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**STEPPING OUT OF THE STUDY ABROAD BUBBLE: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF
U.S. BASED STUDENTS' DIRECT ENROLLMENT EXPERIENCE AT THE
AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF MADRID**

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Abstract

The internationalization of higher education aims to develop interculturally competent, global citizens. In the United States, mobility programs for studies, internships and volunteering for university students, known as study abroad programs, play a central role in internationalization policies. This is due to the traditionally held belief that study abroad positively impacts students' intercultural and second language learning. For U.S. universities, the direct enrollment experience of taking courses in a local university is often considered logically, academically and linguistically more challenging, which has led study abroad programs to rely on U.S academic programs despite the possible learning opportunities that the immersion of direct enrollment offers.

In this educational context, this study investigates the study abroad students' perspectives of both the challenges and opportunities of direct enrollment at Autonomous University of Madrid in Spain. The study's main aims are to: 1) understand how study abroad students perceive the culture of learning at the local university; 2) how they adapt to the new environment, and 3) analyze what and how they are specifically learning from the direct enrollment component of the study abroad experience. The research uses Kim's (2001) integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation coupled with Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory.

The data was collected during the academic year of 2017/2018 at the Autonomous University of Madrid. The methodology uses a social constructivist theoretical perspective to explore how study abroad students make meaning from their academic experiences. The thesis takes an ethnographic approach to gain a deep understanding of the objectives of the investigation. The participants were study abroad students and program staff as well as UAM professors, students and international office staff. The ethnographic methods utilized were semi-structured interviews, participant observations and informal focus groups.

The analysis of my findings reiterates that the study abroad is a highly personal experience that results in a large variation in perspectives. The most significant result that my analysis reveals is that study abroad students use a combination of five strategies to adapt to the Spanish classroom: withdrawal, separation, academic integration, social integration, and relaxing expectations. Their decision-making process is regulated by their motivation, self-efficacy beliefs and agency utilized to interact with local actors. Study abroad students find the most stressful aspects of the experience to be the implicit differences between their expectations about university classes in Spain and the reality. The study also discovers that study abroad students perceive that the local classroom provides opportunities for second language learning, understanding new cultural perspectives, and academic learning as well as personal growth; however, the depth of their learning depends on their level of integration in the local university.

The study suggests that although the direct enrollment experience is inherently more challenging than courses provided by U.S. study abroad institutions, the immersion forces study abroad students to adapt to cultural differences hence expanding their opportunities to learn. Nevertheless, the study recognizes that situational and individual components can lead to study abroad students' maladaptation which would prevent such learning. Therefore, the study concludes with recommendations for all actors to improve the integration of study abroad students in the local classroom with the goal of improving the intercultural competencies of all students.

Resumen

La internacionalización de la educación superior tiene como objetivo formar ciudadanos globales e interculturales. En Estados Unidos, los programas de movilidad para estudios, prácticas o voluntarios para universitarios, conocidos como *Study Abroad*, son parte central de las políticas educativas de internacionalización. Esto es así porque se parte de la creencia arraigada de que las experiencias de *Study Abroad* son la mejor manera para desarrollar las competencias interculturales y

lingüísticas del alumnado. Para las universidades estadounidenses, la experiencia individual de inscribirse y cursar asignaturas en una universidad extranjera, lo que se denomina matrícula directa (*Direct Enrollment*), se considera a menudo un reto por los problemas logísticos, académicos y de comunicación que puede generar al estudiante. Por este motivo la matrícula directa, a pesar de las oportunidades de aprendizaje que ofrece, es una opción menos frecuente en los programas de *Study Abroad* que prefieren proponer sus propios programas académicos a sus estudiantes.

En este contexto educativo, esta tesis analiza las opiniones y puntos de vista de los estudiantes de programas de *Study Abroad* sobre la experiencia de matrícula directa en la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (España). Más concretamente, este trabajo tiene como objetivos: 1) comprender cómo los estudiantes de *Study Abroad* perciben la cultura de aprendizaje de la universidad española; 2) estudiar cómo se adaptan al nuevo entorno educativo y 3) analizar qué y cómo aprenden estos estudiantes a través de la matrícula directa dentro la experiencia de *Study Abroad*. La investigación parte de la teoría integradora de la comunicación y la adaptación intercultural de Kim (2001) y de la teoría cognitiva social de Bandura (1986).

Los datos se recogieron durante el curso académico 2017/2018 en la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. La metodología adopta una perspectiva teórica de constructivismo social para explorar cómo los alumnos de *Study Abroad* interpretan sus experiencias académicas. Esta tesis adopta un enfoque etnográfico para conseguir una comprensión profunda de los objetivos de la investigación. Los participantes en este estudio son estudiantes y personal de los programas de *Study Abroad*, además de profesores, estudiantes y personal de las oficinas internacionales de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. Como esta tesis adopta un método etnográfico, los instrumentos de investigación utilizados fueron entrevistas semiestructuradas, observaciones participantes y grupos focales informales.

El análisis de los resultados obtenidos muestra que *Study Abroad* es una experiencia muy personal que se manifiesta en una gran variedad de perspectivas. Los resultados más significativos revelan que los alumnos de *Study Abroad* utilizan una combinación de cinco estrategias para adaptarse al aula de español: retirada, separación, integración académica, integración social y relajación de sus expectativas. Su proceso de toma de decisiones está regulado por su motivación, sus creencias de autoeficacia y agencia utilizada para interactuar con los actores locales. Los estudiantes de *Study Abroad* encuentran que las diferencias existentes entre sus expectativas sobre la enseñanza universitaria en España y la realidad son los aspectos más estresantes de la experiencia. El estudio también descubre que los alumnos de *Study Abroad* perciben que el aula local ofrece oportunidades para el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma, nuevas perspectivas culturales y contenidos académicos además del crecimiento personal; sin embargo, la profundidad de su aprendizaje depende de su nivel de integración en la universidad local.

Los resultados obtenidos en la tesis sugieren que, aunque la experiencia de matrícula directa es inherentemente más desafiante que los cursos proporcionados por las instituciones de *Study Abroad* de Estados Unidos, la inmersión obliga a estos alumnos a adaptarse a las diferencias culturales y, por lo tanto, a ampliar sus oportunidades de aprendizaje. Sin embargo, el estudio reconoce que, dependiendo de las características de los alumnos y las situaciones que se les presente, la matrícula directa puede resultar en una mala adaptación que impediría dicho aprendizaje. El estudio concluye con recomendaciones para que todos los actores implicados puedan mejorar la integración de los estudiantes de *Study Abroad* en el aula local y lograr así convertir a todos los alumnos en ciudadanos globales e interculturales.

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Perhaps due to the nature of my research, I have spent much time reflecting on the events in my life that led this sheltered girl from Massachusetts to do a Ph.D. in Spain. By events, I mean mainly the people who have defined my experiences abroad and who ultimately shaped me into this intercultural soul floating around the world. I am deeply grateful to my parents Mike and Lisa and my grandparents John and Julie, for providing me with an amazing education, which I recognize few people in this world have access to. Equally importantly, I thank my parents, brother Tom, cousin Lily and Ashleigh for always being there for me despite the distance due to my insistence on living abroad.

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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Term
AUCP	American University Center of Provence
AUM	Anxiety/Uncertainty Management
CIEE	Council on International Educational Exchange
DiLe	Diploma in Spanish Language, Culture and Civilization
DMIS	Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ESN	European Student Network
EU	European Union
GPA	Grade Point Average
HE	Higher Education
HEI(s)	Higher Education Institution(s)
IDI	Intercultural Development Inventory
IES	Instituciones de educación superior
ITI	Intentional, Targeted Intervention
ORI(s)	International Relations Office(s)
IaH	Internationalization at Home
IoC	Internationalization of the Curriculum
L2	Second Language
RQ(s)	Research Question(s)
SEPIE	Spanish Service for Internationalisation of Education
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SLT	Social Learning Theory
SA	Study Abroad
SAM	Study Abroad in Madrid
UK	United Kingdom
U.S.	United States
UAM	Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Preface

“And, when you can’t go back, you have to worry only about the best way of moving forward”

(Paulo Coelho, The Alchemist)

Born in the United States, my first opportunity to study abroad was through the Rotary short-term youth exchange program in high school. My only request was to go “somewhere in Latin America” because I wanted to speak Spanish, not because I had any idea about the region or its cultures. This experience shaped not only how I view language acquisition and cultural learning but also the decisions I would make in college and beyond. Due to the ethnographic nature of the study, I will begin this dissertation with the abbreviated version of my story. Just as my participants’ study abroad perspectives are influenced by their cultural history and experiences; it was my life’s path that led to my passion for the research topic.

