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## The role of native target cultures in the high school English-As-a- Foreign-Language classroom

Gwendolyne Claudine Mamanua

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THE ROLE OF NATIVE AND TARGET CULTURES IN THE HIGH SCHOOL  
ENGLISH-AS-A-FOREIGN-LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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

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

---

by  
Gwendolyne Claudine Mamanua

June 2005

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by  
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June 2005

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*June 6, 2005*  
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## ABSTRACT

This project addresses the importance of including both the native and target cultures in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) high school classroom. With increased emphasis on grammar, the aspect of culture is often neglected. The use of language is a form of social behavior. As such, users must understand the dynamics of language and its functions in the culture. Thus, the project defines culture as more than merely the content that is presented in the lessons. Instead, culture is taught and learned in the context of daily activities that are mediated by the teacher.

The culture-based tasks in this project provide students with language skills through personal development. Interpersonal skills are outlined that can aid students in real-life applications. The use of critical-thinking and problem-solving exercises may further assist students to express themselves and gain a strong sense of identity.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the Project

With over 750,000,000 speakers, English has become one of the most important languages in the world. In many countries in which English is a common second language, it is seen as a status symbol. English proficiency is a social class marker just as are foreign cars and big houses. For many, it is a comparative advantage, an edge to securing a better job, and a necessity for prosperity in today's global society.

As global communication continues to grow, countries are separated merely by a keyboard and lack of a common language. Consequently, the popularity of English as a global language has created an equally growing demand for qualified teaching professionals. Teaching English abroad is no longer a job left to the Peace Corps and missionaries; it has turned into one of the fastest-growing international professions. With this in mind, many educators are realizing the opportunities available in this burgeoning field. Teaching English to speakers of other languages becomes as much a challenge as it does an

opportunity to provide non-native speakers with the necessary skills to communicate effectively.

### The Role of the Native and Target Cultures

The importance of language learning can be directly linked to understanding the culture. To understand how a language is used in the target culture requires that students become familiar with the social context and pragmatics of the language. As students become immersed in the target culture and learn the functions of the language, it is also crucial that teachers do not dismiss the importance of the native culture.

One of the mistakes that second-language instructors make is eliminating students' native cultures in the learning of the second language. The idea that an all-English classroom can promote and accelerate learning is incorrect. By including the native culture, students are given a positive perspective on learning the new language. Furthermore, it provides students with a sense of confidence in learning the target language. Students do not need to ignore their culture in order to learn a new one. Self-esteem is a key motivator for language acquisition and proficiency. For older students, this sense of confidence

is even more crucial as they struggle with the challenges of learning a foreign language.

### Target Teaching Level

My first choice is to teach at the high-school level and possibly the university level overseas. High-school students are aware of the importance of English at this level because many of them are beginning to think about attending a university or vocational school. Therefore, the motivation to learn is high. They are dedicated to their studies because the consequences are great. For many, it is a simple pass-or-fail situation without too many exceptions. Abroad, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) when the culture provides little or no exposure to English outside of the classroom.

The pressure to succeed in the EFL classroom overseas is perhaps greater because it can open or close doors for the future. Many high-school students depend on their English abilities to create opportunities to attend the universities they choose. Even for those who choose the vocational school route, the demands are just as difficult, as students compete for limited vacancies. Those who work for the family business must project a certain image as

well as protecting the "family name" by speaking proper English.

Besides the social marker that speaking English provides, the popularity of the language carries other social significance. English is popular among the teenage population overseas because it is the medium for their universal language, which is pop culture and more specifically, music. No matter how poor their English skills, most teenagers could probably recite the lyrics to the songs on the top 40 and talk about the latest American movies. This enthusiasm makes teaching and learning less onerous than it would be otherwise, and more like a way of fine-tuning their social skills.

At the university level, students are either trying to get a job or sustain their current job. Speaking English has become a common requirement for those entering the job market. This is evident in newspapers and other international publications available today. More and more, speaking English is as necessary as having a college degree and being computer literate. As a result, English speakers find themselves with a comparative advantage and thus more in demand.

Just as employees are eager to get ahead in the workforce, companies are also trying to stay competitive. Adult learners are likely to be motivated and disciplined, so some of the problems that would arise with younger students, such as behavior, are not a factor. Part of the struggle with children is discipline. Most teachers are involved in classroom management 90 percent of their time, which leaves little time to actually teach. The advantage of teaching adults is that a teacher can dedicate every valuable moment to teaching. Students at these grade levels are committed to learning and find little time to waste in misbehaving and laziness. From my previous experience, the degree of dedication from EFL students, especially at these levels, is unlike that of most native speakers of English who are learning their own or a foreign language.

#### Where I Plan to Teach

I plan to teach at a private institution, such as an international school, either in Latin America or in Asia. From my previous experience of teaching at an international school in Thailand, I feel that this type of institution would be ideal. Working at an international school brings the best of both worlds for teachers living abroad. It brings the comforts of a familiar (American) curriculum,



while still providing the feel of foreign teaching and living. Furthermore, the commitment of the administration to raise the standards of learning and instruction at these institutions is the type of challenge I look forward to addressing.

### The Role of the English as a Foreign Language Instructor

Because each student has different needs, it is unreasonable to develop a standard approach to suit all students. A teacher, especially an EFL teacher, should be allowed the opportunity to make appropriate changes to meet individual needs. This is not to say that the intent is to challenge an existing curriculum, only that there should be room for flexibility. In my experience, other teachers who have grown accustomed to years of tradition and practice do not always welcome the idea of change with open arms, much less open minds. Many teachers and students simply accept certain conditions without question. One of these conditions is the one-size-fits-all curriculum.

In many cultures, questioning authority or any establishment is seen as a show of defiance, insubordination, or disrespect. It is imperative that teachers going abroad be sensitive to the customs and

cultures of their new homes. Not only will it improve relationships with colleagues, it will enable them to understand the needs of their students. It is not unusual for many institutions to require that new teachers be educated on local customs and traditions. Before I made my trip to Thailand, I was sent information on acceptable/unacceptable behaviors, history, and other useful guidelines of conduct. Upon arrival, orientation was also required for all new teachers. Taking an assignment overseas is not a responsibility to be taken lightly and must be met with a great sense of obligation.

The role of the EFL instructor can be a demanding job. Aside from the usual instruction of English, the teacher also has the responsibility of acting as a cultural representative, or ambassador. EFL teachers are supposed to motivate, inspire, and above all educate their students into becoming effective speakers. The objective of teaching English abroad is not to make native speakers of everyone. Instead, it is to provide the necessary tools to develop skills that will produce confident and effective communicators of English. Above all, EFL instructors must keep in mind that there is the need to be culturally

sensitive to the target culture as well as the native culture.

### Purpose of the Study

#### Affirming the Importance of Culture

The purpose of this study is to affirm the importance of both the native and the target culture in the learning of English. In order for students to acquire a second language, they should not simply discard their own. It is important for students to relate to the target language and culture through their own culture. Students who are learning a foreign language will feel more comfort in practicing English if there is a sense of inclusion, cultural and otherwise. Putting value on their culture also puts value on their learning.

The atmosphere in the classroom is an underlying factor in a productive learning environment. Traditionally, teachers have been considered the sole providers of information and learning. Thus, they also set the tone for the classroom and its activities. The goal of this project is to provide a curriculum that allows EFL students to learn through various social settings. Vygotsky's theory of social activity provides an effective learning environment

where students can learn by interactions with peers who have greater knowledge, as well as with adults.

Learning English through various classroom activities also enables the learner to apply the knowledge outside of the classroom setting. Part of the success in acquiring a second language is the ability to use it independently. Vygotsky's theory states that once a learner is able to internalize knowledge, it becomes a tool for higher-order thinking. The objective of EFL learners is to be able to speak English comfortably and communicate effectively. For EFL instructors, the objective is to provide students with the necessary skills that will allow them to function independently. The cliché, "practice makes perfect" is somewhat applicable. As mentioned, it is not the goal of the EFL teacher to make native speakers of everyone. Instead, it is to make them effective communicators of English. This can be accomplished through consistent practice. Therefore, this project presents a theoretical model that includes both the native and target cultures in teaching English as a foreign language for high-school classrooms.

## Social Context of Learning

Understanding the social implications of language should be important for all people involved in second-language acquisition, especially for those who intend to focus on language learning and teaching as a career choice. For EFL teachers, it is pertinent to understand the context in which second-language learners acquire the target language. This will enable prospective English teachers to become effective in understanding how one learns a language.

Classroom learning and interpersonal relations are just two examples of socio-cultural context. In addition, socio-cultural context also refers to external factors, society and culture, that contribute to the overall development of a student in becoming an independent thinker. Social influences are not limited to the classroom, but extend into society as a whole. The classroom is just a microcosm of a larger learning domain, made up of several entities.

Institutional policies, ideologies, and beliefs that are passed down by the school, district, community, and state influence classroom practices. The teacher and students may be the only participants in the classroom, but

these forces ultimately contribute to standards or norms. Even in traditional teacher-centered classrooms, much of what is taught is not solely decided by the teacher in the classroom. Instead, various social and cultural factors contribute to the material that is presented. Classroom culture is determined by what is taught as much as how it is taught. This "culture" that exists in the class environment is what determines how and what the child learns. Finally, this leads to a student's development through social interaction.

For teachers of English as a foreign language, there is no guaranteed formula for success. However, understanding the social context of language learning does guarantee a foundation for teaching students "how to learn." How a student processes the information and the factors that influence his/her learning is the basis of successful learning. When a teacher can find a successful method of helping students retain knowledge through meaningful activities, then the learning process can begin. This study asserts the importance of cultural inclusion in EFL classrooms through mediated social interaction.

## Content of the Study

Using the Vygotskian theory of social activity, this project provides a learning strategy based on the belief that shared responsibility of learning falls on the teacher, students, and the community. The role of the teacher is that of facilitator, though the level of involvement varies depending on the activity. The model suggests that the teacher is somewhat of a gatekeeper of information. Still, the main task of the teacher is to mediate the activities. Students learn through interactions with other students and adults.

The classroom is just one avenue that leads students toward their objective. Learning also takes place outside the classroom as students interact with other members of the community. The teacher introduces ideas and lessons, then provides basic activities for students to apply their skills. From this point, students are given the opportunity to develop their skills by interacting with others in the classroom, while being mediated by the teacher. As a facilitator, the teacher sets the rules of communication and a division of labor.

The activities reflect the five areas of culture-based language learning: Culture, Video, Interactional

Competence, Negotiated Output, and Fluency. This study reinforces the importance of both the native culture and the target culture in the learning of English. As the theoretical model suggests, the culture of learning exists in content and context. Each lesson includes one or more of these components, and challenges students to develop their interpersonal skills as part of language learning.

Students will demonstrate their skills using videos in the classroom, interacting with more fluent speakers, negotiating a response, and attaining overall fluency in English.

The contents of the activities, as well as the manner in which they are presented, all provide a significant arena for learning. Students will then be able to internalize these same principles as they use them outside the classroom, and in their daily activities. Lessons are targeted at the EFL high-school classroom. The aim of each lesson is to provide students with activities that require them to interact with other learners, besides the teacher. The lessons are also created to give students real-life situations to use their skills outside the classroom. Finally, the lessons seek to promote higher-level thinking in order for students to communicate intellectually.



## Significance of the Project

The traditional role of the teacher is changing. He/she is no longer a figure that feeds information to students who react like sponges, absorbing anything and everything that is given to them. In the EFL classroom, this image still exists. In fact the idea of the teacher as an "equal" may not even be fathomable in many cultures. But as the needs of English learners change, so does the need for a fresh approach in teaching. The idea of change may not fare well at many institutions, but a more progressive approach to learning might challenge that traditional outlook.

I believe that a teacher, especially an EFL teacher, should be allowed the opportunity to make these appropriate changes. The idea is not to discard old methods, only to improve them. If a new idea can improve learning, then it is important to accept some flexibility in an existing curriculum. Keeping this in mind, EFL teachers going abroad must still be sensitive to their approach of adapting the existing curriculum. It is possible to provide a fun, energetic, and progressive approach to learning English without offending members of the native culture.

There are several reasons why people should have a clear understanding of how both the native and target culture affect the use of language in context by second language students. First, English is the language used worldwide as a means of communications. Every year, there are millions of people trying to master it. Consequently, attempts to understand the processes through which it is acquired should be unconditionally supported. Second, by addressing the factors that affect the use of English in context by second language learners, such as native language/culture influence, this study will allow readers to extrapolate knowledge to other languages. Thus, the knowledge can be generalized universally and not simply applied to English. The significance of the study is to present further insight into the field of language learning through the use of native and target cultures.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Classroom discourse is a significant factor in the development of English language learners, because according to Vygotsky, learning takes place through social activity. A child learns by interactions with peers who have greater knowledge, as well as with adults. A significant portion of the knowledge attained is made up of routines, procedures, and strategies that go toward achieving a larger goal. Classroom discourse is a means of developing higher mental functions through literacy, cooperative learning, and most importantly, social interaction.

The key to Vygotsky's theory is social interaction. If students are to improve their learning, then interaction with one or more individuals is necessary. Peer collaboration is a key part in developing higher mental functions. Knowledge that is acquired through interaction provides a sort of comfort zone for children. As the teacher takes on a less imposing role, students feel at ease attempting new ideas, and even making mistakes. Students are involved in higher level thinking as a result

of their own discussions and collaboration. As a result, other avenues of social interactions begin to take place.

The next phase of this theory leads to the understanding of self. There are two social planes in which the learner begins to develop. The first is the interpersonal (social), and second is the intrapersonal (psychological) (Forman, Minick, & Stone, 1993). Students can enact what is learned even if it is not fully developed or understood. As they talk with more expert members, they are able to encounter knowledge (propositional learning) and later learn about how to use the knowledge (procedural learning). The knowledge is internalized once the student is able to construct and develop facility in mental activities involved in literate thinking. This ability to internalize knowledge becomes the tool in higher literate thinking.

