The need for teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) to have cultural sensitivity is discussed. First, it is proposed that ESL teachers must develop multicultural understanding and sensitivity to the cultural needs of students in order to help them reach their full potential. This means avoiding cultural domination, treating students as human beings, avoiding oversimplification, and understanding that cultural needs have as important a role as linguistic needs in intercultural language instruction. Second, ways the teacher can increase cultural sensitivity before entering the classroom are discussed, including developing one's own personal understanding of culture, acknowledging the link between language and culture in the human experience, understanding the classroom as culture and the effect of language learning on the student's interpretation of reality, and developing a sense of oneself as a cultural being. The classroom context is then addressed. Common stages of and student reactions to acculturation are examined and two strategies for dealing with students as they undergo these stages are offered. Issues of English language variation and dialects are outlined. Finally, three methods teachers can use to practice their cultural sensitivity are presented. A brief annotated resource list and a 53-item bibliography are appended.

(MSE)
MULTICULTURAL SENSITIVITY:
AN ESSENTIAL SKILL FOR THE ESL/EFL TEACHER

Gregory G. Anderson

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Project Advisor

Project Reader
ABSTRACT

This paper examines a number of features believed to be necessary for the interculturally sensitive teacher. The principle on which the entire paper is based is that only by developing multicultural understanding can the ESL/EFL teacher help her students realize their full potential. First, it is advocated that before entering the classroom, the ESL/EFL teacher should develop a number of understandings. These include the teacher's own concept of culture; an understanding of that which defines humans; the idea of the classroom as culture; the effects of learning another language; and the need for teachers to understand themselves as cultural beings. Second, some considerations for teachers already in the ESL/EFL classroom are discussed. These include an understanding of the stages of acculturation; skills to work with students as they go through these stages; a consideration of dialectical variations within English; and skills to maintain and develop students' cultural identity.

ERIC DESCRIPTORS

cultural awareness
cultural differences
multicultural education
cultural pluralism
culture contact
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Enseñar es aprender
Aprender es trabajar
Trabajar es servir
Servir es amar
Amar es morir
Morir es esforsarse
Esforsarse es levantarse
Por encima de todas las limitaciones que hay en la tierra
de los Bahai

To my students, future and past.
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PART I: AN ARGUMENT FOR GREATER MULTICULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN ESL/EFL TEACHERS

Chapter 1: Introduction

I was not a "nigger" even though you called me one. But if I was a "nigger" in your eyes, there was something about you--there was something you needed. I had to realize when I was very young that I was none of those things I was told I was. I was not, for example, happy... I knew enough about life by this time to understand that whatever you invent, whatever you project, is you! (Baldwin 1988, 8)

Although speaking from the standpoint of a native speaker of English, Baldwin eloquently expresses the common lot of a student who finds himself labelled by the society in which he lives and the classroom in which he learns. Baldwin's reaction, righteous rejection of the labelling, is, unfortunately, very uncommon. All too often, students begin to believe that they are what they are labelled. By demeaning their individualism, labelling erodes self-worth. This acceptance of oppression is all too common in students of English as a second language in the United States and English as a foreign language students in countries where English is the respected and elite tongue of the highest socio-economic groups. Teachers of English as a second or foreign language, are, to a significant degree, responsible for the emotional security of their students. In order to empower students, teachers must avoid falling into the trap of cultural imperialism (Freire 1972, 8). They must end their role as oppressors, wielders of those magic wands called English language and Anglophone culture.
The students' culture must be accepted as equally important as that of the target language.

The growing ethnic diversity of the United States and other English-speaking countries has created an increasing awareness of the pressing need for greater intercultural sensitivity in all occupational areas. The presupposition inherent in this increasing awareness is that all cultures have strengths. All peoples are able to contribute new ways of thinking and new strategies for solving problems.

This paper will examine one of the most effective ways that teachers can contribute to a healthy multicultural society: acquiring intercultural sensitivity. It will be composed of three parts. In this, Part I, it will be argued that in order to teach more effectively teachers must gain greater sensitivity towards the cultural needs of their students. Four separate justifications will show the importance of ESL/EFL teachers cooperating with their students and encouraging the healthy transition of students to bi- or multiculturalism.

Part II, which consists of Chapters 2 through 5, will concentrate on the things that a teacher can do before entering the classroom in order to increase multicultural sensitivity. Chapter 2 will argue that ESL/EFL teachers need to develop their own personal understanding of culture, grounded in established and accepted concepts. Both scientific definitions as well as two personal concept-
ualizations will be presented. The third chapter will discuss language and culture as essential components of the human experience. It will be argued that the forces which bind the species are greater than those which divide it. Chapter 4 will consider two factors which, by the very nature of the ESL/EFL classroom, transform students. The final chapter in Part II will discuss ways in which teachers can understand themselves as cultural beings. Various deep and broad intercultural experiences will be advocated, along with introspection and careful consideration of one's own values.

Part III will move into the ESL/EFL classroom. The sixth chapter will examine the stages of and common reactions to acculturation that many students undergo. Two strategies for dealing with students as they proceed through these stages will also be discussed. Chapter 7 will discuss the role of dialectical variations within the English language as they concern the cultural needs of our students. Standard American English will be shown to be only one of many varieties of English. Implications for teaching will also be discussed. The eighth and final chapter will return to some of the issues found in Chapter 1. If the argument that students' cultural needs are just as critical as their linguistic needs is accepted, this implies the need for practical solutions. Chapter 8 will present three methods with which the teacher can practice the sensitivity she has

3
developed. The three methods to be advanced will be utilization of the author's model, adoption of Paulo Freire's problem posing approach, and incorporation of specific books.

Avoiding Cultural Domination

In order to consider the significance of the need for greater multicultural sensitivity, one should examine an excerpt from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

> Cultural invasion . . . serves the ends of conquest. . . . The invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group, in disrespect of the latter's potentialities; they impose their own view of the world upon those they invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression (1972, 150).

Obviously, the considerate ESL/EFL teacher would like to avoid the role of cultural invader. But this is more easily desired than accomplished. If common databases of educational resources like the MLA or ERIC are searched, language teaching publications like *TESOL Quarterly*, *ELT Journal* perused, or an ESL/EFL teacher's library examined, the subject of culture will receive extremely wide coverage. Many ESL/EFL teacher training programs include courses whose entire objective is culture. The overwhelming concern of all these materials is the *teaching* of culture. With these courses and publications, the teacher is ready to inculcate her students with a proper understanding of what it means to be a native speaker of English. To the detriment of the students, their culture is willfully avoided or, at best,
unconsciously ignored. ESL/EFL students and "minorities are often expected to absorb Anglo culture (and language) while many Anglo-Americans learn and understand very little about the cultures of the minority groups" (Wallerstein 1983, 6). While the learning of English often necessitates an accompanying study of Anglophone culture, this must neither exclude nor dominate the students' culture.

Treating Students as Human Beings

But while both humanization and dehumanization are real alternatives, only the first is man's vocation (Freire 1972, 28). ESL/EFL teachers are putting greater and greater effort into humanizing their classrooms. Efforts are being made to scrutinize activities and approaches in terms of whether they encourage personal growth. However, many teachers still fail to recognize how their techniques jeopardize the psychological well-being of their students. For example, some teachers still attempt to humiliate their students into speaking English. One of them, known to the author, works at a language school in California. Students who consistently refuse to use English in this teacher's classroom are presented with a piece of tagboard emblazoned with "I PROMISE TO ONLY SPEAK ENGLISH" to wear around their neck, reminiscent of Hitler's Germany where Jews were forced to identify themselves with a board on rope. This practice may seem completely unreasonable when viewed from the outside. To people who fail to grasp the conflicting
pressures within the classroom, such practices are obviously damaging. But when viewed by those on the inside, other ESL/EFL teachers, the conflicting demands of the classroom can create a situation in which the inhumanity of the practice described above may not be immediately obvious. Other teachers understand the intense pressure to improve oral proficiency. They understand that this teacher's goal, more consistent practice, was well-intentioned. They are able to empathize with the teacher who applies excessive pressure on students in an effort to meet their linguistic goals. But empathizing with the forces which cause an act such as this does not mean that this behavior is acceptable. Teachers, in their eagerness to improve English proficiency, must remember the developing identity of their students. They must monitor their own behavior and that of other teachers to guard against any dehumanizing behavior.

The students' native language, and by immediate and obvious extension, the student's culture, must be valued as much as the language and culture he wishes to learn. Mocking students when they speak their native language can only serve to create feelings of cultural inferiority. Making a serious effort to understand the culture of our students can only serve to humanize the classroom.

Avoiding Oversimplification

ESL teachers need to know about their students: where they come from, what their concerns are, and what cultures they bring [to the classroom]. Without this
knowledge of the students, developing a curriculum and an individualized classroom environment becomes extremely difficult (Wallerstein 1983, 198).

Although the media in the United States continually remind the public of the importance of interculturalism, the tendency to believe in cultural homogeneity is still prevalent. People from around the world (but perhaps more commonly people from countries where English is widely spoken as a native language) tend to reduce other cultures' complexities in a half-hearted effort to understand them. Common phrases like, "People are all the same wherever you go" are potentially very harmful in creating intercultural understanding.

As evidence for the persistence of the tendency to look at other cultures as a series of facts to be mastered, one need look no farther than a guide about American values for ESL students. One, entitled American Ways: A Guide for Foreigners in the United States, presents the idea that here in the US, the predominant ideas, values and behaviors are those of the white middle class. "Society's main ideals have been forged by that group. . . . members of other groups usually (not always) agree with those ideals, at least on some level" (Althen 1983, xiii). According to this guide, those who oppose the ideas are very few in number--like hippies. This gives rise to the idea that students should be thought of as coming from the mainstream of a given culture. If ESL/EFL teachers could be sure that
their students fit a certain mold, cultural understanding would be accomplished by following a list of required behaviors (see Benjamin 1985). But ESL/EFL students, be they immigrants, refugees, or executives, tend to be set apart in some way, distinct from the mainstream. For example, as ESL/EFL teachers, we must recognize that our students are more likely than not to be bi- or multi-lingual/cultural already (Grosjean 1978). Therefore, we must attempt to understand them on their own terms (Fantini 1988), not as perfect representatives of a given society.

