and become more sensitive to cultural differences.

The key concepts introduced in this project can be combined and form the theoretical framework presented in this chapter. By combining them, the model reflects how students can improve their oral and written language skills, as well as their intercultural communication competence. According to this theoretical model, an instructional unit is designed and introduced in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR  
CURRICULUM DESIGN

Unit of Instruction

According to the theoretical framework presented in Chapter Three, a unit of instruction is proposed to develop adult English learners' oral and written language, as well as intercultural competence. The outcomes of the unit plan are to improve oral and written skills proficiency and intercultural communication. The unit consists of five lessons, which are designed to promote effective English learning. The instructional unit aims to instruct, and provide practical and authentic activities and assessments. In addition, homework assessments are designed to practice and extend writing skills as well as to promote reflection upon the activities and the content covered in the lesson. The unit of instruction is intended to benefit students who seek to improve their English proficiency as well as their intercultural sensitivity.

The unit plan is created for adult learners who have the intrinsic motivation to gain English skills essential to succeed in their academic, professional, or everyday lives. In addition, this unit is designed for English learners who are at the upper intermediate or advanced

fluency who wish to further develop their general English skills to be able to effectively cope with different social encounters. The unit is designed to tap into existing knowledge and experience, providing new opportunities to improve learners' social interactions.

### Lesson Plans

The unit plan is comprised of five units. Each lesson follows a very simple and straightforward format that provides English-as-a-second language instructors with easy-to-follow procedures, activities, and assessments to utilize directly or adapt if needed. In the beginning of each lesson, the amount of approximate time that each lesson takes is suggested. In addition, the lessons have clear and useful focus sheets, worksheets, and assessment sheets.

Each lesson's objectives are well specified. There are three different types of objectives: a learning objective, a content objective, and a language objective. Each lesson covers the three different types of objectives; and each objective is followed by a matching task chain that illustrates how that objective is being met. In the first part of each lesson, a warm-up activity is carried out by the instructor to activate students' prior knowledge and existing skills that sets the stage

for successful learning of new information. During this phase, the instructor gains insight on students' skills so the approach to introducing the lesson content and activities can be adapted, if required, to meet students needs.

Each task chain matches an objective. According to what is specified in the objective, there is a reading, writing, or speaking activity, and a set of exercises that matches what the objective specifies. In each case there are formative as well as summative assessments, providing students opportunities to self-assess and to assess their peers' progress. In addition, the instructor provides feedback and assessment to the students. This variety in assessments gives learners opportunities to correct their work in a constructive way. The assessment phase of the lessons is addressed in Chapter Five.

### Lesson Contents

The contents of the lessons are based on themes that reflect the key components introduced in the Review of the Literature, and that are the basis of the theoretical model presented in Chapter Three. A summary of the five units, which includes the elements of the model, is presented in Appendix B: Summary of Curriculum Design, and the set of lessons is introduced in Appendix C:

Instructional Unit. All lessons incorporate at least two of the key concepts presented in the model: intercultural communication, learning styles, Mexican-American values, the socioliterate approach (teaching methodology), and the social construction of knowledge (psychology of learning). In addition, each lesson has a specific outcome that facilitates and improves oral and written language proficiency and intercultural communicative competence. The lessons that comprise the unit are: Relating to Diverse Individuals, Learning How We Learn, Mexican Values, The Dream Job, and A Cover Letter That Sells.

Lesson One. The unit plan begins with a lesson on human diversity, which provides practical strategies to build rapport for interacting with colleagues, peers, superiors, and clients, from diverse backgrounds. This lesson incorporates the following components from the theoretical model: intercultural communication, the socioliterate approach, and the social construction of knowledge. The lesson begins with a warm-up activity that activates students' prior knowledge on the subject and gives the instructor an idea on how to proceed to facilitate the means to meet learners' needs. During this step, the instructor provides the appropriate context for the lesson and stimulates class discussion on the topic.

Next, the instructor gives students time to complete a set of controlled activities that allows the students to build new knowledge about cultural differences. In addition, the students interact with each other and are able to expand their oral skills. Next, another set of controlled activities is introduced where students can generate ideas and can practice oral communication skills. Finally, the assessment design calls for two activities, in pairs and in groups, and an oral activity. A homework assignment on freewriting is given to the students to help them reflect on what they have learned during the lesson, and to improve their writing skills. The whole lesson is aimed to facilitating oral and written proficiency as well as intercultural communication competence.

Lesson Two. The second lesson, Learning How We Learn, provides strategies and skills to improve learners' learning styles. This lesson incorporates the following components from the theoretical model: learning styles, the socioliterate approach, and the social construction of knowledge. During the beginning of the lesson, the instructor again sets up the context by asking students to read about someone's learning preferences. Students' prior knowledge on the content is activated, the context for the



lesson is set, and class discussion on the topic is stimulated.

The instructor presents a set of controlled activities to provide learners with the appropriate set of learning preferences that are available to them. Students work in pairs and in groups activating and generating new knowledge to apply to the learning situation. Next, teacher gives students a writing activity that will generate opportunities for peer interaction and constructive feedback and from both peers and the teacher helping students to reach their potential.

Lesson Three. The third lesson, Mexican Values, provides students the opportunity to interact with a different type of literary genre, as well as to expand their cultural awareness. This lesson incorporates the following elements from the theoretical model: Mexican-American values, the socioliterate approach, and the social construction of knowledge. This lesson helps students improve their oral and written skills as well as their intercultural communication proficiency. The instructor starts out the lesson by introducing the title of the book and sets the context and tone for the lesson. Students make predictions and perform a shared reading activity that generates peer and group discussions about

cultural differences. Next, students work in groups and again construct new concepts by interacting and sharing their knowledge with each other about writing in context. Students activate vocabulary to talk about literary texts and develop a plan to improve their writing skills.

Afterward, the instructor gives students various opportunities to practice their writing skill. Finally, assessment rubrics help learners work on their writing by self-assessing their progress, and by having a peer assess their work. In addition, the teacher provides feedback after students have worked with a partner to improve their writing skills, and gives additional comments, suggestions, and constructive feedback so that students can expand their writing skills repertoire.

Lesson Four. This lesson, The Dream Job, reflects another type of literary genre that students are quite likely to come across in their daily lives, and gives an authentic opportunity for the students to expand their oracy and written skills, as well as their intercultural communication proficiency; because applying for a job in a global world requires students from all ages to effectively cope with cultural differences when trying to communicate. This lesson comprises the following key elements that are present in the model: the socioliterate

approach, the social construction of knowledge, and intercultural communication.

The lesson starts with the teacher's activating prior knowledge about various types of jobs; following this, students make predictions about their future careers. Next, the teacher gives students a set of controlled activities in which to apply reading techniques. Afterward, the students are asked to complete a writing assignment to expand their writing skills.

Lesson Five. Lesson Five, Writing a Cover Letter That Sells!, refers also to a topic that is authentic for adult English learners and provides a set of activities that help students build their writing techniques and skills. This lesson includes the following components of the theoretical model: the socioliterate approach, and the social construction of knowledge.

The lesson begins with the teacher's activating prior knowledge on how to write cover letters, and creates the right learning environment to present the lesson. During this lesson, students learn to implement graphic organizers to organize their ideas. They build knowledge about what is expected when writing a cover letter to apply for a job in the United States. They implement writing techniques to improve their writing. They learn

how to write a cover letter after identifying the writing context. Finally, the teacher gives feedback and assesses students' written work. Students improve their writing proficiency as a result of this lesson.

In summary, the five lessons that comprise the unit of instruction address different aspects of the model. The first lesson, *Relating to Diverse Individuals*, provides practical and authentic activities to improve students intercultural communication and oral and written language proficiency. The second unit, *Learning How We Learn*, provides a deep insight on learning preferences and includes practical strategies to improving learning. The third unit, *Mexican Values*, gives students the opportunity to expand their intercultural sensitivity and to improve their writing skills and oral proficiency. The fourth lesson, *The Dream Job*, gives practical activities that develop students' writing skills. The fifth lesson, *Writing a Cover Letter that Sells!*, includes exercises that help students to practice their writing skills in an authentic activity. The main objective of the instructional unit is to help learners improve their oracy and literacy skills, as well as their ability to effectively communicate in intercultural encounters by

being able to identify different cultural aspects that can help them cope with cultural diversity.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT

Assessment activities offer learners the opportunity to receive constructive feedback on their English-language performance. It is important to include assessment exercises in a lesson because students need feedback to check their learning progress. By implementing assessments in the lesson plan, the teacher can also gain insight on the effectiveness of the lesson and on how much students learned during a particular activity. Assessment activities can reinforce what the students have learned during a lesson. Assessments can suggest possible future strategies to improve lesson-plan optimization.

This project presents a unit of instruction that is comprised of five lessons, each culminating in a formal assessment activity. The assessment component of the lesson includes opportunities to assess students in a formative and summative way. A formative assessment provides specific suggestions to help students improve their language proficiency. A summative assessment provides an evaluative summary, that is to say, a specific grade.

This unit places an emphasis on teacher and peer evaluations that provide constructive feedback to help students gain language competence in oral and written skills. Throughout the lessons presented in the unit, there are opportunities for self-assessment, peer assessment, and teacher assessment. There are rubrics to assess students' work that help learners achieve the learning goals. During some activities, students work individually, and self-assess their progress by checking their work with a given rubric. During other activities, learners work with partners by discussing and giving suggestions, giving and receiving feedback to improve their writing, and also by using a rubric. After working with peers and editing their work, students can submit their writing to the instructor for suggestions, comments, and feedback. In addition, after receiving feedback, learners can modify their practice, resulting in an improvement of oral and written language proficiency.

During social interactions, students learn to share, examine, and reconsider their performance. Students can participate in formal or informal discussions. According to Sunal, Powell, and McClelland (2000), learning can be assessed by informally listening to students' conversations and focusing on whether key words are used

that give the teacher cues about student thinking. Then, the teacher can evaluate students' prior knowledge, growth, and understanding of a concept. Teachers also note whether group members contribute and participate in an informal discussion. Formal discussion can occur in a more structured way, such as in whole-class activities. Students are asked to talk about observations related to the unit or content of the lesson. This type of assessment validates the idea of cooperative and interactive learning.

Throughout the unit, there are formal and informal conversations and group activities that involve student-student as well as student-teacher interaction. These activities provide opportunities for the learners and the teacher to evaluate whether a concept is being learned, and whether or not students fully participate in learning. Teacher and learners can measure learners' oral-language proficiency by assessing their participation in formal and informal conversation activities.

