

CULTURE, L2 SELF, AND EMOTION IN THE DIGITAL REALM:  
DEVELOPING LEARNERS' INTEREST IN  
CONTINUING TO STUDY SPANISH

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present study centers on developing cross-cultural awareness using contextualized cultural projects. Drawing on the ubiquity of social media in learners' lives, I used Pinterest as a means of exploring real-world cultural topics and leading learners to visualize themselves interacting in the target culture.

To evaluate learners' subjective experiences, I adopted a qualitative approach and collected data through pre- and post-study questionnaires, cultural projects, journal entries, and a focus group. Twenty-eight undergraduate students enrolled in two intensive review introductory Spanish courses collaboratively completed two cultural projects. In each project, they worked in groups to explore the target culture on Pinterest. Then they used the information from Pinterest to complete a written activity and an oral activity. After each cultural project, learners wrote an individual journal entry (in English) to reflect more deeply on what they had learned.

Following an iterative approach (Charmaz, 2006), I did a line-by-line coding of all written data produced on Pinterest and in learners' journal entries. I developed categories and themes based off the recurring words and phrases I found and analyzed the patterns through the lens of Gee's (2011) theory of D/discourse. I also used descriptive statistics to analyze the data produced on the pre- and post-study questionnaires and triangulated learners' responses with data from Pinterest and journal entries. Findings revealed that in the first cultural project, all 28 learners enacted a jet-setting tourist when exploring the target culture on Pinterest. However, once they had time to reflect, they began to progress in their cross-cultural awareness. In the second cultural project, results showed that when learners made emotional connections with the

target culture, their cross-cultural awareness and interest in continuing to study Spanish increased.

Findings suggest that cross-cultural awareness was not a straightforward progression nor did learners move toward cross-cultural awareness at the same pace. Instead, results indicate that cross-cultural awareness is a recursive process. Additionally, findings show that Pinterest served as a “narrative hook” (Freadman, 2014, p. 380) and piqued learners’ interests in culture. However, an integral component in cultivating a deeper, more profound understanding of culture in foreign language learning is reflection.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

“Because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity. It is not just an accumulation of skills and information, but a process of becoming – to become a certain person or, conversely, to avoid becoming a certain person” (Wenger, 1998, p. 215).

Learning, as described by Wenger, can be a transformative experience. In particular, foreign language learning is an opportunity for learners to grow as speakers of a foreign language and begin to consider how they, as multilinguals, fit into an ever-growing multicultural society. However, how does this transformative experience occur? As Wenger stated, the learning process is more than acquiring skills and information. It is about connecting to the humanistic characteristics of learning (del Valle, 2014). Humanistic characteristics of foreign language learning center on the relational aspects of a language, which cultural learning naturally imparts. That is, when learners connect to the target culture when learning a foreign language, they engage with otherness (Byram, 1997) and begin to see different ways of being and thinking in the world. Such an approach to learning a foreign language informs who they are, who others are in the world, and sets them on a path of transformation.

However, as many educators have mostly likely experienced in their own foreign language classrooms, learners do not always connect to the target culture in the manner described above. Instead, they often objectify culture as knowledge to acquire or question its place in foreign language learning altogether (Chavez, 2002, 2005; Drewelow, 2012; Drewelow & Mitchell, 2015). In my own personal experience as a foreign language educator, I have also often observed this type of disconnect between learners and their cultural learning. Instead of conceptualizing

the target culture as a way to inform their understanding of the world, in my experience, learners instead usually view the target culture as facts or as supplemental to their language acquisition. For example, I have had the same type of conversation with learners at different levels when studying Spanish as a foreign language. When we learn vocabulary related to different nationalities, learners usually ask why their textbook uses *estadounidenses* (Americans from The United States, U.S.) to describe people who live in the U.S. and not just *americanos* (Americans). When I teach this unit, I always explain that people who live in Central and South America are Americans as well, and Spanish distinguishes between nationalities by using the word for the country (e.g., *estadounidenses* are people from *Los Estados Unidos*, or the U.S.). Learners in my courses always have struggled with this concept. Usually to them, people from the U.S. are the only “Americans.” Thus, this new concept is always perplexing for many learners, and they grapple with this idea. Some do not understand that people outside of the U.S. are identifiable as American. Others, while acknowledging that there are “Americans” in other parts of the world, qualify this recognition with a pro-U.S. statement (e.g., “Well, we are the best kind of American”). This kind of sentiment has not been unique to one individual or one level of foreign language learning. I have often observed this ethnocentric viewpoint from the introductory to the advanced level, one in which learners consistently resist otherness and view the world from their own cultural lens. While these comments do display misconceived viewpoints of the target culture, they are inevitable, as they help people cope with difference and make sense of an “outside” or foreign world (Saville-Troike, 1993). Therefore, what I have observed in my classrooms are not comments necessarily intended to be malicious but instead are learners’ attempts to make sense of something that do not align with their experiences or their current conceptualizations of the world.

In addition to their understandings of people in the U.S. as the only Americans, learners in my courses also have often conveyed through comments and remarks about the world around them that they conceive the outside world uniformly. In other words, people who are not from the U.S. are a one-size-fits-all *other*, regardless of their language, background, culture, country, etc. When learners' experiences during foreign language learning conflict with what they have originally imagined about the *other*, they often cope with these realizations by homogenizing cultural difference, i.e. in my case, they view all Spanish-speaking cultures as the same or only as variations of one overarching culture.

Even after continually observing these worldviews in learners and attempting to address them, the question remained of what the reason was for this disconnect between learners and the target culture. If we as educators are teaching learners about culture, then why are they not connecting with it and thus allowing it to transform their conceptions of the world?

These observations and questions led me to conduct a study that took a closer look at learners' opinions of culture (Drewelow & Mitchell, 2015). Findings showed that learners, even at the advanced level of foreign language study, often view culture as useful only for specific purposes, such as traveling or studying abroad. The results from this study also revealed that learners at the advanced level of language study did not incorporate what they learned about culture into their daily lives and saw no reason to do so. Instead, they viewed culture as a tool that aided their understanding of a foreign language in terms of linguistic development. These findings therefore supported my observations – learners often do not connect with culture in their foreign language learning experience thereby preventing the transformation and broadening of their worldviews. While these viewpoints were representative of ways in which learners deal with difference, these conceptions showed that learners were still not connecting with the target

culture. There was a gap in what they were learning about the culture and how they were conceptualizing the culture.

Theoretically, there are many different ways to address learners' objectification of culture in foreign language learning. However, the question remains of how to go about addressing these objectifications during the foreign language learning experience. Based off these aforementioned experiences, observations, and research studies on the integration of culture in foreign language learning, I deduced that the missing link in learners' transformations seemed to be an emotional connection with the target culture. Instead of forming a connection with the target culture, learners were objectifying it as facts and knowledge to acquire or as a supplementary tool that could enhance their communicative competence. Such an approach to culture therefore was limiting their ability to develop a deeper awareness of culture, or cross-cultural awareness. Cross-cultural awareness develops through a process of learning in which learners undergo an internal transformation because they begin to recognize the self and others as culturally situated subjects. This cross-cultural awareness is vital to a transformative process in foreign language learning because it focuses on the relational aspects of language learning. In other words, cross-cultural awareness centers on leading learners to understand culture as guiding their views of themselves and of the world around them.

Therefore, this current study explores ways to cultivate emotional connections to the target culture so that learners develop their cross-cultural awareness. In particular, this study looks at using positive emotions, specifically interest, in foreign language learning to draw learners in, connect them to the target culture, and set them on a path toward cross-cultural awareness.

## **The Growing Need for Cross-cultural Awareness**

Globalization, according to Blommaert (2010), is the rapid growth in the dispersing of “capital, goods, people, images and discourses around the globe” (p.13) and has created an environment where peoples and cultures from different backgrounds have more opportunities for interaction with one another. Increased mass migrations, the development of global technologies, and instant access to information have merged and blended cultures and peoples all around the globe (Schenker, 2013). With this heightened connectivity, diversity is also growing, therefore establishing a need for people today to possess deepened cross-cultural awareness so that they are able to interact with others in more than one language (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2014).

Globalization has also reshaped the landscape of foreign language learning. The world is now more multicultural and multilingual, and it is critical that foreign language learners can use their language skills in diverse contexts with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Furthermore, the increased technological developments and changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have created a culturally and linguistically hybrid world, thus requiring a different approach to teaching foreign languages (Kramersch, 2014). Such approaches must move past teaching sole communicative competence and consider pedagogies that take into account the hybridization that is characteristic of our post-modern world. That is, new pedagogies that are “more reflective, interpretative, historically grounded, and politically engaged” (Kramersch, 2014, p. 296) are needed in order to lead learners to develop a disposition where they can “communicate with respect and cultural understanding in more than one language” (ACTFL, 2014).

## **Connecting Learners to Their Foreign Language Experience: A Digital Approach**

To develop such a disposition, learners must be interested in learning about culture. When they are interested, they engage more, go beneath the surface of learning about culture, and are able to connect on a deeper level (Schenker, 2013; Reeve, 2005; Yulin, 2013). However, the question remains of *how* to develop learners' interests in culture and *what* is interesting to them. As research shows, for learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when content is relevant, their interests spark (Yulin, 2013). Additionally, many learners today are digital natives (Prensky, 2001). Their lives center around technology, from their personal assistant, Siri, on their iPhones to getting news via Twitter; technology is a way of life for them, and as a result, they are "native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games, and the Internet" (Prensky, 2001, p. 1). These learners constantly connect to the Internet or with others via social media and have never known a life without the influence of technology (Prensky, 2001). Therefore, being a digital native determines what they consider relevant and important (of news, pop culture, etc.). Breaking news is now reported within a tenth of a second and through innumerable amounts of digital technologies, giving students today immediate access to current events (Clifford, Friesen, & Lock, 2004). As such, digital natives find relevancy in immediacy, meaning that whatever is happening now and in this moment is pertinent. Further, as a part of their digital culture, learners today not only desire to access information instantaneously but also have the power to control what, when, and how they find information. In part due to this immediate access and the ability to control the information they learn, these digital natives expect to be able to jump from one topic to another and be able to decide when they want to do things (Clifford et al., 2004; Prensky, 2001). By being able to choose when, where, and how they find out information in today's world, digital natives are an empowered generation that wants to be in charge of their own learning, whether inside or outside of the classroom. Inside the classroom, they no longer

want to sit through a lecture; rather, they prefer to conduct their own research (Clifford et al., 2004). They also want to learn about topics that they find interesting and expect to be able to choose those topics. When what they are studying is interesting to them, digital natives invest more in their learning and engage on a deeper level with the content because they find purpose in what they are learning (Paily, 2013; Reeve, 2005; Yulin, 2013). In other words, they begin to understand the ‘why’ behind what they are doing.

### **Nurturing Cultural Awareness in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Foreign Language Learning**

Understanding what is relevant to learners today is vital for creating pedagogies that interest them and lead them to a more profound conceptualization of culture. However, another characteristic of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning to consider is *how* to connect learners to relevant, real-world cultural content. While deepened cultural awareness is important for communicating and interacting in today’s multilingual communities (ACTFL, 2014), cultivating this concept in foreign language learning can be challenging (Garrett-Rucks, 2013; Moeller & Nugent, 2014). Culture is a constantly changing, multilayered notion that is not easily definable nor easily categorized (Furstenberg, 2010). Additionally, as Spanish grows as a local and global language, the decision of what parts of culture and when or how to incorporate it is becoming increasingly difficult (del Valle, 2014; Drewelow & Mitchell, 2015). However, educators can use digital natives’ interests to connect with one another and with the outside world (Prensky, 2001) as an avenue to develop cross-cultural awareness in foreign language learning. Additionally, because the 21<sup>st</sup> century is technology-driven (Kramsch, 2013; Paily, 2013), foreign language educators can also use technology to teach culture and connect learners to real world and relevant cultural content (Yulin, 2013).

One form of technology that people use in foreign language learning is social media. Social media is an interactive way in which learners can engage with relevant content and with one

another, and it allows them to use the target language to explore and discover their own interests in the target culture (Chartrand, 2012; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Learners can use the target language to express their opinions, share ideas with one another, and build communities through collaborating on social media (Chartrand, 2012).

Social media is also an appealing vehicle for educators to connect with their learners because it is relevant to them (learners), as demonstrated by the number of learners who not only own digital devices, but who also participate in social networking. For example, in 2011, 98 percent of learners owned a digital device (Bennett, 2011). While only eight percent of 18-29 year-olds had social networking profiles in 2005, in January of 2014, 89 percent of 18-29 year olds had social networking profiles (PEW Research Center, 2014). This participation in social networking is not only present at the university-aged level. In 2015, 92 percent of 13-17 year olds indicated they also participated in daily Internet use and social media (PEW Research Center, 2015), and more than half (59%) of all children are on some type of social networking site by age 10 (Knowthenet, 2014).

In terms of developing cross-cultural awareness in foreign language learning, social media use opens doors to a new and unknown world (Kern, 2014). In other words, through social media, learners can explore and discover new concepts, learn about diverse perspectives, and experience different cultures. While foreign language textbooks cover a variety of cultural topics through examples of how people live in different cultures (e.g., a person ordering food at a restaurant), research has shown that students are less interested in learning about these topics from a textbook because they deem them as outdated, not relevant, and not related to their everyday lives (Dechert & Kastner, 1989; Schenker, 2013). Through social media use, learners can engage with content that is from the real world (Paily, 2013). Furthermore, interaction with

real-world content via social media is beneficial for developing cultural awareness because learners can gain an insider's view of the target culture from within the four walls of their classroom. For example, they can use social media (and are not limited to one social media site) to explore and access real-time products, practices, and perspectives of the target culture. That is, social media gives learners opportunities to interact with real-world cultural phenomena because it allows them to see and experience the cultural changes as they are happening.

### **The Current Study**

Foreign language learning provides a unique and appropriate environment to cultivate this kind of cultural awareness because otherness is at the core of learning a different language. The foreign language learning setting therefore is an ideal environment to teach about otherness and encourage learners to develop a respect for and understanding of difference. The purpose of learning a *foreign* language is to be able to communicate with people who come from different backgrounds and different cultures. Therefore, this learning context is a situation where educators can focus on developing an understanding of otherness through in-depth approaches to teaching and learning about culture. However, an extensive approach to teaching and learning about culture that would ultimately lead to increased cross-cultural awareness has often been reserved for courses in which learners maintain a higher proficiency level (i.e. intermediate- or advanced-level courses) or when studying abroad (Garrett-Rucks, 2013). At the introductory level, educators tend to evade focusing on cultural topics (Allen, 2014; Sercu, 2005), which is a missed opportunity, given that the majority of learners in foreign language learning enroll in introductory-level courses and do not continue learning at an advanced level or study abroad (Garrett-Rucks, 2013).

Based off of the tendency of fact-oriented approaches to culture at the introductory level and the fact that the majority of foreign-language learners discontinue their foreign language study

after this level, I designed the present study to center on developing cross-cultural awareness in introductory-level Spanish courses. I developed two contextualized cultural projects with the purpose of leading learners to visualize themselves interacting in the target culture. Drawing on the ubiquity of social media in learners' lives, I used Pinterest as a means of exploring real-world cultural topics and activating learners' imagination. The purpose of the cultural projects was to pique and nurture learners' interest in culture, lead them to investigate diverse cultural topics on a deeper, more profound level, and to encourage their interest in continuing to study Spanish by connecting with the target culture. I created the two projects so that learners progressed through a process of learning in which they explored their own interests in the target culture (as related to the project topics). My goal was to encourage learners to invest more time in what they were learning, make emotional connections with the target culture, and develop a desire to continue studying Spanish.

In order to evaluate learners' subjective experiences as they engaged in the projects and how these experiences relate to the development of cross-cultural awareness and motivation to continue studying Spanish, I adopted a qualitative approach. I collected data through pre- and post-study questionnaires, cultural projects, journal entries, and a focus group, all of which provided insight into the role positive emotions (e.g., interest) play during foreign language learning.

### **Culturally Focused Pedagogies Relevant to Today**

This study is of particular interest to foreign language educators at all levels (i.e. introductory to advanced level), language program directors, and other administrators, etc. in foreign language programs because it provides examples of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning in which learners engage with meaningful content through current and innovative approaches. While this investigation takes place in a Spanish language classroom, it is applicable to all languages because it can easily be

adapted to fit the needs of different languages, levels, and types of learning environments (e.g. online, hybrid, or face-to-face).

In the project that I developed for the purpose of this study, I propose a ready-to-use guide for implementing social media in the foreign language classroom and exhibit how it engages learners in the exploration of diverse cultural topics and leads them to imagine themselves interacting in the target culture. I also consider how learners' visualizations of themselves as future language users affect their interest in culture and their motivation to study a foreign language. Because learners who connect with a topic tend to be more invested in it (Reeve, 2005), I explore how this curriculum can lead learners toward cross-cultural awareness by using content that is of interest to learners and allows them to connect emotionally to what they are learning.

This study has several pedagogical implications in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It provides significant insight into what interests learners socialized in a digital world, which is invaluable when designing different activities to use inside and outside of the language classroom. It also highlights the need for more reflective opportunities for both learners and educators alike. In particular, this study includes activities that afford learners the chance to reflect on the purpose behind their learning.

The study intends to contribute to the theoretical understanding of emotions in foreign language learning, specifically by investigating the effect of positive emotions. Previous research (Elkhafaifi, 2005; Horwitz, 2010; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Zhao, Guo, & Dynia, 2013; to name a few) has focused on negative emotions, i.e. anxiety, and their effects during foreign language learning most often and has neglected the potential of positive emotions, i.e. interest (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012a). Therefore, the project I designed and proposed for the purpose of this

study incorporates interest as a positive emotion and examines learners' interests in continuing to study Spanish. Izard (2011) asserts that without interest, people would not be inclined to do much of anything; thus, interest is a motivating emotion, and I therefore investigate how to activate and nurture learners' interests and use these interests as a motivating force during foreign language learning. The specific focus of this study is connecting learners' interests to culture so that they engage with the target culture and become more emotionally connected to it; thus, this investigation also intends to provide additional insights to the theoretical understanding of how to develop cross-cultural awareness inside the foreign language learning experience through a *process* of learning. In this process of learning, interest plays a central role in drawing learners in, engaging them with the target culture, and motivating them to study Spanish even more so that they continue to increase in their cross-cultural awareness.

## **Chapter Overview**

Following this introduction, I next begin with Chapter 2, in which I review appropriate and relevant literature that guided the development of this investigation and establish the relevance of my study. Chapter 2 begins with an overview of past and present methods including approaches to teaching a foreign language, and then considers how these methods or approaches view the role of culture. Considering that the teaching and learning of culture is the primary focus of this study, I next define and outline the definition of culture that I adopted. The next section of Chapter 2 looks at another main objective of this study, which is motivating learners to continue studying a foreign language. Building off the understanding that emotion is what drives motivation (MacIntyre, MacKinnon, & Clément, 2009), I focus on both motivation and emotion. In particular, I outline how scholars have previously conceptualized motivation and discuss the motivational framework adopted for the purpose of this study, which is Dörnyei's 'L2 Self Motivational System'. The chapter transitions into the history of emotional studies in the field of

psychology and discusses how motivational and emotional theories are often separated in the field of foreign language learning. Moving into more discussion that is specific to emotions, I look at positive and negative emotions and consider the effect of both on foreign language learning. The next section considers the potentially beneficial effects positive emotions in foreign language learning, particularly interest. After outlining the connection between emotions and motivation, Chapter 2 discusses two different types of interest that can occur. I move into a specific discussion of the type of interest in the present study: interest that is low in motivational intensity. Specifically, I consider how interest that is low in motivational intensity is most appropriate for foreign language learning. Chapter 2 then focuses on other motivating factors, specifically collaborative learning environments (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). In this section, I provide the overarching theoretical framework that guided the development of this study, which is a social constructivist approach. This section considers the role that Activity Theory (Wells, 2002) plays in a social constructivist learning environment and specifically focuses on how learners use their dialogue as a mediating tool to enact different visualizations of themselves as future language users (Gee, 2011). Chapter 2 concludes with an overview of different pedagogical approaches that have incorporated the use of social media to foster a social learning environment, to lead learners to deeper understandings of culture, and to cultivate their interests in foreign language learning.

Chapter 3 outlines the methods used in the present study. In this chapter, I describe the level of study selected for this investigation and then move into a summary of the curriculum that I adapted for the present study. From an Activity Theory perspective (Wells, 2002), which I describe in more detail in Chapter 3, I created two different cultural projects that each included three phases of activities. Chapter 3 also provides the plan for data collection and analysis. As for

data collection measures, I used three different instruments – a questionnaire, self-reporting journals, and a focus group. Each of these sources of data provide insight into how learners progressed in their visualizations of themselves as future language users, how these visualizations affected their interests in culture, and how their interests in culture ultimately tied into their motivations to continue studying Spanish. To analyze the data, I followed Charmaz's (2006) Constructivist Grounded Theory in which I coded all of the data first for recurring words and phrases. Then I developed categories based off these patterns and trends, and finally, to clarify the categories I derived themes that are more specific.

Chapter 4 begins the data analysis of this study. In both Chapters 4 and 5, I analyze the data through the lens of Gee's (2011) theory of D/discourse and specifically look for ways that learners used their discourse to enact socially recognizable versions of themselves as future language users. Chapter 4 looks at learners' data from the first cultural project (specifically, their Pinterest posts and journal entries) and investigates how learners enacted visualizations of their future self when exploring real-world cultural topics on Pinterest. This chapter also examines how opportunities for reflection may affect the evolution of learners' visualizations of themselves as future language users. Furthermore, it considers how these visualizations influence learners' approach to culture as well as their level of interest in culture.

In Chapter 5, I build off the findings from Chapter 4 and look at the emotional connections learners make with the target culture during their second cultural project. By analyzing the Pinterest posts and journal entries from the second project, this chapter considers the effect that an emotional connection has on the development of learners' cross-cultural awareness and subsequent interest to continue studying Spanish. Chapter 5 also gives a comprehensive perspective of the present study by focusing on the entire process of learning that learners

underwent in their introductory foreign language experience. That is, in Chapter 5, I compare learners' visualizations of themselves with their emotional connections between the first cultural project and the target culture in the second cultural project. Such analysis examines the evolution of learners' cross-cultural awareness as a result of completing two culturally focused projects.

Chapter 6 begins with a summary of the results in Chapters 4 and 5. I discuss the different pedagogical and theoretical implications this study has for the field of foreign language learning. Chapter 6 also outlines the different limitations of the study through a discussion of suggestions for areas of this investigation that could be improved in the future. The chapter concludes with insights for future research. That is, I discuss future work that this study could inspire and provide some recommendations for foreign language learning.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter situates the present study within the context of foreign language learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by focusing on the role that learners' interests play in learning a foreign language today. The literature review begins with a discussion of the teaching and learning of culture. Considering that a main objective of this study is to cultivate interest in culture in order to foster learners' cross-cultural awareness, I focus on previous and current approaches to teaching culture in foreign language learning. This section also looks at learners' definitions of culture and demonstrates the need for learners to gain a deeper understanding of culture in the globalized world of today.

The next section starts by discussing previous motivational frameworks in the field of foreign language learning because another main objective of the study is motivating learners to continue studying a foreign language. I focus on the motivational structure selected to frame this study, Dörnyei's (2009) 'L2 Self Motivational System', which centers on activating learners' imaginations through visualizations of the L2 self. Dörnyei's motivational framework is best suited for explaining motivation in language learning environments diversified as result of globalization and therefore is most appropriate for this study (Dörnyei, 2010). This section also describes how in this study, Dörnyei's motivational framework empowers learners to want to learn by activating their imagination.

In the next section of this chapter, I draw on the understanding that motivation and emotion are intrinsically linked because emotions are natural motivators (MacIntyre et al., 2009).

Therefore, I look at the history of emotional studies in the field of psychology and describe their

influence and use in foreign language learning. After establishing the background on emotional theories, I then differentiate between positive and negative emotions and outline the different effects of each type of emotion in foreign language learning. While negative emotions have received considerably more attention from researchers in the field, positive emotions have the power to undo lingering effects of negative emotions, broaden learners' cognition, and help them absorb a foreign language more easily (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012a). Accordingly, this section further focuses on the concept of positive emotions, highlighting the importance of positive emotions to create a broadening learning experience for foreign language learners.

In the next section, I define the positive emotion implemented in this study, which is interest. After defining interest, I proceed to outline the different types that can occur in the learning environment and describe the interest at the center of investigation in this study. To conclude the discussion on motivation and emotion, I then focus on the relationship between interest, L2 self, and motivation, specifically linking the three together through the activation of learners' imaginations.

As Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) described, motivation in foreign language learning is also dependent upon collaborative, social learning environments where learners are actively involved in the acquisition of knowledge. When learners work together to achieve a common goal, for which they all ultimately receive the same reward, they are more engaged, invested, and motivated (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Therefore, the next section of this chapter focuses on how to activate learners' imaginations and motivate them to learn through a social constructivist-learning environment. For the purpose of this study, I follow a social constructivist approach to learning based off Vygotsky's (1978) explanation of learning as a social process. By combining this social constructivist approach with Wells' (2002) conceptualization of Activity Theory and

Gee's (2011) theory of D/discourse, the section looks at the role the environment plays in developing learners' visualizations of their future L2 self.

In order to engage 21<sup>st</sup> century learners more effectively, learning has to be relevant and interesting (Yulin, 2013). Therefore, this section also examines how social learning tools can be used to create collaborative pedagogies grounded in social constructivism that lead to relevant and interesting activities for digital natives, in particular Activity Theory.

To conclude this literature review, I discuss how previous scholars have used social media in foreign language learning. In order to inform the selection of a Web 2.0 tool for the present study, which is Pinterest, this section looks at a review of ways in which scholars have elicited digital natives' interests in culture via Web 2.0 technologies. Through this review, I demonstrate why Pinterest is most appropriate for activating digital natives' imagination, developing their interest in culture, and motivating them to continue studying a foreign language.

### **The Role of Culture in Language Instruction: Past and Present Methods and Approaches**

Historically, foreign language learning has centered on linguistic development. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century into the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Grammar-Translation Method, Audio-Lingual Method, and Direct (Berlitz) Method were some of the most popularized methods of teaching a foreign language (Brandl, 2008; Kramsch, 2012; Richards & Rogers, 2014). While these are by far not the only methods and approaches used previously in foreign language learning, a discussion of these three does provide general insight into how culture has been taught in the profession over the years.

The Grammar-Translation Method was the predominant method for teaching foreign languages in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century (Brandl, 2008). The emphasis was on linguistic input, grammar, and vocabulary and more specifically, on the memorization of rules. Thus, linguistic translation drills were at the core of how learners studied a foreign language. However, this

method lacked an oral focus, and an increased demand for oral proficiency led to the development of new methods that focused not only on written skills but also on oral communication (Brandl, 2008).

The Direct Method focused on linguistic proficiency and spontaneous language use (Brandl, 2008). In this method, grammar and vocabulary were the key elements because they were the knowledge base learners needed in order to communicate effectively in the language. There was still quite a bit of resistance to this method though because it required educators to possess an extremely high skill level in the foreign language and was not maintainable (Richards & Rogers, 2014). Thus, the demand for native speakers or highly competent L2 speakers led to the decline of the Direct Method (Brandl, 2008).

Another method that replaced the Grammar-Translation Method was the Audio-Lingual Method. As with the Direct Method, the focus of the Audio-Lingual Method was on oral proficiency (Brandl, 2008). Based on behaviorist theories, Audio-Lingual Method centered on training learners through drill repetitions such as “substitution drills, variation drills, translation drills, and response drills” (Brandl, 2008, p. 3). In these exercises, language learning was “a mechanical process of habit formation and automatization” (Brandl, 2008, p. 3). The influence of this method was so strong that traces of it remain in teaching methods and textbooks today (Brandl, 2008). However, some critiques of this method were that (a) the native speaker was the perfect model; (b) the method centered on the teacher, not the learners; (c) the method did not engage learners in meaningful communication; and (d) the hypercorrection of errors created higher levels of anxiety for learners (Brandl, 2008).

In terms of teaching culture, all of the aforementioned methods conceptualized culture as Big C culture, or the culture of the literature and arts that were definable by separate and distinct

nation-states (Kramersch, 2012). They also treated culture as supplementary to language acquisition because the focus of each of the three methods was on learners' linguistic development (Brandl, 2008; Richards & Rogers, 2014). Furthermore, the linguistic output produced in these methods was not communicative in nature, meaning that learners memorized phrases or sentences to repeat but did not learn how to engage in meaningful communication.

Therefore, around 1970s and 1980s, a "communicative revolution" (Kramersch, 2014, p. 301) occurred. Foreign language learning began to emphasize the need for skills that were applicable and usable in everyday life, which was a missing component in the previously mentioned methods. The methods prior to the communicative revolution focused solely on the memorization of linguistic forms. However, after this shift occurred, purposeful communication moved to the forefront of foreign language learning.

**The communicative revolution.** Communicative Language Teaching differs from the previously mentioned methods because theorists in the field consider it an approach, not a method. The difference between a method and an approach is that a method outlines when, what, and how to teach the language whereas an approach allows for a variety of different methods to be used, all with the same objective. The guiding objective and purpose of the Communicative Language Teaching approach is to develop learners' communicative competence, which is the ability to communicate in real-world situations (Brandl, 2008). The focus is on teaching learners what to say (linguistic skills), when to say it (social skills), how to say it (discourse skills), and how to repair issues when mistakes are made (Brandl, 2008). Within this approach, learners move to the center of instruction and the teacher moves to a role of facilitator. To achieve a higher level of communicative skills, learners begin participating in cooperative learning inside the classroom, which represents a shift from their previous passive role in the pre-communicative

approach era (Richards & Rogers, 2014). The critiques of this approach though are that it still puts emphasis on the monolingual native speaker as the perfect model for language instruction and does not take into account learners' diverse needs and goals in 21st century language learning (Richards & Rogers, 2014).

***Approach to culture in Communicative Language Teaching.*** Communicative Language Teaching grew in popularity in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and is still in place in many textbooks and institutions today. As for cultural instruction, little c culture, which is the culture of everyday life (Kramersch, 2012), became popular with the communicative revolution. When communication and interaction became a central tenet of language learning, little c culture also moved to the forefront because it reinforced the relational aspect of the Communicative Language Teaching approach (Kramersch, 2012). That is, the communicative revolution focused heavily on teaching purposeful language use for everyday interaction. Therefore, little c culture is the most common cultural focus because it supports the fundamental role of Communicative Language Teaching – “how to get things done in the target country” (Kramersch, 2012, p. 66).

With the native speaker as the model of instruction, the modernist approach of “one language = one culture” has been the mentality of textbooks and educators alike in the communicative era (Kramersch, 2012, p. 66; Richards & Rogers, 2014). Because of this mentality, teachers educate learners about culture just as they educate them about grammar and vocabulary points – as something to memorize (Kramersch, 2012).

One approach to cultural instruction in the communicative era has been the four Fs: food, fashion, festivals, and folklore (Byrd, 2014). Working under the premise of this approach, educators highlight tangible, cultural tidbits that represent one-dimensional aspects of culture. Therefore, this type of instructional approach does not take into consideration the perspectives

behind the cultural products and practices. Instead, it centers on teaching culture as separate from language learning or as occurring after linguistic acquisition. Within Communicative Language Teaching, this approach to cultural instruction allows language acquisition to remain at the center and culture to continue to play a supplementary role.

This approach does not fully encompass what the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) recommends for teaching culture. To combat this ongoing objectification of culture and emphasize the centrality of culture in foreign language learning, the ACTFL developed *The National Standards* (1999, 2006, and 2015). In *The Standards*, (1999, 2006, 2015), culture became a central component of language instruction (Drewelow & Mitchell, 2015; Schulz, 2007). In particular, the newest version of *The Standards*, which are *The World Readiness Standards* (2015), emphasize instructional methods that lead learners to relate cultural practices and products to cultural perspectives (the 3 Ps). Understanding the perspectives behind the products and practices in the target culture leads learners to develop a more profound understanding of culture and to value intercultural interactions (ACTFL, 2014). The importance lies within the relationship between the 3Ps; that is, learners should be able to “use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between” the products, practices, and perspectives in order that they might develop a disposition to “interact with cultural competence and understanding” (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015).

### **Globalization: Ushering in New Changes in Language Learning**

Despite the extensive amount of research and work within the profession to move culture to the forefront of language instruction, there is still an ongoing debate about when to teach culture, how to teach it, and what to teach (Kramersch, 2012). Globalization ushered in the post-modern era (Blommaert, 2010; Kramersch, 2014), an era in which increased communication, connectivity, and interaction have created opportunities for peoples and cultures all over the world to interact

with one another on a daily basis (Schenker, 2013). Because of all of this moving, mixing, blending, and shifting, the global has become local, and the world is now a global village (Drewelow & Mitchell, 2015). Therefore, we really are no longer able to define culture and language by national boundaries anymore; yet we often still do inside the foreign language classroom (Kramersch, 2014). There is often still a mismatch between language use in the real world and the approach to teaching a foreign language inside the classroom (Kramersch, 2014). For example, the contact between new cultures and peoples creates new forms, meanings, and new ways of saying and doing things (postmodern era). However, the traditional teaching methods inside the classroom continue to relegate language and culture to specific recognizable national borders and reflect a more modernist era (Kramersch, 2014). Additionally, inside this kind of modernist foreign language classroom, culture is still of secondary importance. That is, it is either supplementary to linguistic acquisition or reserved for higher-level language courses (Allen, 2014; Byrnes, 2010; Chavez, 2002, 2005; Drewelow & Mitchell, 2015; Kramersch, 2014; Martel, 2013). Specifically at the introductory level of foreign language instruction, learning maintains its focus on the grammatical syllabus (Martel, 2013) instead of adopting culturally focused approaches to language learning. This type of approach to foreign language instruction reinforces the long-held belief that language and culture are separate entities and that it is possible to learn one without the other.

In the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, foreign language learning needs pedagogies that encourage learners to use their language skills to explore diverse cultural perspectives, leading them to consider multiple viewpoints and think more critically and deeply on the relationship between the products, practices, and perspectives of a culture (ACTFL, 2014). A more in-depth understanding of the relationship between the 3 Ps ultimately leads learners to discover the

perspectives behind the products and practices and “value such intercultural experiences” (ACTFL, 2014).

### **Learners’ Approach to Culture in Foreign Language Learning**

This objectification and misconception of the role of culture in foreign language learning can be found in learners’ perspectives as well. In Chavez’s (2002, 2005) and Drewelow’s (2012) studies, first- and second-year learners reported that they viewed culture and language as separate entities. As a result, they often held an incomplete view of culture, one where they either questioned the type of culture that should be taught in foreign language learning (Chavez, 2005) or one that objectified culture altogether (Drewelow, 2012).

These approaches of culture are not just in the first and second year foreign language learning experience. Learners at the advanced level of study have also considered culture to be a set of facts to be memorized or as country-specific (Drewelow & Mitchell, 2015). Additionally, learners in Drewelow and Mitchell’s (2015) study reported they believed culture to be most useful and important when studying or traveling abroad and not as informing their everyday language learning experience.

For learners today, language use and cultural awareness are no longer “an object of pride”, but instead learners now desire knowledge of a foreign language for “its exchange value” or the value it adds to their “economic and symbolic capital” (Kramersch, 2014, p. 301). With this understanding in mind, learners view culture as something to acquire and not as a process of learning in which they develop a disposition that informs their language use and leads them to become culturally competent language users.

The way learners approach culture suggest they are at odds with the current goals of the profession. The profession seeks to move culture to the center of language instruction so that learners are able to interact with sensitivity to and understanding of other cultures. However,

learners are most interested in learning about culture to add to their linguistic ability, or they have no desire to learn about culture because it does not have a purpose in their goals for foreign language studies (Chavez, 2002, 2005; Drewelow, 2012; Drewelow & Mitchell, 2015).

The mismatch between learners and the profession provides challenges for foreign language learning. In particular, the biggest challenge centers on discovering pedagogies that lead learners to understand the importance and role of culture in foreign language learning. To do so, learners have to realize that culture is not about how many facts they can learn or how much information they can read and commit to memory. Instead, cultural learning hinges on a process of learning in which learners first understand themselves as a cultural subject and then begin to become more open to cultural diversity around them (Knutson, 2006).

### **Approach to the Teaching and Learning of Culture in the Present Study**

Having considered how both the profession and learners have viewed the teaching and learning of culture, I used these findings to guide the development of the present study. The goals of this study centered on developing a deeper understanding of culture in learners by leading them to connect emotionally with the target culture. Therefore, in relation with the goals of the study, I chose to focus on fostering learners' cross-cultural awareness. Cross-cultural awareness leads learners to view themselves and others as cultural subjects and to reflect on the relationships between their native culture and the target culture. This type of developed cultural awareness fosters respect for and interest in cultural difference (ACTFL, 2014; Knutson, 2006).

Instructional approaches aimed at developing cross-cultural awareness focus on the quality of cultural content, not the quantity. This level of culture understanding centers on a *process* of learning, not the amount of content being covered. Thus, cross-cultural awareness decreases the objectification of culture as facts to be memorized like grammar and vocabulary because it

alleviates the pressure of trying to teach a large amount of cultural information that is not feasible in a typical semester-long course (Knutson, 2006).

### **Cross-cultural Awareness: Critiques and Obstacles inside Foreign Language Learning**

Although developing cross-cultural awareness is beneficial for foreign language education, it also has its limitations inside the classroom. Previous studies typically developed cross-cultural awareness through long-term contact with native speakers via ethnographic projects, telecommunication projects, or study abroad experience (Robinson-Stuart & Nocon, 1996; Garrett-Rucks, 2013; Lee, 2012; Schenker, 2013). However, this type of learning cannot be replicated very easily because not all learners go abroad or have access to native speakers (Abrams, 2002; Garrett-Rucks, 2013).

In order to confront this issue of developing cross-cultural awareness inside the foreign language classroom, Abrams (2002) and Garrett-Rucks (2013) used Internet-based projects where learners gained an insider's view to the target culture via Web technologies. Abrams addressed learners' stereotypes of the foreign language through a semester-long project in which learners used the Internet to explore stereotypes and create cultural portfolios, which ultimately led them to become ethnographers inside the classroom. Use of the Internet allowed the learners to develop an emic perspective through instantaneous access to cross-cultural information. Furthermore, Abrams' incorporation of the Internet took into account the dynamic and ever-changing notion of culture in a globalized world. The understanding of what culture is transforms into something different every day in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because new people encounter one another, new technologies emerge, and the world continues to change. By using the Internet to explore culture, learners were able to experience these changes firsthand and observe them while still inside the classroom. As a result of using the Internet, learners also became more

interested in their learning process because they deemed the cultural learning as interesting and purposeful (Abrams, 2002).

In Garrett-Rucks' (2013) study, learners participated in different types of technology-enhanced activities that incorporated explicit cultural instruction, authentic texts, and videos of native French speakers. Findings revealed that the greatest amount of change in learners' understandings of culture occurred when they viewed the videos of native French speakers. Therefore, in her study, Garrett-Rucks concluded that technology made the target culture more personal for learners, specifically, through asynchronous recordings of native speakers.

### **History of Motivational Frameworks in Foreign Language Learning: A Cognitive Approach**

As seen in the discussion above, the teaching and learning of culture is important in foreign language learning because it is what can lead learners to develop cross-cultural awareness. Equally important, however, is learners' motivation to learn about culture. Therefore, the following section focuses on the history of motivation in foreign language learning and moves into current motivational frameworks in use today.

To begin, motivation has roots in psychology (Ross, 2015). Motivation research in foreign language learning started with Gardner and Lambert (1959). Prior to their study, theorists in the field attributed language-learning success to linguistic ability or aptitude (Gardner & Lambert, 1959). However, Gardner and Lambert argued that this assertion was incorrect and instead determined that motivation, and in particular, learners' attitudes, determined their ability to learn a language. Acquiring a language, as argued by these two scholars, centered on the intentions of the learner and his or her goals for foreign language learning. In other words, "...an individual acquiring a second language adopts certain behaviour [*sic*] patterns which are characteristic of

another cultural group and that his attitudes towards that group will at least partly determine his success in learning the new language” (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, p. 267).

This proposed conceptualization of foreign language learning ignited a new and unprecedented focus on motivation in the field. It led other scholars to begin rethinking foreign language learning, especially in terms of what motivates learners. Three main phases of motivational work arose out of this radical change in thinking (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Ross, 2015). While there are several contributions that helped form each phase, here I focus on the most prominent work from each in order to provide a clear, comprehensive review of each phase.

**Social psychological phase (1959-1990).** Gardner and Lambert (1972) were the prominent scholars in the social psychological phase, and they considered motivation to learn another community’s language as a primary force in foreign language learning. This phase served as an important progression in the conceptualization of motivation. It combined traditional motivational frameworks, which focused primarily on the individual, with the social context of learning (Dörnyei, 2005; Ross, 2015). It also was the first time that motivational work considered the effect of affective factors (or non-cognitive factors) as “a significant cause of variability in language learning success” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 40).

During this phase, theorists began to consider learners’ attitudes toward the target language or the target language community to be an important motivational factor when learning a foreign language (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). This phase also contained Gardner and Lambert’s (1972) seminal publication on L2 motivation that shaped the field of motivational theory and research for the next two decades (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). In their book, they comprised different studies that emphasized social psychological theories of foreign language learning (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). In particular, their findings denounced the previously held viewpoint that

linguistic aptitude solely determined the success of a language learner. Instead they found that while language aptitude does account for some language learning achievement, motivational factors such as learners' attitudes, can "override the aptitude effect" (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 117).

Gardner (1985) then put forth a new conceptualization of motivation called the socio-educational model. In this work, he attempted to "update matters, to survey and summarize what appear to be major empirical and theoretical trends in this area [*motivation*]" (Gardner, 1985, p. xiii). Based off research already conducted in the field by other scholars and off his own findings in 1985, Gardner concluded that the relationship between motivation and orientation (or goal) is vital to understanding what motivates someone to learn another language (Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Two of Gardner's most widely recognized concepts grew out of this motivational theory, instrumental and integrative orientation. Gardner (1985) conceptualized these two different types of orientation to be the main causes of learner motivation. Integrative motivation centers on "the desire to interact with and even become similar to valued members of that community" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 41). Instrumental motivation focuses on "the potential pragmatic gains of L2 proficiency, such as getting a better job or a higher salary" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 41).

While instrumental motivation did play an integral role in Gardner's (1985) motivational theory, integrative motivation received more elaboration and attention (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). In his conceptualization, Gardner (1985) proposed that integrative orientation consisted of "integrativeness" (level of desire to integrate with target community and language), attitudes toward the learning situation (teacher and language learning course), and motivation (the effort expended to learn the language). Upon the publication of this work, many scholars in the field began to adapt this motivational construct for their own research purposes and heavily focused

on motivation as a result of positive viewpoints toward the target language community. While a positive perspective is an integral part of motivation, it is not the only factor. As Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) noted, the actual learning context has a significant effect on a learner's motivation and cannot be ignored. This discrepancy (of missing factors that play a role in motivation) is what ultimately led to the next phase of motivational research – to “an increased focus on situational factors affecting motivation and language learning and use” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 45).