The argument against this sort of "facts" approach to cultural understanding can be strengthened further by the following: First, facts change over time, among socio-economic classes, and in various areas of a given culture. Second, there is the danger of reinforcing or even establishing stereotypes. Third, even if a compilation of facts could somehow be comprehensive, such a method would only prepare the teacher for a single culture, or part of that culture (Omaggio 1986, 361). All cultures and all individuals within cultures are complex and should be respected as such. No approach to cultural understanding which fails to grasp this reality is valid.

Are Cultural Needs as Important as Linguistic Needs?

One major problem we face in EFL situations is not how to deal with the cultural background (Anglo-American culture), but how to respond to the cultural foreground (local culture). (Prodromou 1988, 73)
It would seem unlikely that most ESL/EFL teachers are so arrogant or ethnocentric that they think they can teach Anglophone culture without understanding their students' culture. In other words, why, when a good teacher would never consider entering the classroom without first knowing the students' linguistic needs, backgrounds, and proficiency, would she fail to recognize the urgency of developing a beginning knowledge and awareness of their cultural needs, backgrounds and their degree of proficiency with other cultures? Such an ignorance represents a wholly untenable position.
NOTES

1. A note on pronoun usage: Throughout the paper, feminine pronouns will be used to refer to teachers and masculine pronouns to students (Buchanan (1990) and Stevick (1980) adopt a similar method). Using masculine for all is inherently sexist; switching from one to the other is confusing; and combining both is cumbersome. Further, this usage represents reality: The preponderance of teachers are female. On this, perhaps one of the most sensitive issues of sociolinguistics, a writer is sure to offend regardless of what mode of reference he or she uses. Apologies are extended to those who are offended by the choice described above.

2. A note on intended audiences: This paper was originally designed for all language teachers. After considering the fact that my experience and education rest in English teaching and my examples will come from that field, I decided to narrow the audience to teachers of English as a foreign or second language. The term ESL/EFL will be used throughout the text (Larsen-Freeman and Celce-Murcia 1983, page v.).

This is not to say however that the suggestions and implications of the arguments to be presented are inapplicable to any language teacher throughout the world:

"The United States is not unique in its diversity; multiculturalism is occurring in many nations throughout the world. However, societal and educational responses to heterogeneity are varied. Some have been negative, such as attempt to eradicate diversity (the holocaust in Nazi Germany), to contain whole populations (Jewish ghettos in Poland), to constrain and restrict minorities (Blacks in South Africa), to create cultural and societal hierarchies of dominance (ethnic minorities in Franco Spain). But positive responses such as the civil rights movements, affirmative action, and the like, are the only acceptable ones in a democratic situation" (Fantini 2001, 21).

It has been said that all classes are multi-level. Similarly, all classes are multicultural.

3. I would add that in addition to white and middle class, the mainstream to which Althen refers would consist largely of conservative Christian males.
Chapter 2: What is this Thing Called Culture?

Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete (Geertz 1973, 29).

The whole terrain through which we are now struggling is a hotbed of subjectivism, a splendid field for the airing of national conceits (Sapir 1970, 86).

The initial and most important step required of an ESL/EFL teacher who is committed to intercultural understanding is to develop a firm grasp of the concept of culture. Without this understanding as a basis, the other requirements which will be discussed later are nearly impossible. As important as this task is, however, it eludes even the most able teacher trainees. In an informal survey conducted of Master of Arts in Teaching candidates at the School for International Training, it was found that, in spite of two classes whose objectives included an understanding of what culture is, students did not feel they had gained a firm grasp of the concept. In fact, they often said that they were more confused after the courses than before. This confusion is not surprising when one considers that, as Sapir put it so eloquently in the quotation above, culture is a nebulous topic, loaded with multifaceted meanings and potentialities for offense. The intense nature of many teacher training programs precludes the possibility of depth in most subjects. Furthermore, academics in the disciplines of psychology, anthropology and sociology produce "on-the-
side-stabs" (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952, 141) at definitions which only serve to obscure the already unclear picture of culture.

**Common Fallacies**

In order to develop a clear understanding of the concept of culture it is necessary to dispel three commonly-accepted definitions. Let us first examine the idea of a cultured individual, or culture as "personal refinement" (Brooks 1968, 210). A likely image brought to mind is that of an elegantly dressed couple who listen to the appropriate music, purchase wares in exclusive boutiques and dine in fashionable restaurants. According to the definition at hand, this couple would be contrasted with the common folk, mere peasants who are hopelessly unable to appreciate the finer things in life and are therefore "uncultured." This is reminiscent of the notion of barbarians and savages—members of cultures that are not European in nature—common during the colonial era. Although it is exceedingly easy to mock this definition as ridiculous for excluding the vast majority of humanity, one can still recognize vestiges of this idea in the work of extreme linguistic prescriptivists, society sections of newspapers, and advice columns like "Miss Manners."

The second myth, not completely distinct from the first, is the old grammar-translation idea of culture. It is unlike the first myth because it concentrates on things
and activities rather than on people. This idea would consist of the "higher" arts: classical music, fine art, and renowned prose and poetry. Or, as Sapir put it, the idea of "a certain modicum of assimilated knowledge and experience . . . made up chiefly of a set of typical reactions that have the sanction of a class and of a tradition of long standing" (1970, 80). Although Sapir dismisses this idea as a "vesture and an air," its vitality in ESL/EFL classrooms around the world continues.

Finally, consider the growing trend towards cultural compartmentalization. As countries find themselves required to do business with other countries, publishers rush to produce guides to "foreign cultures." A quick glance at the appropriate section of a bookstore reveals a plethora of books with titles like Bowing and Scraping: Things to Do and Avoid when Communicating with the Japanese, and Working with the French: A Reference Guide to Appropriate Behaviors. Perhaps the most guilty offender of all is a book entitled Do's and Taboos Around the World, a book which lists most of the countries in the world and the behavior required of visitors to that country. In a page or less for each country, this book purports to answer all the questions important for a person to understand the culture of that people. If culture were so simple, the work of cultural anthropologists and authors of papers like this would be in vain. But an understanding of culture is much more than a
simple list of behaviors or "facts." As Hall says, "The reason one cannot get into another culture by applying the 'let's-fit-the-pieces-together' process is the total complexity of any culture" (1976, 131). In the next section, in order to understand the accepted Western definitions of culture, five commonly accepted classifications of definitions will be examined.

Scientific Definitions
Definitions of culture produced by scientists tend towards the general, for example, "That which the human species has and other social species lack" (Kroeber 1952, 61). However, when one classifies the concepts produced by various disciplines, it is clear that there are a number of different ideas. The following, which draws heavily from Kroeber and Kluckhohn's extensive compilation of concepts of culture, shows some of these differences. Definitions of culture over the years have included a number of major groups: descriptive, historical, normative, psychological, and structural.

Descriptive definitions are distinguished by the fact that they enumerate the content of culture and they see culture as a comprehensive totality. For example:

Culture in general as a descriptive concept means the accumulated treasury of human creation: books, paintings, buildings, and the like; the knowledge of ways of adjusting to our surroundings, both human and physical; language, customs, and systems of etiquette, ethics, religion, and morals that have been built up through the ages. (83).
Historical definitions, on the other hand, define culture much more narrowly, concentrating exclusively on social heritage or social tradition:

The process of cultural tradition, the process by which in a given social group or social class language, beliefs, ideas, aesthetic tastes, knowledge, skills and usages of many kinds are handed on ("tradition" means "handing on") from person to person and from one generation to another. (92)

According to psychological definitions, culture is a tool for solving the problems of life. (For a consideration of these "basic needs" or "cultural universals," see Chapter 3.)

The culture of a society may be said to consist of the characteristic ways in which basic needs of individuals are satisfied in that society. (107)

Structural definitions of culture emphasize the patterns or organizations of culture:

Culture consists of patterned and functionally interrelated customs common to specifiable human beings composing specifiable social groups or categories. (119)

Finally, the most general definitions of all are those that are classified under the category called normative:

The customs, traditions, attitudes, ideas, and symbols which govern social behavior show a wide variety. Each group, each society has a set of behavior patterns (overt and covert) which are more or less common to the members, which are passed down from generation to generation, and taught to the children, and which are constantly liable to change. These common patterns we call the culture. (97)

Each of these definitions is a valid attempt to explain culture according to the needs of the discipline which created it. On the other hand, concerning the subject of
this paper, understanding the culture of ESL/EFL students, the vital information presented in these definitions can be considered in a more helpful manner. While the above understandings are representative of others of the same sort, the following two definitions are unique. Each attempts to examine culture subjectively, based on a more idiosyncratic approach to the concept. By attempting to understand the essential components of the above definitions and the two subjective conceptualizations to be presented, one can develop and make more explicit her or his own understanding of humanity and culture. This can help the teacher understand, and therefore work with, her students better.

A "Myth of Humanity"

Man is the model-making organism par excellence . . . The purpose of the model is to enable the user to do a better job in handling the enormous complexity of life. By using models, we see and test how things work and can even predict how things will go in the future. The effectiveness of a model can be judged by how well it works, as well as how consistent it is as a mechanical or philosophical system" (Hall 13).

Throughout this section, myth is used not as something with negative connotations but as a term which describes an understanding of a topic whose authors admit inherent bias. In an introduction to, A Course on Process, Self and Interaction, Pepin and Cowles (1975) feel compelled to discuss their view of culture before proceeding with the rest of the thesis. They have developed a model which
begins by concentrating on the individual. They feel that all people, across all cultures, have, at the center, "essence"--an intangible which defines one's existence. On the second ring out from this center come the intrinsic parts of one's being: one's place in time and space and one's physical qualities. The most flexible part of a being is the basis for the next ring--cultural aspects--the results of experiences like upbringing. Apart from these three rings, another important feature of this conceptual framework is the "universe in each of us" (6), the individual's world view. What links all of this is experience. Through experience, one can grow and learn from various intercultural relationships and occurrences. This myth was built on the basic assumptions that people are good, capable of change and open to every possible facet of the "entire range of human existence" (8). For these authors, the concept of will becomes important when one sees cultural forces as limitations. Since all humans have will, they are able to burst all bonds, be they cultural, physical or corporal.

