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Increasing the Social Connection Between Immigrant English Language Learners, School Staff, and Peers in the High School Setting

Gretchen Johnson Griffey
Regis University

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INCREASING THE SOCIAL CONNECTION BETWEEN IMMIGRANT ENGLISH
LANGUAGE LEARNERS, SCHOOL STAFF, AND PEERS
IN THE HIGH SCHOOL SETTING

by

Gretchen Johnson Griffey

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

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ABSTRACT

Increasing the Social Connection between Immigrant English Language Learners, School Staff, and Peers in the High School Setting

An Immigrant English Language Learner (ELL) encounters many new and different experiences when they enter high school. This transition can lead to a sense of loneliness and isolation if the student is not comfortable. However, if ELLs feel welcomed, valued, and connected to others, the high school experience can be a positive one. This research project was designed to use a personal presentation learning tool as a way to establish a needed social connection between ELLs, school staff, and native speaking peers as a way to enhance personal relationships, promote cultural understanding, and connect students to their new setting.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

English Language Learners (ELL) face many new transitions when they enter high school. High school is a new place with new rules, new faces, a new language, and a different culture than what they have known previously. This transition, according to Igoa (1995), can lead to *cultural disorientation*, which is a normal feeling for an immigrant ELL to experience when he or she is placed in a new and different environment. Gay (2000) described it this way:

Immigrant students entering the United States have to adjust to a new culture, language, style of living and educational system. This geographic, cultural, and psychoemotional uprootedness can cause stress, anxiety, feelings of vulnerability, loneliness, isolation and insecurity. All of these conditions can have negative effects on school achievement. (p. 18)

According to Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001), students' exposure to a different culture, lack of connectedness, language barrier, and anxiety can foster poor self-esteem and inhibit academic and social success in the school setting. However, if the ELL feels welcomed, valued, comfortable, and safe, learning can be achieved.

Statement of the Problem

According to Oberg (1960, as cited in Igoa, 1995), there are numerous unfamiliar experiences that an ELL encounters upon entry to a new school. Due to these unfamiliar experiences, often, ELLs feel alone, scared, and disconnected from their surroundings. According to Igoa, after an ELL is removed from his or her familiar background, many

experience shock in the new setting. In order for a student to survive and transition into the new environment, there must be a teacher, peers, or other significant person who *nurtures* the student through transition. It is not only the teacher who must help with the transition, but also the staff in effective schools can help establish a positive and beneficial environment to facilitate the transition into the new school and culture. A successful environment is facilitated by teachers and administration who specifically place a high value on the students' cultures and languages. However, according to Derwing, DeCorby, Ichikawa, and Jamieson (1999), Franquiz and del Carmen Salazar (2004), Igoa, and Sam (2000), many educators lack connectedness with students and, often, schools are not places where immigrant students are embraced as assets to the school environment.

Purpose of the Project

In order to establish a school and classroom environment where immigrant students feel welcomed and accepted, educators must listen to students and help them feel like they belong. This can be done by the promotion of cultural awareness (Igoa, 1995) and social group identity (Sam, 2000). A personal presentation will be developed that can be modified by the ELL, school staff and native speaking peers, which can then be used as a learning tool to share personal and cultural information with one another. The presentation will be developed by use of Microsoft Power Point software and will have three templates; one each for ELLs, school staff members, and native speaking peers. Each template will be different in order to help each pair acquire specific information from each other and the English used in the templates will be appropriate for a beginning

to intermediate level learner; however, they can be further modified for higher levels if needed. The school staff member and native speaking peers will be paired with ELL students, and each will introduce their presentation to one another during a designated time. The presentations can either be printed or shown directly from the computer or projected for a class. This interaction can enable the pair to increase understanding between cultures, create a personal relationship between native speakers and ELLs; also, it can be a way to promote a welcoming atmosphere in the school environment.

Chapter Summary

In summary, according to Igoa (1995), ELL immigrants need to feel a connection to their school environment. The ELL teacher can facilitate and promote this connection by use of a personal presentation between the ELLs, school staff, and native speaking peers. Research will be presented in Chapter 2 to further define: (a) immigrant ELL issues; (b) ELL learning theory; (c) the immigrant experience; (d) lack of connectedness between school staff, peers and ELLs; (e) academic success, and (f) strategies to better improve school and ELL student relations. The method for the applied project will be presented in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

English Language learners (ELLs) face a myriad of challenges when they enter the school system in the United States. They not only face changes in language and culture, but they are displaced from any familiarity they may have had (Igoa, 1995). Therefore, if a positive social connection between ELLs, school staff and peers is established, positive feelings about the high school setting will be enhanced; thus, academic and social success for ELLs can be achieved. Presented here, the data are used to provide a depth of knowledge for this issue.

A National Look at the Immigrant Population

Linguistic Diversity

According to Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004), ethnic and linguistic diversity increases every year in the U.S., more than 90% of all new immigrants come from countries where English is not the dominant language. Between the years 1979-2003, the number of children from the ages of 5-17 who spoke a language other than English at home, increased from a population of 3.8- 9.9 million (National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2005).

In order to obtain specifics about this population, supplemental surveys were

distributed by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census Population Survey (CPS, 1999, as cited in NCES, 2005) between the years of 1979 and 2003. Of the 9.9 million children surveyed, they were asked if they could speak English: (a) Very well, (b) Well, (c) Not well, and (d) Not at all. According to the CPS, a category of anything less than Very well indicated that there was difficulty in speaking English. Also, according to the NCES, the category of less than Very well more than doubled from a population of 1.3 million in 1979 to 2.9 million in 2003.

A more specific breakdown of the data is included in the 2000 census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). The most frequently spoken languages spoken at home in the U.S. for ages 5 and above, other than Spanish, included: (a) Chinese at 2.0 million, (b) French at 1.6 million, (c) German at 1.4 million, (d) Tagalog at 1.2 million, (e) Vietnamese and Italian at 1.0 million, (f) Russian and Polish at 0.7 million, and (g) Arabic at 0.6 million. In relation to English speaking ability, it was found that Spanish speakers reported that only 13.8 million of 28.1 million spoke less than Very well. Also, included in the data were statistics for Other Indo-European languages that included: (a) German, (b) Russian, (c) Italian, and (d) Polish. Of the 10.0 million in this population, 3.4 million spoke English less than Very well. With Asian and Pacific languages, which included Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, Hmong, and Tagalog, 3.6 million of 7.0 million spoke English less than Very well. For all other languages, 0.6 million of 1.9 million were reported to speak less than Very well.

According to the 2000 census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003), the increase of nonEnglish speakers is not evenly divided throughout the U.S. For example, one-fifth of

the total U.S. population of ages five and above reside in the West. However, the West is the home to one-third of the total population non English speakers in the U.S., which, of all regions, is the highest population of non English speakers. More specifically, Spanish is the language most often spoken: (a) 64% of the total population of Spanish speakers are in the West (17.3 million), (b) 45% are in Northeast (10 million), (c) 71% are in the South (14 million), (d) 46% are in the Midwest (5.7 million).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2003) the states which are most effected by a population influx of persons identified as, spoke another language other than English, based on a total U.S. population of 262,375,152 in 2000 are: (a) California with 12,401,756 (39%) of the population; (b) Texas with 6,010,753 (31%) of the population; (c) New York with 4,462,921 (28%) of the population; and (d) Florida with 3,473,864, (23%) of the population. More specifically, those identified as, spoke English less than very well, based on a U.S. total population of 21,320,407 are the same four states: (a) California with 6,277,779 (20%) of the population; (b) Texas with 6,669,603 (14%) of the population; (c) New York with 2,310,256 (13%) of the population, and (d) Florida with 1,554,865 (10%) of the population. This trend of increased non English speakers shows an obvious need for English language education in U.S. schools in order to adequately educate the new influx of school age students in all regions.

English Language Education

Initially, population growth and the levels of English language inability lead to the need for English language education in the U.S. schools. According to NCES (2005), during the 2002-2003 school year, English as a Second Language (ESL), also termed

ELL services, were provided for 4 million students, 8% of the total student population. According to Freeman and Freeman (1998), the term ESL is a term used for programs where teachers teach English to children or adult students who do not speak or who are learning English. It can either be in an English speaking environment or where English is not generally spoken. This term is not always used because second language does not accurately describe students for whom English is their third or fourth language.

Hispanic Education and School Drop Out Rates

According to the *Latinos in Education* report (1999, as cited in Echevarria et al., 2004), Hispanic American students in ESL, bilingual, and other English programs constitute 75% of all students serviced. Pallas, Natriello, and McDill, (1989, as cited in Fitzgerald, 1995), reported that the U.S. population of Hispanic American students in 1982 was 9.3% of the school age population; however, by 2020, an increase of 25.3% is predicted. As reported by Moss and Puma (1995, as cited in Echevarria et al.), the academic achievement of language minorities has fallen behind the school population, they are judged by teachers to have lower academic abilities, and they score below classmates on standardized tests. In the 1990s, California third grade students were given a state reading achievement test. The results showed that 80% of all Hispanic, 50% of all Native American, and 53% of all Asian American students scored at or below the average. The student's scores remained the same through the twelfth grade (Echevarria et al.). Padron (1994) stated that

Hispanic/LEP students are the largest growing minority group. In addition, they have the lowest educational level and the highest drop out rates of any other ethnic group in the U.S. Furthermore, there is also evidence that disadvantaged or lower achieving

students generally attend schools that serve them less well than schools that serve more advantaged students. (p. 49)

According to NCES (2005) the Hispanic American drop out rate in high school in 2003 was 23.5%. This lack of achievement in Hispanic American youth, according to Valdez (1992, as cited in Padron, 1994), is associated with poverty, mediocre schools, poor teachers, and low English language proficiency levels. This low achievement demonstrated by linguistically and culturally diverse students is an indicator that educators are not adequately meeting the educational needs of these students (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000, as cited in Echevarria et al.).

Involvement in Extracurricular Activities

Halloway (2000) suggested that there is a link between success and lower drop out rates when students are involved in extracurricular activities, and participation in such activities can keep all students interested in school. Mahoney and Cairns (1997, as cited in Holloway), found that participation in extracurricular activities was tied to lower school drop out rates for both girls and boys. Also, Holloway cited McNeal (1995), who noted a difference between participation in certain activities and drop out rates. The positive activities were: (a) sports, (b) fine arts, and (c) participation in academic organizations. It was concluded that students were more likely to stay in school if they were involved in an academic organization; however, participation in sports alone “reduces the probability of school drop outs by approximately 40 percent” (p. 87). Another study cited by Holloway was conducted by Marsh (1992), in which extracurricular participation was linked with increased social self-concept and academic

self-concept. It was concluded that “participation in extracurricular activities, even those not obviously associated with academic achievement, leads to increased commitment to school and school values, which leads indirectly to increased academic success” (p. 87). Even limited involvement in school culture can lead to improved performance academically, and social connectedness is a natural byproduct of team activity.