**Cognitive-situated phase (1990s).** For around 30 years, the majority of motivational work in the social psychological phase centered on Gardner's conceptualization of motivation. In the 1980s and 1990s though, theorists began to comment on the social psychological phase, and then Crookes and Schmidt (1991) published an article that called for a revitalized approach to foreign language motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Ross, 2015).

This new era of motivational research, which Dörnyei (2005) later named the cognitive-situated phase, called for a realignment of motivational research. In particular, Crookes and Schmidt (1991) called for motivational research to join the cognitive movement of mainstream psychology at the time. This new phase also narrowed the focus of motivational research to concentrate on more situated learning experiences, i.e. specific learning contexts. Crookes and Schmidt's (1991) call for a change in motivational research was also based in the field of education. Namely, they claimed that the field needed the use of more practical motivational constructs inside the classroom and not just broad social psychological research that had been the focus of previous investigations. What is important to note from this phase of motivational research is that it never outright rejected the tenets from the social psychological phase of research. Instead, there was just a shift in focus that took on a more educational orientation and

attempted to make motivational research more applicable inside the classroom (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

Tremblay and Gardner (1995) then wrote a response to this call for more practical motivational applications in the classroom. They combined variables from other cognitive studies with Gardner's socio-educational model and found that while these other variables, "such as persistence, attention, goal specificity, and causal attributions to each other" (Tremblay & Gardner, 1985, p. 505) do play a role in motivation, they maintained that the original structure of the socio-educational model was a sound tool for explaining learner motivation.

Thus, theoretical expansions to motivational research grew out of the cognitive-situated phase (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). A particular theoretical expansion centered on the effect of motivation as developing over a period. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) stated that in the 1990s, the cognitive-situated phase had more of an "explicit concern with the dynamic nature of motivation and its temporal dimension" (p. 60). This interest in the temporality of motivation therefore led into the third phase of motivational research.

**Process-oriented phase (early 2000s).** A main critique of the previous phases of motivational research was that they only provided a "snapshot" of motivation, meaning that they "do not lend themselves to investigating the complex ebb and flow of motivation" (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012, p. 397). This lack of details brought about the next phase in motivational research, the process-oriented phase. This phase focused on motivational change (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012). Specifically, it centered on the temporal aspects such as motivation *to* engage in learning a second language and motivation *while* engaged in learning a second language (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012).

Prior to this phase, the field researched motivation from a more quantitative perspective, and therefore, there was a lack of temporal focus. That is, the *process* of motivation did not receive as much attention. While there were many theorists (such as Williams & Burden, 1997; Ushioda, 1998) who were instrumental in paving “the way for process-oriented approaches to L2 motivation” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 60), the most influential work in this phase was Dörnyei and Ottó’s (1998) development of the process model of L2 motivation.

This model was one of the first and only places where emotions received attention in motivational frameworks via self-motivating strategies (Ross, 2015). It divided the temporal aspects of motivation into three phases: (a) Pre-actional (choice motivation), (b) Actional (executive motivation), and (c) Post-actional (evaluation) (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The process model of L2 motivation provided insight into how different internal and contextual influences affect motivation through a process-oriented approach. However, a critique of this model, from Dörnyei himself, was that it appeared to conceptualize motivation as a linear process (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Ross, 2015). This critique ultimately led to the next and current phase of motivational research.

**Socio-dynamic phase (2005-present).** The socio-dynamic phase builds off the other previous phases, but it analyzes how motivation has focused on a linear process or a cause-effect relationship (Ross, 2015). Inside the foreign language classroom, it is impossible to know for certain “when a learning process begins and ends, or whether several learning processes might be running simultaneously, overlapping or interacting with one another” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 69). Because of the complex dynamics of language learning, Dörnyei (2010) radically changed his viewpoint on motivation and adopted a dynamic systems perspective.

A dynamic systems approach understands learning to be a social process, one in which learners' motivation is a socially and historically situated process. Norton (2000) described motivation through the lens of dynamic systems as a “socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (p. 10). This dynamic systems approach coincides with a more sociocultural perspective, which aligns with the study because I adopt a social constructivist approach that considers the social environment's effect on learning. This theory aligns with the social turn that Block (2003) described as well, which reflects the current state of the field of second language acquisition. Through a dynamic systems approach, motivation and social context become intertwined, moving away from traditional linear models to contextual and relational variables in motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). A dynamic systems approach also takes into account the “broader complexities of language learning and language use in a modern globalised [*sic*] world” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 72). Thus, by looking at motivation from a more socially and historically grounded perspective, we can understand the effect of the environment on language learning.

The most prominent conceptualization of motivation in this phase is Dörnyei's 'L2 Motivational Self System' (Dörnyei, 2010), which is the model I use in this study. This motivational framework combines “psychological theories of the self” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 79) with other important tenets in the field of L2 motivation, namely integrativeness (Gardner's, 2001), self-determination theory (Noels, 2003), and a qualitative approach (Ushioda, 2001, 2009) (Ross, 2015). The L2 motivational self-system consists of three main tenets: (a) the ideal L2 self, (b) the ought-to self, and (c) the L2 learning environment. Csizer and Lukacs (2010) described these three main components in the following ways – the ideal L2 self as “the

person who wishes to become a competent speaker of an L2”, the ought-to self as a reference to the “attributes a person believes they ought-to possess to avoid possible negative outcomes”, and finally the L2 learning experience, which centers on the “motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience” (p. 2-3).

In order for the future self to be motivating, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) claimed that a number of conditions must be met, as seen in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Conditions for the Motivating Capacity of the Ideal and Ought Selves**

Conditions	Explanation
The learner <i>has</i> a desired future self-image...	Visualizations of the future self have to be present in order for learners to begin on the journey of becoming their future self.
The future self is sufficiently <i>different</i> from the current self...	There has to be a gap between learners’ actual self and their imagined future self so that they will put forth effort to become the future self.
The future self is <i>elaborate</i> and <i>vivid</i> ...	Mental imagery must be strong enough to evoke the visualizations of their future self.
The future self image is perceived as <i>plausible</i> ...	The future self is persona that the learner believes is achievable, not an unrealistic attainment.
The future self image is <i>not</i> perceived as <i>comfortably certain</i> ...	Learners have to realize that they will have to expend effort to become this future self, and it is not a natural by-product of other actions.
The future self is in harmony...	The future self cannot conflict with expectations from the learner’s social environment, i.e. family, peers, etc.

The future self image is <i>regularly activated</i> ...	The future self does not occur as a natural reaction; it has to be evoked.
The future self image is accompanied by relevant and effective <i>procedural strategies</i> ...	Learners need guidance in how they are to reach this future self.
A desired future self image is offset by a counteracting <i>feared possible self</i> ...	When learners realize the negative effects of failing to achieve their future self, they become more motivated.

\*Taken from Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, pp. 83-84)

As seen in Table 1, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) claim that the future self is motivating for learners when they actually have a visualization of themselves as a future user of the foreign language and when this visualization is different from whom they currently are. Furthermore, Dörnyei and Ushioda propose that the future self is motivating for learners when they can visualize it through vivid imagery that regularly activates a plausible yet not comfortably certain self. That is, the visualizations of themselves are different from who they are but not so different as to actually demotivate learners because they do not believe they could ever achieve their visualization. In addition to believing they can become their future self, learners are also motivated when their future self does not conflict with their current societal expectations, such as becoming someone whom their family and friends would not approve of. For their future L2 self to be a motivating force in their learning experience, learners need guidance for how to achieve this visualization. In other words, they need instructional support that leads them to reach this future self.

While Ross (2015) implied that Dörnyei's L2 self-motivational system does not take any emotional aspects into account, I would argue that it does, as seen in Table 1. Albeit Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) do not overtly talk about the emotional component in tandem with the L2 self,

they allude to the undeniable role emotion plays in motivation by differentiating between the positive and negative effects of a learner's future self on motivation. Such a differentiation acknowledges that emotion has a role in motivation because it focuses on the inherent aspects of emotion – either a positive or a negative reaction to stimuli, which in this particular case, is learners' visualizations of their future self. Additionally, as MacIntyre et al. (2009) stated, emotions are natural motivators and thus are intrinsically linked. With this understanding in mind, I move into the next section and focus on emotions. In particular, I begin with an introduction to the background of emotions and move into the current state of emotions in the field of psychology and lay the foundation for the gap that the present study seeks to fill, which is merging the current perspectives on emotional theories and Dörnyei's motivational framework of the L2 self motivational system.

### **History of Emotions: A look into the Background of Emotional Theories**

Theories regarding the study of emotions date back to 1879 when the German psychologist Wilhelm Wundt created the first laboratory to study the mind. Beginning with Wundt, scholars all over the world have conducted research to establish an understanding of emotions and the role they play in daily human life (Kalat & Shiota, 2011).

A few years later, in 1884, William James, who is the founder of American psychology, wrote one of the first and most important articles on emotion. In his article titled "What is an emotion?" he began the discussion on the theory of emotion, one that many other scholars since then have debated and discussed through innumerable amounts of research and definitions on emotions (Kalat & Shiota, 2011). Three major theories in the field of emotion that provide insight into where the field is today are the James-Lange Theory, the Cannon-Bard Theory, and the Schachter-Singer Theory.

**James-Lange Theory.** Around the same time that James proposed one of the first major theories on emotion in *Mind*, a Danish psychologist by the name of Carl Lange put out a similar theory. As a result of both scholars proposing similar theories around the same time, the first major theory on emotion became the James-Lange theory. In this theory, James and Lange defined emotions as the “labels we give to the way the body reacts to certain situations” (Alvandi, 2015, p. 65). This theory reverses the common understanding of cause and effect relationships, i.e. you feel afraid and so you flee.

Instead, this theory, according to Kalat and Shiota (2011) states, “you notice yourself attacking and therefore you feel angry” (pp. 13-14). You have to have an internal, bodily response in order to feel an emotion. For instance, your muscles or internal organs have to react before you can feel an emotion. James later altered his theory to argue that cognitive appraisal of a situation comes first and then physiological and behavioral responses occur. These responses then lead to the feelings of the emotional state.

**Cannon-Bard Theory.** As Kalat and Shiota (2011) pointed out, the James-Lange theory is contrary to common sense and is what ultimately led to the development of the next major theory in the field of emotion, the Cannon-Bard Theory, developed by Walter Cannon and Philip Bard. The original James-Lange Theory centered on the feeling aspect of an emotion as the “perception of the body’s actions and physiological arousal” (Kalat & Shiota, 2011, p. 14). The Cannon-Bard Theory claims that the four aspects that make up an emotion (cognition, feeling, physiology, and behavior) occur independently of one another. Kalat and Shiota provided an example of this theory by stating, if you were afraid of a situation, you would cognitively appraise the situation, which would then “independently cause feelings of fear and the action of running away” (p. 14). A problem here is that this theory assumes that a stimulus causes independent actions and not

necessarily reactions related to one another. An example as provided by Kalat and Shiota (2011) highlighted the fallacy of the Cannon-Bard Theory. According to their theory, “The sight of a mad killer chasing you with a chainsaw would cause you to decide that you are in danger, and independently cause feelings of fear and the action of running away” (Kalat & Shiota, 2011, p. 14). Critics of this theory also claimed that like the James-Lange Theory, it is contrary to common sense because when there is a stimulus, emotion occurs as a reactionary result (Kalat & Shiota, 2011). By evaluating emotion according to the Cannon-Bard Theory, the four aspects of emotion are unrelated to one another and are irrelevant to each other. In other words, you can cognitively appraise a situation as something you are afraid of, but it does not necessarily mean that you would change your behavior in the sense to flee. According to the Cannon-Bard Theory, if these changes are unrelated and independent of one another, then you might have the behavioral reaction that tells you to flee a fearful situation, or you might not.

**Schachter-Singer Theory.** The third major theory on emotion came from Stanley Schachter and Jerome Singer and is known as the Schachter-Singer Theory. These two theorists claimed that the physiological response to an emotion is vital for understanding how strongly you respond to a stimulus; however, the physiological response is not sufficient alone to determine which emotion your body is experiencing. There must be some type of cognitive appraisal in order to identify which emotion you are feeling (Kalat & Shiota, 2011).

The Schachter-Singer Theory, therefore, defines emotion based off the cognitive appraisal of a reaction to a stimulus. Schachter and Singer tested their theory by inducing the same physiological response in participants in a study and then put them into different situations. If their theory on the physiology of an emotion were true, then the participants would report different emotions based off their cognitive appraisal of the situation they were in.

Schachter and Singer (1962) gave one group of participants a shot of adrenaline to elicit a physiological arousal and another group a placebo shot. In short, they placed participants into either a situation that evoked happiness or one that evoked anger. While the findings are somewhat confusing because of a flawed study design, the main conclusion from this study is that someone's interpretation of their emotion is only somewhat influenced by their situation (Kalat & Shiota, 2011). It seems that from this study, Schachter and Singer were partially right in their theory. There are some emotions that are confused with each other.

As seen from the previously discussed theories, scholars in the field of psychology have always debated and continue to debate what exactly an emotion is. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century alone, scholars have put forth over 90 different definitions of emotion (Plutchik, 2001). While the "importance of emotion is intuitively obvious" (Kalat & Shiota, p. 2011, p. 2), it is difficult to research and define because it is a subjective experience that we cannot observe. Rather, people have to infer which emotions others experience (Kalat & Shiota, 2011). However, out of these three main theories, the commonality is that an emotion involves some type of stimulus and some kind of reaction, which leads to more modern-day research.

### **The Current State of Emotions in the Field of Psychology**

Emotion theorists differ greatly in how they define an emotion (Izard, 2011; Gable, Browning, & Harmon-Jones, 2015). Kalat and Shiota (2011) noted that most theorists consider an emotion as a reaction to a stimulus that contains a cluster of components, which include: (a) cognitive appraisal, which is a cognitive interpretation or appraisal of the event or situation; (b) phenomenological responses, which are your feelings or "subjective changes" (Kalat & Shiota, 2011, p. 5); (c) physiological responses, which are bodily responses such as change in heart rate, skin conductance, etc.; and (d) behavioral responses, which is some type of change in a person's behavior in response to the stimulus.

However, psychologists often disagree on which of the components must be present in order for an emotion to occur. First, an earlier definition from Plutchik (1982) defined emotion as “an inferred complex sequence of reactions to a stimulus” which includes “cognitive evaluations, subjective changes, autonomic and neural arousal, impulses to action, and behavior designed to have an effect upon the stimulus that initiated the complex sequence” (p. 552). For Plutchik, emotion is an internal experience and is essential to human existence because emotions explain who we are and how we survive. For example, the emotion of distress compels people to find help (Plutchik, 2001) as interest compels people to explore (Reeve, 2005). Plutchik defines an emotion as more than a feeling and as a sequence of events that start with some type of stimulus and then “includes feelings, psychological changes, impulses to action and specific, goal-directed behavior” (2001, p. 346). Therefore, Plutchik considers the components of an emotion as occurring sequentially.

Scherer (2001), like Plutchik (2001), defined emotion as a component process. In this process, emotion occurs as “an episode of interrelated, synchronized changes in the states of all or most of the five organismic subsystems in response to the evaluation of an external or internal stimulus event as relevant to major concerns of the organism” (p. 93). Scherer (2001) pointed out that scholars in the field of emotions have long accepted three of the five components: expression, bodily symptoms, and subjective experience. The action tendencies component has become accepted more recently after much argumentation from a prominent scholar, Nico Frijda, in the field in the 1980s. However, whether or not cognition is a major component is still not agreed. For instance, Gable et al. (2015) defined an emotion as containing feelings, physiological response, facial expressions, and motivational impulses. From their perspective, cognitive appraisal of a situation is not necessary in order to experience an emotion. As Izard (2011)

claimed, some emotions occur as an automatic response to “a simple perceptual process (e.g., seeing a viper in your path) that does not require complex appraisals or higher order cognition” (p. 373). All of the theorists mentioned in this section agree on the fact that emotions are useful, meaning that they serve a functional purpose for humans every day. They guide how we evaluate situations and events in life. In other words, when something happens in life, our emotions determine how we react to the situation.

Another relevant point made by Kalat and Shiota (2011) is that it is not necessary to agree on exactly what an emotion is, but what is necessary is “to state clearly what definition we are using” (p. 6) in an investigation. Furthermore, Kalat and Shiota pointed out that emotion does not have to contain every component mentioned above; instead, it can be a variation of different components and is still an emotion. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, I consider an emotion as a reaction to an external stimulus. In my definition, I include Izard’s (2011) consideration that feelings are an innate component of emotion, meaning that you cannot experience an emotion without some kind of subjective experience. Additionally, I incorporate Gable et al.’s (2015) understanding that an emotion contains a motivational impulse. This definition of emotion is most appropriate for this study because I use external stimuli (i.e. cultural projects) to elicit a positive emotional reaction inside foreign language learning (i.e. interest). Additionally, this definition operates under the premise that emotion and motivation are intrinsically linked, which allows me to investigate how learners’ subjective feelings about the target culture relate to their level of motivation to continue studying Spanish.

### **The Difference between Negative and Positive Emotions**

Previous research on emotions has focused on both positive and negative emotions, differentiating the two based off their separate functions (Fredrickson, 2004; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012a). In the following sections, I look first at negative emotions and how previous

scholars have studied them in foreign language learning. Then I focus on positive emotions and outline different studies that have looked at their role in language learning.

**Definitions of negative emotions.** Negative emotions are a person's multisystem response interpreting something as bad or harmful (Fredrickson, 2004). Examples of negative emotions include sadness, anger, disgust, fear, and anxiety, to name a few. In situation involving any one of these emotions, a negative reaction occurs as a result to some kind of stimulus. "Anger leads to the urge to destroy obstacles in one's path, fear leads to protective behaviours [*sic*], and disgust leads to rejection as in quickly spitting out spoiled food" (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014, p. 241)

Within foreign language learning, researchers have most studied the negative emotion of anxiety (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012b). Generally speaking, anxiety has a debilitating effect, narrowing learners' cognition because it causes them to "freeze up in role play, forget previously learned material" and causes them to "exhibit avoidance behaviors, such as missing class or procrastinating" (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012b, p. 104). Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986) seminal work on foreign language anxiety looked anxiety as a situation-specific emotion, one that arises out of three different contexts: communication, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (Horwitz, 2010). Within the last 20 to 25 years, other researchers have most often studied anxiety in relation to learners' language performance (Saito & Samimy, 1996), listening comprehension (Elkhafaifi, 2005), and reading comprehension (Zhao et al., 2013), to name a few. Findings from these studies suggested that anxiety has numerous effects on a foreign language learner.

Saito and Samimy (1996) investigated foreign language anxiety at the introductory, intermediate, and advanced level in the Japanese foreign language classroom. Since previous

studies had focused on foreign language anxiety in the introductory-level foreign language classroom, these authors studied whether or not anxiety affected other levels of learners. Their findings revealed that the advanced-level learners were most anxious, then introductory-level learners, and finally intermediate-level learners.

Elkhafaifi (2005) focused on undergraduate and graduate students' anxiety in relation to listening comprehension when studying Arabic as a foreign language. Findings showed that foreign language listening anxiety is distinguishable from general language anxiety. Zhao et al. (2013) looked at the level of reading anxiety of English-speaking university students learning Chinese. They found that reading anxiety was similar to general foreign language anxiety and suggested that the major areas of anxiety arose from "unfamiliar scripts, unfamiliar topics, and worry about comprehension" (p. 771).

These studies all focused on anxiety and its effect on linguistic aspects of language learning. Spitali's (2000) study differed, though, in that it studied foreign language anxiety and its effect on learners' attitudes toward the people from other cultures. Findings revealed that there was a relationship between anxiety and learners' attitudes, suggesting that language learning could possibly increase ethnocentrism because of the negative emotions associated with it.

While these studies have provided insightful information on the effect of anxiety in foreign language learning, most all have been quantitative in nature and have focused on how anxiety affects learners' cognition when acquiring a foreign language. There have been few studies focused on the reasons behind why learners experience certain emotions, their effect on the process of learning a language, and more specifically, the effect negative emotions have on cultural learning.

**Definitions of positive emotions.** Opposite of negative emotions are positive emotions or a person's reaction to something good (Fredrickson, 2004). Positive emotions are not "simply the absence of negativity" or "opposite ends of the same spectrum" (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012a, p. 198). Different examples of positive emotions include joy, interest, pride, and love, to name a few. According to Fredrickson (2013), all of these positive emotions broaden perspectives in different ways. For example, joy "creates the urge to play" (p. 4). Interest broadens perspectives by creating "the urge to explore, to learn, to immerse oneself in the novelty and thereby expand the self" (p. 3). Pride, like joy and interest, leads to broadened understandings of the world by creating the urge to visualize an "even bigger accomplishment" in the future (p. 6). Finally, love, which is the positive emotion that people feel most often, broadens thoughts and actions "by creating momentary perceptions of social connection and self-expansion" (p. 6).

Even though positive emotions have this potentially broadening power, negative emotions have received considerable more attention than positive emotions in the fields of psychology and in foreign language learning (Fredrickson, 2004; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012a). Fredrickson (2004) commented that researchers generally study negative emotions more because they are problematic for society and demand remedies for the issues that arise with them. I would also posit that the same is true for foreign language learning. Specifically, scholars in the field of foreign language learning have often focused on anxiety in order to remedy the problems that arise with this emotion. For example, anxiety can prompt students to withdraw from their language learning experience for reasons of self-preservation (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012a).

Therefore, researchers have studied anxiety to understand what causes it and suggest recommendations such as "reducing the negativity of the experience [associated with anxiety], dealing with unpleasant feelings, and ameliorating its disruptive effects" (Dewaele & MacIntyre,

2014, p. 240). However, equally relevant to foreign language learning is the effect that positive emotions have. While negative emotions only lead to narrowed cognition and a negative experience in foreign language learning, positive emotions have a greater number of beneficial effects. For example, Fredrickson (2004) claimed in her “Broaden and Build” theory that the integration of positive emotions can undo the lingering effects of negative emotions, can encourage learning, broaden perspectives and build resiliency.

In a study, Fredrickson and Levenson (1998) tested their “undo hypothesis”, which centered on the effect of positive emotions on negative emotions. Findings showed that positive emotions did indeed have the power to undo the lingering arousal from a negative emotion. For example, in their study, they showed participants a video clip that elicited negative emotions and then followed it with a different video clip known to elicit positive emotions. In this environment (where negative and positive emotions mixed), positive emotions “clearly stood out in their ability to ‘undo’ lingering cardiovascular activation” (Fredrickson, 2013, p. 10) caused by negative emotions. In terms of encouraging learning and broadening cognition, positive emotions lead learners to explore and investigate new knowledge, which results in broadened perspectives because learners are taking in new information. Fredrickson’s (2004) theory also focuses on building learners’ resiliency because of broadening perspectives. In other words, Fredrickson (2013) stated that when learners broaden their perspectives through the investigation of new knowledge, new ideas, or new skills, they are accruing new resources that might aid them later in life in other contexts or situations.

### **The Role of Positive Emotion in Foreign Language Learning**

The benefits of positive emotions in foreign language learning merits further investigation in order to understand the role they can play in decreasing negative emotions and facilitating learners’ ability to absorb a language and become more open to cultural difference (MacIntyre &

Gregersen, 2012a). However, not many studies have looked at positive emotions and language learning. The two types of positive emotions investigated in foreign language learning are enjoyment (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014) and interest (Dechert & Kastner, 1989; Schenker, 2013).

In Dewaele and MacIntyre's (2014) quantitative investigation of foreign language enjoyment, over 1,700 multilingual speakers (ranging in age from 11 to 75 and education level from secondary to doctoral level) completed an online survey. The questionnaire focused on the levels of foreign language enjoyment and anxiety in foreign language learning, if the two concepts are linked, different variables (such as number of languages known, languages studied, mastery in the language, etc.) that affect enjoyment or anxiety, and what cultivates enjoyment in the foreign language classroom. Findings that relate to the present study suggested that enjoyment was more prevalent than anxiety and that teacher and classroom peers played integral roles in cultivating foreign language enjoyment.

Dechert and Kastner (1989) and Schenker (2013) investigated the interests of students enrolled in undergraduate German courses. Dechert and Kastner looked at learners' interests in the cultural content in textbooks of German. Their findings from a questionnaire they distributed showed that learners' interests, which centered on cultural topics about everyday life, did not align with the cultural content in their textbooks. Schenker (2013) focused on undergraduate students of German and their interests in culture as well, but she investigated their interests through a 12-week electronic exchange. In the exchange, learners in the United States studying German interacted with learners in Germany studying English. Learners from each class wrote emails, blogs, and held videoconferences with one another. Schenker investigated if these types of cross-cultural interactions had any effect on learners' interests in the target culture. She

reported that learners' interests were high before and after the exchange and they were most interested in studying cultural topics related to daily life, a finding that supported Dechert and Kastner's (1989) study.

While the three previously mentioned studies did look at learners' positive emotions inside foreign language learning, they were either purely quantitative in nature (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dechert & Kastner, 1989) or did not go into an in-depth study of positive emotion and its potentially powerful effects in foreign language learning (Schenker, 2013).

### **Interest as a Positive Emotion: Connecting Learners to Culture**

The goals of this study center on understanding how to connect learners emotionally with the target culture so that they develop cross-cultural awareness and become more motivated to continue studying Spanish. In particular, the focus is on positive subjective feelings during foreign language learning, i.e. positive emotions, and how to elicit and nurture these emotions in order to create a positive-broadening experience (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012a). Because my approach centers on understanding how and why positive emotions affect learners, I adopt a qualitative approach that focuses on the process of learning.

I selected interest as the positive emotion for this study in order to engage learners with cultural content and develop motivation to continue studying Spanish. Interest is a "curious emotion" (Silvia, 2008, p. 57), one that motivates learning and encourages exploration (Reeve, 2005; Silvia, 2008). People develop interest in something when they deem a situation or context as "mysterious or challenging, yet not overwhelming" (Fredrickson, 2013). This type of feeling is what creates the desire to explore a topic more, gain new knowledge, and broaden perspectives (Fredrickson, 2013; Reeve, 2005; Silvia, 2008).

**Motivational intensity of interest: The effect on foreign language learning.** Research has showed that the same emotion can have varying effects due to the differing levels of

motivational intensity, meaning the strength of the inclination to approach or the inclination to withdraw from a situation or context (Gable, et al., 2015). In the case of interest, there is interest that is high in motivational intensity, and there is interest that is low in motivational intensity (Gable & Harmon-Jones, 2008; Gable & Harmon-Jones, 2011; Harmon-Jones, Price, Gable, & Peterson, 2014).

**High motivational intensity.** Interest that is high in motivational intensity can narrow attention and memory in order to facilitate an individual in achieving a specific goal (Gable & Harmon-Jones, 2011). By narrowing in on the desired goal, individuals are able to focus specifically on what they are interested in accomplishing.

In foreign language learning, there have not been studies that looked specifically at interest in terms of motivational intensity and its effect on acquisition of foreign language. Therefore, I posit that interest that is high in motivational intensity occurs when learners focus heavily on linguistic proficiency during their foreign language learning experience. Recent research shows that learners often value communication the most inside foreign language learning (Magnan, Murphy, & Sahakyan, 2014). In Chavez' (2002, 2005) studies, learners at the first, second, and third-year of German language study indicated that their interests in foreign language courses centered on linguistic development. They conveyed this interest by stating that culture should be taught in courses required for majors only, once linguistic proficiency was developed. Learners' comments also showed that they were most interested in focusing on grammar in order to become proficient in using the language (Chavez, 2005).

Learners in first-semester French courses expressed the same interests in Drewelow's (2012) study. These learners believed grammar and vocabulary were the primary focus of their language courses, regardless of the level of instruction. Such findings conveyed an interest in linguistic

proficiency over cultural competence. While these learners were at the introductory level, the focus on linguistic development is not bound to only this level. Drewelow and Mitchell (2015) found that advanced-level learners of Spanish are also most interested in linguistic proficiency in foreign language learning. In their study, the majority of learners indicated that they were most interested in furthering their linguistic knowledge (over cultural knowledge). The same was true for Schenker's (2013) advanced-level learners of German. While these learners did acknowledge the importance of cultural instruction in foreign language learning, they commented that learning about culture was important "in order to understand language development" and to help "progress the language" (p. 498). These last two studies suggest that even at the advanced level, learners may still be focused on linguistic proficiency as their main interest to further study a foreign language.

Regardless of the level of study, learners seem to continue to view the primary purpose of foreign language learning as developing their linguistic skills. I postulate that this interest is high in motivational intensity because learners "shut out irrelevant stimuli as they approach desired objects" (Gable & Harmon-Jones, 2008, p. 477). In the context of foreign language learning, learners who possess this type of interest focus so narrowly on linguistic proficiency that they shut out other parts of their language learning experience, i.e. the other 4 Cs (Communities, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons) (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015).

With such narrowed perspectives, learners continually objectify foreign language learning as a skill to acquire for the toolkit they believe they must possess upon completion of their undergraduate studies (Drewelow & Mitchell, 2015). In other words, they view learning another language as a way of adding another credential to their resume.

The interest that is high in motivational intensity not only leads learners to objectify the foreign language learning experience, but it is also unsustainable (Gable & Harmon-Jones, 2008). Such an attentional focus cannot endure for a long period because of its high intensity level. *The Standards* (2015) call for pedagogies that lead learners to develop a deeper understanding of the language *and* culture, which subsequently motivate them to become lifelong learners. Therefore, interest that is high in motivational intensity is not interest that should be elicited and nurtured in foreign language learning.

**Low motivational intensity.** Interest that is low in motivational intensity has the ability to broaden perspectives, build new knowledge as “a durable resource” (Fredrickson, 2013, p. 4), and increase learners’ cognitive scope (Gable & Harmon-Jones, 2008). This interest aligns with Fredrickson’s (2004) broaden and build theory because the low motivational intensity broadens attention and does not lead learners to focus narrowly on one specific objective or goal.

This type of interest is one that grows overtime in stable and calm environments (Gable & Harmon-Jones, 2008). Therefore, I postulate that in the context of foreign language learning, interest that is low in motivational intensity occurs inside and outside of the classroom context through a process of learning where learners have time to explore their interests and reflect on what they are learning. Interest that is low in motivational intensity not only encourages lifelong learning, but it also lays the foundation for learners to embark on a journey of cross-cultural awareness because they develop an interest that leads them to be more open-minded. Additionally, interest that is low in motivational intensity broadens learners’ cognition and perspectives, thus allowing them to absorb the language more because they are more receptive to new ideas and concepts.

**Cross-cultural awareness: The link between interest, motivation, and culture.** Within the field of applied linguistics and more specifically, foreign language learning, motivation has been a highly researched topic for over 60 years (Ross, 2015). The focus, however, has generally been on cognitive factors such as attention, goal orientation, self-efficacy (to name a few) (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) while motivational research has typically left out the effect of emotional factors (Ross, 2015). Scholars have focused on confidence and anxiety, but other than these two emotions, there have been little to no studies that focus on other emotions such as interest in foreign language learning and its role in motivating learners (Ross, 2015). Perhaps the lack of emotional studies on interest in relation to learner motivation is due to the conceptualization of emotion as a subjective experience that cannot be observed but only inferred (Kalat & Shiota, 2011; Ross, 2015). However, emotion and motivation cannot be separated from one another because emotion determines the level of motivation a person has in achieving goals (MacIntyre et al., 2009). Even more specifically, interest, which is a motivating emotion (Reeve, 2005), cannot be separated from the concept of motivation because it is what inherently drives learners to be motivated to achieve a goal.

Thus, in the present study, I draw upon the natural motivating tendencies of interest as a motivating emotion and connect learners' interests to cultural learning. Specifically, I elicit and nurture their interests that are low in motivational intensity and link them to cultural learning in order to develop a deeper, more profound understanding of the target culture. Thus, interest that is low in motivational intensity is most likely to develop cross-cultural awareness because it broadens perspectives. In other words, by nurturing interest that is low in motivational intensity, learners become more receptive or open to change, and when connected to cultural learning, they begin to recognize, appreciate, and seek out ways to engage with otherness (Byram, 1997).

## **Interest Low in Motivational Intensity, Future L2 Self, and Motivation in the Present Study: A Process of Learning**

As Amores (2002) and Knutson (2006) noted, a process of learning that encompasses explorations and reflections is pivotal to developing learners' cross-cultural awareness in foreign language learning. That is, learners must have numerous opportunities to explore new cultural phenomena and reflect on what they are learning so that they begin to understand themselves and others as culturally situated subjects. Such comprehension leads to more open-mindedness and receptivity to cultural difference (Knutson, 2006).

Because, "imagination works best when it activates emotion" (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012a, p. 194), this study combines Dörnyei's (2009) framework of the L2 self-motivational system with cultural learning and interest in order to activate and nurture learners' imaginations of themselves interacting in the target culture. However, I adapt Dörnyei's model of the L2 self to include any visualization of the future L2 self, not just the ideal self or ought-to self. Based off of my own experience as a foreign language educator, I often noticed that learners do not always possess an ideal visualization of themselves as future language users, nor do they have a visualizations of their future L2 self based off of what they feel they ought to do (i.e. learn a language). Thus, the expansion that I incorporate in the present study allows for more possibilities of future L2 selves to emerge as potentially motivating forces during foreign language learning.

This study aims at leading learners to imagine a future L2 self-interacting in the target culture and creates an imaginative experience that mimics an immersion-like environment. This type of scenario centers on increasing cross-cultural awareness through these imagined interactions inside the target culture. Since the context of this study does not include actual interactions with

native speakers in the target culture, i.e. in a study abroad context, the focus is on motivating students through their interests to learn about the target culture in a social learning environment.

### **Social Learning from a Social Constructivist Approach**

Social constructivism centers on understanding how learning takes place “through interactive pedagogical practices” (Yang & Wilson, 2006, p. 365). It has roots in sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), meaning context is vital because it conceptualizes learning as not occurring in isolation or void of cultural context (Drewelow, 2009; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

Furthermore, a social constructivist approach views learners as active collaborators in their acquisition of new knowledge (Yang & Wilson, 2006), which is a naturally social and collaborative process that occurs through dialogic interaction (Abrams, 2011).

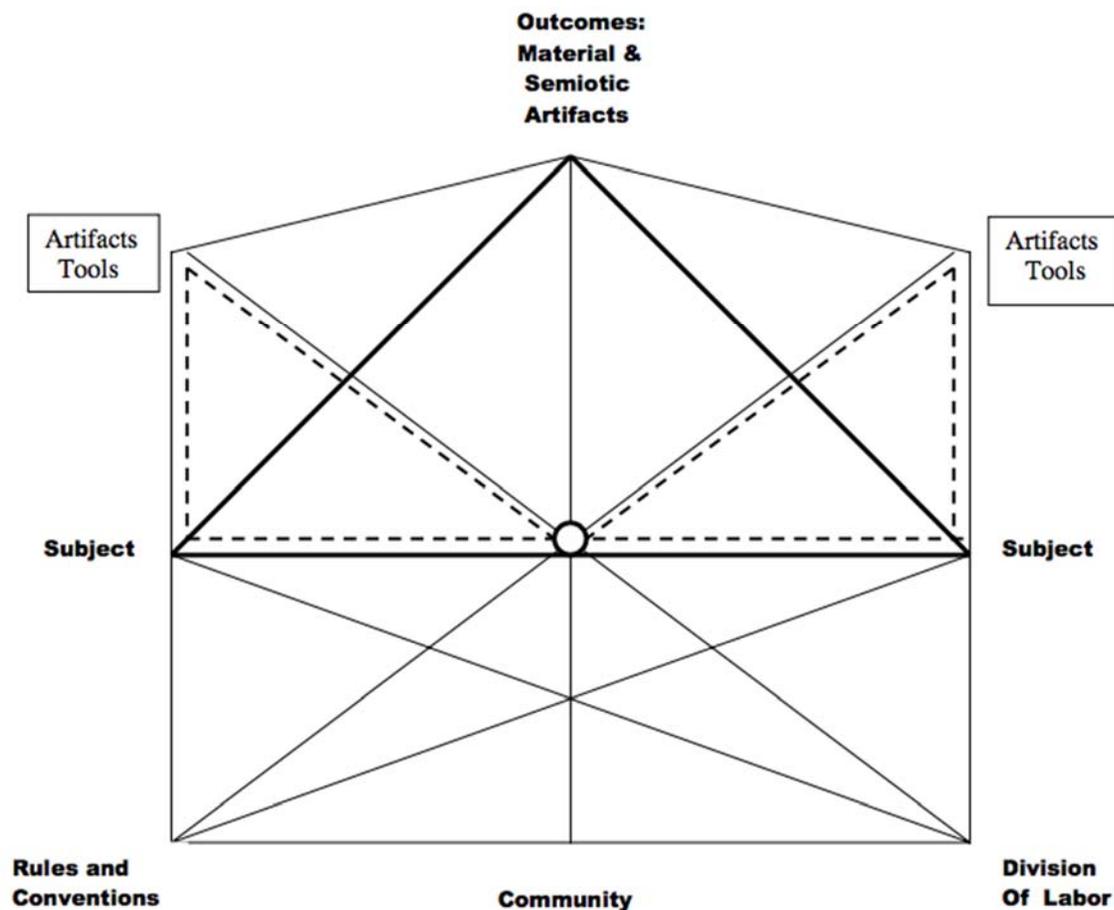
Another fundamental concept associated with social constructivism is the purpose for learning, meaning why learners do what they do. As Vygotsky (1978) noted, learning is dependent upon why and how learners interact with one another to achieve certain outcomes and goals within their learning environment (Yang & Wilson, 2006). Social constructivism looks at the dialogic interaction between learners and how they use different tools to achieve their outcomes/goals (Rivens Mopean, 2010; Wells, 2002; Youngs, Ducate, & Arnold, 2011). This kind of interaction has been operationalized through Activity Theory and implemented previously in foreign language learning to examine holistically the joint actions and activities of multiple learners within an activity system.

In this study, I designed two cultural projects, which I later describe in more details in Chapter 3, from an Activity Theory perspective. In particular, I looked at the role of dialogue (Wells, 2002) in learners’ activity systems (their foreign language learning environments) and how they used their dialogue to visualize their future L2 self-interacting in the target culture. While Lantolf and Genung (2002) stated that they do not consider Activity Theory to be within a

social constructivist framework, I follow Dörnyei's (1998) understanding that it is. In particular, I argue that Activity Theory has roots in social constructivism because both Activity Theory and social constructivism conceptualize learning as a social process in which learners engage actively with one another through dialogic collaboration. Furthermore, both Activity Theory and social constructivism conceive learning as an experience where the participants, i.e. the learners, use different socially mediated tools to achieve the goals within their learning environment. Therefore, their dialogic interaction with one another to construct meaning inside their activity system is a foundational tenet of social constructivism.

Vygotsky (1978) first conceptualized Activity Theory, but due to his early death, his colleagues continued to develop and redefine the concept (Kim, 2007). Initially Vygotsky's (1978) conceptualization centered on three main elements: (1) subjects acting upon their (2) motive/object through the use of (3) tools (Karabulut, LeVelle, Li, & Survivorov, 2012). However, a main critique of this earlier version of Activity Theory was that there were gaps between the subjects, motive/object, and the tools. In other words, a relational aspect was missing from the theory. Two prominent scholars in the field, Leont'ev (1978, 1979, 1981) and Engeström (1987, 1999), later re-structured Activity Theory to include reciprocal interactions. Leont'ev originally created three different layers of analysis that took into account the transformations that occur in between each level (Engeström & Miettinen, 1999). However, Leont'ev's version of Activity Theory received criticism for its totalitarian nature, meaning it did not allow room for variations of the model (Kim, 2007). As such, Engeström (1987, 1999) re-envisioned Activity Theory and added new components to account for reciprocal relationships between the aspects of an activity system and to center on mediation as an integral part of every activity system. A critique of Engeström's model though is that it does not include multiple subjects or the effect that multiple

perspectives can have in one activity system. To account for this limitation, Wells (2002) expanded Engeström's model to include more than one subject inside an activity system. While Wells' model includes most of the same elements as Engeström's (e.g. outcomes, tools, subject, rules and conventions, division of labor, and community), it deviates in that it includes more than one subject that can act as a mediating factor in an activity system; it shifts the outcome to the center of the triangle to indicate that it is the product of the subjects' collaboration; and it points to the use of dialogue as a mediating tool as well (Carrillo Cabello, 2012). Figure 1 displays Wells' model and includes the artifacts or tools that multiple subjects can or will use to achieve different outcomes, be they material or semiotic outcomes. Additionally, Wells' model, like Engeström's (1987), includes the rules and conventions that learners use to achieve their goals in a collaborative learning environment, the community, and how work is divided within the activity system. It is worth noting that Wells stated that there is no limit on how many subjects can take part in an activity system, and as such, his model allows for multiple subjects (or additional triangles) to be added if needed.



**Figure 1 - Wells' Diagram of Activity Theory**

In foreign language learning, Activity Theory can provide a holistic perspective to understanding how language learners interact (Karabulut et al., 2012). It also allows researchers to examine dynamic relationships between learners, their mediating tools, and to explore how these interactions affect learning. Scholars have applied Activity Theory to foreign language learning to understand interactions in international tele-collaboration projects (Basharina, 2007); in study abroad programs (Allen, 2010; Douglass, 2007; among others); in project-based learning (Gibbes & Carson, 2014); and to examine how learners' and teachers' expectations of technology use coincide or contradict one another (Karabulut et al., 2012). By implementing Activity Theory in these studies, researchers have gained insight into what pedagogical

approaches are most effective and how to improve foreign language methodologies in order to fit with learners' needs. For example, Gibbes and Carson (2014) used Activity Theory to provide insight on methodological approaches in the foreign language classroom by observing and analyzing contradictions of learners' perspectives on project-based learning. In Karabulut et. al's study, Activity Theory provided insights on how to make technology-enhanced learning more effective through consideration of students' needs and preferences in instructional activities. Allen (2010) and Douglass (2007) both implemented Activity Theory to understand students' motivation to continue studying a language and how this motivation evolved by participating in study abroad programs. Activity Theory also provided insight on how to address inter-cultural, intra-cultural, and technology-related tensions present in tele-collaboration projects with students from different countries (Basharina, 2007).