It is interesting to note how difficult it is to recreate this model, to explain it for others to understand. Given the intense personal nature inherent in the creation of meaning, understanding another person's model should be a challenge. Like all models, Pepin and Cowles' is biased, based on the authors' understanding of reality.
Furthermore, Pepin and Cowles freely admit that it "raises questions in 'western' system of logic" (8), thus allowing such ad hoc constructions as, "The fact that each universe is a personal one does not exclude it from the universal realm, for every universe is a personal one. It is simply that each personal universe represents one perspective of the whole of the universe" (6). As a Westerner who claims to desire intercultural sensitivity, I naturally admire such flexibility in the consideration of logic. However, despite this admiration, arguments like the one presented above can make it difficult to understand Pepin and Cowles' framework.

The point of all this for the ESL/EFL teacher is simple: the best understandings of culture are not necessarily transparent to another person. If, by reading the various scientific definitions and trying to understand the "myth of humanity" presented above a teacher can develop her own understanding of culture, she will have accomplished a great deal. Another conceptualization, my own, will be presented below. My framework for cultural understanding is based on a great number of definitions, my own biases and a desire to create a model that can be used in the classroom.

An Alternative Framework
I first presented the following model in a "fishbowl exercise" at the School for International Training. The fishbowl is a technique used to expose a large group to the ideas of a small group. The small group discusses an issue
amongst themselves in front of the class. In this activity, five other students and I were asked to discuss what had been significant for us in a class entitled "Cultural Identity and Ethnic Diversity." Because the following framework had germinated naturally, I chose to try to articulate it. After that class, a variety of other ESL/EFL teachers-in-training commented to me on how useful they found the model. Having evolved through course work and discussions with other teachers, it subsequently became the basis for a conference presentation which led to further modifications.

My framework will take into account experiences that enculturate an individual to be very different from his or her culture mates, including the following examples of cultural diversity:

--city dwellers and country people
--male and female
--ethnic groups and mainstream society
--single and married
--religious groups
--socioeconomic and political groups
--special interests (sports enthusiasts, birdwatchers, stamp collectors)
--recent immigrants versus those who have been in country for two or three generations
--sexual orientation^1 (adapted from Fantini, 1983)

This model also accounts for "sports of nature"--a biological term used to describe flowers or leaves of a plant which do not resemble other products of the plant. Here, sports of nature is used to refer to the offspring of a family of a certain background who contradict many of the
values of that family. Another concept that my model is designed to encapsulate is the Sapir-Whorf idea that learning another language liberates the learner, allowing him to transcend his paradigms. If one believes this idea one can see that the very presence of a student in the classroom alters his culture. As they learn the linguistic code, so students learn the cultural code. Thus ESL/EFL students' very culture is being altered as well.

I see culture as a set of planes hovering in space (see Appendix A). On each of these planes exists a level of culture. On the bottom rests a certain fictionalized individual. She is unique among all humans before, at that moment, or after. Therefore, she is alone on her tiny plane which represents her idio-culture, that which separates her from all others, that which only she holds (labeled "i.d." for individual differences). Above the individual, ruling her life to a greater or lesser degree depending on her personality and the relative power of all the other planes, exists the family. The size and strength of this plane varies according to the value that a given culture places on family. Of varying sizes and representing the influences of various other forces come language, nationality, religion, social status, and race. The final and largest plane, and the one all of us share in common is humanity. Other planes whose size would vary according to the individual schema of any given person include sexual orientation, race, gender,
socio-economic class, bilingualism, professional association, age and amount of contact with peoples of other cultures.

Let us now consider two concrete examples to show how this model can be applied. Maternal twin sisters raised in the same family by relatively neutral parents would share almost every plane throughout the entire pyramid. In fact, only the bottom plane would differ to a significant degree. Thus, one could say that their cultures would be the same in every sense but that dictated by individual differences. At the other extreme would be an example in which two people would share only the uppermost plane, that of humanity: A heterosexual female member of the !Kung tribe of southern Africa (one of the world's only remaining pure nomadic hunter/gatherer groups) would have little in common with the gay mayor of an affluent Swiss suburb. Another way to put this idea is to say that the more two cultural backgrounds have in common, the more the planes overlap or coincide. In any case, however, the base on which each individual stands is small and the disc which covers each is large. Concerning the other discs, their size varies according to how important that factor is in the cultural identity of the individual.

Let us consider an extended example in order to see how this particular myth of humanity can be applied.

While I was writing this, a man walked into the computer room. From his physical features (richness of
skin tone, shape of nose etc.) and some of his more obvious non-verbal communicators (way of walking and distinct accent with which he pronounced his English phonemes), I surmised that he was from Kenya or Uganda. Having spent time throughout Africa and thus realizing the rich diversity of tribal, national, regional, and ethnic groupings as well as recognizing the inconsistency of my ability in distinguishing among these groupings, I dared not risk insulting him by asking "Are you from East Africa?" To my benefit, another student, bolder than I, asked the visitor his origin, which turned out to be Kisumu, a city on the northern shore of Lake Victoria. This put him on the frontier of Kenya with Uganda.

At this, I joined the conversation. I wanted to know more about him. Understanding some of the significance of certain tribal orientations in Kenya, I wanted to ask him what tribe he was from. Knowing also that this question is often considered an insult, I attempted to phrase it sensitively. So I asked what his native language was. "Luau," came the answer. Now I knew his tribe and, if my memory served me correctly, this tribe's position in the political and economic power structure of Kenya. An additional clue in understanding his culture was knowing that his life experiences had somehow brought him to study at a small international university in the United States. This implied that his family valued education enough to make the necessary sacrifices to allow him to pursue an advanced degree. Later in the conversation, it came out that he had not been back to his native country for over two years. The many questions that this long absence produced became the basis for further conversation.

The discs were starting to fall together. Before he walked in I was familiar with only two discs: the large one for all humanity and the small one for his individual differences. By the time he left, but three minutes later, I had tentatively added some more discs: one for his native language. One for the fact that he had learnt English syntax and semantics perfectly (but that he had chosen to retain the educated articulation characteristic to East Africa rather than to adopt the American swallowing act performed by so many non-native speakers). I added another disc for the fact that he had received enough education in his own country to allow him to attend the Master's Program in Intercultural management. The final factor was that he was a citizen of Kenya (rather significant when one
considers that with the linguistic/tribal affiliation which he mentioned, he could be from Uganda as well).

After such a brief conversation, it may seem as if I had learned a great deal. In one way I did; in other ways it can be seen that I learned nothing. I learned a lot when I compare it with how another person might have evaluated him: as a Kenyan he is ________, ________, and _________. (Such a reaction could result from stereotyping or over-generalization.) In reality, however, the framework had hardly begun to be built. But at least I had the framework. At least I had the ability to continue to add pieces to the puzzle. By using my paradigm, I had the flexibility to allow contradictory facts to alter my original concept of his culture.

Taking these planes as a whole, one can then see culture as the complete way of a life of an individual as she represents her family, community, nation and humanity. The farther one goes up the steps of the paradigm, the more the planes of one person become the planes of another. On the bottom, of course, there are no similarities—individuals are unique. The top level, the largest, the only one equal for all of us, contains only those features that we all share. (These features will be discussed in Chapter 3.) In between these two extremes, varying degrees of commonalities exist between individuals and the cultures that have taken part in their formation.

Two people from widely varying national backgrounds may have two large discs that perfectly coincide. For instance, the United States and Japan have very similar international volunteer development programs (United States Peace Corps and Japan Overseas Cooperative Volunteers). If a person from both of these countries spent three years advising
community gardens in rural Kenya and living and working with
the Kikuyu language and people, then they would have a great
deal in common, thus sharing a large disc. After the
presentation of this model, I was struck by how other
features of one's cultural makeup can remain influential and
similar across national and linguistic boundaries. The
most frequently cited of these features were religion
(specifically the effect of Judaism on Ethiopians, Russians
and Poles) and sexual orientation (specifically the
communities of lesbian women throughout the world).

It may be that many are satisfied by neither the
extended explanation of my framework nor the summary of
Pepin and Cowles' "myth of humanity." In fact, some might
feel frustrated because their concept of culture has been
disturbed. If this is the case, then it is now important to
restate the intention of all these definitions and models:
culture is a difficult but necessary notion to come to terms
with in order to teach with intercultural sensitivity. The
multi-disciplinary definitions above provide a good base one
can use to develop one's own concept. The two personal
frameworks can serve as models for those interested in
creating their own. By developing her own unique model, the
ESL/EFL teacher has taken the first and most critical step
in developing a sensitivity to the multi-cultural needs of
her students.
1. **Sexual orientation** is one of the most commonly ignored influences on the lives of our students. When asked why they avoided a conference presentation on the subject of homosexuality in the classroom, ESL/EFL teachers with many years of experience have been known to respond, "It doesn't interest me, I've never had one in my classroom." If one considers the fact that approximately ten percent of all societies is homosexual, one realizes that the likelihood of having never taught a gay man or lesbian woman is nil. Homosexual men and women are active in every sector of every society, from presidents and peasants to Thai teachers and telex typists.

2. **A note on disc arrangement.** One might legitimately ask why the individual is placed on the bottom plane. To another Westerner, this position would probably seem natural. In other words, if a person comes from a similar cultural background as I (a person whose planes coincide quite frequently with my own), it would seem appropriate to place the individual at the pinnacle of a pyramid. However, I realize that the things which define us are much more influential than who we are as individuals. If one considers all the components that comprise human beings, we realize that the essence of humanity is based to the greatest extent on factors other than individual differences. Primarily, we are human beings. Thus we see this factor on the uppermost plane. Finally, we are unique individuals, thus we see this factor on the bottom. Differences and similarities among individuals are discussed further in the third chapter.
Chapter 3: What Does it Mean to be Human?