Historical Background of ELL Education

Federal Laws

The previously stated concerns about ELLs have not been ignored by members of the U.S. government or educators; this is evident in the laws that govern schools today. According to Crawford (1989) and Fitzgerald (1993, both cited in Fitzgerald, 1995), the education of ELLs began in the 1930s with a focus on adult students. Adults were taught primarily in universities, came from the upper middle class, were highly literate in their native languages, and had studied English in their home countries prior to living in the United States. At this same time, personnel in university English and Linguistic departments began to provide teacher training programs in ESL teaching (Ebel, 1980, as cited in Fitzgerald). However, according to Garcia (1992c, as cited in Fitzgerald), it was not until the 1960s that laws associated with ESL and bilingual education programs were applied to the public schools.

In 1964, 1968, and 1970, laws were enacted to ensure education for ELLs. According to the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (1991, as cited in Fitzgerald, 1995), in 1964, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act was enacted in order to prohibit discrimination of race, color, or national origin specifically in federally funded

activities and programs. In order to see that Title VI was upheld, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) was organized to oversee the compliance of the law. In 1968, further steps were taken (Crawford, 1989, as cited in Fitzgerald); Title VII, the Bilingual Education Act, was enacted which was an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This amendment was the first notable endeavor to address the educational needs of ELLs. The amendment was specifically devised to target schools where there were high enrollments of language minority students and low income students. The programs were to be supported in schools so that educators could focus on students' transition from their native language to English. There was no focus at this time on the promotion of bilingual skills (Crawford, as cited in Fitzgerald, 1995).

In 1970, Chinese public school students charged that the San Francisco United School District did not have appropriate language programs to address language acquisition, and this caused them a disadvantage in school (Fitzgerald, 1995). A class action lawsuit was filed, *Lau vs. Nichols*, and the supreme Court Judge ruled that school educators were required to provide assistance for ELLs in the form of "ESL-pullout instruction, bilingual instruction, or some other possibility" (p. 119).

Specific standards began to emerge (Tucker & Coddling, 1998, as cited in Echevarria et al., 2004), when The Goals 2000: Educate America Act was passed in 1994. The focus of the Act for its authors was to design standards for the content areas of: (a) geography, (b) reading, (c) language arts, (d) science, and (e) history. Thus, with standards set for these disciplines, the organization, Teachers of English to Speakers of

Other Languages, Inc, (TESOL) was established to encourage national standards for the education of ELLs.

A task force was assembled in 1990 “to ensure educational equality and opportunity” (Echevarria et al., 2004, p. v) for ELL students. First, the *Access Brochure* was written to highlight ELL needs and specifically address school reform. Then, the task force members compiled a document of ELL education standards. The document; *ESL Standards for Pre-K-12 Students*, was adopted nationally with sheltered instruction and content based ESL as preferred methodologies. Included in the document are ESL goals and standards by grade and proficiency level.

Even though programs and laws were in place for schools and ELLs, government officials took education reform a step further, and the most recent educational law was signed into office on January 8, 2001. President George W. Bush signed into law, Public Law 107-110, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; White House, 2001), and stated that: “too many of our neediest children are being left behind” (White House, 2001, p.1). Among the many other educational reforms in NCLB, language instruction for Limited English Proficient, (LEP), ELLs and immigrant students were addressed. Limited English Proficient (LEP) was a term widely used but, according to Freeman and Freeman (1998), it can be perceived as a negative term because of the focus on what students cannot do rather than the strengths the students possess. According to Fitzgerald (1995), federal government officials describe LEPs as: (a) not born in the U.S., (b) spoke native languages other than English, and (c) come from environments where the use of languages other than English, impact their proficiency levels. Also, the term, immigrant

students, according to Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001), is used in reference to foreign born students who have migrated. However, not all students in English programs are foreign born. Instead, the term, children of immigrants, can be used for both: (a) children born in the U.S. or (b) foreign born. It is possible, according to this author's personal experience, to have beginning ELLs in high school because even though they may have been born in the U.S. they have moved back and forth between the U.S. and their home country without adequate English preparation.

Under the NCLB (2001, as cited in U.S. Department of Education, 2004), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was amended, and the Bilingual Education program was consolidated to create Title III. This enabled federal support for immigrant education and bilingual education grants to be combined and dispersed more evenly throughout the U.S. in order to implement programs. According to a White House (2001) press release, the NCLB will “benefit all limited English proficient students, helping them learn English and meet the same high academic standards as other students” (p. 1). Within the provisions of the NCLB, educators are held accountable for the success of their LEPs tests administered in English in the areas of reading and language arts after they have attended schools for 3 consecutive years in the U.S. Along with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), The Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) is another specially created government department used to uphold the laws created for the benefit of ELLs. The mission of the OELA staff is to:

help ensure that children who are LEP, including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English and meet the same challenging state academic content standards as all children are expected to meet. (p. 1)

This mission is followed by the promotion and support of quality education and reform, and administration of Title III of NCLB.

Programs for ELL Students

Currently, the OCR (2005) provides information to all school districts across the country so that school administrators and educators can choose methodologies and evaluations of their programs. Currently, specific program models are not mandated by the federal government. This gives educators in individual districts the opportunity to plan and implement programs that fit their needs. Yet, these educators must re-evaluate unsuccessful programs if the goals that were set by the educators for students, are not achieved. The different types of ESL programs include: (a) *transitional-bilingual-education* programs in which transition to English is the desired outcome yet, the students' native language and English are used in the classroom; (b) *content-ESL* and *ESL-pullout programs* taught by trained teachers in a *sheltered-English* approach; and (c) *two-way bilingual* education programs in which students continue to study their native language while, at the same time, learn English (Ovando & Collier, 1995, as cited in Fitzgerald, 1995).

The sheltered-English approach was originally developed by Krashen (1985, as cited in Freeman & Freeman, 1998) for older intermediate level ELL students. With this program, Krashen believed that students should be first taught in a mixture of three types of classes. Some classes are taught in the students' primary languages, some are sheltered, and some are taught in the mainstream. As students progress, they are then

transitioned through the classes until, finally, they remain in the mainstream. According to Freeman and Freeman, over time, the meaning of sheltered English has changed, and now it consists of two different meanings. Some schools have specific classes for ELLs, and teachers teach them with special techniques in order to help students with academic content based material. The term, sheltered, in this case refers to ELL students who are not in competition with mainstream students; however, in another meaning, sheltered refers to the techniques themselves. Teachers who use sheltered English techniques for teaching content, incorporate: (a) age and reading level appropriate literature about specific topics, (b) primary language support for key ideas and concepts, and (c) thematic units to promote in depth academic vocabulary for each specific subject.

ELL Teachers

However, according to Echevarria et al. (2004), in order for the education in ELL programs to be effective and for teachers to use the correct strategies, it is necessary to have highly qualified teachers. These certified teachers must be aware of standards based teaching and be well equipped with effective strategies for the education of ELLs. Unfortunately, according to the staff of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF; 1996, as cited in Echevarria et al.), there are not enough certified ESL and Bilingual teachers to meet the NCLB laws which call for a certified teacher by the year 2006 to teach in every core academic classroom. According to the NCES (2002, as cited in Echevarria et al.), in the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing survey, reportedly, 41.2% of the 2,984,781 public school teachers taught ELL students, but only 12.5% had 8 or more hours of training in the last 3 years.

To help with this shortage of qualified teachers, professional development opportunities have been organized in some districts (Echevarria et al., 2004). According to NCTAF (1996), Darling and Hammond (1998), and Darling, Hammond and McLaughlin (1995 as cited in Echevarria et al.), good professional development education includes a continuous and intensive program in which:

modeling, coaching, problem solving; collaborative endeavors for educators to share knowledge; experiential opportunities that engage teachers in actual teaching, assessment and observation; and development grounded in research but also drawing from teacher experience and inquiry, connected to the teachers' classes, students and subjects taught. (p. 7)

According to Echevarria et al., another concern with ELL success, which is related to the importance of qualified teachers, is the inconsistency between programs, student educational needs and instructional goals. Ideally, programs would be developed that enable certified teachers to teach ELLs in a separate ESL or bilingual classroom and would only transition to mainstream classes when they were sufficiently proficient in English to be successful with mainstream class work. However, this is not always the case and students are transitioned before they have reached a proficient level in academic English because: (a) educators may prematurely transition students due to an increase in student enrollment which then creates a deficit in certified teachers to teach in individual classes; or (b) laws enacted by state government officials in which access to language support is restricted, as occurred for students in the California schools who were exited from programs after 1 year.

Language Acquisition Theory

The early exit of an ELL student in this manner does not coincide with how long it

takes to acquire a new language as found in a study conducted by Thomas and Collier (1997, as cited in Haynes, 2005). This longitudinal study was conducted from 1982-1996, and it was found that the quality of formal school education in students' native language was an indicator of how long the process of English language acquisition takes. The study was conducted with a group of Asian and Hispanic American students who were split into two subgroups. The first subgroup, those who had entered a new school before the age of 8 and were below grade level and had little or no formal school education in their native language, took 7-10 years to test at grade level in English. In contrast, the subgroup of students between ages 8-11 who had 2-3 years of education in their native language took 5-7 years to test at grade level in English.

Brown (2004) cited Language Acquisition theorist, Cummins (1980), who discussed the amount of time required to learn a new language. However, his theory of language learning is categorized into two different parts of language. The first is Basic Interpersonal Conversational Skills (BICS) which consists of social and conversational language. "BICS English is characterized as content-embedded since contextual cues are available to both speaker and listener who are involved in the conversation, and is cognitively undemanding" (p. 2). Attainment of BICS, according to Cummins, takes 2-3 years. In comparison, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is much more difficult because it is *context-reduced* and contains more difficult vocabulary and concepts which are taught in content courses. This language is more difficult to explain in writing; thus, CALP proficiency takes 5-7 years.

Language learning theorist Chomsky (1965, as cited in Freeman & Freeman, 1997)

maintained that language learning is innate, and it is learned. Students learn it by the encounters they have with new experiences. This is much like the theory of learning, Piaget (1955, as cited in Freeman & Freeman). In Piaget's theory, an individual progresses through developmental stages. As the stages pass, the individual's opinions are continuously altered due to new information received by personal experience, and language is learned through a continual process.