The use of Vygotskian theory in an EFL classroom is significant in promoting an interactive learning environment. More importantly, it is the appropriate foundation to culturally based learning language. "The effect of society on language can be reflected in the vocabulary, by reference to unique aspects of the physical and cultural environment" (Risch, 1990, p. 49). Also, the

values of a society, including norms for appropriate behavior, often influence patterns of usage. Finally, it is commonly held that habitual patterns of thought, in terms of unconscious plans for what is talked about and what is given emphasis, are partly shaped by language use. Learning another language can be better understood through the learning of one's own culture.

### Implementing Culture in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom

#### A Definition of Culture

For many scholars, the definition of culture is as broad as the number of cultures that exist in the world. The first contemporary effort to define culture was exerted by anthropologists. Culture, they reasoned, was what their science was all about. Still, each had a distinct idea. A precise common denominator was not found. Instead, "culture emerges as a very broad concept embracing all aspects of human life" (Seelye, 1992, p. 109). For most laymen, this is defined as language, traditions, and beliefs that identify a group of people. Culture is all of the above. It is the way a group functions and carries out its activities, based on their language, traditions, and beliefs.

Finding an accurate definition of culture has not been an easy task. Decades of research and study still find many scholars with contrasting interpretations of this broad concept. "Teachers have been slow to accept culture as a broadly defined concept" (Seelye, 1992, p. 79). For much of the profession, culture has been defined almost exclusively in terms of the fine arts, geography and history. This narrow definition of culture, unfortunately, does not fully prepare a student to understand the wide range of behavior. An understanding of the way of life of a foreign people is important to survival in a world of conflicting value systems. For EFL teachers, culture exists in the content of the lessons as well as the context in which they are taught. In other words, "what" is being taught is as crucial as "how" it is being taught.

The inclusion of culture in an EFL classroom relies heavily on the teacher, even in a student-centered classroom. Teachers set the tone for the activities as well as the "culture" of the classroom. From the role of communication to the division of labor, all of which derive from the activity, the instructor facilitates the atmosphere of learning. This can be a challenging

opportunity for many EFL teachers abroad who are not prepared to become more than language instructors.

### Behavior and Language in Culture

Language, moreover, is not self-dependent: it cannot be wholly understood without reference to the culture that produced it. To understand the cultural and social relations of language, it is important to understand the language itself. Furthermore, the learner's attitude toward the people that use a language influences motivation, and capacity to learn the language. One cannot help having presumptions of people's ways of life as one teaches its language and culture. It is important that the teacher gives an accurate impression, based on defensible generalizations, for the sake of the students' grasp of reality, crosscultural relations, and a true understanding and enjoyment of a foreign language and its culture.

Knowing the rules of a language means knowing the utterances that are important in a particular sociocultural context, both with respect to meanings that one may convey and to the forms one may use in conveying them. These are factors in verbal communication such as appropriateness, meaning and form. "Once engaged in verbal conversation (oral, or written, productive or receptive), all three are

important; all three are in play" (Yalden, 1987, p. 28). Students learning a second language generally put more conscious attention to appropriateness and meaning than to linguistic form. As they become more fluent, the attention to linguistic form may change as well. Behavior in language development is one of the effects of adjustment to the internal and external cultures.

The role of behavior and language can be examined using the Iceberg model. Weaver (1986) analyzed the elements of behavior and language in his "Iceberg" analogy. In his analysis of cross cultural adjustment, he mentioned two key sectors: the external culture and the internal culture. The external culture is explicitly learned, conscious, easily changed, and includes objective knowledge. This is where behavior and beliefs are formed. Internal culture is cultivated by one's values and thought patterns. These are implicitly learned, unconscious, difficult to change, and involve subjective knowledge. Language would be factored in at the "tip of the iceberg," as an individual first encounters the behavior and the language of another culture beneath which lie the differing beliefs, values and thought patterns.



Behavioral differences are seen as a key factor in crosscultural misunderstanding. Matters such as punctuality, intimacy, politeness, etc. are all-important. Discourse analysis of crosscultural encounters, in Weaver's research, reveals differences in frames between speakers from different countries, differences in turn-taking and patterns of presentation. Differences in non-verbal communications (eye-contact, tolerance of silence, gestures, volume of sound) are all examples of behavioral differences that vary by cultures.

#### The Importance of the Native Culture in Learning the Target Language

For many EFL students, learning English is a fun and hip way to become more connected to the global world that they are already a part of through MTV and other aspects of pop culture. Still, it is imperative that in the process of learning to sound and act like their Western counterparts, they also remember to maintain ties with their native culture.

A learner ought to be able to represent the good in his own culture and to avoid being irritated by the differences he finds between his and the new culture. The learner should strive to be acceptable as an

outsider in certain respects but not in all. He should keep his selfhood undivided and not try to ape another personality. (Valdman, 1966, p. 68)

Again, the objective is to create effective English speakers, by engaging them in the differences of a new culture, and still uphold their traditions; it should not be an attempt to extend Western imperialism and make native speakers out of everyone.

#### Teachers: the Link to Language and Culture

The responsibility of cultural liaison and cultural representative is not a task many teachers are willing to undertake. EFL teachers seeking adventure abroad must also educate themselves in the culture to which they will soon be exposed. Those who believe that change will only take place in their students will be in for a shock. Many teachers take an assignment overseas must also face the fact that they will be a visitor, and as such they must behave.

The language teacher who cultivates a firsthand knowledge of a second culture, and who is able to communicate empathy for it, knows the conflict between loyalty to this culture and irritation toward the faults that one must find in it. On the other hand, the self-

identity that develops in the context of two cultures does not need to be unitary, nor even fixed for all occasions (Parry, 1996). English teachers abroad have the double responsibility of teaching the target culture and still being sensitive to the native culture; and in some cases, the native culture may even consist of multiple cultures.

Language is an integral part of culture, and one cannot exist without the other. In teaching language, culture is an apparent part of the formula, both the native and the target culture. The role of the EFL teacher is not only to bridge the gap between language and culture through mediated activities that center on the target culture, but also to embrace the native culture. Culture is a broad concept covering everything from the arts to the group of people and its language and practices. Introducing foreign language students to the target language, through various aspects of the target culture, is effective practice both implicitly and explicitly.

#### Educational Use of Video in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom

The introduction of a moving picture component as a language teaching aid is a crucial addition to the teacher's resources. The use of video and film in the

classroom is not a new concept. Still, there is still much debate on the effectiveness of using video and film to teach a foreign language. Using a visual aid such as video provides several positive results in learners. "Videos, more and more are designed to be interactive--that is, to respond to the student's input" (Ornstein & Levine, 1997, p. 213). Motivation and communication are two key ingredients of any classroom, and both are enhanced when using video and film to teach a foreign language.

Children and adults feel their interest quicken when language is experienced in a lively way through television and video. By keeping their interests, students are more motivated to continue learning. This combination of moving pictures and sound can present language more comprehensively and realistically than any other teaching medium. Using a video sequence in class is the next best thing to experiencing the sequence in real life. In addition, video can take students into the lives and experiences of others.

Teachers have observed how a video sequence used in class makes students more ready to communicate in the target language. Activities which encourage students to find out things from each other on the basis of the video

are an important part of learning through video/film. Some of the activities depend on information gaps, created by manipulating the technology or the viewer so an individual viewer can get the full message only by communicating with another viewer. In other words, a teacher may choose to show snippets or even just pause during certain parts of a video to focus on a particular idea. Other activities depend on the richness of content that would give students the opportunity to conduct activities such as opinion polls and consumer surveys in class. By such means, the use of video/film encourages a more interactive classroom.

(Stempleski & Tomalin, 1990). This introduces a new avenue of communication for students, further developing their interpersonal skills.

#### Interaction: Non-Verbal Communication

Interaction does not have to be verbal in order to be considered effective. "Much effective communication requires a language system that is nonverbal" (Seelye, 1996, p. 45). Even in a classroom that uses interactive methods such as video, non-verbal aspects of communication still exist. The American psychologist Robert Merabian has estimated that as much as 80 percent of our communication is non-verbal. In English, gestures, expression, posture,

dress and surroundings are as eloquent as what is actually said. Video allows one to see this in action and freeze any moment to study the non-verbal communication in detail. Often, a video will code particular behaviors and body language as differing by gender, with men looking consistently at the camera and women averting their gaze. Whether speakers gaze directly at one another or avoid eye contact can "speak" to viewers about the attitudes and desires of the people depicted.

One of the benefits of using videos in the EFL classroom is that it presents aspects of non-verbal language such as gestures and body language. Identifying gestures and other body languages in video and film lead to crosscultural comparisons. Observing differences in cultural behavior is not only suitable training for operating successfully in an alien community, but also is a rich resource for communication in the language classroom. Understanding what is appropriate can prevent embarrassing and sometimes dangerous situations. A subtle gesture can be offensive in one culture while being totally acceptable in another. Proper vocabulary is only effective if it is used in the correct social context. Moreover, simple gestures are just part of social acceptance.

To illustrate the need for social validation of behavior, Geertz (1972) offered an example of the difference between mere actions and socially meaningful behavior by contrasting a blink with a wink. If you simply look at the physical movement of the eyelid, both behaviors are identical. For a blink to become a wink, however, the social context in which it occurs has to provide a mutually agreed upon meaning. There are many commonplace examples of this differentiation. Sometimes scratching one's upper lip simply means it itches. In China, it is an invitation to sexual intimacy. In every society there exist conventions that distinguish mere actions from meaning-laden conduct. Subtle movements in body language and gestures can be seen through the use of video, whether it is in an extended form such as films, or even short segments such as commercials.

#### Selecting Video and Sequence

Video can be used at every level, both as supplementary material for language reinforcement and skills practice and as the main component of an intensive course or course module, provided that suitable material is available. Teachers must exercise some caution in using video for the classroom. It is not a simple task of finding

a video and playing it for the class. Selection and preparation are crucial in accompanying a lesson.

Typical preparation includes introducing critical vocabulary, analyzing the film title, and using the text to provide students with character information, background, plot, and relevant setting information. It also requires pausing the film at appropriate points to call attention to salient features, check comprehension, and explain vocabulary and idioms (Williamson & Vincent, 1996). It is beneficial to students and teachers if the teacher previews the video and is familiar with the pertinent parts. Consequently, preparation may be time consuming; but if video/film is executed properly, a classroom using these media can be an exciting way to introduce the English language.

Introducing video and film in the EFL classroom also allows students to interact, though indirectly, with English speakers outside their classrooms. "Videos expose students to authentic materials and to voices, dialects, and registers other than the teacher's and provide cultural context" (Swaffar & Vlatten, 1997, p. 45). They also change classroom routines. Video offers students more than



listening comprehension. Students have the opportunity to read visual as well as auditory messages.

### Video for Reading and Listening Practice

Being able to read what is seen, as well as what is heard, enhances learning. Reading videos as visual systems provides students with a feasible classroom project. In other words, people or objects may emerge as important figures because they are shown in public places with the symbols of public esteem, such as flags or cheering crowds. Simply put, this puts a face with a name or title. Reading is a skill that requires consistent practice and repetition. Video learning also requires some degree of repetition, but in limited form.

Repetition is a central curricular strategy because only through repeated viewing and listening can students learn how to identify some (not necessarily all) of the ideas expressed in rapidly paced, authentic foreign films and television segments. Full comprehension of all ideas expressed in a typical authentic video clip is an unreasonable goal for any viewer, particularly for beginning learners. This is especially true if all of the clips used are extracts from actual television broadcasts in a foreign language or close equivalents. Teachers also

need to be aware of the negative output produced by a lengthy, or overly repetitious, segment.

### Choosing the Appropriate Length of Segments

Determining the appropriate length of the video clips is a judgment that needs to be made by the teacher. This can be easily motivated by the degree of interest that students show after a period of time. Students will indicate, either verbally or by the lack of interest in their participation, how motivated they are by the video. It is important that the length of the video does not exceed their expectations. It is always wise to stop while they are still looking forward to the next lesson with anticipation, and not anxiety.

One of the first problems that foreign language learners confront when viewing a foreign program or video segment is cognitive overload, that is, too much new information to process in working memory. A common solution has been to present only brief segments (thirty seconds to three minutes of a longer videotext) or to limit selections to commercials and newscast excerpts. Researchers like Trombly (2000) believe that "the video unit should be limited to 5 minutes or less in length so as to increase the students' comprehensible input. Increased

comprehensible input will then augment students' understanding of normal social interactions and the language used within those interactions" (p. 2).

Perhaps the most important disadvantage of an exclusively short excerpt approach is that it fails to encourage the type of extensive video use that characterizes the comprehension patterns of native speakers. Thus, teachers must enable students to view videos of varying lengths without frustration, and with clearly articulated learning objectives appropriate for the genre and length of the video. The solution encourages intensive and extensive viewing. This strategy enables users to replay segments conveniently and, in that recycling process, focus on the language spoken. However, a classroom focus on the language of the video can easily discourage students: those with limited linguistic proficiency will become easily frustrated. So again, the teacher needs to determine the length of the clips when making preparations.

Choosing the proper criteria for video selection is as challenging as choosing the right textbook for the classroom. As a learning tool, both will need to provide

useful information that will lend applicable skills for the English speaker.

The most important criterion is that the video focus on a single issue or theme, so the content is spread throughout and students can watch the video over several class sessions. Because the emphasis is on global comprehension of the story, students need to be able to understand what is happening in the video without frequent repetition of scenes or excessive explanation. (Schwartz, 1999, p. 35)

Video aid is just that, an aid to instruction. Relying on the video to explain the complexities of the language is a mistake. It can help, not replace, the actual teaching that is required by a teacher.

As with any other learning tool, video is useful and effective if used properly, by a well-prepared teacher. Using video-aided instruction is also an important part of interactive learning. Students are engaged in different activities that allow them to develop their interpersonal skills. Aside from the entertainment value it provides, video further introduces valuable language skills such as speaking and listening.

Using a video unit in an oral communication classroom is effective because oral communication involves initiating a topic for discussion, and the video unit provides a focus for comparing cultures. Students increase their knowledge of social language from the situation right down to the language used in the communicative act(s).

Video use in the EFL classroom can be a resourceful tool if it is applied carefully. It can provide visual representations of certain aspects of culture that cannot be translated in textbooks. As gatekeepers of meaningful information, teachers have the responsibility of choosing the appropriate video/film for the classroom. The criteria should allow students to interact and apply language skills that will make them competent English speakers.