Through Rotary, I ended up in a small town in the province of Córdoba, Argentina. I was determined to only speak in Spanish, not that there were many other options. After two months, I could communicate with little difficulty; although admittedly not with the best grammar or robust vocabulary. In my case, full immersion was the key to learning Spanish and gave me a boost in confidence as well. I associated my fluency with the constant interaction with native speakers rather than Spanish classes, which is why during future SA experiences my goal was always to interact with locals.

In Madrid, I requested to live with girls my age, landing me in a flat with four Spanish girls with whom I spent most nights watching bad reality TV instead of partying with U.S. program peers. I sought out language exchanges online, had an internship, and did not travel except for the program trips in Spain. In Ecuador, I lived with a host family with three children my age, volunteered at an afterschool center for children, only traveled nearby and found myself in a *telenovela* relationship with a local. Upon returning to the U.S., it took me only a month to decide to study abroad again.

This time, the program in Chile offered direct enrollment in local classes. I learned how to get photocopies of the readings, understand my politics professor who barely modulated his words and realized university could look quite different elsewhere. I made local friends through group work and a language exchange but was too shy to ask local students or professors for academic help. I lived with a host family, spent every day cooking with my host mom and enjoyed long *sobremesas* after meals learning about Chilean history, politics and social issues. I swam on the university swim team, taught an English conversation class at the university and was an English teaching assistant at a local school. In my SA experiences, I had few U.S. program friends which often left me feeling like an outsider; however, it was a sacrifice I was willing to make to feel integrated with the local culture and improve my Spanish.

After college, I moved to Córdoba, Argentina, to work at a Spanish school. Since it is not exactly an international hub, I could live just like any other Argentine. Or, as they would say “*sos una mas*”, “you’re one of us”. Later, when I lived in Portugal, Brazil and Italy, my strategy for language learning never changed. I would develop a solid grammatical and vocabulary base from a textbook and then find ways to interact with locals, separating myself from anyone who spoke English or Spanish. These experiences shaped my belief that the added value of studying or living abroad is the opportunity it presents to interact with local people to learn language, culture and gain new perspectives on life.

My experience with the Erasmus program in Europe as a master's student of Erasmus Mundus has also shaped my views on student exchange. In the Erasmus program, students are expected to be independent, problem solve and interact with other Europeans, while growing and learning along the way. Therefore, I have always questioned why it is that European students, many of which had never left home, seem to be able to study abroad without all the support of the U.S. study abroad programs. Looking back on my own experience, I was sheltered from many realities of living abroad and perhaps, had I been allowed to experience those challenges, I would have learned the skills and confidence that come from navigating living abroad earlier. My experience with the Erasmus program led me to believe there must

be a middle ground between the study abroad programs and the Erasmus program that provides enough support for cultural learning but not too much support to stunt personal growth.

During my semesters abroad, I witnessed many students who did not take advantage of its opportunities; only speaking in English, hanging out with program peers or spending their time skyping back home. I wanted to work in this field to improve programs' design to facilitate social integration with locals instead of pushing U.S. peers together. During my time as an exchange coordinator, I found many students want to make local friends and learn Spanish but are limited by their own shyness, lack of confidence in their Spanish or are just too self-conscious to step out of their comfort zone. I realized that my forced linguistic immersion experience in Argentina had given me an advantage for future study abroad experiences. My constant moving detached me from American culture, almost eliminating homesickness. As one professor commented during an interview, I am the exception to the rule, not the rule. I would need a new mindset to understand and support the typical exchange student.

Early in my research, I was inspired by Anthony Ogden's (2008) piece, "A view from the veranda" which compares study abroad students to British colonists who travel but stayed on their porch observing the country from afar. I never quite understood why so few U.S. study abroad students enroll in local universities. Instead, they stay in the comfortable confines of their U.S. program classrooms; observing the culture, studying the culture but not having meaningful interactions with the culture which could lead to learning about values, lifestyles and global perspectives on social issues. My research topic stems from my desire to discover what the direct enrollment experience is truly like for the study abroad student to find out how best to support the experience and in turn, inspire future students to step out of their U.S. bubble and into the Spanish classroom.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of my research is to understand the experience of study abroad (SA) students from the United States (U.S.) who directly enroll at the Autonomous University of Madrid¹ (UAM), a large public university in Spain, to enhance the intercultural learning value not only for exchange students but for the local students as well. The focus of my study is on the students' adaptation process to the new academic and social culture within the classroom. The present research uses a social-constructivist perspective and an ethnographic methodology to gain the necessary depth of analysis to understand the adaptation process from the students' perspective. Its ultimate objective is to provide recommendations to SA programs and Spanish universities to improve the facilitation of intercultural learning of all students. This introduction provides the context of the study, statement of the problem, rationale and importance of the work and the organization of the dissertation.

1.1 Context of the study

In 2020, U.S. SA was brought to a screeching halt, inflicted by Covid-19 which forced higher education institutions (HEIs) to reimagine how internationalization of higher education (HE) could look in a non-mobile world. In the past, the narrative focused on the development of intercultural and global competencies of SA students rather than all students. Covid-19 accentuated growing inequalities in society and higher education, spotlighting the need for increased inclusion and diversity in the international components of HE. Suddenly, the long-overlooked internationalization "at home" (IaH) branch of internationalization of higher education came into prominence. While this study was completed before Covid-19, the current shift towards a more balanced approach to internationalization makes the research all the more timely because it lies at the intersection of where SA meets IaH: direct enrollment in the local classroom.

¹ Original name in Spanish: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

In the U.S., SA is the most visible component of internationalization of HE policies. Internationalization of HE is “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2008, p. 21) whose goal is to improve the quality of HE. The conceptualization of internationalization is commonly understood as having two streams: “at home” and “abroad” (Knight, 2008). The “abroad” pillar refers to education taking place across borders (e.g., mobility programs) while the “at home” pillar refers to on-campus initiatives; both working towards global learning outcomes (de Wit et al., 2015). U.S. HEIs mobility programs are commonly referred to as “study abroad”.

SA policies have long been supported based on the belief that “immersion in another culture will lead to students increasing their intercultural competence” (Hammer, 2012, p. 124). Recently, many researchers have concluded that immersion itself is not sufficient to develop these skills (Lafford, 1995; Pyper & Slagter, 2015; Talburt & Stewart, 1999) and that interventions that are purposefully crafted to facilitate learning are key to intercultural learning during SA (La Brack & Bathurst, 2012). Especially in light of the rising costs associated with higher education and SA, stakeholders are demanding evidence of what and how students are learning abroad (Ogden & Streitwieser, 2016; Paige & Vande Berg, 2012). While improving learning during SA is warranted; we must also consider that only 10.9% of undergraduates participated in SA in 2017/2018 (Institute of International Education, 2019). Therefore, it is also pertinent to explore avenues towards inclusion in SA, such as the expanded use of exchange programs which are the least expensive option for students yet currently the least utilized.

On the other hand, IaH also represents an opportunity to impact a larger proportion of students, faculty, and staff (Greene, 2020). It is defined as “the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments” (Beelen & Jones, 2015, p. 69). IaH recognizes that having international students in the classroom is neither a requirement nor enough to guarantee intercultural skills will be developed by all

students (Beelen & Jones, 2015). Nevertheless, having international exchange students in the classroom is beneficial for IaH because it provides opportunities to add international perspectives to the discussion and for students to engage with cultural others; helping to develop intercultural skills of both the mobile and non-mobile students. The current literature shows that a main challenge for IaH is the academics' lack of engagement, skills and knowledge of IaH strategies (Beelen, 2019) as institutions continue to rely on their students going abroad to develop intercultural skills.

A parallel concept to IaH that also deserves mentioning is internationalization of the curriculum (IoC). Its current academically accepted definition is, "the incorporation of international, intercultural and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study" (Leask, 2015, p. 9). It coincides with IaH in its integration of international elements in the curriculum but diverges in its focus on the entire study program which includes mobility (Beelen & Jones, 2018). While IaH and abroad are often viewed as either-or scenarios, IoC incorporates both pillars to develop intercultural competencies of students. This research incorporates ideas of IoC, but I will use the term IaH since it examines the "abroad" aspect of U.S. SA and the "at home" part in a Spanish university rather than examining both pillars from the perspective of one HEI.