As seen in the previously mentioned studies, Activity Theory is useful in examining pedagogical approaches in foreign language learning. Furthermore, Activity Theory conceptualizes learning as a social process "in which multiple factors are in constant interaction with each other" (Karabulut et al., 2012, p. 344). In the present study, multiple factors such as interest, future L2 self (Dörnyei, 2010), and cross-cultural awareness (Knutson, 2006) are in constant interaction with one another, and therefore, I used Activity Theory to guide the development of each cultural project (as described in Chapter 3). By creating the activities in each project from an Activity Theory perspective, dialogic interaction among learners was the guiding principle in the design of each activity. In other words, I created the activities so that learners had to work together, using the mediating tools in the activity system, to activate visualizations of their future self-interacting in the target culture. The goal of these visualizations

was to lead learners toward cross-cultural awareness by exploring and connecting the relationship between the products, practices, and perspectives of the target culture.

### **D/discourse Theory to Provide Understanding of the Future L2 Self**

Building off of Wells' conceptualization of Activity Theory and dialogue as a central component, Gee's (2011) theory of D/discourse is the most appropriate method of examining how learners use their discourse as a tool to enact socially recognizable versions of their future L2 self within their activity system. In particular, Gee's theory shows how learners use their language-in-use (or their discourse) to enact the "kinds of people" (p. 178) they see themselves becoming. Another main tenet of Gee's theory centers on how people use their language-in-use (discourse with a little 'd') to "enact specific socially recognizable identities" or their "Discourses" (Gee, 2011, p. 177). As Gee explained, "a Discourse with a capital 'D' [...] is composed of distinctive ways of speaking/listening and often, too, distinctive ways of writing/reading" while little 'd' discourse centers on the "'language-in-use' or stretches of oral or written language" (p. 177). In the present study, I consider little 'd' discourse as the language that learners use to enact their big 'D' discourse, or their future L2 self. In addition to little 'd' and big 'D' discourse, Gee (2011) also considers the effect of a person's Primary Discourse on his or her Secondary Discourse. One's Primary Discourse is his or her current self or "a culturally distinctive way of being an 'everyday person' (Gee, 2011, p. 179). A Secondary Discourse includes Discourses people acquire later in life in different social spheres. However, Gee (2011) noted that Primary Discourses "work out, over time, alignments and allegiances that shape them as they, in turn, shape these other Discourses" (p. 179). In other words, Primary Discourses have an effect on the development of Secondary Discourses.

Although numerous scholars have used Gee's theory of D/discourse in the field of foreign language learning, applied linguistics, and educational linguistics, below I review a sampling of

empirical studies in foreign language learning that examined undergraduate learners' discourse in the digital realm. Because the present study uses a digital component in the cultural projects (which I discuss in the following section in more detail), I focus here on how learners used their *discourse* to form different *Discourses* in their online environment. This analysis of other studies informed my own understanding of how to implement Gee's theory of D/discourse in order to gain insight into how learners in the present study enacted visualizations of their future L2 self in the digital realm.

Klimanova and Dembovskaya (2013) conducted a tele-collaborative project where they examined communications between native and non-native speakers of Russian in an online social networking community, *Vkontakte*. They looked at how learners used their discourse to establish their online L2 identities in their interactions with native Russian speakers. Findings revealed that learners used their language-in-use to “move in and out of the L2 learner identity frames and accomplish social tasks beyond the scope of the classroom assignment” (Klimanova & Dembovskaya, 2013, p. 82). To reach this understanding, the authors used Gee's theory of D/discourse (2005, 2011) and particularly focused on how learners' online L2 identities emerged either as language users or as language learners. However, while they did use D/discourse theory to analyze how learners enacted different L2 identities when interacting with native speakers, the authors did not focus on how learners' Primary Discourse affected their Secondary Discourse. In other words, they focused more heavily on the formation of the L2 identity in the online tele-collaborative environment. However, there was not much focus or discussion on the learners' Primary Discourse and the effect it may have had on the development of their Secondary Discourse in the virtual realm.

Looking at learners' Primary Discourse can provide insight into how and why they formed their Secondary Discourse. In Klimanova and Dembovskaya's (2013) study, the main analysis was on *how* learners' used their discourse to move in and out of different L2 identities and not as much on *why* they enacted these identities. Examining the '*why*' is equally important in foreign language learning because this understanding provides insight on the kinds of activities that should be used to lead learners to deeper understandings of themselves and the foreign language they are studying.

Holmes (2013) also studied the formation of learners' L2 identities in the digital realm but looked at how they used their discourse on Twitter to act and interact in socially acceptable ways. This study used Gee's (2011) discourse analysis to examine how learners used language in their tweets to tell stories and share experiences. Specifically, learners imagined they were immersed in a new video game, *Mass Effect 3*, and tweeted on what they witnessed "firsthand". Findings suggested that the learners were able to experience the story via Twitter and develop their L2 identity through active engagement in the digital world. In particular, the use of Gee's discourse analysis showed that learners used their discourse to develop a new literacy, or a new understanding of how to use to language appropriately to interact in different social contexts (Allen & Paesani, 2010). In his use of Gee's discourse analysis, Holmes examined how the learners in his study used their discourse on Twitter to enact their identity in the game. In particular, he focused on structural cues and how learners formed their sentences at the syntactic level to convey their messages (i.e. one learner wrote with typos in her tweet to match the context of her tweet – that she had been injured and broke her hand). However, in this use of Gee's discourse analysis, Holmes did not focus on the theoretical aspect of discourse theory that informs the reason behind learners' language choices. In other words, the findings reflected *how*

learners used their language to enact a socially recognizable identity on Twitter but not *why* they did so. By using D/discourse theory to analyze learners' reasons behind their discourse, the field of foreign language learning can gain insight into the choices learners make and better understand who they are and how to connect them to their foreign language learning experience.

Belz and Reinhardt (2004) also implemented Gee's (1999, 2005) theory of D/discourse in the digital realm. Through a case study of one advanced-level undergraduate learner of German, the authors investigated his language play in computer-mediated communication with a native German speaker. The data revealed that foreign language play in the digital realm affords opportunities to enact social identities in online interactions. Additionally, analysis of the learner's discourse showed that he had developed an awareness of the situated meaning of his language play, meaning that he understood when, where, and how he could use the language play (defined as "the conscious repetition or modification of linguistic forms such as lexemes or syntactic patterns" (p. 328)) in socially acceptable ways. This finding supports the idea that the primary purpose of language is not the transmission of knowledge or information but instead is a way "to effect membership in social groups" and "facilitate the performance of social actions within these groups" (Belz & Reinhardt, 2004, p. 351). As in the other studies discussed in this section, Belz and Reinhardt primarily focused on the linguistic aspects of the discourse. That is, the unit of study was mostly on the syntactic elements of the little 'd' discourse (the language-in-use) and less on implications of the learner's language within his or her Discourse. A focus on learners' discourse at the structural level informs educators on how learners use their language to become a certain L2 self and shows if they learn to interact in socially acceptable ways. However, the missing element is the understanding behind the learners' language choices. By analyzing how learners use their language in their Discourses, both Primary and Secondary, we

as educators can gain insight into *why* learners make certain language choices and enact certain versions of themselves in different contexts.

The previously mentioned studies incorporated Gee's (2011) theory of D/discourse to understand how learners use language to act and interact in different digital Discourses. Building off the methods and findings of each study mentioned, I use Gee's theory of D/discourse to examine learners' language-in-use in their cultural projects, which partly took place in the digital realm. I also look at learners' enactments of different socially recognizable L2 identities by examining how they envision their future L2 self. Finally, I consider the relationship between their Primary Discourse, or learners' actual self when entering the foreign language classroom, and the development of their Secondary Discourse (their future L2 self) during their foreign language learning experience.

In the present study, I draw upon insights from social constructivism, Activity Theory, and D/discourse theory to guide my understanding of the effect of the social and cultural environment on the foreign language learning experience. In particular, I adopted a social constructivist approach when designing the pedagogical tools implemented in the present study. I used Activity Theory (Wells, 2002) and created collaborative activities in which learners used different tools (i.e. social media, their dialogue, etc.) to construct meaning, explore and discover the target culture, and develop visualizations of their future L2 self. Furthermore, because social constructivism places emphasis on the context of learning, the pedagogical activities learners completed in this study also pertained to an imaginary context with the goal of providing purpose and relevance to the learning environment.

### **Developed Interest through Learner Interaction on Social Media**

Previous studies have shown that Web 2.0 technologies are useful in foreign language learning because they provide a window into the real world and in the context of foreign

language learning, they enable the development of a deeper understanding of the target culture (Paily, 2013). For the purpose of this investigation, I combine definitions from Chartrand (2012) and Paily (2013) and consider Web 2.0 technologies as any Web tool that is dynamic, interactive, and that allows users to create, edit, and change content on a regular basis. Considering that today's learners have grown up in a technological age, Web 2.0 technologies spark learners' interest and engage them in different and new ways than traditional instruction with a textbook can (Lomicka & Lord, 2012; Schenker, 2013).

Social media, which is one type of Web 2.0 technology tool, is beneficial in foreign language learning due to its inherently social nature. It encourages collaboration by affording learners opportunities to interact actively with one another (Paily, 2013). For example, the concept of social media itself centers on participation and collaboration. Via social media, users create content, collaborate with one another, and exchange ideas (Paily, 2013). In the context of foreign language learning, social media provides these same opportunities to language learners. Learners can use different tools to create content together, exchange ideas, and communicate in the target language with one another and with the outside world.

Social media also provides a dynamic learning environment where learners develop skills that will aid them in successful interactions in the real world (Chartrand, 2012). For instance, it emphasizes interpersonal communication skills, teaches learners how to collaborate with one another, and is a way for them to learn how to express their opinions (Chartrand, 2012). In addition to developing learners' 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, social media provides access to foreign cultures (Kern, 2014) and can be an integral component in developing an emic perspective of the target culture from within the four walls of the classroom. Finally, social media provides learners with opportunities to explore their own interests, and in the context of foreign language learning

research has suggested that when allowed to explore their own interests, they become more motivated to explore the topic further (Reeve, 2005). When connected to cultural learning, social media can lead learners to a deeper understanding of the target culture (Garrett-Rucks, 2013). That is, when they become more interested in the target culture and want to discover and uncover more about it, they learn more from the culture and have the opportunity to connect the 3 Ps. When learners begin to understand the relationship between the 3 Ps, they are able to understand the ‘why’ behind the culture and learn more about the perspectives. Such an understanding leads them to develop a more profound awareness of cultural diversity (ACTFL, 2014).

While there are numerous approaches to incorporating social media in foreign language learning, I concentrate on forms that have activated learners’ imaginations by engaging them in interactions with the target culture via the digital realm. Since the goal of this study is to develop learners’ cross-cultural awareness through visualizations of their future L2 self, I specifically look at different social media tools that have the capability of activating imagination and exposing learners to real-world cultural phenomena. While the review below does not cover all of the social media forms previously used in foreign language learning, it does provide a “snapshot” of applicable social media forms that scholars in the field have used.

**Facebook.** According to Chartrand (2012), Facebook has become “the most successful social networking site” (p. 99) due to its millions of users. This tool appeals to learners because it creates an online community where they feel more open to express their opinions and share information readily shared in the face-to-face classroom.

Mills (2011) implemented Facebook in her undergraduate intermediate French course to create imagined communities where learners wrote, shared opinions, and engaged in meaningful interactions with one another and the target culture. Learners in Mills’ study developed Facebook

profiles in French and interacted online three times a week. By focusing on their interests via Facebook, the majority of learners reported that their learning experience was useful, specifically as it related to connecting with their classmates and learning more about French culture.

Shih (2011) also incorporated Facebook into an undergraduate English class in order to develop learners' writing skills in the target language. He examined the effect of incorporating Facebook into instruction by having participants complete written assignments on Facebook and assess other classmates' writing throughout the duration of the semester. Results revealed that Facebook served as an interactive platform for developing learners' linguistic skills and interest in the subject matter.

Other researchers who have incorporated Facebook in the foreign language learning experience include Terantino and Graf (2011) and Naditz (2011). Terantino and Graf used Facebook in introductory- and intermediate-level Spanish courses and focused on developing learners' written skills. At the introductory level, learners completed a profile that contained basic information in Spanish such as information about themselves, their university, their family, etc. While the main purpose of this activity was to provide learners with opportunities to practice their written linguistic skills, findings suggested that learners possessed a higher level of excitement about completing the assignment because they viewed Facebook as a relevant and engaging way to use the target language. At the intermediate level, Terantino and Graf had learners write about and discuss an imagined study abroad program in Mexico City. These learners created profiles just like the introductory level learners did, but they also engaged in conversations on Facebook in the target language and created photo albums that served as visual discussion boards. The created photo albums represented what the learners imagined their first week in Mexico City would be like. After posting their photo albums and descriptions of the

photos, other learners viewed the album and posted comments and questions on the photos, which created the visual discussion board. The original intent, as outlined by the authors, was to develop learners' linguistic skills, specifically their written skills. However, an unexpected by-product of this activity was an increase in learners' cultural competence. By creating their own profiles and photo albums, learners had to investigate culturally appropriate ways of saying things and therefore grew in their cultural understanding.

Naditz (2011) used Facebook to create online communities amongst learners in different levels of French courses that she taught. In particular, she used Facebook as a tool to share information quickly with learners, allow learners to ask questions and collaborate with one another, and to encourage learners to exchange information with one another. Learners who participated and used the Facebook group pages often posted in French even though it was not a requirement of participating in the online group. Naditz' use of Facebook thus extended learners' dedication to practice their linguistic skills outside of the traditional classroom.

All of the aforementioned studies that incorporated Facebook provided opportunities for learners to practice linguistic skills and build online communities. The purpose of Facebook centers on developing online communities by connecting with other people who have similar interests (Chartrand, 2012). Therefore, the goal of Facebook and the goals of the present study do not coincide. Facebook prohibits the creation of false profiles, and therefore, learners are not able to use Facebook as a way to create an imagined self-interacting in the target culture.

**Twitter.** Twitter is a microblogging social media tool that allows users to post or comment on content with 140 or less characters. Its unique method of communicating sparked interest in educational settings because it allows students and teachers to stay connected in a creative and innovative way (Chartrand, 2012). Previous research (Borau, Ullrich, Feng, & Shen, 2009;

Lomicka & Lord, 2012; Lord & Lomicka, 2014; Lee & Markey; among others) showed that Twitter is a useful tool in foreign language learning because it provides learners with an authentic environment where they can practice their language skills, connect with one another and their instructor, develop a sense of community, and connect with the target culture (Lord & Lomicka, 2012).

Borau et al. (2009) used Twitter to develop learners' communicative and sociolinguistic competence, or the ability to interact in the social contexts where speakers use the target language. Throughout a period of approximately seven weeks, learners enrolled in an English speaking and listening blended learning course participated in this study. First, they registered on Twitter and then posted Twitter updates in English as a part of their course curriculum. Learners' Twitter updates served as a method of practicing their language skills in an authentic environment, and findings showed that through interaction with native speakers via Twitter, learners increased their linguistic competence and began to grow in their cultural awareness.

Lomicka and Lord (2012) also implemented Twitter into foreign language learning in order to examine how learners used it to form communities with each other and the target culture. Findings showed that when educators incorporate Web 2.0 tools into foreign language learning, tasks must be well designed, must fit the group of people who will be using the tool, and the Web 2.0 tool must match the type of task being accomplished. The authors also used Twitter to investigate how it provided authentic opportunities for learners to practice their language skills. The intermediate French learners who participated in this study tweeted weekly with their classmates and native speakers throughout the duration of the semester. As a result, learners developed a community with one another and built their social presence through their interactions on Twitter.

Another study that highlights the use of Twitter in foreign language learning is Lee and Markey's (2014). Their study differs from the previously mentioned studies because Twitter was not the main Web 2.0 tool implemented, but instead it was one of three tools used. The objective of Lee and Markey's study was to examine how different Web 2.0 technologies develop cross-cultural communication between learners in different countries who speak different languages. As such, the participants were learners enrolled in one advanced English course in Spain and one advanced Spanish course in the United States. In three different phases, participants used a different Web 2.0 tool to complete a task. Phase one required learners to get to know one another on Twitter; phase two required the learners to write a blog about typical traditions and customs in their native countries; and phase three centered on creating podcasts to discuss any topics that learners found controversial in the previous two phases. Findings of this investigation revealed that social engagement through Web 2.0 tools increased learners' cultural knowledge and helped them become "more aware of their own beliefs and attitudes toward their own culture" (p. 295). In particular, a majority (78 percent) of learners reported that Twitter was "useful for instant communication" and fostered "a sense of belonging to support each other" (p. 289).

While Twitter did provide real-world exposure to the target culture, its focus is on rapid, short series of posts. Its primary purpose is not on exploring the target culture through visual images and videos. Even though users can post photos and videos to Twitter, the primary focus of Twitter is on text-based posts. Thus, this social media tool does not lend itself to developing learners' imagination because it lacks a visual component that would allow learners to visualize themselves in the target culture.

**Wikis.** Wikis are collaborative Web sites where users create and edit content on the page (Evans, n.d.). Wikis are a popular tool that many scholars have used inside and outside of the

foreign language classroom. For example, studies have shown that wikis encourage collaboration, cultivate learners' writing skills in the target language, develop L2 content knowledge, and develop learner agency. Additionally, many researchers have also used wikis to make lists, plan, take exams, brainstorm, store research, and create portfolios (Evans, n.d.; Ducate, Lomicka-Anderson, & Moreno, 2011; Lee, 2010b; Pellet, 2012).

Evans (n.d) and Lee (2010b) conducted studies on wiki use in the introductory foreign language classrooms. In Evans, the participants were enrolled in an introductory course in literature and culture of Quebec (which, according to Evans, "serves as a gateway course to more advanced literature courses" (p. 1)) whereas Lee's participants were Spanish language learners in an elementary Spanish course, which included learners with "less than two years of Spanish language instruction" (Lee, 2010b, p. 262). In both of these studies, learners engaged in a collaborative writing process in which they contributed to a class wiki page and edited each other's content throughout the duration of a semester. Findings from both studies showed that the wikis provided a productive avenue for developing learners' language skills and a dynamic environment for learners to participate actively in their language acquisition.

Ducate et al. (2011), who conducted a study of wiki use in three different intermediate classrooms of French, Spanish, and German, focused on developing learners' cultural knowledge. In the French course, learners created a digital micropedia, which is like an online encyclopedia. This micropedia served as a supplement to a book they were reading in class. The learners in the Spanish course used wikis to write a branching story, or where readers and an author of a book interact on a wiki and create a story together. Finally, in the German class, learners used wikis to enhance their cultural knowledge by investigating and posting on topics related to a novel they read in class. Pellet (2012) also followed this type of wiki use in an

advanced-level French course. In her course, learners created wikis and engaged in collaborative activities centered on developing their content knowledge of the target language. The findings of Ducate et al. and Pellet suggest that wikis have a positive impact on student motivation and develop a sense of community through collaborative work. Additionally, Pellet noted that learners became more engaged with their coursework as a result of completing tasks on wikis.

While wikis do provide an environment for learners to develop visualizations of their future L2 self interacting in the target culture, I chose not to use wikis based off of findings from a pilot study I conducted prior to the implementation of this present study with two intensive review courses of introductory Spanish. With the goals of cultivating learners' cross-cultural awareness through visualizations of their future L2 self, I designed contextualized projects that required learners to explore cultural topics and create a wiki. Learners worked in groups of four to five and researched information related to the topics I provided (Appendix A) and then created a wiki for their classmates to view. While these wikis did encourage collaboration, exploration of the target culture, and interaction with the products, practices, and perspectives of the culture, learners reported that they found the wikis did not suit their interests. In other words, they commented midway through the pilot study that, for the purpose of their projects, the wikis were not a dynamic enough platform. They felt that the wikis were interesting, but that they were too text-heavy. Therefore, they rarely read what their classmates posted, and they did not feel they were learning about the target culture. As such, I decided not to use wikis because they did not meet my purported goals of developing learners' cross-cultural awareness by developing their interests in culture and leading them to see themselves interacting in the target culture.

**Web logs.** The use of blogs appeared in foreign language education within the past decade to promote the development of learners' intercultural competence, linguistic skills, learner

autonomy, and online collaboration (Ducate & Lomicka, 2005, 2008; Lee, 2009, 2010a, 2011, 2012; Lee & Markey, 2014; among others). It is worth noting that all of the studies on blogs mentioned in this section took place at the advanced level of foreign language study. Since the blogs served as a forum for learners to complete longer written assignments in the target language, it seems learners must possess a higher level of linguistic competence in order to complete these types of tasks.

Ducate and Lomicka (2005, 2008) examined the benefits of blogs in developing learners' linguistic and cultural competence, and they looked at how learners reacted to blogging. In their 2005 study, learners used blogs as online journal, and in 2008, learners read native speakers' blog posts and wrote their own responses. Findings from both studies revealed that blogs were practical tools that developed learners' reading and writing skills in the target language and promoted critical thinking. Additionally, blogs afforded learners the opportunity to take control of their learning and encouraged creativity in how they expressed themselves in the foreign language.

Lee (2009, 2010a, 2011, 2012) as well as Lee and Markey (2014) also used blogs in their foreign language classrooms to cultivate intercultural learning environments and examine how blogs relate to cross-cultural communication between learners. In Lee's studies, learners wrote blogs to focus on enhancing cross-cultural exchanges (Lee, 2009; Lee & Markey, 2014), develop intercultural competence (Lee, 2011, 2012), or foster reflective writing (Lee, 2010a). Findings from these studies showed that blogs are an effective method to create dynamic interactions where learners become autonomous in their learning and reflect more deeply on diverse cultural perspectives.

As with the wikis, the primary purpose of a blog is for writing activities. Therefore, for the same reason that I decided not to use wikis, I also chose not to use blogs. I believed learners would deem blogs as not interactive enough and as too text-heavy. In order for learners to be able to visualize themselves in the target culture, they remarked that they needed to see what it was like. In other words, they needed more visually based interactions.

### **Learner Interest: Activating the Imagination Through the use of Pinterest**

As Gee explained, humans understand anything better by being able to visualize it:

When human beings understand anything, whether it's a text or the world, they understand it not by abstract generalities but by literally being able to run in their head a simulation of images and actions and experiences that the words refer to (Edutopia, 2012, 4:28).

In order to cultivate interest in culture through the activation of learners' future L2 selves, it seemed most appropriate to select a visual and text-based social media platform, namely Pinterest. By pinning images and/or videos from other sources on the Internet, users share content with one another, create, and edit online pinboards (Zarro & Hall, 2012). As such, Pinterest is all about the discovery of new information, which aligns with the goals of the study of discovering new cross-cultural perspectives.

This type of platform stimulates imagination because of the visual imagery it uses. Specifically, it leads learners to see themselves as future language users through exploring images and videos related to the target culture. Pinterest encourages learners to develop visualizations of a future self that is different from their current self through elaborate and vivid imagery. They realize through the affordances of visuals on Pinterest that the future self is one that is plausible, is not comfortably certain, and this realization acts as a motivating factor in their discovery of new knowledge (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). In addition, Pinterest ideally fulfills the goals of a social constructivist learning environment by enabling users to work

together to co-construct knowledge. Pinterest's ease of use also appeals to digital natives' desire for instantaneity – it is one-click. In other words, users find something, they click the “pin” button, and they can create their post all in one place (write a description of 500 characters and add the photo). In the learning environment, Pinterest also allows for deeper reflection on what learners' have studied because they store all of their information in one place (they do not have to go searching for old posts).

### **Research Questions**

In light of the discussion provided in this chapter, the following research questions (RQ) highlight what this study explores:

*RQ1:* How do learners enact their future L2 self when exploring real-world cultural topics on Pinterest?

*RQ2:* How do opportunities for reflection affect the evolution of learners' future L2 self?

*RQ3:* How do visualizations of the future L2 self-influence learners' approach to culture?

*RQ4:* What emotional connections do learners make with the target culture when exploring different holidays in a cultural project?

*RQ5:* How do learners' emotional connections as generated by their second cultural project affect their interest in continuing to study Spanish?

### **Chapter 3: Methods**

This chapter focuses on the methods I implemented in an introductory Spanish course in order to develop learners' interest in culture. In the first section, I describe the current curriculum in place at the university of study and lay the foundation for the rest of the chapter. After establishing the department's current approach to foreign language learning, I then explain how I adapted the curriculum for the purpose of this study. Next, I provide an outline of the procedures of the cultural projects. After discussing the procedures of each cultural project, I then report on the demographics of the participants to provide further insight into how the adapted curriculum fit the needs of the learners in this study. The next section describes the instruments used and how they provided insight into learners' subjective experiences when learning a foreign language. Specifically, I discuss the four instruments, two questionnaires, self-reporting journals, and a focus group used to collect data on learners' interests in culture. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the data analysis, with a specific focus on the results presented in Chapter 4 and in Chapter 5.

#### **Current Curriculum**

To lay the foundation for the present study, I first describe and discuss the current curriculum and specifically the introductory level Spanish courses at the university of study. In the sections below, I describe the Spanish Basic Language Program, the introductory Spanish course, and conclude this section by providing details of the original curriculum in order to lead into how I adapted it for the purpose of this study (which I outline in the following section).

**Spanish Basic Language Program.** At the large southeastern university where the study took place, introductory Spanish is a part of the Spanish Basic Language Program. The goals of the program reflect a Communicative Language Teaching approach and center on developing lower-intermediate proficiency in Spanish. Outcomes focus on (a) cultivating both productive and receptive skills through instructional methods that align with the 5 Cs as proposed by *The Standards* (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015); (b) developing learners' general knowledge about culture in the Spanish-speaking world; (c) cultivating basic speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills; and (d) expanding knowledge of significant historical events.

**Introductory Spanish.** Introductory Spanish is a two-semester sequence at the university of study. This sequence is for true beginners, that is, learners who have not taken prior Spanish courses. Additionally, learners who enroll in these two courses fulfill an undergraduate language requirement set by many programs of study at this university. Another option, for learners who wish to enroll in Spanish at this university, however, is an accelerated introductory course that combines the two introductory-level courses and provides an intensive review. This accelerated course takes place during one semester and is for learners who have recently (within the past four years) taken one or two Spanish courses in high school or at another university (i.e. introductory Spanish at a different university). At the university of study, a majority of learners enroll in this accelerated introductory course because it fulfills their general education requirements. Therefore, after completing this course, they usually do not continue on to the next level of foreign language study, and I decided to conduct the present study at this level in order to examine pedagogies that might elicit and nurture learners' interest in continuing to study Spanish, whether informally (i.e. outside of the classroom) or formally (inside the educational or academic environment).

**Original curriculum description.** The intensive Spanish review course in this study is a hybrid course and is part of a coordinated program where all assignments are the same across all sections. Hybrid courses, which are growing in popularity across the United States, incorporate traditional classroom learning, supplemented by online and other computer-based instruction and activities (Scida & Saury, 2006). Learners at the university of study meet face-to-face three times a week for 50 minutes in a traditional classroom environment and then complete online activities on the days during the week when classes do not meet in person. During in-class meetings, instructors focus on developing learners' linguistic proficiency and basic cultural knowledge through different communicative activities from the textbook, which in this intensive introductory course is *Protagonistas* (Underwood, 2012). The days that learners do not meet face-to-face they complete out-of-class online activities that serve as formative assessment to develop and evaluate their vocabulary and grammar skills. Summative assessments in this course include three oral assessments, three written assignments, and five quizzes.

*Protagonistas* is a textbook that focuses on Communicative Language Teaching by providing opportunities for learners to study different grammatical and vocabulary structures through every day, practical language use. *Protagonistas* takes an innovative approach to teaching language in the way that it uses an individual's life (the protagonist) in each chapter to teach vocabulary, grammar, and cultural information. However, per the introduction of the textbook, *Protagonistas* centers mostly on developing linguistic competence. Because of this kind of focus, it seems as if the organization of the textbook reinforces a sequential view of language and culture, meaning that it supports a focus on linguistic proficiency before cultural competence. Each chapter contains three different sections – the first two sections focus on a specific contextual theme (i.e. specialties of the house – foods) and the final section focuses on the chapter's protagonist (i.e. a

Spanish-speaking chef). The third section in each chapter is the “Protagonist” section, where the textbook focuses on the daily life of a Spanish-speaker. While a focus on daily life is interesting to learners (Dechert & Kastner, 1989; Schenker, 2013), a critique of this type of cultural instruction is that it conceptualizes culture through the lens of Big C culture versus little c culture. For example, in the textbook’s introduction, it says a feature of *Protagonistas* is a curriculum that teaches vocabulary and grammar through a focus on the daily life of individuals from all around the Spanish-speaking world. This approach does move the profession forward by recognizing that there is a need for an emic approach to language learning and real-world language use. However, it continues to reinforce the divide between Big C versus little c culture in foreign language learning, by focusing specifically on little c culture, the culture of everyday life (Kramsch, 2012).

In addition to the three functional spreads in each chapter, *Protagonistas* incorporates a “tarea final” at the end of each chapter. Per the textbook’s Timeline of cultural project #1, these activities aim at bringing together the communicative and cultural skills that learners have studied in the previous chapter through group projects. However, a critique of these projects is that they often only incorporate pair work and are not designed to encourage learners to explore real-world perspectives on a more in-depth level. Additionally, not many of these activities incorporate the use of social media or technology that would ultimately expose learners to real-world and real-time cultural topics. Thus, *Protagonistas* does not include projects like the present study proposes that would lead learners through a process of learning in which they explore the target culture and then reflect on what they have learned.

### **Adaptation of Curriculum**

The goal of the present study is to foster cross-cultural awareness by connecting learners’ interests to cultural learning during their foreign language learning experience. To address these

goals, I created two different contextualized cultural projects that led learners through a process of learning throughout the duration of their foreign language course. In these projects, learners explored their interests in culture (within the context of the projects), focused on investigating real-world phenomena in the target culture, and had opportunities to reflect on what they were learning.

With this objective in mind, I adapted the original curriculum and aimed at providing cultural activities that aligned with *The Standards'* (2015) recommendations, which center on developing learners' ability to communicate with cultural understanding in more than one language. To cultivate this deeper level of cultural understanding, learners have to be interested in the cultural information they are studying. Therefore, I drew on the ubiquity of social media in learners' lives and used Pinterest as a means for learners to explore their own interests in culture, in particular content that is (a) related to the real world, (b) connected to learners' lives, and (c) authentic. Research shows that this type of instructional approach develops learners' interest and leads them to connect more with the target culture (Schenker, 2013).

During the 15-week semester, I incorporated two projects that lasted approximately a total of four to five weeks each and required learners to work collaboratively in groups to explore different cultural topics (Table 2). Each project guided learners to complete a variety of activities inside and outside of the classroom setting. The original and adapted curricula are presented in Table 2 for a comparison.

**Table 2 - Description of Original and Adapted Curriculum**

Original curriculum	Adapted curriculum
Three oral activities	Two cultural projects that each consisted of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group Pinterest activity</li><li>• Group written activity</li><li>• Group oral activity</li></ul>
Three written activities	Two journal entries (in English)
Five grammar/vocabulary quizzes	–

I replaced the original curriculum's oral activities, written activities, and quizzes with two cultural projects and two journal entries. Each project included a set of three group activities where learners used the language to explore the target culture. The activities were (a) a Pinterest activity, (b) a written activity, and (c) an oral activity. In the Pinterest activity, learners researched cultural products and practices and explored the target culture in ways that were interesting to them but still adhered to the activity requirements. The written and oral activities built upon the research learners gathered on Pinterest. Each activity followed the same contextualization and led students through a process of cultural learning.

The final part of the adapted curriculum included two journal entries, one per cultural project. The main purpose of the journal activities was to lead learners to consider the perspectives of the target culture by discussing the viewpoints behind the cultural products and practices they explored on Pinterest and in their written and oral activities. Learners completed these activities individually at the end of each project. Since all learners in this study were at the novice level of foreign language learning, I designed the journal entries for completion in English so that they could reflect more deeply on the topic they investigated in each cultural project (Sandrock, 2015).

## Procedures

In the section that follows, I begin by describing the topics of the two cultural projects learners completed. In doing so, my goal is to provide an overall understanding of the central focus of each project before continuing into more specific details of the projects, i.e. the design and timeline.

**Topics of projects.** As stated in Chapter 2, I conducted a pilot study during the semester prior to the implementation of this main study. I first piloted four different topics that related to the content in students' textbook at the time and that emulated real-world context<sup>1</sup>. I based each one off of (a) United States pop culture because all of the learners in the pilot study (and later in the main study) were from the United States or (b) topics related to learners' lives as college-aged students, with the goal of providing topics that interested learners. In the pilot study, the topics (Appendix A) focused on working for a travel agency in Spain during the summer (project #1), studying abroad (project #2), searching for a house to live abroad via *House Hunters International* (project #3), and planning a wedding in Chile (project #4). After piloting these topics, learners provided feedback in a focus group. Results from the focus group indicated that the most interesting topic was the one that related to *House Hunters International* because it was the most realistic way they could see themselves using the target language. Based off these results, I kept this topic and used it for the first cultural project in the main study. The premise of the show *House Hunters International* centers on show participants touring three different housing types and selecting one type of house they want to buy or rent at the end of the show.

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<sup>1</sup> While I tested four different cultural project topics in the pilot study, I only implemented two different cultural projects in the main study. After meeting with students from the pilot study and after reviewing the timeline of each project, I decided that it would be best to give more time for each activity of the cultural project. By elongating each project, I was able to provide more adequate time for exploration and reflection of cross-cultural perspectives.

Building off this idea, I provided learners with a contextualization: the learner just received a scholarship to study for an entire year in a Spanish-speaking country of their choice but had not received funding for their housing/lodging while abroad, and thus, they were responsible for finding what they considered the perfect home. To do so, they were to work in groups apply to be on the show *House Hunters International*. In their projects, they had to select three housing options and provide these options for their application to be on the show.

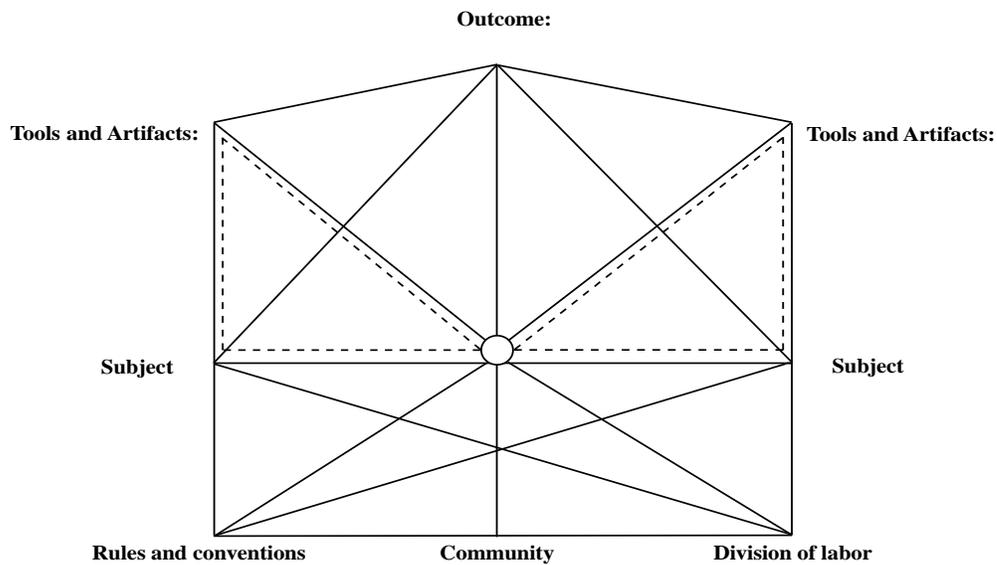
Also in the focus group, learners commented that while the other topics of the projects in the pilot study were interesting, they all required them to visualize themselves using Spanish in a foreign country or context. Learners suggested that I should develop a topic that focused on using Spanish in a local context so that the topics would be even more relevant to their everyday lives and relate to their interests in using Spanish in their everyday lives. The main goal of the second project was to lead learners to connect emotionally with the target culture through using the “the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own” (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015).

The second cultural project took place toward the end of the spring semester before summer break; thus, I considered this temporal factor when designing the topic. In this project, I told learners to imagine they had just gotten a new job to make extra money to support their summer travels and adventures. Their new job was to work as a freelance journalist for a bilingual company in Alabama, *HOLA Latino*. Specifically, they worked in groups to investigate different holidays that the Spanish-speaking world celebrates; this research was conducted using Pinterest. They then compared one of the holidays they researched to a similar holiday celebrated in the United States. If they chose a holiday that did not have an equivalent in the United States, they

were instructed to imagine what a similar United States holiday could be like and pin information to Pinterest that represented this imagined version.

**Project design and timeline.** To design each activity in the cultural projects, I used Wells' (2002) conceptualization of Activity Theory (Figure 2). Within Wells' model, there are multiple participants, artifacts/tools, and practices "involved in dialogic interaction" (p. 60). That is, all elements contribute to the outcome achieved in an activity system. Further, in each activity system, there are numerous participants working and interacting. Each participant has individual and multi-faceted goals and roles, but they all work together to reach the goal of the overarching activity system. In other words, the concept of an activity system is comparable to a puzzle, with many different pieces, each with a different role that ultimately fits together to make one big picture.

I applied this understanding of Activity Theory to the current investigation by viewing learning as a social process in which each activity within the cultural projects contributed to the overall goal of the individual project. Furthermore, each project played a role in achieving the overarching goal of this study, which was increased cross-cultural awareness. Figure 2 provides the same illustration of Wells' Activity Theory that I described in Chapter 2; however, I include it in this chapter as well as a reference for the following descriptions of each activity in the cultural projects.



**Figure 2 - Wells' (2002) Activity Theory**

In the section below, I outline and describe each project through the lens of Activity Theory. I first discuss the overarching goal of the particular project, and then I describe each activity completed during the project and show how it played a role in achieving the goal.

**Cultural Project #1.** The overarching goal of the first cultural project was to develop learners' visualizations of their future L2 selves and use these visualizations to increase their interests in culture. Each activity described in Table 3 played a specific and unique role in achieving these goals.

**Table 3 - Timeline of Cultural Project #1**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Group contracts	Week 2
Pinterest research and mini-presentations	Week 4
Written activity	Week 6
Oral activity	Week 7

***Project 1 – Group contracts.*** From an Activity Theory perspective, I used the first activity (group contracts) to establish a community of collaboration that encouraged social learning. This particular activity allowed the learners in each group to set group rules, conventions, and divisions of labor for the rest of the project. During the second week of the semester, the instructor of the course divided learners into groups of four to five each (totaling four to five groups per class), and learners received their project instructions and began working on their group contracts (Appendix C). In their contracts, they were to (a) collaborate, decide how they would complete their project (i.e. who would be in charge of each aspect of the project, timeline for completion, etc.), (b) establish the rules for how and when to complete each part of the project, and finally, (c) decide on regulations/penalties to enforce if group members failed to complete their work. This assignment set the context for a social learning environment, required learners to communicate with one another in order to achieve their goals, and established a sense of accountability among the group. Once completed, one learner per group submitted their contracts to their instructor via their online learning system, and the group moved into the next activity of the cultural project.

***Project 1 – Pinterest research and mini-presentations.*** The goal of this activity was to activate learners’ visualizations of their future L2 self-interacting in the target culture by

exploring different cultural topics that related to their interests in learning about culture that is current and related to the real world (Yulin, 2013).

By the fourth week, learners started creating their group pinboards on Pinterest. To do so, one member from each group created a group pinboard and then sent invitations to the other members and the instructor of the class. Then, each learner had one week to pin a minimum of five images and/or videos that related to the cultural topic, *House Hunters International* (Appendix B). The group pinboard was to have a minimum of 15 to 20 total pins. Learners each individually searched the Internet to find images and videos that represented the Spanish-speaking country they wanted to investigate, the types of housing that interested them (requirement of three types of housing), and additional details about where they would live (i.e. neighborhoods surrounding the housing, attractions in the area, information about the city, country, etc.) and pinned those images and videos.

Another goal of this activity was to connect the products, practices, and perspectives of the cultural information they found online. To do so, learners used written discourse as a mediating tool. Once they pinned different cultural products and practices to Pinterest, they then wrote short descriptions of each pin in the target language. The written discourse focused on connecting the perspectives of the culture to the products and practices (i.e., they were to explain the ‘why’ behind the pin). Because of the limitations of Pinterest (500 characters), the instructions indicated that each description was to be brief (three to four sentences maximum).

Once learners had created and captioned their Pinterest boards, each group gave a mini-presentation (Appendix B) during the fourth week of the 15-week semester. The goal of the mini-presentation was to develop learners’ understanding of culture by providing them with opportunities to use the language to investigate and explore the target culture (The National

Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). Because of the size of the groups (four to five members per group) and the focus of the mini-presentation (only a brief introduction of the research conducted), only one or two members presented the findings. Presentations took place during one class meeting and lasted for one to two minutes. The instructions of this activity (Appendix B) informed learners that they should speak in the target language, should identify the group's chosen location, should describe their research to date, including information they thought would be interesting to the rest of the class, and use their Pinterest board as the visual aid for their class presentation.

***Project 1 – Written activity.*** The goal of the third activity was to lead learners to reflect on the target culture and develop their linguistic and cultural competence. They used their written discourse and the cultural information they gathered on Pinterest as mediating tools to achieve these goals. Specifically, each group used their cultural information collected on Pinterest to create one written script (in the target language) that they would later use for an audition video (Project 1, Oral Activity). During the sixth week of the semester, learners worked together to write and edit an outline in the target language for each person's role in the audition video and what images and/or videos from Pinterest to include. The instructions (Appendix B) indicated that the script was to result in a three to four minute audition video and that each group member was to contribute the same amount of content. Once learners completed their written activity, one group member per group submitted the script to the instructor via their online learning system.

***Project 1 – Oral activity.*** The goals of the final activity of the first cultural project were the same as the written activity (reflection on target culture and development of linguistic and cultural competence) but learners worked toward achieving these goals through oral

presentations. In this activity, they used the cultural images/videos from Pinterest, their written scripts, and oral language as mediating tools to achieve their goals.

In the seventh week of the semester, each group recorded one audition video that served as their application to be on *House Hunters International*. Per their instructions that I provided (Appendix B), learners used a digital recording tool (e.g., iMovie, Pixorial, WeVideo) of their choice to create their video. Through this activity, learners reflected on the cross-cultural information they encountered in the previous two activities. They described the three houses they had chosen, explained why they chose these three options, recommended different things to do in the area, described what they liked most about their chosen neighborhood, compared the target country with their own native country, and then made recommendations for the best place to live. At the end of the seventh week of the semester, one group member submitted the video to the instructor via their online learning system. The instructor played the videos during a class meeting that week, and learners imagined that they were the producers of *House Hunters International*. They watched each video, discussed them in the target language, and then voted on the best three videos. For this activity, I provided all learners with a handout (Appendix D) where they could take notes on each video and then vote anonymously for their top three selections; they could not select their own group as one of the top three.

**Cultural project #2.** The second cultural project followed the same timeline (see Table 4) and organization of activities and required the same type of output from learners (i.e. group contract, Pinterest, written activity, oral activity). Learners received all instructions for the second cultural project in week 10 (Appendix B).