Another language learning theorist, Halliday (1977, as cited in Freeman & Freeman 1998) supported the theory of *functional grammar*. Functional grammar is "the relationship between the different aspects of language and the social functions that different language structures fulfill" (p. 25). Halliday's theory is similar to that of learning theorist, Vygotsky (1962 as cited in Freeman & Freeman) who perceived learning as more of a social activity. That is, the individual learns more through assistance with a task given to them, than when they perform the task alone. However, the optimal tasks should be targeted above the ability of the learner, described as *zone of proximal development* and should be the types of tasks that educators prepare in their lessons.

Krashen (1982, as cited in Freeman & Freeman, 1998) developed a theory of second language acquisition (SLA). The premise of his theory is that students acquire rather than learn a second language. "Acquisition occurs in a natural order when students receive comprehensible input, messages they understand" (p. 19). In 1983, the *natural approach*, developed by Krashen and Terrell (1983, as cited in Freeman & Freeman), enhanced Krashen's earlier SLA theory. The natural approach is a theory in which

students move through four stages of language development and included in these four stages of development is the importance of comprehensible input. The first stage is *pre-production*; in this stage, students listen to the teacher, but are not forced to produce language. This establishes an environment where students are able to listen and ignore the pressure to produce oral language immediately. The second stage is *early production* where the student produces language with one or two words and short phrases and can answer questions which enforce the vocabulary taught in lessons. The third stage is *speech emergence* where the learner develops higher levels of language and produces longer phrases and complete sentences. The fourth and final stage is *intermediate fluency* where the student is able to produce sentences and conversation. During this delayed production of language, anxiety is lowered, and is described as the “affective filter, by allowing students to relax and understand what they are hearing before having to produce and language” (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, as cited in Freeman & Freeman, p. 14).

The previous theories are an overview of language learning, yet there is no focus specifically on the personal and social needs of the individual ELL student. According to Oberg (1960, as cited in Igoa, 1995), many new immigrant ELLs feel disconnected and unwelcomed as if they do not belong in their new school settings. These negative feelings, according to Gay (2000) and Suarez-Orozco and Suarez Orozco (2001), can have adverse effects on the social and academic success of the students within the new school. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the causes of disconnectedness and possible improvements for immigrant ELL educational success.

The Immigrant Experience

According to Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001), each individual or family has their own motivations for the decision to immigrate to a new country. The choice can include survival for economic reasons or the need to leave political, religious, or ethnic persecution. The term immigrant, in this case is used as well for an individual who has chosen to move voluntarily, yet it can be used for those who are *refugees* or *asylum seekers* who had to escape for survival. Often, the decision to immigrate to specific areas is due to the location of family and friends who are already settled in the area. This ensures established connections and familiar communities. According to Geertz (1973, as cited in Suarez-Orozco and Suarez- Orozco):

shared world views and cultural models provide humans with the webs of meaning that make life predictable. Therefore, it is not surprising that newcomers who have just uprooted from their homeland and are facing the turmoil of resettling in another-gravitate to one another for a variety of reasons. . . immigrants turn to each other for jobs, information about the new culture, and to share news and reminisce about the old country. (p. 53)

Public Opinion

Historically, immigration has been a major public topic and, often, it results in very dissimilar views (Suarez- Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). The public opinion polls between 1880-1980 were reviewed by historian, Simon (1985, as cited in Suarez- Orozco & Suarez-Orozco). She found that negative opinions about immigrants were consistent over time; yet, they were more negative toward more recent immigrants. “On the whole, while the people who came in earlier waves are thought to have been *good folk*, new immigrants are viewed by many as *pure scum*” (p. 38). Another view of immigrants and a societal concern is their lack of assimilation into the mainstream American culture (Suarez- Orozco & Suarez-Orozco). Assimilation, according to Igoa (1995) in this

context, refers to an immigrant who gives up his or her own cultural values in order to become a member of the new culture. In contrast is acculturation, which “allows the individual to become part of the mainstream culture without discarding past meaningful traditions and cultures” (p. 44)

Brimelow (1995, as cited in Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001) in his book *Alien Nation*, expressed the fears and concerns of some Americans from a study conducted by Hingham (1975). “The latest immigrants are different from those who came before. These newcomers are less educated, less skilled, more prone to be in trouble with the law, less inclined to share American culture and values, and altogether less inclined to become American in name and spirit” (p. 50). There is a similar view, according to conversations conducted by Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, held by teachers, principals, and those who work with immigrant children that stems from the opinions of their ancestors who came to the U.S. and effectively assimilated into the culture. The views include: “Why can’t the new immigrants do the same? Why can’t they learn English and become Americans? Why can’t they settle down, give up their culture, and become like the rest of us?” (pp. 50-51)

With these opinions in mind, the researchers for the 1990 (Sachs, 1999) U.S. census study found that, of all immigrants, 75% of them reported that they spoke fluent English after 10 years in the U.S. Also, immigrant children were asked if they believed that learning English was important. They reported yes (99%) and (92%) liked to learn English, and (47%) found it was difficult. However, although they valued English, 90% indicated that they did not want to forget their first language, and it was important to

them to maintain language (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). These census data are contradictory to the previous statements because, there is a strong indicator that immigrants and students are in the process of learning English and do find worth in it.

Immigration Stress

Not only is immigration a life changing experience, it can be stressful on family and specifically on children. In the Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001) study, out of the children questioned, only 20% immigrated as a complete family to the U.S. This was an indication that most children suffered separation from one or both parents, which can be very traumatic especially if the child feels: (a) abandoned, (b) lacks communication with parents, and does not receive appropriate care. Whether a child is alone or with family, it is likely that he or she will miss friends and family left behind and or feel depressed or angry about the transition because, “for these children, the gains of immigration are tainted by loss” (p.69).

Another factor experienced by immigrants once they start their lives in the U.S. is *acculturation stress* (Berry, 1998; Flakerud & Uman, 1996; Smart & Smart, 1995; all cited in Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001). This is “the process of learning new cultural rules and interpersonal expectations” (p. 73). This includes not only language, but social interaction as one must learn new social and cultural norms. According to Smalley (1963, as cited in Igoa, 1995):

Every culture has subtle, if not unconscious, signs by which people evaluate what they say and do. Losing these cues produces strain, uneasiness, and even maladjustment if the person is received badly, because the props have been swept away and there is no longer a familiar foundation on which to stand. Until one learns the cues of the new culture, one is culturally disoriented. (p. 39)

As found in Oberg (1960, as cited in Igoa, 1995), this disorientation is experienced as *culture shock*. However, Igoa, (1995) views this often as a *normal* transition rather than *abnormal* and, in order to diminish the sense of culture shock, one should not assimilate too quickly and “become what one is not; rather one should stay connected to one’s own culture and also learn the cues of the new culture-a both/and experience” (p. 39). Also, Bhugra (2003), believes that although culture shock has a negative connotation, it can be viewed as:

important for self development and personal growth. It may be a transitional experience, which in the presence of factors such as high self-esteem, adequate social support, and appropriate achievement according to expectation, may produce a sense of achievement by overcoming a depressogenic situation. (p. 69)

Thus, according to Bhugra, in order to improve oneself it is necessary to push outside of one’s comfort zone, which can be a possible survival tool.

Immigrants in American Schools

Student Perceptions

Although a positive culture transition experience is optimal, it is not the case for all immigrant ELLs who enter new schools. This is evident in the feelings of a child from China who stated:

This is a totally different environment than I have been used to. The change is different because it upsets the kind of life I had. It was different back home. School was different, teachers were different. I feel depressed because I miss my friends in my country. (Igoa, 1995, p. 13)

More student opinions about school were presented in a Canadian study by Derwing, DeCorby, Ichikawa, & Jamieson, (1999). The students in the study were aware of the teachers' negativity toward them and considered it as detrimental to their educational advancement. The researchers wanted to research ELL high school drop out rates to see how they related to a past study conducted by Watt and Roessingh (1994, as cited in Derwing et al.). Fifteen former ELL students, as well as five ESL teachers and six mainstream teachers were interviewed. The students were asked to express their opinions in relation to: (a) their classes, (b) connections with people at school, (c) extracurricular activities, and (d) "if they felt there was a stigma attached to ESL study" (p. 3). It was found that, when students spoke of their school relationships, they were displeased with the interaction they had with teachers. According to the researchers, students wanted the teachers to be genuinely interested in them and to build relationships with them. This was evident in the opinions of two ELL students:

(1) I had a bad experience with my ESL teacher, probably because my English level was less than what she expected. I didn't feel welcome in the class, therefore I

decided to transfer to a different school. (2) One of the teachers used to be really rude and then, so, then he got transferred, even saying that he doesn't want to teach immigrants no more. (p. 5)

Teacher Perceptions

Perceptions of teachers were the focus of a study conducted by Vollmer (2000).

Vollmer found that ELL students in American public schools may receive differential treatment by teachers. This differential treatment may be due to discourse between teachers and assumptions made about immigrants and their assimilation into U.S. society. This dialogue can impact their views on gender bias, levels of ability, and promote negative assumptions, which will inevitably affect the education of language minority students in U.S. classrooms. The data collected for this 1 year study was in the form of informal interviews in the high school faculty lounge. The researcher wanted to know the attributes of a *typical* ELL student and whether the Russian students fit this image. Questions were asked about individual Russian students and the teachers' experiences with them, as well as topics related to: (a) the maturity of the students, (b) their relationships with authority, (c) their academic preparation, and (d) their high school experience.

After analysis of the data, the Russian students were commonly described by the teachers as *atypical* students and *model immigrants*, meaning that they possessed different qualities from other students, had higher levels of academic success, which included assimilation into U.S. culture. Frequently, the Russian students were compared to Chinese students with the common perception that they fit into the role of the model immigrant as well. In comparison, most often, the Hispanic students were viewed

negatively. However, as the year progressed, teachers began to report negative comments about the Russians and that they were, in fact, not conscientious and hard working; thus, they did not conform to their model minority status. According to Vollmer:

success or failure of the ESL student seems to lie completely outside the realm of the school's educational practices. . . either they have it or they don't. . . nowhere in the interview data collected for this study does the context or the teachers and students' daily interactions come under serious consideration. (p. 63)

Vollmer concluded that discourse between teachers can impact their views on gender bias, levels of ability, and promote negative assumptions, which will inevitably affect the education of ELLs in U.S. classrooms.