Covid-19's significant impact on student mobility forced institutions to develop the IaH components and shift to a more holistic understanding of internationalization – hopefully finding a better balance between "abroad" and "at home" components for the future. "It is an ambitious change, requiring many faculty members to think differently about their disciplines and courses, and administrators to develop a different frame of reference for the workings of the institutions and the relationship between IaH and mobility" (Green, 2020). My research's focus is on the SA students' adaptation; however, rather than examining their experiences as something disconnected from IaH, the focal point of the research is

within a crucial aspect of the relationship between mobility and IaH; the experience of exchange students in the classroom.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The U.S SA model relies heavily on U.S. employed support staff to organize and facilitate the exchange of U.S tertiary students abroad. Trends towards short-term programming of less than two months and U.S. faculty led group study tours only reinforce the model. Consequently, most SA students take classes within programs delivered by U.S. institutions (de Wit et al., 2017). While this practice may be in part due to practical matters; it subtly reinforces the idea that U.S HE is superior to the local institutions (Hendrickson, 2016) hence accentuating the same ethnocentric worldviews that SA aims to diminish. Researchers and practitioners have raised concerns about the lack of integration of SA students with local people and its effects on language and intercultural competence learning (Hammer, 2012; Ogden, 2008). After all, “engagement with the culture is still at the heart of the SA experiences” (Vande Berg et al., 2009, p. 54). Programs are designed to increase SA students’ immersion in the local community through homestays, internships and other extracurricular activities; yet few push to increase the number of students who directly enroll in local universities.

Direct enrollment provides SA students the opportunity to experience the culture in a natural setting and understand how a local HEI works in another country. The opportunities for contact with local students and practicing the local language are enhanced by taking classes and/or involving oneself in on-campus extracurricular activities. The classroom also provides advantages for second language (L2) learning since it exposes students to a constant authentic input of the language in its natural setting (Rueda, 2006). Furthermore, it simultaneously uses a higher linguistic register (e.g., professors’ lectures) and informal colloquial language (e.g., communication between students). Direct enrollment offers a wider variety of course selection which opens opportunities for non-traditional SA students (e.g., sciences majors) to earn credit towards their major or minor. Finally, the challenge of studying in an unknown

academic context pushes the student to become more independent which can also develop transversal skills such as flexibility, adaptation and intercultural skills (Pastor Cesteros & Pandor, 2017). Nevertheless, it continues to be underutilized compared to the logistically easier option of attending U.S. SA program courses.

From the perspective of IaH, the direct enrollment experience is also beneficial to the local students and professors because SA students can offer international perspectives to the classroom. Furthermore, if the interaction is increased between international and local students; there will be more opportunities to learn about each other's cultures and languages. Since Spanish universities aim to improve English language skills to better their graduates' work prospects, (Ministerio de Educación Cultura y Deporte, 2014) interaction with U.S students may be particularly beneficial for local students. Nevertheless, if international students are as simply passive actors without having meaningful interactions, these potential learning benefits are not guaranteed to be achieved (Beelen & Jones, 2018; Leask, 2015). For this reason, IaH initiatives that facilitate the integration of international students in the classroom, including U.S SA students, would be beneficial for Spanish HEIs.

The Spanish Service for Internationalisation of Education² (SEPIE) report of internationalization of HE in Spain (de Wit et al., 2017) concludes that:

the contribution of American students and faculty to the quality and internationalisation of Spanish higher education is limited. Only by advocating for more direct enrolment of American students in and reciprocal exchange with Spanish universities, might more integration of those students occur within and outside the classroom with their Spanish students and teachers. (p. 67)

A positive direct enrollment experience would have learning benefits for SA students as well; however, we cannot advocate for more direct enrollment if we do not fully understand; first, what are the

² Original term in Spanish: Servicio Español para la Internacionalización de la Educación

challenges SA students face; secondly, how both SA program staff and local university actors can facilitate the adaptation process; and lastly, how the learning benefits can be achieved. Improved support of the direct enrollment experience would lead to better learning outcomes for all and allow for increased use of exchange programs which could lead to more inclusion in SA as well. This doctoral thesis will explore direct enrollment from the SA students' perspective to comprehend these aspects and provide recommendations to improve the experience for all.

1.3 Rational and importance of study

U.S SA research focuses primarily on measuring language learning and intercultural competence development during SA by examining personal and program characteristic variables. Studies have found that the SA experience in itself can improve competencies but does not guarantee it (Jackson, 2012). In fact, conclusions in the literature regarding actual outcomes of SA remain limited and are often contradictory (Terzuolo, 2018). It is clear that being present in a foreign country does not automatically mean students will interact with their new environment as they find ways to shelter themselves by socializing with U.S. peers, taking classes within their U.S. program and relying on technology to speak to those back home rather than establishing deeper relationships with local people (e.g., host families). A qualitative approach is needed to account for these discrepancies, in order to understand what happens between the pre- and post-test "to better understand the process of facilitating students' intercultural development during study abroad" (Harvey, 2013, p. 2).

Past qualitative research examines the SA experience in a global sense, perhaps except for those that focus on the host stay experience. The direct enrollment experience in a host institution is mainly referenced anecdotally if a critical incident arose in the classroom during the SA experience; however, I could find no SA research focused specifically on the academic context. As Collentine (2009) concluded, "it is true there exists little information about American learners' success in advanced-level, direct-enrollment programs" (p. 221). Since the experience inside the classroom affects how students perceived

experiences outside with the local environment and vice versa; Kinginger (2009) suggests that “research on the cultures of schooling encountered by studies abroad would form a useful complement to investigations of students’ experiences” (p. 119). The present research is innovative as it is perhaps the first that aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the direct enrollment experience in the local academic setting by taking an ethnographic approach, allowing me to gain a “natives’ point of view” (Geertz, 1974). Hence, overcoming a gap in previous SA research.

It is widely accepted that each academic context is influenced by culture which has led to studies about differences in cultures of learning (see Jin and Cortazzi 1993, 1995, 1998; Ward 2006). However, this research has been limited primarily to studies on degree-seeking Asian students at Anglo-Saxon universities (Andrade, 2006; Lewthwaite, 1996; Li & Campbell, 2008; Volet & Ang, 1998; Zhang & Goodson, 2011) since this profile is the most numerous in terms of mobility and the long-term stays facilitate longitude research suitable for studying adaptation. The potential differences in cultures of learning between the U.S. and Spain for SA students have only been considered by Rueda (2006) and Pandor (2017); however, the cultural differences were predetermined by the researchers. By taking an ethnographic approach, my results are grounded in the SA students’ perspectives on the cultures of learning rather than the researchers’, another novel aspect to the study.

The adaptation process of degree-seeking international students to the academic context has been extensively researched (Chien, 2013; Schartner & Young, 2016; Wan et al., 2013; Ward & Kennedy, 1993); however, for SA students, the academic context has only been considered as a variable which could contribute to intercultural competence or language learning outcomes. SA programs are indeed shorter in nature (2 weeks to 1 year rather than 3-5 years) allowing less time for adaptation; however, this does not negate the fact they will face cultural differences in the academic setting. The shorter-term orientation of their programs provides less incentive for adaptation than long term sojourners (Kim, 1988). Nevertheless, the short term stay actually increases the importance of facilitating their adaptation as they

have less time to learn about the new culture and adapt to it. The process of adaptation for one-semester SA students is likely to be different than degree-seeking students which makes it vital that we understand the specific difficulties this segment of sojourners face.

Moreover, I did not discover any U.S. SA research which considers the local students' and professors' perspectives on their own university culture and the impact of the SA students in the classroom.

If we only take the sojourners' perspective "we learn only about what is 'wrong' with other cultures, according to temporary residents. By including the voices of all parties to the learning that emerges in SA settings, language socialization offers a means to overcome this difficulty.

(Kinger, 2017, p. 10 as cited in Isabelli-Garcia & Isabelli, 2020)

My dissertation's methodology allows for a holistic understanding of the local perspectives on the Spanish HE system and the impact of exchange students in the classroom, resulting in a deeper understanding of the complexities of the culture of learning. Furthermore, this approach allows for recommendations for laH at the local university which have not been included in previous U.S. SA research either.

My research is the first within the U.S. SA body of literature to take an ethnographic approach to understand the SA students' perspective on their experience in a local university classroom specifically. It adopts a social constructivist perspective which assumes each student constructs knowledge based on their individual experiences and social interactions. The ethnographic approach allows for the necessary depth of understanding needed to comprehend how SA students' give meaning to their experiences in the classroom. It is most appropriate for understanding complex individual perceptions through its use of "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) to understand the "natives' point of view" (Geertz, 1974). Its interpretivist naturalistic nature allows me to live the experience alongside the participants over an extended period of time. My ethnographic approach provides an emic perspective of the students' adaptation and learning process during direct enrollment which is currently absent in the SA literature.

