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## Writing and Rhetoric Along the U.S.-Mexico Border

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## Writing and rhetoric along the U.S.-Mexico border

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### **Introduction: Hiding and then unmasking border cultures and rhetorics**

Recently, our field has seen a strong surge in the interest in *writing across borders*, multilingual and ESL writing, and globalization and rhetoric (see, for example, the 2010 *Penn State Conference on Border Rhetorics*; 2014 *Border Rhetorics*, Rhetoric Society of America). This surge parallels, in many ways, the growing enrollment of international student populations and second-language writers in U.S. writing programs, which is widely documented (Roberge, Siegal, & Harlau, 2009; Matsuda, 2009). Given this development, it would seem appropriate or even natural that writing programs would be developing curriculum to meet the needs of these multilingual students. In fact, that development is happening with many U.S. writing programs integrating ESL and second-language pedagogies (see, for example, Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014; de Oliveira & Silva, 2013; Kirklighter, Cárdenas, & Murphy, 2007).

This surge in multilingual writing also matches a surge in the interest in *border rhetorics*, from a huge variety of perspectives. For example, the RSA 2014 *Border Rhetorics Conference* examined how borders and rhetoric work together in a variety of contexts or inquiries such as gender, science and technology, sexuality, rhetoric-poetic binary, theory/practice, and human existence versus materialism (object oriented ontology). But surprisingly, this development and interest in borders have not seriously engaged what is a very important *border* in the United States: the U.S.-Mexico border. Of the 100s of presentations at the RSA Border Conference in San Antonio, Texas, only a handful look at rhetoric along the U.S.-Mexico border. Given that this conference takes place in a U.S.-Mexico border state (Texas) and in a city (San Antonio) that experienced a monumental U.S.-Mexico border war, it seems extremely surprising that only about 5% of the presentations engage the U.S.-Mexico border.

And worse, even when rhetoric and writing scholars explore the U.S.-Mexico border, they almost always do so from a U.S. perspective, drawing solely on U.S. theories and practices and examining the border almost entirely from the U.S.—not Mexican—border areas. For example, the recent collection *Border rhetorics: Citizenship and identity on the US-Mexico frontier* (De Chaine, 2012), explores “rhetorical enactments of citizenship and identity, particularly as they concentrate on and around the U.S.-Mexico border” (p. 3). However, even though this collection explicitly argues for approaching border studies from a denaturalized, postmodern *situatedness*, the editorial introduction and all 13 chapters examine the rhetorical enactments on the U.S. side of the border. Thus, the “US.-Mexico” border has effectively become naturalized as the U.S. experience on the U.S. side, hardly a border approach.

But this naturalizing of the U.S. side as the border experience, which precisely exemplifies Said’s (1978) definition of *orientalism* or what is commonly known in intercultural research as *ethnocentrism*, does not surprise scholars who live and work on *both* sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. One of the greatest paradoxes or contradictions in border studies is that the closer one gets physically or figuratively to the U.S.-Mexico border, the more that border (at least the Mexican side) is ignored. As explained elsewhere by these authors (Brunk-Chavez, et al, 2014), the multilingual programs at U.S. border universities are the least developed and the most anglicized and English dominant. For example, at New Mexico State University, which is 45 minutes from Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, the ESL program is minimally developed, and until Fall 2014 it was housed in the Communication Studies Department and only had three full-time, non-tenured faculty. And even worse, the ESL writing courses were not taught as *English as Second Language* courses but rather as *Speech Communication Disorder* courses.

Likewise, as more fully explained in Brunk-Chavez, et al (2014), the composition program at the University of Texas El Paso (overlooking the border with Ciudad Juárez) does claim to integrate some ESL approaches into its curriculum, but it does not directly draw on Spanish-English methodologies or Mexican-U.S. contrastive rhetoric, nor even though the student population at UTEP is 78% Hispanic (most of Mexican origin) and 5% Mexican nationals. Much like NMSU, the ESOL program at UTEP is housed in the Languages and Linguistics Department. Students placed into the program take classes separate from the “mainstream” first-year composition, but these students are foreign nationals, not domestic ESL. Thus, a large percentage of NMSU and UTEP students who are G1.5 and Spanish-dominant are placed into mainstream, native composition courses with little to no support.

In radically contradictory ways, these border universities ignore their border situations. This is both unfortunate and counter-intuitive, but nevertheless true. For example, authors from this team helped survey writing instructors at New Mexico State University and found that less than 20% of these instructors could distinguish a Mexican national student from a Mexican-American monolingual whose family has lived multiple generations in the United States. And many instructors did not perceive the need to make this distinction, choosing to ignore the students’ backgrounds, and often deeming them irrelevant to writing instruction. Ignoring the cultural and rhetorical backgrounds of students in this way, however, directly contradicts the CCC’s 40-year old Statement of *Students’ Right to their language* and the more recent *Statement on Second*

*Language Writing and Writers*. This denial obviously speaks to the capacity of these institutions ability to effectively teach writing to their multilingual populations.

The reasons for this great denial are complex and deserve to be discussed at length, but given the different purpose for this article, we can/merely only offer the following directions. The first is U.S. ethnocentrism: Much current research in G1.5 and resident ESL writers examines almost exclusively writing in U.S. contexts (Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999; Roberge, Siegal, & Harlau, 2009; Kirklighter, Cárdenas, & Murphy, 2007), drawing on U.S.-based theories of rhetoric and writing, which naturalize or make invisible the U.S. cultural and rhetorical foundations of these “diverse” contexts. In short, the research and theory of ESL resident writing in the United States is generally ill-informed about the rhetorical and writing traditions that are brought by students into the U.S. writing classroom or program, even though intercultural and global approaches have been proposed as being critical for L2 and ESL writing (Connor, 1996).

And although the global approach to writing is an important area of inquiry, most U.S. scholars are ill-equipped to carry it out (Thatcher, 2010) for a variety of reasons, including U.S.-centered methodology, ignorance of rhetorical traditions outside the United States, and a strong local approach to inquiry. For example, the recent online collection *Transnational Literate Lives in Digital Times* (Berry, Hawisher, & Selfe, 2012) documents very general world trends in digital literacies outside the United States and then portrays the “global” digital literacies of foreign graduate students living in the United States. However, instead of theoretically or empirically grounding the experience of these graduate students in their home literacies and then their complex transitioning to the U.S. contexts, the core of this text shows how the graduate students un-reflexively assimilated U.S. rhetoric and writing theory into their own local situations, which they used as the foundation for their voices.

For example, as portrayed by the authors, one Mexican national studying for a graduate degree in Illinois was quite taken with Villanueva’s *Bootstraps* and then Mejia’s article in *Crossing Borderlands* and used both as touchstones for grounding his digital literacies and forming his voice and approaches to digital literacy and storytelling. Both these texts are entirely U.S.-based with little or no research or theory from Mexico or Latin America. Ironically, this collection assumes that a well-educated Mexican national can only speak about his digital literacy experiences using U.S.-sourced theory and research from a monolingual Puerto Rican or Mexican-American—the ethnocentrism is obvious.

Perhaps the reason why the great majority of ESL, G1.5, and multilingual research assumes a U.S. context is that programs and research are safely ensconced somewhere in the United States where predominant U.S. values still reign, in spite of evident multiculturalism. Another reason for the continual perpetuation of predominant U.S. values is that a large variety of ESL students (from many backgrounds and languages) come together in the U.S. classroom, and they generally have two things in common: the need/desire to learn English (and demonstrate that competency) and the default use of U.S. cultural and rhetorical paradigm as the common ground from which they can learn English (Matsuda, 2009). Sadly, because of curricular needs, it would be impossible to first interrogate and then accommodate the great variety of cultural and

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rhetorical traditions or use another, non-U.S. tradition as the curricular base. Thus, ESL writers bring their highly varied and complex rhetorical and cultural traditions to the writing classroom, but in order to make the classes work, this incredible diversity is homogenized into the U.S. paradigm (Matsuda, 2009), a kind of U.S. ethnocentrism that is seen in many other contexts (Stewart & Bennett, 1991). This incredible diversity, however, is not the case with U.S.-Mexican border universities where, as explained throughout this special edition, Spanish-dominant and G1.5 Hispanic students are the majority.

In addition to the U.S. ethnocentrism, another problem, which Thatcher has discussed extensively elsewhere (See Thatcher, 2001, 2010, 2012) is that even when U.S. researchers interrogate the global contexts in U.S. writing classrooms, not naturalizing the U.S. context and attempting to overcome U.S. ethnocentrism, they suffer from severe methodological problems. First, many theorists draw on literary and critical textual hermeneutics to explore global writing in U.S. classrooms (Canagarajah, 2006), but these theories are not designed to assess the planning, composing, reviewing, and evaluating of multilingual student writing in U.S. classrooms, only large socio-political dynamics of mostly literary texts. These critical, textual hermeneutical approaches place a huge gap between highly abstract, critical theory and applications to the classroom.

For example, many of the articles in the very important collection *Teaching Writing to Latino Students* (Kirklighter, Cárdenas, & Murphy, 2007) similarly posited the large gap between abstract theory and practice. One article in this collection (Ramírez-Dhoore & Jones) narrated the experiences of two Anglo professors teaching writing at the University of Texas-Pan American, which sits right on the U.S.-Mexico border and is where Gloria Anzaldúa attended. These Anglo authors framed their experience from the bifurcated literary, poststructuralist theories of Anzaldúa and Mejia that explored the “linguistics terrorism” on the one hand and the more expressive, individualistic experiences of their students’ writing on the other hand, with nothing tying the two approaches together in terms of the exact struggle these students faced when making the rhetorical moves and approaches required by them in the composition classroom. And notably, although Mexico is visible from the UT Pan American campus, these authors never even commented about the influence of Mexican rhetorical traditions, even though a huge percentage of their students were either born in Mexico or had Mexican parents.

Although it feels terribly contradictory, this border denial is common in other border areas and contexts. Nancy Adler (2007) argued that when international organizations setup in local areas, the local employees of these international organizations often re-entrench themselves in their local cultures as a kind of resistance towards the constant cultural imposition from the home culture of the international organization. In the same way, border institutions in the United States face such constant influence from Mexico that they re-entrench themselves against this constant influence. For example, those unfamiliar with the University of Texas-El Paso would assume that its buildings would probably reflect the southwestern, U.S.-Mexico border culture. However, its architectural designs are taken from ancient Buhtan civilizations.