Educator Responsibility in Schools

In the book, *The Inner World of the Immigrant Child*, Igoa (1995) focused on the problems that immigrant students have when they first enter U.S. schools and how to better teach and communicate with them. A theme throughout the book was the importance of a teacher's views about the students and that, as a teacher, administrator, or other school personnel, one must understand and respect the *cultural attitude*, which is the personal feeling held by the student. This respect for the cultural attitude must be seen with the view that it is just as important as learning a new language.

Cultural Respect

Also, the idea about cultural respect was evident in a 5 year ethnographic study which was conducted by Franquiz and del Carmen Salazar (2004) in a northern Colorado high school. The researchers wanted to focus on the elements of success as defined by

Chicano, Mexican, and Latino students. Ultimately, the data would be used in order to provide teachers with information to improve and enhance their programs to work with these students. The data consisted of interviews, video recordings of classes, which included ESL classes, and observation notes. It was suggested in the findings that, in some cases, the students felt they were treated as an *inferior population with problems*. However, also, it was found that, when teachers listened to students and practiced a *humanizing pedagogy*, the most resilient students were socially connected to caring and supportive adults in school and thus, it “results in their academic resiliency against all odds” (p. 1). This humanizing pedagogy was defined as the promotion of a classroom environment in which teachers: “value each student’s background knowledge, culture and life experiences (Bartolome 1994, as cited in Franquiz & del Carmen Salazar, p. 1).

Similarly, the development of *social group/ethnic identity* was identified by Sam (2000). According to Bromley (1966), Erickson (1968), and Lee, (1988); all cited in Sam). “An adolescents’ inability to develop identity may result in role confusion, which may subsequently undermine the person’s self-esteem and mental health” (p. 3). This was validated by Sam’s findings in which the establishment of social group identity had the “strongest predictive power for self-esteem, mental health and satisfaction with life” (p. 3) in relation to: (a) family values, (b) acculturation strategies and (c) social group identity. A teacher in the study stated it this way:

on an individual basis we had kids come in, do personal presentations where they shared their favorite food, share a video clip that kind of represents their lives from a movie. They’d share their favorite song and did tell a little about themselves. And the things that kids were willing to share were great but also shocking. I mean you’re amazed at how some of these kids even get up in the morning and even focus on school, let alone come here and do anything. And the kids were very open and very

accepting of each other and I think they learned a lot about each other by having to do that. And I think that was something that was really successful in the class. . . I think (it) had a positive impact. (Franquiz & del Carmen Salazar, p. 6)

The practice of humanizing pedagogy is not a new concept, according to Freire (1970, as cited in Franquiz & del Carmen Salazar) and he stated that:

Revolutionary (not reactionary) teachers, establish a permanent relationship with students from subordinated cultures and languages. The revolutionary teacher practices a humanizing pedagogy where the method of instruction ceases to be an instrument by which the teachers can manipulate the students, because it expresses the consciousness of the students themselves. (p. 2)

As previously mentioned, when a teacher establishes an environment in which students are nurtured through the acculturation process, it is the expectation that learning and success in school can be achieved (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). However, also, effective programs must be established and endorsed so ELLs will be a part of a safe school environment.

School Environments

Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001), described a positive school environment as one that is beyond the appearance of the school and neighborhood in which it is located. A positive school has a good social climate with: (a) leadership that is positive, (b) staff morale is high, (c) aggressive academic expectations for all students, (d), students' cultures and languages are valued, and (e), and students learn in a safe and organized school atmosphere. However, this school ideal is not always the case. In an ethnographic study, Collier (1998, as cited in Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco) found that the environments in many Miami schools encompassed *cultures of violence*. These cultures included: (a) school officials often denied the fact that drug problems and

violence were widespread in their schools, (b) a demeanor toward students of *non-caring* exhibited by staff, and (c) and security measures were poorly enforced.

According to Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, (2001), it is the poor administrators within these schools who lessen positive opportunities and experiences for immigrant students. In addition, this can lead to segregation for immigrant students who are *tracked* in low level noncollege preparatory classes. This separation was evident in the Franquiz and del Carmen Salazar (2001) study. The structure of the school in which the research was conducted was considered *hostile* because the *smart* students in the higher track attended classes on the top floor of the school, while the lower tracked vocational and language program students were on the bottom floor. The ESL classroom was in a small former weight room and was known in the school as *Mexican town*. Being tracked is a concern for bilingual education classes which, often, are characterized as *linguistic ghettos*.

According to Gay (2000), poor school structures, teacher attitudes and school climate can be changed. This idea was first described first by Gentemann and Whitehead (1983, as cited in Gay) as the role of a *cultural broker*. This was described in more depth by Diamond and Moore (1995, as cited in Gay) and was broken down into 3 categories: (a) *cultural organizers*, (b) *cultural mediators*, and (c) *orchestrators of social contexts*. A cultural organizer understands how important culture is, promotes cultural expression between students, and incorporates it into lessons with the expectation of high achievement. A cultural mediator incorporates opportunity for students to engage in important dialogue about cultural topics and encourages students to affirm each other and

celebrate their own culture. Finally, a teacher, who is an orchestrator of social contexts, is one that understands how culture and ethnic diversity relates to learning and is best aware of the strategies and resources for their students.

Chapter Summary

In summary, the ideas presented here of teachers who practice a humanizing pedagogy, teachers who nurture students through transition, administrators who place high expectations on immigrant ELL students, the promotion of native English speaker peer bonding, and finally the importance of participation in extracurricular activities can all be incorporated in a way that is true to language learning theory and ESL standards.

Presented in Chapter 3 is the method by which this project will be developed. The purpose of the project will be to develop a personal presentation that can be used as a learning tool to share personal and cultural information with one another that will be effective in the promotion of the enhancement of a social connection between ELLs, school staff and peers.

Chapter 3

METHOD

The purpose of this project was to establish a social connection and personal relationships between English Language Learner's (ELLs), school staff and native speaking peers in the high school setting. This was accomplished through a personal presentation learning tool developed by this researcher with the use of Microsoft Power Point software. The personal presentations were modified by ELLs, school staff, and native speaking peers in order to share: (a) personal and cultural information, (b) school expectations, (c) questions, and (d) specific school information with one another. This engagement in the modification and practice of the presentation, conversation, discussion of social and cultural traditions, and the expression of personal needs, feelings and ideas by the ELL had direct connections to grades 9-12 ESL standards as defined by Teachers of English to Speakers of other Languages (Kupetz, 1997). The development of this specific personal presentation tool allowed the ELL, school staff members, and native speaking peers to get to know one another through personal communication, which helped to establish a school environment where the ELL felt accepted by others, welcomed, and socially connected.

Target Population

The groups or individuals that were interested in using this project were; (a)

secondary ELL teachers and their beginning to intermediate English level students, (b) school staff who work with ELLs such as librarians, translators, counselors, principal, office staff, or other teachers; and (c) native speaking peers who are interested in the promotion of cultural awareness and a more connected school environment. The use of the personal presentation between ELLs, school staff, and native speaking peers is an interesting way to incorporate curriculum standards and technology in order to establish social connections within the high school setting.

Goals

The goals of this project for school staff, native speaking peers, and ELLs were different. They are different because each group plays a different role in the school environment. At school, staff are often highly visible and in contact with ELLs in different settings on a daily basis. These settings include, but are not limited to: (a) registration, (b) counseling and nurse's offices, (c) library, and (d) food service. It is the researcher's experience that school staff can be intimidated by ELLs because of the language and cultural barrier; thus, communication between them may be avoided. On the other hand, native speaking peers may not be in contact with ELLs due to different classes and social connections; thus, a continuance of segregation between cultural groups will occur. In these cases, the goal of this project was to build a bridge between staff and ELLs, and native speaking peers and ELLs in order to break down barriers of communication one group at a time. The goal was to start on a small scale with one on one communication in order to establish relationships and that after the communication occurred, more and more faces would become more familiar around the high school and

each group would feel like they had learned about one another.

These goals were the overall goals for the ELL as well; however, the participation in the modification of the students' personal presentations enabled the teacher to facilitate learning in other areas associated with the content standards of the English course. First, the students were able to imitate the text structures and alter them to address their personal information. By doing this, the ELL students were re-acquainted with and learned new personal, social, and school related vocabulary. Also, they used previously learned English and acquired more advanced English grammar and sentence structures, as well as gained important technological knowledge and practical uses for Microsoft Power Point software. The students edited and practiced their presentations with their classmates and teachers before they were paired with school staff and native speaking peers. This practice advanced the students' pronunciation and presentation skills; thus, their confidence was enhanced before the actual presentation.

These activities were aligned with the *ESL Standards for Pre-K-12 Students* (Kupetz ed, 1997). The standards addressed included: Goal 1 Standard 3: "To use English to communicate in social settings: Students use learning strategies to extend their communicative competence." Specifically: (a) "listening to and imitating how others use English", (b) "seeking support and feedback from others", and (c) "practicing new language" (p. 117). Goal 1, Standard 1: "To use English to communicate in social settings: Students will use English to participate in social interactions." Specifically: (a) "sharing and requesting information", (b) "expressing needs, feelings, and ideas", (c) "getting personal needs met", and (d) "engaging in conversations" (p. 109). Goal 2,

Standard 1: “To use English to achieve academically in all content areas: Students will use English to interact in the classroom.” Specifically: (a) “participating in group and pair discussions”, and (b) “expressing likes, dislikes and needs” (p. 121). Goal 2, Standard 2: “To use English to achieve academically in all content areas: Students will use English to obtain, process, construct, and provide subject matter information in spoken and written form.” Specifically: (a) “listening to, speaking, reading, and writing about subject matter information”, (b) “selecting, connecting, and explaining information”, and (c) “responding to work of peers and others” (p. 127). The final edited personal presentations were an indication of how well the students applied the material associated with the standards; however, it was the outcome of the actual presentation that showed the teacher/researcher that this learning tool was one that could be used to build social connections between ELLs, school staff and native speaking peers.

Procedures

The personal presentations were developed by use of Microsoft Power Point software and had three templates; one each for ELLs, school staff, and native speaking peers. The researcher developed each template differently in order to obtain specific information from the user. Interested school staff and native speaking peers were recruited by the teacher to participate in the project. School staff included highly visible persons whom the ELL students saw throughout the year. The native speaking peers were recommended by teachers as being interested in the promotion of cultural awareness and a more connected school environment.