The experience of taking courses alongside local students should be part of the SA experience considering it is called study abroad after all. However, we cannot ignore that taking classes in a new academic culture is a challenging experience that can require adaptation on the part of the SA student and the local actors. If we are to advocate for a more immersive experience; this research is paramount in understanding how to support students' adaptation and facilitate their learning. Furthermore, if we are to promote the internationalization of HE in Spain, then it is imperative we understand how the presence of international students affects and/or pushes local students and professors to adapt as well. This dissertation aims to improve both the internationalization "abroad" experience for the SA students and the IaH at the local university.

1.4 Organization of the dissertation

The present thesis is organized into seven chapters. The first chapter presents an overview of the context of the study, a statement of the problem and the importance of the study. The second chapter provides the theoretical perspectives which inform how my research views student learning during SA: social constructivism, cross-cultural adaptation (Kim, 2001) and social cognitive theory (SCT) (Bandura, 1986). It is followed by a critical literature review of the relevant past research on cultures of learning, student adaptation and learning during SA. The fourth chapter outlines the general objectives of the study and the research questions that aim to fill the gap in the current literature. It provides the rationale for the choice of ethnography and the use of the social constructivist perspective. The research methods follow, including a detailed description of the methodology, data collection, and data analysis.

The fifth chapter contains the results and is divided into two sections. First, I present the descriptive results which provide answers to my research questions. They are followed by four narrative stories of eight participants which were chosen for their representation of salient categories obtained from the data as well as their range of adaptative choices. The sixth chapter discusses the results' connection to the previous literature and the theoretical framework. The discussion adds to the

understanding of the impact of internationalization of HE in Spain, the role of motivation, self-efficacy and agency in SA students' decisions to interact with locals and how it impacts their adaptation process, and the added learning value of direct enrollment to SA programs.

The final chapter provides recommendations for SA programs to facilitate support for intercultural learning during direct enrollment and for Spanish universities to enable intercultural learning of home students through greater integration of international students in the classroom. It also offers suggestions to SA students by providing them with a framework of possible cultural differences they may find in a foreign classroom and suggestions for adapting to the challenges presented so they may take advantage of the learning opportunities direct enrollment presents. Finally, it concludes by exploring the limitations of the study and areas for possible future research.

Chapter 2: Theoretical perspectives

This chapter presents the theoretical perspectives underpinning how my research understands the adaptation process of SA students taking courses at a Spanish university. I approach my research using a social constructivist epistemology which views learning as being socially constructed through social interaction. Additionally, Kim's (2001) integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation informs my understanding of how SA students adapt to a foreign classroom environment. Finally, Bandura's (1986) SCT adds to my research's comprehension of SA students' communication and adaptation decisions. The following will explain my rationale for choosing these theories to inform my investigation.

2.1 Social constructivism

Social constructivism's roots are found in Vygotsky's developmental psychology (Hruby, 2001). The key concepts of the sociocultural theory of development can be found in *Thinking and Speech* (Vygotsky, 1987) and *Mind in Society* (Vygotsky, 1978). The sociocultural theory of development views knowledge as being socially constructed through social interaction. It argues that development cannot be understood without taking into consideration the cultural, historical and institutional setting (Wertsch, 1991). Its process orientation of development rather than linear progression in stages compliments Kim's (2001) view of adaptation as a cyclical process. I believe social constructivism to be the most appropriate paradigm to understand the SA direct enrollment experience because it helps explain how individual students' cultural background and social interactions in the new classroom environment influence their meaning making process.

Wertsch's (1991) works identified three main themes of the writing of Vygotsky: "1) reliance on genetic or developmental, analysis; 2) the claim that higher mental functioning in the individual derives from social life; and 3) the claim that human action, on both the social and individual planes, is mediated

by tools and signs” (p 19). The first theme highlights Vygotsky’s emphasis on understanding human cognitive functioning as a developmental process mediated by cultural, historical and environmental factors. “We need to concentrate not on the product of development but on the very process by which higher forms are established” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 64). Such observation is relevant to my research’s aim of understanding the adaptation process of students rather than solely analyzing learning outcomes.

Vygotsky considers that four genetic domains are necessary for this developmental analysis: phylogenetic development, factors that distinguish humans from other animals such as the use of tools and signs; cultural/historical, the role of cultural practices in development; ontogenetic, ways in which individual characteristics and history influence development; and microgenetic, processes of interaction between individual and environment (Palincsar, 2005). These domains guide my analysis when considering how SA students’ cultural/historical backgrounds influence their adaptation and learning decisions at the local university. Furthermore, the microgenetic domain is reflected in Kim’s (2001) cross-cultural adaptation model; hence emphasizing the role of interactions between the SA students and the classroom as important factors in their adaptation and learning process.

The social origins of learning are evident in Vygotsky’s theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky claims that individuals learn best in the ZPD, the distance between the "actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving" and the higher level of "potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). In his view, learning is best achieved through social interaction when working with a professor and skilled peers closer to one’s potential development level than one’s actual level (Wertsch, 1991). ZPD theory assumes that collaborative learning with more capable peers is beneficial to learning. When applied to the experience of SA students, social interaction in the target language with local peers who understand the academic culture should facilitate both language and cultural learning. However, the question arises of whether the direct enrollment experience falls within a

SA student's ZPD, which would benefit their learning or whether it is beyond their potential learning level. The ZPD theory is especially useful because it provides a way to understand how students' initial language or intercultural skills can impact their learning during the direct enrollment experience.

The last theme, states that for cognitive processes to be understood, we must recognize the tools (physical) and signs (psychological) that mediate them (Wertsch, 1991). The mediation methods are products of the sociocultural environment and their importance is derived from the meaning ascribed to them by society (Daniels, 2005). Language and culture are two key signs that play a mediating role in these interpersonal interactions. Tools and signs are also inherently cultural and therefore depending on the given society, the connotation ascribed to them is different. SA students will naturally attribute certain meanings to cultural artifacts (e.g., chairs, syllabuses, common spaces, etc.) only to find they may have different meanings to the host society; likely disorienting them. This idea is particularly beneficial when analyzing any cultural differences SA students find in the classroom.

These key concepts of social constructivism are valuable for understanding the experience of direct enrollment students because it allows me to consider their meaning making process as being socially constructed through their interactions in the classroom. Its focus on the influence of individuals' genetic domains on their experience helps explain the variety of outcomes, hence making the rationale for using this theory stronger. Furthermore, the social constructivist epistemology strengthens the case for my choice of ethnography because it allows for the proper depth required to understand the students' individual adaptation to the classroom. Finally, the social constructivist perspective's understanding of development as a process guided by interactions is complimentary to my choice of Kim's (2001) integrative communication theory of cross-cultural adaptation and SCT (Bandura, 1986).

2.2 Cross-cultural adaptation

Cross-cultural adaptation is defined by Kim (2001) "as the dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar, or changed cultural environments, establish (or reestablish) and

maintain relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationships with those environments” (p. 31). I believe the most appropriate theory of adaptation for my research is Kim’s (2001) integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation approach which includes two key models: the stress–adaptation–growth dynamic and the cross-cultural adaption model.

Other adaptation theories that focus on sojourners' problems and/or psychological and socio-cultural adaptation outcomes allow for an understanding of difficulties international students face; however, they do little to help us understand the dynamics of the adaptation process itself (Church, 1982). Kim’s (2001) model is advantageous because it views adaptation as a process in constant flux rather than an outcome, which is better suited for understanding how students adapt. Furthermore, it allows for an understanding of the interplay of individual, environmental and communicative factors that influence SA students’ adaptation and account for the variation in results. It does not view cultural differences as a negative but rather opportunities for growth and learning which corresponds to my belief that the challenge of direct enrollment provides learning opportunities.

2.2.1 Kim’s integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation

Kim’s (2001) theory provides a comprehensive approach to adaptation that draws from existing interdisciplinary works to create a more general theory. Kim’s theory also aims to reconcile past incongruities in the existing adaption literature: macro (group level) and micro (individual sojourner) level perspectives, long-term and short-term adaptation, adaptation as a problem or learning opportunity, varying theoretical accounts and empirical assessments, and assimilationism models that view it as a necessity and pluralist models that view it as a choice (Kim, 2001). I believe Kim’s (2001) model’s integration of these viewpoints allows me to explore the SA students’ experiences through considering a broad range of factors influencing their adaptation.

Kim’s (2001) definition of cross-cultural adaptation is meant to encompass broad adaptation terms such as assimilation, the internalization of host culture by sojourners; acculturation, the acquisition

of some aspects of host culture; adjustment, psychological responses to difficulties presented; coping, psychological responses to difficulties faced; and integration, the development social relationships in host environment (Kim, 2001). In my case, it is the process by which students learn to adapt to the unfamiliar Spanish HE classroom.