Thus, a great deal of work about writing in U.S. border universities needs to take place. But how can we do the research and curriculum development ethically? Further, how might we

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understand and draw upon the great strengths of U.S.-Mexico border students with this development? This article seeks to address these issues. It first briefly describes the history of Doña Ana County, New Mexico, the home of New Mexico State University and part of the El Paso del Norte border region, which historically and culturally grounds the subsequent discussions of the multiple border rhetorics and corresponding identities. Next, it develops a theory of border rhetoric and writing and connects that theory to different border rhetoric capabilities. And finally, it demonstrates these capabilities analyzing the writing of a variety of multilingual, Spanish-English university students.

### The complex border history of Southern New Mexico

In order to understand the complex cultural and rhetorical patterns along the U.S.-Mexico border, we briefly narrate the history of Doña Ana County, New Mexico, home of New Mexico State University. This area is a land of borders, situated among the U.S.-Mexico and Texas-New Mexico borders, and it boasts a dynamic and rich history. As the map below in Figure 1 shows, Doña Ana County has a sizable border with Mexico, starting with Sunland Park and going west until Arizona. The county also borders the Texas County of El Paso and the City of El Paso to the south and east.

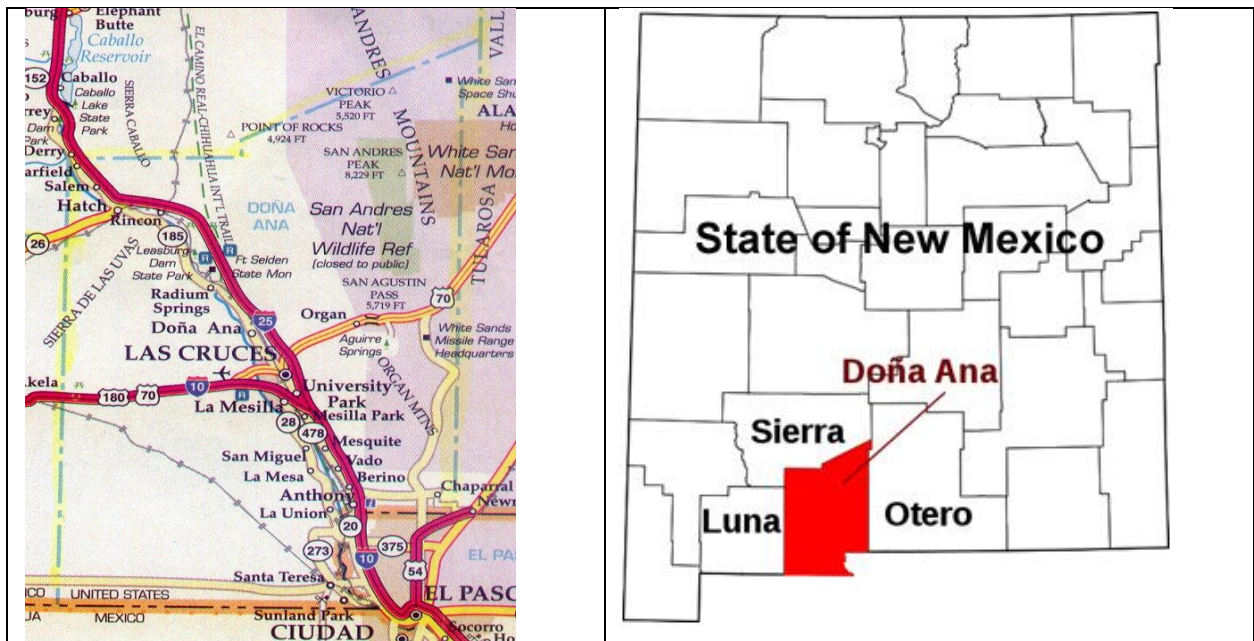


Figure 1. Maps of Doña Ana County, New Mexico and The State of New Mexico.

In addition to the borders, the Doña Ana County area also has a richly complex population and history. It was sparsely populated by Manso and Mescalero Apache but colonized by the Spanish beginning in 1598, when Juan de Oñate passed through the county and claimed all territory north of the Rio Grande for New Spain. Oñate later became the first governor of the Spanish territory of New Mexico, and thus, the county was part of Spain until 1821, when Mexico gained independence from Spain.

In this U.S.-Mexico border region, Doña Ana County also makes up a good section of what is historically known as the “El Paso del Norte” region, a large bi-national region encompassing Las Cruces, New Mexico, El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. The region has around 2.5 million people, making it the second largest bi-national region in North America. This region was founded in 1659 by Spanish explores seeking a *northern pass* (Paso del Norte) for the *Camino Real* or *Royal Road*, which was and is the official trade road and route that runs through the Rocky Mountains and connects the Southern Capital of New Spain, Mexico City, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, the northern Capital. The Camino Real runs right through Doña Ana County, following the Rio Grande. For almost 200 years, the dynamic and growing area was entirely a Spanish-Mexican settlement; and for almost 300 years, the geo-political border was relatively meaningless with the populations going back and forth easily, forming a coherent regional culture, people, and economy.

The homogeneity of this region began to change in the early- and mid-1800s, with Doña Ana County at the crossroads of much of this change. As mentioned, from the 1600s to 1821, this area was officially part of New Spain or a Spanish colony. Then, from 1821-1836, all of Doña Ana County was Mexican Territory. However, in 1836, Texas gained independence from Mexico and established itself as the Republic of Texas and claimed the eastern part of the county up to the Rio Grande (which roughly parallels Interstate 10 and Interstate 25, as shown above). This half of the county continued as part of the Texas Republic until 1845, when the Republic of Texas became part of the United States. From 1836 until 1848, the western half of Doña Ana County was Mexican until Mexico ceded most of this area to the United States at the conclusion of the Mexican-American War.



Figure 3. Changing national boundaries of Doña Ana County.

In addition, as shown in the map above, the southeastern parts of New Mexico were also part of Mexico even after the 1848 cession and until the Gadsden Purchase of 1853, in which Mexico lost additional land as the border was renegotiated; Doña Ana County was the actual treaty site of the Gadsden Purchase where the United States bought these 30,000 square miles from Mexico.

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After the Mexican cessions, Doña Ana County grew quite slowly, still retaining much of its Mexican culture, language, and heritage. However, the area began to develop more complexly near the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1888, New Mexico State University was founded by the Indiana-born educator, Hiram Hadley, bringing strongly rooted Anglo-American cultural, social, and educational values to the region. In 1954, the White Sands Missile Range was established with its corresponding NASA test facility in 1963, which brought high technology development and deployment to the area. All three of these entities have been integral to the new population growth of the county. Further, beginning in the early 1900s, farmers and agricultural immigrants from Europe and the United States began developing more industrialized approaches to farming the rich Rio Grande valley. Some of the largest and most productive pecan orchards in the world are now located in Doña Ana County.

Because the foundation of Doña Ana County was historically Mexican but complexly and dramatically split three times in a relatively short time span of 17 years (1836-1853) but then became part of the United States since that time (159 years), it demonstrates a richly complex and interesting site for cultural, rhetorical, and inquiry in border rhetorics.

### **Modern connection to Mexico**

Furthermore, because of its location on the U.S.-Mexico border, Doña Ana County is still strongly connected to Ciudad Juárez and Mexico in general. The migratory movements between Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico and the El Paso-Las Cruces area have existed since the before origin of the 1836, 1848, and 1853 treaties. Strong blood bonds have existed among families that stayed on each side during the demarcation of the territories, the search for peace during Mexico's revolution (1910-1920), and most of all, the need for jobs among the people in the rural countryside. After the great depression of the 1930's, the owners of U.S. agricultural fields were in urgent need for labor that they could not find in their country or that was too expensive. This attracted many Mexican laborers to the Southwest, including Doña Ana County where the laborers (Braceros) could enter the United States without any difficulty, and would find employment wherever it was most convenient for them.

In 1986, the United States enacted the *Immigration Reform and Control Act*, which allowed for all undocumented migrants living in the United States as of January 1, 1982 a path to legal citizenship. Further, in the late 1990s, the Clinton Administration relaxed the immigration laws, allowing Mexican citizens a quicker path to legal entry if they could prove they had family on the U.S. side. Thus, starting in the mid-1990s and until 2002, a large influx of Mexican immigrants crossed over into El Paso, Texas and Las Cruces, forming the second wave of immigration, after the Bracero Program. What is important, for this project, is that this second wave increased the cross-border familial connections; that is, unlike many parts of the Mexican immigration into the United States, the El Paso del Norte Region is characterized as a familial region, with many families having members living simultaneously on both sides of the border.

### **U.S. and Mexican rhetorical traditions and intercultural rhetoric**

Given the complex history, it is not surprising that the U.S.-Mexico border has complexly related rhetorical traditions. In order to understand these relations, we must first explore the general patterns of U.S. and Mexican rhetorical traditions. Much research has compared the different

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writing styles of U.S. and Mexican rhetorical and writing traditions in academic contexts (see Crawford, 2010; Montaña-Harmon, 1991; Simpson, 2000; Kail, Sánchez, & López, 1997; Lo Castro, 2008; Valero-Garcés, 1996). And most of this research concludes that from an English speaker's perspective, Mexican Spanish writers have more run-on, longer, and more complex sentences; constant lexical repetition for thematic cohesion (as compared to syntactic parallelism); more additive and causal conjunctions; and very frequent conscious deviations from topics (Crawford, 2010). And, not surprisingly, most, if not all, these differences tend to show up in Mexican ESL compositions (Montaña-Harmon, 1991, pp. 418-420; Simpson, 2000, pp. 303-305).