The ELL populations used for this project were partly vulnerable subjects in 2

beginning/intermediate level English classes taught by the researcher. The information obtained from the ELL student included information about their lives such as: (a) name, (b) primary language, (c) home country, (d) family and home life, (e) pastimes enjoyed in their native country, (f) current activities common to their native country, (g) school life, (h) memories of home, (I) their immigration story, (j) feelings about their immigration, (k) their family and social life in the U.S., (l) questions and anxieties about their new school, and (m) a chance to express interests or needs they have in the current school. The presentation information did not include questions that were seen as an invasion of privacy, and the subjects' personal behavior was not examined. Consequently, all subjects were not identified by name or any other identifier in Chapters 4 and 5 and approval was given for the use of human subjects (Appendix A).

The presentations modified by school staff and native speaking peers were personal in nature, and gave the presenter a chance to teach the ELLs about the culture of the school by the use of specific high school vocabulary and common situations that relate to everyday success and involvement in high school such as: (a) clubs, (b) sports, and (c) social activities. With the information acquired through school staff and peers, students enhanced their English skills, learned about the school, gained a sense of belonging, and improved overall their success within the school setting. On the other hand, school staff and native speaking peer participants, were able to get to know the ELLs in their groups as individuals and put a face to the ELL population and add familiarity with the other cultures to decrease false and racist perceptions. The risks associated with this project were potential confusion the ELLs could encounter when speaking to the staff or native

speaking peer due to low English speaking ability. Thus, in order to alleviate this, the researcher/teacher was available to help with introductions and assist if needed. Also, refreshments were provided to promote a friendly and casual atmosphere.

Assessment

An assessment to determine the effectiveness of the project was given to each participant after the presentations had been completed. The assessment was in the form of a Likert scale (Appendices I, J, and K). According to Underwood (2003), the Likert technique is a prepared group of attitude statements. The participants completed a five point scale to express agreement or disagreement to a specific statement. The categories of the five point scale included: (a) strongly agree, (b) agree, (c) neither agree nor disagree, (d) disagree, and (e) strongly disagree. Each statement was given a 1-5 numerical value; and responses were calculated. The ELL students, school staff and peer participants answered a series of questions in relation to the outcome of the personal presentation and the effectiveness of the project.

Chapter Summary

At the conclusion of the personal presentations, ELL students, school staff, and native speaking peers involved in the project had a social connection not yet achieved within the high school setting. Participant information, activity instructions, templates and survey result data are in Chapter 4. Finally, results are discussed, as well as future application suggestions are presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this project was to establish a social connection between ELL students, school staff and native speaking peers. To accomplish this, personal presentations were developed and presented by the participants. Upon completion of the presentations, a Likert scale survey was given to the participants to determine the effectiveness of the activity and recommendations for improvement were solicited.

Participants in the Study

Participants in this study were 5 school staff members, 5 native speaking peers, and 12 ELL students all at Thornton High School in Adams 12 Five Star School District. The school staff members were all asked to participate by the researcher and included in the group was a school counselor, a health aide, a special education teacher, a foreign language teacher, and a language arts teacher. The native speaking peers were recommended to the researcher by their teachers and were also asked by the researcher to participate. Included in the group were 4 high school juniors and 1 sophomore. The ELL student participants in this study were students from the researcher's beginning/intermediate ELL classroom. The data collected were the personal presentations and a Likert scale survey about the participant's feelings regarding the effectiveness of the activity.

The activity was introduced to the participants in three different ways. The school

staff members were individually spoken to and then received an e-mail with their specific Power Point presentation template (Appendix B), directions to modify their personal information, and the date, time and location of the presentation luncheon. The native speaking peers were also spoken to individually, but were given a folder with their personal presentation on a CD and in print (Appendix C), an information page which included directions for modification, completion and the date, time and location of the presentation luncheon (Appendix D), and a parent waiver (Appendix E). The ELLs were spoken to during class time.

The researcher taught the ELL student participants on a daily basis; therefore, the personal presentations were completed during their class time and a parent waiver was given to the students prior to the start of the activity (Appendix F). Due to the low English language proficiency of the students, the activity was taught in a series of steps which began with a verbal introduction to the activity and a question/answer pre-write packet to guide the students with each question and to assist the students with correct written language (Appendix G). Each question was presented by the researcher and students were given help and time to thoroughly complete each answer. The grammar mistakes were corrected 1 on 1 by the researcher to ensure quality. When the students completed with the packet, they were taken to a computer lab where the researcher demonstrated how to use the Microsoft Power Point software and provided students with an electronic template of their Power Point presentation (Appendix H). Each student had access to a computer to complete their modifications. The researcher took some pictures of the students that were used in the presentations and the researcher was also available

to scan photos for use by all participants. When all participants completed with their personal presentations, the researcher printed them on a color printer and bound them in clear presentation folders. The ELL students practiced pronunciation of the words in their presentations at home, during class time with the researcher and with classmates, and in front of the classroom to an audience. The presentations were practiced for the 5 days prior to the luncheon.

The presentations were presented for two hours during ELL class time. The ELL students and researcher welcomed the school staff and native speaking participants to the luncheon and the researcher began the activity by serving lunch. The researcher paired the ELL students with the school staff and native speaking peer participants. The participants were encouraged to eat lunch first and then to begin the presentations. Within the pair, the participants decided who would present first. When each pair was finished a new ELL student was placed in the pair. The extra ELL students presented to each other. When the activity was finished, a Likert research questionnaire survey was given to the school staff (Appendix I) and native speaking peers (Appendix J). The ELL students were given the Likert scale survey the following school day in order to allow time for translation, discussion and questions (Appendix K).

Survey Results

ELL Students' Perspectives

The ten ELL student participants were surveyed to determine their feelings toward their academic and social growth with the activity. The questions on the Likert scale questionnaire were separated into questions based on academic and social skills.

Academically the questions were focused on their feelings in regards to the effectiveness of the introductory lesson, their ability to express themselves using new grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure, whether or not they enjoyed writing about themselves, if they were satisfied in the quality of their presentation and overall preparedness.

Socially, the questions were focused on their feelings regarding sharing about themselves and learning about the lives of school staff and native speaking peers and whether or not, by participating in the activity made them feel more connected to their school. Finally, a question was asked if they would like to be involved in an activity like this in the future.

The question which applied directly to the purpose of the project which was to establish a social connection was responded to with a 90% selection of strongly agree by the ELL students, which indicates that the purpose of the project was met. Also included for the ELL students were skills based on the 9-12 ESL standards as defined by Teachers of English to Speakers of other Languages (Kupetz, 1997). In relation to the standards as discussed in Chapter 3, 90% of the ELL student respondents selected strongly agree and thus felt that completion of the introductory lesson helped them to organize and understand the presentation. Yet, when asked if they were able to express themselves by using new grammar, school specific vocabulary and sentence structure, 20% selected strongly agree and 70% selected agree.

In response as to whether they were satisfied with the quality of their work, 50% selected strongly agree and 50% selected agree. The students selected strongly agree

with 50% as to if they were prepared to present their presentation, while 40% selected agree and 10% selected disagree. When asked if they spent enough time practicing their pronunciation, 30% selected strongly agree, while 70% selected agree.

There were two questions which related to how they felt overall in writing and sharing about themselves and both showed an 80% selection of strongly agree. Finally, 90% of the respondents selected strongly agree when asked if they would like to be involved in an activity like this again. Recommendations for improvement were suggested by one student. The student suggested that there be a pronunciation exam given before the presentations and time given to practice words which proved to be troublesome for them after each presentation. A summary of the results are illustrated in Appendix L.

School Staff Perspectives

The five school staff participants were surveyed to determine their feelings about whether or not participation in the activity was a worthwhile use of their time, if they learned about ELL students and their backgrounds, if it gave them a better understanding of students' perspectives as well as, if the activity was well explained and well organized. They were also questioned as to whether participation in the activity will promote further positive interaction between ELL students and school staff, if participation in the activity met the goal of promoting positive interaction between ELLs and school staff, and if they would like to be involved in the activity again. The school staff respondents 100% selection of strongly agree, supported the original goal of the establishment of a social connection between themselves and ELL students was met. The school staff also

strongly agreed at 100% when asked if involvement in the exercise will promote further positive interaction between ELL students and school staff. Yet, 60% selected strongly agree and 40% agree when asked if the personal presentation was a worthwhile use of their time. In relation to if they learned a great deal about ELL students and their cultural backgrounds, 60% of respondents selected strongly agree, 20% agree and 20% neither agree nor disagree. Finally, 100% of the school staff respondents selected strongly agree when asked if they would like to be involved in an activity like this again.

Recommendations for improvement were suggested by one school staff member. The school staff member suggested that there be more native speaking students involved in the activity to interact with the ELL students. A summary of the results are illustrated in Appendix M.

Native Speaking Peers' Perspectives

The five native speaking peer participants were surveyed to determine their feelings in relation to how much they learned about ELL students and their social needs, if participation in the exercise gave them a better understanding of how ELL students feel in their new environment, if participation in the activity promoted positive interaction and if they were more likely to interact with ELL students because of the activity. Additionally, they were asked if they understood what was expected of them for participation in the exercise, if it was a positive experience and if they would like to be involved in an activity like this again. According to the native speaking peer respondents, 60% selected strongly agree while 20% selected agree and 20% selected neither agree or disagree when asked if they felt that participation in the activity

established a social connection between them and the ELL students. It was also indicated by 60% of the respondents' selection of strongly agree that they are more likely to interact with ELL students because of the exercise. As for if the native speaking peers found the activity to be a positive one for them and if they would like to be involved in it again, 60% of respondents selected strongly agree. Recommendations for improvement were suggested by two native speaking peers. The first native speaking peer suggested that more information from the ELL students' lives could be included in each slide. The second native speaking peer suggested that the template for the peers be more thorough. The peer felt that their template was not as in depth, contained too simple English and basic ideas thus, was insulting to those ELLs who had more proficient English skills than others. A summary of the results are illustrated in Appendix N.

Chapter Summary

The results of this study showed that participation in the activity did have an effect on the establishment of a social connection, which indicates that the desired goal of the activity was met based on the information provided by the respondents on the Likert scale questionnaires. This data is based on if the participant felt the activity met the purpose of establishing a social connection between ELL students, school staff and native speaking peers. The positive connection was indicated by 83% of the respondents' selections of strongly agree by all three groups. In Chapter 5, the findings from this study are discussed. Implications of the findings, limitations to the study, and recommendations for future research are also presented.