The theory seeks to understand how and why people adapt (Kim, 2005) which corresponds to my objective to comprehend how and why SA students adapt to the Spanish university classroom. The theory consists of two models, the process model (how) and the structural model (why) that seek to answer two central questions respectively:

- 1) what is the essential nature of the adaptation process individual settlers undergo over time?
- 2) why are some settlers more successful than others in attaining a level of psychological fitness in the host environment? (Kim, 2001)

2.2.2 Stress-adaptation-growth dynamic

Kim's theory of adaptation merges the problem-oriented and cultural-learning approaches by arguing that adaptation is inherently both problematic/stressful and growth producing (Kim, 2017). Problem-orientated approaches stem from the notion of culture shock, "the anxiety that results from losing all of our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (Oberg, 1960, p. 177). Culture shock is traditionally viewed from a negative perspective as a natural problem or sickness that needs to be treated (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). However, Adler (1975) argues that culture shock "can be an important aspect of cultural learning, self-development, and personal growth" (p.14). In a SA context, J. Bennett (2008) contends that "disequilibrium need not lead to dissatisfaction....it can result in teachable moments or trigger events which are often stimuli for developing intercultural competence." Kim's (2001) stress-adaptation growth dynamic is useful for my research as it allows me to consider the direct enrollment experience as both a stressful and learning experience as students strive to meet the challenges of the host classroom.

Kim's (2001) theory is based on an open-systems perspective that assumes "adaptation manifests the natural human instinct to struggle for an internal equilibrium in the face of adversarial environmental conditions" (Kim, 2005, p. 378). People are not viewed as static but rather dynamic and self-reflective, who adjust as they interact with the environment (Kim, 2001). Stress occurs when humans' abilities are unable to meet the demands of the environment, creating disequilibrium in the open system (Kim, 2017). Such is often the case when exchange students enter a new academic culture and realize they are missing familiar cues that govern classroom pedagogy and interactions.

Individuals are enculturated in their home society through which they develop a communicative or social competence comprised of cognitive, affective, and operational (or behavioral) capabilities (Kim, 2001). When people enter a new cultural environment, they become aware of their taken for granted assumptions of their original enculturation. Their open system enters disequilibrium, reflected in feelings of uncertainty, confusion and anxiety when communicating with the host society (Kim, 2001). The experience is stressful due to

a kind of identity conflict rooted in resistance to change: the desire to retain old customs in keeping with the original identity, on the one hand, and the desire to change behavior in seeking harmony with the new milieu, on the other. (Kim, 2005, p. 383)

Initially, they may have negative reactions including denial, avoidance and withdrawal due to a natural instinct to maintain equilibrium and not be affected by the outside environment (Kim, 2005). When applied to SA students, their initial reaction to stress will likely be negative, which if not overcome will hinder their adaptation and growth. Therefore, it is my position that it is preferable to facilitate SA students' adaption process to ensure their learning.

Adaptation is a way of regulating behavior to satisfy both internal identity structures and to function successfully in the new environment (Kim, 2001). As sojourners adapt, they go through both a new acculturation process as well as a deculturation process, losing some of their old cultural elements

and gaining new cultural elements (Kim, 2001). The approach views “cross-cultural adaptation as a process that occurs in and through communication activities” (Kim, 2005, p. 379). Sojourners' self-reflexivity enables them to figure out new ways of solving problems and communicating in the host society (Kim, 2001). “Growth of some units always occurs at the expense of others, the adaptation process follows a pattern that juxtaposes psychological integration and disintegration, progression and regression, leading to a state of reintegration and personal development” (Kim, 2017, p. 3). As SA students interact, they decipher the local academic culture and learn new ways of being, resulting in a growth that allows them to function in the new setting.

In SA research and practice, popular stage models such as Oberg's (1960) U-curve theory and Gullahorn and Gullahorn's (1963) W-curve adaption, Adler's transitional experience (1975) or Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (1993) are commonly used to describe the cultural adaptation process. Reviews of the U-curve and W-curve have shown inconclusive results for explaining sojourner adaptation when applied to different settings (Kim, 2012). I agree with Perry and Southwell's (2011) argument that these frameworks “assume that individuals become more interculturally sensitive in a linear progression...without allowing for the possibility that individuals can express multiple, complex and conflicting aspects of intercultural sensitivity” (2011, p. 461). These models may be intuitively easy to comprehend, especially for practitioners; however, I do not view adaptation as an outcome achieved through stages but rather a cyclic, ongoing process that happens as individuals negotiate their identities in the new environment.

In the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic the adaptation process is a “fluctuating pattern of drawback-to-leap: each stressful experience is responded to with a temporary setback which, in turn, activates adaptive energy to reorganize and re-engage in the activities of cultural learning and internal change, bringing about a new self-reintegration” (Kim, 2012, p. 234). As sojourners improve their host communicative competence, daily activities become easier, and levels of stress are lower when

confronted with communicative differences (Kim, 2001). Rather than viewing adaptation as a final outcome in which students are fully functional in the host society, Kim's (2001) theory allows me to view adaptation to the local classroom as an ongoing process which becomes less stressful over time as students learn the academic culture.

Finally, Kim (2001) argues that "none of the three [stress, adaptation, growth] occurs without the others, and each occurs because of the others" (p. 57). This is relevant to my argument that although direct enrollment may be challenging or stressful, it also sets in motion the potential for cultural adaptation and growth. The model is illustrated below.

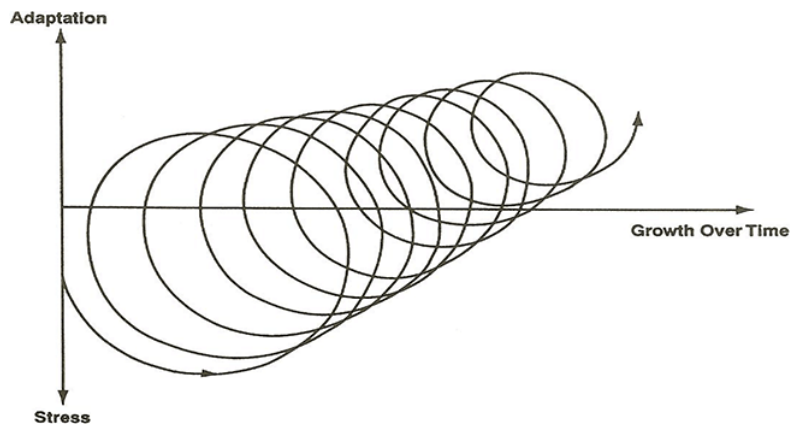
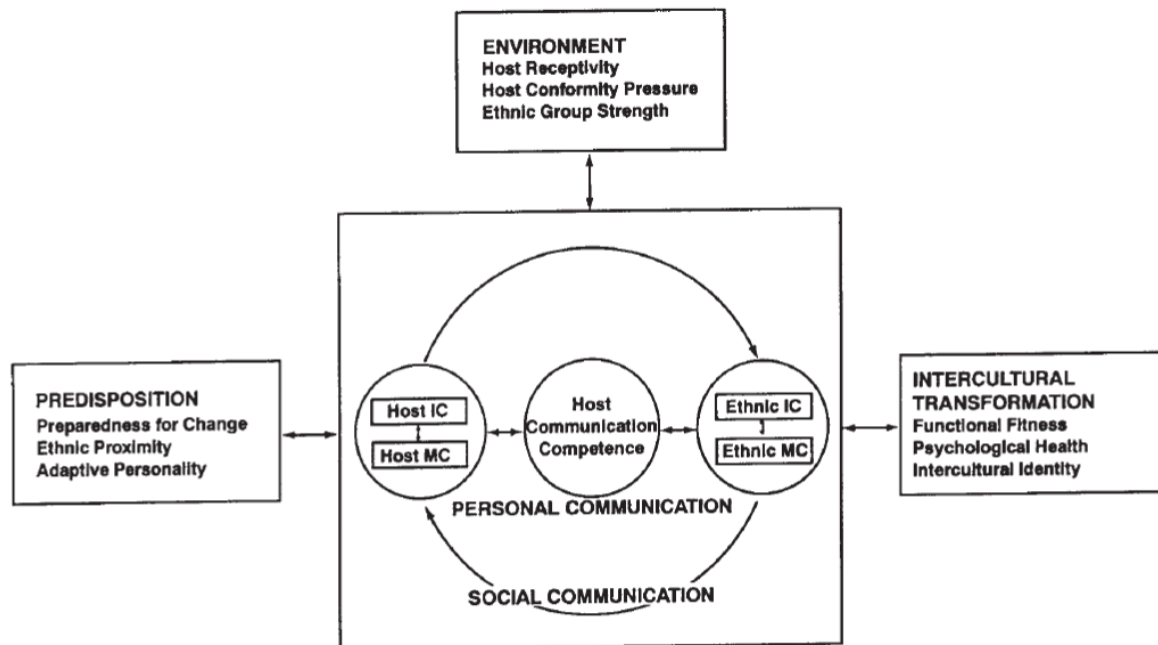


Figure 1

Kim's Stress-Adaptation-Growth Dynamic (Kim, 2001, p. 59)

2.2.3 Structural model of cross-cultural adaptation

Kim's (2001) structural model of cross-cultural adaptation illustrates factors influencing adaptation to explain why some sojourners are more successful than others at adaptation. The model centers around personal and social communication, which are reciprocally impacted by environmental conditions, predisposition characteristics and intercultural transformation, as seen below.