### Interactional Competence: Applying Language for Communication

#### Definition of Interactional Competence

The act of communication demands that the speaker not only know the language but also its usage. Interactional competence is the ability to use learned skills to socialize with others, and communicate effectively.

"Language proficiency should be considered in terms of interaction with other participants in a given interactive

situation: Interactional competence" (Schank & Ableson, 1977, p. 56). These can involve modifications such as comprehension and confirmation checks and clarification requests. These acts of communication enable the second language learner to comprehend what is being said by using various interactional techniques.

Interacting in another language involves more than knowing the appropriate syntax and lexicon. It is also, minimally, a matter of interactional competence (Hinkel, 1999). This competence involves such context-specific knowledge as the goals of the interactive practice, the roles of the participants, and the topics and themes considered; the optional linguistic action patterns, their conventional meanings, and the expected participation structures. The more competent the learner becomes, the more the learner can use knowledge to interpret and respond to the ensuing talk, becoming creative in ways to participate and adept at realizing individual goals. Finally, flexibility in the learner's resources provides the skills to efficiently recognize situations in which to apply the new information in the appropriate social settings.

## Language as a Social Function

As with any other skill, language requires practice and application in order to achieve proficiency. "Of all the reciprocal, mutually intelligible behaviors that make up a culture, language erects the biggest boundary between people of different cultures" (Seelye, 1996, p. 225). If one can not speak the language, one is reduced to understanding a version of events that only roughly approximates understanding, and is entirely shut out of most nuances that give interpersonal communication its spice. Language is the key to opening the cultural door to interrelationship and knowledge riches.

For second language learners, repetition and interaction are necessary elements of language acquisition. Students who have studied English for years often find themselves in difficult situations when confronted by a native speaker. Years of classroom practice and achievement seem to have little bearing when they realize that speaking the language does not guarantee effective communication. Factors such as word selection, accent, and idioms are not things that were covered in their English textbooks, and now they find themselves at the beginning stages once again. For many second language learners, the "quick fix"

solution is to use whatever means necessary to get the point across. This could mean repeating the question or statement, using gestures, asking questions, and even guessing.

### Interactional Modifications

Confirmation checks, clarification requests, and comprehension checks are three interactional modifications used by language learners in interactional competence. As Pica and Young (1996) described in their study of the impact of interaction on comprehension, the three modifications are pertinent components of interaction. First, confirmation checks are moves by which the listener seeks confirmation of the speaker's preceding utterance through repetition, with rising intonation, of what was perceived to be all or part of the speaker's utterance. Second, clarification requests involve moves by which the listener seeks assistance in understanding the speaker's preceding utterance through questions or statements such as "I don't understand" or imperatives such as "Please repeat." Third, comprehension checks are that which the speaker attempts to determine whether the listener has understood a preceding message.



Each technique can be found in most conversational exchanges, especially between native and non-native speakers. There is an increase in the number of comprehension checks that are used, especially if the non-native speaker is not yet proficient in the language. Furthermore, contributing factors such as confidence and situational elements may add to the communication between the two.

In speaking with non-native speakers, I was told that the confidence and comfort level they feel with the native speaker dictates much of the level of conversation. Depending on the relationship, there is either lesser or greater attention to errors. As I was learning Spanish, and to the present day, I had to agree that there is an added amount of pressure in speaking with a native speaker of Spanish. Additionally, the attention to errors is significant if I am speaking with a native speaker for the first time, compared to meeting a good friend over coffee.

Social blunders are one of the results of native and non-native interaction. Misunderstanding and miscommunication occur between native and non-native speakers for several reasons. The first reason is a non-native speaker's inability to map the correct linguistic

form into pragmatic intentions. The second is the native speakers' negative perception about speech acts by non-native speakers. Finally, native speakers assume they understand what non-native speakers have said. They are less likely to question interpretations, especially with proficient non-native speakers (Gumperz & Tannen, 1979). The lack of comprehension that occurs in many situations where native and non-native speakers interact could be said to be caused by input failure.

Before one can answer a question, one first needs to understand what is being asked. In many ways, how the information is asked or said will determine a comprehensible response. Input that has been modified, or simplified, in some way before the learner sees or hears it increases comprehension (Pica & Doughty, 1987). For example, repetition and paraphrasing will effect the comprehension of the person receiving the information. Using techniques for simplifying spoken and written language, communication between native and non-native speakers can be more effective.

Modified input is a strong determinant of interactional competence for dealing with second-language learners. In native and non-native interactions, modified

input by both parties can be an ideal way to reach mutual understanding. The most common example of classroom use of modified input was where the teacher (usually a native speaker) used modified language to make the material more comprehensible. Modifications of the interactional structure can vary from one classroom to another, but the conclusion is the same. As Pica and Doughty (1987) discovered, non-native speakers' comprehension is significantly better when the input is in the form of an *a priori* linguistically modified text or lecture than when the input is presented in its original, unmodified form.

While modified input is important in reaching interactional competence, redundancy in input is another significant factor. Redundancy in input is a vital factor in comprehension, whereas grammatical complexity of the input seems to make little difference. It was mentioned previously that repetition is a necessary part of language learning. However, language teachers should also take into account the redundancy factor that can result as such. Quantity at the expense of quality is not a successful motto for any educator.

## Managing Input to Avoid Burnout

Cognitive overload is not unusual in many classrooms, especially in foreign language classes. Teachers who understand the limits of their students' aptitude, as well as their own, realize that there can be no gains in forcing information that is not going to be retained. "If learners are not at the correct developmental level they will not acquire the (language) structure; it is supposedly unlearnable, unteachable, and untreatable" (Mackey & Philip, 1998, p. 117). Assessing what abilities students possess and understanding their learning motivations can lead to generating successful performance. According to the Yerkes 1910 model, performance and arousal are directly correlated; performance increases as the level of arousal moves from low to high. However, midway between the plane of arousal is the optimal point. Beyond that point of optimal arousal, performance begins to drop again. While it is essential to motivate students with challenging tasks, it is equally important to make them meaningful.

Interactional modification is the mechanism that brings about comprehension. Using language that is comprehensible and meaningful creates mutual understanding, most notably in cases where one speaker is less proficient

in the target language. Modifying what is said leads to competence in speaking and ultimately enables the listener to process the information; interactional modifications lead to comprehension of input.

#### Process Leading to Acquisition

Competence in speaking speeds the process of acquisition in social interactions. Factors that promote competent speaking are general attitudes toward the audience, normal demeanor, the system in which competence is acquired and evaluated, and conceptions of such competence (Hymes, 1967). The overall success of interactional competence derives from the learner's ability to utilize these elements in a social setting, whether this entails classroom settings or beyond. The processes of acquisition take place in three forms; communicative environment, acquisition of speaking competence, and acquisition of linguistic code.

The type of communicative behavior that is directed at the learners influences the communicative environment that affects their acquisition. The acquisition of speaking competence is the next factor. This includes the first speech acts, what the learner says as well as what is said to him/her, and how the speech is responded to. Finally,

the acquisition of linguistic code competence includes conceptions of first words, of sequence of acquisition of code(s), how it comes about, and what is done. The response, conceptions, and general environment under which the interactions take place affect the learner's competence and socialization.

Learning to interact with others in another language involves the development of pragmatic competence, principally, interactional competence. This helps the learners "notice," and subsequently facilitates the learning of the various practice-specific, pragmatic uses of language, the likely optional sequences of moves in the practice, and their typical interpretations and consequences. This mindfulness of language use in turn provides opportunities for learners to reflect on, and make informed choices about, their individual participation as users of the target language.

Interactional competence introduces ways in which a speaker can take part and function effectively in conversations. Understanding the various means to interject, deliver appropriate language, and simply "getting a turn" is the first part of communication. After having practiced how to use verbal and non-verbal language

to engage in conversations, the next step is to solicit feedback. Speakers have learned how to "input" information actively and now they must learn to negotiate a response, or "output."

### Negotiated Output for English as a Foreign Language Students

#### Definition of Negotiated Output

As second language students learn to interact with native speakers, the role of interpretation takes on great importance. Negotiation is a process in which a listener requests message clarification and confirmation and a speaker follows up these requests, often through repeating, elaborating, or simplifying the original message. These are more abundant in interactions among native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS), even more so when all participants are non-native speakers.

Part of the success of communicating with NNSs is the ability to find other avenues to express one's ideas. Therefore, in conversations involving one speaker who is less proficient, there is a degree of "negotiating" that takes place. In common terms, it is almost a bartering system that allows both sides to exchange certain words for a common understanding. Negotiated output is the result of

using limited, or alternative communication skills to function as communicative language. This concept is commonly utilized in native and non-native interactions, but may also be used between native speakers as a way of shortening the conversation.

### Does Native Speaker Interaction Improve Fluency?

While it is a popular notion that increased exposure to native speakers would be an effective learning environment for non-native speakers, there are other factors to consider. One concern is the question of communicative English versus proper grammar. In other words, is the intent of the speaker to learn proper English grammar, or simply to function in a native speaking environment? Learning textbook English is quite different from that which is spoken daily. This could be said for most foreign language learning.

In retrospect, I realize how meaningless was some of the information I learned in my college Spanish classes. The probability of meeting a stranger and refusing an invitation for coffee, after a bullfight, was very unlikely; yet we learned the proper phrase to use in such a case. The whole purpose of learning the second language was to be able to function easily enough that one would not



"stick out" like an obvious foreigner. Instead, textbooks rarely prepare one for refusing or requesting like a typical native speaker.

A recent study of interlanguage context (Mamanua, Sosa, & Baptiste, 1999), discovered that the exposure to native speakers does not always produce positive learning effects. Two focus groups were used in the study. The first focus group consisted of six non-native English learners and three native speakers. The second group had an equal distribution of non-native speakers and native speakers. All non-native participants were English instructors in their native countries who had come to the United States to improve their English. The non-native speakers agreed that the native speaking environment was irreplaceable in language learning. After years of practice, the true test was using the language in its native environment and in a real life setting.

The study was conducted in an informal setting, using a prompt that would initiate participants to react and discuss the given situation. As expected, the group with the higher number of native speakers provided more dominant participation by the native speakers, leaving non-native speakers to become observing participants. The other group,

however, provided a more equal-opportunity speaking forum. Even if native speakers were conscious of not dominating the discussion, the natural tendency of informal discourse still led them to be more active than their non-native counterparts. At the conclusion of the activity, the second language learners were asked if they thought more interaction with native speakers was actually beneficial. All agreed, but with a word of caution. As one student expressed, "sometimes I just need a quiet period." This "quiet period" was exactly what it indicates; time to tune out everything in English and "just give your interlanguage system a break."

As discussed earlier, cognitive overload can be a backlash to language learning. Furthermore, the study found that negotiation existed in input (requests) as well as output from both sides. In requesting information, both parties either repeated a question or rephrased it in shorter form. When answering, native speakers first had to rephrase the questions, then answer with as much attention. Additionally, the relationship between speakers affects the negotiation process. Non-native speakers further indicated they felt greater ease to make mistakes with someone whom they considered "close," as opposed to an acquaintance.

## Relationships Affect Communication

It is important to highlight the social variables that determine how language is used in context. For instance, what is the relationship between two people involved in a particular speech event? Are they close friends or acquaintances? Are they colleagues? Are they co-workers? Are they of equal status? Are they of the same gender? Are there other people witnessing the speech event? All these affect the dynamics of any conversation, but especially one involving foreign language learners.

Interaction with native speakers changes the dynamics of the conversation. Furthermore, the relationship between the speakers greatly influences the discourse, as explained in the Bulge Theory (Wolfson, 1998). The term bulge comes from the frequency of responses and the way these are plotted in a diagram: The two extremes are similar and the center has a bulge. This theory established the following postulates. First, intimates and strangers both require elaborate speech functions. Second, the responses are predictable, therefore there is little need for negotiation. Third, the bulge group is comprised of non-intimates, friends of equal status, coworkers, and acquaintances. Fourth, the bulge group requires negotiation

to sustain the relationship (Gass & Selinker, 1994).

Understanding pragmatics is just part of the negotiation process between native and non-native speakers.

#### Refusal: Cultural Variations and Messages

Taking the speech act of refusal as a way of illustrating the speech act paradigm, Gass and Selinker established that languages and cultures refuse in different ways. Complex and negotiated interactions and face-saving maneuvers take place. Beebe (1990) studied four groups of native speakers of Japanese and English in which the major concern was the existence of pragmatic transfer. They were asked to fill out a Discourse Completion Test involving 12 situations of refusal. Beebe found that there exists a transfer of formulas from native language to target language. The range of formula is similar but the order differs from language to language. Learners' negotiation with other learners addressed their theoretical needs for second language learning in ways that were not always comparable to their negotiation with native speakers, particularly with respect to their need for modified input in general and, more specifically for input modified in ways that conform to features of syntax.

Further studies have also indicated that the question of whether learners can aid one another in second language learning is a question of modified input and feedback. Results revealed that they can be a limited source of modified input and modified output, and can provide opportunities for feedback, albeit in a simplified form. Learners provided more utterances of feedback of the simple segmentation type than did the native speakers.

#### Modifications for Negotiating Input and Output

Pica's study of language learners' interaction (1996) reported that learners, too, may be reassured that their participation in communication tasks with other learners is not linguistically harmful. Considerable challenge, however, is posed by the need to identify, adapt, or create classroom tasks that encourage and motivate learners to invite, require, and ensure the comprehensibility of their message meaning. Such tasks would engage learners to modify their interaction through negotiation and thereby serve as a context for them to provide each other with modified input and feedback for learning.

One of the most common forms of modification in negotiating input and output is the use of modal verbs. When people are negotiating and planning in very informal

or intimate situations, verbs such as "suggest," "agree," and "disagree," are unlikely to be used frequently (Carter & McCarthy, 1997). Instead speakers simply state their position, but usually soften it by using modal verbs. Native speakers of English are familiar with the strategies of negotiation using modals to make demands. Such modals as "could" and "might" offer the most appropriate form of "suggestion" without actually appearing to be forceful. For example, the phrase, "You might want to reconsider your decision" is less suggestive than the following, "I disagree with your decision," or even more bluntly, "I think you're wrong." As English learners become more communicative, they also evolve into using more negotiated output.