In summary, students and teachers are engaged in formative and summative assessments that give the students opportunities to reflect on their own learning. These assessments offer insights on the effectiveness of the



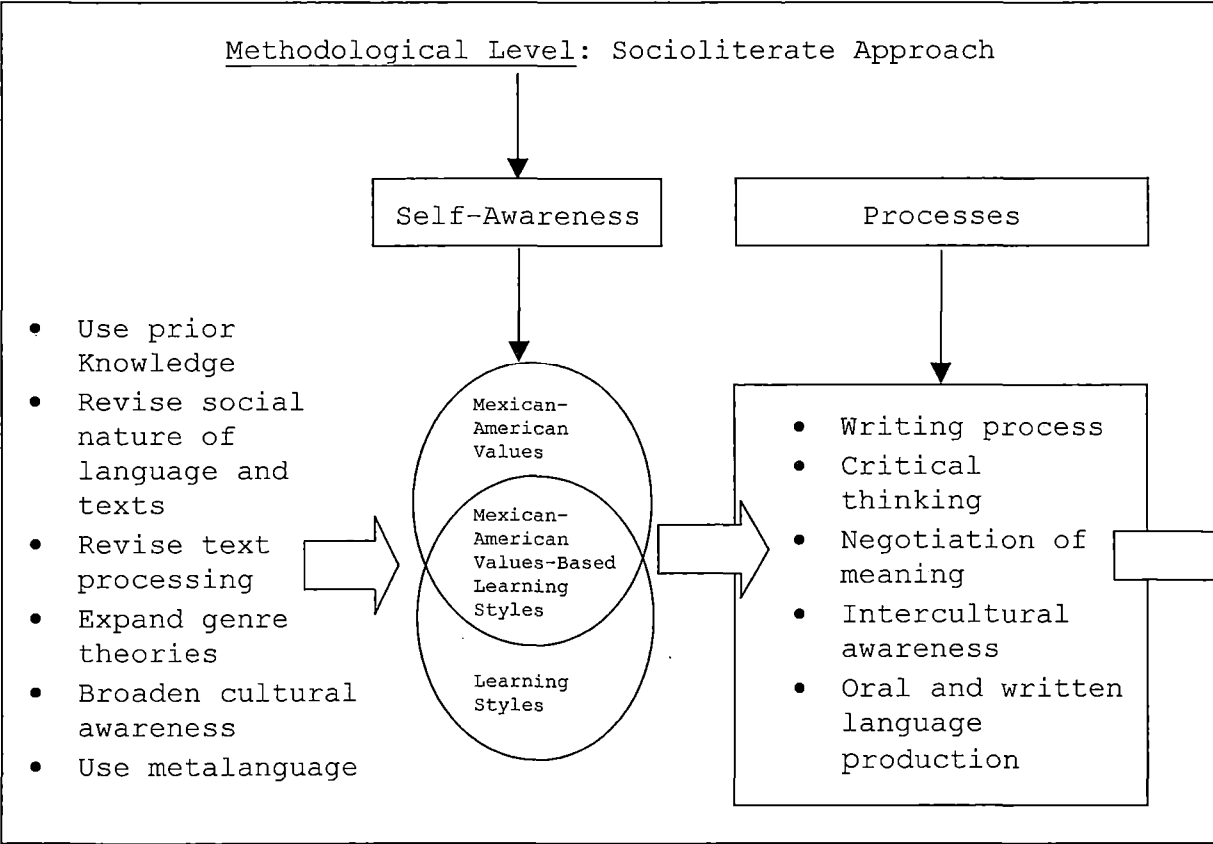
lesson, and how students can improve their language proficiency.

In conclusion, the unit of instruction developed for this project has been presented from a variety of perspectives. In Chapter One, the background, the content, and the significance of the project were introduced. In Chapter Two, the key concepts were reviewed, compiled, and examined for applicability. In Chapter Three, the concepts presented in Chapter Two were summarized, combined, and synthesized into a model applicable to the curriculum. In Chapter Four, the content of the unit was described in detail. In Chapter Five, the different types of assessment have been described and summarized. The complete instructional unit is presented in Appendix C: Instructional Unit, culminating the main purpose of this project, to promote English learners' oracy and written skills and intercultural communicative competence.

APPENDIX A  
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Psychology of Learning: Social Construction of Knowledge



- Use prior Knowledge
- Revise social nature of language and texts
- Revise text processing
- Expand genre theories
- Broaden cultural awareness
- Use metalanguage

Outcome  
Intercultural communication

Outcomes  
Oral and written proficiency

APPENDIX B  
CURRICULUM DESIGN SUMMARY

SUMMARY OF CURRICULUM DESIGN

<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Component From Theoretical Model</u>	<u>Outcomes</u>
Relating to Diverse Individuals	1. Intercultural communication 2. Socioliterate Approach 3. Social Construction Theory	1.Oracy 2.Literacy 3.I.C.*
Learning How We Learn	1. Learning Styles 2. Socioliterate Approach 3. Social Construction Theory	1.Oracy 2.Literacy 3.I.C.
Mexican Values	1. Mexican-American Culture 2. Socioliterate Approach 3. Social Construction Theory	1.Oracy 2.Literacy 3.I.C.
Dream Job	1. Socioliterate Approach 2. Social Construction Theory	1.Oracy 2.Literacy
Writing a Cover Letter That Sells!	1. Socioliterate Approach 2. Social Construction Theory	1.Oracy 2.Literacy

\* Intercultural Communication

APPENDIX C  
INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT

## LESSON PLANS

Lesson One: Interacting with Diversity .....	118
Lesson Two: Learning How We Learn .....	138
Lesson Three: Mexican Culture .....	161
Lesson Four: The Dream Job .....	171
Lesson Five: A Cover Letter That Sells! .....	186

**Lesson One**  
**Interacting with Diversity**

Teaching Level: Intermediate to Advanced Fluency

Time Frame: 2 hours

Objectives:

1. Learning Goal: Students will learn how to recognize and organize ideas by noting significant similarities and differences. Students will use a Venn diagram to compare different cultures.
2. Content Goal: Students will learn about different cultural values and will identify and value diversity.
3. Language Goal: Students will expand their oral skills by interacting, sharing, negotiating and clarifying their opinions with others to avoid miscommunication problems. Students will improve their written skills by writing a reflection on what they need to do to improve their interactions with diverse individuals

TESOL Standards:

Goal 1: To use English to communicate in social settings.  
Standard 1: Students will use English to participate in social interactions.

Standard 2: Students will interact in, through, and with spoken and written English for personal expression and enjoyment.

Vocabulary:

stereotyping-prejudice



## Materials:

- Focus Sheet 1.1: What Is Diversity?
- Focus Sheet 1.2: Was de Tocqueville Right or Wrong?
- Focus Sheet 1.3: American Values
- Worksheet 1.1: Recognizing and Comparing Cultural Differences
- Worksheet 1.2: My Attitudes Toward Diversity
- Worksheet 1.3: My Identity
- Worksheet 1.4: Appreciating Others' People's Backgrounds
- Worksheet 1.5: Building a Prosperous Society
- Worksheet 1.6: Appreciating Diversity
- Worksheet 1.7: Let's Interact!
- Worksheet 1.8: Are You Stereotyping?
- Worksheet 1.9: Interacting on the Basis of Stereotyping
- Assessment 1.1: What Do You Think?
- Assessment 1.2: Rubric for self-assessing your group participation
- Homework 1.1: Freewriting

## Warm Up:

The teacher asks the students to think about the meaning of the word diversity, and writes their ideas on the board. The teacher reads a passage (Focus Sheet 1.1) to help students brainstorm ideas.

## Task Chain 1: Recognizing and Comparing Differences

1. The teacher gives the students Worksheet 1.1 and asks them to complete the survey.
2. After students have finished completing the survey, they are asked to find a partner and explain why they answered the way they did and listen to his or her explanations.
3. Once they have shared their answers with each other, the learners complete Worksheet 1.2 and then they share their responses as a group.
4. The teacher gives the students Worksheet 1.3 and has them work individually; students become aware of their identities.
5. The teacher asks the students to think about their appreciation of others' cultural background and asks them to complete Worksheet 1.4, first individually and then with a partner. Students complete a Venn

diagram to compare their culture with their partner's culture.

6. The teacher walks around and makes sure that everyone is on track.

#### Task Chain 2: Appreciating Diversity

1. The teacher gives Focus Sheet 1.2 and tells the students to read the passage and discuss their opinions with a partner.
2. Then students complete Worksheet 1.5.
3. The teacher distributes Focus Sheet 1.3 and asks the students to find out about American values and then work with a partner to come up with a list of important shared values.
4. Students complete Worksheet 1.6.

#### Task Chain 3: Let's Interact!

1. Students complete Worksheet 1.7.
2. Students get together with a partner to share and discuss their points of view about stereotyping.
3. Students need to come up with a new ranking.
4. Teacher asks the students to get find another pair and do the same.
5. The teacher asks the students to reflect upon the stereotypes each of them holds and hands in Worksheet 1.8.
6. Students assess their understanding of stereotyping others by completing Assessment Sheet 1.1
7. The teacher gives students Worksheet 1.9 and has students work in small groups to interact with each other and reflect how stereotypes are associated with diversity.
8. Students complete Assessment Sheet 1.2 to assess their group participation.

#### Homework:

Note: If time permits, this assignment can be started in class.

1. Students write down a reflection on what they need to do to improve their interaction with diverse individuals (Homework 1.1).
2. The following class, the teacher collects homework and gives feedback.

Final Assessment:

Formative:

The teacher walks around the classroom and checks that students are on track.

The teacher gives constructive feedback on students' writing.

Summative:

The teacher has students assess their own work with rubric appended (Assessment Sheet 1.1) and the teacher checks their assignments for final grade.

References:

Johnson, D. W. (2003). Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualization (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

## Focus Sheet 1.1

### What Is Diversity?

We live in one world. The problems that face each person, community, and country cannot be solved without global cooperation and joint action. What do you think about this situation? Do you agree or disagree? What was it like 5,000 years ago? In which ways has diversity increased? What do we need to do to address diversity?