Note: IC = interpersonal communication; MC = mass communication.

Figure 2

Kim's structural model of cross-cultural adaptation (Kim, 2001, p. 87)

Host communication competence

At the center of the cross-cultural adaptation model is host communication competence which “refers to the overall internal capacity of a stranger to decode and encode information in accordance with the host cultural communication practices” (Kim, 2012, p.236). The competence is composed of affective competence, the emotional and motivational ability to cope with living in the host environment; operational competence, the ability to use effective verbal and non-verbal behavior in the host environment; and cognitive competence, the knowledge of host language and culture (Kim, 2001). These three elements are consistent with Deardorff's (2009) Delphi study of leading intercultural experts which concluded that most models of intercultural communication highlight the importance of attitudes, knowledge and skills.

Host communication competence is developed through participation in the host society communication processes through interpersonal and mass communication interactions (Kim, 2012). Active participation with natives in the host environment is integral to the development of host communicative competence (Kim, 2001). For international students, friendships with host nationals serve as instrumental facilitators of cultural learning (e.g., culture-specific knowledge, language skills, academic help, etc.) (Bochner et al., 1977). Mass communication activities refer to communication systems that transmit cultural knowledge such as television, music, art, etc. but do not involve interpersonal contact. Within the curriculum, cultural learning is transmitted through the selection of readings, videos and assignments.

Ethnic interpersonal and mass communication can also be useful upon arrival as they can provide information about the host society and emotional support (Kim, 2001). Co-national friendships between international students are used to express and maintain cultural values, identity and self-esteem (Bochner et al., 1977). However, when such reliance continues to pass the initial phase, it can negate opportunities for interaction with the host society which facilitate adaptation (Kim, 2012). These assumptions about the host and ethnic communication suggest that engaging with the local actors in the classroom will benefit SA students' adaptation while extended interactions with ethnic group members will be unfavorable for adaptation.

In the higher education literature, the term integration is used more often than host communication competence when analyzing the interactions between groups of students. Integration refers loosely to the degree of interaction with peers and faculty in and outside of the classroom. Concepts of social and academic integration in HE stem from Tinto (1997) work on persistence which found that the more students interacted with faculty and peers, the more likely they were to finish their college degree due to a sense of belonging to a group that increased their willingness to persist. Drawing

from Tinto's work, Severien and Wolff (2008) researched ethnic minority and majority students' integration and developed the following distinction between the different types of integration.

Table 1. Severiens's Distinctions Between Formal and Informal Aspects of Academic and Social Integration.

		Explanation
Academic integration		
Formal		Contact related to the institute itself: for example, engaging actively with the learning content, and being supported to do so by the teachers.
Informal		Contact between teachers and students outside the formal learning environment.
Social integration		
Formal		Contact between peers on matters of learning, particularly in relation to group work and project work.
Informal		Frequent social contact and participation in activities out of class.

Figure 3

As adapted in Spencer-Oatey and Dauber (2019, p. 4)

The concept of integration can be applied to the direct enrollment experience when considering the amount and quality of host communication the SA student has with local professors and students. I will use academic integration to refer to actively engaging in the learning context including, but not limited to participation in class, communication with professors and understanding the culture of learning. Social integration refers to the interpersonal relationships built with students both in and outside the classroom. The degree to which SA students are socially and academically integrated reflects their level of engagement in host communication, an integral component of their adaptation and learning process.

Environmental Factors

Kim's structural model consists of three environmental conditions that impact adaptation: host receptivity, host conformity pressure and ethnic group strength (Kim, 2001). Host receptivity refers to the degree to which a given environment, or society, is open to accepting strangers and offers social support. Depending on the past relations between ethnic groups, cultural distance, and status, the reception may differ. Also, within countries, different areas (e.g., cities versus towns) and contexts (e.g., work versus school environments) impact the level of receptivity (Kim, 2001). Host conformity pressure refers to the

extent to which the host environment pressures the strangers to conform to host communicative patterns. This may be communicated through discrimination towards the sojourner that motivates them to change behavior to avoid negative reproaches. Using these ideas, actors' attitudes at the local university towards SA students may depend on how accustomed they are to receiving exchange students, the perceived cultural distance of the students' backgrounds (e.g., ethnic, language skills, academic knowledge, etc.) and to what extent accommodations are made for exchange students.

Ethnic group strength refers to the level of conformity pressure within one's ethnic group that causes people to resist adopting host practices to avoid rejection from their co-nationals (Kim, 2001). SA students have consistently been seen to maintain strong co-national bonds within their cohorts, especially within their SA centers (Hendrickson, 2017; Ogden, 2008). The different SA programs' designs and the role of direct enrollment within them are likely to impact the level of pressure students feel to socialize with their cohort. The environmental conditions are beneficial for understanding the relative degree of 'push and pull' of direct enrollment and the SA program that influences students' adaptation.

Predisposition characteristics

Kim's model highlights three important predisposition categories to describe an individual's adaptation potential: preparedness, ethnic proximity/distance and adaptative personality predisposition (Kim, 2001). A sojourner's preparedness depends on the level of language and cultural knowledge obtained before arrival which in the case of SA students is dependent on previous years of study and/or cultural heritage. It may also depend greatly on whether the move was voluntary and the length of stay (Kim, 2001). SA is voluntary in most cases; however, direct enrollment may or may not be depending on the SA program options offered by each university. Ethnic proximity refers to a person's visual aspects (e.g., a student's race) that differentiate them from the host society as well as speech pattern (e.g., linguistical variation of Spanish). It influences the host society's acceptance of the sojourner providing an advantage or disadvantage for adaptation.

Studies show that heritage students, who theoretically have a closer ethnic proximity and preparedness, demonstrate a range of SA experiences from higher levels of adaptation (McLaughlin, 2001; Nguyen et al., 2018) to withdrawal (Goldoni, 2013; Quan, 2018). For this reason, I believe the last element to be of particular importance in understanding SA students' ability to overcome the challenge of direct enrollment. Finally, the sojourners' predisposition to adaptation refers to inner resources such as openness, resilience, patience and positivity which facilitate adaptation to challenging situations (Kim, 2001). I will further analyze the inner resources in the next section by coupling it with Bandura's (1986) SCT which will better explain differences in students' adaptation choices.

Intercultural transformation

The interaction of the environmental conditions, individual characteristics, and host communicative competence results in an intercultural transformation with three main components: functional fitness, psychology health and intercultural identity (Kim, 2012). The largely unconscious process of intercultural transformation happens along the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic (Kim, 2001). Functional fitness is developed through the successful accomplishments of activities in the host society which demonstrate an "increased congruence of subjective meaning systems" (Kim, 2001, p.186). Sojourners also develop a balanced level of psychological health resulting in emotional wellbeing, greater satisfaction and efficacy (Kim, 2012). Finally, sojourners may develop an intercultural identity in which one no longer defines themselves rigidly by the home or host culture. They can better experience different cultural worlds and make deliberate choices to be successful in a given situation (Kim, 2001). These gradually developed facets are both outcomes as well as contributing factors in improving the sojourners' host communicative competence (Kim, 2001).

In my investigation of the direct enrollment experience, these facets of intercultural transformation are central to adaptation. SA students may increase their functional fitness by improving academically (e.g., understanding assignments, participating in classes, achieving good marks) and

developing better communication with professors and students. Their psychological wellbeing is reflected in increased levels of comfort in the classroom and during intercultural interactions, as well as lowered levels of academic stress. Finally, SA students may demonstrate the development of an intercultural identity through accepting and incorporating different ways of being a student into their beliefs and/or behaviors. Reciprocally, these adaptive facets allow students to improve their host communication competence which in turn continues their intercultural development.