**Table 4 - Timeline of Cultural Project #2**

Assignment	Due Date
Group contracts	Week 10
Pinterest research and mini-presentations	Week 11
Written activity	Week 13
Oral activity	Week 15

**Project 2 – Group contracts.** In the tenth week of the semester, the instructor of the courses placed learners into new groups of two or three students. Feedback from the first cultural project indicated that group collaboration would be easier in smaller groups. The goals of the group contracts were the same as they were in the first project: to encourage social learning. Therefore, learners received similar instructions (Appendix C). Once learners completed their contracts, one group member submitted the contract to the instructor via their online learning system.

**Project 2 – Pinterest and mini-presentation.** The goals of the Pinterest activity were the same in the second cultural project – to use Pinterest to explore real-world cultural topics and gain an insider’s perspective to the target culture through their written descriptions of each pin they selected. During week 11, one learner in each group created the pinboard on Pinterest and invited the other group members and the instructor to join. As their instructions indicated (Appendix B), learners imagined they worked for *HOLA Latino* as a freelancer and pinned at least five different images and/or videos related to different holidays. They selected a holiday in the Spanish-speaking world, decided upon a specific Spanish-speaking country that celebrated the holiday, and then compared it to an equivalent holiday in the United States. Learners

described each pin in three to four sentences in the target language, focusing on the ‘why’ behind the different cultural products and practices associated with the holiday they studied.

As in the first cultural project, learners next completed a mini-presentation (Appendix B) during a class meeting in week 11 of the semester. Because each group consisted of only two or three students, all learners participated in the mini-presentation and spoke in the target language for one to two minutes each. The mini-presentation lasted for approximately three minutes and groups were instructed to identify the Spanish-speaking country they chose, their selected holiday, and their research to date, including any additional information they found interesting. As in the first mini-presentation, learners also used their Pinterest boards as their visual aid when presenting to the class.

**Project 2 – Written activity.** The goal of the next activity was to encourage learners to use the language to make comparisons between their native culture and the target culture. Like in the first cultural project, learners used Pinterest and their written descriptions as mediating tools to achieve their goals of making more in-depth comparisons between the target and their native cultures. However, in the second project, they instead created a flyer that advertised an upcoming radio broadcast hosted by *HOLA Latino* (Project 2, oral activity). During week 13, learners created this flyer and compared and contrasted a cultural holiday they had selected in a Spanish-speaking country with the same or equivalent holiday in their own native culture. Per their instructions, (Appendix B) learners used information from their Pinterest boards to illustrate and describe the different holidays. While I did not give learners a sentence or word requirement, their flyer had to be at least 8 ½ by 11 inches in size, and learners had to write in complete sentences in the target language and use information from Pinterest.

**Project 2 – Oral activity.** The goal of the oral activity in the second cultural project was the same as the written activity in this project: to lead learners to make more in-depth comparisons of the target culture and their native culture. However, in this activity, learners used their oral language skills and the information from the previous two activities (Pinterest and written activity) as their mediating tools to achieve this goal.

Learners worked in the same groups as in the previous activities of this project and complete the oral activity during week 15 of the semester. In this oral activity, which served as their final exam for their introductory-level Spanish course, each group created one radio broadcast for *HOLA Latino* (Appendix B). In their podcasts, each group member spoke between 30 seconds and one minute, thus creating a total 90 second to two minute group podcast. In this podcast, groups identified the two holidays they researched in this cultural project, compared them, and talked about the perspectives they uncovered during the first two activities. After learners completed their podcast, one group member then submitted the finished “radio broadcast” to the instructor via their online learning system. In order to encourage live discussion of the second cultural topic, learners listened to the podcasts individually outside of class during the final week of the course. They then completed an in-class discussion using guided questions that I created (Appendix E). However, the in-class discussion was not a part of their final oral activity grade.

### **Assessment of Activities**

The activities previously described were all performance-based, meaning that the learners *did* something. Therefore, performance-based assessment was best suited to evaluate learners’ linguistic and cultural competence, taking into consideration *how* students learn in addition to *what* they learned, an approach advocated by various scholars (see Duncan, 2014; Blaz, 2013). Rubrics are typically used to assess performance-based activities.

Montgomery (2002) defines a rubric as “a scaling process [...] that contains proficiency levels with clearly specified criteria” (p. 35), and I used rubrics to evaluate learners’ application and use of linguistic and cultural knowledge in their cultural projects. The purpose of the mini-presentations was to provide a “practice round” for the learners’ oral activity and to encourage learners to begin working on their projects before their deadline. Thus, I did not use rubrics to evaluate this activity. However, I did use rubrics to assess learners’ individual contribution in the other three assignments – the Pinterest research, the written activity, and the oral activity. The scale I used in every rubric included “not yet competent”, “average”, “competent”, and “sophisticated”. The rubrics were the same for both cultural projects, and learners received them at the beginning of the semester so they would understand how they would be assessed and could self-evaluate their work and progress. Criteria for each activity are displayed in Tables 5, 6, and 7, and full rubrics, including sub-criteria are included in Appendix F.

**Pinterest research.** Criteria in the Pinterest research rubric include organization, language control and use, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation, and creativity and content (Appendix F). Table 5 outlines the criteria and associated points.

**Table 5 - Pinterest Research Rubric**

Criterion	Points
Organization	20
Language Control and Use	20
Vocabulary	20
Spelling and punctuation	10
Creativity and Content	30

In the organization criterion, I assessed learners on how they organized their research on their pinboard, whether they addressed the main topic clearly, and whether their written descriptions sufficiently explained why they chose each image or video. In the language control and use

criterion, I assessed learners on their use of appropriate language for the scope of the course<sup>2</sup>. The rubric also assessed their use of varied structures that demonstrated appropriate understanding of tense, conjugations, and agreement. In the vocabulary criterion, I assessed learners on their use of relevant and appropriate vocabulary for the theme, appropriate word choice for the context, and no use of English words<sup>3</sup>. The next evaluation criterion was spelling and punctuation, and the focus here was on comprehensibility. That is, I evaluated learners on using punctuation and spelling words correctly so that meaning was not hindered. The final criterion on this rubric was content and creativity and I specifically focused on learners' explanations of content and the originality of the content. In this criterion, the rubric also evaluated learners on their posts and whether they were relevant, on target, and explained the image and/or video they pinned.

**Written activities.** The rubric (Appendix F) used for the written activities measured learners' abilities to use written language skills to present the cultural information they had explored on Pinterest (see Table 6 for criteria). The first criterion was the quality of the script (project #1) or flyer (project #2). Sub-criteria for quality included (a) originality, (b) inventiveness, (c) logical organization, and (d) development. The next three criteria, language use and control, vocabulary, and spelling and punctuation, each measured the same areas described in the Pinterest rubric. Table 6 outlines the different criteria and associated points.

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<sup>2</sup> If learners used language that was higher than their abilities, they received a zero in this area because this type of language use would indicate they received aid from an outside source.

<sup>3</sup> If learners used vocabulary that was higher than their abilities, they received a zero in this area because this use of vocabulary would indicate they received aid from an outside source.

**Table 6 - Written Activities Rubric**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>
Script (project #1) or Flyer (project #2) quality	26
Language Control and Use	20
Vocabulary	20
Spelling and punctuation	10
Style of delivery/participation	20
Submission	4

In order to encourage every learner to participate and contribute to the group activity equally, the next criteria measured style of delivery and participation. Specifically, the rubric evaluated the amount of written content compared to other participants. Each learner indicated his/her contribution to the final product by writing his/her initials next to that contribution. Finally, learners received points if the activity was submitted on time and correctly via their online learning system.

**Oral activities.** The third rubric (Appendix F) used in the cultural projects measured learners' oral proficiency and how they used the target language to discuss the cultural topics they explored. The oral activities in both cultural projects contained the same areas of evaluation as the written activity rubrics, only differing in the style of delivery/participation and pronunciation criteria. Table 7 below highlights the different criteria and associated points for the oral activities.

**Table 7 - Oral Activities Rubric**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Points</b>
Organization	26
Language Control and Use	20
Vocabulary	20
Style of delivery/participation	20
Pronunciation	10
Submission	4

For the style of delivery/participation criterion, the oral activity rubric measured the learners' contribution to the presentation (minutes spoken, effort expended), and whether they read from their notes during the presentation. This criterion also measured whether the speech was appropriately paced for the audience's understanding (i.e., a natural and understandable presentation). The other criterion that differed on the oral activity rubric was pronunciation, and here I evaluated learners' pronunciation as it affected comprehension.

### **Participants**

Participants in this study were 34 learners enrolled in two Spanish intensive review sections taught by one instructor at the university of study. Within the first two weeks of classes, I visited the two Spanish sections involved in this study and spoke to the learners to inform them of the adapted curriculum and recruit them to participate in the study. All 34 participants enrolled agreed to participate and signed informed consent documents allowing me access to their coursework for my study. Of the 34 participants, 28 completed all portions of the study, i.e. pre- and post-study questionnaires, all portions of the cultural projects, two self-reporting journal entries, and one focus group. Because this study aimed at gaining a comprehensive view of learners' process of learning about culture, I did not include the work of the six participants who did not complete all portions of the study.

Out of the 28 participants, 27 were between 17 and 22 years old, and one participant was 27 years old. All participants indicated that they were from the United States and were monolingual English speakers. Table 8 presents demographic information about participants.

**Table 8 - Demographics of Participants**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Females	10	36%
Males	18	64%
First year undergraduate	15	53%
Second year undergraduate	8	29%
Third year undergraduate	3	11%
Fourth year undergraduate	2	7%
Traveled outside of the United States	18	64%
Number of Spanish minors	2	7%

**N = 28**

None of the participants had ever studied abroad, but a majority (n = 18, 64%) had traveled abroad. Fifteen participants (53%) indicated that they had visited a Spanish-speaking country; nine of those (32%) had visited Mexico, while the other six (21%) indicated that they had visited countries such as Spain, Honduras, Guatemala, or Panama. All of the learners who had traveled abroad indicated that they had visited the previously mentioned countries for one day (as part of a cruise they went on with their family) or for one or two weeks of vacation. It is worth noting that all participants had either very limited or no exposure to cross-cultural perspectives for an extended amount of time.

No participants in this study indicated that they were majoring in Spanish. The most common major was biology (n = 7, 25%), followed by political science (n = 3, 11%) and psychology (n = 3, 11%). Other participants identified majors such as economics, theatre, engineering, nursing, history, or public relations. Two of the participants (6%) indicated a minor in Spanish. Many participants indicated that they did not have a minor area of study or had not chosen one yet (n = 9, 32%). Four of the participants did not answer this question, and it is unclear whether they

declined to answer or had no minor area of study. The remaining (n = 13, 46%) participants identified biology, psychology, international studies, business, or political science as a minor.

### **Instruments and Data Collection**

In the following section, I describe the instruments used in the present study and how I used each of them to collect various forms of data.

**Questionnaires.** During the first week of the semester, participants completed a biodata questionnaire (Appendix G) that contained 18 questions. In this questionnaire, I not only wanted to obtain participants' biographical data, but I also wanted to gather information regarding their prior exposure to Spanish as a foreign language.

I administered a second questionnaire containing two items (Appendix G) at the end of the semester during the last week of classes. Participants identified how interested they were in continuing their study of Spanish, formally in a classroom setting or informally in environments outside of the classroom. They indicated their interest by choosing from five options ranging from very uninterested to very interested. Included in these options was a neutral option. After selecting their level of interest, I then asked them to explain their level of interest.

**Journals.** Learners also completed self-reporting journals in this study. After each project, I asked learners to complete a directed journal entry. While cultural projects were group endeavors, learners completed the journals individually. I developed the journal prompts for the present study (a) after reviewing feedback from the focus groups conducted in the pilot study and (b) based off results from others' research (see Abrams, 2002; Price, 1991; Xie, 2014). I first tested four different journal prompts in the pilot phase (Table 9; Appendix H).

**Table 9 - Journal Prompts from Pilot Study**

Prompt	Project
Email to parents, recommend vacation in Spanish-speaking country	1
Email to parents and friends, compare host university and home university	2
Email a friend, compare life in Spanish-speaking country and native country	3
Email friends and family, describe a typical Chilean wedding	4

After conducting a line-by-line analysis of learner journals in the pilot study, I discovered an *Us versus Them* perspective as an overall theme, rather than the intended reflection leading to cross-cultural awareness. After examining the prompts, I believe this dichotomous approach occurred because I asked learners to focus so heavily on their native culture versus the target culture. While the intention of the prompts was to encourage reflection of the diverse cultural perspectives encountered in the cultural projects, learners instead often perceived the target culture as the *other* and then their own culture as *us*. This dichotomization led to an “all or nothing” approach, meaning learners’ responses revealed they described one culture as better than the other.

After reviewing the learners’ journals from the pilot study and examining the prompts, I adapted the journal prompts to follow suggestions from Abrams (2002), Price (1991), and Xie (2014). Abrams (2002) used reflective activities in foreign language learning to cultivate learners’ cross-cultural awareness. Price (1991) studied anxiety in foreign language learning (which I adapted to focus on positive emotions), with the goal of evoking and nurturing learners’ emotions. Xie (2014) studied how learners visualized their L2 selves when completing written assignments. The final version of the journal prompts used in the main study (Appendix I) engaged the context of each cultural project and prompted learners to write two to three paragraphs. Table 10 outlines the journal topics for the two cultural projects in the main study.

**Table 10 - Journal Prompts from Main Study**

Prompt	Project
Email to friends, help share costs of housing when studying abroad	1
Opinion piece for <i>HOLA Latino</i> comparing/contrasting holidays	2

In the first journal entry, each learner wrote an email to a friend, convincing that person to join the learner abroad and to share housing expenses. While this prompt was similar to one of the prompts from the pilot study, I adapted it in the main study to focus more on “recognizing and weighing perspectives” (ACTFL, 2014) from both the target culture and their own native culture. Under the premise of rent being too expensive to afford alone, learners wrote to their friends, presenting reasons for living abroad as well as reasons for not living abroad. Learners were asked to incorporate all of the information they had learned in their cultural project into their journal entry (places to live, housing options, etc.) and to reflect on why (or why not) someone should move to a Spanish-speaking country.

The second journal assignment (Appendix I) prompted learners to reflect more deeply on the 3 Ps they had explored in their second project. To do so, learners imagined they were writing an opinion piece to publish in *HOLA Latino*. The journal assignment prompted learners to choose any holiday that interested them not confined to their group’s holiday. Learners explained why they selected the holiday, what it represented for people in the Spanish-speaking world and in the United States, and how people celebrate it. In this journal prompt, the focus was the cultural perspectives, that is, why people celebrated the holiday in the manner they did and what the holiday meant to them.

**Focus group.** I conducted a focus group with the 28 participants in the present study at the end of the semester. My goal was to gain further insight into the effect of the cultural projects, in

particular, what learners' opinions were of the topics of each project, design of the projects, use of Pinterest, etc. Based off feedback from a focus group I conducted in the pilot study, I designed the focus group in the main study to follow a semi-structured style of questioning (Labov, 1984) in order to encourage learners to discuss their viewpoints with one another and with me. I incorporated 22 questions (Appendix J) in the focus group and concentrated on learners' opinions of cultural learning in the foreign language classroom, the use of social media to learn about culture, learners' interests in foreign language learning, and on the projects as a whole.

### **Data Analysis**

I analyzed data from this study using an approach that considered the “existence of multiple socially constructed realities” (Higginbottom & Lauridsen, 2014, p. 10) because this study examined the subjective experiences of 28 different learners and their perceived realities as foreign language learners. To do so, I focused on each individual learner's progression (or regression) of cross-cultural awareness through the semester, as evidenced in his or her assignments. I analyzed (a) how each learner collaborated with other learners in the study, (b) how he/she used the various mediating tools in the activity system, and (c) how each subsequently constructed his/her own realities, that is, the visualizations of his/her future L2 self.

To answer the five research questions proposed in Chapter 2, I combined Charmaz's (2006) Constructivist Grounded Theory and Gee's (2011) D/discourse theory. I analyzed learners' discourse on Pinterest and in their journals in each project through a line-by-line coding. I looked for recurring words and phrases, and from the patterns that emerged, I derived categories and then more specific themes that answered each specific research question as described below. In particular, I created different labels that I incorporated in each chapter. These labels described and identified various categories of learners and provided insight into how they visualized their future L2 self or how they emotionally connected with the target culture in the projects.

Chapter 4 focused on answering *RQ1*, *RQ2*, and *RQ3*. To do so, I triangulated data produced in the first cultural project, specifically from Pinterest and in learners' journal entries. I coded the data in Pinterest to derive different categories that showed how learners used their discourse (Gee, 2011) to enact their future L2 self when exploring real-world cultural topics on Pinterest (*RQ1*). Within this data, one future L2 self arose, and I report on these findings in Chapter 4.

Once I established the type of future L2 self present in learners' discourse in Pinterest in the first project, I then did a line-by-line coding of all journal entries in project #1 in order to understand how opportunities for reflection affect the evolution of learners' future L2 self (*RQ2*). Within this coding, two new future L2 selves arose and provided insight into how reflection affects learners' visualizations of themselves interacting in the target culture. I describe each future L2 self and how it influences learners' approach to culture (*RQ3*) in Chapter 4 as well.

In Chapter 5, I analyzed the data produced in the second cultural project and answered *RQ4*, and *RQ5*. I used data from Pinterest and learners' journal entries from the second cultural project since the second project centered specifically on the emotional connections that learners made with the target culture when exploring holidays in a cultural project (*RQ4*). In their Pinterest posts and journal entries, learners showed that they made four different kinds of emotional connections with the target culture, and I report on these connections in more detail in Chapter 5.

After I had examined learners' emotional connections with the target culture, I looked at how these emotional connections as generated in the second project affected their interest in continuing to study Spanish (*RQ4*). To understand this correlation, I compared the emotional connections with responses from the post-study questionnaire. I looked at the correlation between the emotional connections that learners had at the end of the second project and the level of interest they expressed in continuing to study Spanish in their questionnaire. This

connection provided insight into how the cultural projects affected learners' interest in continuing to study Spanish, and I report the results at the end of Chapter 5.

#### **Chapter 4: Toward Cross-cultural Awareness: The Connection between Learners' Future L2 Self and Their Approach to Culture**

This chapter examines the evolution of learners' cross-cultural awareness as related to the development of their future L2 selves during the first cultural project of this study. As indicated in chapter 3, the decision to include only the data (in particular, from Pinterest and journal entries) from the first cultural project was motivated by the topic of the project, which centered specifically on visualizations of the future L2 self interacting in the target culture and in doing so, addressed *RQ1*, *RQ2*, and *RQ3*. The triangulation of data provided insight into how learners enacted their future L2 self when exploring real-world cultural phenomena on Pinterest in their first cultural project (*RQ1*), how opportunities for reflection affected the evolution of their future L2 self (*RQ2*), and how these visualizations influenced their approach to culture (*RQ3*).

Before I begin the data analysis, I reiterate that Dörnyei's (2009) concept of ideal L2 self served as a point of departure for the data analyzed in this chapter. I adapted it to encompass more than idealistic visualizations of self as a future language user (ideal L2 self) or what learners believed they ought to become (ought-to self) because I believed these visualizations would limit learners in how they could visualize their future L2 self. Thus, I broadened the scope of my analysis of the L2 self and framed it with Gee's (2011) theory of D/discourse. In doing so, I included any type of future visualizations of the L2 self that learners enacted through their discourse on Pinterest and in their journals.

In order to answer the three research questions in this chapter, I first conducted a line-by-line analysis of all open-ended comments from learners' Pinterest posts and journal entries and

searched for patterns and recurring words that expressed their future L2 self when exploring cultural topics. I established categories based off the repetitions I noticed, and then I derived more specific themes to clarify the various categories I had created. These themes served as the labels that identified and described each group of learners in this chapter. The labels provided understanding of the relationship between learners' future L2 self, their interest in culture, and their approach to culture. While the data from learners' Pinterest boards were in Spanish, I translated the comments for reporting in this chapter. Learners completed their journal entries in English.

### **In the Beginning: Learners' Reluctance to Otherness when Exploring Real-world Cultural Phenomena on Pinterest**

During the fourth week of the semester, all learners began to explore the target culture on Pinterest. This experience put them into contact with real-world cultural topics, and during this activity, they enacted a jet-setting tourist as their future L2 self, meaning that they took an outsider's approach and put distance between themselves and the target culture through what they pinned. While this kind of approach may seem problematic during foreign language learning, it is actually a normal reaction to an encounter with cultural difference (Abrams, 2002). Therefore, in order to understand how learners evolved in their visualizations of their future L2 self and how these visualizations affected their cross-cultural awareness, it is first important to show where the learners began at the onset of the cultural projects.

As a jet-setting tourist, they pinned (a) luxurious vacation spots, (b) exotic tourist destinations, and (c) historic tourist spots, all of which displayed their desire to "taste" cultural experiences while abroad. For instance, learners showed they wanted to stay at a distance and try but not take part in the target culture because as one learner commented, "Tuscaloosa is the best place on earth". Furthermore, this same learner explained, "It would be challenging living in a

country that speaks a different language from what we know.” Their discourse continually displayed an inward focus on what “we know” and created a dichotomy between what is familiar for them as learners and what is different.

**Description of categories.** In this section, I provide a brief outline of each category and then go into a more detailed analysis of learners’ pins and descriptions in the three sections that follow. Table 11 below lists the categorization and frequency of the pins in the first cultural project.

**Table 11 - Categorization and Frequency of Pins in First Cultural Project**

Types of pins	Frequency of pins
Luxurious vacation spots	70
Exotic tourist attractions	38
Historic tourist spots	14

**N = 122 pins in cultural project #1**

As shown in Table 11, learners pinned images that represented luxurious vacation spots the most (70). In particular, they pinned images of modern, spacious housing that had multiple bedrooms, bathrooms, parking spaces, and pools. Considering that the project instructions required learners to find housing in a Spanish-speaking country, I expected that they would pin housing options the most. However, they all pinned luxurious options and did so knowingly. That is, they pinned extravagant housing options and commented that they knew the particular accommodation was luxurious, but it was what they preferred to live in when traveling abroad.

In the next largest group of pins (n = 38) learners selected images that centered on exotic tourist attractions. They picked attractions that were different from what they were used to and that they believed would provide an exciting sampling of the culture. In their pins, they included resorts in the mountains or at the beach; different popular or famous restaurants; cultural hotspots

in the city such as art galleries; and various entertainment options such as shopping malls, festivals, and other places to visit and things to do. Through these pins, learners reinforced the idea that they did want to *try* the culture but it was on a limited basis, meaning they only wanted to test out the local flavor and then move on to the next exotic attraction.

The last 14 pins in the first cultural project were of historic tourist spots such as statues, museums, and palaces in the Spanish-speaking country where learners were exploring. In their pins and descriptions, learners enacted a jet-setting tourist who was on a hop-on, hop-off bus tour going around the city. In particular, their pins and descriptions resembled what a typical organized group tour would focus on – famous, historically important sites that were attractive to tourists.

**Luxurious vacation spots.** In the 70 pins of luxurious vacation spots, learners pinned large, spacious accommodations that had amenities such as pools, barbecue grills, free Wi-Fi, modern appliances, and spectacular views (Figure 3). Figure 3 provides examples of the types of housing that learners pinned in the first cultural project.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

**Figure 3 - Pins Related to Housing**

### **Description of pins:**

1. Misterio Beach – Peru
2. Los Altos de Golf Course – Spain
3. Outskirts of Madrid – Spain
4. Las Arenas – Peru
5. Santa Ana – Costa Rica
6. Las Condes – Chile
7. Las Condes – Chile

A majority (49) of these pins depicted expensive housing that is isolated from where the general population lives in the Spanish-speaking country. As shown in photo 1 of Figure 3, one learner pinned a modern home in Peru that had a pool and beautiful views of the countryside. In this pin, the learner chose a 6,200 square foot, five-story vacation home located on Misterio Beach, which is approximately 70 miles south of Lima, Peru. This type of extravagant housing, located in a gated community, was representative of what all learners pinned in this first cultural project and showed their desire to go to a foreign country but remain on the periphery. The learners appear to favor “placing” an invisible divide between themselves and the rest of the population in the country by imagining their future L2 self living behind a gate, far away from native residents such as at a luxurious beach house (photo 2, Figure 3) or on the outskirts of town (photo 3, Figure 3), or residing in homes that were considered extremely expensive for the country (photo 4, Figure 3). Additionally, learners expressed their desire for seclusion by choosing houses that had 24-hour security and were capable of keeping the outside world away from their luxurious house. For example, the advertisement for the house in Photo 4 (Figure 3) boasts modern, luxurious living and draws buyers in by claiming that it is safest to live in this type of residential setting because the house comes with 24-hour permanent security with closed circuit monitoring.

The other 21 pins were of houses or apartments in the city (examples seen in photos 5, 6, and 7). While these houses were located where the majority of the population lived and worked, learners indicated in their pins that these houses were in exclusive neighborhoods such as Santa Ana, Costa Rica, (photo 5, Figure 3) or Las Condes in Peru (photos 6 and 7, Figure 3). On the websites that learners linked to their pins, the descriptions of these neighborhoods often said many expatriates lived in these areas and that these neighborhoods provided the perfect place to get away from the turmoil of the city while still being close enough to enjoy the city if one so pleased.

Not only did these photos of luxurious homes exhibit a jet-setting tourist, but the descriptions of the pins did as well. Most often learners indicated that they wanted to find accommodations in a Spanish-speaking country that would allow them to maintain the level of comfort they were accustomed to in the United States. For example, when describing the perfect home while abroad, one learner said, “It will be like we never even left the United States.” Learners also conveyed their desire for comfort by repeatedly emphasizing that they needed housing that was (a) spacious, (b) had modern and contemporary amenities, and (c) had a pool with beautiful views of scenery in the country (e.g. of a mountain range or overlooking the entire city) (Table 12). Table 12 provides examples of repeated phrases that learners used when describing the housing they selected.

**Table 12 - Sampling of Repeated Phrases when Describing Housing**

Spacious living	Modern and contemporary amenities	Pool with a view
<p>“I will need a large kitchen to learn to cook...”</p>	<p>“This room is very spacious and modern.”</p>	<p>“I love the view of Santiago in this room. [...] There also is outdoor space. This is very important to me. This house is very close to Santiago, but not in the city.”</p>
<p>“The house needs a large living room.”</p>	<p>“These condominiums are very modern. They are many angles and not many arches in the architecture.”</p>	<p>“This house is on the beautiful beach in Asia, Peru. It comes with five rooms and three bedrooms. The view of the beach is incredible.”</p>
<p>“I prefer a house, not at apartment. The houses have more space. This kitchen is very beautiful. It is large and open.”</p>	<p>“I love this house because of its unique style. It comes with a modern architectural style and is on a lot of land.”</p>	<p>“[This house] also has a private pool...”</p>

In the sections that follow, I provide a more in-depth analysis of Table 12 as well as the photos from Figure 12.

***Spacious living.*** In their selections of housing, learners chose extravagant, large living spaces. In their explanations of their choices, they repeatedly used the words “large,” “spacious,” and “open” to discuss their preferences (Table 12). One learner in particular stated, “I like this condominium because there are two floors. There is a lot of space, and there are three rooms and four bathrooms.” For them, the space was one of the most important attributes of the house because it was what they were most accustomed to as pointed out in the following comment:

“The living room is very large and spacious. I like it; it’s like my house in the United States.” Furthermore, as seen in Table 12, an apartment in the Spanish-speaking country was not as desirable as a house because it did not meet learners’ requirements for luxurious living arrangements. One learner reinforced this desire by stating, “I prefer a house, not an apartment. The houses have more space.” The continual use of “space” in learners’ discourse (Table 12) coupled with their references to what they are used to in the United States showed that they equated space with comfort. Additionally, their desire for comfort overrode any interest in immersing themselves in the culture and ultimately led them to imagine a more distanced future L2 self.

***Modern and contemporary amenities.*** In their quest for spacious living arrangements, learners also desired to have a home that was modern and contemporary (Table 12). However, this preference for space and modernity also came with an expensive price tag. Learners picked out different houses that ranged from \$1,900/month in rent (photo 5, Figure 3) to a purchase price of \$2.5 million dollars and higher (photos 6 and 7, Figure 3). While they did recognize that these types of housing were expensive, the modern style of the home was worth the cost to them, as seen in this comment: “I like this house because of its unique style. It comes with a modern style of architecture and is on a lot of land. The cost of this house is, without doubt, worth the trouble to pay.” To these learners, contemporary design in the home was of extreme importance because it tied in with their idea of luxurious living arrangements. For instance, one learner stated, “These condominiums are very modern. They have many angles and not many arches in the architecture” (Table 12) while another learner said she selected a certain house because the rooms fit within her ideal living arrangements, as seen in her statement: “This room is very spacious and modern. It also has a lot of outdoor space. These [characteristics] are very

important to me.” Through their discourse, learners repeatedly concentrated on modern and contemporary design and commented that they did not desire “arches” but instead wanted clean, straight lines in the design of their homes. These learners’ focus on and descriptions of arches in Spanish-speaking countries showed that they found this type of design to be typical of the Spanish-speaking world. Additionally, through their discourse, they expressed a dislike for this style of architecture and indicated a preference for modern and contemporary design like what they are used to in the United States.

*Pool with a view.* In addition to spacious and modern living arrangements, learners also conveyed through their discourse that a pool and/or a beautiful view added to their concept of luxurious living arrangements (Table 12). For example, in explaining why he selected a house, one learner said, “I like the outdoor view” and another echoed his preference for a certain type of house by stating, “This is a side view from the house, showing a beautiful backdrop of the Mediterranean Sea.” Other learners also conveyed similar desires by stating, “I love the view of Santiago in this room. This [the view] is very important to me. This house is very close to Santiago, but not in the city.” Here, learners’ emphasis on where the house was located or what view it had showed that they valued the beauty of the home and the location most. That is, they focused so heavily on finding a home that was spacious and modern with great views that they did not focus on how living in these areas would affect their ability to interact with native speakers.

The data from their comments revealed that learners’ fascination with luxurious housing when abroad determined how they visualized themselves interacting (or not) with native speakers in the target culture (Table 12). In other words, because they narrowed in so intently on luxury, they ignored other housing options that would have led them to interact more with the

target culture. Because they chose housing that was more secluded, they thus visualized themselves just as tourists who were coming to see the best the Spanish-speaking country had to offer.

**Exotic tourist destinations.** The next way learners enacted a jet-setting tourist was through the photos they pinned about exotic things to do and places to see in the Spanish-speaking country they were exploring. As their instructions in this cultural project indicated, learners were to pin photos of different activities and attractions in the region (Figure 4). Figure 4 provides examples of the tourist attractions that learners pinned in the first cultural project.



1



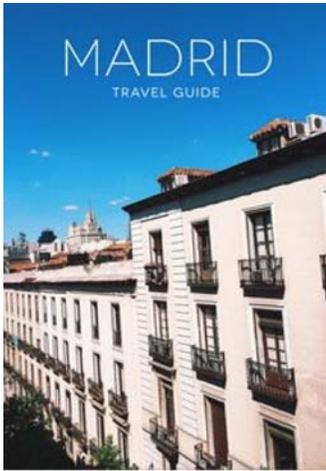
2



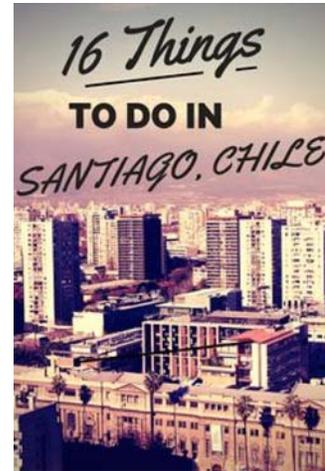
3



4



5



6



7



8



9

**Figure 4 - Tourist Attractions Pinned**

### Description of pins:

1. Los Andes – Chile
2. La Fortuna – Costa Rica
3. Isla Robinson Crusoe – Chile
4. Torres del Paine National Park – Chile
5. Travel guide – Spain
6. Entertainment guide – Chile
7. Outdoor shopping – Chile
8. Soccer stadium – Chile
9. Outdoor cafes – Spain

*Exotic escapes.* Almost half of the pins (17 of 38) related to exotic tourist destinations, as shown in Figure 4, were photos of exotic, picturesque locations such as recreational spots on in the Andes Mountains in Chile (photo 1, Figure 5) tropical rainforests in Costa Rica (photo 2, Figure 5), or national parks in Chile (photo 3 and 4, Figure 5). The other approximate half of the pins (21 of 38) centered on local tourist destinations in the city, including travel brochures and entertainment guides for a city (photos 5 and 6, Figure 5) or cultural hotspots such as shopping, restaurants, or sporting events (photos 7, 8, and 9, Figure 5).

Photos 1, 2, 3, and 4 (Figure 5) were all locations and/or resorts that are famous for their seclusion and known for being exotic escapes. Instead of seeking ways to immerse themselves inside the target culture and interact with native speakers, 17 of learners' pins focused on tourist destinations where they could go to a private location when abroad and isolate themselves from the rest of the world. Their selection of these locations showed that they did not desire to engage with cultural difference but rather preferred to observe from the outside looking in. That is, they were most interested in seeing beautiful scenery of the region and the exotic aspects of the culture (i.e. the mountains or tropical rainforests), but their pins did not convey a desire to explore the culture through interactions with native speakers. In this sense, they were “surfing diversity rather than engaging with difference” (Kramsch, 2014, p. 302), which is the same touristic approach that their textbooks take (Kramsch, 2014). Considering that all of these

learners were false beginners, meaning that they had previously taken Spanish as a foreign language in the classroom setting, I posit that they pinned this kind of touristic approach because it is what they were familiar with. In other words, it is likely that their textbooks have focused on these types of exotic, cultural hotspots before, and so they mimicked that same type of approach in the photos they pinned.

Learners also reiterated this touristic perspective through their descriptions of these exotic destinations. For example, in describing photo 1 (Figure 5), one learner said, “There are many things that you can do outdoors in Santiago. You can walk or run in Saint Christopher Metropolitan Park. You can ski at the ski station in Portillo or practice surfing or sunbathe on Valparaíso coast.” Likewise, when commenting on their selections of photos 2, 3, and 4 (Figure 5) learners said, “[This area] is a tourist attraction. It is very beautiful” as well as “Many tourists come here to see these beautiful beaches.” As seen in these examples, learners’ discourse focused on what a tourist would like to do at the exotic, beautiful locations in the country. These learners’ lack of personalization, i.e. no use of personal pronouns such as “me,” “I,” or “my,” showed a level of disconnect between what they were exploring and what they were reporting. Instead of visualizing themselves as experiencing the target culture from an insider’s perspective where they were immersed in the culture, their discourse displayed an outsider’s perspective, one that kept the target culture at a distance.

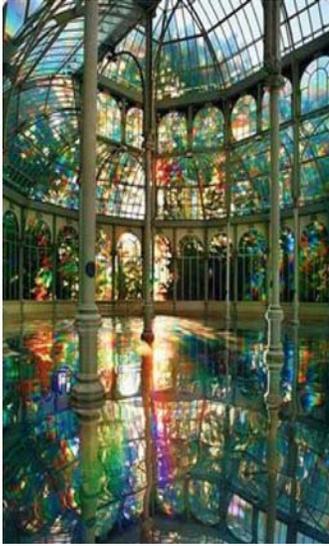
*Adventures in the city.* The other 21 pins (out of the total 38) about tourist destinations highlighted exciting things to do and places to see inside a Spanish-speaking city. For example, learners pinned different travel guides in English (photos 5 and 6, Figure 4). Instead of finding references, information, or sources in the target language about the target culture, they found travel guides geared toward the American market, which revealed that they were approaching the

target culture through their own cultural lens. However, while these pins did acknowledge cultural difference because they highlighted different things to do and see when abroad, they showed that learners were only interested in *tasting* the culture on a more superficial level and not really engaging with it on a more in-depth level, as seen in this comment: “It [Santiago] is a large city that would give us a large taste of Chilean culture, but still offer us a lot of the conveniences we are used to at home.” This learner’s discourse indicates that she only desired to sample or try the culture, meaning she wanted to surf it, remain on the periphery, and experience life in these Spanish-speaking countries from a tourist’s standpoint where she could remain unchallenged by different ways of thinking and being in the world.

At first glance, photos 7, 8, and 9 (Figure 4) appear to display a desire to immerse in the target culture and interact with native speakers. For example, photo 7 represented a local shopping mall, photo 8 was of a local soccer stadium, and photo 9 represented a famous local restaurant. However, the descriptions of these pins revealed a different viewpoint than a desire to immerse in the target culture. That is, learners’ discourse again emphasized the touristic approach to the culture when describing what they would like to do when inside the Spanish-speaking city. For example, one learner wrote, “There are many things to do in Madrid. There are neighborhood markets to shop in. There are places to eat. Many museums are located in Madrid.” This focus showed that learners were most interested in the fascinating and exciting aspects of the city that they could see or do when they had time to. For instance, one learner commented, “In my free time, I want to see the city” and specifically concentrated on seeing well-known tourist places in Madrid: “La Plaza Mayor is very popular in the city of Madrid. [...] People come from all over the world to visit Plaza Mayor. It is very fascinating, right?” In this learner’s discourse (which was originally in Spanish), he used the word “ver” [to see], which

reiterated the lack of desire to immerse and take part in the culture but instead to see it through stereotypical tourist attractions. He also used the word “visitar” [to visit] when describing Plaza Mayor, which also conveyed an outsider’s perspective, one where he only visualized his future L2 self as a guest in the city of Madrid. In addition to these words that expressed an outsider’s viewpoint, this learner also added a question to the end of his statement, reinforcing a touristic tone to his discussion. By adding the question at the end, it seems as if this learner is not completely sure of the well-known, must-see spots in the city because he is not a native in the Spanish-speaking country.

**Historic tourist spots.** The final 14 pins that centered on historic tourist spots resembled a “hop on, hop off bus tour.” In other words, learners’ pins showed that they visualized themselves as a jet-setting tourist hopping around from one famous site to another famous site in the city. Through this approach, they enacted a tourist who wanted to skim the surface of cultural difference, specifically the tourist spots that were most valued because of their importance in a Spanish-speaking country’s history. In their pins, learners focused mainly on museums, plazas, monuments, or landmarks (Figure 5). Figure 5 provides examples of the types of historic tourist spots that learners pinned in their first cultural project.



1



2



3



4



5



6

**Figure 5 - Historic Tourist Spots**

- 1. El Palacio de Cristal – Spain
- 2. La Plaza de Toros – Spain
- 3. La Puerta de Alcalá – Spain
- 4. La Plaza Mayor – Spain
- 5. La Plaza de España – Spain
- 6. Zurbarán Museum – Spain

**Description of pins:**

What is first interesting to note is that all of the 14 pins (as seen in Figure 5) are historic sites in Spain and not in Latin America or South America. All groups who explored countries in Latin America or South America focused on exotic places to visit or see. The groups who investigated Spain, however, also included pins that focused on historical landmarks. Learners' choices of what to pin in certain areas or countries displays their understanding of culture as region- and country-dependent, meaning they saw Latin America and South America as fun, adventurous places to visit while Spain was well known for its history.

As seen in Figure 5, learners' choice of the historical places seemed to be based off their conceptualizations of culture. For example, in his description of the Gothic neighborhood in Barcelona, one learner said, "There are many places to visit in Barcelona. Many of the buildings in the Gothic neighborhood date back to the Roman and Medieval era. Barcelona offers a perfect combination of culture and fun." In this learner's discourse, he linked culture to Spain's history through his descriptions of the historical neighborhoods in Barcelona. Additionally, with his discourse, this learner exhibited that he viewed culture in terms of Big C culture – the culture of the arts, literature, and history.

Learners also selected their different historical tourist destinations in Spain based of the importance as well as the popularity they attributed to the area. In photo 1 of Figure 5, one learner commented that she selected El Palacio de Cristal because to her, it had historical importance and attracted people from all over the world: "The Crystal Palace is a structure of glass and metal located in Parque del Buen Retiro of Madrid. What used to be used as a greenhouse to maintain exotic flora and fauna, but now it is used for art expositions. It is in the form of a Greek cross. [...] Its beauty attracts people from all parts." Here, her stance is reminiscent of a tour guide's tone. She gave general descriptions that were void of any

personalization. As such, she solely reported the facts about the landmark's history, much like the information one could find in a typical travel brochure or tourist's guide.

Another learner showed that what he considered to be historically important was grounded in the notoriety of the landmark. In his description of La Plaza de Toros (photo 2, Figure 5), he wrote, "Plaza de Toros is very popular among the people in Madrid. The running of the bulls is a Spanish tradition that attracts many people here." As seen in these two learners' discourse, they both described the historical landmarks as attracting people from all over the world and as well known to native speakers. In other words, these learners deemed these historical sites as something important to see when studying abroad because these places were popular with other tourists and with native speakers. These selections showed that learners approached the target culture from a tourist's point of view yet they still wanted to experience the culture in ways that native speakers do.

In photos 3 through 6 of Figure 5, other learners pinned and described La Puerta de Alcalá (photo 3), La Plaza Mayor (photo 4), La Plaza de España (photo 5), and the Zurbarán Museum (photo 6). Their discourse revealed that, like the other pinned photos in Figure 5, learners wanted to visit these places because they were important to the city they were exploring. For example, one learner commented, "The Puerta de Alcalá is not only beautiful, but it also has historical importance – it is situated in the middle of the capital next to the Buen Retiro Park." In their discourse, learners repeatedly emphasized the importance of these sites within the city. More importantly though, their discourse conveyed a desire to only see these places, visit them, and then move on to something else. Consequently, learners' visualizations of themselves interacting in the target culture were limited because of this kind of touristic viewpoint.

The data presented in this section revealed that learners enacted jet-setting tourists when exploring the target culture on Pinterest in the first cultural project. While these visualizations may seem problematic in that learners wanted to visit the target culture but not engage with otherness, they actually showed that learners were beginning to recognize difference. That is, they encountered cultural difference on Pinterest and as a natural coping mechanism, they stereotyped themselves as tourists through their pins in order to make sense of the difference they found (Abrams, 2002). In other words, they pinned places and things to do in the target culture through their own frames of reference. These pins, therefore, represented what they envisioned a typical tourist would do in the target culture. Furthermore, these pins showed that learners desired to remain the same when in the target culture, and thus, they visualized themselves as jet-setting tourists. However, as they had more time to reflect on this cultural difference, learners began to shift in their visualizations of their future L2 self, as seen in the following section.

### **The Path to Cross-cultural Awareness: Developing the Future L2 Self through Reflections**

After learners researched the target culture on Pinterest (week 4) and completed written and oral activities (week 6 and 7, respectively) (Appendix B), they each wrote one journal entry in English during the eighth week of the semester. The goal of this activity was to encourage them to reflect more deeply on the relationship between the products, practices, and perspectives of the target culture. The prompt (Appendix I) instructed them to imagine they were writing an email to a friend in order to convince him or her to live abroad and help share the housing costs. Learners were at the novice level linguistically, and therefore they completed the journal entries in English so they could reflect more deeply on cross-cultural perspectives (Sandrock, 2014; Sercu, 2005).

