



**Tales from the Chihuahuan Desert:
Borderlands Narratives about Identity and Binationalism
National Endowment for the Humanities and The University of Texas at El Paso
2017 Summer Institute for Secondary School Teachers (Grades 6th–12th)**

**Instructional Lesson Plan Framework with 5E Model
for E-Portfolio with Artifacts and Readings**

**El Papel de las Fronteras en Nuestras Vidas
The Role of Borders in Our Lives**

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Cheryl Smith teaches Spanish and is the gifted/talented program coordinator at Saydel High School in Des Moines, IA. Before moving to Iowa in 2004, Cheryl taught Spanish in her home town of St. Louis, MO, where she began focusing on the issues of ethnicity and race and how our environment and personal experiences shape our identity. She has worked with both teachers and students in many roles in school communities, such as mentoring and coaching career teachers, supervising student teachers, collaborating with differentiated instruction, and mentoring and coaching gifted and talented students.

When not teaching, Cheryl spends time with her husband and three teenage children. She is an avid reader, gardener, and walker. She can be reached at smithcheryl@sayel.net and @SraCSmith.

[Resume](#)

Subject Areas: Spanish 3+, AP Spanish

Keywords: personal and public identities, global challenges, binationalism, culture, murals, self-expression, beauty and aesthetics

Grade Level: 12th grade

Time Required: 3 weeks (45 minute classes)

Instructional Objectives and Student Learning

[Iowa World Language Competencies:](#)

Interpersonal Communication Standard:

IAWL.IPL: Express self and negotiate meaning in the target language by appropriately engaging in unrehearsed conversations and/or correspondence to actively participate in social interactions (face-to-face or electronically) as a global citizen.

IAWL.4.IPL2.IM2: Handle short social interactions in everyday situations by asking and answering a variety of questions.

IAWL.4.IPL2.IM3: Usually say what I want to say about myself and my everyday life.

IAWL.4.IPL1.IM1: Participate in conversations on familiar topics using sentences and series of sentences.

Presentational standard:

IAWL.PRE: Present information, concepts, and ideas in the target language through appropriately prepared oral and written discourse to inform, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics to a diverse audience.

IAWL.4.PRE1.IM1: Make presentations on a wide variety of familiar topics using connected sentences.

IAWL.4.PRE2.IM2: Write on a wide variety of familiar topics using connected sentences.

Interpretive standard:

IAWL.ITV: Interpret authentic written/spoken/signed language by applying appropriate comprehension strategies to extract meaning and use information for personal and/or community enrichment.

IAWL.4.ITV1.IM1: Understand the main idea in messages and presentations on a variety of topics related to everyday life and personal interests and studies.

IAWL.4.ITV1.IM2: Understand the main idea in conversations that I overhear.

IAWL.4.ITV2.IM3: Understand the main idea of texts related to everyday life and personal interests or studies

Guiding Questions

Essential Question: How are our stories shaped and told by borders and walls?

Sub-Questions:

- What are the implicit and explicit functions of walls?
- What societal changes result due to borders and walls?

- What are the walls or borders (visible, invisible, tangible, intangible) that separate us from each other?

Authentic Materials and Resources

- Poems:
 - "Where You From?" - Gina Valdes
 - ["English con Salsa"](#) - Gina Valdes
- Articles:
 - [Vivir en El Paso cuesta más de doble que en Juárez](#)
 - [El viaje entre dos países que una estudiante tiene que hacer a diario para ir al colegio](#)
 - [Lin Manuel Sale en defensa de los inmigrantes](#)
- Film:
 - "Precious Knowledge" - Dos Vatos Films
- Songs:
 - ["La Frontera"](#) - Juan Gabriel
 - ["México Americano"](#) La Santa Cecilia - (En Vivo) Ft. Rebel Cats."
 - ["The Hamilton Mixtape: Immigrants \(We Get The Job Done\)."](#) Hamilton Mixtape
- Videos:
 - [La huella latina en EEUU](#)
 - [Niños cruzan la frontera cada día para ir a la escuela](#)
- Photos of murals from El Paso / Juárez
- Maps of West Texas and El Paso / Juárez region
- Bus for field trip to visit murals in Des Moines
- Computer Access
- Internet Resources
- Laptop with Projector
- Paper and Pen

Introduction

People living in border communities often exemplify a duality of identity that is unfamiliar to students who do not come from these regions. By studying how people on the border experience dual identities and cultures, students can begin to understand how geographical location and historical events shape their personal identities. Focusing on intertwining the AP Spanish themes of Personal and Private Identity, Global Challenges, and Beauty and Aesthetics, this unit seeks to engage students in conversations about how where they come from shapes who they are.

Gina Valdés illustrates this concept of dual identity beautifully in her poem "Where You From?"

Soy de aquí
y soy de allá
from here
and from there

Students will explore a variety of narratives describing the challenges of living on the border through authentic texts, audio, poetry, art, and song. They will engage in discussion and debate about what it

means to be binational and the challenges associated with biculturalism, Additionally, students will connect this learning with discussions about the roles of borders in their own communities--geographic, cultural, personal, and how lines and delineations shape us. Finally, students will analyze murals in a border community with murals in their own community to compare how our

Instructional and Lesson Activities (ENGAGE, EXPLORE, EXPLAIN)

[See student processing packet for how to implement learning plan in the classroom.](#)

Hook: Students will look at a map of their city with no school district lines removed. The students will be asked to work with a partner to create boundaries for the districts in the area based on their own understanding of where they might be. Students will then share out with the class about why they drew the lines where they did, explaining their thinking.