Further, most research comparing the writing instruction of Mexican L1 Spanish writing and U.S. L1 English writing concludes that Mexican writing instruction emphasizes: 1) vocabulary building by using synonyms, antonyms, paraphrasing, and derivations; 2) writing practice focusing on tone, style, and vocabulary based on written models from literary figures; 3) practice in elaborating a given idea through writing in various ways as the student attempts to develop the theme in greater depth; and 4) work on correct grammar and mechanics at the sentence level (Montaña-Harmon 1991, p.418). Likewise, much research in professional communication (Thatcher, 2006, 2012) has documented rhetorical differences between Mexican and U.S. professional writers. These writing and pedagogical differences originate from different rhetorical traditions especially concerning the styles and rhetorical purposes of writing, as opposed to orality (Valdés, 1996; Leon-Portillo, 1996; Thatcher, 2006).

However, despite these apparently clear differences between predominant Mexican and U.S. writing styles, it is often difficult to understand how these differences might influence writing instruction, especially at U.S. universities, which is precisely the problem of the state of research indicated earlier. In other words, what do these differences really mean, especially on the U.S.-Mexico border? These contrastive rhetorical characteristics are so broad that they are devoid of meaning in specific contexts (See Thatcher, 2012). In order to understand the relevance of the rhetorical differences, we need to move beyond some stylistic features and explore more fully the cultural and rhetorical reasons for the differences. This understanding will help U.S. writing instructors and program administrators understand both *how* and *why* border writers draw upon these two rhetorical traditions in complex, strategic ways.

To illustrate these differences, we summarize research that is reported elsewhere (Thatcher, Montoya, Medina-López, 2014) but helps us convey the connection between cultural and rhetorical patterns. The first example is a *Fotonovela*, a pamphlet that was developed by Mexican health experts contracted by the NIH for the Mexican-American and Latino community in the United States. The following Figure 4 is four pages from the 24-page English version.

**An Ounce Of PREVENTION**  
A Guide To Heart Health

Featuring the Ramirez Family

- Mariano
- Virginia
- Doña Fea
- Nestor
- Carmencita

My family has made the switch to a heart-healthy lifestyle to protect us against heart disease. Now we have a new sense of well-being. Come on and see how we did this!

**The Crossword Puzzle: Lower Cholesterol**

This pie is delicious. I'd like a piece too, Mariano.

Just give me a tiny piece. All that cream, it's too much saturated fat for me.

This crossword puzzle gets harder every day.

I can solve it, mamá. Just give me the clue every day.

A 10 letter word. Foods high in saturated fats make this go up and some people have a high level.

They call him the King of Crossword Puzzles, mamá.

**An Unsettling Surprise: Prevent High Blood Pressure**

Be good to your heart. Eat less fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.

Eating low fat, low cholesterol foods can help you reduce your blood cholesterol level and your weight and prevent heart disease. It also sets a good example for your children.

Do you know your cholesterol number?

A total blood cholesterol level of less than 200 is desirable. A level of 240 or higher is high blood cholesterol. But even a level between 200 and 240 can increase your risk of heart disease. If you don't know your number, ask your doctor about it.

Write your blood cholesterol number here:

Make the switch to heart-healthy eating today!

Doña Fea has learned that it's not difficult to get your family to eat low fat, low cholesterol foods.

I've switched my family from whole to skim milk.

To switch my family from drinking whole milk to skim milk, I served them whole milk mixed with 2% milk for a month. During the next month, I served them 2% milk mixed with 1% milk, then 1% milk mixed with skim milk, until they were drinking only skim milk. Soon they couldn't even taste the difference.

Marianooooo! Did you take your high blood pressure pills, dear?

For no reason, my love, no reason at all. You know what the doctor said. If you stop taking them, you could have a stroke.

Yes! Virginia! Why do you ask, my dear?

My son loves to practice his favorite sport. There he is navigating the channels on his remote control. How is he not going to have high blood pressure?

Mariano, fix your collar! What will our little girl's boyfriend thank?

My God, that must be Lolita! You'll see mamá, he's so handsome.


What? Who? Whose boyfriend?

Figure 4. Fotonovela of Heart Health for Mexican-American Community.

In English, *Fotonovela* means a photo drama pamphlet, and as a genre, the fotonovela has been a critical component of health instruction for Latino communities, not only in the United States, but around Latin America (see [hablamosjuntos.org](http://hablamosjuntos.org)). Figure 5 shows an NIH pamphlet with the same content but for a non-Latino or generic U.S. audience.

National Cholesterol Education Program

## High Blood Cholesterol What you need to know



### Why is Cholesterol Important?

Your blood cholesterol level has a lot to do with your chances of getting heart disease. High blood cholesterol is one of the major risk factors for heart disease. A risk factor is a condition that increases your chance of getting a disease. In fact, the higher your blood cholesterol level, the greater your risk for developing heart disease or having a heart attack. Heart disease is the number one killer of women and men in the United States. Each year, more than a million Americans have heart attacks, and about a half million people die from heart disease.

### How Does Cholesterol Cause Heart Disease?

When there is too much cholesterol (a fat-like substance) in your blood, it builds up in the walls of your arteries. Over time, this buildup causes "hardening of the arteries" so that arteries become narrowed and blood flow to the heart is slowed down or blocked. The blood carries oxygen to the heart, and if enough blood and oxygen cannot reach your heart, you may suffer chest pain. If the blood supply to a portion of the heart is completely cut off by a blockage, the result is a heart attack.

High blood cholesterol itself does not cause symptoms, so many people are unaware that their cholesterol level is too high. It is important to find out what your cholesterol numbers are because lowering cholesterol levels that are too high lessens the risk for developing heart disease and reduces the chance of a heart attack or dying of heart disease, even if you already have it. Cholesterol lowering is important for everyone—youngeer, middle age, and older adults; women and men; and people with or without heart disease.

INSIDE:

What Do Your Cholesterol Numbers Mean?

What Affects Cholesterol Levels?

What is Your Risk of Developing Heart Disease or Having a Heart Attack?

Treating High Cholesterol

Lowering Cholesterol With Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH  
NATIONAL HEART, LUNG, AND BLOOD INSTITUTE

### What Do Your Cholesterol Numbers Mean?

Everyone age 20 and older should have their cholesterol measured at least once every 5 years. It is best to have a blood test called a "lipoprotein profile" to find out your cholesterol numbers. This blood test is done after a 9- to 12-hour fast and gives information about your:

- **Total cholesterol**
- **LDL (bad) cholesterol** – the main source of cholesterol buildup and blockage in the arteries
- **HDL (good) cholesterol** – helps keep cholesterol from building up in the arteries
- **Triglycerides** – another form of fat in your blood

If it is not possible to get a lipoprotein profile done, knowing your total cholesterol and HDL cholesterol can give you a general idea about your cholesterol levels. If your total cholesterol is 200 mg/dL or more or if your HDL is less than 40 mg/dL, you will need to have a lipoprotein profile done. See how your cholesterol numbers compare to the tables below.

Total Cholesterol Level	Category
Less than 200 mg/dL	Desirable
200-239 mg/dL	Borderline high
240 mg/dL and above	High

LDL Cholesterol Level	LDL Cholesterol Category
Less than 100 mg/dL	Optimal
100-129 mg/dL	Near optimal/above optimal
130-159 mg/dL	Borderline high
160-189 mg/dL	High
190 mg/dL and above	Very high

\*Cholesterol levels are measured in milligrams (mg) of cholesterol per deciliter (dL) of blood.

HDL (good) cholesterol protects against heart disease, so for HDL, higher numbers are better. A level less than 40 mg/dL is low and is considered a major risk factor because it increases your risk for developing heart disease. HDL levels of 60 mg/dL or more help to lower your risk for heart disease. Triglycerides can also raise heart disease risk. Levels that are borderline high (150-199 mg/dL) or high (200 mg/dL or more) may need treatment in some people.

### What Affects Cholesterol Levels?

A variety of things can affect cholesterol levels. These are things you can do something about:

- **Diet.** Saturated fat and cholesterol in the food you eat make your blood cholesterol level go up. Saturated fat is the main culprit, but cholesterol in foods also matters. Reducing the amount of saturated fat and cholesterol in your diet helps lower your blood cholesterol level.
- **Weight.** Being overweight is a risk factor for heart disease. It also tends to increase your cholesterol. Losing weight can help lower your LDL and total cholesterol levels, as well as raise your HDL and lower your triglyceride levels.
- **Physical Activity.** Not being physically active is a risk factor for heart disease. Regular physical activity can help lower LDL (bad) cholesterol and raise HDL (good) cholesterol levels. It also helps you lose weight. You should try to be physically active for 30 minutes on most, if not all, days.

Things you cannot do anything about also can affect cholesterol levels. These include:

- **Age and Gender.** As women and men get older, their cholesterol levels rise. Before the age of menopause, women have lower total cholesterol levels than men of the same age. After the age of menopause, women's LDL levels tend to rise.
- **Hereditry.** Your genes partly determine how much cholesterol your body makes. High blood cholesterol can run in families.

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### What is Your Risk of Developing Heart Disease or Having a Heart Attack?

In general, the higher your LDL level and the more risk factors you have (other than LDL), the greater your chances of developing heart disease or having a heart attack. Some people are at high risk for a heart attack because they already have heart disease. Other people are at high risk for developing heart disease because they have diabetes (which is a strong risk factor) or a combination of risk factors for heart disease. Follow these steps to find out your risk for developing heart disease.

**Step 1** Check the table below to see how many of the listed risk factors you have; these are the risk factors that affect your LDL goal.

**Major Risk Factors That Affect Your LDL Goal**

- Cigarette smoking
- High blood pressure (140/90 mmHg or higher or on blood pressure medication)
- Low HDL cholesterol (less than 40 mg/dL)\*
- Family history of early heart disease (heart disease in father or brother before age 55; heart disease in mother or sister before age 65)
- Age (men 45 years or older; women 55 years or older)

\*If your HDL cholesterol is 60 mg/dL or higher, subtract 1 from your total count.

Even though obesity and physical inactivity are not counted in this list, they are conditions that need to be corrected.

**Step 2** How many major risk factors do you have? If you have 2 or more risk factors in the table above, use the risk scoring tables on the back page (which include your cholesterol levels) to find your risk score. Risk score refers to the chance of having a heart attack in the next 10 years, given as a percentage.

(Use the Framingham Point Scores on the back page.)

My 10-year risk score is \_\_\_\_\_%.