Another common form of negotiation is the use of interlocutors. Negotiation has been used to characterize the modification and restructuring of interaction that occurs when learners and their interlocutors anticipate, perceive, or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility (Pica, 1994). As they negotiate, they work linguistically to achieve the needed comprehensibility, whether repeating a message verbatim, adjusting its syntax, changing its words, or modifying its

form and meaning in a host of other ways. Negotiation is not the only way in which the interaction between learners can be modified or restructured. The flow of interaction can be interrupted by a correction or rerouted to a new topic.

Although negotiation can take place through various forms, including repetition and rephrasing, it should be exercised with caution. Negotiation must also be put into critical perspective from a social point of view. In situations of native/non-native discourse, negotiation needs to be balanced by the smooth flow of even exchange. As Aston (1986) argued, too many impasses and repairs can make for uneasy social relationships. Too many clarification questions can be downright annoying.

Negotiation provides learners with opportunities to attend to relationships of form and meaning in the target language. Concurrently, the practice of social interaction with more proficient speakers, as well as native speakers, also ensures that students are not receiving solely grammatical practice. Negotiation, as a particular way of modifying interaction, can accomplish a great deal for second language acquisition (Pica, 1994). It can help make input comprehensible to learners, help them modify their

own output, and provide opportunities for them to access second language (L2) form and meaning.

### The Importance of Authentic Material

Language learning in the classroom context is not a guarantee to second language fluency, as indicated in the earlier part of the chapter. One of the limitations of many foreign language classrooms is the lack of unscripted, authentic, negotiation. Part of the reason this is true is the traditional role of teacher-student. In many cases, the negotiation is predetermined, and therefore has little room for variance. Students are led to believe that the same will hold true for all cases outside the classroom. Studies show that non-native speakers find difficulty in negotiations that require unfamiliar modifications for request. As Carter and McCarthy pointed out in their study (1997), NS signals draw responses from learners that also modify message meaning and form. This is twice as likely to occur if the NS signal was an open question (What? Huh? Can you tell me what that means?). Opportunities to "go beyond" the stated questions or negotiated output rarely push students to acquire the understanding of meaning in the target language.



## Negotiation Not the Ultimate Indicator

There is not a singular approach that can determine the absolute success and acquisition of language learning. Neither a singular experience, practice, methodology, nor theory can explain the ways in which language learning takes place. As such, negotiation can not be singled out as the ultimate road to fluency. "Negotiation cannot be really counted on, any more than anything else can be counted on, as the be-all and end-all of L2 learning" (Pica, 1994, p. 76). The effects produced by each learner are as distinct as his/her learning process. In a 1997 study by Van den Branden, he summarized the following implications on the effects of negotiated output: 1) children, while performing a two-way exchange communicative task, negotiate each other's output on the levels of meaning and content, but not deliberately on the level of form; 2) children interactionally modify their output when confronted with negative feedback, irrespective of whether this feedback is provided by a peer or a teacher; 3) the type of interactional modification children produce is more strongly determined by the feedback they receive than by the person who provides it; 4) the feedback they are provided and the interactional modifications they make

during negotiation, have selective, delayed effects on their output production in subsequent interactions.

Van den Branden's study did not provide a measure of the effects of negotiation on language acquisition. However, it provides a clear indication of the potential effects of negotiation on language acquisition, as well as empirical evidence of the effects of negotiation on subsequent output production.

The Van den Branden study examined the issue of meaning versus context. Though it emphasized the effects on children, a general assumption can be made for all language learners regardless of age. Attention to meaning and context over form could be a highly successful form of negotiation. Furthermore, the participants in the study showed more concern in the content of their responses and interactions than in the audience. Older students seem to be more conscious about giving the expected answer rather than speaking or acting on instinct and habit. On some levels, this is productive; however, excessive attention to mistakes can only lead to unnatural responses. Successful language learning requires a learning context that enables students to make mistakes. Students need to be aware that their errors should not be interpreted as failures, but

instead as a natural process. Teacher and peer encouragement can make this process less intimidating.

### Teacher Mediation

Even with the promising results of peer interaction, teacher mediation yields pronounced outcomes. Not only does a teacher need to push the pupils to produce difficult or challenging output, this should be done in a student-centered way. It can be done by adapting the amount of negotiation, and the amount of assistance offered during these negotiations. Whether the mediation is preset or spontaneous, the result can be beneficial. As long as it leads to comprehensible, authentic negotiated output, then the task is successful.

Another aspect of varying teacher input is the emphasis on more peer interaction, in which students are at different levels of proficiency. This leads to more spontaneous and elaborate interactions with less proficient students. Most importantly, the students are now the ones leading the discourse, and the teacher is simply following, thus becoming an observing participant. By allowing students to direct the flow of the interaction, and refraining from immediate interjections, the teacher is less imposing. Even when making suggestions, it is

important that teachers elicit their confirmation of the suggestions. By acting as an interlocutor, and pushing them in a supportive and encouraging manner, the teacher equips students to produce a description of their own (DeKeyser, 1993). Student-centered instruction does not imply the absence of the teacher as a guiding force, but it promotes the idea that students can project their skills by taking more control of their learning processes.

#### Culture: An Integral Part in Negotiation and Communication

Understanding the complexities of language negotiation is an integral part of understanding the culture in which it takes place. A curriculum designed with the intent of using culture as an integral part of second language learning can not dismiss the need for using negotiation in communication. Knowledge of the language is not always adequate to function in a second language and culture. Part of the success in learning alternative means of negotiation is being aware of what is acceptable in the target culture. The context in which clarification, requests, and repetition are acceptable forms of communication is as significant as knowing the correct phrases to transmit meaning. Negotiation is deeply rooted in the culture of the

language, and as such requires the learner to be aware of the cultural implications.

Negotiating output is essential in communicating effectively in the target language. In cases involving native speakers, the impact is paramount. Interpreting meaning in input and output can prevent misunderstanding and embarrassment. Providing students with authentic material that will prepare them for such encounters is a key element in language learning. Furthermore, fluency in the language requires that students are familiar with various avenues of expressing their ideas, and using them in the appropriate social context.

#### Fluency in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom

##### Definition of Fluency

In acquiring a second language, the conclusion of most learners is that success can only be measured by fluency. While this belief may be widespread among English language learners, many are still divided when it comes to a singular definition. For the majority of language learners, fluency means that one has reached native-speaker equivalence. Then the argument continues on what defines a "native speaker." Can someone who speaks grammatically

correct, accented English still be considered a native speaker, and therefore fluent? The following section examines the ideas of fluency, based on the belief that it is not determined by the accent, but rather by the effectiveness of communicating effortlessly in a native speaking environment.

### What Determines Fluency?

Fluency in a common language provides a potential means to a shared identity. Whether two people who speak variations (dialects) of the same language see each other as members of the same group varies from culture to culture, as well as from person to person (Seelye, 1996). Some cultures are more inclusive than others. That is, wide speech divergences--different accents, different vocabulary, may be seen as irrelevant or as exclusionary. Does an American, for example, through the medium of shared language, identify with people from India, Scotland, and Kenya? Much depends on the extent to which the general cultural milieu is perceived to be the same. "English belongs to the people who speak it, whether standard or non-standard" (Norton, 1996, p. 415). The standard of English may vary from country to country, and even within regions, so ownership of the language is not exclusive.

Armed with the appropriate language, one is well on the way to forming a sense of cohesion with those with whom one interacts.

One of the first things that a foreign-language student learns is the difficulty of practicing the target language with a native speaker. Regardless of the length of study, exposure to the target environment usually sheds new light on one's actual "ability" and level of proficiency. "Level one" or "five" usually has significance in a classroom where one is comfortably nurtured and prodded at one's own leisure. Once the secured settings are eliminated and the participants are not classmates, the real challenge begins.

#### Communicative Tools: Speaking, Listening, and Writing

Speaking, listening, and writing are all elements of language learning, and they all contribute to interpersonal communication. The debate continues on the order of operation that leads to successful second-language acquisition. Whereas many educators have traditionally believed oral communication is a prerequisite to listening and writing, there are arguments to the contrary as well. "Contrary to the traditional belief that students must have

'mastered' the oral language before being able to write, research indicates that children are able to write using whatever knowledge of English they possess" (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 1995, p. 73). Fluency is not an aspect of just one of the above-mentioned elements, speaking, listening, and writing, but rather a convergence of all three.

Oral command of a language is the most prominent feature in second-language acquisition, as seen through the eyes of many learners. The initial contact a person makes is usually done through discourse, which would explain the importance that students associate with speaking. Meeting someone for the first time, one is not usually required to write the greeting, but to communicate it orally.

Furthermore, for learners abroad, the "visual" effects of English are far greater than what is translated on paper. In other words, as a status symbol, the appearance of sounding and speaking like a native is more valuable. It comes as no surprise, then, that EFL students place a high degree of emphasis on speaking English.

Oral fluency represents many things to people abroad. For some, it translates to higher paying jobs, advancing in the job market, entrance into a prestigious preparatory school, or a renowned university; moreover, it is a status



symbol. As discussed in Chapter One, speaking English is another proud possession that they can display alongside their many cars, homes, and other imports. Fluency of speech is far more apparent to those who are interested in "showing." Therefore, in many cases, students are more interested in first developing fluent speech.

Pronunciation is arguably the most prominent indicator of oral fluency, as viewed by foreign-language learners. Oral communication is a complex and multifaceted language process. One of the facets of speaking includes pronunciation. Students learning a foreign language find pronunciation as much an obstacle as vocabulary and grammar. Mastering the correct sounds, and allowing them to register in the brain, is not an easy task. As a former Spanish instructor once told me, "you've got to think in Spanish when you speak it." Students must learn to gain accurate control of the sound system and remember how to recall this when speaking. As sounds begin to form, the next step it takes is in the form of writing.

Another way to enhance fluency is through writing and listening. Writing is an important part of foreign-language learning. Once a student is able to recognize the sounds and their combinations, it is important to apply

this to a written exercise. This can take place in one of various forms. It can be original work, written by the student, or even a repeated task that has been modeled by the teacher. In both cases, the importance of having written material allows the student to recognize the sounds and patterns that are being learned. Visual representations of sounds reinforce what is spoken and heard. For many foreign-language learners, it is helpful to see what is being said, because what they hear is not always written as such.

As mentioned in the earlier portion of this section, fluency is a convergence of the three parts of oral communication: speaking, listening, and writing. Classroom teachers must embrace the idea of using the three as integral parts of promoting fluency. Activities that center upon the sound system, such as dialogues, apply two of the important elements, speaking and listening. "Speaking and listening can be defined as major skill areas of interpersonal communication; pronunciation encompasses subsets of both speaking and listening skill development" (Murphy, 1991, p. 85). Attention to speaking, listening, and pronunciation must proceed in an integrated fashion.

## Misconceptions About Fluency

A common perception in foreign language learning is that "fluency equals intelligence." In a society already driven by perceptions, language learners face the burden of breaking down misconceptions of "language proficiency equals intelligibility." As John Murphy (1991) aptly stated, "The ability to speak coherently and intelligibly on a focused topic is generally recognized as a necessary goal for ESL students" (p. 90). The author made this point in reference to the number of ESL students at the high school, college, and university graduate level who are aspiring to professional careers in English-dominant communities. In keeping with this belief, the same can be said for EFL students. In an effort to get ahead and gain a comparative advantage over their peers, the pressure of possessing excellent English communication skills is high. The ability to translate that into coherent, intelligible English is a separate issue.

It is a common perception, and perhaps one based on ignorance and prejudice, that those who speak "proper" English are intelligent, refined individuals. This is a widespread belief even among native speakers themselves. In more common terms, "if you sound smart, then you probably

are." This belief parallels the ideas that are rampant in foreign language learning that one must speak accentless English in order to be perceived as fluent.

For many English learners, fluency means the absence of a "foreign" accent. The presence of an accent is seen as a nuisance, and even a distraction to those who come in contact with these speakers; even at times, to the speakers themselves. So the next question is, how much of an accent is too much; to what degree does the accent go from charming to irritating? Reverting to the earlier discussion of negotiated output, too much clarifying and repetition is irritating to a native speaker. Thus, it is safe to say that when the accent becomes too difficult for the listener, it detracts from the content. Then it is too much and it does matter.

#### Discourse with Native Speakers

What ultimately defines a fluent speaker is the ability to be an active participant in a discourse involving native speakers. Young (1995) suggested that "high proficiency in speaking a second language includes the ability to smoothly change the topic, to cooperatively manage the conversational floor, to talk at greater length, on a wider range of topics, and to be more reactive to

topics introduced" (p. 101). However, he went on to mention that one reason learners are incapable of changing the topic is because they are not given the opportunity. This is, in large, because of the control of the native speaker who directs the conversations. Classroom discourse can be effective as long as there is discretion by the teacher and other native speakers not to overshadow the participation of non-native speakers.

Speakers and listeners are expected to interact with peers, teachers, and other target language speakers. The types of methods that will ensure the highest level of practice for the classroom will be left to the discretion of the instructor. Murphy (1991) mentioned a number of methods to consider in teaching "spoken" English. Of the twelve methods discussed, I found the following to be most useful in my future classroom: Community Language Learning, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Task-Based Approach.

In keeping with Vygotsky's theory of social activity, these three approaches correspond to the belief that learning is based on interpersonal relationships and self-realization. Community Language Learning involves many peer-to-peer interactions that contribute to a community

spirit among students, whereas the spoken forms incorporated into the syllabus are generated by students themselves. Communicative Language Teaching also comprises peer-to-peer, guided, and free speaking activities, which are organized around notional, functional, or linguistic considerations. Finally, a Task-Based Approach entails activities that center on practical tasks for students to perform that can be weighted to emphasize oral communication.

Classroom activities that promote peer interaction are part of the advancement of language teaching. In addition, these practices in social interaction also evoke the importance of student self-evaluation. Dickerson (1989) sometimes called this strategy "covert rehearsal." It involves critical self-evaluation and self-correction in either classroom or non-classroom settings. During moments of covert rehearsal a learner applies to self-initiated utterances his/her knowledge of past learning and memories of target language sounds. This ability is vitally important in improving the comprehensibility of their speech. Strategies for covert rehearsal can be taught in the classroom through video and audio recordings. To reiterate previous discussion on the inclusion of video in

the classroom, this strategy is another means for integrating the teaching of speaking, listening, and pronunciation.