In this chapter, a number of aspects common to the experiences of all human beings will be developed. Every human society invents a certain language. All languages and societies share certain features. After a sound personal grasp of the concept of culture is developed, an understanding of that which binds humans is the second step in the development of a multiculturally sensitive teacher.

A Unique Species

In order to understand the culture of our students more clearly, we must understand what they, as fellow and sister human beings, naturally have in common with us. Second, we have to develop an awareness of the myriad forces that, from moments after birth and throughout our lives, changes us to be different from one another.

The teacher must be trained to talk about cultural relativism as well as the universality of certain components shared by different cultures (Dunnett, Dubin and Lezberg 1981, 158).

In recent years, as the interdependent nature of the relationship among all life forms has become more clear, important efforts have been made in the direction of protecting the wonderful and essential diversity of the planet. As a result of this, perhaps, people throughout the world are moving away from the ancient idea of humans as the controlling force whose role towards nature is that of master to slave. All of these steps are encouraging and
positive because it is only through this shift of the prevailing mindset that we can ensure the survival of the planet and our place on it. One possible result of this trend, however, should be avoided at all possible costs. The relationship between humans and animals does not imply that there are no differences between them. In other words, just because the subjugation of the rest of nature to the needs of humans is an untenable position does not mean that humans are not unique from all other life forms. Again, let Freire speak on this:

Animals . . . cannot create products detached from themselves. Men . . . through their action upon the world create the realm of culture and history. . . . It is as transforming and creative beings that men, in their permanent relations with reality, produce not only material goods--tangible objects--but also social institutions, ideas, and concepts" (1972, 91).

To try to place a higher value on one species than another is not germane to the present goal, that of increasing the cultural sensitivity towards our students. I would discourage such an attempt as both futile and distracting. What is essential is developing an objective understanding of that which divides and binds humans.

Language as an Inherent Feature of all Human Societies
Both unique to and omnipresent in communities of humans, the ability to communicate through a system of symbols is a critical distinguishing component of our species. Students in ESL/EFL classrooms bring with them the ability to learn languages, having perfectly mastered their mother tongue.

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This section will examine the significance of language as a constant among all humans.

Animals do not consider the world; they are immersed in it. In contrast, men emerge from the world, objectify it, and in so doing can understand it and transform it with their labor (Freire 1972, 119).

One of the essential means by which humans "objectify" the world is through the use of language--developed and accepted codes of communication which have been agreed upon as meaningful by groups of people. The ability to discuss abstract issues is one of the most important distinguishing features of homo sapiens. According to Sapir, "Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols" (1921, 5). As evidence for the human-specific nature and the universality of language, it is fruitful to consider the knowledge gained from the study of people raised in isolation, so-called feral children.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, an interest in the new science of anthropology began to develop. At that time, scientists and common people alike were interested in finding a "natural man." This meant that they were looking for a human being unadulterated by contact with other humans. As all the examples of feral children demonstrate, no human in such a "pure" form exists (Shattuck 1980). That which "adulterates" humans is that which makes them human. Feral children never receive proper care (i.e.,
they never had the benefits of group forces to teach them culture) so, in spite of the fact that they are often born with perfect control of their faculties, they never become human. The most telling feature of their state is their inability to learn languages. It has been conclusively proven that "neither feral nor isolated man creates his own language" (Brown, R. 1958, 192). But, when removed from isolation at an early enough age and brought into society, these individuals make amazing progress and, within a very short time, create utterances and demonstrate linguistic ability on a par with other children of the same age. On the other hand, numerous examples of people denied the ability to see or hear (abilities commonly thought of as necessary for language) have been able to exist as complete human beings. For example, Helen Keller, born deaf and blind, eventually learned enough language to express herself so eloquently that she has served as a role model for thousands of others who have overcome what are normally seen as severely limiting disabilities. It is interesting to note that the one question discussed when academics consider the case of Helen Keller or les enfants sauvages is whether they are able to communicate with their fellow and sister human beings (see Sattuck 1980). In other words, language is one of the most significant factors which bind us as human beings.
From all the examples, it is obvious that the physical properties\textsuperscript{2} of a human are only the most basic of the components which define a being as human. Or, "Man is human only when he is civilized, as we commonly say, or when he is acculturated and enculturated, as the anthropologist says" (Landees 1965, 36). In other words, humans, by nature, are a societal animal. Only by working together in groups (including but not limited to families, tribes, nations, religious denomination, language speakers) does one become a human being. That which makes us human is that which enculturates us.

Although culture constrains individuals, participation in a sociocultural system is what allows us to develop our human qualities and abilities. The price we pay for being human is that we become human in a culturally specific way (Gregg 1985, 5).

The connection between all of this and the topic may not be entirely clear at first until one thinks in the concrete terms of the classroom. If one imagines a picture of a typical ESL classroom in the United States, one can see a number of cultures represented. The teacher herself may be a member of any ethnic group, sexual orientation and religious background. With the constant influx of immigrants from the countries of Latin America, one can imagine a number of students of Hispanic origin. In the image, let us place some refugees from Haiti and Cambodia as well as the children of some Vietnamese refugees. This class, like many throughout the world, would be considered
multi-cultural. The students themselves would be, needless to say, all human. And therein lies the beauty of the human species. None of the students are without their own native language and culture. Each of them has been taught a method of communicating with other members of certain groups. All of them are in the process of learning another language and adapting to the changes of another society. It is the role of ESL/EFL teachers to find out what it is that makes them different from one another and why these things are important to them.

Linguistic Universals

No matter how intercultural attitudes come into an EFL course, all of those professionals concerned--teachers and administrators--must possess certain basic understandings about language and culture. If they have this awareness, the programs they plan, the courses they create, the syllabi they construct and the materials they write can foster an intercultural point of view (Dunnett, Dubin and Lezberg 1981 148--emphasis mine).

In order to safeguard against the feeling that English or any other language is superior to the language spoken by their students, ESL/EFL teachers must understand the linguistic and extra-linguistic features which are present in all languages.³

First, because of the universal presence of idiomatic expressions, word-for-word translation is impossible. Second, spoken language is rich with non-verbal cues, unique to the language: Intonation, gestures, body movement and proxemics being but some of them. Third, all languages use
different grammatical elements for describing the physical world. Next, all languages, depending on the culture in which they are spoken, have issues which are discussed less freely and openly than other topics. These subjects often have two or more lexical entries (ways of referring) used to express the same action, thing or idea. Fifth, all languages have register differences. These differences can be very distinct, marking the speaker as a member of a certain class. (Chapter 7 briefly considers the topic of Standard American English.) Sixth, every language has a perfectly adequate and developed set of phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon and system of semantics. This is not to say that languages are invariable, exactly the contrary. In fact they are completely flexible. This sixth point means just that they are rule-governed. No language works without constraints. A working hypothesis with which many descriptive grammarians approach the study of languages is that no syntactic or semantic choice is arbitrary (Larsen-Freeman 1992). People speak in certain ways based on accepted (but often implicit) rules. By recognizing that every language has certain universal features, ESL/EFL teachers necessarily realize that every language is equally suited to the situation out of which it grew.

A final linguistic universal that deserves attention is the idea that all languages are in a state of flux, changing to meet the needs of the society in which the language is
spoken. It is clear that no language is unable to express a topic. When a society is invaded or through another means encounters new concepts or objects that need to be articulated, the language spoken by that society adapts to that idea (Boas 1911).

Cultural Universals

We can at least suggest that a basic course in cultural change and cultural universals would be of most use to the second language teacher. (Hughes 1986, 168).

In the same sense that every language has a number of features which correspond to every other language, so too are there certain features of culture which apply to every known human society. Further, just as an understanding of language universals makes an ESL/EFL teacher sensitive to the linguistic aspects of her students' cultural development, so too does an understanding of cultural universals sensitize her to other important aspects of their developing inter-cultural being. Murdock cites seven universal characteristics of cultural behaviors:

1. they originate in the human mind;

2. they facilitate human and environmental interactions;

3. they satisfy basic human needs; [Enumerated by Kohls (1979) as: food, clothing, shelter, family organization, social organization, government, defense, arts/crafts, knowledge/science, religion (19)]

4. they are cumulative and adjust to changes in external internal conditions; [in the same sense that languages adjust effortlessly to account for new concepts.]
(5) they tend to form a consistent structure;
(6) they are learned [but not necessarily followed, see the section on the role of intercultural experience and second language acquisition] and shared by all the members of a society;
(7) they are transmitted to new generations (1961, 45-54).

From this, it is clear that human beings are similar in many important ways. This is why the model in Chapter 2 presents "humanity" as the all-encompassing force. In that framework, the largest disc of all is that for humanity, the aspect of existence that every human shares completely with every other. It clarifies the forces which unite teachers to their students. When ESL/EFL teachers think of how different their students are, they need only pause to consider the linguistic and cultural universals which bind all humans as a unique and distinct species.

Culture, Race and Language

The stench of racism permeates the societies which produce ESL/EFL teachers to such an extent that it is only the rare individual who has no vestiges of it. A consideration of the essential distinguishing characteristics of the human species would remain incomplete without a mention of the differentiation among race, language and culture. Racism and linguistic chauvinism in the classroom can be combatted by education and awareness. Both the teacher and her students need to work together to combat the oppression of racism. It will be shown that because culture, race and
language are only arbitrarily related, students must be understood on their own terms.

Remove the new-born individual from the social environment into which he has come and transplant him to an utterly alien one. He will develop the art of walking in his new environment very much as he would have developed it in the old (Sapir 1921, 4).

Languages have settings. In other words, at one time, centuries ago, they (languages) evolved, within a given group of people (part of a race), to meet the needs of a given society (culture). But circumstances in which these three entities could develop in isolation simply do not exist. From prehistoric times, languages mixed, races intermarried, and cultures invaded each other. For this reason, science has proven that race is a fiction. Biologically and anthropologically, human beings cannot be classified into groups according to skin color and other physical characteristics. In spite of this fact, prejudice, discrimination and oppression continue to stand in the way of certain groups of people. Therefore, the terms "race," "racial groups" and "racism" are still used to describe problems in the United States and other societies. Another early pioneer in cultural anthropology, Franz Boas gives many examples of how, over history, the three factors have become completely independent of one another. He then goes on to state an underlying truth of the discipline:

The assumption that a certain definite people whose members have always been related by blood must have been the carriers of this language throughout history; and the other assumption, that a certain cultural type
must have always belonged to this people—are purely arbitrary ones and not in accord with the observed facts (1913, 6).