In these journal entries, learners re-examined what they pinned, what other members in their group pinned, and reflected on the projects other classmates completed and presented in class.

Through their written discourse in their journals, they exhibited two new versions of their future L2 selves – as either a consumer or a discoverer (Table 13). These two categories of learners can be thought of as two halves in opposition to each other. Table 13 provides a breakdown of the future L2 selves that learners enacted through their journal entries.

**Table 13 - Future L2 Selves in Journal Entries**

Enactment	# of Learners
Consumer	15
Discoverer	13

**N = 28**

The 15 consumers enacted their future L2 self as someone who would go abroad but would consume the culture. That is, they visualized their experience abroad as a chance of a lifetime, one in which their overall tone reflected a perspective of “carpe diem”. For example, learners said, “[...] what better time will we have to see the world than now, while we are students?”

The other future L2 self enacted in the journal entries was a discoverer. In their discourse, 13 learners indicated they visualized their time abroad as a growing experience, one in which they would have the chance to learn about other people and discover new things about the world. For example, they often commented, “Living in Spain creates an opportunity for people outside the culture to learn about the Hispanic culture.”

**Consumers: Seize the day.** The 15 learners who enacted a consumer focused on what they could gain from their experience abroad and how it could enhance the skillsets they were developing in their undergraduate careers. An analysis of the most frequent words used in their journal entries provided more insight into these learners’ visualizations (Table 14). Table 14 displays the most frequently used words that consumers used in their journal entries.

**Table 14 - Most Frequent Words Used by Consumers**

<b>Word</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Culture	31
Learn	24
Great	22
New	22
Opportunity	22
Experience	20

**N = 12 learners**

As seen in Table 14, the most frequent word was “culture” (31 different references), followed by “learn” (24 different references). The analysis of how the consumers used these words in their discourse indicates that they recognized that learning about the culture was important when studying abroad. When attempting to convince her friend to go abroad with her, one learner said, “We can also visit museums, see the city, learn more about history and culture, and really immerse [*sic*] ourselves in the language and culture.” Another learner also highlighted the importance of culture when he stated, “We’d have some of the most exciting and fun six months of our lives, get credit hours, get a solid feel for spanish [*sic*] and get a new cultural experience.” Notably, these two learners, who represent the others consumers as well, focused on culture as something to “get”, to “visit”, to “see”, or to “learn about” when studying in a Spanish-speaking country. Further analysis of their discourse revealed that they objectified culture because they saw it as separate from language acquisition. For instance, one learner said, “Moving to this spanish speaking country [*sic*] would not only give us greater understanding of the spanish [*sic*] culture, but it would also enhance our knowledge of the Spanish language.” The use of the

conjunction “but” in this sentence displays that the consumers viewed language and culture as mutually exclusive entities, meaning that language and culture can exist and function separately from one another.

The next most frequently used words in consumers’ journal entries as shown in Table 14, which were “great” (n = 22), “new” (n = 22), “opportunity” (22), and “experience” (n = 20), revealed that these consumers were more inwardly focused. These consumers identified themselves as language learners who were going abroad to have a great, thrill-seeking adventure in a foreign, exotic country. For them, studying abroad was a chance to explore the world, learn a little bit about a new language, and soak up a fun, cultural experience, as seen in this comment – “Maybe meet a cute guy, and have a short fling. This is the time in our live [*sic*] for us to open our horizon, try new things, make mistakes, live life and have fun!” Another learner conveyed this same desire for a fun language learning experience while abroad and said, “A study abroad trip is the best way to get this type of invaluable experience because it will be safer and cheaper than any regular traveling trip, and it still allows us to continue our education in a much more exciting way.” Learners’ discourse, specifically the use of the words and phrases such as “live life,” “have fun,” and “exciting” showed that these consumers were most concerned with the kind of fun experience they could have. Their interests in going abroad were related to their desire to have a good time, and everything else was secondary to their quests for fun. Additionally, in his description of studying abroad, the learner above described this experience as “a safer and cheaper” option in comparison to other traveling trips, a viewpoint that reinforces a consumer state of mind. Here this learner encapsulates what the other learners in this group displayed as well – ways they could consume the target culture in cost effective manners.

Other supporting arguments for going abroad still aligned with their desire to consume the culture but centered on developing linguistically and becoming a more interesting person. In his explanation of why he wanted to study abroad, one learner stated, “It [studying abroad] would also just make us better and more interesting people” while a different learner portrayed this same perspective when she said, “We would also be gaining invaluable knowledge about a different culture and language, and studying abroad is very appealing to future employers.” These learners’ continual use of personal pronouns such as “us” and “we” combined with their descriptions of study abroad as an advantageous experience that would benefit them socially and professionally revealed that their focus was not on engaging with otherness and recognizing difference. Instead, the focal points of their visualizations were consumption of the culture as an object, benefitting them in some way (e.g. linguistic development, in their future job, or just make them a well-rounded person). As in their Pinterest research, the discourse in their journal entries revealed that this group of learners was still coping with the difference they encountered when exploring real-world cultural topics. They did so by further objectifying the culture as something they could acquire and store in their toolkit for later use.

**Discoverers: A whole new world.** The 13 learners who enacted a discoverer focused on what they could discover about the target culture through interactions with native speakers. An analysis of the most frequent words used in their journal entries provided further insight into these learners’ visualizations (Table 15). Table 15 displays the most frequently used words that discoverers used in their journal entries.

**Table 15 - Most Frequent Words Used by Discoverers**

<b>Word</b>	<b># of uses</b>
People	41
Culture	40
Learn	33
New	31
Experience	22
Great	22

**N = 13 total learners**

As seen in Table 15, in the discoverers' discourse, the most used word was "people" (41 references), with culture following as the second most mentioned word (40 references). "Learn" was the third most commonly used word (33 references). A more in-depth analysis of these three words and their uses in conjunction with one another revealed a more outwardly focused perspective held by these learners. That is, their discourse showed they focused less on what they could gain from an experience abroad, i.e. more knowledge of culture to add to their "communicator toolkit" (Drewelow & Mitchell, 2015, p. 9). Instead, their discourse exhibited a focus on interactions with native speakers as informing their understanding of other cultures, as seen in this comment: "Sure, it will be hard to communicate with people who may not understand what we are saying, but I'm sure we can learn as much from them as they can learn from us." This learner's use of the words "people" and "learn" put emphasis on engagements that are mutually beneficial and represent how these learners envisioned their future L2 self – as someone who desired to immerse in the culture and discover new ways of thinking in the world. They believed that by being in contact with native speakers, they (the learners) would naturally

discover more about the target culture. For example, one learner commented, “However, the best part [about studying abroad] is that the people there are the culture. We will be able to learn so much just from being around them” while another learner mirrored this understanding of the relational aspect of culture through his statement: “Meeting new people, learning about different cultures, [...]; this is what life is all about.” In these learners’ discourse, they use the words “people” and “culture” interchangeably, which revealed that they were beginning to see culture as more than a quantifiable set of information or facts to be acquired when abroad. Because they understood that culture was not just a set of facts to memorize, they began to visualize their future L2 self as immersing deeper into the culture. That is, they exhibited, through their discourse, that they saw themselves seeking out cultural difference, as emphasized in this learner’s comment: “If we study abroad, we can interact with people that are different than us.” Another learner showed that he began to value cultural diversity by stating, “We already know what the people here [in Tuscaloosa] are like and the beliefs they share. I, for one, feel that we need to get out and explore the world more. We need to immerse ourselves in another culture.” These learners’ emphasis on getting outside of their comfort zones, immersing themselves in the target culture, and discovering new beliefs displayed they were beginning to discover that “values and behaviors are culture-bound” (Drewelow, 2015, p. 71), an integral understanding for developing cross-cultural awareness (Knutson, 2006). Such desires conveyed that they were progressing in their cross-cultural awareness because their visualizations of their future L2 selves centered on communicating “with respect and cultural understanding in more than one language” (ACTFL, 2014).

The next three most commonly used words in the discoverers’ discourse (as revealed in Table 15), “new” (31 references), “experience” (22 references), and “great” (22 references),

provided even more insight into the type of cultural experiences the discoverers sought to take part in when studying abroad. While the consumers also used these words, the discoverers' discourse revealed that their focus was on growing to learn about the world around them.

When weighing the advantages and disadvantages of studying abroad, one learner said, "Advantages to living in Spain might include the total cultural immersion that you would experience. You might also be able to pick up on some Spanish while you are there." The words "advantages" and "total cultural immersion" in this context emphasize the cultural immersion instead of linguistic development. Instead of viewing studying abroad only as a fun way to build their linguistic skills like the consumers did, the discoverers also saw it as a new and great opportunity to grow as a person *and* engage with other cultures. A different discoverer also highlighted the importance of learning about the culture when abroad by stating the following:

Advantages of living in a Spanish-speaking country, Spain in particular, include: a different cultural experience from what I'm used to, a different set of values and cultural norms, great cuisine -- not to mention healthier than what we eat here, new people, an opportunity to learn and better understand a foreign language, new sites to be seen, a vaster knowledge of the world outside my personal bubble, an opportunity to see art and history from a different perspective in a new place, etc. [...] it would have the best opportunity to meet a multitude of people.

As seen in this learner's discourse, his use of the word "different" three times in one statement displayed his desire to interact with and understand cultural difference. In particular, his discourse revealed that wanted to discover how other people in Spain live, what they value, and better understand the world around him. By revealing his desire to gain new perspectives from a new place, this learner showed that he was moving toward cross-cultural awareness where he could begin to weigh and recognize different perspectives and interact with sensitivity to and respect for other cultures.

These learners not only conveyed that they wanted to engage with otherness when abroad, but they revealed through their discourse that being abroad was an opportunity to self-reflect, learn, and engage with difference, all of which are vital components in developing cross-cultural awareness (Knutson, 2006). One learner in particular conveyed this desire through his comment about studying abroad:

Another advantage is that you will grow from the experience and learn about another cultural [*sic*] as well as about yourself. You will also get to try new things and meet new people that you would have not otherwise met.

This learner's discourse revealed the process of cultural learning that this group had begun to undergo, one that was self-reflective and that led to more open-mindedness. Specifically, his focus on personal growth that would take place as a result of encountering "new things" and "new people" acknowledges that this group began to see "the relational nature of cultural study" (Knutson, 2006, p. 592), which is integral in the development of cross-cultural awareness.

Equally vital for increased cross-cultural awareness is the understanding of self as a cultural subject, which leads to more openness (Knutson, 2006). Through this learner's use of the reflexive pronoun "yourself" and focus on learning more about himself as a result of the cultural interactions, he showed that he was taking the first step toward increased cross-cultural awareness. Additionally, his discourse about the internal change that would occur as a result of interacting with new cultural phenomena and new people indicated a movement toward accepting cultural difference.

### **Learners' Approach to Culture: The Difference in Levels of Interest**

The new versions of future L2 self as displayed in learners' journal entries guided their interest in culture and subsequently affected the approach to culture that they took during their first cultural project. The first project ended during the ninth week, which was around the midway point of the semester. Thus, after learners completed their journal entry for the first

cultural project, I re-examined the discourse in their journals to gain insight into their level of interest in culture (or lack thereof).

**Interest high in motivational intensity.** For the 15 consumers, the discourse in their journal entries exhibited an interest in culture that was high in motivational intensity. That is, they focused heavily on culture as something to acquire in order to enhance their experience abroad and to help them learn the Spanish language. This interest that was high in motivational intensity subsequently led them to narrow their focus on learning about the target culture, meaning that they honed in so much on culture as an object to acquire and not as something that could have led them to value intercultural interactions and multiple perspectives (ACTFL, 2014). For instance, in a comment about going abroad, one learner stated, “We would also be gaining invaluable knowledge about a different culture and language.” This focus on the acquisition of knowledge showed that the consumers conceptualized culture to be like a product they could purchase and use to achieve their goals when living abroad. Another learner reinforced this understanding by stating, “Living in a Spanish speaking country has many advantages and disadvantages [*sic*] one main advantage is the culture and opportunities it opens up. Like jobs, places, sports, and food.” This learner’s focus on “culture” in relation to the “opportunities” it can open up (which are all associated with concrete, monetary values) shows that he saw culture as the key to success and fun when studying abroad as well as when back in his home country. These narrowed viewpoints led these learners to approach culture as something they needed to obtain and limited their ability to progress in their cross-cultural awareness. Because they desired to consume the culture, these learners viewed studying abroad as an advantageous opportunity, as seen in this comment: “This really is a once in a lifetime opportunity and I’d really hate for us to miss out on this!” To them, becoming more aware of themselves as cultural subjects and open-

minded to cultural diversity was not a part of their visualizations of their future L2 self. The way in which these learners approached culture showed that they were still coping with the differences they had encountered in their Pinterest research. In other words, they continued to relegate the target culture to facts, products, or tangible things in order to make sense of the cultural diversity they had encountered. The discourse of the 15 learners who enacted a consumer by the end of their first cultural project showed that they did not want to go deeper yet with their explorations and reflections of the target culture. Instead, they narrowed their interests in on one-dimensional aspects of the culture, as seen in this comment:

They have many great restaurants, clubs, and many sites to see! Since we both love to dance it really would be a good place to live, [*sic*] I mean you always complain about the lack of dance clubs here in Tuscaloosa, [*sic*] why not get a chance to experience clubs in another country, and maybe even learn some new styles of dance.

This one learner's repeated use of phrases such as "we both love to dance," "why not get a chance to experience clubs," and "maybe even learn some new styles of dance" show that she was more focused on consuming the culture in order to have a good time. Her focus was less on interacting with native speakers and learning about the world around her through immersion in the target culture. By focusing on these more superficial characteristics of culture such as restaurants, clubs, sites to see, etc., these learners avoided an emotional connection with the target culture that would have required them to reconsider the way they previously conceptualized the world around them.

**Interest low in motivational intensity.** For the 13 discoverers, their discourse in their journal entries exhibited an interest in culture that was low in motivational intensity. This kind of interest broadened the views of the world around them and allowed them to be more open to cultural difference. They approached culture as an opportunity to interact with native speakers, stating, "We would learn so much about the culture and the language and gain everlasting

friendships with new people. I think that living in Spain would be one of the best decisions we would ever make.” While this learner’s discourse still dichotomizes culture and language using the conjunction “and” the focus of this statement is on culture as the link that could connect her with native speakers. Additionally, her use of the phrase “gain everlasting friendships” shows that she is growing in her cultural awareness because she was developing a desire “to interact and communicate with people from other cultures,” which ultimately “opens doors to new relationships, knowledge, and experiences” (ACTFL, 2014).

These learners continued to objectify culture as a tool because they saw it as knowledge that could aid them in their interactions with native speakers. What is most important though is that they were progressing in their cross-cultural awareness because of their interest in using culture as a way to interact with native speakers. In other words, their discourse revealed that they were beginning on a path to cross-cultural awareness. They were embarking on a cultural journey where their viewpoints were beginning to shift to recognize “the multiplicity of factors that influence who people are and how they communicate” (ACTFL, 2014). Thus, they were undergoing an internal transformation that resulted in them understanding themselves and others as culturally situated subjects in a multicultural world, which is the first step toward becoming more open-minded and cross-culturally aware (Knutson, 2006).

Furthermore, their interest in culture led them to be more open to multiple perspectives, because to them, “Spain has the potential to be the adventure of a lifetime if you just give it a chance to steal your heart, I firmly believe it truly will with it's magnificance [*sic*]”. The phrase “steal your heart” revealed a sense of love and conveyed the relationship that these learners were beginning to develop with the target culture. Through these relationships that they visualized their future L2 self forming with people within the target culture, learners acknowledged that

they would undergo a change and welcomed this possibility. They perceived cultural interactions as not merely going and being an observer but as an experience that required some level of participation and an open mind. For instance, one learner commented, “You could study abroad and expand your perspective on life.” The use of the word “and” here signifies a correlation between studying abroad and expanded perspectives. It shows that these learners wanted to take part in a study abroad experience so they could become more open to diverse viewpoints that would push them to understand the world in a new way. For one learner in particular, she stated, “I believe that we should live in Madrid to experience new things, get exposure to Spanish so we can become more proficient, and experience another country's culture in order to better understand the world.” While this learner’s discourse focuses on learning the language, the emphasis in this statement is on experiencing “new things”, in particular another culture, so that she can develop a better understanding of the world. This desire to see the world differently revealed that these learners’ interest in culture led them to be more open-minded. Not only did they want to see the world differently, but also more specifically, they wanted to see it through the target culture’s eyes. That is, they wanted to combine the target culture with their own understanding of the world, which displayed a heightened level of cross-cultural awareness because they desired to “interact with awareness, sensitivity, empathy, and knowledge of the perspectives of others” (ACTFL, 2014).

This focus on developing a new understanding of the world encapsulated what the discoverers visualized themselves as becoming – someone who would be open to discovering and uncovering new cultural differences in a study abroad context. Specifically, they viewed their experience in a foreign country as transformational because it would change them and force them to get outside of their own comfort zone. This realization showed that they grew in their

cross-cultural awareness because they recognized difference, were receptive to learning about otherness, and considered this type of personal growth to be a positive outcome of going abroad.

## **Discussion**

To answer *RQ1*, which examined how learners enacted their future L2 self on Pinterest when exploring the target culture, all 28 learners displayed jet-setting tourists. The data revealed that learners stereotyped themselves as jet-setting tourists in their first cultural project when they explored the target culture on Pinterest. In regards to *RQ2*, which centers on how opportunities for reflection affect the evolution of learners' visualizations of their future L2 self, the results showed that reflective activities led learners to visualize new and different versions of their future L2 self. In particular, nearly half of the learners ( $n = 13$ ) began to visualize themselves as a discoverer, or as someone who believed an opportunity abroad would allow them to immerse themselves in the culture and relate on a deeper level with native speakers. Fifteen learners visualized themselves as consumers, or as someone who saw an experience studying abroad as an opportunity to gain cultural and linguistic knowledge while having a fun-filled adventure in a foreign land. As for *RQ3*, which focused on how learners' visualizations of their future L2 self affected their approach to culture, the data revealed that learners' visualizations of their future L2 self determined the level of interest (either interest high or low in motivational intensity) in culture they had, which ultimately influenced their approach to culture. The "kinds of people" (Gee, 2011, p. 178) learners wanted to become as they completed their cultural projects guided their interest in and approach to culture.

**The relationship between Pinterest and the future L2 self.** At the beginning of the first cultural project (week 4 of the semester), all 28 learners used Pinterest as an avenue to explore the target culture, but they all enacted a jet-setting tourist through the pins and descriptions they posted to their group boards. They approached the target culture from an outsider's perspective,

one where their discourse exhibited that they desired to see or examine the target culture without actually having to connect with it. For them, Pinterest was a way of looking up facts, figures, and generic information and allowed them to keep the target culture at a distance. Through their discourse, learners conveyed that they were afraid of making the leap to become more cross-culturally aware. That is, they expressed a hesitation to connect with the target culture, and therefore, instead of openly approaching the target culture on Pinterest, they remained guarded and visualized their future L2 self as unaffected and unengaged with the culture (i.e. as a jet-setting tourist). Their pins and comments on Pinterest showed that they wanted to pick up their own culture and take it with them to the target cultural context so that they could remain protected from cultural difference.

To better understand why they approached the target culture as an observer, I followed Gee's (2011) theory of D/discourse and interpreted learners' Pinterest data by looking at how they used their discourse in the cultural projects to shape who they wanted to become (i.e. their future L2 self). I also looked at how learners' Primary Discourse, or who they actually are, related to the development of their Secondary Discourse, or their visualizations of their future L2 self.

As seen from their comments on Pinterest, learners enacted a jet-setting tourist so that their Primary Discourse would not clash with their Secondary Discourse. When they explored cultural topics on Pinterest, learners stereotyped themselves. In other words, the cultural difference they came into contact with disoriented their understanding of the world and in order to regain control and make sense of what they were pinning on Pinterest, learners ultimately were reluctant to imagining themselves engaging with otherness and expressed a desire to stay true to their Primary Discourse, or their American self. Such visualizations give rise to the need for more studies that investigate why learners enroll in a foreign language course. If the purpose or

motivation were to complete graduation requirements, then this type of motivation would indicate a need for pedagogies that address this issue in the foreign language learning experience in order to lead learners to invest in their learning and become more motivated.

While this outsider approach that learners adopted on Pinterest may seem problematic for foreign language learning, learners' explorations on Pinterest actually began their process of cultural learning. In their first cultural project, Pinterest provided an avenue in which learners could access real-world cultural information from within the four walls of the foreign language classroom. Learners commented in the focus group at the end of the semester that Pinterest was the most interactive way they had ever engaged with real-world cultural information during their foreign language learning experience. Because Pinterest gave learners autonomy to explore their interests in going abroad (within the confines of the project instructions), learners remarked in the focus group that they believed they engaged more with their learning. They commented that they felt they had the freedom to choose their topics of study and could explore things that interested them on a deeper level if they so wished. Thus, findings suggest that Pinterest was the narrative hook that drew learners in and got them interested in exploring the possibility of studying abroad and interacting in the target culture. As Freadman (2014) described, "The hook is the program that catches the fish, bringing it into the space, time, and posture required for continued viewing" (p. 380). In the context of foreign language learning, the hook functions "to stimulate the students' interest, thus engaging them in the learning that makes sense of it" (Freadman, 2014, p. 380).

**Reflection as the impetus for cross-cultural awareness.** As a result of the reflective journal entries in this cultural project, all of the learners developed a changed frame of reference, one that was beginning to become more culturally aware. Some progressed quicker than others (e.g.

discoverers versus consumers) did. Specifically, through deeper reflection they began to think more deeply about “how they perceive themselves and others, the stories they remember from the past, the way they imagine the future” (Kramsch, 2014, p. 306).

By looking at these transformations, findings revealed that innovative approaches to the teaching and learning of culture are beneficial for engaging toward cross-cultural awareness. However, the key element of these approaches is a reflective opportunity for learners. In particular, Pinterest challenged learners to explore the products and practices of the target culture, and the journal entry further developed their cross-cultural awareness because learners reflected more deeply on the concept of culture. Their journal entries afforded them opportunities to create their own connections between the 3 Ps of the target culture. Instead of being told by a textbook how they should connect the 3 Ps, learners had the opportunity to discover on their own and learn about culture in their own way. This type of autonomous, reflective approach to learning about culture engaged learners in a different and new way because it took into account their own interests and their desire to control their learning (Clifford et al., 2004).

Therefore, in order to increase in cross-cultural awareness, reflection should focus directly on developing learners’ future L2 self through their own interests and a more culturally competent future L2 self. As the data suggest, learners’ conceptualizations of self-guided them toward their cross-cultural awareness. Therefore, reflective activities must “necessitate changes in both teachers’ and students’ identities” (Norton, 2010, p. 1), or the future L2 self.

Reflection should also occur with the educators in the foreign language classroom as well in order to consider how an educator’s future L2 self and their discourse affects learners’ future L2 selves. Educators should reflect on how their visualizations or goals they hold for their learners affect the development of the pedagogies they use inside the classroom. In light of this

understanding that educators have an effect on learners' cross-cultural awareness, suggestions to consider when creating different methodologies include the following:

- Does the future L2 self I expect to see in my learners align with what my learners' future L2 self actually is?
- If there is a mismatch between these two conceptualizations, how will it affect the learning environment and what I am teaching?
- If there is a mismatch, then will the pedagogy I develop activate the type of future L2 self that ultimately leads to a more culturally aware language user?

All of these questions point to a need to establish what learners' visualizations of themselves are as future language users. By appropriately understanding these imagined selves, educators can use them to guide learners' interests when exploring cultural topics. Specifically, educators can develop activities for cultivating interest that is low in motivational intensity and that ultimately broadens learners' perspectives and leads them to become more open to cultural difference.

**Interest in culture that emerges as a result of the future L2 self.** As described in the literature review, there are typically two types of interest that occur in the learning environment, either interest that is high in motivational intensity or interest that is low in motivational intensity. The two differ in that interest high in motivational intensity has narrowing effects, causes learners to hone in on specific details, and leads them to ignore other aspects in the learning environment. On the other hand, interest low in motivational intensity broadens perspectives because it is an interest that develops over time, centers on concepts that expand cognition (i.e. in this study, culture-specific content that includes a variety of products, practices, and perspectives (Knutson, 2006)), and leads learners to consider multiple perspectives.

In the present study, when learners visualized their future L2 self as a jet-setting tourist on Pinterest, their interest in culture was high in motivational intensity. It was an interest where they focused heavily on replicating their own frames of reference and expressed a reluctance to engage with otherness by focusing on the exotic aspects of the target culture. This type of cultural understanding required little to no emotional connection and provided them a level of comfort because it was a way that learners could continue to insulate themselves from otherness. By enacting the jet-setting tourist, learners were not challenged to consider other worldviews or different cultural perspectives. In other words, recognizing cultural difference was uncomfortable for them, and therefore they avoided it through their enactments and sampled cultural difference rather than exploring it on a deeper level.

Learners who visualized themselves as a consumer exhibited an interest that was high in motivational intensity. In other words, the consumers saw culture as an asset to manipulate or one over which they could exert control. Therefore, their heightened interests in controlling the culture for their own personal gain led them to narrow their viewpoints of the target culture. Instead of allowing their explorations of the target culture lead them to a deeper understanding that could result in more open mindedness, they wanted to consume the culture and objectified it. Conversely, the discoverers, whose interests in culture were low in motivational intensity, broadened their outlook on the target culture, and they began to become more open minded toward difference. Even though these learners sometimes continued to objectify the culture, they were not interested in manipulating the culture for their own use (like the consumers). Instead, they focused on learning about culture as a way to grow and develop relationships with native speakers. Additionally, these learners viewed the target culture as a concept that they could learn from and not as something they could acquire and later exploit for their own personal use.

Considering that interest that is low in motivational intensity is tied to more culturally aware visualizations of the future L2 self, more activities that elicit and nurture this type of interest are needed in foreign language learning. As seen from the findings in this first cultural project, activities that incorporate a process of cultural learning can elicit this type of interest and set learners on a trajectory of cross-cultural awareness. Specifically, when learners have the opportunity to explore the target culture and then reflect on what they encountered, they start to imagine themselves engaging with difference and as a result, they begin to perceive an alternate way of seeing the world.

It would be unrealistic to expect that one sole project could immediately elicit visualizations that are fully developed in the sense of cross-cultural awareness. However, it is possible to cultivate more cross-culturally aware versions of the future L2 self through multiple activities and projects where learners become autonomous and have opportunities to reflect on the relational aspects of culture. Through this type of instructional approach, learners are able to find purpose in their learning, connect with the target culture, and broaden their approach to language learning as a result of the interest they develop that is low in motivational intensity.

## **Chapter 5: Emotional Connections with the Target Culture as Motivation in Foreign Language Learning**

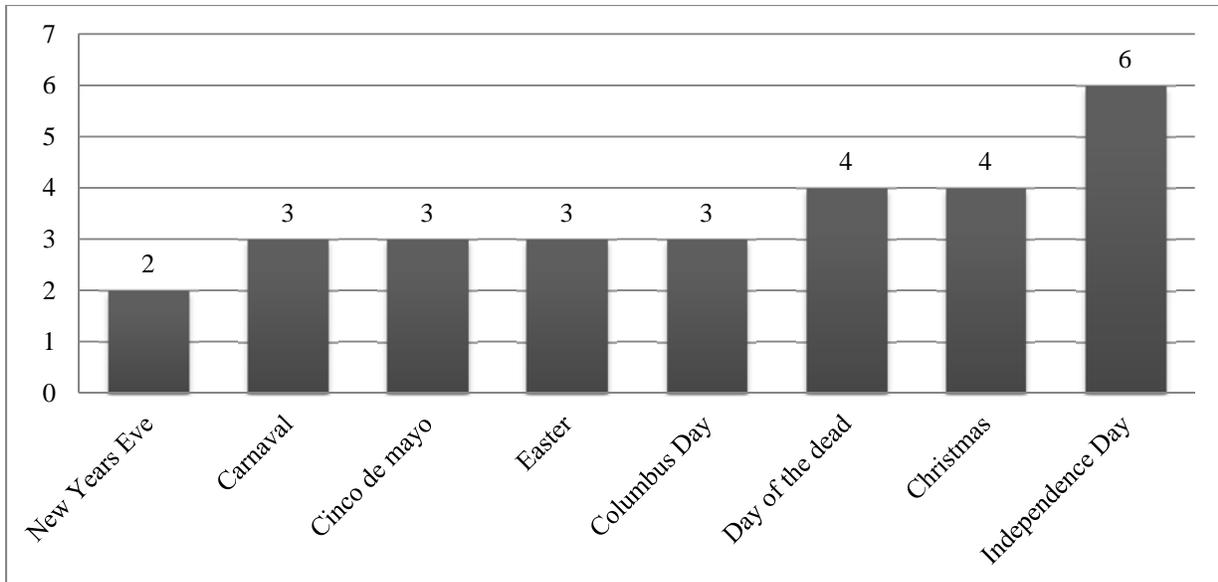
This chapter looks at the emotional connections that learners make (or do not make) with the target culture when exploring different holidays (*RQ4*). It also examines the relationship between these emotional connections and learners' interest in continuing to study Spanish (*RQ5*). In this chapter, I analyze data produced in the second cultural project completed during weeks 11 to 15 of the semester. In order to answer *RQ4*, I coded all of the data from learners' Pinterest research and their journal entries to understand the emotional connections they made with the target culture. As for *RQ5*, I looked at the link between learners' emotional connections and their level of interest in continuing to study Spanish at the end of the semester. To show the level of interest, I quantified learners' responses on their post-study questionnaire (administered the last week of the 15-week semester). I asked them to rank their level of interest in continuing to study Spanish on a five-point Likert scale (from 'Very Uninterested' to 'Very Interested') and then compared the results to learners' emotional connections at the end of the second cultural project (weeks 11-15). Additionally, I looked at the data from both cultural projects in order to achieve a comprehensive viewpoint on learners' entire process of learning that they underwent during the semester.

As in Chapter 4, learners described their pins on Pinterest in Spanish, and they completed their journal entries in English. For the purpose of data reporting, I translated all of the data to English. I also created different labels that identified and described each group of learners in this chapter. The labels provided an understanding into the relationship between learners' emotional connections with the target culture and their interest in continuing to study Spanish.

### **Emotional Connections as Determined by Learners' Exploration of Cultural Holidays**

At the eleventh week of the semester, learners began their second cultural project, which focused on comparing and contrasting holidays in the target culture(s) and their native culture. The instructions (Appendix I) told learners to imagine themselves working as a freelancer for *HOLA Latino*, a local bilingual company. As part of their first assignment for *HOLA Latino*, they were to investigate one holiday in a specific Spanish-speaking country and then compare and contrast it with the same or equivalent holiday in their own native culture. In groups of two to three, learners each pinned five pins related to the specific cultural holiday they selected (14 total pinboards included in the data analysis of this chapter). In total, each pinboard on Pinterest contained 10 to 15 pins at least. After comparing and contrasting the holidays on Pinterest, learners then used this information to create an advertising poster and a mock radio broadcast where they discussed the cultural holidays they were researching.

Figure 6 provides a breakdown of the holidays pinned in the second cultural project and the number of learners who chose to focus on each holiday.



**N = 28**

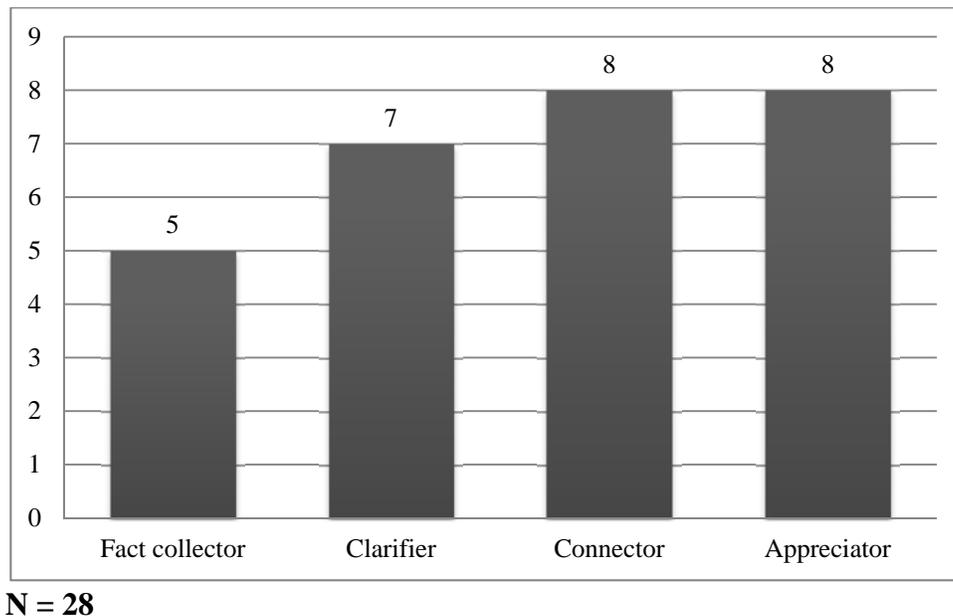
**Figure 6 - Holidays Pinned and Number of Learners who Researched each Holiday**

In general, the distribution of holidays that learners chose to explore was fairly even (Figure 6). Two studied New Year’s Eve; three learners chose to investigate Carnaval; three explored Cinco de mayo; three studied Easter, and three investigated Columbus Day. Four learners chose to explore Day of the Dead, and four other learners studied Christmas. The remaining six learners, who made up the largest number out of the total 28 learners, investigated Independence Day.

For the purpose of the analysis below, I isolated recurring categories and themes within each of the holidays that learners explored. Within each holiday that learners investigated, they connected emotionally with the target culture in four different ways (Figure 7). The categories that arose were fact collectors, clarifiers, connectors, and appreciators (described more in detail below).

Because of the amount of data produced in this project, I selected photos and comments from learners’ Pinterest posts and journal entries that were representative of all of the learners’ overall

viewpoints. In each section below, I provide a sampling of the photos and then use the data from learners' written discourse on Pinterest and in their journals to provide a comprehensive picture of their emotional connections with the target culture. Figure 7 provides a breakdown of the four emotional categories.



**Figure 7 - Learners' Emotional Connections in the Second Cultural Project**

As seen in Figure 7, the way in which learners emotionally connected with the target culture was rather evenly distributed. Five learners were fact collectors. Seven learners were clarifiers, eight were connectors, and eight were appreciators. The sections that follow describe each emotional connection found in Figure 7.

**Fact collectors.** The five fact collectors in the second cultural project were all consumers in project #1. In their investigations in this second project, they explored five different holidays: Cinco de mayo, Christmas, Independence Day, New Year's Eve, and Columbus Day. These fact collectors saw their job at *HOLA Latino* as just reporting general facts or cultural tidbits. For example, one learner said in his journal, "I'm glad *HOLA Latino* [*sic*] gave me the chance to do

research on these holidays and helped increase my cultural knowledge of other nations” while another learner added, “In our group podcast, I gave a brief history on why the holiday is what is.” The recurring use of words such as “research,” “knowledge,” and “brief history” showed that these fact collectors viewed their job for *HOLA Latino* as collecting different information to later share with their audience. In their concentration on acquiring knowledge of the target culture, they continued to objectify the culture as something they could gain or acquire and use to their advantage. For instance, in her comment on Independence Day, one learner remarked, “I am glad to further improve my knowledge of Mexican Independence Day.” To these learners, the cultural information or knowledge they gained aided their understanding of the holiday. While this increased understanding did open their eyes to cultural difference, these consumers’ interests were high in motivational intensity and thus narrowed their understanding of the target culture, leading them to continue to relegate the culture to facts, tidbits, or information they could add to their fact collector toolkit.

As fact collectors, they tended to display an ethnocentric approach to the target culture. That is, they viewed the holiday in the target culture as the same as their own native culture, with just a few variations (Bennett, 1993). For example, when comparing and contrasting Cinco de mayo with the Fourth of July in his native culture, one learner said, “Cinco de Mayo looks like a lot like July the 4<sup>th</sup> in the United States, [*sic*] the historical importance are [*sic*] different, but the way the two societies celebrate it makes them similar.” Another learner also expressed this same ethnocentric understanding of the target culture by stating, “Although the dates may not be the same, the celebration is the same way.”

The repeated use of the words “similar” and “same” suggests learners’ intent to connect with the target culture by comparing the celebrations of the holiday. However, the direction of their

comparisons was somewhat misguided. In other words, because of how they conceptualized culture as an object to acquire, their comparisons were one-dimensional and ultimately led them to evaluate the target culture through the lens of their own native culture. In the following comment, one learner displayed this attempt to make connections with the target culture:

“Though Cinco de Mayo isn’t a celebration of Mexican Independence I would say that the closest thing to it in the US is Independence Day.” Here this learner acknowledges the differences in the two holidays and then provides his explanation for choosing Cinco de mayo, stating it is the “closest thing” in Mexican culture to Independence Day in his own native culture. While he is completing the project as the instructions required him to, his understanding of culture as nothing more than factual knowledge hindered the progression of his cross-cultural awareness, as with the rest of the learners in this group.

Because they saw the target culture’s holiday as only a variation of a holiday in their native culture, these learners also displayed a dichotomous understanding of the target culture and their native culture, expressing the sentiment of “this is what we do versus this is what they do.”

Figure 8 below provides examples of this dual approach.



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### Figure 8 - Pins from Fact Collectors

#### Description of pins:

8. Cinco de mayo – Mexico
9. Columbus Day/National Day – Spain
10. Christmas – Spain
11. Independence Day – Mexico
12. New Year's Eve – Spain

One learner exemplified this dichotomous perspective in his description of photo 1 (Figure 8). In his pin of a typical festival during Cinco de mayo, he stated, “Cinco de mayo is celebrated with family and friends. They spend time dancing, singing, drinking, and have a good time.” Another learner echoed this approach by commenting, “All of the world shows their patriotism as a celebration of their independence like we do here in America.” In their contrasting use of the pronouns “they” and “we”, these learners displayed that they were separating the products and

practices of the holiday according to each particular culture. In the second learner's use of "all of the world" in contrast with the phrase "like we do here in America," his discourse showed he held an *Us versus Them* understanding of the world and in particular, he grouped the rest of the world together as *Them* or as the *other*. In comparing Columbus Day and National Day (in Spain), another learner also displayed this *Us versus Them* viewpoint as well. In her description of the day (photo 2, Figure 8), she stated, "National Day is what we would call Columbus Day in America." While not as overtly dichotomous as the other statements above, this learner still used personal pronouns such as "we" and statements like "in America" to convey a sense of separation and an outsider's viewpoint of the target culture.

This dichotomous approach was also present in learners' descriptions of holidays in other Spanish-speaking countries. For example, one learner described the food eaten during Christmas in Spain, stating, "A lot of the customs are the same, [*sic*] we celebrate with feasts with family and friends much like the citizens in Spain do." A different learner added to this *Us versus Them* approach in her description of photo 3 (Figure 8) by commenting, "Much like we celebrate the birth of baby jesus [*sic*] on Christmas the citizens in Spain celebrate the 3 kings bringing gifts to baby jesus [*sic*]." In both of these comments, learners' use of "we" and "the citizens of Spain" to compare Christmas in Spain and in the United States displays the way they approached the target culture. Not only did they separate the two cultures in their comparisons, but also the learners' use of the phrase "the citizens of Spain" conveys an outsider's approach to the target culture and seems to dehumanize the target culture in a way by referring to people in Spain as "citizens." That is, their use of the term "citizens" reflects an encyclopedic knowledge or a report of information. When describing *others*, these learners referred to them as "citizens of Spain," but when describing themselves or their own culture, they gave a more intimate tone to their culture.

While it might be expected for them to be more personal when describing their own culture because they are more familiar with it, their generalized, “book report” feel they gave to their descriptions of the target culture reinforced an outsider’s standpoint.

In their attempts to explore the target culture and make comparisons with their own native culture, the fact collectors also often simplified any differences they found and as a result, limited their own ability to recognize and weigh different perspectives (ACTFL, 2014). For example, in photo 4 (Figure 8), one learner compared and contrasted Independence Day in Spanish-speaking countries and in the United States. In his description of the holiday, he stated, “A lot of the holidays celebrated in the Spanish-speaking countries are very similar to holidays that are celebrated in the United States.” As seen in this comment, which is representative of all five fact collectors’ viewpoints, this learner focused on the similarities of the holiday “in the Spanish-speaking countries.” That is, he homogenized the traditions and celebrations of holidays in the Spanish-speaking world as all the same and ignored differences that might occur in different parts of the Spanish-speaking world. Another learner echoed this sentiment of a homogenous *other* in his descriptions of New Year’s Eve in Spain (photo 5, Figure 8). “In the celebrations, there is always food. Many people drink champagne or carbonated grape juice. Cake and cookies are common foods for this celebration. People also wear hats and play things that make a lot of noise.” His continual use of words such as “always,” “many,” and “common” conveyed a generalizing tone, one that represented how all the fact collectors viewed the target culture – as all the same with little to no differences.

**Clarifiers.** Seven learners in project #2 understood their job at *HOLA Latino* as finding information that would clarify more about the people of the target culture and therefore emotionally connected to the target culture as a clarifier. At the end of project #1, five were

consumers and two were discoverers. In the second project, these clarifiers explored five different holidays: Day of the Dead, Cinco de mayo, Christmas, Easter, and Columbus Day. In their exploration of the cultural holidays, the clarifiers looked for information that would provide insight into the 'why' behind the holiday, i.e. the cultural perspectives. Figure 9 below provides a representation of the holidays that the clarifiers explored.



1



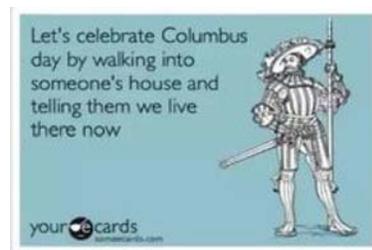
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**Figure 9 - Pins from Clarifiers**

**Description of pins:**

1. Day of the Dead – Mexico
2. Cinco de mayo - Mexico
3. Christmas – Spain
4. Easter – Honduras
5. Columbus Day - United States / National Day - Spain

As seen in clarifiers' pins and journal entries, their comparisons reflected an interest that was beginning to shift to lower motivational intensity. Because of this shift, they were beginning to want to engage with difference. In other words, they did focus on culture as information and narrowed in on that aspect of their explorations; however, they were interested in cultural information that was more about understanding and learning about people in the target culture and information that would clarify more about these people and how they lived, what they believed, what their values were, etc. Thus, the clarifiers' interests were beginning to change, shifting toward lower motivational intensity. The result was that their understandings of the target culture were broadening in the sense that these learners began to position themselves less as outsiders. Instead, their clarifications of the target culture showed they desired to engage with otherness more than the fact collectors did. They exhibited this desire through their discourse in which they showed that they wanted to make more meaningful connections with the target culture on Pinterest and in their journal entries. This desire to understand the reason behind the holiday led them to center less on "what we do" versus "what they do" and pushed them to think more deeply (than the fact collectors did) about the target culture.