Johnson, D. W. (2003). Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualization (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

## Focus Sheet 1.2

### Was de Tocqueville Right or Wrong?

"Without common belief... there are still may be men, but there is no social body. In order for society to exist...and prosper...it is necessary that the minds of all men should be held together by certain predominant ideas"

-de Tocqueville

Johnson, D. W. (2003). Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualization (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) (p. 353). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

## Focus Sheet 1.3

### American Values

#### Declaration of Independence

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them to another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any form of Government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

#### Constitution of the United States

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Johnson, D. W. (2003). Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualization (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 353-354). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

## Worksheet 1.1

### Recognizing and Comparing Cultural Differences

1. How skillful are you in relating to diverse individuals? The following steps will help you understand a little better how to interact effectively with diverse individuals. Rate yourself on a scale from 1 (low skills) to 5 (high skills). The higher you score, the more you see yourself as having the skills to interact effectively with diverse individuals.

Before answering try to infer the meaning of each new word. Share your ideas with the class.

Questions:

- \_\_\_ 1. I recognize that diversity exists, and I value it as an important resource.
- \_\_\_ 2. I can create a cooperative context in which I work with diverse individuals to achieve mutual goals.
- \_\_\_ 3. An important part of my identity is my historical and cultural heritage.
- \_\_\_ 4. I recognize, respect, and value the historical and cultural heritage to others.
- \_\_\_ 5. I highlight the superordinate identity that unites us all into one society.
- \_\_\_ 6. I work constantly to reduce my internal barriers (such as stereotyping and prejudice) to interacting effectively with diverse individuals.
- \_\_\_ 7. I know the procedures for resolving conflicts constructively, and I am skillful in using them.
- \_\_\_ 8. I am committed to the pluralistic values that recognize the equal worth of all persons and each individual's inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

\_\_\_ Total

2. Now, find a partner and explain why you answered each question the way you did and listen to his or her explanations.

Johnson, D. W. (2003). Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualization (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) (p. 343). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

## Worksheet 1.2

### My Attitudes Toward Diversity

On the lines that follow, list several things you like about having diverse friends and several things you dislike about having diverse friends.

<u>Benefits of Diverse Friends</u>	<u>Disadvantages of Diverse Friends</u>

Johnson, D. W. (2003). Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualization (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) (p. 343). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.



## Worksheet 1.3

### My Identity

1. Answer the following questions:
  - a. What is an identity?
  
  - b. How many identities do you have?

2. Complete the following chart: Who Am I?

<u>Personal Characteristics</u>	<u>Demographic Characteristics</u>	<u>Abilities and Competencies</u>

3. The list provided presents ten methods of self-definition during the Middle Ages. Define yourself according to each category. Then rank order the ten characteristics from 1 (most important) to 10 (least important) to your identity.

<u>Who Am I?</u>	<u>My Answers</u>	<u>Rank</u>
Geography		
Family		
Marriage		
Occupation		
Social Rank		
Gender		
Age		
Bodily characteristics		
Moral Goodness		
Religion		

Johnson, D. W. (2003). Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualization (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) (p. 349). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

## Worksheet 1.3 (cont.)

### My Identity

#### 4. Aspects of Self

Rank the following benefits of yourself from most important to you (1) to least important to you (11).

- \_\_\_ Physical characteristics (height, weight, sex, hair, eye color, and general appearance)
- \_\_\_ Social roles (student, daughter, son, father, employer, employee)
- \_\_\_ Activities you engage in (singing, studying, soccer)
- \_\_\_ Attitudes and interests
- \_\_\_ Personality traits
- \_\_\_ Gender identity
- \_\_\_ Cultural identity
- \_\_\_ Ethnic identity
- \_\_\_ Religious identity
- \_\_\_ Social class identity

5. Discuss your answers with a friend and write down a brief summary of the differences in opinion that you encounter. Include details and reasons why your opinions differed. (Write at least 4 sentences)

Johnson, D. W. (2003). Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualization (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) (p. 349). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc

## Worksheet 1.4

### Appreciating Others' People's Backgrounds

Complete the following exercise:

1. My cultural heritage, historical, ethnic heritage is...

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---

2. Find the other members of the class who share your cultural heritage, including the following:
  - a. Definition of cultural identity (Who are we?)
  - b. History of culture (What is our history?)
  - c. Traditions of culture. (What are our traditions?)
  - d. Aspects of culture (food, songs, art) (Examples of our culture are...!)
  - e. Personal experiences as member of the culture (My personal experiences as a member of this culture are...)
  - f. Continuing traditions you are following
3. If there are no students in the class who share your heritage, find somebody else who share some of your heritage.
4. Then, after discussing with your partner, make a Venn diagram. In the first circle write down the aspects of your cultural, historical and ethnic identity that are unique and different from that of other person. In the second circle write down unique characteristic of the other person that are different from yours. In the overlapping part of the circles, write down the aspects of both your cultural, historical, and ethnic identities that are similar.

Johnson, D. W. (2003). Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualization (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) (p. 351). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc

## Worksheet 1.5

### Building a Prosperous Society

1. De Tocqueville believed that a common set of values and ideals held American society together. Do you agree or disagree?
2. Find a partner and come to an agreement. Write down your ideas as what is necessary for our society to exist and prosper.

Here is a list that might help you:

- a. Taking good responsibility for common good
- b. Trusting others to take responsibility for the common good
- c. Being honest
- d. Doing good deeds
- e. Fostering peace
- f. Respecting human life

Johnson, D. W. (2003). Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualization (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) (p. 354). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc

Worksheet 1.6

**Appreciating Diversity**

1. Read Focus Sheet 1.3, and identify values contained in the statements.
2. Write down a list of the values.
3. Find a partner and share your answers.

Values:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Write down a sentence for each entry to illustrate how these values are reflected in your home country.

Johnson, D. W. (2003). Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualization (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) (p. 355). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc

## Worksheet 1.7

### Let's Interact!

Here are several reasons why stereotypes persist. In pairs, discuss and rank them from the most important (1) to the least important (6). After working together and creating an improved ranking, find another pair and repeat the procedure.

- a. Many people perceive that being poor and lazy are associated.
- b. Your attitude about noticing negative traits you ascribe to certain groups is confirmed every time you come across information that confirms the stereotype.
- c. You tend to see your behavior as the right way of doing things. Every time you see someone behaving in a different way, you think their behavior is wrong and inappropriate.
- d. You behave in certain ways to elicit the actions you expect from other groups, thus confirming your stereotype.
- e. You think that if a person does not match your stereotype, he or she is the exception to the rule.
- f. You often develop a way of justifying your stereotypes and prejudice.

Johnson, D. W. (2003). Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualization (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc

## Worksheet 1.8

### Are You Stereotyping?

1. Look at the following list of words. Write down one stereotype you have heard under each heading.
2. Work in small groups to share your answers.

Male  
Teenager  
Mexican American  
Roman Catholic  
Lower income

Female  
Over age 70  
African American  
Protestant  
Middle income

Johnson, D. W. (2003). Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualization (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc

## Worksheet 1.9

### Interacting on the Basis of Stereotyping

1. Get into groups of five. Role-play (10 minutes): You will take part in a discussion among employees of a large corporation of the ways in which the percentage of people of color and women in higher-level executive positions may be increased from 10 percent to 50 percent.
2. Each member of the group takes a headband to wear with a particular identity written on it for others to see. Group members are not to look at their own headbands.

The 5 identities are:

Single mother of two young children, unemployed

Physically disabled employee

Woman, age 72

White male, company president

Black female, union official

3. After the discussion, can you guess what was written in your headband?

4. How did you feel during this exercise?

Johnson, D. W. (2003). Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualization (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) (p. 359). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc



## Assessment Sheet 1.1

### What Do You Think?

1. How do you feel about stereotyping?
2. How accurate do you think the stereotypes of their identities are in Worksheet 1.8?
3. What have you learned about stereotyping others? Give at least five facts.

## Assessment Sheet 1.2

### Rubric for Self-assessing Your Group Participation

Did you...?	Rating	Points
...wait for your turn?	1 2 3 4 5	___/5
...listen to others' opinions?	1 2 3 4 5	___/5
...side with someone?	1 2 3 4 5	___/5
...feel hurt, or angry?	1 2 3 4 5	___/5
...you feel frustrated?	1 2 3 4 5	___/5
	Total	___/25

## Homework 1.1

### Freewriting

Write down a summary stating what you would do to develop the two weakest skills that you have in order to improve your interactions with diverse individuals. Then, chose two to skills that you would like to improve. At least write three suggestions for each skill.

**Lesson Two**  
**Learning How We Learn**

Teaching Level: Intermediate to Advanced Fluency

Time Frame: 3 hours

Objectives:

1. Content Goal: Student will evaluate their learning styles and will come up with suggestions on how to improve their learning.
2. Learning Goal: Students will think precisely about thinking and will develop a learning plan.
3. Language Goal: Students will expand their writing skills by writing an essay. Students will improve oracy skills by group discussions and peer interactions.

TESOL Standards:

Goal 2: To use English to achieve academically in all content areas. Standard 2: Students will use English to obtain, process, and construct, and provide subject matter information in spoken and written form.

Goal 3: To use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways. Standard 3: Students will use appropriate strategies to extend their communicative competence.

## Materials:

Focus Sheet 2.1:	Learning Experiences
Focus Sheet 2.2:	Checking Your Results
Focus Sheet 2.3:	Barriers and Supports
Focus Sheet 2.4:	Case Study
Focus Sheet 2.5:	Outline Map
Worksheet 2.1:	Perceptual Learning Preference Survey
Worksheet 2.2:	Balancing Barriers and Supports
Worksheet 2.3:	What About Time?
Worksheet 2.4:	Your Personal Learning Plan
Worksheet 2.5:	Case Study
Worksheet 2.6:	Writing Activity
Assessment Sheet 2.1:	Self-Group Assessment
Assessment Sheet 2.2:	Criteria for Writing Assessment
Assessment Sheet 2.3:	Teacher's Feedback

## Warm Up:

The teacher asks the students if they know what kind of learners they are; then tells them that people learn in different ways, and it is important for them to understand how they learn best. This information can help them plan their own learning goals.

## Task Chain 1: Learning Experiences

1. The teacher gives the students Focus Sheet 2.1 to elicit prior knowledge about learning styles.
2. Then students complete the survey on Worksheet 2.1 to check what kind of learners they are.
3. Once they have finished it, they look at Focus Sheet 2.2 to check the results. Then they share and compare their answers with a partner.
4. The teacher gives the students Worksheet 2.2 and has them work individually; each student becomes aware of the barriers and supports they encounter when learning.
5. The teacher asks the students to complete Worksheet 2.3 to find out when it is that they have time to study during the week.
6. The teacher walks around and makes sure that everyone is on track.