Chapter 5

The researcher attempted to design a project in which a social connection between ELL (English Language Learner) students, school staff and native speaking peers could be established in order to help ELL students feel more welcomed and valued within the high school setting. According to the data collected in the form of three Likert scale questionnaires, 83% of all respondents questioned selected strongly agree to the purpose of the project being met. The outcome of this project can then be seen as a contribution to the original problem that ELL students do not feel connected to others outside of their high school ELL program. Thus, participation in an activity which brings these groups together is an effective one. However, implications of the findings also show that with success, there are improvements to be considered.

Contribution

The data collected from the ELL students, school staff and native speaking peers showed that participants felt the purpose of the project was met. This was also obvious to the researcher by observation during the entire process which was culminated at the final luncheon presentation activity.

The researcher observed the ELL students from the beginning stages of their presentation preparation. Immediately, the students were very willing to participate and excited to share and write about themselves with the researcher and classmates. The

researcher noticed that there were no reservations expressed by the students when writing and when asked, they said that they enjoyed sharing memories about their home countries, family and friends. They also said that they felt as if others in class were genuinely interested in their lives. However, when the time came to practice, the students felt nervous because in their opinions, their English pronunciation of their presentations was not perfect. The researcher understood this feeling; however, based on the English proficiency of the students, the researcher felt that the students' pronunciation was adequate and improving daily.

The lack of preparation confidence that the students felt was indicated in the Likert scale questionnaire data. It is the researcher's opinion that the preparation time was adequate, and the students were well prepared; yet, when presenting, the students became very nervous and self-conscious because of their English speaking audience. An area of improvement could be to set up multiple mock presentations in advance with native speaking individuals so that the students could have more practice time with a native English speaking audience.

The researcher took notes during the presentation luncheon and noticed many positive activities which would also indicate that a social connection between the three groups was established. When presentations were presented, both presenters expanded on the information in their presentations. This was done through specific questions and answers posed by both members of the group. This showed the researcher that both members were friendly, felt comfortable, and were genuinely interested in what the other had to share. In four groups specifically, commonalities in the presentations were also

discussed. These side discussions in all occasions made the presentations longer than the researcher had originally scheduled.

It was obvious to the researcher that the activity was enjoyable because all participants were laughing and having fun. In two groups, a third ELL student joined a group without being told to do so, simply because they wanted to hear what the school staff participant and native speaking peer had to share. This showed the researcher that all participants were comfortable and happy to get to know one another without reservation. In fact, the researcher noted that a native speaking peer and ELL student exchanged phone numbers. Finally, it was also noted that one ELL student stopped a school staff participant who was on her way to leave because he had not met her and wanted to see her presentation. Thus, further showing that social connections were met which could also show a willingness to connect that is hampered by a lack of opportunities to interact outside the ELL program.

Resolve for the Original Problem

Often in the high school setting, ELL students do not feel connected to their schools because they do not know or associate with others outside of the ELL program (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Participation in this research project activity helped to resolve this original problem through a planned activity in which ELL students could be in direct contact with school staff and native speaking peers.

Social interaction between the groups was planned in the form of pre-written presentations printed in color and bound in plastic covers. Included in the presentations was large text that could be easily read by both group members in case auditory

explanations and pronunciation could not be understood. Also included in the presentations were personal photos and clip art to describe and enhance the meaning of the text.

The planned activity luncheon was a safe place where participants could eat, introduce themselves and share about themselves with a presentation they had prepared and had experience and practice presenting. This casual and fun atmosphere was not a threatening one and all participants knew what to expect. Although the activity involved a limited number of participants, it did provide the ELLs with direct contact with others outside of the ELL program and hopefully, socially connecting the groups with one another. Thus, the conclusion can be made that a way to get people out of their comfort zones and socially connect ELLs, school staff and native speaking peers is to establish many non-threatening activities in which these groups can interact, get to know one another, and discuss commonalities, which can lessen the gap between ELLs and their schools.

Project Limitations and Recommendations for Future Study

There were two main limitations to this project. The first dealt with the level of English proficiency of the ELL students in the researchers classes, which effected the start date of the project. The second dealt with the small number of school staff and native speaking participants asked to participate in the activity.

It would have been optimal to begin the activity at the beginning of the school year rather than at the end because the social connections could more easily have been fostered throughout the year. However, this was not possible with this particular group

because the researcher/teacher felt the students were not adequately prepared at the beginning of the year in their newly acquired English skills in order to fulfill the written and speaking portions of the activity. The researcher feels that more advanced levels of students could be used earlier in the school year in order to start the activity earlier and in order to maintain social connections throughout the year.

Comments were also recorded by two native speaking peers in relation to the low English speaking ability of the students. The two students felt that their presentations were unsophisticated compared to the information in the ELL presentations. The reason for this was that the researcher had much more one on one time with ELL students to add details and more information was asked of ELL students due to the nature of their immigrant experience, which did not apply to the school staff or native speaking peers. Also, because the English proficiency levels varied between ELL students, school staff and native speaking peers, presentations needed to apply to all English levels. The researcher can understand the frustration, yet feels that a lower level was needed to include all of the ELL students involved.

It also would have been optimal to have more native speaking peers and school staff members participate in the activity. A way to do this would be to set up the activity with an entire classroom of ELL and native speaking students; thus more students could be involved at one time and the presentations could be completed during class time. This would also enable a future researcher to study the effects of long term social connection between the groups. The researcher would have liked to have asked more school staff to participate, yet was aware of the full work loads of school staff and lack of extra time to

devote to this activity. Perhaps if this was a school wide activity, or if school staff participants could receive some kind of compensation, it would appeal to more staff.

Project Summary

The transition in to the high school setting can be a difficult one for ELLs. Yet, if students feel connected and valued in their new environments this transition can be a positive one (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001). The presentation activity developed here has shown through researcher observation and through Likert scale questionnaire data to be an activity that can be used to establish a social connection between ELL students, school staff and native speaking peers.

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APPENDIX A

Application for Review/Approval for Research Involving Human Subjects

Application for Review/Approval for
Research Involving Human Subjects

TO: Human Subjects Review Committee, Regis University

Principal Investigator (Name): Gretchen Griffey

Address: 2234 South Lafayette Street Denver, CO 80210 Telephone: 303 807-3942

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Sue Vodehnal

Department: SPS Graduate Teacher Education Office #: DTC Campus

Program Director: Dr. Sue Vodehnal

Project Title: Increasing the Social Connection Between Immigrant English Language

Learners, School Staff, and Peers in the High School Setting

1. Are investigational drugs to be used?

Yes _____ No X

2. Will you be using patients and/or the facilities of a health care agency as a part of this study?

Yes _____ No X

If YES, after approval of your proposal by the members of this committee, the proposal must be approved by the appropriate review board within the facility.

Attach to this form the supporting materials for Items 3-7.

3. Project description in relation to human subjects. Attach a brief summary of the problem to be investigated, the questions to be asked, the methods or instruments to be used, the subject population to be studied, and the method of subject selection and recruitment. Include sufficient detail, including examples of protocols and/or data collection instruments, in order that the members of the Committee can assess any potential hazards.

4. Risk/benefit assessment. Assess the risks and potential benefits of the investigation.

5. Provision for informed consent. Provide details of informed consent procedures to be used, including examples of project descriptions to be provided to subjects and consent forms to be used.

6. Additional ethical considerations. Describe provisions for anonymity or confidentiality and any additional measures not previously addressed be utilized to protect the rights and safety of subjects.

7. Research funding. If the research is supported by a grant, provide source of funding.

Important Note. The proposal must be resubmitted for approval if changes are made in the research plan that significantly alter the involvement of human subjects from that which is described by this application.

<u>Gretchen Griffey</u>	<u>5-1-2006</u>
Signature of Principal Investigator	Date

<u>Dr. Sue Vodehnal approval signature on file</u>	<u>5-3-2006</u>
Signature of Faculty Advisor	Date

Action of Human Subjects Review Committee

1. Exempt according to condition
2. Approval by expedited review
3. Approval in general and specific details
Edwin May/ Director approval signature on file Date: 5-17-2006
4. Approval in general with specific details to be resubmitted.
5. Disapproval for the following reasons:

Research Involving Human Subjects

3. The problem to be investigated is the lack of social connection English Language Learners (ELLs) have with school staff and native speaking peers within the high school setting. The method used will be a personal presentation learning tool developed by the researcher with the use of Microsoft Power Point software. The personal presentation will be a modification of a presentation template provided by the researcher and completed by each participant. After modified, the ELLs will be paired with school staff members and native speaking peers who have also prepared personal presentations. Each participant will present his or her presentation one on one; thus, ELLs will meet and get to know staff members and students in the high school setting.

After the presentations have been completed, a Likert scale assessment will be distributed to all participants. Questions will be asked which focus on the value of the presentation in establishing a social connection between the participants and recommendations for improvement.

The population used for this project will be partly vulnerable subjects. The subjects include 13 high school ELLs in 2 beginning/ intermediate level English classes taught by the researcher. Also included in the study are 5 native English speaking students recruited by the researcher who have been verbally recommended by their teachers. The native English speaking students will be those interested in the promotion of cultural awareness and a more connected school environment.

4. The risks associated with this project will be potential confusion the ELLs may encounter when speaking to the staff or native speaking peer due to low English speaking ability. The presentation will not include questions that may be seen as an invasion of privacy, and the subjects' personal behavior will not be examined. The teacher/researcher will be in the same room during the presentation to translate or assist with any confusion if this occurs.

By participating in this study, there are benefits for ELLs, school staff, and native speaking peers. The benefits for ELLs include: (a) learning more advanced English grammar and sentence structures, (b) gaining important technological knowledge and practical uses for Microsoft Power Point software, (c) editing and practicing of the presentation will advance the students' pronunciation and presentation skills; thus, their confidence will be enhanced before the actual presentation, (d) ELLs will get to know people around school on a personal level, (e) ELL students will feel welcomed and feel like they are part of the school because they will learn about staff and native speaking peers and clubs and activities at the high school that are available to them. The benefits for school staff, and native speaking peers include the establishment of positive relationships with ELLs.

5. A consent form will be sent home with the participants to be signed by the parent and participant. The researcher will have a meeting with the participants to explain the procedures and the expectations of the study. Attached are the consent forms for both ELLs and native speaking peers, as well as a project description to be used when explaining the procedures of the study.

6. The subjects will not be identified by name or any other identifier.
7. No funding is needed for this study.

APPENDIX B

Staff Member Power Point Presentation Template



Hello, my name is
Gretchen Griffey.