### Final Thoughts on Pronunciation and Fluency

Despite the proclamations of researchers that pronunciation is not a grave concern to language fluency, the development of L2 pronunciation remains a primary goal of many learners. "Indeed, learners consistently give extremely high priority to mastery of pronunciation of the target language" (Macdonald, Yule, & Powers, 1993, p. 54). Perceptions of improvement toward target-like pronunciation are the bases for both in-class activities and formal evaluation and assessment; and assessment is always about individual performance. Though Western, progressive approaches to evaluation no longer emphasize the distribution of grades, this is not yet a globally shared practice. Grades, points, and daily evaluations are still invaluable standards of measure; they validate the students' effectiveness and level of improvement.

One of the major problems in attempting to investigate the effectiveness of any language teaching technique or procedure is being able to identify the point at which positive effects can be recognized. Most language teachers

are familiar with the instant improvement in a learner's performance in connection with some focused classroom activity, and with the subsequent disappearance of that improvement, when the focus has shifted. Finding no immediate improvement in the students' performance after some classroom activity, many language teachers either abandon the activity or decide that they, as teachers have failed (Macdonald, Yule, & Powers, 1993). Although this observation may hold for any aspect of language teaching, it is particularly relevant for the teaching of pronunciation.

The speech of second language learning is heavily judged on pronunciation. Accordingly, the implications for assessment and instruction are far-reaching for English instructors, as well as students. For the instructor, the obligation lies in the understanding that accent need not be associated with fluency. Furthermore, teachers should instill this same truth to students who are eager to "sound" like native speakers. Munro and Derwing (1995) accurately pointed out that, "Although strength of foreign accent is indeed correlated with comprehensibility and intelligibility, a strong foreign accent does not necessarily cause L2 speech to be low in comprehensibility



or intelligibility" (p. 94). Based on this, it makes little sense to assess pronunciation on scales that range from non-accented, perfectly comprehensible, to accented and difficult to understand.

Scales of accent, perceived comprehensibility, and intelligibility should not be confused with one another. Assessment should be determined according to the goals of the instructor and the learner. If comprehensibility and intelligibility are accepted as the most important goals of instruction in pronunciation, then the degree to which a particular speaker's speech is accented should be of minor concern. Hence, instruction should not focus on global accent reduction, but only on those aspects of the learner's speech that appear to interfere with listeners' understanding (Munro & Derwing, 1995). In essence, these findings suggest that what ultimately matters is that the listener comprehend the speaker's intended message.

#### Cultural Context of Fluency in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom

Oral practice can and should be used in an integrated fashion with practice in other skill areas. The integration of cultural content is also an important consideration. These activity types have the added benefit of fostering

cooperative learning and small-group interaction, both of which can be especially conducive to the development of oral proficiency (Omaggio, 1993). The tasks need to allow students to use language in the contexts likely to be encountered in the target culture. Furthermore, there must be opportunities for students to practice carrying out a range of functions likely to be necessary in interacting with others in the target culture.

In acquiring the target language, students cannot be excluded from the culture. The mechanisms of the language and its functions are deeply rooted in its culture and therefore must be included in the formula for learning. Fluency is a product of using the integrated skills of oral communication, where each skill stems from the development of the other. Speaking can not be taught without writing, nor can listening be taken out of the equation. As each area is integrated in the learning of English, eliminating one would not produce a fluent speaker. Fluency delineates that one can function in the target culture, with ease, in all aspects of communication: speaking, writing, and listening.

The role of culture in the EFL classroom is the underlying theme of this project. By including both native

and target cultures, students are able to acquire the target language through interactive lessons. These activities require students to engage in natural settings provided in the material as well as the classroom culture of learning that is mediated by the teacher.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This project presents a unit of instruction that is based upon the key concepts of interactional competence, negotiation, culture, fluency and video enhanced teaching. The chapter presents a theoretical model that supports the teaching unit. Each component of the model is described and justified, based on a figure representing the complete model.

There has been a growing awareness over the years of the enormous complexity of language teaching, leading to the conviction that in order to be a truly professional enterprise, scholars must approach it in a scientific manner and establish a sound theoretical framework. After decades of well-reasoned application of linguistics and psychology, scholars arrived at another significant finding. "Other factors besides the language sciences had to be taken into consideration in understanding language teaching, such as social, political, and economic realities" (Stern, 1983, p. 35). The effects of culture are apparent in second-language teaching. Thus, it is with this understanding that a theoretical model was developed that

will be presented as Figure 3.2. The role of the native and target culture in second-language acquisition is the foundation of the framework and project.

This project aims to develop a framework that will promote communication skills for the high-school EFL classroom through social activity, using both native and target cultures in the process. The formats of the lessons will use the application of Vygotskian theory of learning through social interaction. Students will be the main participants in the activities while the teacher will mediate and encourage cooperative learning and self-evaluation. Use of the target language will be encouraged and supported by the teacher, while using the native language and culture as a base or reference when necessary. The goal of the framework is to draw self-sufficiency and confidence in using English, through social activity.

#### Cortazzi and Jin Model

The Cortazzi and Jin (1996) Culture Content Model shown in Figure 3.1 is a three-party dialogue with target culture content taking place between the following: the teacher, the students, and the textbook.

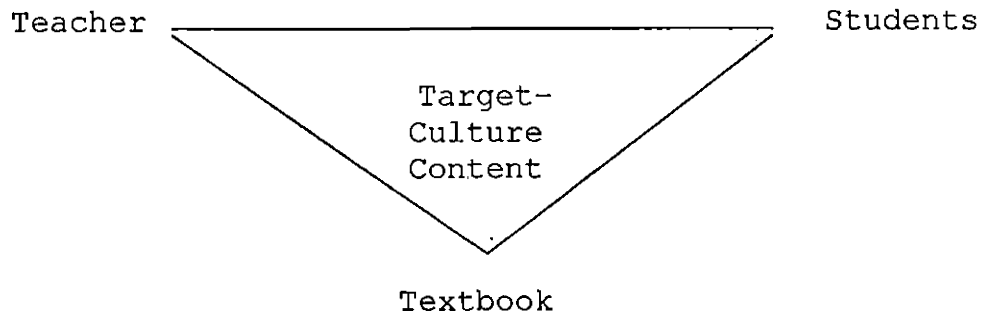


Figure 3.1. Cortazzi and Jin Culture Content Model

Source: Cultures of learning: Language classrooms in China. In H. Coleman (Ed.), *Society and the language classroom* (pp. 169-206). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

This dialogue exists when cultural content is found in the textbook and used as part of classroom interaction, as shown in Figure 3.1. In this dialogue, the teacher and/or students have some previous knowledge of the target culture; the teacher may be a native-speaker participant.

Aside from the human participants, the textbook plays a key role in presenting cultural content. Whereas such textbooks offer interesting cultural mirrors, the learning of culture and the development of intercultural skills depend in large part on how the textbooks and other material are used in the classroom, that is, on the quality of interaction between students, texts, and teachers.

"Beyond textbooks, what is required is a methodology of cultural learning" (Allwright, 1981, p. 9). Allwright

further stated that the management of second-language learning is far too complex to be "satisfactorily catered for by a pre-packaged set of decisions embodied in teaching materials." What is needed are appropriate methods for teaching and learning culture in the EFL classroom that will facilitate a reflective use of the best available materials. Based on the Cortazzi and Jin model, this project's theoretical model recognizes the use of the three-party dialogue, as well as the native and target cultures (see Figure 3.2).

### Components of the Model

#### The Teacher

As argued, language competence takes place in situations of negotiated meaning and identity in the context of the target culture and language. In this instance, it is the teacher's responsibility to help students "make the connection" to the target language. While introducing the lesson, they may draw on students' personal experiences and knowledge. Although this theoretical model emphasizes a student-centered learning environment, the teacher determines the foundations. Throughout the activities, the teacher maintains an active

part as observer and facilitator, mediating when necessary. Teachers may teach about target cultures, but their way of teaching is not solely influenced by their professional training. It is also influenced by their culture of learning.

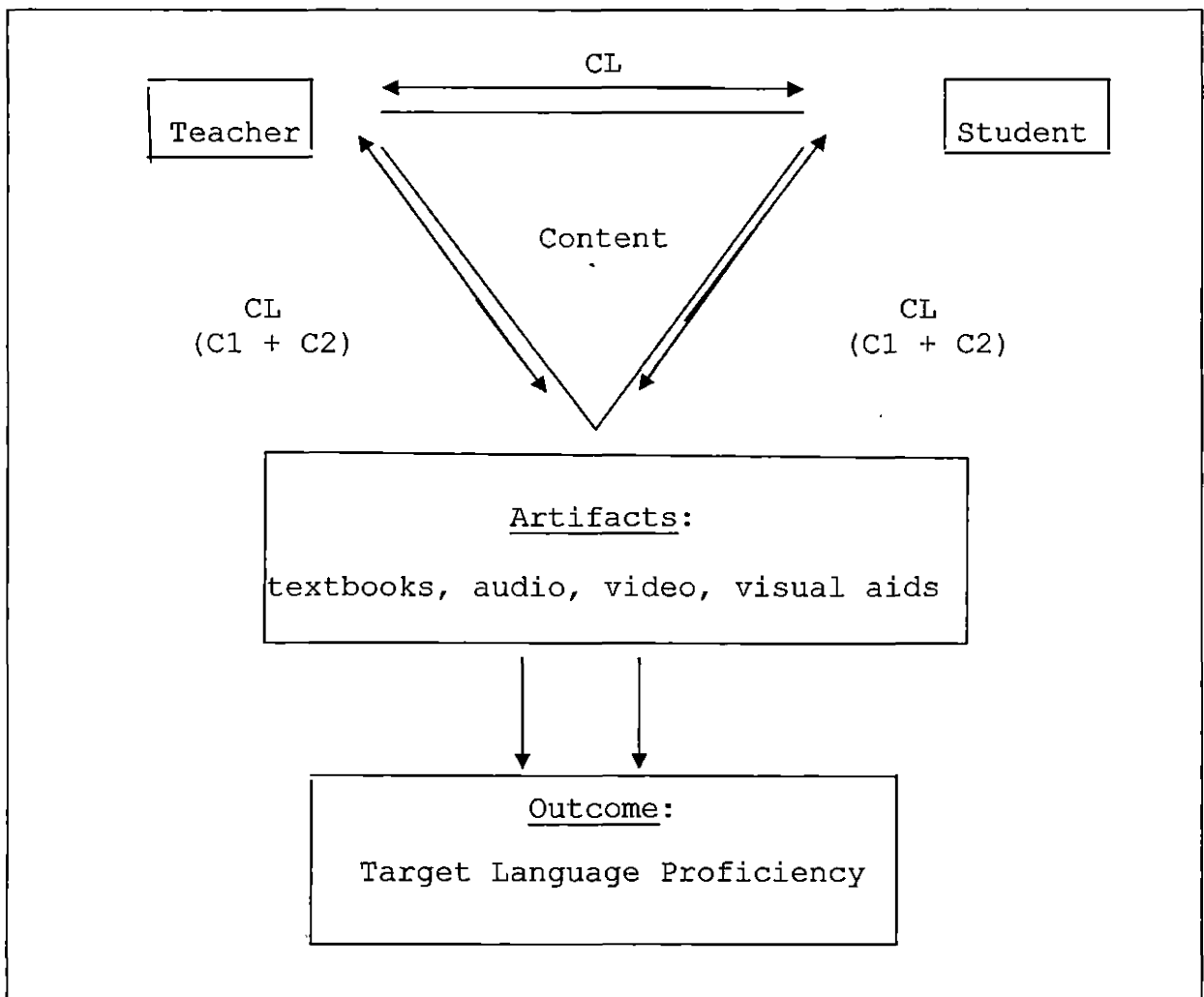


Figure 3.2. Theoretical Model of Culture-Based English as a Foreign Language Instruction



### Culture of Learning (CL)

This aspect of the learning process refers to how one learns, and is largely influenced by one's background, personal experiences and culture. Thus, the culture of learning involves both the native (C1) and target (C2) cultures. It is a "framework of expectations, attitudes, values, and beliefs about what constitutes good learning" (Henkel, 1999, p. 212). Students learn about target cultures, but their culture of learning is part of their own culture, acquired in most cases long before entering a foreign-language classroom. It is acquired in early socialization patterns and through the internalization of roles and expectations that students learn at school. It influences teachers through the imprint of years of being a student, prior to training, and years of teaching as well as observing other teachers.

Such a culture of learning becomes a framework of cultural interpretation that is unconsciously employed in later teaching. It becomes an invisible yardstick for judgment on how to teach and learn. For EFL instructors, the implications are great because of the cultural barriers that they encounter. Subtleties such as classroom behavior, seating arrangements, and even activities requiring

discussions are all impacted by the instructor's culture. Thus, culture is present in both content and context of learning.

### Content

The content component of the proposed model (see Figure 3.2) refers to the actual material that is introduced by the teacher. Each lesson focuses on segments of EFL instruction using the native and target cultures, negotiation, interactional competence, video, and fluency. Contents of the lesson are presented by the teacher and then transferred to students for further practice. Other resources contribute to the content, such as artifacts.

### Artifacts

Textbooks, audio, and other visual representations are considered objects and "artifacts" of learning. Textbooks might also be seen as a process of dialogue in which students negotiate meaning and identity vicariously with the textbook author and its cultural content. Therefore, teachers must not only use discretion in selecting textbooks, but also mediate how culture is mirrored in the textbook. Teachers are thus "ambassadors of culture" (Nelson, 1995, p. 30), and may also thereby mediate ways in which students see themselves.

## Students

Students interact in teacher-mediated activities, practicing with other students and the teacher. Students derive their information and source from the teacher, artifacts, content, and interactions with other students. Each task requires student interaction and participation, in order to effectively apply the learned skills. Based on Vygotsky's theory, interacting with other students of greater knowledge or an adult will greatly improve a student's independent learning abilities. Using these skills through mediated learning, the student is able to internalize the knowledge for further use. As an observing participant, the teacher will interject only to further a discussion or answer a question. Otherwise, the student is given ample opportunities to practice and make self-evaluations.

