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Becoming a "Gringo": Immigrants, Language Learning and Acculturation

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The word "Gringo" is well known in all Latin America. It refers to United States citizens, or as they would be called in this country, Yankees. Immigrants who have lived in the United States for long periods of time are also referred to as Gringos when they return to their native Latin American country. This unit aims at reviewing what is the experience of language learning and acculturation. It also introduces the process of how it has affected Latino writers in the United States.

At the present time, I teach a high school course entitled "Latin America, Art and Culture." It is important that students recognize their heritage be it Latino or Hispanic, Afro-American or any other. These students are part of a high school for the arts, which is encouraging them to become artists in the future. Thus developing their ability to communicate in many different mediums is of primary importance.

In this classroom curriculum I intend to help students understand the development of language, especially as it refers to a second language. This will include learning language development as children, the language development of others, and working towards recognizing who a "voice" is created in the process of becoming a writer. To develop artistic abilities in any form, it is important to encourage these young minds to get in touch with many aspects of their personalities.

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