Sapir echoes Boas: "Language, race, and culture are not necessarily correlated" (1921, 215).

In short, students can be of any race, speak any language, and be raised by any culture. Knowing one of the three does not predict the others. A student with coffee-colored skin could be a Portuguese speaker from Brazil while a person with much lighter skin could be a Swahili speaker from Tanzania. The sooner the ESL/EFL teacher comes to her own realization of the relationship among the three, the sooner she will be able to consider her students as products of their culture, not their color. She will be able to realize that the language or languages they speak or learn are no more or less intrinsically valuable than any other. An understanding of the spurious basis of the disease of racism is the first step in cleansing the soul of it, thus permitting each student to be treated as a human first and a speaker of a certain language and member of a certain culture later.
NOTES

1. At the time of this writing, for example, the largest gathering of heads of states for many years is happening in Rio de Janeiro. They have gathered for the "Earth Summit." With the exception of George Bush, every one of the over 100 national delegations has agreed to sign a strongly-worded pledge directed at maintaining bio-diversity.

2. Neither should one overestimate the extent to which physical properties are innate. R. Brown (1958) shows that such aspects of human existence as sexual desire are probably developed by association with others. Further, Shattuck (1980) found that certain senses of humans raised outside of human society are dulled, demonstrating again the fact that much of what is considered "natural" is probably a result of contact with human society.

Chapter 4: Two Factors to be Considered in the Emerging Intercultural Identity of ESL/EFL Students

The previous chapter examined a number of universals common to groups within the human race which the multi-culturally sensitive teacher must be aware of in order to appreciate the integrity of our species. In this chapter emphasis will be placed on that which creates the amazing cultural diversity present throughout the world and in ESL/EFL classrooms. An understanding of the varying cultural backgrounds possible and the basis of these variations is necessary for the teacher to recognize how students might react differently to the same material. Further, it will explain many conflicts within the classroom, allowing the teacher to teach more effectively, building a strong sense of community.

At times, cultural differences can be as seemingly innocuous as differences between certain towns within the same region of the same nation. Other times, cultural chasms may separate the students, as in the case of a class in New England where great challenges were created by persistent conflict between a German-speaking Swiss visitor and an Arabic-speaking refugee from rural Yemen. In many instances, however, cultural differences can provide the impetus for enlivened class discussion that the students invest themselves in, thus accomplishing one of the main goals of any ESL/EFL classroom—improving English proficiency. The possible ways in which classrooms can
benefit by multi-cultural diversity will be discussed later. The present chapter discusses another essential understanding: How ESL/EFL students become so different. It is hoped that the forces present in a developing cultural identity (including the varying situational needs which cultural universals must adapt to) have been developed sufficiently in the preceding chapters. Now, by concentrating on two specific forces that change the culture of ESL/EFL students, two more understandings will be developed for the multiculturally sensitive teacher. First, we will briefly consider the classroom as culture. Then we will attempt to understand the effects of second language acquisition on one's culture.

The Classroom as Culture
As recently as the 1960's, it was seen that the role of education in the United States was to eliminate the so-called subcultures in favor of the middle class. Throughout a rather didactic book entitled Cultural Patterns in Urban Schools: A Manual for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators, disparaging comments are made about the general values, assumptions and IQ levels of students who represent the various cultures in classrooms. These students are consistently referred to as "culturally deprived," "disadvantaged," and "alienated" (Lohman 1967, xii). Those teachers who attempt to implement a multi-cultural focus into their classroom, thus recognizing the
worth and contributions provided by various cultures are castigated and held up for ridicule.

In spite of all this, the authors pledge allegiance to the idea that students "must be understood by an increasing number of teachers" (x). Then, the authors go on to present a typically ethnocentric and blind view of the subcultures, one so commonly promulgated by the white, male, middle-class:

By "middle class" we mean the mass of American society that places a high value on a stable family life, regular employment, education, and social and professional achievement. We will speak of the "lower class" as that population group which is made up of semi-skilled or unskilled workers, if they are employed at all, and which frequently exhibits an unstable family life or commonly mother-centered family with no stable male present. In such contexts, importance is often attached to toughness, excitement, and the ability to "con" or outsmart others (Lohman, 1967, 2).

For those inclined to agree with the viewpoint presented in the above manual, the obvious solution would be to view the classroom as a civilizing force. According to this view, the role of teachers towards their students of different cultures would be to inculcate them with the solid middle-class values of which, after all, they have been hopelessly deprived.

But whether or not one feels that homogenizing is a viable option, it should be made clear that options other than standardization exist. Other educators, even in the early sixties, took a much more humanistic and interested approach. In a book which describes an experiment which
combined cultural anthropology and education, Landes describes an approach which "stresses the mental gifts and social heritages of human groups rather than their physical appearances and test ratings" (1965, i). Her entire book is dedicated to the importance of understanding and learning from the students in the classroom. According to Landes, using such racist terms as "minorities" only serves to perpetuate the stereotypical and prejudiced categories and distinctions of our students, thus stunting their intellectual growth and personal development. Fantini (1988) is also convinced that positive solutions to diversity are possible. Indeed, they are happening throughout the world. Cultural differences in the classroom can be recognized as a positive force. Students can learn from one another, expand their world view, discover alternative solutions to the common challenges present in their lives, and develop an appreciation for diversity necessary in today's world. Buchanan (1990), among many others, sees the ESL/EFL classroom as a new culture (neither their own nor that of the teacher but a synthesis of the two) to be entered by students.

One effective method of developing a positive attitude towards this culture is recognizing the common educational attitudes of teachers from the United States. The following attitudes are often present in the ESL/EFL classroom:

1) Independence and individual work are considered necessary components in order to assess learning.
2) Certain rules of turn taking are demanded. Hands must be raised and students called upon.

3) Group work is encouraged, demanding skills of cooperation.

4) Deadlines are made, formalized and largely static. If they are not met, harsh judgements are often made on the intellectual merits of the student.

5) Students are encouraged to ask questions in order to prove that they are paying attention and to learn (adapted from Buchanan 1990).

Teachers should recognize that these values are often in conflict with those of the students and develop curricula and activities which reflect diverse cultural backgrounds. Although it is not within the scope of this paper to suggest specific classroom teaching techniques that would address various learning styles, emphasizing a variety of activities would seem to be an appropriate consideration.

Learning Another Language

Language . . . defines experience for us by reason of its formal completeness and because of our unconscious projection of its implicit expectations into the field of experience (Sapir 1931).

Whorf (1956) showed that every culture has its own way in which it uses language to describe and interpret reality. According to the famous hypothesis he developed along with Sapir, these differences can be used to grasp cultural differences. Because the culture of ESL/EFL teachers is so often different from that of their students, their ways of interpreting reality and expressing these interpretations are also different. These modes of expression are not
wrong, just different. It is the role of the teacher to
discover the differences and then profit from them.

Fantini (1983) presents a clear and helpful picture of
the importance of language in relationship to the culture of
our students. By understanding this relationship, the
ESL/EFL teacher can gain greater appreciation of how her
students are being affected by learning English

Speakers
(social organization/Sociofact)

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VIEW OF
THE WORLD

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Symbols
(artifact) ********************

Meaning
(mentifact)

In other words, what we think about something (meaning)
we express by way of a symbol. Conversely, once
acquired, that symbol also influences how we think
about the world. The way we organize ourselves
socially and what we consider important aspects of our
social organization (e.g., sexual differences, age,
role, status, etc,) affect the way we speak about
things. Different speakers often have different ways
of expressing the same thing. All people do not speak
alike nor do the same persons speak in the same ways
all of the time in all situations. The social
circumstances of the speech act affect the way
something is communicated.
(Reprinted from A Guide & Workbook to Field Language
Acquisition and Cultural Exploration [1983], with the
kind permission of Dr. Alvino E. Fantini)

Fantini's description can also be seen to support the
author's model of cultural understanding which was developed
at the end of Chapter 2. By using the disc framework
throughout the course or term, teachers can take into account the way in which the factors Fantini discusses affect their students. As students learn new and different ways to express themselves, so too can they learn new things about themselves. With the help of their teacher, they can incorporate these revelations into their personal system of discs. Not only will this help them ground their experiences in a image more permanent than thoughts, but it can serve the of developing proficiency with the language as well.
Chapter 5: The Importance of ESL/EFL Teachers Coming to Terms With Themselves as Cultural Beings

An individual cannot through introspection and self-examination understand himself or the forces that mold his life, without understanding his culture (Hall 1976, 281).

If teachers are to understand the cultural forces at play in the varied lives of their students, it is first necessary to develop an understanding of themselves as cultural beings. The process that teachers can go through in developing their own identity can be as simple as posing a series of questions such as, Who am I? Where do I come from? What forces have created me? Where am I going? Why? What life experiences have led me to my place and direction? How am I different than others who come from families of similar background? As simple as these questions appear, they are not easily answered. Too often, people fail to reflect deeply, considering only the superficial aspects of society, not the driving forces that have formed them. The identity being considered here is not "a series of myths about one's heroic ancestors" (Baldwin 1988, 9). It is a deep and meaningful introspection.

The Importance of Multicultural and Multilingual Experiences

In this section, it will be argued that in order to see oneself clearly and understand that all humans are products of a culture, teachers need to learn other languages and exist in other cultures. Hall (1976), speaks eloquently of this need:
1) People are unaware of the culture that controls them.

2) People spend their life imagining their inputs.

3) When learning a new culture, one's own culture is produced only in bits and pieces.

4) Trying to understand one's own culture by studying the behavior of others to whom one is close is largely futile. One is reminded of the old parable, "if you want to know about water, don't ask a fish."