## Outcome

The goal of each activity is to encourage the use of the target language. After each task, students and teacher evaluate their performance through various assessment methods. The class will discuss what was learned, which area requires more practice and needs to be repeated, and finally, whether the objectives were met. It is important

that the goals and objectives be clearly defined at the beginning, so that all participants understand their responsibilities and expectations. During the tasks, it is also imperative that the teacher continue to ensure that students stay on task in order to meet these goals. The final outcome is ideally a self-sufficient, effective English speaker.

As the framework suggests, the native and target cultures are ubiquitous in the EFL classroom that adopts this model. Teachers use cultural resources to teach, and draw on students, culture as well as their own knowledge and backgrounds. The lessons offer the content -based learning, as do textbooks, audio and video, and other artifacts present in the classroom. Above all, the paramount element of this framework is the culture of learning that surrounds the classroom. How a student learns encompasses the content, and mediates between student, teacher, and other resource material. Second-language acquisition through mediated activities is the most successful tool in the EFL classroom. Furthermore, the inclusion of culture, both content-based and contextual, is significant in target language practice and proficiency.

As evident in the theoretical model(see Figure 3.2), the content, composed of interactional competence, negotiation, culture, fluency, and video, is the center of a culture-based model. Students are active participants in these classrooms, with teachers mediating the interactions. Resources such as textbooks, audio, and other visual aids provide additional instruments in reaching the outcome. Finally, the presence of the native and target cultures are critical to the application of this model. Apart from the cultural content of each lesson, students are further engaged through the culture of learning.

CHAPTER FOUR  
CURRICULM DESIGN

Introduction of Lesson Plans

This unit consists of six lessons designed to provide students with exercises in self-introduction, self-expression and the overall growth and development of social skills. Targeted toward young adults preparing for higher education, the lessons are intended to provide the learner with language usage through personal growth. Additionally, these lessons allow learners to express themselves in order to gain self-esteem and a strong sense of identity. The use of cooperative learning in each lesson also enables students to apply interpersonal skills that will aid them in real-life applications.

The lessons created for this curriculum incorporate one (or more) of the five core areas of this project: culture, educational use of video, interactional competence, negotiated output, and fluency. Furthermore, the lessons contain culture-based tasks that promote social interaction through peer interviews and introductions, understanding the target culture through video, and fluency in oral, written, and listening practice. The presence of

culture is evident in all the activities in which students engage. Culture-based tasks reinforce the inclusion of the native and target cultures in EFL classrooms.

This curriculum is designed to emphasize the importance of student-student interaction in learning. The teacher's role as mediator involves introducing the lessons, modeling, and intervening when necessary. Although the instructor monitors students during the activities, the basis of learning derives from their interactions with other students. Emphasis is placed on getting students to learn from one another, on developing group activities, and on cultivating a zest for learning by showing that the teacher shares in the excitement of learning.

#### Summary of Lessons

##### Lesson One: Getting Personal

In this introductory lesson, the main objective is for students to be able to practice interpersonal skills through language development. They will learn to use descriptive language such as adjectives, and apply their oral-communication skills by working with other students. Students will have the opportunity to use their communication skills in performing these activities. They

will be required to elicit information, write their responses, and listen for comprehension. By using the various language skills, students are continuously developing their speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills. As an introductory lesson, this provides students with a chance to get to know their peers a little better and begin to feel more comfortable in working cooperatively.

### Lesson Two: Body Language

This lesson introduces the use of video into the classroom. It is important that students preview the objectives and expectations. By clearly identifying the purpose and need for using film in the classroom, students will understand their responsibility for learning, and not perceive it as pure entertainment. The use of video in the classroom adds a different dimension to daily lessons, and also is effective in introducing students to authentic target-language speech, and providing a glimpse into a different culture in general. Students learn the importance of note taking and viewing comprehension in this lesson. Furthermore, they will be able to observe and understand culturally accepted gestures and body language. The lesson



presents opportunities for them to exercise their listening comprehension and writing skills.

### Lesson Three: Relating to Someone

As a continuation of the previous lesson, students learn what is acceptable speech in various social settings. This lesson gives students more practice in simulating dialogue exchange with native speakers. The objectives are to help students understand the cultural norms, different speaking styles, and adjustments that are necessary according to their relationship with the other speaker. Understanding cultural norms is part of the learning. Students will also apply their reading and listening comprehension skills as a follow-up to Lesson Two. Finally, the lesson brings forth situations where they would interact with native speakers, and thus exercise negotiation and interactional competence.

### Lesson Four: Create a Nation

Sometimes it is easier to understand one culture when it is seen through another. The motivation of this lesson is to allow students to use their creative skills to have fun in learning about another culture. Aside from the creative skills they will be required to use, students will also use their writing skills to develop the presentation

pieces. Their presentations to the class will be a challenging practice in public speaking for them. This is perhaps the most challenging lesson, as it requires a high degree of participation and group work. Working with a partner during this assignment will alleviate some of the pressure for individuals. Aside from language skills, they will learn to use research materials such as almanacs, encyclopedias, and so forth. Learning about another culture will also instill a greater sense of pride in their own culture and assist them in appreciating other cultures.

#### Lesson Five: Problem Solving

Another important tool in self-expression is the ability to solve a problem using critical thinking. In this lesson, students will learn how to narrow their choices and arrive at a solution by considering alternatives. By studying about advantages and disadvantages, students learn that putting the options in two categories can help them see a better approach. A list of pros and cons allows them to have a visual idea of which side is favorable. In addition to learning how to solve problems using pros and cons, students will practice using critical-thinking skills such as making judgments and problem solving through peer evaluation and discussion. The focus in this lesson is on

critical thinking and conversation skills. For young adults, this particular lesson is a useful tool in decision making, and a suitable warm-up to the proceeding lesson.

#### Lesson Six: Wishful Thinking

As the unit comes to a close, the focus shifts to preparing for the future. The previous lesson introduced them to problem-solving skills that will help in making important decisions. In Lesson Six, students will learn to identify and express their ambitions, goals, and expectations. The language focus is on conjunctions of time and condition. This lesson will provide students with a beginning guideline or outline to what they wish to accomplish in the future. The lesson is rich with critical-thinking activities as well as language focus on writing and speaking. Finally, the activities help them learn about their objectives in life and how these have been influenced.

#### Summary of Curriculum Design

Each lesson is designed to include aspects of the target culture not only in the content but also in the context of the learning. As students learn the basic usage of the target language, they are able to gain a perspective

on how their culture mirrors their learning of another language through its culture. As evident in Table 4.1, each lesson is designed with specific objectives and a culture-based task. The theme of the unit is to present language in a communicative environment that involves both the native and target culture. Furthermore, the curriculum provides students with activities that represent real life situations, where their language skills may be effectively exercised.

Table 4.1. Culture-Based Curriculum

<u>Lessons</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Culture-Based Task</u>
One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactional Competence</li> <li>• Negotiated output</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Fluency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer interviews and introductions</li> </ul>
Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactional Competence</li> <li>• Negotiated Output</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Fluency</li> <li>• Video</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video/film for comprehension</li> <li>• Non-verbal communication in target culture</li> </ul>
Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactional Competence</li> <li>• Negotiated Output</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Fluency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiating and interacting with native speakers</li> <li>• Speech adjustment in social settings</li> </ul>
Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactional Competence</li> <li>• Negotiated Output</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Fluency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparing cultures</li> <li>• Communicative strategies: writing and speaking</li> </ul>
Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactional Competence</li> <li>• Negotiated Output</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Fluency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> </ul>
Six	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactional Competence</li> <li>• Negotiated Output</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Fluency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> </ul>

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ASSESSMENT

Assessments are generally used to determine a learner's performance level in areas of proficiency, competency, and achievement. These tests can provide evidence for decisions either to promote students or keep at the current level. For EFL students, these assessments carry additional significance. Beyond the traditional grades and points, the assessment will predetermine their places in society, and ultimately their futures.

As young adults, the students will be faced with challenges and must learn to overcome them. This unit is aimed at introducing students to critical-thinking strategies such as problem solving. They will learn to find alternative solutions based on their analyses. The lesson encourages students to use higher-order thinking in arriving at solutions through discussions and interviews. Again, the interaction with other students will be an important resource for learning and motivation. By challenging students to search for their own solution, they will understand the value of decision-making.

The role of assessment in a Vygotskian-based curriculum is to evaluate students based on the task and the context. The individual activity will set the assessment standards necessary to evaluate a student's performance effectively. Depending on the level of difficulty and the social context of each task, the evaluation standard will vary. Because the curriculum is based on the idea of interactional learning, students will also perform differently according to the social context of each activity. Factors such as partner involvement and teacher mediation will affect the outcome of their performance.

As the teacher's role is defined as a mediator in a cooperative environment, final evaluation still falls on the shoulders of the instructor. Although many teachers in the United States gravitate toward using more student-centered evaluations, this same practice cannot be easily applied overseas. Teachers who are dynamic and interesting are embraced, and given a high degree of flexibility. Still, when it comes to academic evaluations, the decision is not solely the teacher's or the school's. Parents' expectations, school guidelines, and culture have an overbearing effect.

## Performance-Based Assessment

In most EFL classrooms around the world, the idea of self-evaluation is slowly being accepted. Traditional evaluation and assessment represented by letter grades are still highly coveted. Thus, performance-based testing is the type of assessment that will be exercised in this unit. "Performance-based testing is testing that corresponds directly to what is taught in the classroom" (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 1995, p. 180). These include teacher-developed evaluations, tests, quizzes, worksheets, and all that correlate with the actual classwork. Although unstructured evaluations such as work samples, participation, and observation are invaluable, structured means of evaluation will be the most effective and acceptable in the EFL classroom.

## Merging Traditional and Progressive Assessment

Using observations as part of classroom assessment requires instruments that must be implemented with consistency. An observant teacher can note individual differences. In addition to formal notes, teachers may record a cooperative or collaborative group working together (Crawford, 1993). This may include reading and



presenting to the class either formally or informally, such as volunteering. Students will value the refreshing approach to grading, but in the end, their performance is measured by the final grade. Teachers in these classrooms can be progressive in their assessments, but summatively, observations and self-evaluations are not adequate determinants.

The assessment used in the unit, as shown in Table 5.1, combines the traditional and progressive roles of teachers and students. By allowing students to take an active role in their own learning, the implication is that they will place greater value on learning a second language. In contrast to traditional teaching, students will no longer be casual observers in their learning. Teachers are still a constant presence in their process, but not the dominant factor. They model the instruction in brief segments, and continue to monitor students' comprehension throughout the activity. Students will be obligated to internalize their knowledge and apply their skills.

Foreign-language instruction has room for new ideas and approaches, but the goal of each EFL teacher should be to address students' needs; and ultimately, to provide

students and their parents with a letter grade.

Consequently, the need for structured assessment is still a preeminent requirement in teaching abroad. This combination of student responsibility along with teacher mediation is an effective model in cooperative classroom assessment.

Table 5.1. Types of Assessment

<u>Lessons</u>	<u>Assessment</u>
Lesson One: Getting Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work sheets</li> <li>• Teacher observation</li> </ul>
Lesson Two: Body Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work sheets</li> <li>• Teacher observation</li> </ul>
Lesson Three: Relating to Someone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work sheets</li> <li>• Teacher observation</li> </ul>
Lesson Four: Create a Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment sheet</li> <li>• Teacher observation</li> </ul>
Lesson Five: Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work sheets</li> <li>• Assessment sheet</li> <li>• Extra practice (take-home)</li> <li>• Teacher observation</li> </ul>
Lesson Six: Wishful Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Sheet</li> <li>• Extra practice</li> <li>• Assessment sheet (teacher only)</li> </ul>

APPENDIX A  
INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT

## Lesson One: Getting Personal

### Objectives:

1. Learn adjectives to describe personal attributes
2. Use *Wh* questions to practice interpersonal development through peer interviews

Materials: Focus Sheet 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, Work Sheets 1.4, and 1.5

### Warm-up/Introduction

Ask students to introduce themselves using a word that begins with the same letter as their names. The teacher will model: "Hello, my name is Gwen. I'm generous." After everyone has stated their names, the teacher explains that adjectives are used to describe nouns.

### Activity One

Students go over Focus Sheets 1.1 and 1.2. The teacher will clarify unknown words. With a partner, they will discuss adjectives on both sheets that can be used to describe them. The focus is on oral communication. Students should not be concerned with writing the responses, but can make notes (circle/check) on focus sheets.

### Activity Two

Teacher will introduce *Wh* questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why, How? Ask volunteers to give examples of *Wh* questions and write answers on board. Looking at Focus Sheet 1.3, ask students to note *Wh* questions. They will now interview their partners using Focus Sheet 1.3. Next, they will complete Work Sheet 1.4 and begin preparing their introductions.

### Activity Three

Introduce partners to the class. They may use Work Sheet 1.4 and any other notes. They should say at least one interesting thing they learned about their partner.

### Assessment

1. More practice: Work Sheet 1.5 for homework (10 Points)
2. The teacher checks for comprehension during warm-up.

3. The teacher monitors group work. Is target language used? Are conversations authentic, spontaneous, and not scripted? (reading questions directly from paper, comfortable interactions). Introductions will be assessed for clear and comprehensible speech.
4. Check Work Sheets 1.4 and 1.5. As a first-day lesson, these assignments will be checked for content and completion.

Focus Sheet 1.1  
Adjectives Chart

Adjectives describe nouns. In grammar, we say that adjectives “modify” nouns. The word “modify” means change a little. Adjectives give a little different meaning to a noun:

*cold* weather, *hot* weather, *nice* weather, *bad* weather.  
Adjectives come in front of nouns or follow *be* (4).  
Adjectives describe the subject of the sentence.

1. I don't like *cold* weather.
2. Alex is a *happy* child.
3. The *hungry* boy has a *fresh* apple.
4. The weather is *cold*.