**Step 3** Use your medical history, number of risk factors, and risk score to find your risk of developing heart disease or having a heart attack in the table below.

If You Have	You Are in Category
Heart disease, diabetes, or risk score more than 20%*	I. High Risk
2 or more risk factors and risk score 10-20%	II. Next Highest Risk
2 or more risk factors and risk score less than 10%	III. Moderate Risk
0 or 1 risk factor	IV. Low-to-Moderate Risk

\*Means that more than 20 of 100 people in this category will have a heart attack within 10 years.

My risk category is \_\_\_\_\_.

### Treating High Cholesterol

The main goal of cholesterol-lowering treatment is to lower your LDL level enough to reduce your risk of developing heart disease or having a heart attack. The higher your risk, the lower your LDL goal will be. To find your LDL goal, see the box for your risk category below. There are two main ways to lower your cholesterol:

- **Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC)**—includes a cholesterol-lowering diet (called the TLC diet), physical activity, and weight management. TLC is for anyone whose LDL is above goal.
- **Drug Treatment**—if cholesterol-lowering drugs are needed, they are used together with TLC treatment to help lower your LDL.

If you are in...

**Category I. High Risk.** your LDL goal is less than 100 mg/dL. You will need to begin the TLC diet to reduce your high risk even if your LDL is below 190 mg/dL. If your LDL is 100 mg/dL or above, you will need to start drug treatment at the same time as the TLC diet. If your LDL is below 100 mg/dL, you may also need to start drug treatment together with the TLC diet if your doctor finds your risk is very high, for example if you have had a recent heart attack or have both heart disease and diabetes.

**Category II. Next Highest Risk.** your LDL goal is less than 130 mg/dL. If your LDL is 130 mg/dL or above, you will need to begin treatment with the TLC diet. If your LDL is 130 mg/dL or more after 3 months on the TLC diet, you may need drug treatment along with the TLC diet. If your LDL is less than 130 mg/dL, you will need to follow the heart-healthy diet for all Americans, which allows a little more saturated fat and cholesterol than the TLC diet.

**Category III. Moderate Risk.** your LDL goal is less than 160 mg/dL. If your LDL is 160 mg/dL or above, you will need to begin the TLC diet. If your LDL is 160 mg/dL or more after you have tried the TLC diet for 3 months, you may need drug treatment along with the TLC diet. If your LDL is less than 160 mg/dL, you will need to follow the heart-healthy diet for all Americans.

**Category IV. Low-to-Moderate Risk.** your LDL goal is less than 190 mg/dL. If your LDL is 190 mg/dL or above, you will need to begin the TLC diet. If your LDL is 190 mg/dL or more after 3 months on the TLC diet, you may need drug treatment along with the TLC diet to lower your LDL, especially if your LDL is 190 mg/dL or more. If your LDL is less than 190 mg/dL, you will need to follow the heart-healthy diet for all Americans.

To reduce your risk for heart disease or keep it low, it is very important to control any other risk factors you may have such as high blood pressure and smoking.

Figure 5. Generic approach to health communications in the United States.

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This fotonovela was written by experts in Latino health, with the lead writer a colleague of this project team. It uses a family situation, games, and drama to explain heart health, an approach that corresponds well to Latino cultural values (Hinojosa, et al, 2011). The Anglo design assumes an analytical, objective, and individual approach, which reflects broad U.S. cultural values (Thatcher, 2012). Although popular in Latin America, the fotonovela design is rare in U.S. health care materials (Olney, et al, 2007). Although both manuals describe heart health, the stark differences show that simply translating Anglo-dominant manuals into Spanish will not meet the cultural expectations of those who prefer the fotonovela design.

Although the rhetorical differences in the fotonovela and generic design are evident, how can research ethically and validly compare their approaches, drawing relevant conclusions for application in the writing classroom? As first developed by literacy scholars, but refined for intercultural contexts (Thatcher, 2001, 2012) using intercultural models (Hofstede, 2010; House et al, 2005), the intercultural literacy model is a universal framework of relevant variables that embeds cultural differences and similarities within that frame. First, the model shows literacy and culture in a four-part layered relationship. As shown below in Figure 6 on the left, the center of the model is the conception that a culture develops of the self or human being.

This conception of the self, in turn, constructs or reinforces distinct thinking or cognitive patterns, and these cognitive patterns construct appropriate social behavior. All three categories correspond to distinct literacy/rhetorical patterns. And finally, the literacy/rhetorical patterns simultaneously reinforce or re-create the previous three categories, as shown by the arrows.

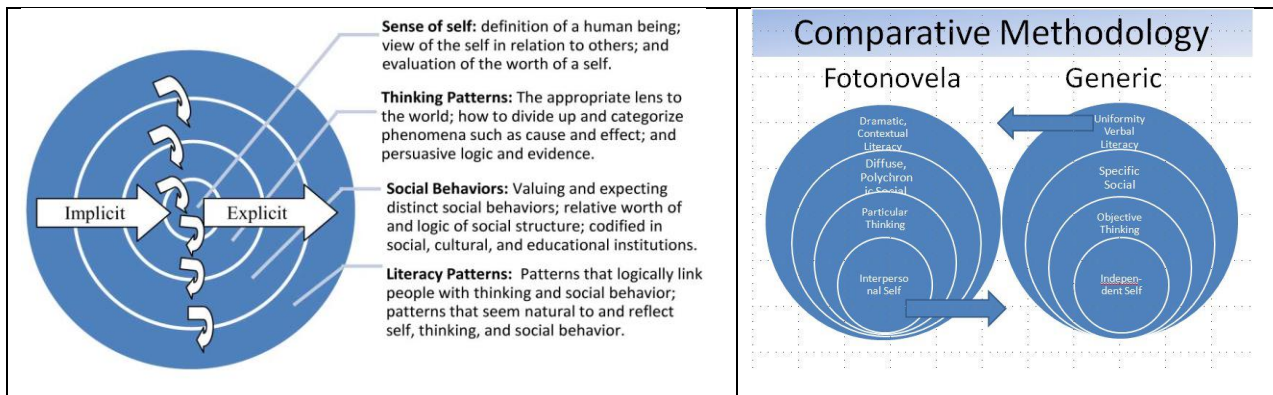


Figure 6. Intercultural model.

As a key strength, this model allows researchers to draw on existing methodologies, variables, units of analysis, and cultural data developed by cross-cultural researchers (House, et al., 2005; Hofstede, 2010; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2000). As shown in Table 2, each layer of culture corresponds to two variables/units of analysis:

Table 2.  
*Variables and units of analysis integrated into literacy-culture model.*

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>What Variables Measure/Units of Analysis</b>
<b>Sense of Self</b>	Individual-Collective	Levels of independence or interdependence among groups of people.
	Status/Achievement	Sources of status, pertaining to actions versus backgrounds.
<b>Thinking Patterns</b>	Rules Orientation	How rules are developed in universal versus particular application.
	Public-Private sphere	Crossing from public to private based on relations and context.
<b>Social Behaviors</b>	Inner Outer directed	Where people look for virtue and guidance for their behavior.
	Poly or Mono Time	Affinity for simultaneous or linear time.
<b>Rhetorical Patterns</b>	Context in Commun.	Relevance and influence of context in communication.
	Power Distance	Influence of inequality in interpersonal communications.

Intercultural communication and organizational behavioral researchers have been using these value sets for more than 30 years. Using these variables, we can assess the fotonovela as more collective, ascriptive, particular, diffuse, inner-directed, polychronic, high context, and unequal power distance, while the Anglo pamphlet exhibits the contrastive values. (For a detailed discussion of the fotonovela versus anglo pamphlet, see Thatcher 2012a). In short, these two pamphlets exemplify how culture and communication patterns are related. And thus, they provide a guide for understanding the possible rhetorical patterns that could surface in U.S. writing classes on the border. But how well does this process work? Can we anticipate the cultural expectations of students and their writing based on our best assessment of their cultural characteristics?

### **Border theory, human capability, and six rhetorical functionings**

The previous history of the border area combined with the presentation of Mexican and U.S. rhetorical patterns in health communication helps establish a foundation for theorizing about the rhetorical characteristics of border writing students. First, however, the border is not just one culture with a supposed multiplicity of fluid and ever changing identity constructions (Thatcher, 2012); rather, the border is a complex—and often strategic—sharing and strategically displaying of competing cultural and rhetorical traditions, depending on the rhetorical situation Vila (2003), explains:

However, the border is not really one, but multiple, in the sense that not only different people construct distinct borders and disparate identities around those borders, but those different borders acquire a distinct weight in relation to the different subject positions (and the different narratives within those subject positions) people decide to identify with. (p. 616)

From this perspective, Vila (2000, 2003) argues that border identities can serve to either cross or reinforce borders, the title of Vila’s 2000 book. That simply means that one person can strategically function as Mexican, for example, and reinforce the pejorative views of northern Mexico, or as a Mexican American, reinforcing the U.S. border, and or a recent immigrant, *Rhetoric, Professional Communication, and Globalization* August, 2014, Volume 6, 56-87.

reinforcing a crossing of borders. These are strategic rhetorical choices and positionalities and are not entirely fluid nor static.

Thus, we have chosen not to turn our analysis of students' relations to the border context and Mexican and rhetorical patterns into a discussion of identity, which is fraught with very complicated and contentious arguments. Instead, we argue that there are six distinct *rhetorical functionings* that border residents are capable of using in specific rhetorical situations. This approach minimizes the dangers of essentializing and highlights the agency of border residents, based on what they choose to value, while not reducing rhetorical choices to the individual and local approach. Residents along the border are differentially capable of acting or using these functions for a variety of reasons. This distinction between functioning and capability is essential to the work developed in the Human Capability Approach, which is discussed next.

### **Border identity as seen as both a functioning and capability**

The Human Capability Approach (hd-ca.org) was founded by a group of scholars and NGOs focused on international development and quality of life initiatives. In short, this approach rejected measures of “development” based solely on gross national incomes or the perfection of institutions concerned with human well-being. Instead they chose to measure human development in terms of what people are capable of doing, based on their own value systems. The approach inspired the creation of the UN's Human Development Index, which measures individual capabilities in health, education, and income across the world. The Human Capability Approach is founded upon three critical and related concepts or definitions: *Functionings*, *Capabilities*, and *Agency* (“Briefing Note” p.1). Functionings are the

valuable activities and states that make up people's well being— such as a healthy body, being safe, being calm, having a warm friendship, an educated mind, a good job.