For example, two learners made connections between Halloween and Day of the Dead by focusing on the origins of the holiday. In her description of photo 1 (Figure 9), one learner said:

In a similar manner to the Mexican tradition of honoring their loved dead ones and believing that they are going to come and visit, the Celtic towns believed that the spirits of those who have died throughout the year intermingle with those still alive before going on to the next life.

The phrase "in a similar manner" was a common representation of how learners used their discourse to enact their clarifier persona and compare the two cultural holidays. They repeatedly used words and phrases such as "similarly," "in comparison," "comparable," and "equivalent" to

make sense of the differences between their native culture and the target culture and clarify differences they did not understand. The five fact collectors also made comparisons between the two cultures, but the clarifiers differed in their comparisons because they focused on the ‘*why*’ behind the products and practices. As seen in the learner’s comment above, she uses the word “believe” twice in comparing the backgrounds of Halloween and Day of the Dead. This learner, who was a discoverer in project #1, focused on comparative and contrasting beliefs and values within each culture in the second project, showing that her interests in culture were continuing to move toward lower motivational intensity. That is, instead of focusing on cultural information that would narrow her perspectives (i.e. high motivational intensity), she was concentrating on topics (i.e. beliefs, values) that would lead her to a broadened understanding of the target culture.

Another learner, who was a consumer in project #1, compared and contrasted Halloween with Day of the Dead in her journal by describing the background of Halloween: “Before Halloween became all about pumpkins, costumes, parties, and celebrations, people were about helping the good souls on their way [*to the next life*] and keeping the bad spirits from doing harm to the living.” Additionally, this same learner wrote:

In the 8th century, Pope Gregory III designated the first of November as a moment to honor all the saints and martyrs -- All Saints Day. He incorporated some of the traditions of Samhain. The night before was known as All Hallows Eve and much later as Halloween. With time, Halloween converted into a secular event...”

These two learners’ discourse focused on clarifying what Halloween used to represent and how it is comparable to what Day of the Dead still celebrates. They repeatedly focused on how Halloween used to be about “helping” and “honor[ing]” before it turned into a “secular event” and how it used to relate more closely to Day of the Dead. Such clarifications revealed that these clarifiers were beginning to develop an interest in culture that was lower in motivational intensity because they were focusing more on the relational aspects of the culture. The relational aspects

of the culture concentrate more on the values, beliefs, and meanings behind the holiday and less on the things people use to celebrate the holiday or the ways in which they celebrate (Knutson, 2006). In their discourse, these learners focused on information that would clarify who the people that celebrate the holidays are.

Photos 2 and 3 (Figure 9) also showed that learners were beginning to progress in their cross-cultural awareness. In photo 2 (Figure 9), one learner, who was a discoverer in the first cultural project, pinned the Mexican flag and described Cinco de mayo as a time when people take great pride in their country, as seen in the following comment:

People in Mexico have a lot of pride in their country. They show their Mexican flag and shout ‘¡Viva México!’ . This love is not only in Mexico. It is celebrated by Hispanic people all over the world on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of September each year.

In his description of Cinco de mayo, this learner used words like “pride” and “love”, showing that he was starting to concentrate less on what or how people celebrate the holiday and dig deeper into the reasons *why* they celebrate the holiday. Such an interest in understanding the culture on a more in-depth level indicated he was moving toward a more profound cultural awareness because he sought to comprehend more about the cultural-bound values and beliefs associated with different holidays (Knutson, 2006). He considered culture as informing his understanding of people in the target culture, and thus, he was moving away from objectifying culture as knowledge to acquire and was beginning to let it transform his worldview through a consideration of the perspectives behind the holidays. Another learner, who was a consumer in project #1, echoed this sentiment of pride in his descriptions of Cinco de mayo as well. In his journal he wrote, “Like in the United States, the people of Mexico get to display their patriotism for their country and hoist their country’s flag with great pride.” This learner’s discourse focused on why Mexicans hoist their flag – because of their pride and patriotism – and highlighted the

reason behind a certain practice, which shows that the learner here was trying to understand what this holiday represents. His concentration on the pride and patriotism of the target culture's holiday displayed an understanding of the relational aspects of culture as well – that pride and patriotism represent who the people are and what they value or believe in.

In photo 3 (Figure 9), one learner, who was a consumer in project #1, also developed a deeper understanding of the target culture by comparing Christmas in Spain and in the United States. He commented:

In the United States people celebrate the birth of Jesus. It is the 25th of December and is also called Christmas. Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem on a donkey and finally found a place where Mary had her baby. The people in Spain celebrate the same story.

This learner's discourse showed that he also sought to connect with the target culture in Spain by focusing on similarities in the values and beliefs behind the holiday, which was the integral component of the clarifiers' comparisons (i.e. a focus on cultural values and beliefs and what they tell about the people of the target culture).

As with the other clarifiers' pins and descriptions above, two other learners in this group continued to objectify the culture somewhat, but the important aspect to note is that they were also beginning to shift away from this pure objectification by focusing on the cultural perspectives associated with the holiday. For example, in photo 4 (Figure 9), one learner, who was a consumer in the first cultural project, described Easter in Honduras and stated, "With Catholicism being the dominant religion, Easter is an important moment of the year for all Hondurans." While in his comment he does report this cultural information as a fact (and somewhat generalized his understanding through the use of "all Hondurans"), his focus on Catholicism as the reason for why Easter is important showed that he was beginning to go beyond the surface of acquiring information about the target culture. His investigations were

leading him to find out about the people of the target culture and why holidays were important to them.

Another learner, who was a consumer in project #1, investigated Columbus Day (United States) and National Day (Spain) in a way that showed he was finding information on Pinterest to clarify what actually happened on Columbus Day. In his pin (photo 5, Figure 9), he wrote, “Many Americans do not celebrate Columbus Day. They think that it is not important. They do not think he found it [America] but that he stole it. They celebrate Columbus Day just like it is any other day.” In addition to this comment where he sought to clarify the true meaning behind the holiday in the United States, he went even further in his journal entry and made comparisons between the two holidays in the two countries:

In Spain, a lot of people feel like it’s a day commemorating Columbus’ discovery of the United States. They have a flag hoisting done in Madrid by the king of Spain. Then, a military parade and an air show is schedule to continue celebrations following the hoisting of the flag. Most businesses and all government offices are closed in celebration of this holiday. Many people attend the ceremonies, but most prefer to watch it on television. In America, a lot of people feel like this is a wasted holiday because they fail to believe that Columbus discovered America. Since the Native Americans were already in the U.S. at the time of his “discovery,” it would be impossible for Columbus to discover it. These people think that Columbus stole a country for his own legacy. Many others think this is a well deserved holiday. Parades are also held here, along with street fairs to commemorate this holiday. Most government offices are closed in commemoration, but not all. Some cities and a few states do not celebrate this holiday at all.

This learner’s repeated use of verbs such as “think,” “feel,” “prefer,” and “believe” shows he was focusing on what this holiday means to people, if they value it, or if they even believe in it. By combining his own viewpoint on the holiday with what he found in his explorations, he was clarifying what the holiday means in each country and to him, which displayed that he was beginning to show an appreciation for difference.

Another clarifier began to express this same kind of appreciation as well, as seen in the following comment: “Overall, there are many similarities and differences between Christmas in Spain and in the United States, but that is what makes each country special.” In this comment, which was representative of the other clarifiers, this learner was starting to undergo an internal transformation because he used his explorations as an explanation of why people in the target culture do things in different or similar way. As his discourse revealed, he viewed his explorations as an “opportunity to discover” new information regarding the target culture.

The comments on Pinterest and in their journals show that these clarifiers still acted as outsiders looking in, but their clarifications brought them closer to immersing in the target culture than the fact collectors. Albeit they objectified the target culture as knowledge they could gain and use to clarify their understanding of otherness, their approach to culture in the second project led these clarifiers to start conceiving culture as a way of understanding the relational aspects of culture – in particular, more about cultural values and beliefs. Their clarifications made understanding the target culture easier for them. Thus, while they still conceptualized the target culture as the *other*, these clarifiers’ explorations began to open new doors to understanding people who are different from them (ACTFL, 2014).

**Connectors.** Eight learners understood their job for *HOLA Latino* as one where they were a connector between the target culture and native culture. Out of these eight connectors, two were consumers at the conclusion of the first cultural project and six were discoverers.

In the second cultural project, the connectors explored six different holidays: Carnival, New Year’s Eve, Easter, Cinco de mayo, Independence Day, and Christmas. In their discourse, they indicated that they chose to explore a certain holiday because of their own personal experiences with the holiday or because of a personal connection they had with the holiday.

All six connectors' pins on Pinterest showed they were interested in knowing more about the target culture's beliefs and values surrounding different holidays (Figure 10). Additionally, in their descriptions on Pinterest and in their journal entries, these learners connected their own values and beliefs with those of the target culture (thus pushing their cross-cultural awareness one step further than the clarifiers do). Figure 10 below provides examples of how the connectors made deeper connections with the target culture.



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**Figure 10 - Pins from Connectors**

**Description of pins:**

1. Carnaval – Mexico
2. New Year's Eve – Spain
3. Easter – Honduras
4. Cinco de mayo – Mexico
5. Independence Day – Venezuela
6. Christmas – Spain

In her descriptions of Carnaval, one learner who was a discoverer in the first project, focused mostly on beliefs surrounding the holiday and connected them back to her own native culture. While she did pin some typical products and practices of the holiday, such as the outfits worn by people participating in parades in Carnaval (photo 1, Figure 10), she also discussed the beliefs surrounding the holiday. Her comments on the pins and in her journals revealed she recognized Carnaval, like Mardi Gras, to be a time when people take part in celebrations before they give up certain foods, practices, etc. for religious reasons. For example, she stated in her journal that Carnaval and Mardi Gras come before Lent, which she described as “a season of sacrifice and giving of [...] time, talents and prayers.” In her focus on the religious beliefs behind these celebrations, she went beyond the surface level of the target culture and explored the values and beliefs of the holiday through the lens of her own personal interests. For example, she wrote in her journal, “There really is nothing like a Mardi Gras or Carnaval celebration. I believe it is something everyone should experience at least once in their lifetime” and continued by stating, “I can understand the desire to be part of such a fun and colorful celebration [*Carnaval*].” In her use of words such as “understand” and “desire” in combination with more favorable descriptions of Carnaval as “fun” and “colorful”, this learner displayed an interest in connecting with the target culture because she viewed Carnaval through a positive light. Her discourse revealed that she was moving toward an appreciation for the target culture because of her personal interests in the holiday.

Another holiday where learners connected with the cultural perspectives was Nochevieja, or New Year’s Eve. In photo 2 (Figure 10), one learner, who was a discoverer in project #1, focused on how people in Spain celebrate the night and how their celebrations represent their beliefs. For example, this learner described photo 2 (Figure 10) by stating, “These grapes

represent the 12 months of the year, and the people believe that this tradition will bring them good luck for the upcoming year.” Her use of the words “represent” and “believe” portrays the approach to the target culture that all connectors had. They concentrated on their beliefs and what the holidays represented for people in the target culture. Their explorations led them to uncover more personal aspects of the target culture, which thus informed their understanding of otherness. For example, this same learner later expanded on her explanation of Nochevieja/New Year’s Eve and remarked, “This night is very special to the people in Spain and in the United States because it’s a time to gather and reflect on their blessings and wonderful moments from the past year.” Here, this learner’s use of the words “gather” and “reflect” to describe what people in *both* cultures regard as important shows that she was going deeper in her explorations of the target culture and was relating these in-depth understandings back to her own native culture. Another way this learner displayed movement toward cultural awareness was by relating to the personal aspects of the holidays in her descriptions from her journal: “In my opinion, Nochevieja seems to be important to the people of Spain due to its focus on family. Family is a central aspect of Spanish culture. Nochevieja revolves around spending time with family and an appreciation of time with loved ones.” In her comments, she repeatedly used words such as “important,” “appreciation”, “family, and “loved ones”, which showed a focus on the relationships surrounding a holiday. Her discourse showed that she was beginning to realize that culture is not just information to learn but instead is a way of understanding who people are, how they act, how they live, what they value, what they believe, etc. As a result of this new conception, she began to relate more to the target culture because she was making connections with the humanistic characteristics. In other words, she was making a deeper emotional connection with the target culture because she was beginning to conceive culture as informing

her about real people and not as just a set of facts. Different from the fact collectors, these connectors began to understand that people in other cultures do truly exist; they are not encyclopedic knowledge like the fact collectors expressed in their descriptions of the “citizens of Spain”.

Two learners, who were both discoverers in the first project, also expressed their connections with the target culture in their descriptions of Easter in Honduras (photo 3, Figure 10). They explored and described the religious beliefs behind Easter. In her journal description of Easter, one learner remarked:

I think this holiday is a beautiful celebration both in America and in Honduras. I, too, am Catholic, so Easter is one of my favorite holidays. I believe that the way Hondurans celebrate Easter and the way Americans celebrate Easter are very similar, and for that reason I feel that I can relate.

In this learner’s discourse, she used words such as “think,” “believe,” and “feel” in combination with personal pronouns such as “I” and “my,” which showed she was connecting emotionally to the target culture through her own personal beliefs. She also indicated in this statement that she was relating to the target culture based off the similarities she has found in her own native culture. What set the connectors apart from the fact collectors and the clarifiers was their interest in connecting with the personal aspects of the target culture, which another learner represented in the following statement from her journal:

Easter is a holiday that we celebrate in the United States and it is one that my family celebrates with traditions that have gone on for years. Consequently, I thought it would be interesting to see the traditions of another country.

While this learner does focus on the traditions, she repeatedly used personal pronouns such as “we,” “my,” and “I” to show that she was beginning to engage with otherness through her own personal experiences. Furthermore, the phrase “it would be interesting to see the traditions of another country” was representative of what the connectors all displayed in their discourse – a

desire to engage with otherness. Additionally, they based their interests in what they already found interesting in their own culture, but then as they explored the target culture, they extended these interests and used them to connect on a deeper emotional level. That is, their discourse showed that they desired to make a connection with difference because they were establishing different links between target culture and their native culture.

Two learners, who were both consumers in project #1, related to the target culture via Cinco de mayo (photo 4, Figure 10). Both selected Cinco de mayo as the holiday they wanted to investigate based off their personal experiences. In his journal entry, one learner gave voice to what both learners expressed in their projects, writing “I chose these holidays because I knew the most about these two holidays already. I have also celebrated both Independence day in the United States, and Cinco de Mayo in Mexico.” As seen in this learner’s discourse, which was representative of all eight connectors, his interest was in relating to the target culture because of prior connections he had made through celebrating the holiday. This learner here commented that he had celebrated both holidays previously and therefore, could relate to them, thus he chose to explore Cinco de mayo more in his project.

The same sentiment of relating to holidays based off personal experiences was true for another learner who was a consumer in project #1 and then researched Independence Day in project #2. In describing Independence Day in Venezuela (photo 5, Figure 10), he wrote:

There are parades down the street. The armed forces march down the streets parading the freedom of the people. Like I said, the holiday is similar to that of the U.S. So like that of Venezuela, Americans take to the streets and celebrate.

As seen in this learner’s discourse, he highlighted what the holiday represents and celebrates – “the freedom of the people.” Thus, he was making a deeper connection with the target culture

because he was connecting to aspects that gave him an insider's perspective into the life of a native speaker in Venezuela, in particular, what values and beliefs one holds.

The final holiday that one connector investigated was Christmas. In describing her pins, (photo 6, Figure 10), this learner, who was a discoverer in project #1, wrote, "I selected to write about Christmas in Spain. I love Christmas in general, so I thought it would be interesting to learn about it in another country." Her use of words such as "love" and "interesting" shows she wanted to connect with the target culture via a holiday in which she already had interest. Her discourse here displayed a desire to expand her understanding of the target culture by exploring how people in Spain celebrate Christmas. Later in her journal entry, she went into more detail on this desire to connect with the target culture. She commented:

[In Spain] They will also go to a Christmas Eve mass service. On Christmas day, spending time with family is very important. In the United States, people usually have a big lunch to celebrate Christmas on Christmas day. [...] Overall, there are many similarities and differences between Christmas in Spain and in the United States, but that is what makes each country special.

In her description of the similarities and differences in Spain and in the United States, she connected to the familiar aspects of the holiday such as spending time with family and the importance of family. Her discourse showed that she was also beginning to recognize and appreciate difference, thus increasing her cross-cultural awareness. In her description of the similarities and differences, she ended the sentence with the phrase "but that is what makes each country special," showing that she had reached an understanding of the target culture that led her to be more open-minded of difference. In other words, her discourse revealed that she wanted to interact with otherness through her explorations of Christmas in Spain, and because of her explorations, she was moving toward an appreciation of the differences that are present in various cultures.

In describing different holidays, the connectors continually focused on the beliefs and values held by people in the target culture and compared them to their own beliefs and values, i.e. considering that they were Catholic, Easter had a more personal meaning to them. Their discourse showed they had moved toward cross-cultural awareness because they were undergoing an internal transformation, one where they were starting to see the personal connections between the two cultures. All of the connectors indicated that they believed their personal connections and experiences could act like a bridge between their native culture and the target culture. To them, the target culture was becoming less about knowledge and facts and more about understanding the people and how they could in the future form relationships by learning about their culture.

**Appreciators.** The remaining eight learners saw their job for *HOLA Latino* as an opportunity to express their appreciation for the target culture and therefore connected emotionally as an appreciator. Out of these eight learners, three were consumers at the end of the first cultural project and five were discoverers.

In the second cultural project, the appreciators explored four different holidays: Independence Day, Day of the Dead, Columbus Day/National Day/Day of Indigenous Resistance, and Carnival. Through their pins on Pinterest, their descriptions of each pin, and their journal entries, these learners conveyed that they were beginning to develop an appreciation for otherness, thus demonstrating that they had achieved a higher level of cross-cultural awareness (ACTFL, 2014).

In their pins and journal entries, the appreciators used their discourse to position themselves as someone who was beginning to use the target language “to interact with awareness,

sensitivity, empathy, and knowledge of the perspectives of others” (ACTFL, 2014). Figure 11 provides examples of the four holidays that the appreciators investigated.



1



2



3



4

**Figure 11 - Pins from Appreciators**

**Description of pins:**

1. Independence Day – Panama
2. Day of the Dead – Mexico
3. Columbus Day / National Day (Spain) / Día de la Resistencia Indígena (Latin America)
4. Carnaval - Mexico

Three appreciators described Independence Day. In their discourse, they used words that showed they admired how Panama celebrated their Independence Day, indicating that they were

beginning to value difference (photo 1, Figure 11). For instance, one learner, who was a consumer in project #1, commented in his description of photo 1:

Another difference is the level of seriousness taken during Independence day. In the U.S. citizens have a tendency to drikn [*sic*] copious amounts of alchohol [*sic*] and get rowdy on Independence day. But in Panama it is much more serious, Alchohol [*sic*] is banned in much of Panama in the days of celebration and people really take time to enjoy the shows put on and spend time with each other.

This learner focused on the personal, relational aspects that come about because of Panamanians taking the holiday more seriously and displayed an admiration of these more serious aspects. For example, his use of words such as “seriousness” or “serious” in conjunction with phrases like “enjoy the shows” and “spend time with each other” cast a favorable light on the holiday. His overall tone reflected an appreciator’s viewpoint because he highlighted the pleasurable characteristics of Panama’s Independence Day and then contrasted them with the less pleasurable characteristics of Independence Day in his native culture.

The two other learners who described Independence Day were discoverers in the first project. They both expressed an appreciative point of view for how Panama celebrates Independence Day, as seen in this comment from one of these learners’ journal entries: “In Panama, their independence is something they are very proud of. It celebrates the hard work that their forefathers put in to have this freedom.” In their comments, learners admired Panama’s Independence Day by focusing on the importance of the holiday to the native speakers. Through their discourse, they sought to give value to how and why the target culture celebrates Independence Day through an overall tone of respect and appreciation.

Two appreciators, who were discoverers, also expressed their admiration of the target culture through their pins and descriptions of Day of the Dead (photo 2, Figure 11). In their discourse, learners focused on the perspectives behind Day of the Dead, which led them to connect on a

deeper level with the target culture. For example, one learner wrote, “To people in the Spanish speaking world, Dia [*sic*] de los Muertos is a day to celebrate those who they loved who have since passed. It is a gathering of family and friends to pray and remember lost family members, while supporting their spiritual journey.” Through her use of words such as “gathering,” “family,” “friends,” “pray,” “remember,” and “spiritual,” this learner concentrated on the more intimate aspects that drive the holiday and connected emotionally with the holiday through these characteristics. While the eight connectors made similar connections as well (i.e. connected on a personal level), these eight appreciators went one step further and moved toward a higher stage of cross-cultural awareness. Instead of just connecting with the personal aspects, the appreciators also began to convey an admiration of the target culture that led them to “reflect on one’s personal experiences across cultures to evaluate personal feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and reactions” (ACTFL, 2014).

The two appreciators who focused on Day of the Dead also showed this deeper appreciation of the target culture by comparing and contrasting with Halloween in their native culture. For example, one learner said, “In America, this holiday [Halloween] has lost its meaningful tradition. Instead, it is a night of candy and partying. People carve pumpkins and decorate their yards with ghosts and witches. It is common to try to scare people, and so haunted houses and haunted corn mazes are common around this holiday.” This learner, who gave voice to what the other appreciators said in their comments, used her language to show that she regrets that her own cultural holiday has lost its “meaningful tradition.” Thus, she displayed a favorable viewpoint of the target culture, one where she indicated that she admires how people in the Spanish-speaking world celebrate Day of the Dead. The other learner echoed this admiration of Day of the Dead by also contrasting it with Halloween in his own native culture:

Personally, I think it would be fun to experience the emotional aspect of *Día [sic] de los Muertos* in Mexico. It would be a few days to celebrate and remember those we have lost along the way. In America, we don't [sic] remember those who have left us. Instead, this holiday is simply for the enjoyment and pleasure associated with the activities. Although it is fun to dress up and get endless amounts of candy during Halloween time, it [*Halloween*] holds no special place in my heart for any reason.

This learner's use of "personally," "experience," and phrases like "emotional aspect" and "no special place in my heart" show that his focus was on merging and blending aspects from the holiday in the target culture into his own personal life. The other part of his discourse focused on how Mexican celebrations of Day of the Dead have a more profound meaning than Halloween celebrations in the United States, which was the common thread found in learners' comments in this category. This kind of understanding led this learner to realize that Day of the Dead in Mexico has a different role than Halloween. His discourse showed that he was beginning to view this holiday from the Mexican perspective and contrasted it with his own perspectives of Day of the Dead, which led him to reflect on what the holiday means to him. This learner's reflective viewpoint was representative of what other appreciators did. In their discourse, they continually engaged in a reflection that led them to think more deeply about what the holiday means to them, thus developing a greater appreciation for the target culture.

One appreciator, who was a consumer in the first project, also displayed her admiration for the target culture in her comparisons and contrasts of Columbus Day with National Day in Spain and Day of Indigenous Resistance in Latin America (photo 3, Figure 11). In her comments, this learner focused on the controversy behind Columbus Day/National Day/Day of Indigenous Resistance and saw herself as giving voice to people in the target culture who were harmed on this day:

On the occasion that the day gives way to unrest [...] These reactions to the past (and the present) make sense – after all, landing in America was a great accomplishment for Spain. However, not all Spanish-speaking people view the past from this perspective. It is

true: to many in Latin America, this day is known as the Day of the Race – a day to celebrate being Hispanic. However, in some countries such as Venezuela and Nicaragua, the day is openly known as the Day of Indigenous Resistance. This also makes sense, as many Latin Americans are descended from both the Spanish and the native [*sic*] Americans. On this day, many find it important to acknowledge the killing, plundering, and general evil that fell upon American natives after 1492.

In her discourse, this learner conveyed a deeper appreciation for the target culture. She questioned if this holiday is even worth celebrating in her native culture because of the negative effect she considered it to have on the target culture. Using words such as “evil,” “unrest,” and “resistance” in the quote above, this learner conveyed her criticism of the past and used her discourse to fight for justice for the different groups of people in the target culture affected by this holiday. In her growing admiration of the target culture, this learner developed an ability to think critically about her own native culture and the target culture. Such an ability led her to become more cross-culturally aware because she was reflecting in a more profound way about the cultural values and beliefs that guide the way people act, think, and what they believe. For example, she commented:

In my opinion, it is good to discuss the past critically. Columbus did some horrible things – yet without his voyage, the settlement of the Americas could have been done entirely differently, and the course of world history would have been rewritten. Surely Columbus was an impactful explorer, but in my opinion, much of his impact was negative. I am of the mind that recognizing the native [*sic*] Americans who suffered under Columbus’s hand is preferable to enshrining the man for his brutality. However, I also believe that the day is an excellent opportunity to seek unity in Spanish descent. While opinions may differ on the issue of Columbus’s voyage, that is one thing that binds Spanish-speaking nations to each other. To me, anything that brings unity is something worth cherishing.

This learner showed a greater appreciation for the target culture by acknowledging the suffering of others. Through her use of words such as “suffered,” “brutality,” and “unity,” she embraced an appreciator viewpoint because she placed importance on the hardships associated with this holiday. In her discourse, she showed that she believed her job in this cultural project was to give voice to the Spanish-speaking world affected by this holiday. All of her explorations

were thus guided by her admiration of the target culture and what the people had experienced because of Columbus' voyage. Her discourse revealed that she was connecting on a deeper emotional level because her interests were in understanding the true meaning behind the holiday and how it affected numerous people in the target culture.

Another holiday that two appreciators described was Carnival (photo 4, Figure 11). In their comparisons of Mardi Gras and Carnival, they used their discourse to position Mardi Gras as lower in importance and favorability in comparison to Carnival. For example, one learner who was a consumer in the first project said:

Mardi Gras is essentially the same as Carnival, but most of the people who celebrate it in the U.S. do not know it's religious background or celebrate it for the right reasons. It [*Mardi Gras*] is just another excuse to go crazy, party and drink. To the Spanish-speaking world, those who celebrate this holiday it holds importance in their faith lives.<sup>4</sup>

This learner's focus on partying, drinking, and not celebrating the holiday for the right reasons showed that she believed the Spanish-speaking version of the holiday to be more meaningful because it holds true to the origin of the celebration. In other words, because she believed Carnival to be more about the religious aspect of the celebration, she formed an opinion that it was, therefore, a more purified celebration. In their comparisons of the two cultures, these appreciators criticized the way in which the United States celebrates Mardi Gras. "However, in Mexico and the rest of the Spanish-speaking world, the celebrations are centered on the religious aspects of the [*sic*] holiday, whereas in America, it is mostly just another excuse to party and drink alcohol." Their continual contrast between Mardi Gras as a reason to party versus

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<sup>4</sup> While the learners in this category comment on Carnival as a religious holiday and therefore evaluate it as a purer celebration than Mardi Gras, I, as the researcher, acknowledge that these learners' assessment can be considered as an overgeneralization of Carnival. I also acknowledge that not all Spanish-speaking countries celebrate the holiday in the same manner, especially in terms of the religious value placed on the holiday.

Carnaval's religious roots showed that they deemed Carnaval to be a purer form of the holiday.

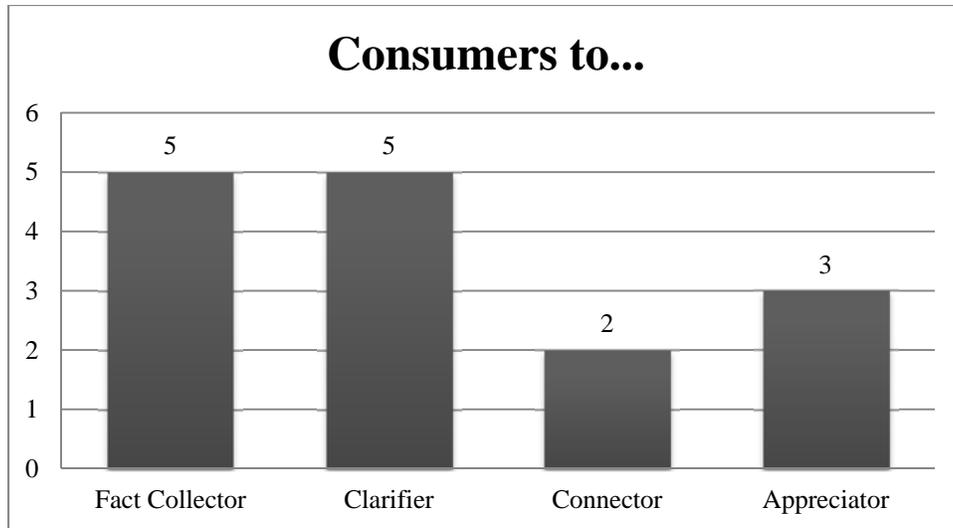
The other learner who described Carnaval was a discoverer in the first project. In her journal entry, she wrote:

The original roots in the Spanish-speaking world are much more pure and religious than they are in America. The American celebration of Mardi Gras is dirty but Carnaval is purely the eating of eating rich foods and being in community with one another.

This learner's discourse, i.e. use of words such as "much more pure," "religious," and "dirty", conveyed a level of frustration with the American celebration of Mardi Gras because she deemed it as a dirty, a somewhat corrupted way of celebrating what she believed should be a religious, purifying time of celebration. Contrastingly, their focus on Carnaval as a purer version of the holiday conveyed an appreciation and admiration for the target culture. Their discourse continually portrayed a desire for their native culture to become more like the target culture.

### **The Evolution of Learners' Cross-cultural Awareness**

The following section focuses on the evolution of learners' cross-cultural awareness and summarizes the data presented in section 5.1 above. Figures 12 and 13 summarize all of the learners' progressions from project #1 to project #2.



**N = 15 total learners**

**Figure 12 - Summary of Consumers' (Project #1) Evolution in Project #2**

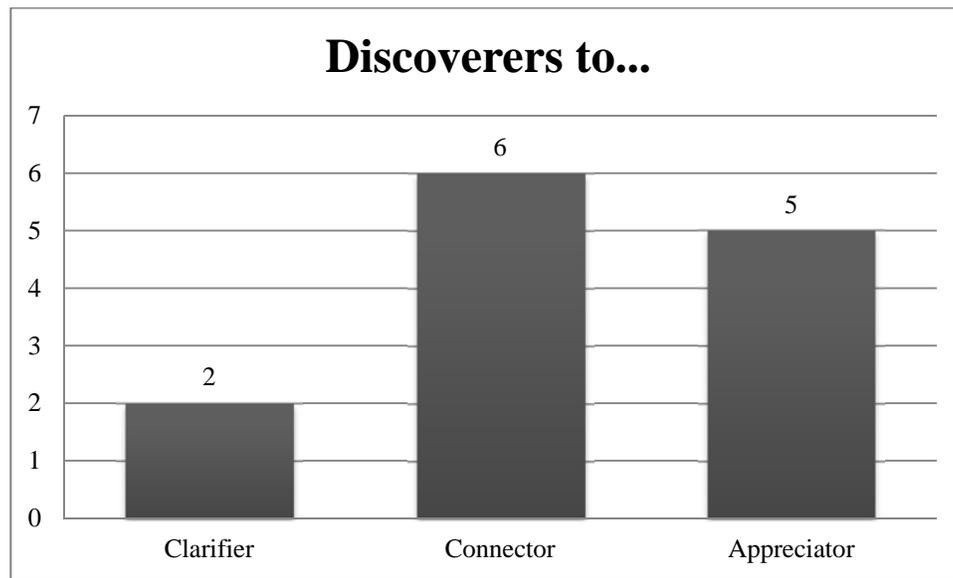
As seen in Figure 12, out of 15 consumers in the first project, five were fact collectors in the second project. Their discourse showed in both projects that they did not form a deep emotional connection with the culture and, therefore, did not seem to show deepened cross-cultural awareness either.

Five learners who were consumers in the first project were clarifiers in the second project. In the first and second project alike, these learners objectified the culture. However, in the second project, they were beginning to move toward cross-cultural awareness. As clarifiers, they were starting to understand the relational aspects more clearly behind the cultural holiday in project #2 and expressed an interest in culture that was lower in motivational intensity.

Two learners who were consumers in project #1 were connectors in project #2. In project #2, they related to the target culture more through different relational aspects such as religion, personal preferences, etc. surrounding the holiday in the target culture.

Finally, three consumers in the first project were appreciators in the second cultural project. These three learners made the largest leap from project #1 to project #2 in their cross-cultural awareness. In their discourse in project #1, they conveyed a desire to acquire cultural knowledge so they could use it to their advantage in some way, but then in project #2, all three displayed a more profound understanding of the culture. Their discourse in the second project showed they had begun to appreciate the target culture in such a way that sparked an internal transformation – one where they began to value otherness.

As revealed in chapter 4, by the end of the first cultural project, 13 learners enacted a discoverer. Figure 13 shows their emotional connections with the target culture by the end of the second project.



**N = 13 learners**

**Figure 13 - Discoverers' (Project #1) Evolution in Project #2**

Out of the 13 learners who enacted a discoverer in project #1, no learners were a fact collector in project #2. Two of the discoverers at the end of the first cultural project were

clarifiers in the second project. In their discourse at the end of the first project, these learners displayed a desire to discover new cultural information that would guide their interactions with native speakers when engaging in the target culture. In the second cultural project, their emotional connection did not move them toward cross-cultural awareness. Instead, they either plateaued or regressed somewhat in their cross-cultural awareness in the second project.

Six learners who were discoverers at the end of the first project were connectors in the second cultural project. As connectors, they related to the personal aspects of the culture and connected through things they knew in their own native culture. These personal comparisons allowed these learners to progress in their cross-cultural awareness because they moved from just wanting to discover new information about the target culture to building connections with the target culture (ACTFL, 2014).

Five discoverers in the first cultural project progressed to appreciators in the second cultural project. As appreciators, their emotional connection (interest) was the strongest out of the other learners in the entire project because of their cultivated appreciation and admiration they had developed for the target culture as seen in Figure 14 below.

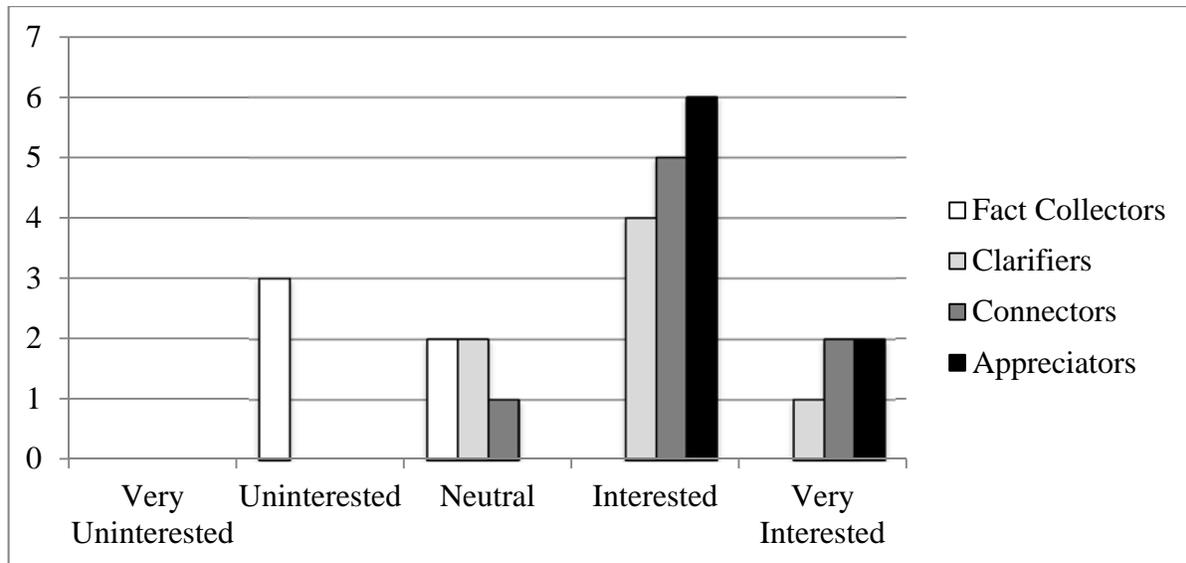
### **Establishing the Link between Learners' Emotional Connections and their Interest in Continuing to Study Spanish**

The following section examines the relationship between learners' emotional connections at the end of the second cultural project and their interest in continuing to study Spanish.<sup>5</sup> In a post-study questionnaire, learners ranked their level of interest on a five-point Likert scale. They

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<sup>5</sup> The present study did focus on learners' interest to continue studying Spanish; however, the focus was not solely on their articulation rate to the next Spanish course but instead, as described in this chapter, the present study examined learners' interests in continuing to study Spanish informally and formally. Therefore, the data reported in this chapter center on learners' interests as an indicator of their desire to continue learning the language and become a lifelong learner as proposed by ACTFL (2014).

chose one option ranging from “Very Uninterested” to “Very Interested” that appropriately represented their level of interest in continuing to study Spanish either formally or informally. Figure 14 displays learners’ emotional connections and their level of interest after the second cultural project.



N = 28

**Figure 14 - Learners' Interest in Continuing to Study Spanish**

Before describing Figure 14 more in-depth, I first note that no learners listed their level of interest as ‘Very Uninterested’. Out of the five fact collectors, three ranked their level of interest in continuing to study Spanish as ‘Uninterested’ while the other two ranked their level of interest as ‘Neutral’. None was ‘Interested’ or ‘Very Interested’. Out of the seven clarifiers, none was ‘Uninterested’. Two ranked their level of interest in continuing to study Spanish as ‘Neutral’. The majority of the clarifiers, which was four different learners, said they were ‘Interested’, while one responded ‘Very Interested’. Out of the eight connectors, none selected ‘Uninterested’. One ranked his level of interest in continuing to study Spanish as ‘Neutral’. The majority of the connectors though, which was five different learners, said they were ‘Interested’ in continuing to

study Spanish, and two responded 'Very Interested'. Out of the eight appreciators, no learners selected 'Uninterested' or 'Neutral'. The majority, which was six different learners, said they were 'Interested' in continuing to study Spanish. The other two selected 'Very Interested'. As seen in the data presented above, the greater the emotional connection was, the greater the level of interest was as well. For example, all five of the fact collectors were either uninterested or neutral in their desire to continue studying Spanish. However, the clarifiers, connectors, and appreciators steadily increased in their level of interest.

The data in this chapter show that the fact collectors maintained an interest that was high in motivational intensity. They narrowed in on gaining knowledge of the culture in order to meet their own personal goals. Their interests in culture, therefore, prohibited them from developing a broadened understanding of the target culture and progressing in their cross-cultural awareness. Furthermore, the data suggest that their interests that were high in motivational intensity also hindered the development of their interest in continuing to study Spanish because they did not make as deep of an emotional connection with the target culture. Their interest that was high in motivational intensity led them to objectify the target culture as something to acquire and thus, did lead to an increased motivation to continue studying Spanish.

The clarifiers also objectified the target culture, but their discourse revealed that their interests were beginning to shift from high in motivational intensity to lower motivational intensity. The clarifiers were starting to progress in their cross-cultural awareness because they were searching for information that would inform their understanding of themselves and others as culturally situated subjects. In other words, their explorations of the target culture yielded results that taught them about themselves and about people who are different from them. Because they were beginning to develop interests in culture that were lower in motivational

intensity, they were also starting to make more emotional connections with the target culture, thus increasing their interests in continuing to study Spanish.

The connectors and appreciators displayed interests that were low in motivational intensity. That is, they were interested in learning about the target culture in order to become more open-minded and to engage with otherness. The connectors' interests centered on making a personal connection with the target culture through aspects they could relate to, i.e. religious beliefs, personal experiences, etc. Thus, their interests focused on gaining insight into the target culture by relating their native culture to the target culture and thus broadened their understandings of the world around them and increased their interest in continuing to study Spanish.

Finally, the appreciators were the learners who portrayed the most cross-cultural awareness. Because their interests, which were low in motivational intensity, in the target culture led them to a deeper appreciation of otherness, they became the most open-minded because of their explorations of the target culture. These findings show that interest in culture that is low in motivational intensity triggers a deeper emotional connection with the target culture. When learners connect more emotionally with the target culture, their interest in continuing to study Spanish increases as well (Figure 14).

Based on the positive relationship between learners' emotional connections and their interests in continuing to study Spanish, findings suggest that developing deeper emotional connections with the target culture not only can increase cross-cultural awareness but also has the power to motivate learners to continue studying Spanish.

## **Discussion**

To answer *RQ4*, which examined what emotional connections learners make with the target culture when exploring different holidays, data revealed that learners formed four different types of emotional connections with the target culture. Five learners objectified the target culture as

facts or information they needed to collect or acquire (fact collectors) and formed little to no emotional connection with the target culture. However, the majority ( $n = 23$ ) of learners began to develop a more profound understanding of culture. They either used their discourse to gain more understanding of the holiday (clarifiers - 7), to connect with the target culture on a personal level (connectors - 8), or to express a deeper appreciation of the target culture (appreciators - 8). As clarifiers, the emotional connection was beginning to grow, but the connectors and appreciators had the deepest connections to the target culture. In regards to *RQ5*, which looked at how learners' emotional connections generated in the second project affect their interest in continuing to study Spanish, the data suggest that the deeper the emotional connection that learners had with the target culture by the end of their second project, the more they were interested in continuing to study Spanish.

**Cross-cultural awareness through emotional connections with the target culture.** As seen in the data from the second cultural project, providing opportunities to create emotional connections with the target culture is conducive to engaging toward learners' cross-cultural awareness.

The more that learners cultivated interest that was low in motivational intensity, the data suggest that the more they were able to develop an open mind and perceive the world around them from a culturally situated standpoint. In project 2, most ( $n = 23$ ) of the learners started to go through an internal transformation because they were beginning to realize that culture is more than just a set of facts. The clarifiers, connectors, and appreciators began to explore the relational aspects of culture more, or the values, beliefs, and meanings that guide the target culture. Their interests were low in motivational intensity and focused less on acquiring cultural facts but instead centered more on engaging with difference through connections they made between their

native culture and the target culture. Because their interest was low in motivational intensity, the data suggest that their outlooks were broadened, and therefore, they were more receptive to exploring differences in the target culture. Results indicate that they were unafraid of making emotional connections with the target culture that would reshape who they are and how they viewed the world. However, echoing what Kinginger (2008) found, these learners might have possessed an idealized conceptualization of the other as well, which could have been what led them to desire to engage with cultural difference and otherness more than the other learners (fact collectors – 5).