Common Adjectives and Their Opposites:

beautiful-ugly	good-bad	big-little
happy-sad	cheap-expensive	long-short
clean-dirty	noisy-quiet	cold-hot
strong-weak	dangerous-safe	poor-rich
dry-wet	sour-sweet	

Nationalities:

American	Canadian	Chinese
Mexican	Japanese	Italian

(Azar, 1996)

Focus Sheet 1.2  
Adjective Cartoons



angry



bad



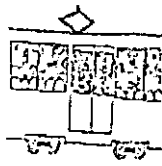
busy



cold



cool



crowded



cute



dangerous



difficult



drunk



famous



far



fast



fat



fever



full



hungry



noisy



old



painful

Focus Sheet 1.3  
Getting To Know You

Directions: Take turns asking the following questions:

1. Have you ever lived in another country?
2. How long have you been studying English?
3. How old are you?
4. What are your hobbies?
5. What countries have you visited?
6. Which countries would you like to visit?
7. When do you plan on taking another trip?
8. Where were you born?
9. What do you do on the weekends?
10. What languages do you speak?
11. Who has had the most influence in your life?
12. Why do you want to learn English?

[www.aitech.ac.jp/iteslj/questions/getting/html](http://www.aitech.ac.jp/iteslj/questions/getting/html).



Work Sheet 1.4  
Interview: My Partner

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

My partner's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Each partner will interview the other using the questions below. Please feel free to ask any additional questions. Use this form to guide you in writing your introduction paragraphs.

Some of the questions I asked:  
(You may write their responses on the back for more space)

1.

2.

3.

The most interesting thing I learned about this person:

Something we both have in common:

Why I think everybody should get to know this person:

Work Sheet 1.5  
Interviewing a Famous Person

Directions: Imagine that you have just interviewed someone famous; your favorite singer, actor, athlete, etc. Write your questions in the spaces below. Use *Wh* questions when possible. Ask about some of the following topics or choose your own:

- Likes and dislikes
- Achievements and failures
- Getting started in their field
- Food
- Work

Be as creative and original as you possibly can. Remember, this is your chance to meet someone you've always wanted to meet, and you'll never have the chance again! Make it fun!

Questions I would ask:

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

## Lesson Two: Body Language

### Objectives:

1. Practice note taking and viewing comprehension
2. Learn culturally accepted gestures

Materials: video (*The Parent Trap*), Focus Sheet 2.1, Work Sheets 2.2 and 2.3

### Warm-up/Introduction

Ask students to show socially acceptable gestures, facial expressions, movements. Other students must guess what they mean. Example: a smile and open arms means "welcome." Nodding up and down means "yes," and so on. Next, teacher will write and explain the following on the board:

HANDS	(gestures)
EYES	(eye contact)
MOVEMENTS	(posture/movement)
FACE	(happy/unhappy/serious/etc)

### Activity One

Students look at Focus Sheet 2.1, the list of characters and their descriptions. They will choose one character to observe in the video. They will take notes on their characters using Work Sheet 2.2. The teacher will clarify unfamiliar words and remind students that "note taking" means they write important facts; not necessarily long, detailed sentences.

### Activity Two

- Run #1: Watch the video sequence without taking notes. This first run is for the purpose of identifying their chosen character.
- Run #2: Begin taking notes on what the character does (excluding speech).
- Run #3: Continue taking notes.
- Run #4: Cross-check notes and sequence

### Activity Three

Students circulate the room and compare notes with other students who chose the same character. They will discuss any observations they missed. Finally, the class

will view sequence again complete Work sheet 2.3 and pause at body language points. Students discuss the real attitude of the characters.

#### Assessment

1. Check Work Sheet 2.2. (20 points), Work Sheet 2.3 (10 points)
2. Monitor comprehension in Activities Two and Three. Do they understand cultural differences in gestures? Can they take notes while still comprehending the video? Do the notes reflect this?

Focus Sheet 2.1  
Character Profiles

Annie & Halley

The twins meet for the first time at summer camp. Annie has grown up with her mother and grandfather in London, England. She lives a very pampered life, and speaks French. Halley has lived with her father in California and loves the outdoors. She rides horses, and she loves animals, like her dog Sam. Both girls later discover that they both enjoy fencing and are avid poker players.

Nick

Nick is the American father of the twins. He owns a vineyard in Napa Valley, CA. He is a single father who has raised Halley to enjoy some of the same things he does, such as horseback riding and camping. Aside from being a successful owner of one of the region's largest vineyards, he is also a wine connoisseur.

Elizabeth

Ever since divorcing Nick, Elizabeth has become one of England's most famous designers of wedding gowns. She has had some help in raising Annie from her father and their butler. She is a sophisticated, elegant, well-mannered woman, who also speaks French.

Meredith

"Mer," as she is sometimes called, is a young, ambitious woman hoping to marry the twins' wealthy father. She met him while working as a public relations associate promoting his vineyard. Her main interests are to marry Nick, and send the girls to boarding school so that they will not be a nuisance. She does not enjoy the outdoors, as the girls clearly prove on a camping trip.

Martin

As a long time butler for Elizabeth and Annie, he is "more like a brother." He is a typical, proper English gentleman, until he arrives in America. When they arrive, Martin leaves his butler formalities in England and takes on a more casual appearance. He is a great support to Elizabeth

and Halley, and even has a special greeting that he performs with Halley.

Jessie

She is to Nick and Halley what Martin is to Elizabeth and Annie. Jessie has always taken care of Nick and Halley and is part of the family. She is easy-going and always protective of the two. It is no surprise that she is drawn to Martin, who also shares the same qualities as well as occupation.

Work Sheet 2.2  
Video Observation

Directions: After viewing the segment, fill out the information below.

Name of character:	
--------------------	--

Description of the character: (what does he/she look like?)	
--	--

Observation Notes (What do they do with their?...)

<u>Hands:</u>	<u>Eyes:</u>
<u>Movements:</u>	<u>Face:</u>

Work Sheet 2.3  
Match, Phrase, Action

Directions: You will now watch a series of segments without being able to hear what is being said. Try to guess what they are saying by observing their body language. Below are a series of phrases. Your job is to match each phrase with the video segments. Circle your choice.

Video Segment #1

- A. Are you sure?
- B. I'm frightened.
- C. I'm confused.
- D. What a surprise!

Video Segment #3

- A. Are you sure?
- B. I'm frightened.
- C. I'm confused.
- D. What a surprise!

Video Segment #2

- A. Are you sure?
- B. I'm frightened.
- C. I'm confused.
- D. What a surprise!

Video Segment #4

- A. Are you sure?
- B. I'm frightened
- C. I'm confused
- D. What a surprise!

Extra Practice: Discuss the following questions with a partner and write your answers below.

Can you think of other examples in the video where body language was used?

What are some ways people in your class use body language?



### Lesson Three: Relating to You

#### Objectives:

1. Understanding different speaking styles in English
2. Adjusting speech styles in different social situations in the target culture

Materials: Focus Sheet 3.1, Work Sheets 3.2, 3.3

#### Warm-up/Introduction

Review previous lesson on body language. Remind students how some gestures are socially acceptable. Ask a volunteer how he/she talks to friends in contrast to teachers. Point out the difference in language, expression, etc.

#### Activity One

Students will complete Work sheet 1 individually. When they are finished, ask students if they notice a difference in their interactions, depending on the relationships with the other person.

#### Activity Two

In groups of two, students will take turns reading the dialogues on Focus Sheet 3.1. The teacher will clarify unfamiliar words. The teacher will circulate to clarify meaning, without explaining subtleties of the interactions in the dialogues. After reading the dialogues a few times, groups will discuss (within their own groups) what the nature of the relationship of the speakers is. Students will complete Work Sheet 3.2. One work sheet is to be completed per group.

#### Activity Three

Complete Work Sheet 3.3. Groups will create two short dialogues; one between two friends and a second between a student and teacher. They may use the Focus Sheet as a model. Groups will read dialogues to class (end of class or following day).

#### Assessment

1. Check: Work Sheet 3.2 (10 points), Work Sheet 3.3 (10 points)
2. Check for reading comprehension during Activity Two.

3. Monitor group work, dialogue for comprehension, language use. Do they understand the difference in speech in various social settings?

Focus Sheet 3.1  
Dialogues

Dialogue A: Paul calls Joe to make plans to see a movie.

- L1 J: Hello.  
L2 P: Hey, what's up? It's Paul.  
L3 J: What's doing? Just got back from working out.  
L4 P: That's outstanding. You're sure in shape. Wanna  
go to the movies with  
L5 Jane and me? There's a new Mel Gibson movie  
L6 I wanna see. What do ya think?  
L7 J: Yeah, me too.  
L8 P: Great! Let's catch the 3 o'clock show at the 86<sup>th</sup>  
Street  
L9 Quad. Okay?  
L10 J: My brother wants to see it too. I'll get him.  
L11 P: Thing there'll be a problem with 3 o'clock?  
L12 J: Nah. He's just taking it easy today.  
L13 P: Cool. We haven't seen Tommy in a while. See ya  
then?  
L14 J: Terrific!

Dialogue B: Rose is speaking with Mrs. Baley of the lost and found department of Olympic Mall. Rose is checking to see if her lost sweater turned up.

- L1 B: Hello, may I help you?  
L2 R: Yes, thanks. I was shopping at the Gap yesterday  
and I lost my sweater  
L3 B: Can you describe it?  
L4 R: Well, it's beige with small and red flowers.  
L5 B: Wait a minute. I'll check what came in last  
night.  
L6 R: I hope you can find it. It's my favorite  
sweater.  
L7 B: (Mrs. Baley returns after a few minutes.) Yes, I  
think we have something  
L8 here. What's your size?  
L9 R: I'm a Medium. (pointing) Yes, that's my sweater.  
Terrific.  
L10 B: We just need you to sign for it.  
L11 R: Thanks. I couldn't sleep last night. I was so  
worried.

L12 B: Glad we could be of help to you! Have a nice day.

L13 R: You too.

Work Sheet 3.2  
Relationship of Speakers

Directions: Answer the following questions based on the dialogues you have just read with your partner. You may refer to Focus Sheet 3.1.

Describe the relationship between the speakers in each dialogue.

A)

B)

Explain the purpose of the exchange between each pair of speakers in Dialogues A and B.

A)

B)

How does the relationship between the speakers change the speech style of each speaker?

A)

B)

Do you think the communication was successful?

A)

B)

Identify the meaning of the underlined language expressions. Write down the meanings.

- A) Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- Line 3: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
- Line 4: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Line 6: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
- Line 7: \_\_\_\_\_
- Line 8: \_\_\_\_\_
- Line 10: \_\_\_\_\_
- Line 13: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

- B) Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- Line 5: \_\_\_\_\_
- Line 7, 8: \_\_\_\_\_
- Line 9: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
- Line 10: \_\_\_\_\_
- Line 12: \_\_\_\_\_
- Line 13: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Sheet 3.3  
Creating Dialogues

Directions: You and your partner will create two different dialogues. The first one should be between two friends, and the second between a student and teacher. Remember to consider appropriate language, social settings, etc. Be as creative as possible. Have fun! Be sure to set up the dialogue by telling us where it takes place, what they're doing, in the title.

Situation A

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ :  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ :  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ :  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ :  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ :  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ :  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ :  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ :

---

Situation B

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ :

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_ :

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_ :

---

\_\_\_\_\_ :

---

\_\_\_\_\_ :

---

\_\_\_\_\_ :

---

\_\_\_\_\_ :

---



## Lesson Four: Create a Nation

### Objectives:

1. Learn other aspects of culture
2. Investigate communicative strategies: writing and speaking

Materials: Focus Sheet 4.1, Work Sheet 4.2, Focus Sheet 4.3, Assessment Sheet 4.4

### Warm-Up/Introduction

Ask students what they would say if someone were to ask about what their country was like. Describe it to someone who has never heard of it. The teacher will list answers on the board. Suggest that they consider geography, language, people, customs, etc.

### Activity One

Students will work in groups of two. They will read Focus Sheet 4.1 to get an idea of how a country is described in an almanac. Class will observe important facts such as language, geography, etc. Ask students what other resources provide this information (encyclopedia, other textbooks, software, internet, etc.). The teacher will clarify unfamiliar words and phrases; point out that present tense is used to make general statements.

### Activity Two

Each group will be responsible for creating a brochure promoting their "pseudo nation." Examples of brochures brought in by teacher and students. A rubric (Assessment Sheet 4.4) will be distributed and explained for clarification of requirements. Groups will be required to present their "nations" orally. Students will complete Work Sheet 4.2, carefully considering location and climate in determining crops, housing, etc.

### Activity Three

After completing Work Sheet 4.2, and discussing answers within the group, students are ready to create brochures. Using Focus Sheet 4.3, groups will follow layout procedures given by the teacher. Brochures will be graded on creativity, neatness, and content.

#### Activity Four

Students rehearse oral presentations. They will be required to display their brochures, and any other visual aids they choose. Students will be given 5-7 minutes per group. Groups will take questions from the audience. Depending on time, presentations could be reserved for the following day.

#### Assessment

1. Grade Assessment Sheet 4.4
2. In Activity Four the teacher will observe participation of presenters and listeners. Did they answer the questions? Did they ask other questions? How well did they know their country? Was group work shared equally?
3. Students will complete Assessment Sheet 4.5. This is part of the overall grade.

Focus Sheet 4.1  
Nations

THAILAND  
Kingdom of Thailand  
*Muang Thai or Prathet Thai*

Capital: Bangkok

Population: 58,851,357

Ethnic groups: Thai 75%, Chinese 14%

Principal languages: Thai (official), Lao, Chinese, Malay

Religions: Buddhist 95%, Muslim 4%

Geography: located on Indonesia and Malayan peninsulas in Southeast Asia.

Neighboring countries: Myanmar on W, Laos on N, Cambodia on E, Malaysia on S.

Chief crops: Rice (major export), corn, tapioca, sugarcane

Minerals: Among world's largest producers of tin, diamonds, gas.

History: Thais began migrating from southern China during the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Thailand, known as Siam until 1939, is the only country in Southeast Asia never taken over by a European power, thanks to King Mongkut and his son King Chulalongkorn.