Functionings are related to goods and income but they describe what a person is able to do or be as a result. When people's basic need for food (a commodity) is met, they enjoy the *functioning* of being well-nourished. (“Briefing Note” p. 1)

As a universal frame, all people in all cultures have activities that make up their well-being. The key difference is that these activities and states differ across cultures.

Second, *capabilities* are the “alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for [a person] to achieve. Put differently, they are ‘the substantive freedoms he or she enjoys to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value’” (“Briefing Note” p.2). Since functionings differ across cultures, the capability to perform these functions differs too, but the concept of capability does not; people are variously capable of performing a variety of functions in local contexts.

Third, *agency* “refers to a person's ability to pursue and realize goals that he or she values and has reason to value. An agent is ‘someone who acts and brings about change.’ The opposite of a person with agency is someone who is forced, oppressed, or passive” (“Briefing Note” p.3). Thus, this approach assumes that all people possess some kinds and applications of agency, but the capability of the agents varies across cultures. These three concepts are universal frames—

what all cultures share—but they must be then grounded in local contexts. The founding documents explore how these three work together in the bicycle analogy:

A person may own or be able to use a bicycle (a resource). By riding the bicycle, the person moves around town and, let us presume, values this mobility (a functioning). If the person is unable to ride the bicycle (because, perhaps, she has no sense of balance), then having a bicycle would not create this functioning of mobility. But in our case, the access to the bicycle (resource) coupled with the person's own characteristics (balance etc), creates the capability for the person to move around town when she or he wishes. Furthermore, let us suppose that the person enjoys having this capability to leap upon a bicycle and pedal over to a friend's house for lunch— thus having this capability contributes to their happiness or utility. Resource → Functioning → Capability → Utility. ("Briefing Note" p.2)

The bicycle example illustrates how the various concepts are all related to one and show how they can combine with the common human thresholds explained earlier. For example, I am an avid cyclist, both mountain and road. But my being able to ride my road bike to work (which I do very frequently) is different for me when compared to residents of Ciudad Juárez who rides their bikes to work. Their bike riding is contextualized in a very different traffic system, economic structure, and work structure; there are many more people who have nothing but bikes to ride whereas, when it rains, I take one of my cars to work. Thus, comparing the number of bikes per capita in Ciudad Juárez to Las Cruces, NM is an invalid comparison, which is a common approach in human rights that focuses on economic development. Further, comparing the distribution of bikes in Las Cruces versus Ciudad Juárez is not valid because the capability—or what people can do with the bike—is different; thus, distribution is an indirect measure at best.

Instead, we need to look at what bike riding enables people to do in Ciudad Juárez versus Las Cruces. For this analysis, we would have to contextualize the transportations systems as a whole (the extremely well developed public transportation system of Juárez, versus the almost non-existent one of Las Cruces); the capability of using other means of transportation such as cars or motorcycles (cars are literally more expensive in Mexico), and this fact, coupled with much lower salaries, means that bicycles provide a greater capability in Ciudad Juárez than in Las Cruces. Thus, what we should be comparing is the function of the bike and what that bike enables or makes the person capable of doing. Thus, it's the *capability* that intercultural human rights researchers are most interested in. Capability means the total functions available for a person to perform, forming a deep connection between function and freedom. Thus, providing certain resources across nations or cultures does not allow people to fulfill their functions in the same way.

These three concepts (function, capability, and agency) directly frame our discussion of writers along the U.S.-Mexico border. We are assuming that various functions exist—such as functioning as a recent immigrant; but people are capable of various functions, depending on their agency and specific capacities and traits. And our goal as researchers, theorists, and teachers is to help our students become more capable of functioning in a great variety of rhetorical contexts, depending in their purpose and audience. Consequently, the following six

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functionings are seen much like strategic cultural/rhetorical scripts that border writers and residents can move between to serve their rhetorical purposes and contexts.

## **Six key cultural and rhetorical functionings on the Border**

### **Functioning 1: Deeply rooted Mexican-American traditions**

As detailed earlier, since U.S. border states (California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas) were part of Mexico in the 19th century, there are many Mexican-American (or Latino/Hispanic) residents who live here that can trace their ancestry back five or six generations to the border region. They are often prominent farmers and ranchers, doctors, entrepreneurs, and important business, government, and industry people. This group adapted itself (often reluctantly) to the change in nationality in the mid-1800s, from Mexican to U.S.-American. Currently, many more often identify themselves as New Mexicans or Texans, integrating cultural and social patterns from the United States and the U.S.-Mexico border area but often not from Mexico. People who self-identify as such rarely function well in Mexico or find themselves with Mexican nationals. Many in this group spoke little Spanish through the generations and are increasingly functioning overtly as U.S.-Americans—without the Mexican-American descriptor.

Many distance themselves from the other border functionings discussed next. In a majority of cross-border interactions, we have observed instances when people functioning as Mexican-Americans not only cannot work with Mexican nationals but often portray ambivalent, even hostile views toward Mexico, much as Vila (2000) documents. A good part of this group may function best as *Hispanic* or *Latino*. In terms of predominant cultural and rhetorical patterns, the Mexican-American function draws on general and often romanticized images of Mexico but within a strongly predominant U.S. rhetorical and cultural tradition, as exemplified in the generic health pamphlet, and despite many discussions of local differences.

### **Functioning 2: Recent immigrant**

The next functioning that is predominant in Doña Ana County is the recent immigrant, most of whom come from Mexico. The key capacity for this function is to speak Spanish like a native, and there is a strong connection to the collective-structured traditions in Mexico, especially self-identification as *Mexican* (as opposed to Hispanic/Latino) and a preference to associate mostly with other recent Mexican immigrants (Vila, 2000; 2003). If possible, people in this group frequently travel to Mexico where many family members still live and where they can function like Mexican nationals. This functioning is populated by multiple classes and income levels, although a higher percentage is working class and laborers. People who function as recent immigrants are the most plagued by problems with immigration, for a large number are undocumented and have complicated relations to U.S. education systems.

A key part of functioning as a recent immigrant is the preference for orality and oral-like rhetorical features in their written texts (Thatcher, 2006). The authors have generally observed people functioning as immigrants interact effectively on the Mexican side of the border, but often are challenged with U.S. institutions. This functioning is grounded almost entirely in Mexican rhetorical traditions, and people who function as such often face considerable difficulty functioning well in U.S. English writing classrooms.



### Functioning 3: Generation 1.5 and beyond

The most complicated and disparate, this functioning has been labeled as Generation 1.5 and is caught between the two functionings discussed above. People who function as G1.5 are often American-born, U.S. citizens, but their parents or grandparents are from Mexico. Spanish is the default language of this functioning, but this translates to Spanish at home with English learned and spoken fluently at school and at work. Often when G1.5 people travel to Mexico to visit family, they cannot function well there and are uncomfortable culturally or rhetorically. A key feature of this functioning is the desire to rapidly acculturate to a specific set of predominant American values such as individualism and universalism, values that are often held in an uneasy tension with the more Mexican values of collectivism and social hierarchy.

However, this functioning assumes many traits from Mexican roots and parents such as particularism, diffuseness, and polychronicity, but they are grounded locally in U.S. cultural systems (Thatcher, 2012). This functioning is literally caught between both rhetorical and cultural traditions, with complex and varied attitudes and connections to both systems, a point that Vila (2003) explores more thoroughly. This includes ambivalence about self-identification: Some may hide their Spanish or Latino characteristics because of their desire to integrate better into the United States, while others may openly identify themselves as Mexican-American and insist on Spanish (Vila, 2000).

In terms of connecting to the U.S. and Mexican rhetorical traditions, there are many variations and gradations of this functioning, depending on their historical, social, cultural connections to either Mexico or the United States. Some of the Mexican rhetorical traditions, for example, easily cross into the United States (Thatcher, 2012a) such as the family and interpersonal orientations; however, other Mexican traditions such as time, diffuseness, and high context might pass less easily onto the U.S. side because of strong differences with the U.S. economic, educational, and legal systems. Much research needs to address the actual influence of the border on rhetorical traditions (Thatcher, 2012a).

### Functioning 4: Mexican Nationals

This functioning emphasizes *lo Mexicano* (Mexicanness) theoretically disconnected from overt U.S. influence. An important sub-function is the *Mexicano fronterizo* (Border Mexican), a person who has immigrated to the United States because of better business opportunities, or more recently, to escape the narco-violence. To function well in this group, people are frequently middle or upper class, have been educated in private Mexican schools, and often speak formal English learned in Mexico. An important feature of this functioning is to view Latinos, Generation 1.5 or Mexican-American groups with some disdain, accusing them of selling out their Mexican heritage (Vila, 2000). This functioning presents complicated relations to the U.S. rhetorical contexts. People who function only in this way often do not identify well with those functioning as recent immigrant or Generation 1.5 because of class-economic differences; and the functioning shares more economic, social, and educational values with the predominant U.S. middle class; but this combination, because of their deep connections to Mexico, also does not connect well with Anglo-Americans either (Vila, 2000; Condon, 1997). Many people functioning as Mexican nationals are usually educated in international perspectives, not only from the United States, but also Europe and even Asia. Often, these Mexican nationals reside in El Paso but work in Ciudad Juárez.

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### Functioning 5: Cross-Border, Bilingual, and Bicultural

A fifth functioning is the cross-border, bilingual and bi-cultural. People who can work well across the border are composed mostly of Mexican nationals (mostly *Mexicanos Fronterizos*) such as the growing percentage of students at New Mexico State University and University of Texas El Paso who are Mexican nationals from Ciudad Juárez. And a good number of mid-level management and engineers live in El Paso and work in the maquilas in Ciudad Juárez. To work across the border, people must be experienced at traveling frequently across the border and interacting bilingually with people who work well with the other five border functionings. This group's ability to relate to the two rhetorical traditions is complex.