The five remaining fact collectors possessed an interest that was high in motivational intensity, leading them to narrow in on the process of collecting information or knowledge. As seen in their projects, they approached the assignment as good students functioning in an academic setting, meaning that they focused on accomplishing the goal of the project and completing all of the different requirements of each activity. Their work, while completing the requirements successfully, reflected a detached standpoint, one where they seemed to be going through the motions as students. Thus, their emotional connection with the target culture was limited or not present at all because they concentrated so heavily on just completing the project. Conversely, the other three groups of learners showed that their interests in culture that were low in motivational intensity allowed them to go beyond solely completing the requirements of the project and connect on a deeper level with the target culture. Therefore, the findings suggest that the clarifiers, the connectors, and the appreciators' interests enhanced their ability to progress in their cross-cultural awareness.

**The path to cross-cultural awareness: A recursive process.** The findings above, which show that all learners differed in their stage of cross-cultural awareness by the end of the second

project, suggest that cross-cultural awareness is not a straightforward progression that all learners undergo at the same time. Instead, cross-cultural awareness is a recursive process. It is not something foreign language teachers can control or force learners to go through. The path to cross-cultural awareness is an individualized process that takes place internally and ebbs and flows differently for each learner. Not all learners are going to move at the same pace. For instance, this kind of individualized progression occurred in the present study. At the end of the second cultural project, 23 out of the 28 different learners had moved to a deeper cultural awareness as a result of their emotional connections with the target culture. However, within each stage, not all learners developed the same emotional connection. Some engaged more while others displayed more reluctance. For example, the eight appreciators connected the most with the target culture while the six clarifiers continued to display a reluctance to engage with otherness or cultural difference.

No learner fully regressed once begun on his or her journey toward cross-cultural awareness. Two did regress to possibly what could be considered a lower stage, i.e. from a discoverer in project #1 to a clarifier in project #2, but none went back to their starting point. Additionally, not all learners moved forward in their cross-cultural awareness. The five consumers in project #1 who were the fact collectors in project #2 plateaued in their cross-cultural awareness. In particular, these five learners continued to objectify culture despite their exposure to real-world cultural phenomena.

This finding confirms that cross-cultural awareness is an individualized process that learners must decide or choose for themselves. Additionally, it reinforces the importance of nurturing interest that is low in motivational intensity in the process of moving toward cross-cultural awareness. As the results in this chapter show, once learners' interests in culture become lower

in motivational intensity, they begin to connect emotionally with the target culture and focus on learning about the beliefs, values, and meaning behind the target culture. Such interests ultimately are what lead learners to understand themselves and others as culturally situated subjects and become more open-minded (Knutson, 2006). For example, in their descriptions of Christmas in Spain, the fact collectors used terms such as “citizens of Spain” whereas connectors used more personal terms in describing the “people” and the importance of family during this holiday in Spain. The use of the phrases by each group represents the approach learners had and suggest that learners who have interests in culture that are lower in motivational intensity (i.e. the connectors in this example) are more open-minded and receptive to cultural difference. Interest that is higher in motivational intensity, however, seems to lead learners to detach themselves from the target culture and see it as only a set of knowledge (as seen in the fact collectors’ data).

**Cross-cultural awareness as a motivating force in foreign language learning.** Upon concluding the analysis and discussion of data in this chapter, the question still remains – what are the implications of these findings for foreign language learning? Language learning is ultimately about who learners are as people (Wenger, 1998). It is a process in which they figure out who they are as a speaker of a foreign language and how they fit into an ever-changing multicultural and multilingual world. When they start to conceptualize culture as more than the “touristic flavor of FL textbooks” (Kramsch, 2014, p. 308), they begin to connect with the humanistic aspects that are inherent to language learning (del Valle, 2014). For example, as seen with the clarifiers (n = 7), connectors (n = 8), and appreciators (n = 8), their views of culture led them to focus on the people of the target culture. This type of focus on the people and understanding more about them and their way of life led these learners to become more open-minded to new and different things in the world. Ultimately, these learners’ approach to culture

as more than a set of facts or information to be memorized is what prompted them to be more receptive to otherness and to begin to find ways to engage with difference. These learners' visualizations of themselves as interacting and connecting with the target culture also acted as a motivating force in the foreign language learning environment. As Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) indicated, visualizations of the future self are motivation to learn a foreign language when learners realize that their future self is different from their actual self and that in order to become this future desired self, they must expend some level of effort to achieve it. In the present study, the learners who were most motivated to continue studying Spanish were the connectors and appreciators. These learners were also the ones who showed they were moving toward more cross-cultural awareness by the end of the project. Therefore, I posit that cross-cultural awareness has motivational power in foreign language learning because it connects learners to their language learning process on a more intimate, personal level.

As seen in the data from both Chapters 4 and 5, interest that is low in motivational intensity is the interest that cultivates cross-cultural awareness. As Knutson (2006) described, cross-cultural awareness comes out of a process of learning in which the focus is on the *quality* of the cultural content being taught, not the *quantity*. Therefore, foreign language learning should focus on covering cultural content more in-depth rather than covering a vast array of cultural topics briefly. Such a focus will not only alleviate the pressure to cover too much material in too little time, but it can also lead learners to engage on a deeper level with the target culture.

Additionally, when learners have adequate opportunities to engage in deeper cultural learning and develop as cross-culturally aware speakers of another language, they can become more motivated to continue learning the foreign language. Findings therefore point to the need for pedagogies that inherently cultivate learners' cross-cultural awareness while simultaneously

developing their linguistic competence. Activities that accomplish both goals center on *using* the language to explore cultural perspectives, whether via the digital realm like this study or through different kinds of activities inside the classroom. Wherever or whatever the context may be, results from this study suggest that reflective activities grounded in real-world, relevant cultural content lead learners to connect with the target culture, progress to a deeper understanding of the culture, and become more interested to continue studying the foreign language.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to examine how two different contextualized cultural projects affected learners' cross-cultural awareness in an introductory foreign language course. I examined how a process of learning influenced learners' interests in culture and interests in continuing to study Spanish. In particular, I implemented different collaborative activities (such as research on Pinterest, written activities, and oral activities) in each project to encourage learners to imagine a future L2 self-interacting in the target culture. My goal was to elicit such visualizations and use them as a means of connecting learners to the target culture on a more emotional level. After each cultural project, learners also completed individualized journal entries with the purpose of continuing in their process of learning about the target culture.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I created different labels to categorize and describe learners and their actions in the cultural project. In doing so, the labels provided insight into learners' enactments of their future L2 selves (Chapter 4), their emotional connections with the target culture (Chapter 5), their interests in continuing to study Spanish (Chapter 5), and how all of these notions worked in tandem to influence their cross-cultural awareness (Chapters 4 and 5). In creating these labels, the findings suggest that there are several of stages of cross-cultural awareness that can occur; however, a caveat to this understanding is that, as Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) noted, my analysis of the progression of cross-cultural awareness is only one interpretation.

### **The Imaginative Nature of Pinterest: A Key to Visualizing the Future L2 Self**

Previous research on future L2 selves indicates that an integral component is imagination (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). That is, if the future L2 self is going to be a motivating force, then a

person has to be able to imagine himself or herself as that future self. In addition to this understanding of the role of imagination, Dörnyei and Ushioda noted that visualizations of the future self must be “sufficiently different from the current self” and “not perceived as comfortably certain” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 83-84) in order to be motivating.

The present study adapted Dörnyei’s (2009) construct of the L2 self motivational system as a means of motivating learners to become more interested in learning about culture through visualizations of their future L2 self interacting in the target culture. By activating these visualizations, the goal was to motivate learners to learn more about the target culture. In the first cultural project, when learners imagined their future L2 self as interacting in the target culture through explorations on Pinterest, they all (28) enacted a jet-setting tourist as their future L2 self. Whereas these finding might seem to conflict with Dörnyei and Ushioda’s conceptualization of the future L2 self as a motivating force, they actually support the understanding that imagination is integral in the construct of the future L2 self. That is, Pinterest played a vital role in activating learners’ imaginations and allowed them to begin visualizing themselves as interacting in the target culture. Although their first visualization exhibited resistance or hesitation to interact with people from the target culture, the findings do support the notion that imagination played an integral role in leading learners to visualize themselves inside the target culture.

Results from the present study also add to the body of knowledge on Dörnyei’s (2009) L2 self motivational system. In particular, these results add to the understanding that visualizations of the future self might not always be a motivating force at *first*. When first activated, learners’ imaginative visualizations of themselves might stir up some hesitation and reluctance because these imagined future selves are different from the current self and are not always a comfortable visualization. Whereas Dörnyei and Ushioda stated that the two aforementioned conditions are

actually grounds for the future self to be motivating, the results of this study suggest that these two conditions might actually be demotivating at *first*. However, as learners indicated in their post-study focus groups, Pinterest served as a narrative hook that drew them in and set them on a trajectory of cultural learning. That is, by using Pinterest to investigate the target culture, learners were able to embark on an imaginative journey that piqued their interests in the target culture.

### **Interest Low in Motivational Intensity: The Role in Future L2 Selves**

Fredrickson (2004) described interest as a positive emotion that encourages exploration and can broaden perspectives. However, Gable and Harmon-Jones (2008) noted that it is not just interest in general that has these positive broadening effects. Instead, there are two levels of interest, one that is high in motivational intensity and one that is low in motivational intensity. Per Gable and Harmon-Jones' findings, interest that is high in motivational intensity actually narrows perspectives because it leads people to focus on achieving a specific goal and to block out all other information or details that seem to be irrelevant to achieving the goal. On the opposite end of the spectrum though, interest that is low in motivational intensity can broaden perspectives because it leads people to focus on aspects that are more global and on a variety of topics.

With this understanding of interest in mind, the purpose of the present study was to develop learners' interests that were low in motivational intensity and connect these interests to learners' visualizations of their future L2 self in order to create a more positive broadening experience where learners become more open to change.

Results from journal entries in the first cultural project support what Gable and Harmon-Jones (2008) stated about the different levels of interest. For example, 15 learners enacted a consumer-learner and 13 enacted a discoverer-learner. The consumer-learners displayed a future L2 self as someone who viewed studying abroad as something to take advantage of – live life to

the fullest, seize the day. Their interests were high in motivational intensity, and therefore, they narrowly focused on consuming the target culture and ignored any other potential benefits of being immersed in the target culture. The future L2 self they visualized because of this interest that was high in motivational intensity was someone who continued to objectify the target culture.

The 13 discoverer-learners viewed studying abroad as an opportunity to learn about a completely new world, to discover new things, and encounter difference. Their interests were low in motivational intensity and led them to broadened perspectives. In particular, they were interested in learning about the target culture as a way to help them interact with native speakers. Whereas these discoverer-learners still somewhat continued to objectify the culture as a tool to enhance their interactions with native speakers, their interests in culture led them to become more receptive to new ideas and ways of thinking. Thus, their interests motivated them to visualize a future L2 self that would desire to engage with people from different backgrounds and cultures when studying abroad.

Both the consumer-learners and the discoverer-learners displayed interests in culture; however, their interests were opposing and their resulting visualizations were subsequently opposing as well. Based off the positive relationship between interest that is low in motivational intensity and the discoverer-learners, it can be postulated that Gable and Harmon-Jones' (2008) findings can be applied to foreign language learning as well.

### **Toward Cross-cultural Awareness: The Connection to Interest Low in Motivational Intensity**

In developing the present study, I took into account the common traits of interest that is low in motivational and cross-cultural awareness. That is, previous research indicated that both are concepts that develop over time, could broaden perspectives, and could lead people to become

more receptive to difference or change (Amores, 2006; Gable & Harmon-Jones, 2008; Knutson, 2006). Therefore, with this understanding in mind, I created the second cultural project with the goal of examining the relationship between interest that is low in motivational intensity and cross-cultural awareness. In particular, the aim of the second cultural project was to examine if this level of interest was the type that could move learners toward cross-cultural awareness during foreign language learning.

Data from the second cultural project (Pinterest posts and journal entries) suggest that this kind of interest and cross-cultural awareness are related to one another. For example, in Chapter 5, 23 learners expressed an emotional connection with the target culture that led them toward cross-cultural awareness. In their search for information on Pinterest, clarifier-learners (n=7) sought out information that clarified more about people in the target culture. Although, they somewhat objectified the culture, their discourse shows that they were beginning to become more open-minded, moving toward cross-cultural awareness because their emotional connections with the target culture prompted them to seek out the *why* behind the holiday, i.e. values and beliefs. In this process, their interests were beginning to shift from high motivational intensity to a lower motivational intensity. While they did not display an interest that was completely low in motivational intensity, they were on the path to this lower level and therefore moving toward cross-cultural awareness as well. Connector-learners (n=8) were more advanced in their cross-cultural awareness than the clarifier-learners in that they saw themselves as a liaison between the target culture and their native culture. They acted as a bridge in between the two cultures and therefore moved toward a deeper emotional connection with the target culture because their interests that were low in motivational intensity centered on personalized explorations of the target culture. In other words, they researched information related to cultural-bound values and

beliefs in the target culture that they could relate to based off their own cultural-bound values and beliefs in their native culture. They were beginning to understand the relational aspects of culture and as such were becoming more open minded to otherness and difference. Thus, the data suggests that their interests that were low in motivational intensity played a vital role in motivating these connector-learners to move toward cross-cultural awareness. The final set of learners, which were the appreciator-learners (n=8), moved further toward cross-cultural awareness than the clarifier-learners and the connector-learners. Data point to the appreciator-learners as cultivating an admiration for the target culture, one that stemmed from their interest that was low in motivational intensity. Because their interests in culture centered on aspects that would broaden their understanding of the target culture, they subsequently began to value and respect otherness. Thus, results suggest that the interest that was low in motivational intensity was an integral component in moving all of these learners (clarifiers, connectors, and appreciators) toward cross-cultural awareness.

### **The Relationship between Emotional Connections and Interest in Continuing to Study Spanish**

Although previous research in the field of emotion and motivation has typically separated the two concepts, several scholars have begun to argue that motivation and emotion are intertwined concepts and cannot be separated (Izard, 2011; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012a; MacIntyre et al., 2009; Reeve, 2005; Ross, 2015). These scholars state that emotions are fundamental to motivation because they are what cause people to *do* something, hence their motivational tendencies.

Based off this understanding of the relationship between motivation and emotion, the present study looked at how emotional connections made with the target culture in the second cultural project related to learners' interest to continue to studying Spanish (i.e. their motivation).

Whereas commenting on learners' motivation in continuing to study at the next academic level of foreign language learning was outside the scope of this study, examining learners' interest and motivation in continuing to study Spanish in general was not (i.e. if they had a desire to learn more Spanish at all). Therefore, in Chapter 5, I compared learners' emotional connections at the end of the second cultural project (i.e. fact collector-learners, clarifier-learners, connector-learners, appreciator-learners) with their level of interest in continuing to study Spanish that they had indicated on a post-study questionnaire.

Findings suggest that the more emotionally connected the learner was to the target culture, the higher his or her level of interest was in continuing to study Spanish. In other words, results support the claim of scholars in the field that emotion and motivation are related. For example, 20 learners ranked their level of interest in continuing to study Spanish (i.e. their motivation) as 'Interested' or 'Very Interested'. Of the learners who were interested in continuing to study Spanish, five were clarifiers, seven were connectors, and eight were appreciators.

### **Cross-cultural Awareness as a Recursive, Agentive Process of Learning**

Research in the field has often considered the path to a deeper understanding of self, others, and the target culture to be a somewhat straightforward progression, in that one must first progress from a state of ethnocentrism to a more open-minded state of ethnorelativism (Bennett, 1993; Global Leadership Excellence, 2016). However, in line with Byram (1997), the data from Chapters 4 and 5 suggest that a more profound understanding of culture does not come about as a straightforward progression. Instead, it is a process where learners progress, regress, and plateau. In other words, they may metaphorically take three steps forward, two backward, and then maybe plateau for a while. Additionally, learners' paths to cross-cultural awareness are not the same, nor do they occur in the same pattern.

By examining the data from the two cultural projects, I gained a holistic perspective into the nature of learners' movement toward cross-cultural awareness. At the onset of the first cultural project (and at the beginning of the semester), all 28 learners enacted a jet-setting tourist. This visualization displayed minimal progression toward cross-cultural awareness because as jet setters, the learners visualized themselves going abroad but as unengaged and isolated from interaction with the target culture. After completing their first journal entry (following the first cultural project), 13 discoverer-learners displayed a movement toward cross-cultural awareness, and 15 consumer-learners either plateaued or progressed minimally (their progression occurred in the sense that they were at least beginning to visualize themselves going abroad and interacting with people in the target culture, a contrast from the jet-setting tourist enactment).

In the second cultural project, the 15 consumer-learners in the first project then emotionally connected with the target culture in four ways: as (1) fact collectors (n=5), (2) clarifiers (n=5), (3) connectors (n=2), or (4) appreciators (n=3). The five fact collectors showed either a regression or plateau in their cross-cultural awareness whereas the other 10 learners (clarifiers, connectors, appreciators) showed a slight progression (clarifiers) to a greater movement (connectors, appreciators) toward cross-cultural awareness.

The 13 discoverer-learners in the first cultural project emotionally connected with the target culture in three different ways in the second cultural project: as (1) clarifiers (n=2), (2) connectors (n=6), or appreciators (n=5). Whereas no discoverer-learners connected as fact collector in the second cultural project, there were two who emotionally connected as clarifiers, thus displaying a regression or plateau in their cross-cultural awareness. However, the other 11 discoverer-learners progressed in their cross-cultural awareness as connectors or appreciators.

In addition to the understanding of cross-cultural awareness as a recursive process, the data also suggest that the path to cross-cultural awareness is an agentive, individual one. That is, no two learners underwent the exact same process of learning. Additionally, the path toward cross-cultural awareness is not something that educators can force learners to take part in, but instead, it is dependent upon learners and the ownership that they take in their learning. For example, whereas some learners did regress in their cross-cultural awareness during their two cultural projects, it can be posited that no learner fully regressed to his or her starting point. That is, when they became agents in their process of cross-cultural awareness, the data suggest that learners were able to continue on the path toward becoming more culturally aware.

### **Limitations of Study**

While there are various findings that are applicable to the field of foreign language learning, there are also a number of different limitations that should be considered in tandem with the findings. In regards to the present study, below I discuss limitations associated with the design of the study in general and more specifically in relation to the design of the cultural projects.

**Connecting with cultural information, not native speakers.** Per the design of this study, I used Pinterest as a method of exploring real-world cultural phenomena. However, Pinterest only offers certain level of connection with the target culture, and more specifically, it only provides interaction with cultural information and not native speakers of the target culture. Therefore, used in isolation, Pinterest may inherently encourage an outsider's perspective and objectification of culture. That is, because learners only explore knowledge and information, they might not independently dig deeper into the target culture, discover, and uncover new ways of thinking and being solely using Pinterest. Instead, if Pinterest is the sole method of exploring the target culture, learners might continue to objectify culture as something to acquire or add to their set of knowledge about the foreign language.

Furthermore, Pinterest as a medium of social media might also naturally lead learners to visualize an idealistic version of themselves or of the target culture. Therefore, the findings from the first cultural project could have been influenced by the nature of Pinterest itself. In asking learners to select housing and imagine themselves on *House Hunters International* via the use of Pinterest, they might have been more inclined to visualize a jet-setting tourist because of the design of the project. To account for this kind of idealistic visualization, future projects might require learners to set a budget that they can spend on housing in the target country or provide more specific stipulations on what kind of housing they can choose. These kinds of instructions might have accounted for the touristic nature of their housing selections in the first cultural project of this study.

In the first project, the use of Pinterest was also more authentic in the sense that everyday users of Pinterest might actually use the social media site to “house hunt”. In the second project, however, the use of Pinterest to investigate different cultural holidays might have been more unnatural in the sense that everyday users might not use the social media site for this same purpose or in this same manner. Therefore, these two different uses of Pinterest in each project might also have influenced or affected how learners enacted their future L2 self in each project.

**Addressing the design of the cultural projects.** In creating the cultural projects, I designed them so that each phase built off the previous. Once learners completed their Pinterest research, they used this information to create their written activity, and then they used the information from the written activity to complete their oral activity. Additionally, once they finished their cultural project, they used the information they had learned to write a journal entry. A limitation of designing the projects as such is that not all learners completed every step of the cultural project. The manner in which I designed the projects therefore led to a loss of participants. If this

study were replicated the design of the cultural projects would need to be taken into consideration in order to retain the maximum amount of participants possible. Suggestions include providing more opportunities inside the classroom to work on the projects as well as extending the timelines that learners complete the projects, i.e. two weeks to complete the journal entry instead of one, etc.

Another issue that arose in the design of the projects, per learners' feedback, was that some of them were unfamiliar with Pinterest and/or with the topics (*House Hunters International* and *HOLA Latino*). To account for this lack of understanding that occurred in the present study, I suggest that future studies include training sessions where learners have time to explore Pinterest with the instructor. Short activities that replicate what learners will be doing during the cultural project would serve as beneficial and effective methods for preparing learners to work in their groups later during the semester. Additionally, it would also be advisable to use part of a class period or include an activity for out-of-class homework where learners explore the project topic prior to beginning the cultural project. For example, in the present study, learners could have watched an episode of *House Hunters International* or read about *HOLA Latino* on the company's website.

As seen from the data in Chapters 4 and 5, learners move toward cross-cultural awareness in each project after they completed their reflective journals. However, when exploring cultural topics on Pinterest, they often did not reflect as deeply on the target culture and as a result continued to objectify the culture as knowledge or facts to learn. To encourage learners to begin progressing toward cross-cultural awareness earlier, future projects might include more reflective components on Pinterest or even before the onset of each project in addition to the journal entries learners write. For example, learners could also read other group pinboards and leave questions

on pins, probing even more into the ‘why’ behind the pin and leading other groups to reflect more on the target culture. Another activity to encourage reflection while completing Pinterest research might include an in-class activity where learners break into small groups and explain their pins to others in the class. The instructor could provide guided questions to prompt deeper reflection on the target culture and lead learners to reflect earlier in the project on what they pinned. As for reflective activities before each cultural project, educators could use in-class small group activities to lead learners to think more deeply on the concept of culture and their conceptualizations of the target culture. Such activities could include group discussions in the target language or in-class journaling where learners reflect on language and culture and the interrelation between the two notions.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

With this study, I aimed to contribute to ongoing research regarding pedagogical practices that bring culture to the forefront of foreign language learning as proposed by ACTFL (2014). Below I discuss different pedagogical implications as related to the teaching and learning of culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, specifically in relation to social media, learners’ imagined future selves, and their cross-cultural awareness.

**Opportunities for learners to define what culture is and why it is important.** In order to develop a deeper emotional connection, learners need opportunities to define what culture is and why it is important in their foreign language learning and in their own personal life. Culture is important in foreign language learning because it is the key component in cross-cultural awareness. If learners do not have time or opportunities to go beneath the surface and understand what culture is or why it is important, they may not be able to develop the “ability to communicate with respect and culture understanding” (ACTFL, 2014), which is vital for successful interaction in a globalized, multicultural world.

Thus, opportunities to define what culture is and why it is important are an integral part of their foreign language learning experience.

As the results from the present study suggest, Pinterest is a useful tool for foreign language learners to explore the target culture from within their foreign language learning classroom. Pinterest, which is all about discovery of new knowledge (Pinterest, n.d.), provides learners with opportunities to see and explore the outside world. As in the present study, in the classroom environment, there tend to be limited opportunities for learners to engage with people from the target culture. Therefore, the use of Pinterest gives learners alternate ways to interact with the target culture. It also provides learners with a window into the target culture so they can start to think more about what culture is and what it tells them about their lives and the world around them. What the findings of this study suggest is that when learners have opportunities to connect with and reflect on the target culture during the foreign language experience, their conceptualizations of culture evolved, progressing toward cross-cultural awareness. How they conceptualized culture changed because they were able to connect with the target culture on a more personal, intimate level through a “firsthand” experience from within the four walls of their classroom using Pinterest.

**Pedagogies that take into account the process of learning.** In addition to uncovering and discovering the target culture with social media tools such as Pinterest, the use of reflective activities are important in foreign language learning because they take into the account the *process* of learning. In the present study, learners wrote journal entries where they reflected on what they explored on Pinterest, and these reflections ultimately led them to begin seeing that the target culture as not just a set of facts and information, but as an alternate ways of thinking and being in the world.

The data suggest that a process of learning like the present study encouraged was a successful approach that guided learners to reflect more deeply on the complex concept of culture. Because of the repeated exposure to the target culture and interaction with new knowledge, learners were able to cope with the difference they encountered and make sense of these differences in their own time, at their own pace. As the results showed in Chapter 4, at the onset of the first cultural projects, all learners grappled with the otherness they encountered on Pinterest, and as a result, they enacted a jet-setting tourist. However, after having more time to reflect on what they learned (i.e. in their journal entries), all of the learners began to visualize themselves in the target culture.

Other reflective activities that could be incorporated into a cultural project include short in-class opportunities for learners to think about what they have learned from their investigation of the target culture. For example, learners could write (in the target language) short responses about one new thing they learned, one thing they already knew, or one thing that surprised them about the target culture. These responses could then be used as a guide for small-group, in-class discussions where learners answer questions in the target language about things they learned about the target culture and how it compares to their native culture. This activity would not only build off of the linguistic structures that learners practiced when completing their projects online, but it would also allow them time to reflect and discuss with their classmates things in the target culture they learned or maybe did not understand.

Whatever the activity might be the important thing to keep in mind when designing projects is a process of learning. As seen in the data from the present study, Pinterest engaged learners with the target culture, but it was only a portion of the project. In other words, Pinterest was the first step in discovering the target culture and then later learners completed written activities, oral

activities, and journal entries as a part of their progression. The findings from this study suggest that a process of learning aided learners in developing interest in culture that was low in motivational intensity and ultimately is what led learners to move toward cross-cultural awareness. Therefore, an idea for a future project that incorporates a process could include the following:

Working under the premise of a service-learning project, learners could select a Spanish-speaking organization or group either in a Spanish-speaking country or in the United States and could work collaboratively to investigate the organization and decide ways in which they can raise awareness for the group. In their process of raising awareness for the organization, learners could participate in different contextualized activities designed by the educator that lead learners to use the target language to explore the target culture on a more in-depth level. By designing the activities so that learners progress through a process of learning, this project would require learners to explore the target culture over a period of time and engage with otherness on a more consistent basis, thus encouraging engagement toward cross-cultural awareness.

**Creating emotional connections in the foreign language classroom.** In order to be truly student-centered in the foreign language classroom, a focus on learners' interests and specifically on their development as global citizens who can interact in a culturally hybrid world should be of primary concern. Student-centered learning should take into account learners' interests at the beginning of the course and incorporate these interests into activities. Through a focus on their interests, it is possible to create an emotionally engaging environment, one where learners connect with the language and culture being studied. As results from the present study indicated, an emotional connection can further motivate learners to continue pursuing the topic because they are invested in the learning (Reeve, 2005).

A way to incorporate learners' interests into foreign language learning is to develop pedagogies that serve as a "narrative hook" (Freadman, 2014, p. 380) to draw learners in and engage them with content that leads them to cultivate 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, i.e. skills they can use in diverse and dynamic interactions with peoples from different backgrounds and cultures. Since learners today are digital natives (Prensky, 2001), the use of technology can enhance the language learning experience and pique their interests because it allows them to explore real world, real-time cultural phenomena. As learners commented in the focus group at the end of the study, Pinterest was an interactive and dynamic way of investigating the target culture that made learning come to life for them.

### **Theoretical Implications**

This study also sought to contribute to the field of foreign language in terms of theoretical understandings of cross-cultural awareness, interest, and imagined future selves. Below I discuss each of these areas in relation to the findings of the present study.

**Interest low in motivational intensity as a drive toward cross-cultural awareness.** Results of this study indicate that learner interest, particularly interest that is low in motivational intensity, plays a vital role in leading to cultural awareness. In particular, this type of interest is the one that leads learners to focus on global aspects of what they are learning and less on specific-goal oriented aspects. Thus, interest that is low in motivational intensity is the interest that can lead to cross-cultural awareness because it is the interest that leads learners to study and explore cultural topics on a more in-depth level (Knutson, 2006). Therefore, the findings from the present study add to the theoretical understanding that interest that is low in motivational intensity is the key component in driving learners toward cross-cultural awareness because it is an interest that leads them to think differently about the target culture. It is the interest that can broaden their perspectives and teach them to value the relational aspects of culture (Knutson,

2006), and these relational aspects are what ultimately lead learners to understand and perceive themselves and others as culturally situated subjects. As Knutson (2006) noted and as the results of this study support, when people are able to recognize themselves and others as culturally situated subjects, they become more open-minded and move toward cross-cultural awareness.

**Interest as the motivational key to imagined future selves.** This study also adds to the theoretical understanding of interest as the motivational key to imagined future selves. As Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) proposed, the future self has the power to be a motivating force in foreign language learning. However, MacIntyre and Gregersen's (2012a) added to this understanding by stating that positive emotions are the key to the future self being a motivational force in foreign language learning. Building off these two concepts, findings suggest that interest is one of the positive emotions that serves as a motivator in learners' imaginations of their future self. In particular, interest that is low in motivational intensity was the positive emotion that activated a visualized future L2 self who desired to engage with otherness and subsequently motivated the majority of learners (20) to be interested in continuing to study Spanish. Thus, based off these findings, I postulate that other positive emotions such as love, joy, hope, or pride might have similar motivating effects in the context of the foreign language learning environment. The only requirement would be that emotion remains low in motivational intensity since the results suggest the motivational intensity is the condition that triggers broadened perspectives and cross-cultural awareness.

**The path toward cross-cultural awareness.** As the results from this study suggest, cross-cultural awareness is a recursive process that can take place when learners take agency in their learning and begin to recognize the subjective nature of culture. As seen from the data reported in Chapters 4 and 5, once learners embarked on their journey to cross-cultural awareness, the

findings suggest that none of them regressed to a state where they lacked any cultural awareness. Whereas they did plateau or regressed in cross-cultural awareness, the data indicate that by taking ownership of their learning through investigating cultural phenomena on Pinterest, they began to move toward cross-cultural awareness.

Therefore, realizing that learners will develop at different rates and at different times shows that the primary focus in engaging learners on a path toward cross-cultural awareness should be on continually implementing activities to challenge learners – challenge them to recognize themselves as cultural subjects, recognize others as cultural subjects, and to grow to become more open-minded (Knutson, 2006).

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

An area of future research centers on understanding why some learners move toward cross-cultural awareness sooner than other learners. Gaining insight into why some of the learners plateaued, why some regressed, and why some progressed in their cross-cultural awareness was outside the scope of this study. Therefore, it would be useful to conduct future research to gain understanding into what prompts learners to begin on their path to cross-cultural awareness and then what encourages continued progression. Future research might first center on developing an assessment of cross-cultural awareness that for examining different activities geared at engaging learners on a path toward cross-cultural awareness.

Another suggestion for future research involves further investigation of positive emotions in the context of foreign language learning. In particular, a study that looks at what other positive emotions can be used in foreign language learning to motivate learners via visualizations of their future L2 self would be useful. Research could investigate if love, joy, hope, pride (that are low in motivational intensity) might elicit the same kind of response as the present study did in learners, i.e. cross-cultural awareness and motivation to continue studying a foreign language.

Additionally, future research might also test different tools such as Instagram or YouTube (or even tools that are not social media platforms) to examine if they develop learners' interest (or any other positive emotion as well) and visualizations of the future L2 self.

Finally, in terms of future research, Chapter 4 discussed a jet-setting tourist approach that learners employed. While data suggest that this future L2 self was unaffected and unengaged with the target culture, it was not within the scope of this study to examine if these visualizations indicated that learners were at first rejecting visualizations of the future L2 self altogether. Therefore, future research might investigate the enactments of learners' future self during foreign language learning and if this enactment is an actual rejection of the future L2 self and rejection of the target culture.

### **Final Thoughts**

This study has shown that positive emotions, particularly interest, have potentially powerful effects in foreign language learning. When connected to cultural learning, positive emotions have the ability to create a transformative learning process for foreign language learners. Interest that is low in motivational intensity has particular importance for language educators, language program directors, and anyone else working in the field of foreign language because it empowers learners and can create an environment conducive to that advocated by Kramsch (2014). That is, it cultivates an atmosphere where the focus is on developing an understanding of self and others as culturally situated subjects (Knutson, 2006). Furthermore, when tied to cultural learning, interest that is low in motivational intensity can bridge the continually dichotomized concept of Big C culture and little c culture. That is, this type of interest is the one that leads learners to focus on global aspects, thus removing the decision of *which* culture to learn or to study. Interest that is low in motivational intensity inherently encourages learners to focus on culture less as facts to memorize and more as informing their understanding of themselves and of others.

Therefore, the discussion of which culture to teach and when to teach it disappears because the focus is on learning about culture on a more in-depth level and centers on a variety of different aspects of culture.

In the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is a growing need for pedagogies that engage learners and that push them to think more deeply about what they are learning, why they are learning it, and what the implications are for their everyday lives. This type of reflection, when tied to cultural learning, can develop a more profound understanding of the world around them, prepare them for a globalized society, and most importantly, ignite a transformational experience during foreign language learning. Considering that language learning is ultimately about learners discovering who they are as speakers of another language and how they fit into a multilingual and multicultural world, it is important to continually provide opportunities for them to uncover new, deeper levels of culture so that they might persist in learning about themselves, about others, and about the world around them.

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## Appendix A - Pilot Study Projects

### Project 1: Traveling in Spain

Congratulations! You have a new job! You just started your job at a travel agency. It's the first week of your new job and there was a computer problem. All the information has been lost! With your team, you have to recreate all of the information about trips provided by the travel agency. Thus, you will need to create a WIKI in which you describe the best places to travel/visit in Spain. You will provide information through Internet images and complete phrases that describe the places.

Step 1: Decide on three regions in Spain that are the most interesting to you (<http://lugaresparavisitar.es> is a good website with a lot of information).

Step 2: Create at least 3 different excursions for tourists. You should include the following information for each excursion:

- City and region of the excursion
- Lodging
- Activities that tourists can do
- Means of transportation to get there

Step 3. Search the Internet for information that illustrates your selections. You should include photos, images, videos of:

- The cities and regions you choose
- The types of lodging
- The activities
- The most useful methods of transportation

\*\*You should also cite the websites you use in the WIKI.

Step 4: Write descriptions of the excursions that you create. Each person should write at least 150 words in Spanish. You should use your own "username" on the WIKI to write your part. Use the vocabulary from Chapter 10 on pages 378, 380, 390, 392, 402 and 404 and think about the following:

Why do you recommend your travel agency? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you recommend these excursions? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you recommend the lodging that you chose? How much does the lodging cost? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you recommend the method of transportation that you chose? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you recommend the activities that you chose? \_\_\_\_\_

Step 5: Finally, you should create a discussion forum to facilitate discussion between the potential clients (your classmates). Think about the theme of your WIKI and each person should create one question for the forum in which your classmates answer and discuss the theme. Some examples are:

- What do you think about traveling in Spain? Does it interest you? Why or why not?
- Out of the excursions, which is the most interesting in your opinion? Why?

### Project 1: Traveling in Spain Discussion Forum

When Group 1 finishes their work on the WIKI for project 1, the rest of the class (Groups 2, 3, and 4) must respond to the discussion forum that they created. The responses that you write should be in Spanish and have at least 50 words.

In the responses, you should focus on:

- The questions that Group 1 writes
- The content of the WIKI

### Project 2: Studying abroad

Congratulations! You received a scholarship to study abroad! You are going to study abroad for two months in the summer.

Before you leave, you need to explain what a study abroad program is to your friends. Thus, you need to create a WIKI in which you describe the best programs to study abroad in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, or Panama (you can choose the country you want from the three provided). You are going to provide information through Internet images and complete phrases that describe the programs using your own words.

Step 1: Decide on the country where you want to study (Costa Rica, Nicaragua, or Panama) (mlsa.org and cea.org are good websites with a lot of information. There are more on the Internet.).

Step 2: Describe the selected program in your own words. You should include the following information:

- City and region of the program
- The university that has the program
- Lodging - Are you going to live in a student residence, in a house with a host family, or in an apartment?
- Available classes
- Available excursions

Step 3. Search the Internet for information that illustrates your selections. You should include photos, images, videos of:

- The city and the university
- The types of lodging
- The classes available in the program
- The excursions available through the program

\*\*You should also cite the websites you use in the WIKI.

Step 4: Write descriptions of the program that you choose. Each person should write at least 150 words in Spanish. You should use your own “username” on the WIKI to write your part. Use the vocabulary from Chapter 11 on pages 416 and 418 and think about these things:

Why did you choose this city? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose this university? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose this program? \_\_\_\_\_

Think about the subjects that a person can learn in this program. What are they? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think that the excursions are fun or boring? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Step 5: Finally, you should create a discussion forum to facilitate discussion about the study abroad programs between your classmates. Think about the theme of your WIKI and each person should create one question for the forum in which your classmates answer and discuss the theme. Some examples are:

- What do you think about studying abroad? Does it interest you? Why or why not?
- Out of the described programs, which is the most interesting in your opinion? Why?

### Project 2: Studying abroad Discussion Forum

When Group 2 finishes their work on the WIKI for project 2, the rest of the class (Groups 1, 3, and 4) must respond to the forum that they created. The responses that you write should be in Spanish and have at least 50 words.

In the responses, you should focus on:

- The questions that Group 2 writes
- The content of the WIKI

### Project 3: House Hunting

In project 2, you received a scholarship to study abroad. You loved studying in Central America and thus, you want to go back another time. After studying abroad, you decided that you want to live in Central America.

Now you need to find the perfect home and to do this, you want to participate in the show House Hunters International. To do this, you have to investigate where you want to live ... in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, or Panama? Also in order to participate in the show, you have to write to the producers and explain why you want to live in the place that you choose and explain why you should be chosen as participants in the show. You should compare your current home in Tuscaloosa with the type of house that you want in Central America. You are going to create a WIKI in which you explain why you should appear in the show and where you want to live. You are going to provide information through Internet images and complete phrases describing the above information.

Step 1: Decide on the country where you want to live (Costa Rica, Nicaragua, or Panama)

Step 2: Describe the following things:

- Country and city/region where you want to live
- Your current home (Is it similar or different than the home that you want in Central America?)
- Home - Are you going to live in an apartment, a house, or something different?
  - As a requirement of the program, House Hunters International, you have to give 3 options of a possible home.
- Why you should be chosen for the program

Step 3. Search the Internet for information that illustrates your selections. You should include photos, images, videos of:

- The country where you want to live
- The specific city where you want to live
- Possible homes (3 different types)
- Regions/Areas surrounding the homes (i.e. the neighborhood)

\*\*You should also cite the websites you use in the WIKI.

Step 4: Write descriptions of the homes that you choose. Each person should write at least 150 words in Spanish. You should use your own "username" on the WIKI to write your part. Use the vocabulary from Chapter 11 on pages 428 and 430 and think about these things:

Why did you choose this country and city? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose these types of homes? \_\_\_\_\_

In your opinion, which is the best home? The worst? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the price of each type of home? \_\_\_\_\_

Where are the homes? In the city? In the countryside? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the characteristics of the homes? Are they furnished? Do they have parking? \_\_\_\_\_

Step 5: Finally, you should create a discussion forum to facilitate discussion between the producers (your classmates). Think about the theme of your WIKI and each person should create one question for the forum in which your classmates answer and discuss the theme. Some examples are:

- What home is most interesting? Explain your answer.
- What are some important characteristics in a home?

### Project 3: House Hunting Discussion Forum

When Group 3 finishes their work on the WIKI for project 3, the rest of the class (Groups 1, 2, and 4) must respond to the forum that they created. The responses that you write should be in Spanish and have at least 50 words.

In the responses, you should focus on:

- The questions that Group 3 writes
- The content of the WIKI

### Project 4: A Chilean wedding

Congratulations! Your best friend just got engaged. His or her fiancé/fiancée is from Chile and you are going to help plan the wedding. Before planning everything, you have to investigate a typical wedding in Chile because you (and your friends and family) are from the United States, and you are not familiar with Chilean weddings. You should compare a typical wedding in Tuscaloosa with a typical wedding in Chile, and then create a WIKI in which you describe and plan a Chilean wedding. This way, your friends and family can understand the traditions associated with a Chilean wedding. You are going to provide information through Internet images and complete phrases that describe the weddings.

Step 1: Decide on the location of the wedding in Chile.

Step 2: Describe the following things:

- Location of the wedding (beach, mountains, etc.)
- Traditions of a Chilean wedding
  - Think about music, dress, food, dances, etc.
- Activities that lead up to the wedding

Step 3. Search the Internet for information that illustrates your selections. You should include photos, images, videos of:

- The place of the wedding (the city and the actual place such as the beach, the mountains, etc.)
- The traditions of a Chilean wedding (music, dress, food, dances, etc.)
- Activities that lead up to the wedding

\*\*You should also cite the websites you use in the WIKI.

Step 4: Write descriptions of the wedding and the activities that lead up to the wedding. Each person should write at least 150 words in Spanish. You should use your own “username” en the WIKI to write your part. Use the vocabulary from Chapter 12 on pages 468 and 470 and think about these things:

Why did you choose this place for a wedding? \_\_\_\_\_

What are traditions of a Chilean wedding like? \_\_\_\_\_

How much does a typical Chilean wedding cost? \_\_\_\_\_

What are some of the activities that lead up to a Chilean wedding? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the activities that lead up to a Chilean wedding like? \_\_\_\_\_

Step 5: Finally, you should create a discussion forum to facilitate discussion between the guest of the wedding (aka your classmates). Think about the theme of your WIKI and each person should create one question for the forum in which your classmates answer and discuss the theme. Some examples are:

- What type of wedding do they prefer? Casual or formal? Big or small?
- Are you interested in going to a Chilean wedding? Explain your answer.

#### Project 4: A Chilean wedding Discussion Forum

When Group 4 finishes their work on the WIKI for project 4, the rest of the class (Groups 1, 2, and 3) must respond to the forum that they created. The responses that you write should be in Spanish and have at least 50 words.

In the responses, you should focus on:

- The questions that Group 4 writes
- The content of the WIKI

## Appendix B - Main Study Project Topics

### Project #1

**Congratulations!** You just received a scholarship to study abroad for an entire year. However, your program doesn't provide housing, and so you are responsible for finding your own lodging. In order to find the perfect home though, you want to participate in the show *House Hunters International*. To do this, you need to investigate where you want to live ... an apartment, a house, a condo, etc. and decide which Spanish-speaking country you want to live in. Also, in order to participate in the show, you have to contact the producers and explain why you want to live in the place that you choose and explain why you should be chosen as participants in the show.