Next, students will compare the boundary maps that they created and compare them with the actual boundary lines. They will examine the question: Why are the borders where they are? What does this show us?

Students will read the poem "Where You From?" by Gina Valdés and analyze the theme and language use of the poem. Next they will listen to the song "La Frontera" by Juan Gabriel and analyze the theme of the song. As a formative assessment, they will compare the meanings and intents of each author regarding their experiences living on a border.

The **elements of literacy** are noted here:

- a. **Knowing**
- b. **Listening**
- c. **Memorizing**
- d. **Noticing**
- e. **Observing**
- f. **Performing**
- g. **Questioning**
- h. **Reading**
- i. **Speaking**
- j. **Thinking (metacognition)**
- k. **You** (readers, literati)
- l. **Viewing**
- m. **Writing (wonderment)** (Rodríguez, 2017)

EXTEND/ELABORATE: Additional Learning

Some students may consider learning more about border issues through the lenses of history, current events, art, literature, and oral history. Students wish to learn more through listening to narratives can examine podcasts and oral histories about people living on the border.

[Un Mundo Ideal](#)

[UTEP Institute of Oral History](#)

These students could put together a brief 3-5 minute presentation about how individuals and communities are divided by the borders between them and how those divisions are manifested in their personal identities.

Students who are Spanish-speakers can interview a family member or friend about their experiences with binationalism and borders. How has their geographical location affected their sense of identity and belonging?

EVALUATE: Assessment

Formative Assessments	Summative Assessments
<p>Presentational Speaking: In groups, students will analyze and examine photos of murals in El Paso and Juárez. As students examine the murals they will consider the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ¿Cómo escogieron los temas para los murales? 2. ¿Qué representa los murales para los artistas y las personas de la comunidad? 3. ¿Qué conexión tienen el movimiento muralista con la identidad cultural de una comunidad? <p>Students will present a short 3-5 minute presentation about the mural to the class.</p> <p>Presentational Writing Assessment: After reading and discussing the articles about El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, students will complete a guided presentational writing activity to answer the question: ¿Dónde vivirías si pudieras escoger? ¿El Paso o Ciudad Juárez? Students will use a variety of processing strategies to understand how to select specific supporting information and evidence from the articles that they have read to fully support their argument.</p>	<p>Presentational Speaking Assessment: Students will embark on a field trip through Des Moines, in which we will examine murals in our own community. As students examine the murals, they will consider the same questions that were presented in the formative assessment. Students will then be asked to complete a presentational speaking assessment, in which they are given 4 minutes to prepare a two minute comparison of the following theme: Compare and contrast the meanings of how walls reflect culture in our community with the walls in El Paso, Ciudad Juárez. Focus on either explicit or implicit meaning of literal and/or figurative walls in these communities.</p>
<p>Interpersonal Speaking Assessment: (formative)</p>	<p>Interpersonal Speaking Assessment:</p>

<p>Students will participate in a class debate. After watching the video and completing a graphic organizer in order to more fully comprehend the topic, students will participate in a class debate regarding the following topic: <i>¿Se debe permitir enseñar clases sobre la identidad cultural en las escuelas públicas?</i></p>	<p>Students will answer the following questions weekly speaking assessment questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ¿Cuál es la función de una frontera? (explícita e implícita) ● ¿Cuáles cambios entre sociedades se resultan a causa de los muros? ● ¿Cuáles son las fronteras o muros (visibles, invisibles, tangibles, intangibles) que nos separamos?
<p>Various Interpretive (reading and listening) Assessments</p>	<p>Various Interpretive (reading and listening) Assessments</p>

11. Accommodations and Modifications

Some accommodations and modifications for foreign language instruction, (Ganschow and Schneider).

Multisensory

- Teach the language using multiple input/output strategies — visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic.
- Use several learning channels simultaneously (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and mnemonic devices for memory). Research findings suggest that hearing, seeing, and saying a word (concept) simultaneously enhances memory.
- Use visual aids when appropriate. Examples are picture clues for words, hand and mouth movements to illustrate a sound, or color coded endings to illustrate gender and subject/verb agreement.

Repetitive

- For reinforcement, provide ample time to discover, practice, and use meaningful mnemonic devices, such as songs with specified grammatical sentence structures or special rhythms; reinforce concepts by using acronyms (for example, USA = United States of America), drawings, and gestures.

Structured

- Teach language concepts in a logical progression and help the student categorize concepts.
- Provide structured, explicit overviews of the material covered. Examples include study guides of the day's activities, summary sheets, graphic representations, and semantic maps.
- Directly and explicitly teach grammatical, syntactic, and morphological patterns engaging all learning channels for maximum outcomes.

Metacognitive

- Help the student think about the language concept to be learned and to explain the concept in his/her own words. This process helps the student understand why certain rules or procedures occur in the language of study. Knowing why assists the student in learning to develop self-confidence in identifying and correcting his/her own errors.

13. Additional Resources

[Google Photo Repository of murals in El Paso and Ciudad Juárez](#)

[Segundo Barrio Mural Tour](#)

[EL PASO x JUÁREZ border murals by EL MAC](#)

[Bordering 110](#)

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15. Reflection

Des Moines, which is located almost in the middle of the country, is about as far from a border as you can get. As I considered what I want students to understand about U.S.-México borderlands histories and experiences, I was mindful about not focusing solely on immigrant experiences. Rather, I wanted to illustrate the divide and internal conflicts that accompany binationalism and a deep longing to belong to two separate cultures.

By experiencing these narratives through song, poetry, and news stories about adolescents' desire to belong, students will understand that the concept of dual identity is not limited to binationalism but can reflect their own human desire to be understood in multiple contexts.