

## ASSIGNMENT: LEARNING ABOUT YOUR STUDENTS

### PART A: Developing a plan

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- ① In collaboration with a partner, review the questions discussed in Activity 2, Questions to Ask About Culture.
- ② List specific questions or information that would help you in working with the students in your classroom. Focus on the specific student you have chosen as the subject of this course.
- ③ Develop a plan that details how each bit of information might be obtained. You will find that the information must be gathered in a number of ways. Some of these, suggested by Hernandez (1989) will include:

**Observation:** observing the student in the classroom, in free play, in his or her home or neighborhood, or in various other types of situations.

**Participation:** participating with the student in relevant activities, trips, tours of his or her neighborhood, or other.

**Interview:** interview the student, the parents, extended family members, others who work with the student, members of the student's culture, or other.

Caution: Asking questions about culture is very touchy. What may seem like an innocuous question

to one person may be a private, or threatening subject to others. In planning any questions for interviews, be sure to check with other members of the culture to see if the questions are appropriate, and how they might best be worded.

**Student projects:** Students may do research projects about various aspects of their culture, biographies of family members, maps of their neighborhood that include those spots they frequent most, and other projects limited only by imagination.

- ④ Organize the information to be collected according to the method of collection. This will be used later in the course as a basis for designing a specific project. **KEEP THE RESULTS OF THIS ACTIVITY IN YOUR PORTFOLIO.**
- ⑤ Meet with your partner and another pair. Each pair should present their plan for discussion and feedback.

### PART B: Developing teaching opportunities in everyday routines

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- ① Handout 8 lists some "teaching opportunities" that you may use to prepare your students for American culture. Review Handout 8 and choose one routine or custom in each of the arenas listed i.e., in class, in school, after school. Develop a "culture capsule" for each of these routines or customs. A culture capsule is "...a paragraph or so of explanation of one minimal



difference between a North American and a target custom, along with several illustrative photos or relevant realia (Seelye, 1984, p. 129).

Each culture capsule should contain a short description of how each routine or custom is carried out in your own school or culture and how it is carried out in the culture of your selected student(s). Describe the policies and procedures surrounding each routine.

You may obtain this information by conducting interviews with the students, parents, or other cultural informants. It is best to obtain the information from more than one source. Identify the sources of information in your written product.

- ② For each routine described above, develop a plan detailing how you would help your target student to learn and understand how the routine is carried out in your school or culture.
- ③ When the above have been completed, meet in small groups to present, discuss and critique your plan with peers. You may revise your assignment, depending upon the feedback received, and include this in your portfolio.
- ④ Complete the final stage of the assignment by implementing your plan with your selected student. Write a brief description of how you carried out the plan and what the results were. Meet again in small groups to report on the implementation. Include the final report in your portfolio.