### Functioning 6: Güeros or Anglos

The final major functioning in southern New Mexico is composed mostly of the Anglo-Americans, güeros or whites, who are relatively late-comers to the border region. As explained earlier, after the succession of 1/3 of the Mexican territory to the United States in the mid-1800s, Anglo-Americans begin to arrive in larger numbers. According to official census ([www.uscensus.gov](http://www.uscensus.gov)), they account for about 25% the population in Southern New Mexico and 10 % in west Texas. This is a catch-all functioning for anyone whose ethnicity is somewhat white and who is not Hispanic, black or Asian. This functioning assumes predominant U.S. rhetorical and cultural values as exemplified in the generic pamphlet.

The following Table 2 summarizes these six groups and references their connections to predominant U.S. writing curricula and programs.

Table 2.  
Six Cultural and Rhetorical Functionings along the U.S.-Mexico Border

Functionings (Human Capability approach)	Relation to Mexican cultural and rhetorical patterns (including Spanish)	Relation to U.S. cultural and rhetorical patterns (including English)	Strategic positioning and capability among functionings in structured contexts	Acculturation issues for NMSU writing and English classes
<b>Mexican-American</b> (3 <sup>rd</sup> + generation U.S.-American with Mexican ancestry)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some remnants of Spanish language and Mexican culture especially in family and interpersonal contexts.</li> <li>• Ambivalence or even hostility towards Mexico.</li> <li>• Strong U.S. gaze of Mexican culture but often selectively romanticized.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant assimilation of deeply-rooted U.S. cultural values.</li> <li>• Perhaps over-assimilation of U.S. values in some cases.</li> <li>• Use <i>mestizaje</i> to engage with U.S. culture but unaware of term's U.S. construction or connection to Mexican values.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can position him/herself with "Mexican" identities, but readily identifies with U.S.</li> <li>• Usually cannot function in Mexico.</li> <li>• Often disdains functioning as recent immigrant or G1.5.</li> <li>• Complex hierarchy with Mexican nationals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English dominant → Very little language or culture issues; most problems are general/academic literacy.</li> <li>• Some affinity for select cultural and rhetorical traditions from Mexican but within a U.S. frame.</li> </ul>
<b>Recent Immigrant</b> (less than 10 years in the U.S. and originally from Mexico or Latin America)	Deeply connected to Spanish and Mexican cultural and rhetorical patterns, but mostly oral traditions and limited formal education.	Ambivalent and contextual: learn U.S. patterns sufficiently to function in employment and education but reject or ignore other U.S. values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually self identifies more with Mexico and has limited experience with U.S. patterns.</li> <li>• Can identify and position as recent immigrant, Mexican national or perhaps Mexican-American.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often limited educational, English, and literacy experience.</li> <li>• Strong oral and interpersonal traditions grounded in Mexican rhetorical patterns.</li> </ul>
<b>Generation 1.5</b> (U.S.-born but from Mexican or Latin American parents).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inherit Mexican culture from parents and U.S. culture in education and work.</li> <li>• Family and interpersonal Spanish.</li> <li>• Oral traditions, especially as children; written traditions at school and in English.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narratives of academic and economic success are connected to English and U.S. cultural and rhetorical traditions.</li> <li>• Strong affinities for U.S. cultural values of universalism (level playing field) and individualism (relative independence).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can usually move effectively between professional contexts with English and family contexts with Spanish.</li> <li>• Difficulty functioning as Mexican national but possible as recent immigrant and usually trying to function as U.S.- or Mexican-American.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most complex group/sets of issues:</li> <li>• Often 1<sup>st</sup>-generation college students of supportive parents.</li> <li>• Spanish/Mexican repertoire in certain rhetorical situations and English/U.S. in others.</li> <li>• Great identity complexities and ambivalences.</li> </ul>

Functionings (Human Capability approach)	Relation to Mexican cultural and rhetorical patterns (including Spanish)	Relation to U.S. cultural and rhetorical patterns (including English)	Strategic positioning and capability among functionings in structured contexts	Acculturation issues for NMSU writing and English classes
<p><b>Mexican National</b> (born and educated with significant ties to Mexico). <i>Mexicano fronterizo</i> versus <i>Mexicano del interior</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongly and often proudly connects to and identifies with Mexican rhetorical and cultural traditions.</li> <li>• Ambivalence to U.S. dominance, especially historically (A.P.: hace 160 años, Nuevo México era México).</li> <li>• Mexican cultural superiority but U.S. economic dominance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often in U.S. to improve economic and academic capacities.</li> <li>• Ambivalence about U.S. cultural and rhetorical traditions.</li> <li>• Academic English with limited practice.</li> <li>• Connection to globalization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often not reliably informed about nor capable of assuming other points of border identity but can pass as recent immigrant.</li> <li>• Can view other identities as sellouts or culturally suspect.</li> <li>• Strong difference in attitude towards U.S. based on Mexican birthplace and experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong academic and learning capacities.</li> <li>• Most issues are linguistic (Spanish→English) and contrastive rhetoric (different genres and functions of communication media in U.S.).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cross-border &amp; bicultural:</b> Live and work on both sides border, bilingual.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See strengths and weaknesses in both U.S. and Mexican cultural and rhetorical traditions→capacity to leverage strengths and minimize weaknesses according to situation.</li> <li>• Feel both marginalized and empowered at the same time, rooted but rootless.</li> <li>• Most often hide bicultural and bilingual traits, as compared to other groups.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adept at positioning themselves as Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, or U.S.-Americans depending on power dynamics.</li> <li>• Ambivalence towards Anglo-Americans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong general rhetorical skills because of innate systematic nature of their bicultural and bilingual orientation.</li> <li>• Can mix-up which rhetorical strategies are appropriate in given contexts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Anglo-American</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mexico is the romanticized but dangerous other.</li> <li>• Awareness of bilingual context.</li> <li>• Academic and Wal-mart Spanish.</li> <li>• Custom of relying on token “Hispanics” to represent the other-than-Anglo identities.</li> <li>• Conflate all border identities into one as “Mexican.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English monolingual in obvious bilingual context but deeply naturalized U.S. cultural and rhetorical traditions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can only function as Anglo-American.</li> <li>• Often completely unaware of other border identities: all are “Mexican.”</li> <li>• Unaware of power dynamics and positionality issues among other five border identities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NMSU and UTEP generally ground writing and language curriculum in Anglo-American values.</li> <li>• Over-reinforcing U.S. cultural values in light of ever-pressing Mexican and border presence.</li> <li>• History of suppressing Spanish is repeated by suppressing border identities.</li> </ul>

### What this means for the composition classroom

As teachers of composition at a border university in southern Doña Ana County, the authors have noted at length that the above functionings and their associated cultural values are necessarily present in the writing patterns of our students. For the authors, these patterns, which have historically been overlooked, swept under the rug, and even grounds for discrimination or placement in “developmental” courses, do not represent the need to correct or downplay a student’s abilities, but rather an opportunity to explore and elaborate upon complex rhetorical strengths. Because much work is still required in studying, identifying, and promoting the benefits of the capabilities of border university students, we will now demonstrate through textual analysis how the individual functionings are presented in student writing samples, and provide some ideas as to how and why to elaborate upon these rhetorical strengths.

The samples we use have been taken from students enrolled in various composition courses at New Mexico State University. They have been chosen for this study to demonstrate the functionings that we have identified and examined, but by no means because they are exceptional; rather, they have been selected because they are indicative of the norm—a general sampling of the types of writing produced by border university students. Additionally, and as noted above, because issues of identity become complex and contentious, we will see that, as demonstrated through the writing patterns of these students’ papers, many of them straddle the line between functionings and characteristics, continually reworking and repositioning themselves in the context of border rhetorics.

#### Sample 1

The first sample holds many characteristics of the Mexican-American functioning, but also demonstrates strains of Generation 1.5+. This speaks to the fact that the lines between these categories often work fluidly, at times opening and at times reinforcing borders. The following is an excerpt from the introduction of the first sample, which we will discuss in detail below: Since Greek and Roman mythology, defining a hero has been a problem with which all the great storywriters and filmmakers have dealt with. Within classical culture, storytellers used tragic flaw to attempt to humanize their heroes ever so slightly. In modern society, story’s today have developed into almost the opposite of classical literature; a humanized display of realistic attributes. Much like in classical culture, modern man often looks to heroes of war and civil revolution as the cornerstone of the way in which the word ‘hero` is actually defined.

This is just as apparent in film, which has come to replace older forms of oral tradition and rehearsed drama. In the movies *Che* by Steve Soderburg and *Motorcycle Diaries* by Walter Salles, the character of Che Guevara is a modern war hero, portrayed as such. However, as a hero, in contrast to what is more modernly shown as a character of depth, both movies seem to characterize Che in a more hagiographic sense. In these two movies it seems like he is more like a god and less like a man. Although this portrayal of the iconic hero may be suitable in a classical interpretation, it does not seem to work as available within modern society. In both *Che* and *Motorcycle Diaries* there are obvious and varied examples of the character of Che Guevara being portrayed more hagiographical, and less as a man which does not seem to support the modern definition

of hero or uphold the directors' responsibility to portray the character not only as iconic, but also as human.

This student presents many of the rhetorical patterns present in the fotonovela but with almost perfect English. Probably the first thing that stands out as notable about this excerpt is the inclusion of a lot of “buffer” words, or “dead wood,” which clearly demonstrates the diffuse, indirect approach and would be seen as weakening the text within the context of Standard Written English (SWE) practices. However, the student's reliance on the use of “with” and “which” speak less to his ability with the language—overall, this student is obviously extremely fluent if not English dominant—and more to his propensity towards a more Mexican rhetorical tradition, including reliance on history and tradition (collectivism), uniqueness of sentences and paragraph (particular), holistic (diffuse), and complex multiple time frames (polychronicity). Additionally, this student moves between these longer, more verbose sentences and short, more direct sentences that are favorable in the SWE tradition.