### Task Chain 2: Your Personal Learning Plan

1. The teacher gives students Focus Sheet 2.3 and asks them to read the passage and discuss their opinions with a partner.
2. Then the students make a learning plan by completing Worksheet 2.4.
3. The teacher assesses students by asking them questions and walking around the classroom to check if students are doing the assignment.

### Task Chain 3: Case Study

1. The teacher collects the surveys and decides who is going to work with whom, and makes sure that students who have different learning styles work together.
2. Students get into groups and read Focus Sheet 2.4 to complete Worksheet 2.5.
3. The teacher gives students Assessment 2.2 to self-assess their group work.
4. The teacher gives students Worksheet 2.6 and goes over the instructions with the students. The teacher asks them to write an essay. Students can follow the outline on Focus Sheet 2.5 as a guide.
5. Students need to get together with a partner who will give constructive feedback and suggestions to improve writing.
6. Students assess their partners' writing project by completing Assessment 2.1.
7. Instructor collects first draft and final copy to assess students' work and give feedback to their writing projects.

### Homework:

Students keep revising papers until they have improved their writing.

Final Assessment:

Formative:

The teacher walks around the classroom and checks that students are on track.

The teacher gives constructive feedback on students' writing.

Summative:

The teacher has students assess their own work with rubric appended (Assessment Sheet 2.1), peer assess partners' work with rubric appended (Assessment Sheet 2.2); the teacher checks their assignments for final grade (Assessment Sheet 2.3).

## Focus Sheet 2.1

### Learning Experiences

Alice reflected on her learning experiences. The last math class she took was a disaster. She remembered having trouble, being confused, and feeling alone. The way the teacher expected her to learn did not work for her. The following is an example of how Alice might complete this worksheet.

Learner Preference Worksheet	
1. What time of day or night do you feel better able to study/work/read/write?	
Early morning ___ Afternoon ___ Early evening ___ Late night ___	
2. Do you prefer to study or learn by yourself or with others? (check one)	
I like learning about new things with a study group I like learning about new things by myself I like learning something new with other person to help me It depends on the subject matter	
3. Do you learn best by (check all that apply)	
Reading about something? Seeing a picture or graph? Hearing someone explain something? Writing it down? Talking about it with a partner? Talking to yourself?	
4. What length of time do you prefer to spend studying?	
I prefer to work for periods of two hours or more I prefer to work for shorter periods of time I can work whenever time permits	
5. How's your concentration? (check all that apply)	
I need complete quiet when I study or read I can study or read with some background noise I can study or read in any environment, quiet or noisy	

Dutwin, P., Altreuter, C. G., & Guglielmi, A. (2003). TABE: Test of adult basic education (p. 6). New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.



## Focus Sheet 2.2

### Checking Your Results

#### Visual/Verbal Learners' Characteristics:

- ✓ Relate to such words as see, look, observe, read
- ✓ Like to read books, and magazines for both information and pleasure
- ✓ Enjoy watching TV documentaries and films in which both visual and verbal information are presented simultaneously
- ✓ Read a newspaper or magazines regularly as a source of news
- ✓ Prefer to look over written directions and diagrams to assemble or use something rather to hear someone explain how to do it.
- ✓ Prefer to read what an expert has written on a subject than to listen to a lecture or discussion
- ✓ Take extensive notes during class lectures and discussions to review later
- ✓ Make lists regularly of daily goals and activities

#### Visual/Nonverbal Learners' Characteristics:

- ✓ Relate to such words as look, see, picture, observe, show, imagine
- ✓ Like to browse and retain information well by looking at pictures, diagrams, charts, maps, films
- ✓ Learn how to do things through observation and modeling rather than verbal explanations
- ✓ Prefer demonstrated tasks and visual models to oral and written instructions
- ✓ Would rather see a film on a subject rather than listen to a lecture or panel discussion
- ✓ Prefer the TV as a source of news rather than a news paper or radio
- ✓ Have a strong visual memory: remember faces, locations, directions, where they put things
- ✓ Often doodle or draw while taking notes during a class lecture or discussion

## Focus Sheet 2.2

### Checking Your Results (cont.)

#### Auditory Learners' Characteristics:

- ✓ Relate to such words as hear, listen, sound, ring, tune
- ✓ Master new information by listening, then repeating or discussing with others
- ✓ Like to socialize, talk, discuss, and share ideas
- ✓ Enjoy working collaboratively with a partner or a small group
- ✓ Prefer to have someone explain how to assemble or use something rather than look over written instructions or diagrams
- ✓ Feel frustrated when teachers write assignment and test instructions on the board or on a handout but do not go over it orally
- ✓ Volunteer answers in class, relate relevant anecdotes and examples, and process what they are learning orally
- ✓ Would rather listen to an expert lecture on a subject than read an article or textbook
- ✓ May not read assigned chapters, articles, or stories thoroughly, in hopes of having the main ideas clarified by a class lecture or discussion
- ✓ Remember names and lyrics to popular songs after hearing them once or only a few times

#### Tactile-Kinesthetic Learners' Characteristics:

- ✓ Relate to such words as feel, touch, grasp, do, move
- ✓ Enjoy working with their hands, want to feel and touch everything
- ✓ Tend to be skilled at repairing and assembling things, even without instructions
- ✓ Tend to be coordinated at sports
- ✓ Like to explore their environment
- ✓ Focus well during "hands-on" projects and activities
- ✓ Are frequently in motion: may fidget, get up regularly, doodle or tap pencil
- ✓ May get restless and distracted during lengthy class lectures, reports or discussions
- ✓ Like variety in classroom activities
- ✓ Enjoy opportunities to work collaboratively

Reid, J. M. (1995) Learning styles in the ESL/EFL classroom. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

## Focus Sheet 2.3

### Barriers and Supports

#### Barriers

Institutional barriers are those over which we have no control. They are put in place by a school, a program, or a class. Institutional barriers can include inconvenient class times, difficult registration procedures, financial aid deadlines, and other things that keep us from taking a class or continuing with one. These barriers may be overcome in some cases.

Circumstantial barriers are difficult but are more often within our control. These barriers may include lack of money, child-care, or transportation. They can make it difficult for us to reach our learning goals.

Personal barriers are mainly in our control, yet they are typically the most difficult to overcome. They include long-held beliefs about our abilities as a learner or student. These barriers may include the following: feelings of being too old to take a class or to learn; feelings that we are not smart enough to do well in class, or even in one particular subject; or negative feelings about school or learning because of poor experiences with school earlier in life.

These barriers may keep us from even attempting to go back to school or take a course. They might also be the cause of someone dropping out of a class or program. The good news is that there are ways to deal with, and overcome many of these barriers.

#### Supports

Many sources of support exist for you, and they will help you overcome some or all of the barriers that prevent you from learning. Family, friends, neighbors, and the community in general are some of the sources that are there for you.

Dutwin, P., Altreueter, C. G., & Guglielmi, A. (2003).

TABE: Test of adult basic education (p. 6). New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

## Focus Sheet 2.4

### Case Study

Ramon has a strong visual/nonverbal and auditory learning style. He is having trouble in a history class. The instructor, Mr. King, is more of a visual/verbal learner. He assigns 20-page textbook chapter every class and sometimes extra outside readings. He gives regular quizzes on the assigned readings, and so far Ramon has received failing or low grades. One main reason for Ramon's poor performance is that his instructor doesn't discuss the outside readings in class and when he lectures on the chapter, he seems to cover all the main points. Mr. King also mentioned in the course syllabus that a term paper is due at the end of the semester, which requires that students do library research. He handed out the syllabus and term papers requirements in the first class session, but he didn't go over the specific requirement orally. Ramon is behind several chapters in the textbook, and a midterm exam is coming up next week. He is also very confused and nervous about the term paper.

Reid, J. M. (1995) Learning styles in the ESL/EFL classroom. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

## Focus Sheet 2.5

### Outline Map

Paragraph 1

Opening comments to stimulate readers' interest

Thesis statement

Paragraph 2

Main point (topic sentence idea)

Supporting details to develop main points

Paragraph 3

Main point (topic sentence idea)

Supporting details to develop main points

Note: Continue until all main points are treated

Final Paragraph

Ideas to bring writing to closure

Clouse, B. F. (2001). Working it out: A trouble shooting guide for writers (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

## Worksheet 2.1

### Perceptual Learning Preference Survey

1. Think about your most recent school experiences as you read the following statements. Then, place a check mark on the response line that most accurately describes how you learn.

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>
1. I can remember most of the information I have heard in a lecture or class discussion without taking notes			
2. I learn more by reading about a topic than by listening to a lecture or a class discussion			
3. I learn more about a subject when I can use my hands to make or draw something			
4. When I study new material, I learn more easily by looking over visual aids in a chapter, such as charts, graph, than by reading the assigned pages			
5. Talking about a subject with someone helps me better understand my own ideas			
6. I take notes during class lectures and discussions and read them carefully several times before a test			
7. When I read a textbook, newspaper, or novel, I picture the ideas in my mind			
8. I am skilled with my hands and can easily repair things or put things together			
9. I remember info that I have discussed in class with a partner or a small group better than information that I have read or written about			
10. I get confused when I try to figure out graphs and charts that do not come with a written explanation			

Worksheet 2.1

Perceptual Learning Preference Survey (cont.)