So, to get going, you first need to work with your group to conduct research on the Spanish-speaking country and type of housing you want. For this phase of the project, you will use **Pinterest** as a "digital archive" to hold all images, videos, etc. that you find online. Then you will use this information to complete the next phases of this project, which is to write a script and prepare an audition tape to send to the producers of the show.

#### **Pinterest research and mini-presentation instructions**

**Step 1:** First, decide on the country where you want to live (any Spanish-speaking country; your team's choice). **\*\*Note: Brazil and Belize are not considered Spanish-speaking countries.**

**Step 2:** If you are not already signed up on Pinterest, you will need to do that. One of your group members will then need to create a board for your cultural project and invite all members of your group to participate (keep the board PUBLIC. **Also, be sure you invite your instructor and the researcher, Claire Mitchell, to join if you haven't done so already.** To add Claire Mitchell, enter the email [cmitchell2@crimson.ua.edu](mailto:cmitchell2@crimson.ua.edu)).

**Step 3:** Search the Internet and add different Pins (videos, photos, etc.) to your board to illustrate the following things:

- Country and city/region where you want to live
- Lodging in your country of choice - Are you going to live in an apartment, a house, or something different?
  - As a requirement of the program, *House Hunters International*, you have to give 3 options of a possible home.
- Areas/Neighborhoods around the places you want to live (Is it a good neighborhood? Are there restaurants near the housing? Etc... Research the area to know if it's a good place to live or not.)

\*\*Each person should include *at least 5 pins each* and should be sure that the reference information is included in the pin (Pinterest should automatically save this for you, but it is always good practice to double check).

**Step 4:** For each image or video you pin to the board (**minimum of 5 required per person**), please write a brief description in Spanish (3-4 sentences) of the pin, with 500 characters being the most allowed by Pinterest. You will need to incorporate the skills you are learning in class by reviewing the grammar, vocabulary, and cultural concepts from your book.

To help you write your descriptions of your pins, use the table below for each pin. **\*These are just questions to guide you. You of course may include any extra information you find interesting or necessary.\***

If your pin is about...	Then focus on the following questions...
<p><b>Housing options</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you choose this pin? How does it relate to the topic or theme?</li> <li>• Why did you choose this type of home (3 different types required)?</li> <li>• What is the best or worst option in your opinion?</li> <li>• What is the price of each housing option?</li> <li>• What are the amenities of each housing option (furnished, available parking, utilities included or not)?</li> <li>• Is the home similar or different to your home in Tuscaloosa?</li> <li>• How many bedrooms/bathrooms are there in each housing option?</li> <li>• Is it spacious or cramped in your opinion?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Area or Neighborhood</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you choose this area/neighborhood?</li> <li>• Is it safe?</li> <li>• Is it secluded or near a busy road?</li> <li>• Is it close to amenities?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it similar or different to your neighborhood in Tuscaloosa?</li> <li>• Is the area/neighborhood in the city or countryside?</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Country information</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you choose this country?</li> <li>• Include some general background information about the country.</li> <li>• Where is it located?</li> <li>• What is the geography of the country like?</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>City information</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you choose this city?</li> <li>• Are there appealing attractions in this city? What are they?</li> <li>• Where is this city located in the country?</li> <li>• Is it a big or small city? Population?</li> <li>• Is it rural or urban?</li> <li>• Is it similar or different to Tuscaloosa?</li> </ul>

**Step 5:** As you develop your project, your team will make a mini-presentation (**on 1/30/14**) in class to report on your progress. You may select one or two team members to be the spokesperson(s) for your group. This person(s) will give a 1-2 minute introduction in Spanish, using your Pinterest board, that includes the following information (check your course calendar for due dates):

- Location you have chosen (country, city, neighborhood)
- What your research has shown you so far (i.e. Do you think a house, apartment, condo, etc. would be better to rent in the country you are going to?)
- Any additional information you think would be interesting to include in your introduction.

### Written activity instructions

Now that you know where you want to live, you need to start preparing to make your audition tape for the producers of the show, *House Hunters International!*

**Step 1:** After completing your research on Pinterest, you will then use your findings to write a script for your audition tape.

You may use the descriptions from your pins, but your script should outline what each person is going to say, be creative, and easy to follow. Each person is responsible for writing what s/he will say in the audition tape. Work together to write, edit, and then create a final version of your script.

Your script should be written in Spanish and should include all of the information that you pinned on your Pinterest board. Also, your script should follow these guidelines:

- One-inch margins
- Double-spaced with 12 point Times New Roman font
- Your script should be long enough to last 3-4 minutes total in your audition tape, with each person writing/talking for the same amount of time (approximately 1-2 minute(s) per person).
- Be sure and review the rubric for the written activity to understand how you will be graded. **Each group member will receive an individual grade for what s/he contributes and writes on the script.**
- Outline what each person will say with his/her name next to the script:

### Example:

**Claire:** Me gusta vivir en España porque es muy interesante.

**Phillip:** Sí, estoy de acuerdo pero me gusta vivir en Madrid más que Barcelona porque es la capital de España.

Be sure to include the following information in your script:

- Who will say what in the audition tape? (For example: Claire might talk about housing options, Phillip might talk about neighborhoods, etc. Decide in your group how you will split up the script.)
- What are the three types of housing that you chose?
- Where are they located? In good neighborhoods? Near amenities or not?
- Why did you choose them?
- Why should you be on *House Hunters International*?
- Be creative in persuading the producers to select your video!

**\*\*Only one person from the group should submit the written activity. Be sure that you include EVERYONE'S name from your group on your assignment.**

### **Oral presentation instructions**

**Step 1:** Finally, you will work with your group to make your audition tape. You will use your script to guide yourself as you record. You should also use the images and videos you pinned on Pinterest as visual tools in your audition tape. You should **not read directly from the script** but

rather should present your findings to your audience, the producers. Your audition tape should follow these guidelines:

- It should be **3-4 minutes total** in length, with each person speaking for equal amounts of time (approximately 1-2 minutes per person).
- Present your images and videos in a creative manner. Please do not just read to us. Use music, sound effects, etc. to make your video the most creative possible.
- Follow your script in outlining what housing types you chose and why you should be on the show.

You may use any format you like to create your video. Some options include:

- Powerpoint
- iMovie
- Pixorial
- WeVideo

\*\*You can find instructions for how to operate these video creation tools by doing a quick Google search.

**Step 2:** Submit your video online **February 15 by 11:59 pm in Tarea en línea 14 Pt. II.**

**Finally**, after each in-class presentation (**to be presented in class on February 16 and 18**), the group whose video was just played should be ready to answer any brief follow-up questions from the producers in Spanish. Additionally, the producers (class members) should be prepared to participate in the follow-up question session.

Your instructor will decide which group will present which day. However, you should have questions prepared for each day of presentations.

Below are some ideas to guide your questions that you will need to bring to the Q&A session (to be completed in Spanish). Each group member should bring 1-2 questions ready to ask.

If the topic is...	Then your focus your question on...
<b>Housing type</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which type of housing they will ultimately choose</li> <li>• Why they chose the three options they did (if further explanation is needed)</li> </ul>
<b>Area/Neighborhood</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations for the area/neighborhood – what is there to do?</li> <li>• What do they like most about the neighborhood/area they will choose?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similarities and differences to Tuscaloosa</li> </ul>

<b>City</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main attractions in the city</li> </ul>
<b>Country</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations for visiting the country – exciting places to see and things to do?</li> <li>• What part of the country is best to live in and why?</li> </ul>

**\*\*Note: The top two groups who are selected by the producers will receive +5 on one of the phases of the cultural project.\*\***

### **Project #2 Pinterest research and mini-presentation instructions**

Throughout the duration of your Spanish course, you have learned about different holidays that are celebrated in the Spanish-speaking world, some of which Americans in the United States also celebrate and some of which they do not.

With summer break coming up, you need to make a little extra money for all the fun things you want to do while on break. It just so happens that a bilingual magazine in Alabama, ***HOLA Latino***, is looking for someone to do freelance work for them and investigate different Spanish-speaking holidays and how they compare or would compare and contrast to the United States version of the holiday. So now that you have learned all about these different holidays in your Spanish class, you have decided that the freelance job offered by ***HOLA Latino*** would be perfect!

**Step 1:** First, do some research in your textbook and on the Internet. Then choose a holiday that is celebrated in the Spanish-speaking world, and select a Spanish-speaking country where this holiday is celebrated. **It's your group's choice regarding what you pick, but remember Belize and Brazil are not considered Spanish-speaking countries!**

**Step 2:** If you are not already signed up on Pinterest, you will need to do that. One of your group members will then need to create a board for your cultural project and invite all members of your group to participate (keep the board PUBLIC. **Also, be sure you invite your instructor and the researcher, Claire Mitchell, to join if you haven't done so already.** To add Claire Mitchell, enter the email **cmitchell2@crimson.ua.edu**).

**Step 3:** Search the Internet and add different Pins (videos, photos, etc.) to your board to illustrate the following things:

- Pins that represent ONE holiday celebrated in the Spanish-speaking world
- Pins that focus on ONE specific Spanish-speaking country that celebrates the holiday
- Pins that represent this holiday in the United States or what the equivalent WOULD be if there isn't one

- Pins that show the viewpoints and attitudes toward the holiday of people living in the Spanish-speaking country
- Pins that show the viewpoints and attitudes toward the holiday of Americans living in the United States

\*\*Each person should include *at least 5 pins each* and should be sure that the reference information is included in the pin (Pinterest should automatically save this for you, but it is always good practice to double check).

**Step 4:** For each image or video you pin to the board (**minimum of 5 required per person**), please write a brief description in Spanish (3-4 sentences) of the pin, with 500 characters being the most allowed by Pinterest. You will need to incorporate the skills you are learning in class by reviewing the grammar, vocabulary, and cultural concepts from your book.

To help you write your descriptions of your pins, use the table below for each pin. **\*These are just questions to guide you. You of course may include any extra information you find interesting or necessary.\***

If your pin is about...	Then focus on the following questions...
<p><b>The holiday in the Spanish-speaking world</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you choose this pin? How does it relate to the topic or theme?</li> <li>• Why did you choose this holiday?</li> <li>• What is the holiday about?</li> <li>• How is the holiday celebrated (traditions, foods, celebrations, etc.)?</li> <li>• When is the holiday celebrated?</li> <li>• How/when/where did the holiday originate?</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Spanish-speaking country where the holiday is celebrated</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you choose this country?</li> <li>• What are the holiday traditions (foods, celebrations, etc.) in that country?</li> <li>• Are they similar or different to other Spanish-speaking countries?</li> </ul>
<p><b>The holiday in the United States (or the imagined equivalent)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you choose this pin? How does it relate to the topic or theme?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When is the holiday celebrated in the United States? Or when would it be if it isn't already?</li> <li>• How is the holiday celebrated (traditions, foods, celebrations, etc.) or how would it be celebrated?</li> <li>• How/when/where did the holiday begin in the United States? Or how/when/where would it have begun in the United States?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Viewpoints/attitudes toward the holiday of people living IN the Spanish-speaking country</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does this holiday represent for these people?</li> <li>• What do these people believe this holiday celebrates?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Viewpoints/attitudes toward the holiday of Americans living in United States</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do Americans believe this holiday celebrates?</li> <li>• Is their viewpoint/attitude different or similar to those of the people living in the Spanish-speaking country where it is celebrated?</li> <li>• Do Americans in the United States celebrate this holiday or is there an equivalent holiday? If so, how do they celebrate it (traditions, foods, etc.)?</li> <li>• If they do not, how do you imagine Americans in the United States would celebrate this holiday?</li> </ul>

**Step 5:** As you develop your project, your team will make a mini-presentation (**on 3/23/15**) in class to report on your progress. Since you only have three members in your group for this project, **all three of you** will be expected to present on your Pinterest board. The presentations will last 1-2 minutes in Spanish, will provide a brief introduction to your research, use your Pinterest board, and should include the following information (check your course calendar for due dates):

- Location you have chosen (country) and holiday you have chosen
- What your research has shown you so far (i.e. What is interesting about this holiday? What is something you knew already? What is something new you learned? When/where/how is this holiday celebrated?)

- Any additional information you think would be interesting to include in your introduction.

### Written activity instructions

Now that you have done your research, you are ready to start your freelance work for *HOLA Latino* so that you can get paid! Your first assignment is to create a flyer to advertise an upcoming radio broadcast that *HOLA Latino* is going to put out based off of your work.

Your flyer should draw in your audience, be exciting and creative, and advertise the upcoming radio broadcast. The radio broadcast will focus on the holiday research you have done, and since the flyer is advertising this event, your flyer will focus on that same information you just collected via Pinterest.

**Step 1:** After completing your research on Pinterest, use your findings to create a flyer to advertise the upcoming radio broadcast.

You may use information from your pins, but your flyer should highlight the facts about the holiday, be creative, and easy to follow.

**Include the following information on your flyer:**

Information about...	Some ideas to focus on...
<p><b>The holiday and Spanish-speaking country you chose</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What holiday?</li> <li>• What country?</li> <li>• Why this holiday?</li> <li>• Why this country?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Interesting facts/information about the holiday</b>            **Summarize them; do not write paragraphs of information**</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrations, traditions, etc. surrounding the holiday in the Spanish-speaking country</li> <li>• Celebrations, traditions, etc. surrounding the holiday in the United States OR what you think they would be like if there isn't an equivalent</li> </ul>
<p><b>Viewpoints/attitudes toward the holiday</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those of people in Spanish-speaking country</li> <li>• Those of Americans in United States</li> </ul>

### Information about the upcoming radio broadcast

- When is it?
- What is it about?
- Why should the audience tune in?

\*\*Each person is responsible for creating an equal portion of the flyer and should contribute accordingly. In order to show your contribution, **write your initials** in parentheses on the images and text you add to the flyer.

Your flyer should be in Spanish and should include all of the information that you pinned on your Pinterest board. Also, your flyer should follow these guidelines:

- Be in color and be creative!
- Must be at least 8 ½ x 11 in size but can be larger to include more information (you may create a brochure, a large poster board, etc. The choice is up to your group!)
- Include photos/images from Pinterest **and** text descriptions
  - 12 photos/images required from Pinterest
  - 12 text descriptions required
  - DO NOT just copy from Pinterest; rather use Pinterest as a guide to create your flyer.
  - You **MUST** write in complete sentences when describing the images/photos.
- Be sure and review the rubric for the flyer to understand how you will be graded. **Each group member will receive an individual grade for what s/he contributes and includes in the flyer.**

**\*\*Only one person from the group should submit the flyer on Blackboard. Be sure that you include EVERYONE'S name from your group on your assignment.**

#### Oral presentation instructions

**Step 1:** Finally, you will work with your group to make your radio broadcast based off of your Pinterest research. You should **not read in your broadcast** but rather should make an appealing and informative radio broadcast for your audience. Your radio broadcast should follow these guidelines:

- It should be **1:30 to 2 minutes total** in length, with each person speaking for equal amounts of time (approximately 30 seconds to 1 minute per person).
- Present your Pinterest research in a creative manner. Please do not just read to us. Use music, sound effects, etc. to make your radio broadcast (podcast) the most creative possible.
- Follow the guidelines below in informing the public about the holiday you chose.

You may use any format you like to create your radio broadcast (podcast). Some options include:

- Apple iTunes
- PodOmatic
- Garage Band

- Buzzsprout
- Audacity
- Castmate

\*\*You can find instructions for how to operate these podcast creation tools by doing a quick Google search. It is suggested that you try out these different software options before you actually begin recording. If you end up having questions, you can email Claire Mitchell (cmitchell2@crimson.ua.edu).

**Step 2:** Submit your radio broadcast (podcast mp3 file) online **April 21 by 11:59 pm in the Tarea en línea folder titled “Submit your final oral presentation here”.**

Information to include...	Some ideas to focus on...
<p><b>Introduction of research</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which holiday did you choose?</li> <li>• Which Spanish-speaking country did you choose?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Interesting facts/information</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell your audience (briefly) about the holiday.</li> <li>• Pick out some of the highlights and discuss them.</li> <li>• Talk briefly about the equivalent holiday in the United States or what an equivalent would be like if there isn't one.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Viewpoints/attitudes toward the holiday</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does this holiday mean to people in the Spanish-speaking country?</li> <li>• What does this holiday mean to people in the United States? Or what would it mean if there isn't an equivalent?</li> <li>• What are your personal viewpoints/attitudes toward this holiday?</li> <li>• What are some differences surrounding this holiday in the Spanish-speaking country and the United States?</li> </ul>

**\*\*Note: The top two groups who are selected by the audience will receive +5 on one of the phases of the cultural project.\*\***

## Appendix C - Group Contract Instructions

### Group Contract outline

Fill in with your own information and feel free to add information where your group deems necessary.

### Names of group members:

---

Below you will outline what each group member will do in each phase of the cultural project. Delete the guided questions, type in your own information/outline, and resave and submit this on **Blackboard**.

**Pinterest** – consider the following ideas when assigning roles:

- Who will create the Pinterest board and invite all members and the instructor to your board (be sure and keep your board public)?
- How will your group research the topic (who will research what, etc.)?
- Who will edit the content on the board (to make sure there are no repetitions and for grammar/spelling/vocabulary errors – be sure and review the rubric so you know how you will be graded)?
- What will your timeline be like? When will this need to be completed by?
- What group member(s) will give the mini-presentation of your research in class?

**Written Activity** – consider the following ideas when assigning roles:

You will be responsible as a group for using your research to write a script for a video you will create.

- Who will write what portion of the script?
- Who will edit what area of content in the script (to make sure there are no repetitions and for grammar/spelling/vocabulary errors)?
- What will your timeline be like? When will this need to be finished and turned in?
- Who will be responsible for submitting the written assignment?

**Oral Presentation** – consider the following ideas when assigning roles:

- Who will research and find what video creation tool your group will use?
- Who will be responsible for what portion of the presentation?
- Who will edit what content area in the presentation (to make sure there are no repetitions and for grammar/spelling/vocabulary errors)?
- What will your timeline be like? When will this need to be finished and turned in?
- Who will be responsible for submitting the oral presentation?

**Finally**, you as a group will decide upon penalties to be assessed if a group member does not complete his/her part of the work or collaborate and work well with others.

You will need to discuss, vote, and agree upon (majority rules) the infraction(s) and penalties (points deducted, etc.) that are assessed with them.

<b>INFRACTION</b>	<b>PENALTY</b>

## Appendix D - End of Project #1 Handout

¡Felicidades! Acabas de empezar un trabajo nuevo como productor de HGTV. Como parte de tu trabajo nuevo, tienes que elegir tres grupos diferentes que van a aparecer en *House Hunters International*, un espectáculo popular de HGTV. Mira los videos, llena el formulario y al fin, elige los tres grupos mejores.

**\*\*Recuerda: No puedes votar por tu propio video.\*\***

**Pon un número de 1, 2 o 3 al lado de 3 videos.**

**1** = Lo mejor

**2** = Muy bueno

**3** = Bueno

\_\_\_\_\_ **Video #**\_\_

Descripción breve:

País en video:

Tipos de vivienda en el video:

Información interesante del video:

Preguntas para el grupo:

## Appendix E - Guided Questions for End of Project #2 Activity

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_

Clase: \_\_\_\_\_

¡Felicidades! Has ganado mucho dinero de *HOLA Latino* para el verano pero antes de recibir tu cheque de paga final, tienes que evaluar los podcasts para la compañía. Encuentra los podcasts en la página principal de Blackboard, escúchalos, llena el formulario y al fin, elige los tres grupos mejores.

**\*\*Recuerda: No puedes votar por tu propio podcast.\*\***

**Pon un número de 1, 2 o 3 al lado de 3 podcasts.**

**1 = Lo mejor**

**2 = Muy bueno**

**3 = Bueno**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Podcast #** \_\_\_\_\_

Información más importante del podcast:

Día(s) festivo(s) discutido(s) en el podcast:

País(es) discutido(s) en el podcast:

Semejanzas o diferencias entre el día festivo en el país hispanohablante y el día festivo en los Estados Unidos:

- Crear **por lo menos dos preguntas** para discusión en clase el viernes:

## Appendix F – Rubrics

SP 103: Pinterest research and investigation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

AREA	Sophisticated	Competent	Average	Not yet competent
<b>Organization</b> (20 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All images and videos are organized and easy to follow.</li> <li>• The main topic is clearly addressed.</li> <li>• Reader can follow line of reasoning for choosing images/videos.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>19-20 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Images and videos are generally clear and well organized.</li> <li>• Reader can follow line of reasoning for choosing images/videos.</li> <li>• A few (3-4) pins are confusing.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>15-18 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Images and videos are somewhat logical and organized.</li> <li>• Reader has a harder time following the line of reasoning for choosing images/videos.</li> <li>• Several (5-6) pins are confusing.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>6-14 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Images and videos are incoherently organized.</li> <li>• Reader cannot follow line of reasoning for choosing images/videos.</li> <li>• A majority (7-10) pins are unorganized and do not pertain to the topic.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>0-5 points</b></p>
<b>Language Control and Use</b> (20 points – 0 points for language use beyond scope of course)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varied structures that demonstrate appropriate understanding of tense, conjugations, and agreements.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>19-20 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varied structures with some structural errors but do not affect meaning and require minimal to no interpretation.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>15-18 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repetitive structures with several structural errors that affect meaning. Requires interpretation to be understood.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>6-14 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic of inadequate structures that are not appropriate for the current level. Errors prevent understanding.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>0-5 points</b></p>
<b>Vocabulary</b> (20 points – 0 points for language beyond scope of course)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary is relevant to the theme and appropriate for the topic in all written descriptions.</li> <li>• Word choice is appropriate for the context.</li> <li>• No English words are used.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>19-20 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary is mostly adequate and somewhat relevant to the theme.</li> <li>• Some erroneous word use for the context in at 2-3 posts.</li> <li>• Minimal (2-3) English words are used.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>15-18 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary is inadequate and repetitive in 4-5 posts.</li> <li>• Vocabulary is irrelevant to the theme and inappropriate for the topic.</li> <li>• Multiple erroneous word usages for the context (4-5).</li> <li>• Multiple (4-5) English words are used.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>6-14 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary is irrelevant to theme and inappropriate for topic in 6+ posts.</li> <li>• Six or more posts contain erroneous word usages for the context.</li> <li>• Use of English is abundant (6+ posts).</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>0-5 points</b></p>
<b>Spelling and punctuation</b> (10 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling and punctuation are correct in all posts.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>10 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few (2-3) posts contain spelling and punctuation errors but content is still comprehensible.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>7-9 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many (4-5) posts contain spelling and punctuation errors, and content is still mostly comprehensible but does require some interpretation.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4-6 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority of posts (6+) contain spelling and punctuation errors, leaving content mostly incomprehensible.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>0-3 points</b></p>
<b>Content and creativity</b> (30 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concepts are well explained, well developed, and contain original content.</li> <li>• Posts are relevant, on target, and explain the image/video.</li> <li>• Pins are engaging for the audience and contain lots of descriptions and information.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>28-30 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most concepts are explained but need more information to be clear.</li> <li>• Posts are adequate but ideas need more developing.</li> <li>• Pins lack engaging content that is descriptive and informative to audience.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>24-27 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some original concepts but lack clarity and detail in several posts (4-5).</li> <li>• More than 4-5 descriptions contain limited or minimal information and lack key details.</li> <li>• Several (4-5) posts contain some repetitions.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>14-23 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concepts are unclear, lack clarity, and follow an illogical organization.</li> <li>• Little to no relevance to task.</li> <li>• Lack of original thoughts, lots of repetitions in majority (6+) of posts.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>0-13 points</b></p>

Total: \_\_\_\_\_ / 100 points

AREA	Sophisticated	Competent	Average	Not yet competent
<b>Script quality</b> (26 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Script is original, inventive, and logically organized.</li> <li>Storyline is well developed.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>25-26 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Script is original.</li> <li>Some elements lack elaboration.</li> <li>Storyline is developed, but there is a lack of details.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>21-24 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Script lacks originality.</li> <li>Elements have been copied from other sources (i.e. text already produced on the Internet).</li> <li>Storyline is not fully developed.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>10-20 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No originality.</li> <li>Most all of script has been copied from other sources (i.e. the Internet).</li> <li>Storyline is ineffectively developed.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>0-9 points</b></p>
<b>Language Control and Use</b> (20 points – 0 points for language use beyond scope of course)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varied structures that demonstrate appropriate understanding of tense, conjugations, and agreements.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>19-20 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varied structures with some structural errors but do not affect meaning and require minimal to no interpretation.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>15-18 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repetitive structures with several structural errors that affect meaning. Requires interpretation to be understood.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>6-14 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic or inadequate structures that are not appropriate for the current level. Errors prevent understanding.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>0-5 points</b></p>
<b>Vocabulary/Word Choice</b> (20 points – 0 points for language beyond scope of course)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary relevant to the theme and appropriate for the topic.</li> <li>Rich and varied word choices adequate for context.</li> <li>No English words are used.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>19-20 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary mostly adequate and somewhat relevant to the theme with some erroneous word choice for the context.</li> <li>Minimal (2-3) English words are used.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>15-18 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary inadequate and repetitive in several portions of script.</li> <li>Some erroneous word usages for the context (4-5).</li> <li>Multiple (4-5) English words are used.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>6-14 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary irrelevant to theme and inappropriate for topic in majority of script.</li> <li>Multiple erroneous word usages for the context (6+).</li> <li>Use of English is abundant (6+ words throughout script).</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>0-5 points</b></p>
<b>Spelling and punctuation</b> (10 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spelling and punctuation are correct in all parts of script.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>10 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few (2-3) spelling and punctuation errors but content is still comprehensible.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>7-9 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many (4-5) spelling and punctuation errors, and content is still mostly comprehensible but does require some interpretation.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4-6 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple (6+) spelling and punctuation errors, leaving content mostly incomprehensible.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>0-3 points</b></p>
<b>Style of delivery/participation</b> (20 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elaborate role, engaged throughout script.</li> <li>Contribution of participant is equal to other participants.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>19-20 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged role, but contribution is less than other group members' roles.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>15-18 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inconsistent role, not engaged throughout, and contribution is considerably less than other group members' contribution.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>6-14 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little to no engagement or contribution throughout the script.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>0-5 points</b></p>
<b>Submission</b> (4 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Script is completed and submitted on time.</li> <li>Script is submitted via Blackboard correctly.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Script is a day late and/or submitted incorrectly.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Script is two days late and submitted incorrectly.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No script submitted.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>0 points</b></p>

**Total: \_\_\_\_\_ /100 points**

AREA	Sophisticated	Competent	Average	Not yet competent
<b>Organization</b> (20 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All content is organized and easy to follow.</li> <li>The main topic is clearly addressed.</li> <li>Reader can follow line of reasoning for choosing included content.</li> </ul> <p><b>19-20 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content is generally clear and well organized.</li> <li>Reader can follow line of reasoning for choosing included content in presentation.</li> <li>A few (3-4) points in the presentation are confusing.</li> </ul> <p><b>15-18 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content is somewhat logical and organized.</li> <li>Reader has a harder time following the line of reasoning for choosing included content</li> <li>Several (5-6) points in the presentation are confusing.</li> </ul> <p><b>6-14 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content is incoherently organized.</li> <li>Reader cannot follow line of reasoning.</li> <li>A majority (7-10) of points are unorganized and do not pertain to the topic.</li> </ul> <p><b>0-5 points</b></p>
<b>Language Control and Use</b> (20 points – 0 points for language use beyond scope of course)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varied structures that demonstrate appropriate understanding of tense, conjugations, and agreements.</li> </ul> <p><b>19-20 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varied structures with some structural errors but do not affect meaning and require minimal to no interpretation.</li> </ul> <p><b>15-18 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repetitive structures with several structural errors that affect meaning. Requires interpretation to be understood.</li> </ul> <p><b>6-14 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic or inadequate structures that are not appropriate for the current level. Errors prevent understanding.</li> </ul> <p><b>0-5 points</b></p>
<b>Vocabulary/Word Choices</b> (20 points – 0 points for language beyond scope of course)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary is relevant to the theme and appropriate for the topic.</li> <li>Rich and varied word choices adequate for context.</li> <li>No English words are used.</li> </ul> <p><b>19-20 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary mostly adequate and somewhat relevant to the theme with some erroneous word choice for the context.</li> <li>Minimal (2-3) English words are used.</li> </ul> <p><b>15-18 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary is inadequate and repetitive in several portions of the presentation.</li> <li>Some erroneous word usages for the context (4-5).</li> <li>Multiple (4-5) English words are used.</li> </ul> <p><b>6-14 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary is irrelevant to theme and inappropriate for topic.</li> <li>Multiple erroneous word usages for the context (6+).</li> <li>Use of English is abundant (6+ posts).</li> </ul> <p><b>0-5 points</b></p>
<b>Spelling and punctuation</b> (6 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spelling and punctuation are correct in all parts of the presentation.</li> </ul> <p><b>6 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few (2-3) spelling and punctuation errors but content is still comprehensible.</li> </ul> <p><b>4-5 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many (4-5) posts contain spelling and punctuation errors, and content is still mostly comprehensible but does require some interpretation.</li> </ul> <p><b>2-3 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple (6+) spelling and punctuation errors, leaving content mostly incomprehensible.</li> </ul> <p><b>0-1 points</b></p>
<b>Style of delivery/participation</b> (20 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elaborate role, engaged throughout presentation.</li> <li>No reading. Paced for audience understanding.</li> <li>Contribution is equal to other participants.</li> </ul> <p><b>19-20 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged role, but contribution is less than other group members' roles.</li> <li>No reading but delivery is too fast or too slow at times.</li> </ul> <p><b>15-18 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inconsistent role, not engaged throughout, and contribution is considerably less than other group members' contribution.</li> <li>Some reading, too fast or too slow at times.</li> </ul> <p><b>6-14 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little to no engagement or contribution throughout the script.</li> <li>Mostly reading, mumbling.</li> </ul> <p><b>0-5 points</b></p>
<b>Pronunciation</b> (10 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speech is clearly understandable.</li> </ul> <p><b>10 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor errors in pronunciation slightly affecting understanding.</li> </ul> <p><b>7-9 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few major errors in pronunciation affecting understanding.</li> </ul> <p><b>4-6 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pronunciation errors rendering speech incomprehensible.</li> </ul> <p><b>0-3 points</b></p>
<b>Submission</b> (4 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Script is completed and submitted on time.</li> <li>Script is submitted via Blackboard correctly.</li> </ul> <p><b>4 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Script is a day late and/or submitted incorrectly.</li> </ul> <p><b>3 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Script is two days late and submitted incorrectly.</li> </ul> <p><b>2 points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No script submitted.</li> </ul> <p><b>0 points</b></p>

**Total: \_\_\_\_\_ /100 points**

## Appendix G - Pre- and Post-study Questionnaires

### Pre-study questionnaire (biodata)

Please answer the following questions with your own information. Your answers to all questions will be treated with the strictest confidence. Although you are asked to provide your name, it is only asked of you in order to be able to associate your questionnaire answers with your other answers from the study. It is important for you to know that before the questionnaires are examined, your questionnaire will be assigned a number, and the same number will be used on any other work you complete. That way your name will not be associated with your answers.

1. What is your name?
2. What is your age?
3. Are you originally from the United States? Y/N
4. If you answered 'No' to the previous question, please list your country of origin and age of arrival.
5. Gender: Male/Female
6. Please list your class section and number (i.e. 103-012):
7. Do you speak more than one language?
8. If you answered 'Yes' to the question above, please list the language(s) that you speak.
9. If you answered 'Yes' to question #7, please explain where you learned another language(s).
10. Have you ever studied abroad?
11. If so, where? (Just type N/A if this question is not applicable to you)
12. And for how long? (Just type N/A if this question is not applicable to you)
13. Have you ever traveled outside of the United States?
14. If so, where? (Just type N/A if this question is not applicable to you)
15. And for how long? (Just type N/A if this question is not applicable to you)
16. What is your academic level at the University of Alabama?  
First year / Second year / Third year / Fourth year / Fifth year / Other
17. What is your major(s)?
18. What is your minor(s)?

### Post-study questionnaire

#### Students' interests in studying Spanish

You are being asked to participate in a survey by answering the following questions concerning foreign language learning. This survey is conducted by a doctoral student of the University of Alabama to better understand what interests students when studying Spanish as a foreign language. This is not a test so there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Your personal opinion is all that this survey is interested in, and all information will remain confidential. Please answer as

honestly as possible as this will guarantee the success of the investigation. Thank you very much for your help.

1. What is your name?

2. What is your level of interest in possibly continuing to study Spanish in the future (this can be formally in a classroom or informally on your own)?

Very uninterested / Uninterested / Neutral / Interested / Very Interested

3. Please explain your level of interest.

If you answered **very uninterested or uninterested**, please explain why you feel this way. Was there was anything in your Spanish 103 class that could have developed your interest more?

If you answered **neutral**, please explain why you feel this way. Was there was anything in your Spanish 103 class that could have developed your interest more?

If you answered **interested or very interested**, please explain how you arrived at this level of interest. Did anything in your SP 103 class contribute to your interest in continuing to study Spanish?

## **Appendix H - Pilot Study Journal Prompts**

### **Project 1: Traveling in Spain Your reaction**

At the end of project 1, ALL GROUPS (1, 2, 3, 4) should write a reaction to the WIKI in your journals. The reaction should be in English and should include 300-350 words.

For the next summer vacations, you and your family plan to travel. Your parents want to decide between vacationing in Spain and vacationing at a place in the United States. In your reaction, you need to write your recommendation of the best vacation.

FIRST, think about all that you read in the WIKI about a trip in Spain.

THEN, use the following questions to guide you when you write. Think of the comparison between a trip to Spain and a trip in the United States.

- What are some advantages of traveling to/in Spain?
- What are some advantages of traveling in the United States?
- What are some disadvantages of traveling to/in Spain?
- What are some disadvantages of traveling in the United States?
- What is the best place to visit in your opinion? Why?
- What are some similarities between the two places? Think about the activities, lodging and the methods of transportation.
- What are some differences between the two places? Think about the activities, lodging and the methods of transportation.

FINALLY, complete your reaction in Blackboard by following these steps:

- Log-in to your Blackboard
- Choose your Spanish course
- Click “Tool Panel” located on the left side of the page
- Select “Journals”
- Select and complete your journal topic for this week

### **Project 2: Studying abroad Your reaction**

At the end of project 2, ALL GROUPS (1, 2, 3, 4) should write a reaction to the WIKI in your journals. The reaction should be in English and should include 300-350 words.

There is a possibility of studying abroad next semester but before deciding, your parents and friends have a lot of questions about the foreign university and the University of Alabama. In your reaction, you need to write an email to your family and friends to describe the similarities and differences between the two universities.

FIRST, think about all that you read in the WIKI about the study abroad programs and the foreign universities.

THEN, use the following questions to guide you when you write. Think of the comparison between studying abroad and studying at the University of Alabama.

- What are some advantages of studying abroad?
- What are some advantages of only studying in the University of Alabama?
- What are some disadvantages of studying abroad?
- What are some disadvantages of only studying in the University of Alabama?
- What is the best place to study in your opinion? Why?
- What are some similarities between the two options (the university described in the WIKI and the University of Alabama)? Think about the classes, lodging, and the excursions.
- What are some differences between the two options (the university described in the WIKI and the University of Alabama)? Think about the classes, lodging and the excursions.

FINALLY, complete your reaction in Blackboard by following these steps:

- Log-in to your Blackboard
- Choose your Spanish course
- Click “Tool Panel” located on the left side of the page
- Select “Journals”
- Select and complete your journal topic for this week

### Project 3: House Hunting Your reaction

At the end of project 3, ALL GROUPS (1, 2, 3, 4) should write a reaction to the WIKI in your journals. The reaction should be in English and should include 300-350 words.

There is a possibility of living in Central America in the future, but it is expensive to do alone. Thus, you need a roommate to help with the rent or mortgage, but your friends don't feel like living in Central America. Now you have to explain your perspective to your friend. You should write an email in order to explain why living in a Central American country is a good idea and explain the similarities and differences between Central American life and life in Tuscaloosa.

FIRST, think about all that you read in the WIKI about homes in Central America.

THEN, use the following questions to guide you when you write.

- What are some advantages of living in Central America?
- What are some advantages of living in Tuscaloosa?
- What are some disadvantages of living in Central America?

- What are some disadvantages of living in Tuscaloosa?
- What is the best type of home in your opinion? Why?
- What are some similarities in between a home in Central America and a home in Tuscaloosa? Think about the types of homes, the price of homes, and the characteristics of the homes.
- What are some differences in between a home in Central America and a home in Tuscaloosa? Think about the types of homes, the price of homes, and the characteristics of the homes.
- Why (or why not) should your friend move to Central America?

FINALLY, complete your reaction in Blackboard by following these steps:

- Log-in to your Blackboard
- Choose your Spanish course
- Click “Tool Panel” located on the left side of the page
- Select “Journals”
- Select and complete your journal topic for this week

#### Project 4: A wedding in Chile Your reaction

At the end of project 4, ALL GROUPS (1, 2, 3, 4) should write a reaction to the WIKI in your journals. The reaction should be in English and should include 300-350 words.

Your best friend is going to marry a person from Chile in two months. There is a lot that still need to be planned. Your friend’s parents also need to plan their trip to Chile and their part of the wedding. So, now you need to write an email to inform them about a typical wedding in Chile and about what they need to do to plan their part of the wedding. To help them, it’s a good idea to explain the similarities and differences between a Chilean wedding and a wedding in Tuscaloosa. This can serve as a reference for your parents who will also be guests at the wedding.

FIRST, think about all that you read in the WIKI about Chilean weddings.

THEN, use the following questions to guide you when you write.

- What are some advantages of a wedding in Chile?
- What are some advantages of a wedding in Tuscaloosa?
- What are some disadvantages of a wedding in Chile?
- What are some disadvantages of a wedding in Tuscaloosa?
- Why does your friend want to get married in Chile?
- What are some similarities in between a wedding in Chile and a wedding in Tuscaloosa? Think about the traditions, the activities that lead up to a wedding, etc.
- What are some differences in between a wedding in Chile and a wedding in Tuscaloosa? Think about the traditions, the activities that lead up to a wedding, etc.

FINALLY, complete your reaction in Blackboard by following these steps:

- Log-in to your Blackboard
- Choose your Spanish course

- Click “Tool Panel” located on the left side of the page
- Select “Journals”
- Select and complete your journal topic for this week

## Appendix I - Main Study Journal Prompts

### Project #1 - *House Hunters International*

After having applied to the show *House Hunters International*, you are certain that you want to go live for six months in a Spanish-speaking country. However, it's too expensive to do alone, and so you need a roommate to help with the rent or mortgage. The bad part is that your friend doesn't feel like living in a Spanish-speaking country, and so you are going to write an email to him/her and explain your perspective, telling him/her why it's a good idea to live abroad. You will also want to explain the similarities and differences between life in the country you choose and life in Tuscaloosa.

**FIRST**, think about all that you learned in the cultural project #1 about living abroad in a Spanish-speaking country, and pick one of the countries that you saw presented in the audition tapes to write about in your email.

**THEN**, to help guide your writing, think about the following aspects:

- Advantages and disadvantages of in living in Tuscaloosa
- Advantages and disadvantages of living in the Spanish-speaking country (you don't want your friend to think you're being too one-sided in your reasoning, and so you need to give both perspectives)
- The best place(s) to live in the country
- The best housing option(s) you have seen
- Sum up why (or why not) your friend should move to the Spanish-speaking country.

**FINALLY**, write a couple of paragraphs on the above topic.

### Project #2 – *Días festivos*

Your time with *HOLA Latino* is coming to a close, which is perfect since summer break is coming up! However, you want to do some traveling this summer, and so you have accepted one last job with *HOLA Latino* to make a little extra money. Your last assignment is to take all that you have learned all about these different holidays, reflect on that information, and write an opinion piece to submit for publication through *HOLA Latino*.

**FIRST**, think about all that you learned in your cultural project on holidays.

**THEN**, based off of what you have learned, write an opinion piece on **ONE holiday** (of your choice; it doesn't have to be the one you did research on). Discuss the following information:

- Which holiday did you select to write about?
- Why did you select this holiday?
- What does it mean to people in the Spanish-speaking world? What does it mean to Americans in the United States?
- How do people in the Spanish-speaking world celebrate this holiday?
- How do Americans in the U.S. celebrate this holiday? Or how would they if there isn't an equivalent holiday?

**FINALLY**, write 2-3 paragraphs in English on the topic above, giving your perspective of the holiday.

## Appendix J - Focus Group Questions

1. What did you like or dislike about the projects you completed?
  - a. In particular, what about Pinterest did you like or dislike?
  - b. In particular, what about the written activities did you like or dislike?
  - c. In particular, what about the oral activities did you like or dislike?
  - d. In particular, what about the journal entries did you like or dislike?
  - e. In particular, what about the group work did you like or dislike?
  - f. In particular, what about the project themes did you like or dislike?
2. Did you like being able to pick your own pins or did you want even more liberty to choose the topics as well?
3. What was easy to do (in the project, i.e. Pinterest research, written activity, etc.)?
4. What was hard or confusing to do (in the project, i.e. Pinterest research, written activity, etc.)?
5. How would you improve this project?
6. How did these projects compare to what you have done previously in other Spanish classes (i.e. tests, written assignments, etc.)?
7. Did you learn anything new or different from these projects?
8. Did you enjoy using social media or not in the classroom?
9. How did using social media make you feel?
10. When you used social media to explore the Spanish-speaking world, how did you feel?
11. Have any of your opinions about culture changed you feel like?
12. Or do you feel like you already know what you learned?
13. Do you feel like you had opportunities to practice your Spanish?
14. Do any of you feel like maybe you want to go visit or study abroad in any of the countries you studied?
15. Do any of you feel like you want to talk to native speakers in Tuscaloosa about the topics you learned about?
16. What were some things about culture that you learned that you didn't know before?
17. How many of you possibly plan to continue studying Spanish after this class?
18. If you said yes, why?
19. If you said maybe, why?
20. If you said no, why? What is something that could have changed your mind?
21. Did you feel more interested in Spanish culture because of these projects?
22. Did that interest make you want to study more about the topics or about culture? Or even make you want to continue studying Spanish? Why or why not?

## Appendix K - IRB Certificate

Office for Research  
Institutional Review Board for the  
Protection of Human Subjects



November 9, 2015

Claire Mitchell  
Department of Modern Languages & Classics  
College of Arts & Sciences  
The University of Alabama  
Box 870246

Re: IRB # 14-OR-071-R2 "Culture, L2 Ideal Self, and Emotion: Developing Learners' Interest to Continue Studying Spanish"

Dear Ms. Mitchell:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your renewal application.

Your renewal application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. You have also been granted the requested waiver of informed consent. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

*(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.*

Your application will expire on November 8, 2016. If your research will continue beyond this date, complete the relevant portions of the IRB Renewal Application. If you wish to modify the application, complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol Form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, complete the appropriate portions of the IRB Study Closure Form.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,



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