This student is juggling both traditions, at times defaulting to one and at others to another. These grammatical issues point back to what has been discussed above, namely that Mexican Spanish writers have more run-on, longer, and complex sentences; constant lexical repetition for thematic cohesion (as compared to syntactic parallelism); more additive and causal conjunctions; and very frequent conscious deviations from topics (Crawford, 2010). Although this student is working within an English frame, he is still relying on these innate Mexican Spanish writing patterns. This is often seen in the writing patterns of generation 1.5+ students, who still retain Spanish-dominant speaking patterns transplanted or superimposed upon English.

In a continued examination of the excerpt, the student does end the introduction with a somewhat pointed thesis, speaking to his knowledge of the conventions of SWE writing practices, but the thesis is long, complex, and wordy. Complicating things further, the student seems to introduce an alternative thesis, or problematizing of the thesis in the second paragraph:

Steve Soderburg and Walter Salles portrayal of Che Guevara in both these movies seems to fit modern society's view of this revolutionary hero. However, this portrayal may be bias based on our societal values. The director's of these two movies could have chosen to humanize Che Guevara character, but the consequences to do so may have caused viewers to look at this iconic figure differently. That being said, the choice by the director's to convey Che Guevara as they did in their movies may not have been a question of ethic's but instead a matter of entertainment. By exploring these two movies in further detail we can come to the conclusion, if it truly is the director's ethical responsibility to show human flaws in today's iconic hero.

This double-masked approach (Paz, 1985) is very common in the Mexican rhetorical tradition, as we have discussed above and exemplified through the analysis of the heart health pamphlets. As demonstrated in the fotonovela pamphlet, the diffuse and interrelated cultural values mean that one thing is always related to another, which is related to another, etc. In the pamphlet, the father has high blood pressure not only from the food, but also from issues related to the family—his daughter brings home a new boyfriend. As demonstrated through this student's

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paper, the thesis cannot be the one, true argument being made— as would be favored in an SWE tradition —because it is more complicated than that; there are other aspects of the creation of the film and personal choice of the directors to explore and consider.

Finally, the thematic elements of this text speak to the student’s rhetorical functioning in a notable way. The theme of the paper is the classical hero through the rhetorical lens of Greek and Roman mythology, a strong indicator that this student has been educated in a system which values and emphasizes a western canonical tradition, like most U.S. schools and universities. More overtly, the topic of the hero in and of itself is strongly U.S. based, stemming from a universal and individual worldview. Following this trend, the student chooses to focus on Che Guevara, a controversial and emblematic character in all of Latin America. This choice speaks to what we have noted as the “romanticizing” of Mexican culture that happens for those functioning as Mexican-American and holding a strong U.S. gaze towards Mexico. This student is probably unaware of the complex Latin American socio-political struggles and history that predicate the advent of Che as symbolic of an essentialized, idealized, and specifically political revolution. Instead, the student finds him as simply relevant to his need to identify with his Mexican roots and express his cultural uniqueness.

## Sample 2

The second sample demonstrates students functioning as Mexican nationals but with experience with U.S. cultural values, common among *Mexicanos fronterizos*. As discussed above, these students are usually highly educated in Mexico, in both English and also other business and technical skills. This specific student grew up in Colonia Juárez, a Mormon community in southwestern Chihuahua (state bordering New Mexico). He attended the Academia Juárez, a bilingual Mormon high school, but all teachers there are Mexican nationals educated in Mexico. Because of this, these students are able to adapt to and mimic U.S. rhetorical traditions for the purpose of advancing their careers, educations, etc. Nevertheless, this transition to directness and overt presentations of problems can be difficult, and often they remain ambivalent to U.S. culture and dominance and keep strong Mexican cultural ties. The following is an excerpt from sample 2:

CAV Aerospace is an industry leading company in structural components for airplanes. The main client of CAV is Hawker Beechcraft, which is an experienced and historic company who builds its own business, travel and army airplanes. In such industries, where there is so little margin of error, it has to be a rigorous control on the pieces produced in terms of quality, tolerances and delivery. For this, a company has to be a well maintained clock where all its parts work in harmony, the first and last place for this in a company would be buying, stores and shipping. Everything that happens in the company has to get through this “stages”, consequently there has to be an impeccable organization, control over stock and over production times. It is so important that even if one of these parts is missing the entire operation can run into a wall.

This sample is the first paragraph of the problem section of a problem-solving proposal taught in a special section of technical writing for Mexican national engineering students. This is actually the third draft of the paragraph because the student had notable difficulty expressing a problem

in the organization so overtly, reflecting the collective and high power distance culture in Mexico. It also shows a propensity to historicize and contextualize the problem by using more polite and indirect ways of stating the problem. The first two drafts of the paragraph demonstrated a strong resistance to even stating that a problem existed; in fact, the approach was one of presenting awkward and tense social relations created by the current social situation, a classic example of articulating a problem in collective cultures (Thatcher, 2012). But with much effort and class discussion of presenting problems in the United States versus Mexico, this student was able to write this paragraph.

Perhaps one of the most poignant aspects of this sample is how the student was able to adapt to the rhetorical exigencies of the writing situation, the proposal problem statement. It demonstrates a good understanding of the genre, and the writing patterns and style seem to have been adapted to SWE rhetorical traditions, which shows how these students often do not have problems transferring learned information into specific genres. This is, perhaps, because these students are able to more easily separate one set of cultural values from another. In this class, the instructor presented examples of problem statements from Mexican writing and from U.S. writing, helping students note the differences. Thus, because they have been born, raised, and educated in one specific culture, they have less difficulty recognizing and reinforcing the border between U.S. and Mexican cultural values. On the other hand, as Mexican-American and Generation 1.5+ receive conflicting messages of language, culture, and rhetorical patterns at home, in society, and at school, they are often unable to recognize which cultural and rhetorical patterns belong where.

Most likely, the student from the first writing sample has no idea that some of his/her writing practices reflect Mexican rhetorical traditions, especially because that particular student was born, raised, and educated in the United States. Unfamiliar with Mexican writing style or rhetorical practices, that student has picked up on those nuances as a form of cultural transfer from their home language and culture rather than as a result of superimposing one educational trend onto another. In contrast, the Mexican National student is able to identify which patterns belong where and how to use them effectively, although this student was writing this proposal in a class where the instructor specifically worked with the Mexican nationals to revise their problem statements to reflect more American approaches. Whereas the first student only has one large, indistinct, hybrid culture to pull from, the second has two distinct and clearly demarcated cultural contexts from which to work, ironically making his final product seem more effective within the boundaries of SWE practices.

However, for Mexican nationals, there are some basic issues of language and translation that can result. For example, the student writes, “it has to be a rigorous control on the pieces produced in terms of quality, tolerances and delivery.” His sentence sounds awkward, although it does make sense. In standard U.S. English we would probably say “there has to be” versus “it has to be.” The student’s default to “it” versus “there” speaks to his direct translation of the sentence from Spanish to English. In Spanish, this sentence would probably read “hay que ser,” which would actually roughly translate to “has to be,” versus “it has to be” or “there has to be.” This student, in learning English, has probably struggled with subject placement— a common issue— and has ingrained in himself the idea that there must always be a subject, “it,” before every verb, “has



to.” Therefore, this student has decided to default to his prior knowledge of English grammatical instruction and put “it” in front of the “has to,” unfamiliar with the more common idiomatic practice of “there has to.”

Interestingly, and related to this theme, the student decided to end his first paragraph with an idiomatic expression, “the entire operation can run into a wall,” perhaps attempting to further Anglicize and adapt his writing. Writing with idiomatic expressions is a more common practice in Mexican Spanish writing, where the inclusion of such phrases helps establish the diffuse, local cultural tendencies of interconnectedness. Nevertheless, English speakers would notice that this is an awkward use of this idiom, symptomatic of someone who doesn’t have complete linguistic fluency. Additionally, SWE usually frowns upon the inclusion of such casual expressions in business texts, which probably makes the usage stand out as awkward even more so in this textual context.

### Sample 3

The third sample comes from a student functioning as recent immigrant but becoming bicultural. This student has adapted well to SWE and U.S. generic and rhetorical patterns but would be able to function just as well in Mexican cultural and rhetorical patterns and Spanish. These students are usually unaware of how their Mexican cultural identity influences their writing because all of their writing was done in U.S. high schools and college. But they are perhaps less connected than Generation 1.5+ in their U.S. cultural identity. Nevertheless, they understand and adapt to their cultural hybridity more so than Mexican-Americans, and with some overt guidance, are often able to see the two parallels, picking and choosing what to use and when to use it. The following is an example from a student functioning in this way:

**ACME Packard**

150 N Orange Grove Blvd, Anywhere, CA 911XX

March 7, 2013

To the shareholders of Avery Dennison Inc.:

As you know, there has been significant controversy over whether the United States operations should change its accounting method of inventory from a combination of LIFO and FIFO to only FIFO, applying the same method as the company’s international operations. Because of your interest in our company, we want to explain to you the change in accounting method used to account for inventory in the U.S. Corporation, its implications and what it means to you the shareholders of Avery.

This paper was written in a graduate course in accounting writing by a student who moved to the United States from Mexico when she first started high school; she was a Master’s student in accounting. The assignment was to write a memo to the company suggesting changes in inventory counting methods, from LIFO to FIFO (last in first out; first in, first out). Perhaps the most striking— and overall indicative— aspect of this sample is its focus on an international context. By comparing the company’s U.S. operations to operations in other countries, and focusing on patterns of industrialization and globalization, the student is demonstrating a heightened awareness of global contexts. This is unique, as the default U.S. cultural strain is

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usually an overt sense of U.S. exceptionalism. The student, aware of how countries, cultures, and economies diverge and converge is able to think beyond these cultural norms.

Nevertheless, there are still some complicated carryovers to note. Like the engineering student above, this student also had significant difficulty in directly stating the proposal—to change from LIFO to FIFO. In the first draft, the student did not even communicate the change, but on subsequent drafts and with the help of native speakers, she was able to indirectly explain the need for the change in that opening paragraph. In addition, other transfer errors from Spanish to English include the student's propensity for capitalization of unnecessary words, such as corporations in "U.S. Corporations." This comes from the student's attempt to overcorrect their English, or a general confusion about English grammar rules. In Spanish, very little is capitalized as compared to English. Therefore, when writing in English, students with a strong knowledge of Spanish tend to capitalize things that should not be capitalized because they know that English favors capitalization for many things. Additionally, the last sentence of this excerpt would probably be considered a run on sentence, or at least require an additional comma or two. This relates back to some of the same strands of writing style that the first example displayed, again a carryover from Spanish or a confusion of grammar rules. Nevertheless, this student has seemed to be almost fully adapted and functional to the generic practices and writing patterns of SWE texts.