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>
11. When I read, I underline or highlight ideas to make the main ideas stand out and to not get distracted			
12. I remember information well by listening to tapes			
13. I am physically coordinated and well at sports			
14. To remember a new word, I must hear it or say it			
15. I would rather see a film on a subject than listen to a lecture or read a book or magazine article			
16. I prefer reading a newspaper or magazine as a source of news rather than listening to the radio or watching the TV			
17. I make drawings in my study notes or on study cards to remember new vocabulary			
18. I read assigned material and notes aloud to myself to concentrate and understand better			
19. When I listen to an explanation or lecture, I form a mental picture to understand better			
20. When I am not sure how to spell a word, I write it different ways to see what looks correct			
21. I better understand homework or test instructions by reading them on the board or on a handout rather than by listening to them			
22. It is easier for me to remember illustrations and charts in textbooks if they are done in bright colors			

## Worksheet 2.1

### Perceptual Learning Preference Survey (cont.)

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>
23. I prefer to watch TV or listen to the radio for news rather than to read a newspaper or a magazine			
24. I understand and remember more about a subject from a fieldtrip than from a lecture or a textbook			
25. To remember a new word, I must see it several times.			
26. Before making or drawing something, I first picture in my mind what my completed project will look like			
27. I find it difficult to figure out what to do on homework assignments when the teacher just give us a handout without discussing it in class			
28. I write or draw while listening to a lecture or a class discussion in order to concentrate and not get restless			
29. I have difficulty understanding a new term if I have no pictures			
30. I regularly read newspapers, magazines or books for pleasure and information			
31. When I am learning about a new subject, I get more interested and remember much more if I can have "hands-on" experience such as drawing, building a model, or doing a lab experiment			
32. When I have homework, reading assignments, I take notes or summarize the main ideas in writing			



## Worksheet 2.1

### Perceptual Learning Preference Survey (cont.)

Each of the checks you entered on the survey has a point value: Usually, 3 points; Sometimes, 2 points; and Rarely, 1 point.

For each column, find the item number on the survey and enter the point value on the line to the right. Then, add the total number of points in each column.

Visual Number	Verbal Points	Verbal Number	Nonverbal Points
2.	_____	4.	_____
6.	_____	7.	_____
10.	_____	14.	_____
16.	_____	17.	_____
21.	_____	19.	_____
25.	_____	22.	_____
30.	_____	26.	_____
32.	_____	29.	_____
Total	_____	Total	_____

Auditory Number	Points	Visual Number	Tactile/ Kinesthetic Points
1.	_____	3.	_____
5.	_____	8.	_____
9.	_____	11.	_____
12.	_____	13.	_____
15.	_____	20.	_____
18.	_____	24.	_____
23.	_____	28.	_____
27.	_____	31.	_____
Total	_____	Total	_____

Reid, J. M. (1995) Learning Styles in the ESL/EFL classroom. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

## Worksheet 2.1

### Perceptual Learning Preference Survey (cont.)

2. In the space below, list your perceptual learning preferences, from the highest score to your lowest score. Your highest indicates your perceptual learning preference/s. Your next highest total indicates another strong preference, especially, if the two numbers are close.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Read Focus Sheet 2.2 to find out the main characteristics of each learning style.
4. Talk to a partner to compare your answers. What can you do to improve your weakest learning preference? Brainstorm ideas with your partner and then share your thoughts with the rest of the class.
5. Hand in the worksheet to the instructor.

Reid, J. M. (1995) Learning styles in the ESL/EFL classroom. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

## Worksheet 2.2

### Balancing Barriers and Supports

After reading with a partner Focus Sheet 2.3, complete the following chart. Identify the barriers and the support you might get from family, friends, neighbors, and community to overcome those barriers. Write at least 3 entries under each category

<u>Barriers</u>	<u>Support</u>
Institutional	Family/Friends/Neighbors/ Community
Circumstantial	
Individual	
Notes to myself	

Dutwin, P., Altreueter, C. G., & Guglielmi, A. (2003).  
TABE: Test of adult basic education (p. 6). New York:  
McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

## Worksheet 2.3

### What About Time?

1. A common complaint of adult learners is that they lack time for studying and other learning activities. This chart will help you document and analyze how you currently spend your time. It will also help you develop a plan to include your learning activities. Mark those activities that are fixed and cannot be changed, such as job hours, and family meals.

#### Weekly Calendar

<u>Time</u>	<u>Mon.</u>	<u>Tues.</u>	<u>Wed.</u>	<u>Thur.</u>	<u>Fri.</u>	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Sun.</u>
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

2. Now, that you have identified those time slots that are not available for learning, ask yourself the following questions to help you plan your best time for learning for during the week.
  - a. When do I learn best?
  - b. How much time do I need during the week to study?
  - c. Are there any times available when I will be able to study without interruption?

Dutwin, P., Altreueter, C. G., & Guglielmi, A. (2003). TABE: Test of adult basic education (p. 6). New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

## Worksheet 2.4

### Your Personal Learning Plan

Now that you have reflected on your situation, put all this information to work for you. Complete this learning plan.

#### My Learning Plan

Goals:

Timeline:

Supports:

Preferred Learning Styles:

Dutwin, P., Altreueter, C. G., & Guglielmi, A. (2003).  
TABE: Test of adult basic education (p. 6). New York:  
McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

## Worksheet 2.5

### Case Study

1. Instructor will ask you to form a group with at least two other students who have different learning styles than yours.
2. Next, discuss with your group what does it mean to be an "active learner"
3. Write your definition.
  
4. Read Focus Sheet 2.4. In your group, suggest what "active learner" steps the student could realistically take to do better in the class taught by an instructor with an incompatible teaching style. Write at least five suggestions.
  
5. Share your thoughts with the class.

## Worksheet 2.6

### Writing Activity

1. Write a reflection on which aspects of a class or classes that you took or are taking now that do not complement your preferred ways of learning, and describe in detail the specific actions you have taken to learn the subject matter more effectively and feel more confident and motivated in class.
2. Your reflection should be 250 hundred words long. Check Focus Sheet 2.5 and use it as a guide.

#### Pair work:

1. Have a partner check and assess your work, and complete the rubric on Assessment Sheet 2.1.
2. Write down your peer's suggestions to improve your writing.
3. Hand in both copies, the first draft, and the final copy to instructor for feedback and assessment

## Assessment Sheet 2.1

### Self-Group Assessment

After working in groups, complete the following personal evaluation. Read each statement below. Then, circle the number that best represents what you did in your group.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Statement	Score					
	(+)+plus Yes, a lot			(-) minus No, not at all		
1. I used my classmates' names in my group	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. I was an active participant in my group	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. I listened to everyone in my group	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. I encouraged and praised others in my group	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. I explained to someone who did not understand	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. I asked for an explanation or help when I did not understand	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. I felt encouraged by people in my group	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. I learned some new things by participating in this group activity	5	4	3	2	1	0
9. I am enjoying working with my classmates in small groups	5	4	3	2	1	0

Goal setting:

Which group work skills will you try to work on the next time you meet in your group?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Personal note to the instructor:

Reid, J. M. (1995). Learning styles in the ESL/EFL classroom. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.



## Assessment Sheet 2.2

### Criteria for Writing Assessment

Use this rubric to assess your partner's work.

<u>Component</u>	<u>Point Value / Critique</u>
Discourse Competence (Organization) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening paragraph offers rationale and has a thesis statement</li> <li>• Subsequent paragraphs have topic sentence and details supporting the point</li> <li>• Contains a conclusion</li> </ul>	_____ / 25
Grammatical Competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register and style are appropriate</li> <li>• Text is spell-checked</li> <li>• Morphemic use is correct</li> <li>• Text shows cohesion and coherence</li> <li>• Usage shows mastery</li> </ul>	_____ / 25
Total	_____ / 50
Peer Reviewer: _____  Your review of peer reviewer: Were the recommendations helpful?	

Diaz-Rico, L. (2004). Teaching English learners: Strategies and methods. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

## Assessment Sheet 2.3

### Teacher's Feedback

<u>Component</u>	<u>Point Value / Critique</u>
Discourse Competence (Organization) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening paragraph offers rationale and has a thesis statement</li> <li>• Subsequent paragraphs have topic sentence and details supporting the point</li> <li>• Contains a conclusion</li> </ul>	_____ / 25
Grammatical Competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register and style are appropriate</li> <li>• Text is spell-checked</li> <li>• Morphemic use is correct</li> <li>• Text shows cohesion and coherence</li> <li>• Usage shows mastery</li> </ul>	_____ / 25
Total	_____ / 50
Peer Reviewer's Name: _____	
Instructor's Comments:	

Diaz-Rico, L. (2004). Teaching English learners: Strategies and methods. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

**Lesson Three**  
**Mexican Culture**

Teaching Level: Intermediate to Advanced Fluency

Time Frame: 2 hours

Objectives:

1. Content Goal: Students will learn about Mexican cultural values.
2. Learning Goal: Students will identify the writing context of a literary work.
3. Language Goal: Students will expand their writing skills by writing a reflection paper. Students will expand their reading skills by reading the first chapter of a book.

TESOL Standards:

Goal 3: To use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways.

Standard 1: Students will use the appropriate language variety, register, and genre according to audience, purpose, and setting.

Standard 3: Students will use appropriate strategies to extend their communicative competence.

Materials:

Villaseñor, V. (1991). Rain of gold. New York: Random House.

Focus Sheet 3.1:	Abstract
Worksheet 3.1:	Making Inferences
Worksheet 3.2:	Reading for Writing
Worksheet 3.3:	Let's Give It a Try!
Assessment Sheet 3.1:	Criteria for Writing Assessment
Assessment Sheet 3.2:	Peer Review
Assessment Sheet 3.3:	Teacher's Feedback

### Warm Up:

The teacher reads aloud the title of the book, and asks the students if they can predict what the book will be about. Teacher elicits students' prior experiences on reading books. The teacher asks them if they know who Victor Villaseñor is, and if they have ever read any work by him.

The teacher elicits students' knowledge of different types of texts, and writes ideas on the whiteboard.

### Task Chain 1: Making Inferences

1. The teacher gives the students Focus Sheet 3.1.
2. The teacher asks students to pair with a partner to take turns and read the first chapter together.
3. They discuss what the text is about and try to guess the meaning of new words from context.
4. Then students find another pair and together start discussing about the values they can infer from the text.
5. Students complete Worksheet 3.1 during group discussion.
6. The teacher walks around and makes sure that everyone is on track, and clarifies and provides guidance as needed.

### Task Chain 2: Reading for Writing

1. The teacher tells the students to do silent reading and read the passage again.
2. The students discuss with a partner their opinions about writing in context of the chapter they just read and complete Worksheet 3.2.
3. Then, in groups, students brainstorm and review the writing process and make an outline about things that they need to consider when writing.
4. The teacher assesses students by asking them questions.
5. Students present their ideas to the rest of the class.

### Task Chain 3: Let's Give It a Try!

1. The teacher gives students Worksheet 3.3 and asks them to write an essay about one of the topics suggested.
2. Students can use the Worksheet 3.2 answers as a guide to complete the assignment.
3. The teacher gives students Assessment Sheet 3.1 to self-assess their writing.
4. Students work individually and ask a partner for feedback. Each peer review completes Assessment sheet 3.2.
5. Students hand in Worksheet 3.2 for assessment.
6. The teacher gives feedback and assessment, using Assessment Sheet 3.3.