Add name here



**I have a husband named
Patrick and 2 year old son
named Beau.**

Add family information here



I am from Fallbrook,
California. I grew up in Fallbrook
with 2 older brothers.

Add home town/country and family information here



Fallbrook is a small town with beautiful green hills and many orange, lemon and avocado farms.

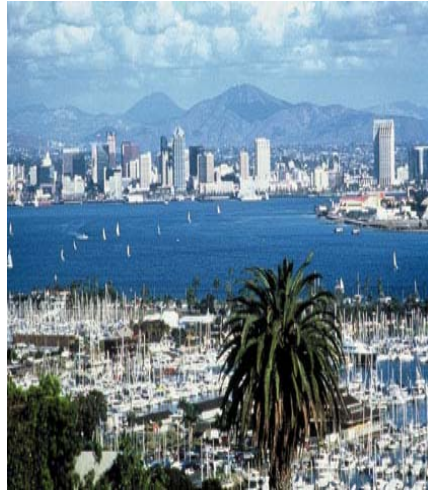
Add specific home town/country information here



Fallbrook is also close to the beach and when I lived there I really enjoyed going swimming and surfing in the ocean.

Add more details and likes/dislikes of home town/country here

San Diego



Fallbrook is near the city of San Diego and is close to the Mexican border, too! Mexico is a fun place to visit.

Add more details and likes/dislikes of home town/country here



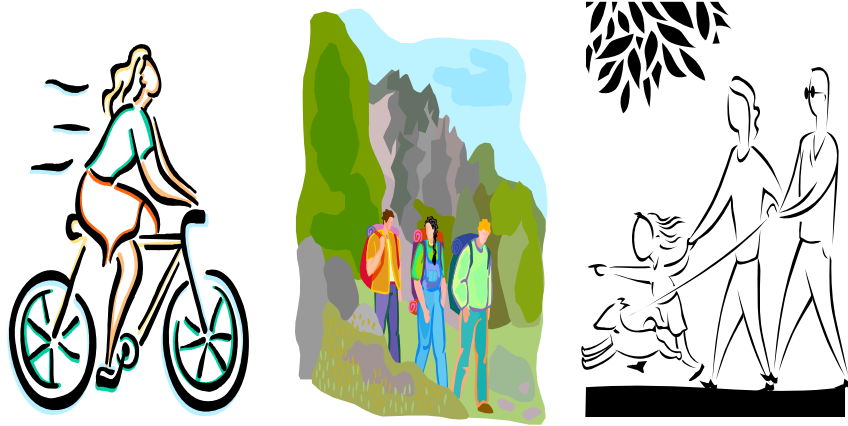
Now I live in Denver,
Colorado. I think Colorado is
beautiful. I like to go to the
mountains and I love the snow.

Add details about where you live now and what
you like about it.



Snowboarding and playing in the snow are my favorite winter activities.

Add your favorite activities here



During my free time, I like to ride my bike, go hiking in the mountains, and go walking in the park with my family.

Add more of your favorite activities here



I really like cats and have a
Siamese cat named Fidel.

Add your favorite pets here



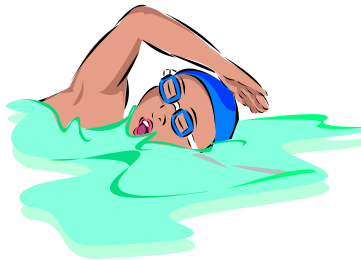
Here at Thornton High School I am an English as a Second Language teacher. I like teaching English very much.

Add your profession and what you like about it here



I like teaching English because I like learning about other cultures and meeting new people.

Add more details about your profession here



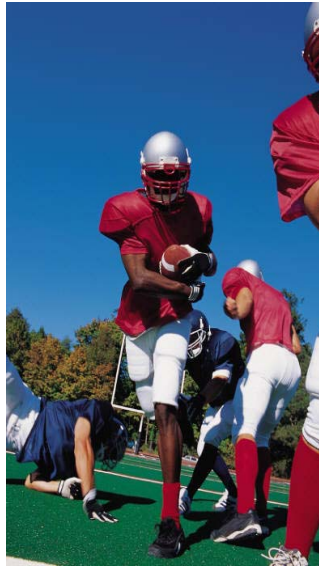
When I was in high school, I played on the tennis team, swam on the swimming team, and danced on the dance team.

Add your high school activities here



In high school I really liked my art classes, and my Spanish classes, too.

Add more high school activities here



In high school my friends and I liked to go to the movies, school football games, and school dances.

Add more high school details here



When I first went to high school I was nervous and scared because it was very big. But after a while, I met my best friends there and am still friends with them today.

Add more high school details here

APPENDIX C

Native Speaking Peer Power Point Presentation Template



**Hello, my name is
Kate Davis.**

Add name here



I have 1 brother, 3 sisters
and many aunts and uncles.

Add family information here



I was born in Denver, Colorado and now I live in Thornton. I like Thornton because it is close to the city and has many beautiful parks.

Add where you were born, where you live now and what you like about it



Thornton is also close to the mountains. I like to go to the mountains and I love the snow.

Add more information about what you like about where you live



Snowboarding and playing in the snow are my favorite winter activities.

Add information about activities you like to do



During my free time, I also like to ride my bike, go hiking in the mountains, and hang out with my friends.

Add information about what you like to do during your free time



I really like dogs and cats
and have a dog named Lucky
and a cat named Simon.

Add information about your pets or animals you like

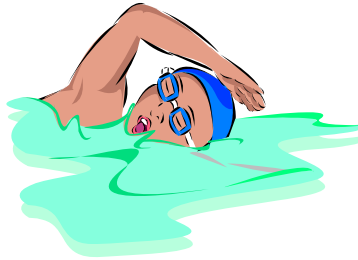
My favorite color is . . .
My favorite movie is . . .
My favorite _____ is . . .
My favorite _____ is . . .

Add your favorites here to fit your personality and add pictures



Here at Thornton High School I am a junior. I like school because . . .

Add what grade you are in and what you like about Thornton High School



At THS high school, I play on the tennis team, swim on the swimming team, and dance on the dance team.

Add the sports and or activities you are involved in at Thornton High School or outside of school



In high school I really like my art classes, and my Spanish classes, too. I am also involved in student council.

Add what you like about your activities



In high school my friends and I like to go to the movies, school football games, and school dances.

Add what you like to do for fun outside of school



When I first came to high school I was nervous and scared because it was very big. But after a while, I met my best friends and now I am very happy.

Add information about how you felt entering high school and how you feel now

My favorite things about THS are .

. .

Add information here about your favorite things at Thornton High School and add insert photo

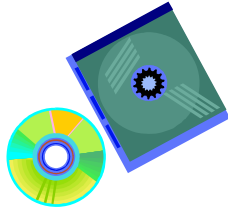
APPENDIX D

Native Speaking Peer Information Page

Native Speaking Peer Information Page

Thank you for participating in this study!

1. Use the provided CD and handout to view the PowerPoint presentation.



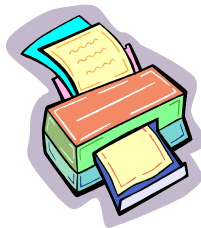
2. Use the PowerPoint and change it to reflect your personal interests. You can cut and paste or scan pictures to add to your presentation. Mrs. Griffey is available to help if you need it, just ask!



3. When you are finished, please have Mrs. Griffey edit your presentation.



4. Give your saved presentation on the CD or email it to Mrs. Griffey for printing.
www.gretchen.griffey@adams12.org



The presentation and luncheon will be:

June 1, 2006
Date:

4th and 5th hours (10:15-12:00)
Time:

classroom: 510
Location:

APPENDIX E

Native Speaking Peer Parent Waiver

Native Speaking Peer Parent Waiver

Dear Parent or Guardian of _____,

My name is Gretchen Griffey and I am the ESL Coordinator and English teacher at Thornton High School. I am also a graduate student at Regis University. I am interested in having your student participate in an activity that I would like to use for my master's thesis.

The goal is for students who are new to the United States to meet native speaking peers.

Your student will:

- Make a power point presentation about themselves
- Share the presentation with participating English language learners
- Answer questions about the activity

Please sign below if I have permission to include your student and their feedback in my activity.

Parent name	Signature	Date
-------------	-----------	------

Student name	Signature	Date
--------------	-----------	------

Thank you,

Gretchen Griffey

Please feel free to contact my advisor or myself if you have any questions or concerns.

Contact Information

Gretchen Griffey

(720) 972-2811

gretchen.griffey@adams12.org

Regis Advisor

Dr. Susan Vodehna

(303) 458-4310

svodehna@regis.edu

APPENDIX F
ELL Student Parent Waiver

ELL Student Parent Waiver

Dear Parent or Guardian of _____,

My name is Gretchen Griffey and I am the ESL Coordinator and your student's teacher at Thornton High School. I am also a graduate student at Regis University. I am interested in having your student participate in an activity that I would like to use for my master's thesis.

The goal is for your student to meet and get to know staff members and students in the high school setting.

The students will:

- Make a power point presentation about themselves
- Share the presentation with participating staff members and native speaking peers
- Answer questions about the activity

Please sign below if I have permission to include your student and their feedback in my activity.

Parent name	Signature	Date
-------------	-----------	------

Student name	Signature	Date
--------------	-----------	------

Thank you,

Gretchen Griffey

Please feel free to contact my advisor or myself if you have any questions or concerns.

Contact Information

Gretchen Griffey

(720) 972-2811

gretchen.griffey@adams12.org

Regis Advisor

Dr. Susan Vodehna

(303) 458-4310

svodehna@regis.edu

APPENDIX G

ELL Student Question/Answer Pre-write Packet

ELL Student Question/Answer Pre-Write Packet

Please fill out the following information and then use it to complete your Power Point presentation.

Personal:

1. Q: What is your name?

A: My name is _____.

2. Q: What language/languages do you speak?

A: I speak _____ and I am now learning English.

3. Q: How long have you been studying English? (months/years)

A: I studied English in _____ for _____
and in _____ for _____.

Family and Home Country:

4. Q: Where are you from? (city/state/country)

A: I am from _____, _____, _____.

5. Q: What is your home country like? Is it hot, cold, or tropical? Is it in a desert? Is it near or in the mountains or hills? Is it near the ocean? Is it a town, city or farming community?

A: _____ is _____

6. Q: Do you come from a big or small family?

A: I come from a _____ family. I have _____ sisters and _____ brothers. (I do not have any brothers or sisters.)

