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**ABSTRACT**

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Gutiérrez, Manuel Joseph, Acquiring North of the Border Culture Through the Teaching/Learning Process in Spanish-Speaking Adults Along the South Texas-Mexico Border.

Doctor of Education (Ed. D.), Educational Leadership, May, 2004, 130 pp., 1 table, references, 6 titles.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the ways in which a second culture is being communicated to Spanish-speaking adult second language learners enrolled in selected English language acquisition programs along the South Texas-Mexico border. This study focused on adult populations in need of receiving instruction in the English language and in the north of the border American culture in southern Texas.

The research questions explored in this study sought to define north of the border culture as perceived by adult students; to determine if the language programs are preparing the students culturally; and to investigate how the American culture is being communicated to adult students.

The methodology used required that administrators, professors and students be interviewed and recorded, and that the recordings be transcribed. The transcriptions were color coded according to the researcher's synesthesia color system. The three main themes that surfaced from the data were communicating culture, education and economics with their varying sub-themes.

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Historically, our educational institutions have "Americanized" immigrants, not taking into consideration the rich background that immigrants bring from their home countries and language. Today's Latinos are not giving up their language and customs as previous immigrants did in order to blend into the American culture; however, if they want to survive and succeed economically in this country, they must learn to function biculturalistically in the American culture.

The study revealed that many of the decisions to better the immigrant's life revolve around the family and the family's needs. Language institutions must work with the families to improve learning conditions and help prepare immigrants in English and the context of the border American culture. Language institutions must design and develop American culture focused programs. This would give adult language learners a foundation on which to build their target language and culture.