Kim's (2001) model has received some critiques from the scientific literature. The principal critique comes from Eric Mark Kramer (2000, 2003, 2019) who argues his theory of cultural fusion better explains intercultural adaptation. Kramer (2019) contends that cultural learning should be viewed as additive rather than Kim's (2001) proposition that deculturation is required for successful learning and adaptation. However, the sojourner may choose to adapt to the degree which still ensures their psychological health and functional fitness (Miller & Massey, 2019). Much of SA students' cultural learning may be additive due to the short time frame that makes it unlikely they will lose elements of their culture of learning. Nevertheless, some deculturation "in the sense that new responses are adopted in situations that previously would have evoked old ones" (Kim, 2001, p. 51) is still likely to occur as students embrace new ways of being a university student to be academically successful.

Researchers of both international students (Maruyama, 1998; Tian & Lowe, 2014) and SA students (Hendrickson, 2016; Pitts, 2005) have found evidence of a shift towards a more intercultural identity. However, Kramer (2000) also argues that the term intercultural personhood is problematic in that it implies an assimilation view of adjustment based on the ethnocentric idea that the host culture does not learn anything from the newcomer. Kramer argues that a more appropriate term is cultural fusion which refers to the mixing of cultures that creates new social forms with no particular end goal of adaptation in mind. While I agree local actors also adapt and learn from international students to some extent, the goal of my research is to understand the SA students' adaption process, rather than new social forms that

emerges from an intercultural classroom and therefore, Kim's (2001) model is more appropriate for the goals of my research.

Kim's (2001) integrative cross-cultural communication and adaptation theory is an appropriate paradigm to achieve my aim of understanding the students' adaptation process and the factors influencing it because its main concern is how and why sojourners are adapting. It complements both the social constructivist perspective and ethnographic methodology of my research that focuses on understanding how students make meaning from the new academic culture. Nevertheless, the model can be strengthened by combining it with Bandura's (1986) SCT that considers how and why students make certain communicative decisions that hinder or facilitate their adaptation.

2.3 Social cognitive theory

SCT was developed in Albert Bandura's landmark book *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory* (1986) and stems from his previous Social learning theory (SLT) (Bandura, 1971). SCT is based on the belief that people exercise control over their actions through agency and that self-efficacy beliefs play a principal role in activity choice, goal setting, effort and persistence, learning and achievement (Bandura, 1986). Agency and self-efficacy beliefs are significant to my understanding of SA students' adaptation choices, especially regarding with whom they decide to communicate.

SLT is a learning theory founded in the belief that "man is neither driven by inner forces nor buffeted helplessly by environmental influences" (Bandura, 1971, p. 2). This view is congruent with both the socio-cultural perspective and Kim's (2001) model which incorporate both inner and outer factors when understanding how individuals make meaning from experiences and adapt to new cultures, respectively. SLT argues that by observing behavior based on past direct or vicarious experiences and their subsequent consequences, individuals make cognitive decisions about which behaviors to engage (Bandura, 1971). Applied to my research, SA students are likely to choose classroom behaviors that have produced positive results in the past.

However, SLT recognizes that not all actions produce the same consequences depending on the time, place and people involved (Bandura, 1971). When actions are produced in one's own culture, they most likely elicit the expected response; however, when repeated in another cultural context the consequence may be different. This leads to uncertainty when operating in another culture, causing the individual to need to re-learn socialized behaviors (Bandura, 1971). Kim's (2001) theory supports this idea by arguing stress is caused by the loss of familiar concepts and acculturation is required to adapt.

In the local classroom, SA students may need to learn from vicarious experiences or verbal explanations from local students and professors to determine how to adapt to the local setting. "The dictum 'when in Rome do as the Romans do' underscores the functional value of modeling stimulus control" (Bandura, 1971, p. 18). Nevertheless, while a person may learn the "correct" behavior of the new culture, it does not mean they will choose to follow the new behavior even if using their old behavior leads to negative consequences (Bandura, 1971). This theory is useful in explaining why some SA students may continue to follow U.S. academic and social norms even if they recognize Spanish customs differ.

SCT is an expansion of the SLT which emphasizes human agency and self-efficacy in determining behavior. SCT is based on the triadic model of causation of behavior based on three bidirectional interacting determinants: cognitive and personal factors, environmental factors and behavioral factors (Bandura, 1989). Behavioral factors include skills, practice and self-efficacy; cognitive factors include knowledge, expectations and attitude; and environmental factors include social norms, access to the community, influence over others and ability to change one's environment. The model does not assume that all influences are of equal strength, nor that they occur simultaneously (Bandura, 1989).

The relationship between the personal and behavioral segment demonstrates the interaction between thought, affect and action as people's beliefs, self-perceptions and goals guide one's behavior whose results then determine their emotional and cognitive reaction (Bandura, 1989). The environment and personal connection analyzes the relationship between "human expectations, beliefs and emotional

bents and cognitive competencies are developed and modified by social influences that convey information and activate emotional reactions through modeling, instruction and social persuasion” (Bandura, 1989, p. 3). Consistent with Kim’s (2001) notion of host receptivity, SCT acknowledges that people may receive different reactions from society depending on their race, sex, age, status, etc. and consequently behave differently (Bandura, 1986). Finally, the behavior and environment segment argues that “behavior alters environmental conditions and is, in turn, altered by the very conditions it creates” (Bandura, 1989, p. 3). SCT’s assumption of reciprocal causation between the influences impacting adaptation benefits my research’s understanding of the interaction between SA students’ decisions and how the direct enrollment experience unfolds.

SCT emphasizes the cognitive capacities of individuals to “symbolize, plan alternative strategies (forethought), learn through vicarious experience, self-regulate, and self-reflect” (Pajares, 2002, p. 2). Cognitive factors play a role in determining which events are observed, the meaning ascribed to them, and how they will motivate or affect behavior in the future (Bandura, 1989). Symbolizing allows people to use forethought by testing possible solutions and imagining the consequence before deciding on an action. However, not all thoughts are necessarily based on complete information leading to irrational or faulty beliefs (Bandura, 1989). This is more common when operating in a new cultural context where subjective meanings ascribed to events are likely to differ such as in the case of my research.

Individuals self-regulate their behaviors through their self-reflective capability which allows them to analyze their personal and vicarious experiences, monitor their ideas, behave accordingly or predict occurrences (Bandura, 1989). Sojourners use self-reflectivity to adapt by finding new ways of handling challenges during periods of stress (Kim, 2005). These concepts are useful for considering how SA students analyze and adjust their behavior or not, to the local classroom. Embedded in self-regulatory and self-reflection capabilities is the role of agency and self-efficacy beliefs which I believe to be the most important concepts of SCT in informing my research.

2.3.1 Agency

Agency as defined by (Martin, 2004) “is the capability of individual human beings to make choices and to act on these choices in ways that make a difference in their lives” (p. 135). Individuals are not viewed as organisms that are simply manipulated by environmental events, but active agents capable of making decisions based on their motivations and goals. However, they are not autonomous either as the interaction between intrapersonal, behavioral and environmental factors influence their choices (Bandura, 2001). Applied to my research, SA students are viewed as active agents in their adaptation process, making choices based on their motivation and goals.

From the SCT perspective, there are three forms of human agency: direct, proxy and collective (Bandura, 2006). Direct agency is exerted by individuals to accomplish their goals. Not all people, in all circumstances, believe that can achieve a goal and/or believe another individual would achieve it better. Therefore, they rely on proxy agency as an intermediary to accomplish the task at hand. Collective agency refers to when a group with a shared belief uses their collective power and influence to achieve the desired outcome (Bandura, 1999). SA students who use direct agency to understand the local academic culture will likely interact with locals whereas those who use their co-nationals as proxies may still learn the local classroom norms but are less likely to improve host communication competence.

Fortuity also plays a role in agency as one can never completely determine which person or situation may cross their path (Bandura, 2006). However, people may develop competencies that help them shape their future and/or take advantage of fortuitous occasions. This concept applies to SA students when they choose how much time to spend at the local university (e.g., how many classes, extracurriculars, meals, etc.) since it impacts their opportunities for intercultural interactions. Furthermore, when presented with a fortuitous opportunity such as an invitation to join a local study group or project, SA students exercise agency in deciding whether to accept.

Agency can also be used to purposefully resist certain behaviors which are in opposition to one's beliefs or identities (Duff, 2013). Some sojourners may resist change, leading to increased stress and maladaptation (Kim, 2001). I must consider that if SA students hold negative views of the host academic culture and/or local people, they may choose not to enact their agency to adopt accepted behaviors but rather disengage from learning and intercultural interactions.