5) Because of the constantly shrinking world, man must transcend his own culture, and this can be done only by making explicit the rules by which it operates (adapted from Hall 1976, 55).

To avoid superficiality, it is extremely helpful to have learned languages other than one's native tongue and appreciated other cultures than the one in which one was born. Without the alterations in world view gained by intercultural experiences, it is only too easy to fall into the trap of using the limited perspective of one's own culture as the sole lens through which to view other cultures.

But three concessions should be made to Hall's dictums. First, the culture which one experiences may not be in another country. Within the United States, for instance, avenues for intercultural exploration are nearly limitless. The partitioning of the Native American nations into reservations provide excellent opportunities for work and learning. Immigrant communities in urban areas supply similar situations. Each of these situations can be as or more distant and equally complex as another country.

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Second, one must take on the appropriate mindset of the intercultural student. A culture cannot be adequately understood when approached as something exotic, thus reducing the experience to romanticism at best and voyeurism at worst. In order to accomplish true understanding, the commitment to learn must be present. The third concession to Hall's suggestions is that breadth as well as depth is advised:

[The study of other cultures] opens great vistas for the teacher and provides a basis for better understanding of persons from other backgrounds, as well as supplying new insights into approaches to teaching a second language. Obviously no one can learn everything about all cultures—no one knows everything about one's own culture . . . [But] a knowledge of many cultures, superficial as it must be for the layman, is essential to the acceptance of those who have grown up in different environments (Valdes 1986, 49-51).

When Valdes speaks of the study of other cultures, I believe she means more than just reading about them in books. The kind of study which is necessary is a non-judgmental attempt at understanding. It involves the desire to learn about and appreciate the ways of life of other people.

After ESL/EFL teachers have experienced these other cultures, what can they do with what they have learned? An attempt at applying intercultural experience is the point at which many teachers fail. After learning a few things about their own culture, they think that they can now predict potential problems in the classroom and thereby control classroom dynamics. It is an oft-stated premise that, for a person who is entering another culture or trying to
communicate with another culture, problems will arise where the areas of greatest differences lie (see Kohls 1979). But this prediction is as obsolete as the contrastive analysis (CA) theory of second language acquisition. The primary flaw in the CA theory is the same as the flaw in the cultural differences theory: Where the areas of greatest difference lie, that is where the problems will arise. For instance, CA theory would predict that the English copulative verb "to be" would be an extremely difficult learning point for speakers of Swahili, Zulu and other African languages in the Bantu family because those languages have no copulative. In fact, however, the copulative presents learners with a much smaller obstacle than areas in which the Bantu languages are similar to but not the same as English. In linguistic studies, the CA theory has not been proven to any degree (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, 56).

In the same sense, knowing where cultural differences among an ESL/EFL teacher and her students lie does not predict the areas where conflict will arise. The simplicity of such an argument destines it for failure in the face of the complexities and diversities of the world's cultures. If, for example, Yolanda, who is originally from the Yucatan, teaches a group of Japanese students, it is impossible to predict that the problems in the classroom will arise out of time concerns. As in the example of the
copulative presented above, the main challenge for the class may not be the consideration of time, where a great difference exists between the teacher's culture and the students' culture.

The case for ESL/EFL teachers learning other languages is a commonly accepted suggestion that has been well made in other literature. At the School for International Training, for example, teacher trainees are required to undergo a "shock language" week in which they study a new language, thus creating empathy for the language learner. Dunnet, Dubin and Lezberg (1981) actually recommend that all ESL/EFL teachers have learned a language which is not of the Indo-European family. Learning, or even attempting to learn, a variety of second languages in formal and informal situations can increase sensitivity towards ESL/EFL students, develop different approaches, and alert teachers to the learning styles shown by her co-learners and, eventually, her students. Clearly these recommendations about language learning represent the ideal situation. It is recognized that few teachers will be able to enjoy such a multitude of intercultural experiences. However, since it is an ideal, it is meant to be strived for.

Universals Versus Culture

[The goal of experiencing other languages and cultures is] having a reasonably accurate set of ideas on which to interpret the behavior they see (Althen 1983, ix).
The person who can enter a given culture, explore it, work to understand it and then accept everything in it is rare, if such an individual exists at all. But the goal of interculturalism is not acceptance but understanding, not adoption but appreciation. This goal is echoed in most publications of interculturalism including Hall (1976), Althen (1983), Benjamin (1985), Fantini (1983), and Kearny (1984).

With appreciation as the ultimate goal, one important method of meeting the demands of the multicultural classroom is for EFL/ESL teachers to develop a dynamic but explicit understanding of their own beliefs. They must decide what, if anything, is universally right and wrong for themselves. What are they going to tolerate in the classroom? What defines a racist comment or act? How does one decide what qualifies as sexist speech or behavior? What religion-inspired conflicts will be encountered? What about instances in which nationalism or ethnic pride creates conflict? When are specific instances of behavior deemed "inappropriate," and how will the teacher explain this to her students? By delineating what is believed and valued, one can become better able to serve the needs of multicultural classes. Further, potentially troublesome areas should be considered before the ESL/EFL teacher enters the classroom, thus enabling her to deal with value and behavior conflicts as they arise.
In order to create an understanding of this topic, two personal components of my development in this area will be examined. The first describes a position which is dangerously close to ethnocentrism. In the second, I will describe a series of common experiences where good intentions have been frittered away because of ethnocentric attitudes.

Every month, as a member of Amnesty International, I write a series of letters to heads of state, attorneys general, dictators and armed forces officials of governments throughout the world. Through this correspondence, I plead for the release of political captives, beg for the sparing of condemned prisoners, and remind powerful people of the universal applicability of certain rights. I tell them that, in spite of cultural differences, certain rights are inalienable—those we call "human rights." I ask them to remember that we all belong to the same fellowship of humanity and it is their responsibility, be they Ethiopians, Chinese, French, Argentinean or of the United States of America, to respect and enforce these rights. The raison d'etre of organizations like Amnesty is that there are universals to be applied across cultures. This position is seen by many to be ethnocentric.

Another set of experiences has created stress with the above set of behaviors. When working, living or travelling in developing countries, I constantly encounter
tourists who refuse to adopt the forms of address required by the culture because they are "undemocratic." They reject protocol and suggestions for working within the system, admonishing others to "go right to the guy who holds the reins and shoot for the bottom line." I see millions of dollars being wasted on development projects that will, for example, create convenience in the lives of thousands of overworked women by providing them with a bridge over a small chasm. Then, a very short time later, after the foreign "expert" has left, I see the bridge, irrigation project, latrine, school, clinic, court, community center, farm, airport or dormitory in a state of disrepair. Community members, the very people the expert had selflessly devoted his time to serve, have destroyed the facility, looted the valuables. All that remains of the project is squandered good intentions and wasted hopes. Once, while living in a small nation in southern Africa, I saw a group of high-minded Danish doctors and health workers come into a village--their pockets bulging with dollars--ready to save the natives from easily-prevented communicable diseases.

The tourists and workers, all of whom came from different cultures, thought that what was of critical importance to them was naturally of critical importance to the people they were trying to develop. The tourists could not comprehend that a culture can waste so much time and attention on something as insignificant (to them) as
honorifics, register differences and rank. The bridge builders did not consider the fact that the chasm represented a lesser god that should not be crossed, only circumvented. The health-care providers never believed that people would actually refuse free services, even if they had failed to secure clearance with the appropriate traditional healers. In each case, the new entrants to the culture failed to consider significant cultural differences between their native culture and that of the culture which they had entered.

The two sets of experiences outlined above represent essential (but conflicting) ingredients in my developing intercultural identity. I believe that pure relativism (the belief that all behavior sanctioned by a given culture should be accepted) is not possible for me. Although not perfectly confident in the limitations of my set of human universals, there are some that I am sure that do exist. Some cultures practice certain behaviors, like the excision of women, which are accepted by the majority within that culture; I nevertheless refuse to accept them. And, if there is a significant group of individuals within that culture working to change that aspect of their world, I will join them in fighting that behavior.
PART III: IN THE ESL/EFL CLASSROOM

Part II presented some of the understandings that I believe a teacher should develop before entering the classroom. It was advanced that a personal but comprehensive concept of culture should be developed. Then, the essential components of the human species were delineated. Third, the potential enculturating effects of the classroom and of learning another language were looked at. Finally, it was advised that teachers should examine themselves as intercultural beings.

Here in Part III, three chapters will explore methods by which the teacher who has committed herself to multicultural sensitivity can take advantage of her awareness. In Chapter 6, the stages of acculturation will be examined. In Chapter 7, the role of Standard American English will be discussed. Finally, Chapter 8 will present some practical methods to implement to maintain and develop the emerging cultural identity of the students.

Chapter 6: Stages of Acculturation and Two Skills to Work with the Emerging Identity of ESL/EFL Students

Learning another culture, especially the spiritual matters within it, is most effective when it is internalized, when it is brought inside the person. When it is a coat that a person takes on and off, one day he will fail to put it on. Over the twenty years that my husband and I have been married, we have constantly become more and more comfortable with our bi-lingual, bi-cultural self. (Kepner 1992).

Originally a Spanish speaker from Peru, the woman quoted above married an English speaker from the United States.
Together they have worked, travelled, studied and lived throughout Latin and North America. Together, too, they have learned some Native American languages, thus increasing their multiculturalism. Ms. Kepner and her husband have both reached the most advanced stage of acculturation. Both are perfectly able to function in the original culture of the other, at times presenting themselves as virtually indistinguishable from natives of that culture. The ESL/EFL teacher who encounters students at this advanced stage of acculturation is rare. Most students are just beginning to form their new intercultural identity.

"ESL and bilingual education classrooms are populated almost solely by students who each day increase their skill in functioning appropriately in diverse cultural setting" (Seelye 1984, 191). Therefore, it is helpful to consider their development in the basic terms of the following model which I have adapted from Brown (1987). When considering the framework, it is vital to understand that the model of acculturation is not a static thing. A student's development can be arrested or reach a plateau at any stage. Conversely, students can go through a stage so quickly that it appears not to have happened at all. Furthermore, students might have reached higher stages in some situations but lower in others.