King Chulalongkorn ruled from 1851 to 1910 modernizing the country, and signed trade treaties with both Britain and France. A bloodless revolution in 1932 limited the monarchy, then Japan occupied the country in 1941. The military took over the government in a bloody 1976 coup. Vietnamese troops crossed the border but were repulsed by Thai forces in the 1980s. Chatichai was chosen prime minister in a democratic election, Aug. 1988. In Feb. 1991, the military ousted him in a bloodless coup. A violent crackdown on street demonstrations in May 1992 led to more than 50 deaths. After general elections July 2, 1995, Banharn Silparcha succeeded Chuan Leekpai as prime minister. Today, Thailand is a favorite destination for tourists world-wide, who are rushing to its thousands of pristine beaches which have become popular sites for international movies.

(Famighetti, 1997).

Work Sheet 4.2  
Facts of a Nation

Directions: Think about the cultures in other countries. Are there some things that are similar? Different? You will be creating an imaginary country. You will decide what to call it, what the culture will be like, the geography, location, etc. BE CREATIVE and HAVE FUN.

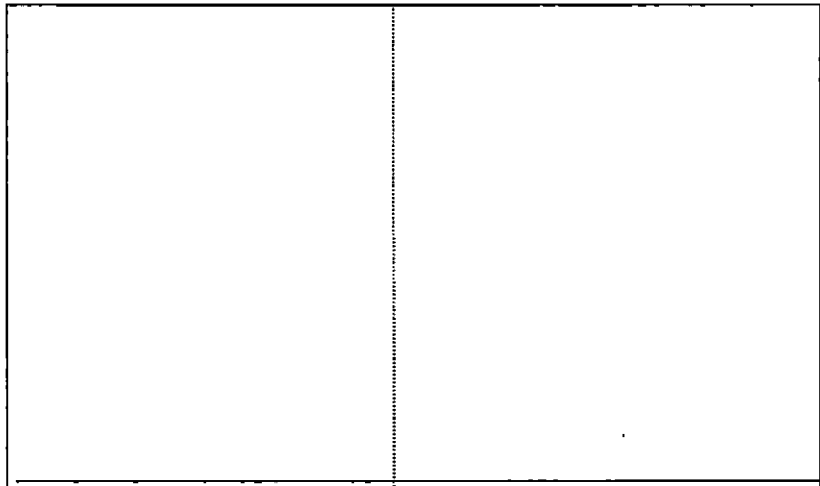
Name of your country:	
Where it is located: (continent)	
Neighboring countries:	
Climate:	
Chief crops:	
Official language(s):	
Describe the people: (ethnic groups)	
Something the country is famous for:	

Draw a picture of your nation's flag:

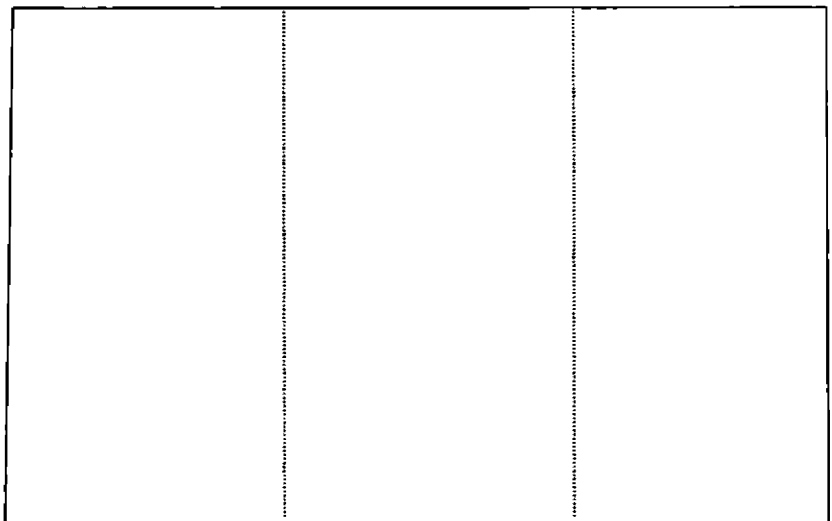
Focus Sheet 4.3  
Brochure Layout

Directions: After completing Work Sheet 4.2, you are now ready to create your brochures. You may choose one of the following layouts for your brochure. Please ask your teacher for the appropriate paper type. Refer to rubric for layout instructions.

Option 1: Two-Fold Brochure



Option 2: Three-Fold Brochure



Assessment Sheet 4.4  
Rubric for Brochures

<p><u>Front cover:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes flag and name of country</li> </ul>	/10
<p><u>Inside cover A:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map of country (shows neighboring countries, bodies of water, etc.)</li> </ul>	/10
<p><u>Inside cover B:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text (grammar, spelling, punctuation)</li> </ul>	/10
<p><u>Overall Presentation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity, neatness, followed directions.</li> </ul> <p>*names of group members go on back cover</p>	/10
<p><u>Comments:</u></p>	<p>Total Points /40</p>

Assessment Sheet 4.5  
 Self-Evaluation  
 5 points

Please complete the evaluation sheet after you complete the assignment. Be honest in your evaluations.

Name:
Name of partner:
How much work did I contribute to the project? (circle one)
some            most            all            equally shared with my partner
How well did we work together? (circle one)
poor                    fair                    excellent
How often did we speak English during the assignment? (circle one)
rarely            most of the time            all of the time
The most difficult part of the assignment?
The most enjoyable part of the assignment?

## Lesson Five: Problem Solving

### Objectives:

1. Learn to solve problems using pro's & con's list.
2. Use critical thinking to negotiate solutions with peers
3. Practice interactional competence through group work

Material: Focus Sheet 5.1 Work Sheet 5.2, Assessment Sheet 5.3

### Warm-Up/Introduction

Write on board: "advantages" and "disadvantages." Ask students to define. Explain that one benefits you (a), and the other works against you (d). After students grasp idea, ask, "What are the advantages and disadvantages of studying for a test?" List answers on the board.

### Activity One

In pairs, students will discuss questions on Focus Sheet 5.1. Each partner will take turns asking the questions. Then, they will switch roles so that both students are allowed to answer the questions. Groups can make notes on the Focus Sheet, but are not required to write down their answers. After groups complete the exercise, class will share some of their answers.

### Activity Two

Using some of the answers from groups in Activity One, the teacher will model a pro's and con's list on the board. The teacher will emphasize the advantage of making a pros & cons list when dealing with any problem. (It allows you to see which one "out-weighs" the other). Students will work individually on Work sheet 5.2.

### Activity Three

Students will work with a different partner and complete Assessment Sheet 5.3.

### Assessment

1. Work Sheet 5.2. (10 points)
2. Assessment Sheet 5.3 (10 points)
3. Extra practice: students try to make their own pros &



cons list to solve a problem outside of class.

Volunteers share their work in the following days.

4. The teacher will check comprehension during introduction; new vocabulary, usage, etc. The teacher will circulate the room during Activity One to make sure students are discussing possible solutions.

Focus Sheet 5.1  
Advantages and Disadvantages

Directions: Discuss the following questions with your partner. Make sure that you take turns asking and answering the questions. Example: Partner A asks question and Partner B answers. Then, B asks the questions and A answers.

What are some advantages and disadvantages of homework?

What are some advantages and disadvantages of going to the dentist?

What are some advantages and disadvantages of fast food?

What are some advantages and disadvantages of learning English?

What are some advantages and disadvantages of studying abroad?

What are some advantages and disadvantages of telling someone you care about them?

Work Sheet 5.2  
Making a Pros and Cons List

Directions: Choose one of the three topics below and complete the list. Write your solution in the space at the bottom of the page.

- a) recycling
- b) college education
- c) part-time job

---

(topic)

Pros	Cons

Solution: After reviewing your list, what did you decide was the best solution? Explain.

Assessment Sheet 5.3  
Peer Evaluation

Directions: Exchange your pros and cons list with someone other than your original partner and answer the questions below. Ask your partner to explain their solutions if it is unclear.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of your partner: \_\_\_\_\_

How did they solve the problem? (Look at their list)

Do you think their solution is reasonable? Explain.

Would you have made the same decision? Explain.

What did you learn from this assignment?

## Lesson Six: Wishful Thinking

### Objectives:

1. More practice with critical thinking and problem solving
2. Practice fluency in oral, written, listening activities
3. Learn the use of subordinating conjunctions (time and condition)

Materials: Work Sheets 6.1, 6.3, 6.5, and 6.6, Focus Sheet 6.4, Assessment Sheet 6.7

### Warm-Up/Introduction

Ask students what types of careers they're interested in. List responses on board. Tell students to respond as follows: "I would like to become" "I will have to study" Next, ask students to name the levels of schools/education in their country (i.e. K-12, univ., etc.).

### Activity One

Students will individually complete Work Sheet 6.1. Next, students will select 3 jobs they are most interested in and discuss with a partner.

### Activity Two

In groups of two, students will read Focus Sheet 6.2. The teacher will clarify any unfamiliar words and phrases. Groups will read several times, focusing on speech and pronunciation. Next they will complete Work Sheet 6.3. They may use Focus Sheet 6.2 as a model for the dialogue puzzle. Once they finish, they will practice reading it aloud together, assuming their appropriate roles.

### Activity Three

Students will review Focus Sheet 6.4. The teacher will clarify the use of each conjunction and review with class. Next, students will Complete Work Sheet 6.5 individually.

### Assessment

1. Check Work Sheet 6.1. Credit/no credit.
2. Check Work Sheet 6.3 for comprehension. Make sure Student interactions involve target language. The

teacher will circulate the room listening for correct pronunciation.

3. Correct Work Sheet 6.5
4. Extra-Practice: Work Sheet 6.6 for Homework. The teacher will use Assessment Sheet 6.7 to grade this assignment.

Work Sheet 6.1  
Choosing a Career

Directions: Thinking about what you want to do in the future can be a difficult task. Below is a chart that you can use to brainstorm your ideas. List as many fields and jobs that are of interest to you. An example has been provided.

FIELD	JOBS
<i>education</i>	<i>teacher, principal, counselor</i>

Now choose three jobs you are most interested in, and share them with a partner. Discuss any similarities/differences you both may have, as well as your reasons for your selection.

My three choices are:

---

Focus Sheet 6.2  
Dialogues

Directions: Take turns reading the dialogues below.  
Practice reading the dialogues out loud to your partner.  
Read both dialogues several times, paying close attention  
to pronunciation.

Dialogue One

- A Yesterday my cousin graduated from high school  
B His diploma will be useful for getting a job  
A Now he wants to go to college  
B What's he planning on studying?  
A Electronics.  
B Does he have any future jobs lined up?  
A Not right now, but he's interested in the big  
electronics industry in the Santa Clara Valley.  
B Yes, I heard that it is really booming.  
A I just hope he can get through all his studies with  
flying colors.  
B It takes a lot of hard work, but it's worth it.

Dialogue Two

- A This English is too difficult! I'll never learn it.  
B Don't get yourself down. You're improving every day.  
A but why does it take so long? I feel like I'm going  
nowhere. Maybe I'm too old to learn.  
B Oh, you're never too old to learn. Education is a  
lifetime experience.  
A I guess you're right.  
B You are not only learning English but you're also  
taking care of a lot of other responsibilities.  
A Which reminds me, I have to pick up my kids at  
school.  
B You'd better get going. See you later.  
A Thanks for the encouragement.  
B Keep studying now.



Work Sheet 6.3  
Dialogue Puzzle

Directions: With your partner, fill in the appropriate responses or questions in the spaces below, then practice reading your new dialogues out loud. You will be presenting this orally to the rest of the class.

A What do you like about studying English?

B \_\_\_\_\_

A Why do you want to learn English?

B Because \_\_\_\_\_

A What is the most difficult thing about learning English for you?

B \_\_\_\_\_

A \_\_\_\_\_

B I would like to be a

\_\_\_\_\_

A So do you think you'll be using English a lot in your future job?

B \_\_\_\_\_

A \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

Focus Sheet 6.4  
Subordinating Conjunctions

A clause is a group of words with a subject and a verb.  
A main clause can be by itself, that is, independent.

*Mary called me last night.*

A subordinating or dependent clause cannot be by itself;  
it needs other words to make its meaning clear and  
complete.

*...after she talked with her parents.*

This subordinate clause needs a main clause to make its  
meaning clear and complete. We are asking, "What happened  
after she talked with her parents?"

*Mary called me last night after she talked with her  
parents.*

The word *after* in the above sentence is a subordinating  
conjunction, and it connects the main clause with the  
subordinating clause. The most commonly used subordinating  
conjunctions are listed in the following categories:

*time, condition, reason, result and comparison.*

Time: after, before, when, while, until (till), as  
He picked me up after he had dropped off the papers at  
the office.

Before I went to sleep, I brushed my teeth

I'll do my homework when I get home

While Sarah was studying, her husband cooked dinner.

He won't receive his diploma until he submits his  
project.

She shut the door as I was getting ready to walk in.

Condition: although, though, if, unless

Although his major is not math, he still knows a lot  
about it.

Though my class is boring, I still have to go.

If you pay me now, I can send the gift today.  
I won't go unless it's free.

Reason: because, since

My teacher likes me because I'm a nice person  
Since it's late, I'll say goodbye now and talk to you  
tomorrow.

Result: in order that, so that

I explained everything slowly in order that he would  
understand everything.  
She studied hard so that she could go to college.

Comparison: than

He talks faster than he thinks

Work Sheet 6.5  
Practice with Conjunctions

Directions: Write a sentence using the stated subordinate conjunction. You may refer to Focus Sheet 6.4.

Time

1. (after)

---

2. (before)

---

3. (when)

---

4. (while)

---

5. (until)

---

6. (as)

---

Condition

(although)

---

(though)

---

3. (if)

---

4. (unless)

---

#### Reason

1. (because)

---

2. (since)

---

#### Result

1. (in order that)

---

2. (so that)

---

#### Comparison

1. (than)

---



Assessment Sheet 6.7  
Rubric for Paragraph

Paragraph contains 7-10 sentences	/5
Used at least 5 subordinating conjunctions	/5
Spelling	/5
Grammar and usage: sentence structure, capitalization, punctuation	/5
Organization: clear and cohesive	/5
Overall presentation: neat and legible	/5
Comments:	
Total	/30

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