### Homework:

Students keep revising papers until they have improved their writing.

### Final Assessment:

#### Formative:

The teacher walks around the classroom and checks that students are on track.

The teacher gives constructive feedback on students' writing.

#### Summative:

The teacher has students assess their own work with rubric appended (Assessment Sheet 3.1), peer assess partners' work with rubric appended (Assessment Sheet 3.2); the teacher checks their assignments for final grade (Assessment Sheet 3.3).

## Focus Sheet 3.1

### Abstract

Dreaming, Lupe reached across the bed. Dreaming as she lay there, facedown on the lumpy-hard straw mattress, she reached under warm-smelling cotton covers, searching for her mother, but she didn't find her.

Opening her eyes, Lupe yawned and stretched, her long thick hair falling about her neck and shoulders in dark, rich curls. Her mother was sitting at the end of the bed, surrounded by long spears of silvery moonlight coming in through the cracks of their lean-to. A cock crowed in the distance, a coyote howled, and the dogs in the village began to bark.

Smiling, Lupe rubbed her sleep-swollen eyes and crawled across to her mother. Coming up behind her, Lupe put her arms around her mother, and snuggled in close to her soft, plump body. Her mother, Doña Guadalupe, stopped braiding her long grey hair and turned about, taking her youngest child into her arms. Lupe was six years old, and she'd been sleeping with her mother ever since her father, Don Victor, had left them to look for work in the lowlands.

Villaseñor, V. (1991). Rain of gold (p. 1). New York: Random House.

## Worksheet 3.1

### Making Inferences

1. Get into pairs and read Rain of Gold, Chapter One with a partner. Alternate the reading. Read one paragraph each.
2. Once you are done, get together with another pair of students and discuss the reading. Find out what values are part of Mexican culture. Mark the text where you can find information that has helped you infer such value.
3. Make a list. Share your opinions with each other.
4. Compare such values with the American culture or another culture that you are interested in. Are they similar or different? Why? If necessary, use the Internet to assist you in finding information. Write down a summary of your ideas.

## Worksheet 3.2

### Reading for Writing

1. Silent reading: Read the chapter again.
2. Go back to your group. Read:

Circumstances influence everything we do, including writing. This circumstance influence the writer enough that they form the context for writing. These factors are:

- a. The writer's purpose
  - b. The writer's audience
  - c. The writer's role
3. What do you know about them? Give a brief explanation.
  
  4. Can you identify these factors in the assigned reading?
  
  5. Now, if you were to write an essay, what are the steps that you need to consider in order to get started in your writing? Write down an outline to develop the best writing process for you.



### Worksheet 3.3

#### Let's Give It a Try!

1. Chose one of the following topics and write an essay.
2. Identify your role, audience, and purpose.
3. Use Assessment 3.1 to self-assess your work.
4. Chose a peer to review your work and give you feedback. Use Assessment 3.2.
5. After your peer's suggestions, edit your work. Submit the two copies to your instructor along with the rubrics for feedback.
6. Keep editing until your work is completed.

#### Topics:

1. Pretend that you are Lupe's mother. Write in your journal and explain how you feel about what is taking place in the village.
2. You finished reading the whole book and you disagree with how the author describes Mexican values. Write a letter to the author explaining why you feel that way.
3. You have recently begun an e-mail correspondence with someone who lives in another country. He or she has asked that you describe Mexican life as honestly and precisely as possible. Pick one aspect that interests you, and write a thorough description for some who knows very little about this country.

### Assessment Sheet 3.1

#### Criteria for Writing Assessment

Use this rubric to self-assess your work.

<u>Component</u>	<u>Point Value / Critique</u>
Discourse Competence (Organization) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening paragraph offers rationale and has a thesis statement</li> <li>• Subsequent paragraphs have topic sentences and details supporting the point</li> <li>• Contains a conclusion</li> </ul>	_____ / 25
Grammatical Competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register and style are appropriate</li> <li>• Text is spell-checked</li> <li>• Morphemic use is correct</li> <li>• Text shows cohesion and coherence</li> <li>• Usage shows mastery</li> <li>• Purpose, audience, and writer's role are addressed correctly</li> </ul>	_____ / 25
Total	_____ / 50
Peer Reviewer: _____  Your review of peer reviewer: Were the recommendations helpful?	

Diaz-Rico, L. (2004). Teaching English learners: Strategies and methods. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

## Assessment Sheet 3.2

### Peer Review

<u>Component</u>	<u>Point Value / Critique</u>
Discourse Competence (Organization) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening paragraph offers rationale and has a thesis statement</li> <li>• Subsequent paragraphs have topic sentences and details supporting the point</li> <li>• Contains a conclusion</li> </ul>	_____ / 25
Grammatical Competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register and style are appropriate</li> <li>• Text is spell-checked</li> <li>• Morphemic use is correct</li> <li>• Text shows cohesion and coherence</li> <li>• Usage shows mastery</li> <li>• Purpose, audience, and writer's role are addressed correctly</li> </ul>	_____ / 25
Peer Review / Feedback is appropriate	_____ / 50
Total	_____ /100

Diaz-Rico, L. (2004). Teaching English learners: Strategies and methods. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

### Assessment Sheet 3.3

#### Teacher's Feedback

<u>Component</u>	<u>Point Value / Critique</u>
Discourse Competence (Organization) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opening paragraph offers rationale and has a thesis statement</li><li>• Subsequent paragraphs have topic sentences and details supporting the point</li><li>• Contains a conclusion</li></ul>	_____ / 25
Grammatical Competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Register and style are appropriate</li><li>• Text is spell-checked</li><li>• Morphemic use is correct</li><li>• Text shows cohesion and coherence</li><li>• Usage shows mastery</li><li>• Purpose, audience, and writer's role are addressed correctly</li></ul>	_____ / 25
Total	_____ / 50

Instructor's comments and suggestions:

Diaz-Rico, L. (2004). Teaching English learners: Strategies and methods. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

## Lesson Four The Dream Job

Teaching Level: High Intermediate to Advanced Fluency

Time Frame: 2 hours

Objectives:

1. Learning Goal: Students will learn how to make inferences and predictions.
2. Content Goal: Students will learn information and new vocabulary from different types of exciting jobs.
3. Language Goal: Students will improve their writing skills by writing about their ideal job, using the newly acquired vocabulary during this lesson.

TESOL standards:

Goal 2: To use English to achieve academically in all content areas. Standard 2: Students will use English to obtain, process, construct, and provide subject matter information in spoken and written form.

Vocabulary:

Matchmaker - skydiving instructor - potter - emergency medical technician - odds - functional - appreciate - exhilarating - thrill - other 10 words to be determined by the students.

Materials:

Focus Sheet 4.1:	Jobs to Die For
Focus Sheet 4.2:	Writing Topics
Worksheet 4.1:	Making Predictions
Worksheet 4.2:	Making Inferences
Worksheet 4.3:	More Inferences!
Worksheet 4.4:	More & More Inferences!
Worksheet 4.5:	Interesting Jobs!
Worksheet 4.6:	Let's Build Some Vocabulary!
Worksheet 4.7:	Let's Write
Assessment Sheet 4.1:	Rubric

### Warm Up:

The teacher ask the students what is meant about being successful in their work, and if they think that what they believe is important now will change ten years from now. If so, in what ways? The teacher writes down the ideas on the board.

### Task Chain 1: Making Inferences and Predictions

1. The teacher gives students Focus Sheet 4.1 and asks them to complete Worksheet 4.1 with their predictions without reading the text. The students only need to scan the title and subheadings of the text.
2. After skimming the text and completing the questions on Worksheet 4.1, the teacher asks the students to read the text closely (Focus Sheet 4.1) and asks them to check their predictions on Worksheet 4.1.
3. The teacher gives the students Worksheet 4.2 and asks them to make inferences about different personality characteristics one should have in order to enjoy the different jobs.
4. The teacher gives the students Worksheet 4.3 and after the students finish completing the worksheet, they will be asked to support and defend orally their inferences and choices.
5. The teacher gives the students Work Sheet 4.4 and asks the students if they can find the main idea of the passage. They check their answer with the group.
6. The teacher assesses the students by making sure that they are on track and by collecting the work sheets after they have finished.

### Task Chain 2: Types of Jobs

1. The teacher gives the students Worksheet 4.5 and checks their reading comprehension and understanding of specific information and vocabulary used in the text to describe different types of jobs. Students need to write down sentences using words from the text.
2. The teacher discuss with students how they can combine vocabulary strategies and together complete Work Sheet 4.6.
3. The teacher assesses students' work by grading and checking the worksheets.

### Task Chain 3: Expanding Writing Skills

1. The teacher gives the students Focus Sheet 4.2. Students read the questions carefully and chose one to write about.
2. Students complete Worksheet 4.7 by writing a small essay of 250 words; they will use the rubric to write the essay.
3. The teacher collects Worksheet 4.7 for assessment.

### Final Assessment:

#### Formative:

The teacher walks around the classroom and checks that students are on track.  
The teacher gives constructive feedback on students' writing.

#### Summative:

The teacher has students assess their own work with rubric appended (Assessment Sheet 4.1).

## Focus Sheet 4.1

### Jobs to Die For

From skydiving instructors to matchmakers, some folks just love their jobs.

Yes, some people love their jobs. Whether they serve mankind, help others with self-improvement or just want to feel the rush of pure adrenaline, they're out there. When I asked our readers to tell me about their dream jobs, I got hundreds of responses. I chose to profile workers who make enough money to live on and have a strong sense of accomplishment. None of them are attracted to their jobs for the money. In fact, many said they would do it for nothing. (Just do not tell their bosses). Here are four who are enviable positions.

#### **Shelly Sallee, 31, skydiving instructor.**

"I have a job with an incredible view. It's high-speed and full of fun," says Sally, an instructor for Front Range Skydivers in California and an examiner for the US Parachute Association.

"Every time I jump, I get another adrenaline rush. After 2,500 jumps, it's still an exciting experience. I have the most exhilarating job in the world." But her real thrill is for her students.

"I love seeing a student on their first jump all nervous and excited before hand. Then, when they get to the ground, they are completely exhilarated. They cannot wait to get to a phone to call everyone they know and tell them they've just jumped out of an airplane," Sallee says. "Later, they learn to turn and fly forward. Then, they realize they are not just flying rocks. They are birds. They can fly!" The air cannot hurt you, only the ground can," she says with a smile. Despite all her jumps, Sallee has had only three malfunctions in which she had to depend on a second, reserve chute.