Stage one: Initial excitement/enchantment. The first stage is familiar to many ESL/EFL teachers who are attracted
to the profession because it allows them to visit exotic places. ESL/EFL teachers from the United States, as products of that society, are encouraged to "collect" experiences (Anderson 1992). This leads them to be especially susceptible to the first stage, when the initial excitement engendered by the new surroundings is still strong. At this level, because everything is fresh and quaint (but not yet inconvenient), negative judgements are limited.

Stage two: Growing frustration. The second stage occurs when the visitor to the new culture feels threatened by the differences. One might fight this threat by seeking out sisters and fellows from one's own culture. Conversely, one might flee it by isolating oneself as much as possible. Another common reaction to the second stage is the search for "sameness" (Kohls 1979, 64). Those who insist that all world faiths are, in their essence, monotheistic would probably be examples of someone who has failed to pass this stage.

Stage three: Growing understanding. The third stage is the one in which people begin learning about the new culture. While certain problems persist, other problems are solved and the individual develops empathy.

Stage four: Bi- or multi-culturism. The final stage represents the final and healthy goal. At this point, the individual is equally comfortable in either culture,
speaking either language. Avoidance, substitution, addition, synthesis and resynthesis are basic coping strategies for dealing with intercultural stress that students may apply throughout the stages of acculturation (Seelye 1984).

**Ambiguity, Generalities and Stereotypes**

All of the skills, attributes and understandings discussed throughout the first five chapters of this paper represent necessary ingredients in the development of this ability. As demanding as they are, however, the skill of productive, sensitive and effective communication with ESL/EFL students demands an even greater commitment. Dealing effectively with classroom challenges, finding solutions to common problems and maintaining one's sanity, make a tolerance for ambiguity and the ability to generalize without stereotyping two additional and essential skills.

One of the most common attributes of the teacher who has made a great deal of progress in this field is a tolerance for ambiguity. In the classroom, as in any multicultural situation, conflicts arise and things are said that cause concern. There often exists a multitude of possible causes and meanings, all of which may be part of the "right" answer. Even more frequently, however, the answer is never clear; the teacher never does quite understand why Carlos walked out on Sanae's presentation on Japan's electoral system. Even after individual sessions
with both students, questions remain. Could it have resulted from his distress about the lack of democracy in his country? A personality conflict between the two of them? A simple misunderstanding, or something else entirely? As Halverson (1989) says, "A good tolerance of [this] ambiguity helps the multicultural teacher cope with the unavoidable stress of the intercultural setting" (60).

Generalizations, as a form of input management, are a healthy method of avoiding information overload. Without some way to categorize and sort information, people in today's world would be overwhelmed. Because teachers are consistently subjected to new and different cultures, it is impossible to understand all of them perfectly. For this reason, "Even rather sweeping generalities, so long as they are not false, may be a help, if one avoids the pitfall of stereotyping and does not expect all members of a culture to fit the generality" (Valdes 1986, 49).

Besides providing a means by which ESL/EFL teachers can develop an understanding of their own identity of cultural beings, the skills discussed in the fifth chapter also ensure empathy for the students. My experience in Africa, for example, has proven invaluable in realizing the challenges that studying a new language and culture create. There, I studied two widely varying languages taught by native speakers who used indigenous approaches and methods. As a result of this, I am better able to understand how it
must feel for my students when I get up in front of the class with my alien ideas. When discussing this topic with others, it became clear that effective ESL/EFL teachers are able to generalize and learn from intercultural experiences.
Chapter 7: Variations Within a Language

This chapter will briefly consider an essential issue which faces all ESL/EFL teachers. Of the many dialects of English, which should be chosen to be taught? If the teacher chooses a certain dialect, what attention will she pay to the other dialects?

In France, an academy of esteemed scholars determine and preach the "proper" way in which their language should be spoken. In Quebec, "language cops" enforce laws against invasions of foreign languages and modified forms. For years, the standard in Britain was what was spoken on the national broadcasting organization, commonly referred to as "BBC" or "the Queen's English." In the United States, self-appointed guardians like William Safire tell other native speakers how not to use the language. In each of these instances, a group of conservative-minded people, linguists and lay people among them, attempt to fight the inevitable evolution of languages.

English, with the most non-native speakers of any language in addition to millions of native speakers around the world, enjoys more dialects, additions and revisions than any other language. In countries where English is taught as a second language, students are sure to encounter many ways of speaking, probably only one of which is accepted for use in the corporate and business world. Often, they will want to learn this standard form as a means
of empowerment. Similarly, many students in countries like India, Nigeria, and the Philippines enter the classroom with a good command of the local variety of English. The goal of these students is mastery of the nuances of standard British English or so-called Standard American English (SAE).

Characteristics of individuals which determine the language they speak are divided into two groups: ascribed and acquired. The former include those features that are given to the individual by birth and the early years of formation. These ascribed characteristics include age, sex, nativeness, ethnicity and region. The latter group develop as the individual grows and experiences other features of existence. In most but not all cases, acquired implies that their has been a degree of choice involved in those aspects. Acquired characteristics include role, specialization, status, fluency and individuality (Preston 1989).

Developing an understanding of how languages vary according to the above characteristics is critical in developing one's skills as an interculturally sensitive teacher. When one teaches English to a group of immigrants, refugees, travelers or even technical workers, one must make a conscious choice of what language is going to be taught. In Britain, the United States, New Zealand, South Africa, Australia, and Canada, the sociolinguistic factors determining the variety of English spoken vary widely. The English which is generally taught is what is quaintly
referred to as standard. "Standard American English is a dialect that many Americans almost speak" (Fromkin and Rodman 261). In other words, it is an idealized language which nobody speaks. Actually, SAE is English which is accepted by white, male, middle-class, natives, those in the power positions.

It is a fact that many if not most ESL/EFL students encounter people who speak non-standard varieties of English. In the United States, at least, immigrants and refugees may be living with speakers of a variety of the English that is quite distinct from SAE. In recognition of this, ESL/EFL teachers should recognize that their impressions of their neighbors can be easily affected by what goes on in the classroom. If an ESL/EFL teacher continually disparages the English varieties that the students acquire on the streets and in their homes, she risks severely damaging the developing interculture of her students. On the other hand, a teacher who refuses to acknowledge that sociolinguistic factors in the United States dictate the use of SAE in formal situations risks eliminating the chance for her students to ever enter the mainstream of society—a goal of cultural development often highly coveted by students. In sum, it is essential for the interculturally sensitive teacher to recognize the sociolinguistic variations in English. By combining this knowledge with an understanding of the way in which her
students' interculture is developing and their wishes for how it continues to develop, she can develop their English language skills to effectively meet their needs and desires.
Chapter 8: Maintaining Students' Cultural Identity

The sophisticated EFL teacher, while introducing foreign students to some aspects of American culture, must also encourage students to maintain their own cultural identity. . . . The teacher should guide cultural discussions so that they do not become judgmental and lead to conclusions that some cultures are superior or inferior (Dunnett, Dubin, and Lezberg 1981, 158).

This chapter is dedicated mainly to the needs of teachers who work with students who learn English in cultures other than their native one. Students in these situations confront challenges of intercultural adaptation on a daily basis. If they are refugees or immigrants they will probably never regain the opportunity to exist solely in their native culture, speaking only their native language. By participating in an English education program, they have chosen (although it may have been virtually the only option available) to adapt, in some manner, to the culture of the dominant society. These students are in a transition phase. But the transition need not be a painful and dehumanizing shift from one culture to another. Instead, it can be an uplifting growth from monoculturalism to bi- or multiculturalism. If ESL/EFL teachers hope to contribute to a psychologically healthy transition and thereby ensure student interest and investment in their learning, they will recognize the worth of the native cultures of their students.

Freire (1972) complains that "almost never do [teachers] realize that [students], too, 'know things' they
have learned in their relations with the world and with other men" (49-50). But this need not be the case: "An intercultural ethos can be brought into any classroom when teachers stop to consider their students' values and attitudes towards topics under discussion" (Dunnett, Dubin and Lezberg 1981, 156). Both teachers and students can profit from discovering and exploring new ways of thinking and alternative methods to use to confront challenges.

Newcomers to all societies often find themselves being discriminated against and attacked at worst, patronized and ignored at best. Immigrants and refugees have left the symbols, accoutrements of role, people, places, family and physical landmarks that constantly remind them of their rightful place in society (Kohls 1979). They have left the things which validate their existence. But English educators in the societies which accept newcomers enjoy a special position. It can be argued that students have come to them for guidance. Does the ESL teacher function as a mere extension of the society, stepping on the psyche of her students? Or does she sincerely commit herself to developing their individual identities, skills and confidence in their abilities? The ESL classroom, instead of being a foreboding place where unrealistic demands are placed on students, can become a place of refuge, where students know that their culture and their individualism will not only be accepted but valued.
Using the Author's Model

For those ESL/EFL teachers who were able to fit the system of discs into their own system of cultural understanding, the "alternative framework" presented in Chapter 2 can be an effective means by which the individual cultures of students are evaluated. There are numerous ways that this can be done. One of the most effective was suggested by a person familiar with the cultural inventory survey. The problem with the written survey as a method of understanding students' culture is that it demands a considerable proficiency with English. The advantage of the disc system is that regardless of their level of English, students can create their own scenarios. Through the use of examples and modelling, teachers can help students understand that they should draw discs of forces that have influenced their lives. This task could be introduced at the beginning of the course. After working alone, students could share their models with other people who shared linguistic backgrounds and, eventually, with the class as a whole. As the course continued, the students' models could be brought out periodically as the students' cultural identity developed and as their proficiency with the language improved. Naturally, the teacher would encourage her students to value both the changes they make as well as their original perceptions as equally important.
The use of the models in the classroom would serve a number ends. First, the teacher could better understand what experiences and aspects of existence are important in the lives of her students. Second, the goal of this section of the paper, maintaining students' identity, would be met. By returning to the model throughout the course or term, students will be reminded of both their past and the changes which they are undergoing. Third, students would develop a sensitivity to the ongoing needs and cultural backgrounds of other students in the classroom. Thus, they would realize that their needs (while different) are neither less nor more significant than those of their classmates. Finally, an adoption of this technique would improve learning. By creating a secure environment in which the students are encouraged to share that which is critical to them, the investment in learning, and thereby the ultimate rewards, are higher.