7. Q: What did you do for fun in your home country?

A: In my home country, I _____

8. Q: What do you miss about your home country?

A: I miss _____

School:

9. Q: What was your school like? Was it similar or different to high school in the United States?

A: School in _____ was:

(brainstorm here)

similarities:

differences:

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

13. Q: Were you involved in any sports or activities at your school? Did you enjoy it/them?

A: I was involved in _____

Immigration:

14. Q: When did you learn that you were moving to the United States? How did you feel? Why?

A: I felt _____

15. Q: Describe your journey/trip to the United States. Were you nervous, scared, sad, excited or happy?

A: My journey/trip to the United States was _____.

I felt _____.

United States:

16. Q: Who do you live with in Colorado?

A: I live in Colorado with _____

17. Q: What do you like to do for fun in Colorado?

A: My favorite things to do for fun in Colorado are _____

School in the United States:

18. Q: How did you feel when you first came to Thornton High School?

A: When I first came to Thornton High School I felt _____

19. Q: Do you like Thornton High School? Why or why not?

A: I _____ because _____

20. Q: Are you involved in any sports or clubs at Thornton High School?

A: I am _____

21. Q: What sports, clubs or activities are you interested in?

A: I am interested in _____

22. Q: What changes would you make at Thornton High School?

A: The changes I would make are _____

23. Q: How can we make Thornton High School a better school?

A: Thornton High School would be a better school if _____

APPENDIX H
ELL Student Power Point Template



Hello, my name is
Maria Hernandez.

Add name here



**I speak Spanish and am
now learning English.**

Add the language/s you speak



1 year



6 months

I studied English in Mexico for 1 year and in Colorado at Thornton High School for 6 months.

Add where and how long you have studied English

- My favorite animal is . . .
- My favorite sport is . . .
- My favorite food is . . .
- My favorite pastime is . . .

Add your favorites and insert pictures

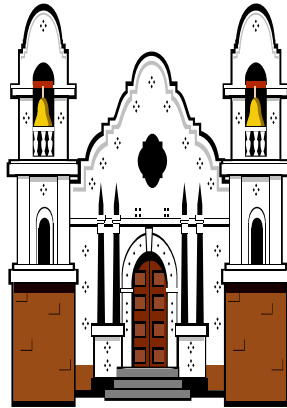
FAMILY AND HOME COUNTRY

Change the color and font of title



I am from San Miguel,
Guanajuato, Mexico.

Add where you are from



San Miguel is a small tourist town. Many people like to visit San Miguel because it has a beautiful town center, churches and is a very popular place for artists.

Add specific information about where you are from



I come from a large family. I have four sisters.

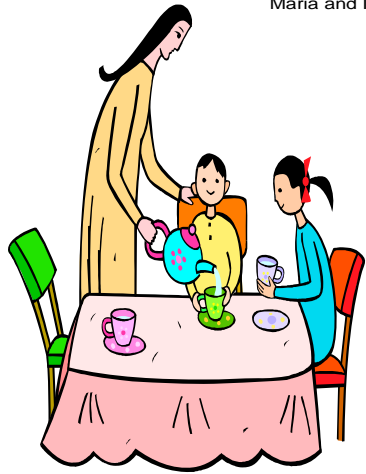
Add family information here



In Mexico, I liked to hang out with my friends and go swimming on the weekends.

Add what you liked to do for fun in your home country

Maria and Isabel 2002



I miss my family and my friends in Mexico. I also miss my Grandmother's delicious chicken enchiladas.

Add what you miss about you home country

School in Mexico

Change the color and font of title

Some things in Mexico were different to school in the United States, but many things were similar, too.

- The differences were that we wore uniforms and teachers moved classes and students stayed in the same classrooms.
- The similarities were that we learned the same subjects and ate lunch at school.

Add what was different and what was similar about school in the US and school in your home country

Add a picture here

In Mexico, I was involved in soccer and volleyball after school. There were no clubs at our school.

Add the activities you were involved in at school

Immigration

Change the color and font of title

Add a picture here

**When I learned I was moving
to the United States I felt...**

Add how you felt about moving to the US

Add a picture here

My journey to the United States was...

Add specific information about your actual journey/trip to the US

IDENTIFICATION

Change the color and font of title

Add a picture here

I live in Colorado with . . .

Add information about who you live with in Colorado

Add a picture here

My favorite things to do in
Colorado are . . .

Add information about your favorite activities in Colorado

School in the United States

Change the color and font of title

Add a picture here

When I first came to Thornton
High School I felt . . .

Add information about how you first felt at Thornton High School

Add a picture here

**I like Thornton High School
because . . .**

Add what you like about Thornton High
School

Add a picture here

I am involved/ not involved .

• •

Add if you are or are not involved in activities at school

Add a picture here

I am interested in . . .

Add your interests here

Add a picture here

The changes I would
make at Thornton High
school are . . .

Add the changes you would make to Thornton High School

Add a picture here

Thornton High School would be
a better school if . . .

Add what you think would make Thornton High School a better school

APPENDIX I

School Staff Likert Scale Research Questionnaire

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

School Staff

Please fill out the following survey and mark the appropriate box that represents your opinion about the personal presentation exercise. Please be honest. The information will be kept confidential. Thank you for your participation.

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither Agree or Disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
This personal presentation was a worthwhile use of my time.					
I learned a great deal about ELL students and their cultural backgrounds.					
This activity gave me a better understanding of ELL students' perspectives.					
This activity was well explained.					
Overall, this was an appropriate activity.					
This activity promoted positive interaction between ELL students and school staff.					
This exercise gave me a better understanding of ELL students' social needs.					
This exercise was well organized.					
The ELL students were invested in this exercise.					
Involvement in this exercise will promote further positive interaction between ELL students and school staff.					
This activity met the purpose of establishing a social connection between ELL students and school staff.					
I would like to be involved in an activity like this again.					

What additional comments or suggestions for improvement do you have?

APPENDIX J
Native Speaking Peer Likert Scale Research Questionnaire

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE
Native Speaking Peers

Please fill out the following survey and mark the appropriate box that represents your opinion about the personal presentation exercise. Please be honest. The information will be kept confidential. Thank you for your participation.

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither Agree or Disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
I learned a great deal about ELL students and their cultural backgrounds.					
This exercise gave me a better understanding of how ELL students feel in their new environment.					
I understood what I was supposed to do for this activity.					
This activity promoted a social connection between ELL students and you.					
This activity gave me a better understanding of ELL students' social needs.					
I am more likely to interact with ELL students because of this activity.					
This was a positive activity for me.					
I would like to be involved in an activity like this again.					

What additional comments or suggestions for improvement do you have?

APPENDIX K
ELL Student Likert Scale Research Questionnaire

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE
ELL Student

Please fill out the following survey and mark the appropriate box that represents your opinion about the personal presentation exercise. Please be honest. The information will be kept confidential.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Academic	1	2	3	4	5
The introductory lesson and questions helped me to organize and understand my presentation.					
I was able to express myself by using new grammar, school specific vocabulary and sentence structure.					
I enjoyed writing about myself, my home country and life in the US.					
I am satisfied with the quality of my work on my presentation.					
I was prepared to present my presentation.					
I spent enough time practicing my pronunciation.					
Social	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoyed sharing with others about myself.					
I enjoyed learning about other school staff and native speaking peers					
By doing this activity I am more connected to my school.					
I would like to be involved in an activity like this again.					

What additional comments or suggestions for improvement do you have?

APPENDIX L
ELL Student Research Questionnaire Results

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS
ELL Student

Please fill out the following survey and mark the appropriate box that represents your opinion about the personal presentation exercise. Please be honest. The information will be kept confidential.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Average Score
Academic	1	2	3	4	5	5
The introductory lesson and questions helped me to organize and understand my presentation.				10%	90%	4.9
I was able to express myself by using new grammar, school specific vocabulary and sentence structure.			10%	70%	20%	3.7
I enjoyed writing about myself, my home country and life in the US.				20%	80%	4.8
I am satisfied with the quality of my work on my presentation.				50%	50%	4.5
I was prepared to present my presentation.		10%		40%	50%	3.5
I spent enough time practicing my pronunciation.				70%	30%	3.9
Social	1	2	3	4	5	5
I enjoyed sharing with others about myself.				20%	80%	4.8
I enjoyed learning about other school staff and native speaking peers				20%	80%	4.8
By doing this activity I am more connected to my school.				10%	90%	4.9
I would like to be involved in an activity like this again.				10%	90%	4.9

What additional comments or suggestions for improvement do you have?

APPENDIX M
School Staff Research Questionnaire Results

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

School Staff

Please fill out the following survey and mark the appropriate box that represents your opinion about the personal presentation exercise. Please be honest. The information will be kept confidential. Thank you for you participation.

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither Agree or Disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5	Average Score 5
This personal presentation was a worthwhile use of my time.				40%	60%	4.6
I learned a great deal about ELL students and their cultural backgrounds.			20%	20%	60%	4.4
This activity gave me a better understanding of ELL students' perspectives.				20%	80%	4.8
This activity was well explained.				20%	80%	4.8
Overall, this was an appropriate activity.				20%	80%	4.8
This activity promoted positive interaction between ELL students and school staff.					100%	5.0
This exercise gave me a better understanding of ELL students' social needs.				20%	80%	4.8
This exercise was well organized.					100%	5.0
The ELL students were invested in this exercise.					100%	5.0
Involvement in this exercise will promote further positive interaction between ELL students and school staff.					100%	5.0
This activity met the purpose of establishing a social connection between ELL students and school staff.					100%	5.0
I would like to be involved in an activity like this again.					100%	5.0

What additional comments or suggestions for improvement do you have?

APPENDIX N
Native Speaking Peers Research Questionnaire Results

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS
Native Speaking Peers

Please fill out the following survey and mark the appropriate box that represents your opinion about the personal presentation exercise. Please be honest. The information will be kept confidential. Thank you for your participation.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Average Score
	1	2	3	4	5	5
I learned a great deal about ELL students and their cultural backgrounds.		20%		20%	60%	4.2
This exercise gave me a better understanding of how ELL students feel in their new environment.				40%	60%	4.6
I understood what I was supposed to do for this activity.				20%	80%	4.8
This activity promoted a social connection between ELL students and you.			20%	20%	60%	4.4
This activity gave me a better understanding of ELL students' social needs.		20%		40%	40%	4.4
I am more likely to interact with ELL students because of this activity.			40%		60%	4.2
This was a positive activity for me.				40%	60%	4.6
I would like to be involved in an activity like this again.				40%	60%	4.6

What additional comments or suggestions for improvement do you have?