"That's pretty good odds," she says. "You have more chance of getting hurt in a traffic accident than you do skydiving." Requirements for a skydiving instructor are six hours of free fall, the equivalent of about 1,000 jumps and up to two years of training. Only about half of the candidates meet the instructors' rigid requirements. Entry-level pay for a full time instructor is \$15,000.



## Focus Sheet 4.1

### Jobs to Die For (cont.)

#### **Sheila Osburn, 37, emergency medical technician.**

Osburn is an EMT with a big heart. "Every day is different and it does not feel like a job. I enjoy it so much. I never know what to expect when I go to work," she says. When someone calls an ambulance, Osburn is there to help with everything from moving an elderly patient from the hospital to a nursing home, to helping a child hurt and scared on the playground. She sees life and sometimes she sees death. "I put my whole heart and soul into this job," Osburn says.

"I encountered one elderly patient last week who had to move to a nursing home from her home of 50 years," Osburn says. "All of her control had been taken away. I told her someday I would be where she was and admired her. I feel deeply for these people. I think it takes a great amount of strength for them because in a lot of ways, their choices have been taken away and it takes strength to accept their new environment."

#### **Greg Marshall, 46, potter.**

"I have a great job. I get to play in the mud everyday. Who could ask for more?" says Marshall of Manitou Springs, Colorado. It took Marshall a while to discover his labor of love. He was an education major in college when one semester he took a pottery class, "...because I needed another class to be a full time student." It was there that he discovered his heavenly handicraft. A former art student-teacher and a wrestling coach, Marshall now specializes in functional pottery: mugs, bowls, and plates. He says, "It's great for people to appreciate something so much that they are willing to pay for it and have it be part of their lives and in their homes. Everything I make I feel like there's a part of me in it. It feels good when other people like it, too."

#### **Donna Shugrue, 49 matchmaker.**

"People always tell me I have the most fun job in the world, and I do!" says Shugrue, a matchmaker with unmatched enthusiasm. Her matchmaking has led to 60 marriages and engagements since she started her own company 20 years ago. "That does not say anything about the people dating and having fun and making friends," says Shugrue, co-owner of "Perfectly Matched."

## Focus Sheet 4.1

### Jobs to Die For (cont.)

Shugrue starts her clients with a compatibility profile, a written test of 46 questions in which they must rate themselves on a scale of one to five on parameters such as attitude toward life, sociability, religion and financial status. Then she matches people with similar interests and long-term goals. "And of course, there has to be a physical attraction," she says. She also considers height, weight, age, occupation, smoking, drinking, children, education, and race when getting couples together.

"I can't imagine a job that's much more gratifying than when someone calls and says, 'Yes, it worked!' One couple stopped by from the hospital with their new baby three months ago. It still gives me chill to think about it."

Eidger, A., & Pavlik, C. (1999). Reading connections: Skills and strategies for purposeful reading. New York: Oxford.

## Focus Sheet 4.2

### Writing Topics

1. Describe your ideal job. What would you do? Where would you work? Would you work alone or with other people?
2. Write about a job that you had. Was it enjoyable? What parts did you like? What parts didn't you like?
3. Write about a job that you think is unpleasant. Why is it unpleasant? Explain. Why would you not want to do that job? Can you think of any reasons why a different person might like this job?

Eidger, A., & Pavlik, C. (1999). Reading connections: Skills and strategies for purposeful reading. New York: Oxford.

## Work Sheet 4.1

### Making Predictions

1. Pre-read the text on Focus Sheet 4.1 and complete the predictions below by filling in the blanks and circling the correct words. (1 point per answer) (Full credit is 5 points)

Remember: Do not read the text, just scan it and look for the following information.

1. Title: This reading will tell me about  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Genre: This reading is probably from  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. It is/is not a news item. It is a  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Introduction: The reading is written in a very formal/informal style.

5. Therefore, I should expect to find technical vocabulary/casual language.

2. Now, re-read the text and check your predictions!  
(Give yourself an extra point for each correct answer)

## Worksheet 4.2

### Making Inferences

After reading the text on Focus Sheet 4.1, make a list of the personality characteristics that one should have in order to enjoy different jobs. Provide at least one answer for each job title that is in the reading. (Each answer is worth 2 ½ points) (Assignment is worth 10 points)

<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Personality/Characteristics</u>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

### Work Sheet 4.3

#### More Inferences!

Look at the following statements about what creates job satisfaction. Put a checkmark (✓) next to the ones that are supported by the reading. Be prepared to defend your choices orally. (Each correct answer will count as 2 points) (Hint = There are 5 correct choices)

People feel satisfied with their work when they:

- \_\_\_ 1. get a good salary.
- \_\_\_ 2. make other people happy.
- \_\_\_ 3. enjoy the activity.
- \_\_\_ 4. get ahead in their career.
- \_\_\_ 5. are able to do a variety of tasks.
- \_\_\_ 6. produce a great amount in a short time.
- \_\_\_ 7. are in a position of authority.
- \_\_\_ 8. make or do something useful.

## Work Sheet 4.4

### More & More Inferences!

Sometimes main ideas are not stated directly. In that case, we need to use inferences to find the author's intended meaning. For example, this reading is almost entirely made up of examples, so you may have to infer a more general point from specific examples.

Answer the following questions and write down the main idea of the passage. (Each question is worth 5 points)

1. What was the author's purpose of writing this article?
  1. to describe four very different jobs
  2. to prove that some people love their jobs
  3. to illustrate the characteristics of a good job

2. How did the writer choose to achieve his purpose?

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3. Look back to exercise on Worksheet 4.3. Complete this sentence about the author's main idea:

The author believes that to have job satisfaction you must have:

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Eidger, A., & Pavlik, C. (1999). Reading connections: Skills and strategies for purposeful reading. New York: Oxford.

## Worksheet 4.5

### Interesting Jobs!

First, complete the following chart to make sure that you understand the content of the text. After re-reading the text on Focus Sheet 4.1, complete the chart with information from the reading. To receive full credit for this assignment, make sure that you provide at least 1 main describing idea for each job. (Each idea is worth 2½ point)

<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Job Description</u>

Now, chose ten new words from the exercise above and write at least one sentence for each new word. (Each sentence is worth 1 point) (Full credit = 10 points)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Eidger, A., & Pavlik, C. (1999). Reading connections: Skills and strategies for purposeful reading. New York: Oxford.



## Worksheet 4.6

### Let's Build Some Vocabulary!

Look at the underlined words and decide what combination of clues can help you guess the meaning. Full credit for this assignment is 5 points. (One point per answer)

1. "That's pretty good odds," she says. "You have more chance of getting hurt in a traffic accident that you do skydiving."

Meaning:

Clues:

2. Marshall now specializes in functional pottery: mugs bowls, and plates.

Meaning:

Clues:

3. "It's great for people to appreciate something so much that they are willing to pay for it and have it be part of their lives and in their homes."

Meaning:

Clues:

4. "After 2,500 jumps, it's still an exciting experience. I have the most exhilarating job in the world."

Meaning:

Clues:

5. But her real thrill is for her students. "I love seeing a student on their first jump all nervous and excited beforehand. Then, when they get to the ground, they are completely exhilarated."

Meaning:

Clues:

Eidger, A., & Pavlik, C. (1999). Reading connections: Skills and strategies for purposeful reading. New York: Oxford.

## Worksheet 4.7

### Let's Write!

Look at Focus Sheet 4.2 and choose the question that is most appealing to you. Write a 250-300 word essay. Your essay will be graded according to the following rubric:

<u>I'm looking for ...</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Points</u>
Organization	5	
Clarity / Coherence	5	
Grammar / Syntax	5	
Spelling	5	
Content / Vocabulary	10	
Total Points	30	

You should have a beginning/middle/ending. You need to have the three parts to receive full credit for the organization part.

Each paragraph should have a thesis statement and ideas to support it. (Each thesis statement is worth one point)  
There should be five paragraphs to receive full credit for this portion of the grade.

Your ideas should be clear and coherent. Make sure that you have subject/verb agreement. I will take one point off for every two subject/verb agreement that is wrong.

Check your spelling. For every two spelling errors, I will take one point off.

You should include in your essay at least ten new vocabulary words learned in this lesson to receive full credit for the vocabulary part. (Each new word is worth one point)

## Assessment Sheet 4.1

### Grading Rubric

Assignment	Point Value	Your Points
Worksheet 4.1	10	
Worksheet 4.2	10	
Worksheet 4.3	10	
Worksheet 4.4	15	
Worksheet 4.5	20	
Worksheet 4.6	5	
Worksheet 4.7	30	
Total	100	

### Assessment Scale

Excellent	100 - 90
Very Good	89 - 70
Good	69 - 60
Needs Improvement	- 59

**Lesson Five**  
**A Cover Letter That Sells!**

Teaching Level: Intermediate to Advanced Fluency

Time Frame: 2 hours

Objectives:

1. Learning Objective: Direct Learning Strategy:  
Cognitive. The students will learn how to use graphic organizers to build, apply and communicate knowledge and ideas.
2. Content Objective: The students will identify typical content of a business English letter and create a letter template.
3. Language Objective: The students will write a cover letter.

TESOL Standards:

Goal 2: To use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways. Standard 1: Students will use the appropriate language variety, register, and genre according to audience, purpose and setting.

Materials:

Focus Sheet 5.1:	Cover Letter Sample
Focus Sheet 5.2:	Cover Letter Sample
Focus Sheet 5.3:	Cover Letter Sample
Focus Sheet 5.4:	Job Ads
Worksheet 5.1:	Complete the Chart
Worksheet 5.2:	Your Own Chart
Worksheet 5.3:	Sequential Organizer
Worksheet 5.4:	Creating a Cover Letter Template
Worksheet 5.5:	Writing a Cover Letter
Assessment Sheet 5.1:	Rubric

Warm Up:

The teacher asks the students what a cover letter is. The teacher writes the ideas on the board. The teacher asks the students if they know when they need to write cover letters and why.