**Working with students to find solutions**

A problem-posing approach, originated by Freire (1972) developed by others and refined by Wallerstein (1983) will be advocated in this chapter. This approach is based on the premise that students lack power. It takes the needs of the students and works with them. Instead of dictating the issues and prescribing solutions, it works with the challenges, skills and abilities of the students.
Throughout Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire sees education as empowerment. The abysmal socio-economic status of immigrant groups and the fact that a huge percentage of Hispanics are employed in menial labor are but two examples of features inherent in the state of ESL education. Given these characteristics, Freire's words about liberation as a mutual process ring even truer today than twenty years ago. Only by close cooperation with their students can teachers improve the situation of immigrants and society. If ESL teachers wish to avoid the trap of cultural oppression and allow their students' culture to be valued as highly as Anglophone culture, they must follow Freire's advice. A sensitivity to students' cultural distinctions and values must be developed. This sensitivity must become a central component of how the curriculum is developed and what is included in the curriculum. As the class works together to learn communicative strategies and other functional skills to master the ways of the students' new society, teachers and students can profit from learning about other cultures.

The present situation of ESL in the United States has improved considerably in the past thirty years. Educators are realizing the continuing value of contributions from other cultures. The more helpful and realistic image of a mixed salad (co-existence without destruction of cultural identity) is replacing the old melting-pot image. The students' identities and needs are still oppressed by the
rush to assimilate. In the first chapter, it was mentioned that the overwhelming majority of articles, texts and research on culture in the ESL/EFL field concentrate on how to teach culture. They present ways to work with Anglophone culture in the classroom. The movement towards functional syllabi and survival English—although, perhaps, noble in intention—actually perpetuates the long term predicament immigrants and refugees face. By concentrating exclusively on the immediate situation, teachers who follow these curricula create skills directed towards obtaining necessities like basic health and staying out of jail, not towards the achievement of higher goals like self-fulfillment, political action and higher education. Furthermore, the situations publications of this nature choose are generally unrealistic. Caricatures of English learners are shown dealing with polite, understanding, and helpful service people. In many dialogues presented in books that adopt these syllabi, daily problems are consistently and easily overcome, much to the delight of the ESL student pictured in the text.

So then, the ultimate question is raised: Considering the challenges commonly faced by the ESL community, what can ESL teachers do about them? I believe the answer lies in a problem-posing approach:

[This approach] takes these conflicts—the difficulties students have in living in the US, their feelings of vulnerability, and their desire to learn English while maintaining their own culture—as the center of the
curriculum. Written dialogues and role-plays based on problem situations generate motivational energy, and students are inspired to work hard to speak English. They also reduce their anxieties by enacting troublesome situations, changing the plots, and finding more satisfying endings (Wallerstein 1983, 10).

Wallerstein explains some of the principles on which this approach is based. An ESL teacher should approach her task in a systematic manner, similar to field research conducted by anthropologists. While this may sound like a difficult task, the teacher who is committed to intercultural understanding must realize that she is working with the students to discover the issues that are important to them. This cross-cultural understanding can emerge most easily out of an interaction among all the people in the community.

Books
I have recommended a number of books which value the students' culture (listed and briefly discussed in Appendix B). While ESL/EFL teachers can be better armed with these books, they often find themselves in situations where the curriculum, methods and texts are determined by the administration or a group of teachers. Even in the most rigid of systems, however, the interculturally committed teacher can work with her students. Dunnett, Dubin and Lezberg suggest seven ways to select and work with textbooks:

1) Examine each new textbook carefully to determine whether it takes an intercultural point of view.
2) Try to identify the cultural aspects inherent in the textbook and list them by chapter or units. Are they positive or negative? Mixed?

3) Examine the exercises carefully. Determine if they will assist you in drawing students into intercultural activities.

4) Check to see if the vocabulary items, examples, grammar structures, drills, etc., are placed in some meaningful cultural context.

5) Examine photographs and illustrations, if any, to see if they are culturally related.

6) Carefully examine dialogues, if any, for their cultural content.

7) Go back and re-examine those textbooks which take a strong intercultural point of view for possible bias. Are they objective? Do they stereotype or overgeneralize about U.S. or foreign cultures? (1981, 160)

Conclusion

In the past few years, diversity has become an increasingly popular buzzword. But, like many words of this nature, more people use the word than understand its significance. Even fewer do anything about it. Throughout the preceding paper, but especially in Part I, it has been argued that something must be done about diversity. Because of increasing influxes of refugees, changing immigration patterns, varying birthrates, global media, widespread tourism, and improved modes of travel, demographics are shifting. Those groups who represented the majority of the population in many English-speaking countries will soon be vastly outnumbered by other groups who were traditionally referred to as "minorities." In addition to this shift, the world's
societies are experiencing increasing contact with each other, causing not only greater chances for conflict but also greater opportunities for learning.

We ESL/EFL teachers who come from countries in which English is widely spoken are confronted with two basic choices. On the one hand, we can reinforce the arrangement of power and class in our societies, ensuring that immigrant populations remain in the lower socio-economic groups. On the other hand, we can choose to cooperate with our students in their own intellectual, social and cultural development. Creating a classroom environment which values the various contributions provided by diverse cultures will not only increase student security but it will also enhance learning. We can encourage students to grow into powerful multicultural women and men who will realize the strengths of their own cultural backgrounds, allowing them to progress towards self-fulfillment, and, eventually, to improve the societies in which they live.

Of the two choices presented above, it is my firm conviction that the latter choice is the right one. In Part II of this paper, a number of skills and attributes were developed that I feel are necessary for the teacher who chooses to allow her students to empower themselves. Throughout the paper, a great deal has been demanded of the teacher; prescriptive measures, which would be easier to follow but much less helpful, were avoided. The issues
discussed here are not concrete or mathematical. No formula for success exists. Dictating the methods which have worked for me would be ethnocentric and presumptuous, no better than the books of cultural "do's and don'ts" referred to earlier.

In the second chapter, I expressed the hope that the idea of culture will be considered so deeply that the teacher will develop her own personal understanding of the topic. Then, the essential features which distinguish human beings from other animals were examined. In the fourth chapter, I showed how the classroom can be seen as a culture of its own, especially when the effects of second-language acquisition are considered. One of the most difficult and potentially painful understandings was developed in Chapter 5. Here, I pled for teachers to develop an understanding of themselves as cultural beings. Multicultural experiences and multilingualism were seen as ideal aids in this process.

Part III gave my point of view that the teacher who chooses to cooperate with her students should understand the stages of acculturation, be able to generalize without stereotyping, and develop a tolerance for ambiguity. Furthermore, it was shown that many equally complex versions of English exist. It was argued that the good ESL/FLL teacher should consciously decide which variety to teach, basing such a decision on the social, economic and other needs and desires of the students. Finally, three methods
by which teachers can help their students maintain and
develop a strong and healthy intercultural identity were
developed. It bears repeating that, although the
suggestions are mine, the onus of responsibility for action
is to be borne by the teacher.

But this responsibility need not be a burden. The
interculturally-sensitive teacher can be refreshed by the
promise of a just and productive society in her classroom.
Many teachers are exhilarated by numerous examples of how
their classroom has developed into a secure learning
environment in which various native cultures are maintained
and strengthened.

I too am thrilled by the prospect of classrooms of this
sort. I see students of English on a voyage. Traditionally,
the teacher has acted as captain and cruisemaster of a ship—
preparing the passengers for their destination without
regard for the significance and value provided by the
passengers' point of embarkment. The destination has been
the rejection of the cultural heritage of the passengers and
an adoption of Anglophone culture. But with a new awareness
about her students' culture, the teacher can crew the ship,
with the students having equal share in guiding the voyage.
Together, it is their responsibility to cooperate to make
the voyage as secure as possible, working closely with the
needs of the entire community. Both the destination and
point of embarkment are essential components of the voyage.
The new destination is one in which the cultural heritage of the students contributes to a healthy pluralistic society. A good voyage is designed to serve the crew—allowing them to develop into powerful multicultural women and men who work to improve society.
APPENDIX A
AUTHOR'S FRAMEWORK FOR CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

HUMANITY

Race
Social status
Religion
Nationality
Language
Family

I. D.
As has been repeated throughout the preceding text, the resources for the teaching of culture are many and varied. Within some of these, a brief chapter or a small part is dedicated to the understanding of their students' culture. Although many of these materials are, of course, better designed than others, it is not within the intentions of this paper to recommend selections of text and guide books. The seven guidelines in the final chapter should be followed in all cases.

Considering the scope of the paper, however, I feel the following five books are absolutely essential. I have chosen them on the grounds that what a teacher needs is understanding, not gimmicks.


A pioneering work which opened new vistas in cultural anthropology. Provides excellent examples which show the relationship of aspects of humanity like race, language, culture, region and type. A good reference.


One of the first works dedicated to education as empowerment. A classic whose powerful calling reverberates today, calling on the oppressed and those who oppress them to change the system, humanizing education and creating a better society. Asks teachers to do more than teach; inspires them to cooperate, as Freire did, with the oppressed.


This, or another of the major works by Hall develop a clear understanding of the essential processes behind behavior, values and other aspects of culture. Provides a good basis on which the teacher can develop her own understanding of culture.

A well-presented and organized compilation of essays concerning various aspects of culture and language teaching. Especially applicable in the classroom.


Carefully following the well-marked path blazed by Freire, Wallerstein argues eloquently for a curriculum which values the individual worth of ESL students. Provides actual lessons and concrete suggestions for steps to be taken in the problem-posing approach.


Kukyendall, Crystal. 1990. Improving black student achievement by enhancing students' self image. (Washington DC: American University and Mid-Atlantic Equity Center.)