Interestingly, this student had difficulty stating directly the purposes of the written accounting communications throughout the accounting writing class. However, because the instructor was able to connect the student's difficulty with this approach to her Mexican context, she learned for the first time why many of her instructors at New Mexico State did not think she could be direct enough in her writing. The student commented that she was finally able to understand some of the transfer problems (from her perspective) from Mexican Spanish and U.S./English, despite the fact that she had spent nine years in the United States writing, four years in high school and five years in college.

#### **Sample 4**

The fourth sample shows a student who is functioning somewhere between recent immigrant and Generation 1.5+. This student has strong characteristics of learning English as an oral, rather than written language, demonstrative of a limited interaction with English language schooling but a larger interaction with English as a working, necessary tool for communication. This is common among recent immigrants, as many of them cross the border to find jobs that require a minimal working knowledge of English. In these cases, oral proficiency is all that is needed. Nevertheless, the student shows a working understanding of SWE rhetorical patterns, or is at least attempting to mimic them. This would be more common of a Generation 1.5+ student, who has a little more formal contact with SWE.

The rhetorical functioning of this student is complex. The student is part of an NMSU program called CAMP, or College Assistant Migrant Program, which serves students from a migrant worker background. Many of these students have had limited or disrupted education, as they have spent their childhood accompanying, and even working alongside, their parents picking crops. They often move from place to place, following the work. They attend many different

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schools, and so receive an education that is constantly being interrupted and changed. Interestingly, not all of these students or their parents are recent immigrants. Some of them can be 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and even 4<sup>th</sup> generation U.S. citizens who, through lack of adequate access to resources and education, remain more closely aligned with the rhetorical patterns of a recent immigrant than those of a Mexican-American. In other words, for the recent immigrant group, poverty is a main contributing factor that separates this group from Mexican Nationals, its parallel, and at times from Generation 1.5+, Mexican Americans, and Bicultural and Cross border groups. The following is a sample from this student:

By applying appeals to the show we don't just see an episode of the middle 50's, but we get to see a wider view of how society, politics, rights would make an effect on the show and to the audience. One of the ethos from this show which brings a lot of credibility to the episode was the fact that the couple in the show, Ricky and Lucy were husband and wife not only on the show but also in real life. Because of this people might of taught that every scene, move, comment etc that were performed by the characters were real and not just an acting from the main actors. Pathos from this show and the episode well we identified during this episode a minor conflict between Lucy and Ricky. After watching a movie Lucy wanted a haircut as that as the Italian girl from the movie which later was referred as the Italian haircut style, but Ricky opposed to that saying that such haircut wasn't for women but instead it would make her look as a man. When this happen Lucy either way tries a wig with the Italian haircut style, she hoped that after Ricky looked her with that look he would change his opinion and would let her cut her hair. But even though he did liked how she looked he never gave in to his wife's idea because again during that time the wife had to do what the husband decide. This is a form of pathos because this conflict passed on to the audience making that some picked Lucy's side and others Ricky's side. For example women in general felt like Ricky should had let his wife get the cut without questioning her. In the other hand men felt Ricky did the correct thing by not letting her get the cut even when Lucy tried to trick her husband. By that they are giving the message that again men had the major power and authority not only in society but in the marriage too.

Although it would be easy to point out the more obvious grammatical mistakes, for example, “middle 50's” and the use of “on” instead of “in,” it is much more productive to look at certain rhetorical features of this piece. For example, the student is struggling between the SWE call for elaborate sign posting and definition generating and a more circumlocutory Mexican rhetorical style. The sentence “One of the ethos from this show which brings a lot of credibility to the episode” is an excellent example. Here, SWE would probably call for a more acute definition of ethos. The student is attempting this, by including “brings a lot of credibility,” but still hasn't provided as much connection or correlation between the two for the common SWE reader. The student abandons—or forgets about—his attempts to conform to this standard altogether further in the paragraph when he discusses pathos, “Pathos from this show and the episode well we identified during this episode a minor conflict between Lucy and Ricky.” An SWE reader would be confused—Who is we? What is pathos? — questions the student leaves unanswered. Here, the student has defaulted completely to a Mexican rhetorical style, in which, in contrast to SWE, it would be insulting to the reader's intelligence to waste time defining terms such as pathos. In

other words, the student is thinking collectively and identifying himself as a member of the English 111 classroom culture, where these terms have already been elaborated and defined. To go back and work through definitions of them again would imply that he considers the reader (i.e. the instructor) to be dumb and in need of an explanation of terms. What we value in SWE becomes an insult in predominant Mexican rhetorical traditions.

Another SWE complaint about this paragraph is that it is very long, with long, complex sentences, and no apparent organization. This goes back to the discussion of the health pamphlets. In Mexican rhetorical traditions, as reflected in both the pamphlet and this student's writing, there is not one simple answer or explanation. Instead, things are circular and interconnected—Mariano's health is connected to his mother, who lives with his family; to his daughter's boyfriend, who rings the doorbell; to his wife's cooking; and to his level of activity. In other words, ethos leads to pathos, which leads to messages about power and authority in society. One cannot be understood or discussed without the other, or without full and rich details about how these things are all working together. Although it would seem that this sort of in-depth analysis would be sought after in SWE, the seemingly high-context way in which the student weaves these together leaves the low-context reader confused.

Finally, we can see how this student is relying on an oral proficiency in English and translating that practice into written text. In the sentence that starts, "Because of this people might of taught that every scene," the error "might of taught" is complex and interesting. Here the student has substituted "might of" for "might have," or as it is most commonly heard when spoken "might've." Unfamiliar with this written English grammatical construction, the student did his best to substitute words that he thought were appropriate. Additionally, "taught" is not supposed to be taught as in "he taught us a lesson," but "thought." Not recognizing the "th" sound is a common error among Spanish speaking ELLs. Because this sound does not exist in Spanish, it is hard for students to hear, pronounce, and pick up on its usage. Research has suggested that ELL students will have difficulty hearing and distinguishing sounds that do not exist in their native language (Helman, 2004). Substituting "taught" for "thought" is demonstrative of the student doing exactly that.

### Sample 5

The final sample demonstrates a student functioning as a Mexican national. However, this student does not come from a background where she had access to as high of quality of education in Mexico as the student from sample 2, nor has she had as much practice writing with the U.S. SWE academic system. This student makes many of the mistakes that the typical reader would identify as common to someone still learning English, i.e., grammatical errors. Most typical readers would be bothered by this, but would feel relatively comfortable reading this paper because other than that it adheres pretty well to SWE rhetorical patterns. In other words, this student has learned and adapted to the SWE patterns, but it still mainly struggling with English grammar:

Lucy is frustrated in many situations during the episode. She went to see a movie when she found out a new Italian hair cut where she totally falls in love with it. Her frustration is that her husband Ricky doesn't want her to cut her hair like that because is too short.

He doesn't want his son get confuse in whom would he be calling mom and that if both of his parents are going to be having their hair short. Also another one of Lucy's frustrations were that she didn't knew what to do when she found out that he husband would be able to cheat on her. Not being able to do anything without Ricky permission gets Lucy a little bit out of sense. The reason why is because of Ricky didn't let her cut her hair how she wanted to and she totally went crazy on trying to trick him by putting on a wig of the Italian hair cut she wanted. There is happiness for Lucy when she has that feeling of cutting her hair as the new Italian hair cut. She really gets into it when she tries to get her husband Ricky to like it.

It is immediately apparent that this student has a much clearer understanding of the SWE rhetorical tradition. The sentences she uses are short and relatively concise. She has a clear topic sentence and most of the ideas tie back to it. Although this maybe comes apart a little bit towards the end, it is not a mistake that any other novice English 111 student would make, regardless of primary language usage. The majority of the errors in this piece are common language errors for someone learning a second language, such as subject verb agreement and pronoun usage. The student is also having trouble using "when" and "where" appropriately. Nevertheless, despite these mechanical errors, this paragraph is relatively successful in an assessment of its English rhetorical patterns.

The five samples provide insight into the rhetorical patterns of multilingual students on the U.S.-Mexico border; and as mentioned, we chose these five because they typify our experience as writing instructors at a border institution; they are the wonderfully complex student population. We did not present writing from Mexican-Americans or Anglo-Americans because their writing is no different than the native English writing across the United States, despite New Mexico State University being a border university.

## Conclusion

We are going to end this article restating a very troubling find in our research—that only 20% of the writing instructors surveyed at New Mexico State University (and adjoining Doña Ana Community College) could identify the difference between a Mexican national and Mexican-American in their student populations. However troubling these statistics may be, they are not surprising, as explained throughout this article, particularly in the introduction. The authors are able to identify the subtle nuances in these students' writing because they have lived and worked directly with this population. The first author, Thatcher, works in Mexico on a daily basis, while Medina-López and Montoya grew up bilingual. All three authors have developed teaching strategies for border institutions based on their experience, which often directly contradicts the approaches to writing dictated by the writing programs. For example, all three authors teach their multilingual students strategies that often conflict with the stated purposes of the writing program objectives because they understand and value the students' backgrounds and writing capacities. But what happens when the other 80% of writing instructors engage the writing of these five samples and cannot understand the cultural and rhetorical reasons for these patterns?

We have much training to do in border writing, training that highlights the rhetorical functionings along the borders but also that recognizes that each student has differing capabilities

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of using a variety of functionings in the writing classroom. This calls for well-developed and deep understanding of both the U.S. and Mexican influence of border culture and a corresponding rejection of the U.S.-only lens to border culture. It also calls for a better methodology in assessing students' needs and backgrounds, filling the huge gap between high, abstract theory on the one hand, and the lived experiences of students on the other. As presented, the intercultural rhetorical model, combined with the Human Capability Approach, has much to offer scholars and teachers of multilingual writing.

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