### Task Chain 1: Using Graphic Organizers

1. The teacher shows the students samples of a cover letter. (Focus Sheets 5.1,5.2,5.3)
2. The teacher asks the students to mark the weaknesses, strengths, accomplishments and skills in each sample.
3. After they finish, the teacher asks them to classify them and complete the T - Chart. (Worksheet 5.1)
4. Once the students have finished filling out the chart, the teacher suggests that the students make another chart using their own personal information (weaknesses, strengths, accomplishments, and skills) (Worksheet 5.2). The teacher monitors the students' work.
5. Later, the teacher asks the students to identify orally the beginning, middle, and end of one of the cover letters.
6. The teacher asks the students to complete the sequential organizer on Worksheet 5.3.
7. The teacher collects the work sheets for assessment.

### Task Chain 2: Identifying Business English Letter Content and Creating a Cover Letter Template

1. The teacher asks the students to think about the expressions and vocabulary that they have identified in the sample cover letters and asks them to come up with a cover letter template that they will be able to use in their future writing of cover letters.
2. The students are asked to write on the template some expressions that they learned from the sample letters (Focus Sheets 5.1, 5.2, 5.3) for future reference. The students complete Worksheet 5.4.
3. The students hand in the template to obtain the teacher's feedback and score.

### Task Chain 3: Writing a Cover Letter

1. The teacher gives the students Focus Sheet 5.4 and tells the students to choose the job description that is most appealing to them.
2. The teacher asks the students to write their own cover letter (Worksheet 5.5) for the job that they have chosen from Focus Sheet 5.4.
3. The teacher collects the worksheets to score them.

Final Assessment:

Formative:

The teacher walks around the classroom and checks that students are on track.

The teacher gives constructive feedback on students' writing.

Summative:

The teacher has students assess their own work with rubric appended (Assessment Sheet 5.1).

Focus Sheet 5.1

Cover Letter Sample

Brenda J. Wilson  
1703 Walnut Grove Avenue  
Philadelphia, Penn. 19107

August 12, 2001

Metropolitan Children's Hospital  
P. O. Box 411067  
Philadelphia, Penn. 19002

Attn: Robin Boyd, Human Resources  
Re: Director for Patient Financial Services

Dear Mrs. Boyd:

I was very interested to see your advertisement for a Director of Patient Financial Services in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (8-11-01). I have been seeking just such an opportunity as this, and I think my background and your requirements may be a good match. My resume is enclosed for your review.

Of particular note for you and the members of your team as you consider this management placement are my strong accomplishments in reducing outstandings and reorganizing accounting and collections functions to achieve improved operating efficiency internally, improve operating efficiency internally, and improve cashflow for the institution a whole.

Additionally, my contributions have been mainly achieved by improving information flow within the patient financial services function, and improving patient financial services utilization of already available MIS services and admissions, UR, contracting, and medical records functions.

After fifteen years in patient accounting, I have a thorough understanding of every aspect of this function in a modern hospital/medical center setting. My current employer is very happy with my performance, but I view myself as somewhat of a troubleshooter, and most of the reorganizations initiated here have already come to fruition; so I am eager to consider new challenges.

(continued)

## Focus Sheet 5.1

### Cover Letter Sample (Cont.)

If you are seeking a manager who stays abreast of the field, who understands technology, who earns 100% staff support, and who is as career-committed as much as it takes to achieve total success, then please consider what I have to offer. I would be happy to have a preliminary discussion with you or members of your committee to see if we can establish a mutual interest. I will call you within the week to answer any initial questions you may have, and to hear about your hiring process.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I certainly look forward to exploring this further.

Yours truly,

Brenda J. Wilson



Focus Sheet 5.2

Cover Letter Sample

Joseph Smith  
1111 Winners Way  
Rochester, NH 90876

October 4, 2001

Ms. Gail Roberts  
Recruiting Coordinator  
Department DRR 1201  
Database Corporation

Dear Ms. Roberts:

Your advertisement for software engineers in the January issue of the IEEE Spectrum caught my attention. I was drawn to the ad by my strong interest in software database design.

I have worked with a CALMA system in developing VLSI circuits, and I also have substantial experience in the design of interactive CAD software. Because of this experience, I can make a direct and immediate contribution to your department. I have enclosed a copy of my resume, which details my qualifications and suggests how I might be of service to Database.

I would like very much to meet with you to discuss your open positions for software engineers. If you wish to arrange an interview, please contact me at the above address or by telephone at (518) 271 - 9999.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph Smith

**Focus Sheet 5.3**

**Cover Letter Sample**

Joan Doe  
333 Fort Stockton  
San Diego, CA 92000

January 30, 2002

Recruiting Coordinator  
HAL Corporation  
55 Washington Avenue  
New York, New York 10081

Dear Mr. Curtis:

As an experienced computer programmer who is presently pursuing a master's degree in electrical engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, I am writing to request information about possible summer employment opportunities with HAL. I am interested in a position that will allow me to combine the talents I have developed in both computer programming and electrical engineering. However, as you can see from the attached resume, I have extensive experience in many related fields, and I always enjoy new challenges.

I feel that it is important for me to maintain a practical, real-world perspective while developing my academic abilities. I am proud of the fact that I have financed my entire education through scholarships and summer jobs related to my field of study. This work experience has enhanced my appreciation for the education I am pursuing. I find that I learn as much from my summer jobs as I do from my academic studies. For example, during the summer of 1986, while working for IBM in Boca Raton, Florida, I gained a great deal of practical experience in the field of electronic circuit logic and driver design. When I returned to school in the fall and took Computer Hardware Design, I found that my experience with IBM had thoroughly prepared me for the subject.

(continued)

### Focus Sheet 5.3

#### Cover Letter Sample (Cont.)

Having said all this, I realize that your first consideration in hiring an applicant must not be the potential educational experience HAL can provide, but the skills and services the applicant has to offer. I hope the experience and education described in my resume suggest how I might be of service to HAL.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss with you how I might best assist HAL in fulfilling its present corporate needs. I will be available for employment from May 14 through August 31, 2002. Please let me know what summer employment opportunities are available at HAL for someone with my education, experience, and interests. You can reach me at the above address or by phone at (518) 271-0000.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Joan Doe

## Focus Sheet 5.4

### Job Ads

---

**Administrative Assistant**

Fast-growing finance company has an immediate opening for a full time administrative assistant.

This successful candidate will be detail-oriented and possess good communication, organization, and computer skills to be applied in a multi-task environment. ACT

experience is a plus. Daily responsibilities will range from simple to complex.

**Requirements:**

Candidate must be able to react with appropriate urgency to situations that require quick turn around. Flexibility and a willingness to learn new things are a must.

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**CPA/Tax Accountant**

Very affluent and successful San Diego professional firm is seeking a tax accountant who is a CPA to work in their La Jolla/San Diego Offices.

This professional will be working with very high-net worth individuals, excellent executive compensation and benefits, one of California's most respected professional firms, client focused environment, immediate opening. Duties include: prepare individual,

Corporate partnership, LLC, fiduciary, gift, and estate tax returns, provide individual, corporate, bookkeeping, accounting, and tax planning assistance, direct client contact, form close working relationships with the client and their financial officers and management team.

**Requirements:**

Tax experience and excellent client relationship skills are required.

---

## Focus Sheet 5.4

### Job Ads (Cont.)

**CUSTOM PICTURE FRAMER.** Full time. Experienced applicants should be knowledgeable in all areas: chopping, joining, computer mat cutting, mounting, conservation and museum framing. Experience in framing design and sales also helpful. San Marcos location. All applicants please fax resume and salary requirements to 760 744-1211 or e-mail to Karen@itworkz.net

**GENERAL.** Spherion in partnership with SLCC is looking for talented individuals to grow their rapidly expanding team. SLCC is a premier financial company located in the Sorrento Mesa area. Part-time Customer Service Reps. Must have great phone voice, basic PC skills and reliable transportation. 6:45 AM-10:45am shift. Up to \$11/hour.

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**REAL ESTATE/SENIOR VP (Commercial).** San Diego National Bank seeks qualified individuals that possess these qualifications: B.S. degree in a business related field, business administration preferred. Ten or more years of experience, with progressively greater responsibilities in commercial real estate lending environment. Through understanding of loan underwriting and documentation for complex real estate transactions. Excellent communication, management, analytical and interpersonal skills. Solid knowledge of commercial real estate lending policies and procedures. Proven organizational and public relations skills. Previous experience in leadership and management of senior level officers.

## Worksheet 5.1

### Complete the Chart

Looking at the sample letters, make a list with the strengths, accomplishments, skills, and weaknesses that you can find in each letter. You should include at least ten ideas or phrases for each category to receive full credit (10 points) for this assignment. Each idea or sentence is worth one point.

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>

## Worksheet 5.2

### Your Own Chart

Now, complete the chart using your own information. You should include at least 10 ideas or phrases for each category to receive full credit (10 points) for this assignment. Each sentence, idea, or phrase is worth 5.1 point.

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>

## Worksheet 5.3

### Sequential Organizer

Fill out the following organizer with the beginning, middle/body, and ending of the letter. Look at Focus Sheet 5.1, and chose one of the samples to complete this exercise. Provide 10 ideas for each space to receive full credit (20 points) for this task. Each sentence is worth two points.

Beginning of the letter/Opening Paragraph

--

The Middle/Body of the Letter/Supporting Paragraphs

--

The Ending/Concluding Paragraph

--



## Worksheet 5.4

### Creating a Cover Letter Template

By looking at the samples on Focus Sheet 5.1, can you create a cover letter template to be used for future reference? You can add to it some of the expressions that you consider important and useful for future writing. Write at least 5 ideas for each part of the letter (beginning/middle/ending) to receive full credit (30 points) for this assignment. Each entry is worth two points.

## Worksheet 5.5

### Writing a Cover Letter

After choosing a job ad from Focus Sheet 5.2, could you write your own cover letter for the position that you are applying to? To receive full credit for this assignment (30 points), you need to hand in a letter with at least 30 sentences (each sentence is worth 1 point.) The format of the letter should be like the ones on Focus Sheet 5.1. Make sure that you check the spelling! Good luck!

## Assessment Sheet 5.1

### Rubric

#### Grading Rubric

Assignment	Point Value	Your Points
Worksheet 5.1	10	
Worksheet 5.2	10	
Worksheet 5.3	10	
Worksheet 5.4	15	
Worksheet 5.5	20	
Worksheet 5.6	5	
Worksheet 5.7	30	
Total	100	

#### Assessment Scale

Excellent	100 - 90
Very Good	89 - 70
Good	69 - 60
Needs Improvement	- 59

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