Bandura (2006) describes the four core properties of agency as intentionality, strategies to accomplish goals; forethought, goal setting based on anticipated outcomes; self-reactiveness, ability to make and adjust choices based on self-regulation; and self-reflectiveness, ability to reflect on efficiency and make adjustments. These properties are especially useful for understanding how SA students make decisions regarding their cultural adaptation in the local classroom. I consider that SA students make deliberate choices based on their varying goals and predicted outcomes. Throughout the semester, student behaviors are adjusted based on their evaluation of the experiences, choosing courses of action that avoid undesirable outcomes and produce desired goals. SCT helps us understand how SA students gauge whether their actions will produce the desired effects through the concept of self-efficacy: the foundation of human agency (Bandura, 1977; Bandura & National Inst of Mental Health, 1986).

2.3.2 Self-efficacy beliefs

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's beliefs in their capabilities to execute a particular action. Therefore, it stands to reason that people who do not believe they can achieve a particular outcome will have little incentive to act or persevere in the face of difficulties (Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 1977). "People's level of motivation, affective states and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true" (Bandura, 1997, p.2). Therefore, people's behavior is better predicted by their self-efficacy beliefs than their objective capabilities. The evaluation of one's performance through self-regulatory processes helps individuals evaluate which actions they believe they can accomplish and set new goals. Self-efficacy beliefs help individuals choose what actions, how much effort to put into each

action and how long to persevere in the face of obstacles (Bandura, 1989). The following will examine how self-efficacy beliefs impact SA students' decision making about their adaptation in the classroom.

Self-efficacy beliefs are based on four sources: enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasions, and physiological and affective states. Enactive master experiences are based on past experiences of success or failure and therefore are the most authentic evidence for individuals to base their capability beliefs (Bandura, 1977). Factors that influence the appraisal of outcomes include perceived difficulty of the task, preconception of capabilities, amount of effort exerted and situational circumstances, and how the activity is cognitively constructed in one's memory (Bandura, 1997). This is pertinent to my research since SA students' belief in their ability to communicate in Spanish effectively is largely based on past interactions in or outside of the classroom. Furthermore, confidence in their ability to do well academically, participate in class, etc. will also be based on past educational experiences coupled with their new encounters in the local classroom throughout the semester.

Vicarious experiences of modeled outcomes may not be as strong as direct experiences but they still provide a social standard of performances through which people judge their capabilities (Bandura, 1997). People tend to choose models with similar attributes to themselves. This concept is relevant to my research because SA students who judge themselves in comparison to local peers who have linguistic, academic and cultural advantages could lead to lower self-efficacy beliefs. However, if they compare to similar international students and judge the outcome considering the disadvantages of being an exchange student, they are more likely to feel accomplished and view their performance positively. Perceived efficacy can change easily in new situations as well (Bandura, 1977). SA students may adjust their expectations for the classroom based on the new social standards observed, which may improve their self-efficacy as well.

Verbal persuasion from social influences is stronger when it comes from someone close to the individual and when the positive appraisal is only moderately better than the individual's opinion. "Most

people believe they know themselves and their predicaments better than others do, and this belief creates some resistance to social persuasion” (Bandura, 1997, p. 105). For SA students, local professors’ or students’ feedback on their participation and/or schoolwork provides verbal persuasion to motivate or demotivate a student. Their co-national friends opinions are also likely to impact a students’ self-efficacy beliefs depending on how they perceive the difficulty level of the direct enrollment experience.

Finally, physiological and affective states refer to how aversive thoughts and physical reactions can affect efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Those who recognize nervousness as a natural process or coping mechanism will not be negatively affected while those who attribute it to their deficiency will most likely lower their self-efficacy beliefs. As applied to SA students, the uncertainty of the new academic setting can cause physiological stress reactions. Students that interpret them as part of the adaptation process will be less likely to lower their self-efficacy beliefs about their ability to be academically successful and/or socially integrate in the classroom.

Self-efficacy beliefs may be accurate or faulty but nonetheless affect motivation and goal setting (Bandura, 1989). A person with high self-efficacy may not begin with the ability when setting the goal. Nevertheless, a motivated individual is likely to persevere and through self-improvement achieve the goal. In this sense, high self-efficacy works to create behaviors that are self-enhancing. The opposite is true for those who put little effort or do not attempt a task due to their low self-efficacy that leads them to engage in self-debilitating behaviors (Bandura, 1997). High self-efficacy beliefs increase resilience which demonstrates strength, a key component of an adaptative personality (Kim, 2001). SA students who believe their language, social and academic skills to be sufficient to succeed in the new classroom are more likely to put in the necessary effort to thrive whereas those who view any aspect of the experience as impossible (e.g., making local friends, passing the course, etc.) are less likely to put in enough effort to be successful.

Self-efficacy beliefs are mediated by four processes: cognitive, motivational, affective and selection. Cognitive processes affect the development of forethought and influence goal setting. Those with high self-efficacy are more likely to view challenging situations as presenting opportunities while those with low self-efficacy view them as risky and imagine the outcomes as a failure (Bandura, 1997). In my research, SA students that view direct enrollment as presenting opportunities are more likely to engage and take advantage of them. The motivational process is influenced by three forms of cognitive motivators: causal attributions, a person's judgment of their past performance; outcomes expectancies, envisioned results of an action and cognized objectives, aims constructed through self-regulation of past experience (Bandura, 1997). SA students' motivation is likely to fluctuate throughout the semester with positive outcomes improving self-efficacy beliefs and furthering adaptation efforts.

Self-efficacy beliefs also affect the nature and intensity of emotional experiences. High self-efficacy essentially works as a coping mechanism to lessen anxiety and negative thoughts in uncertain situations. Individuals mediate self-efficacy through selecting to engage in activities and environments in which they feel comfortable and confident they will succeed. People with high self-efficacy prefer more difficult activities and will be more persistent in overcoming challenges presented (Bandura, 1997). For SA students, self-efficacy beliefs are likely to impact the degree to which they attempt to integrate in the local setting due to the environment's uncertain and difficult nature and also shape which activities they select to engage with. These four processes are not static but constantly being constructed through SA students' self-regulation and self-reflection based on the outcome of their activities.

People generally aim to accomplish goals they view as achievable and that will bring them self-satisfaction and self-worth. Therefore, even those with high self-efficacy beliefs, who feel capable of a particular action, may not choose to perform it due to real or imaginary constraints such as lack of incentive or perceived reward, logistical constraints or lack of social resources (Bandura, 1997). This is highly relevant to my research because SA students may perceive little reward in adapting to the Spanish

classroom due to the short stay and/or blame logistical aspects of their program for their lack of effort. This coincides with Kim's (2001) assertion that short term sojourners have less incentive to adapt.

Bandura (1997) proposed the following graphic to explain how self-efficacy beliefs are combined with expected outcomes.

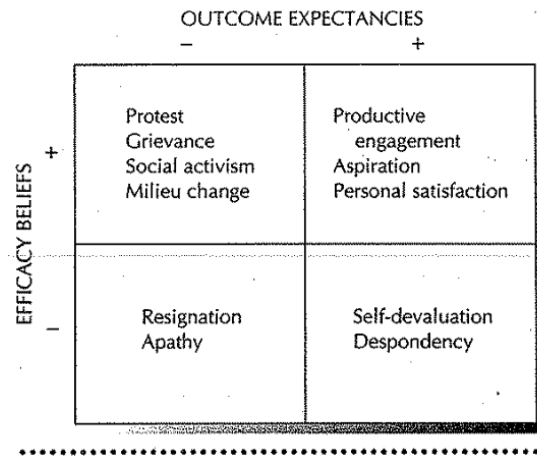


FIGURE 1.2. The effects of different patterns of efficacy beliefs and performance outcome expectancies on behavior and affective states. The pluses and minuses represent positive and negative qualities of efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies.

Figure 4

Effects of self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Bandura, 1997, p. 20)

In accordance with the graphic above, SA students with negative outcomes expectations (e.g., believe they will do poorly in a class or that local students will not talk to them) and low self-efficacy beliefs will likely withdraw and not engage with the class while those with high-self-efficacy will attempt to change their situation (e.g., switching classes, protesting to the professor) in response to the challenging situation. Those who expect positive outcomes (e.g., receive good grades and make local friends) and have low self-efficacy are likely to get discouraged and give up. Meanwhile, those with high self-efficacy will likely find productive outcomes and personal satisfaction through accomplishing their academic or social goals.

These key concepts of agency and self-efficacy strengthen my rationale for using SCT because they inform my research's understanding of the SA students' decision-making process regarding their adaptation. Pandor (2017) argues that motivation for deeper cultural integration and language learning pushes students to choose direct enrollment because it is a more challenging learning environment from which they expect a higher return in learning. Nevertheless, when faced with difficulties, those with high self-efficacy may double their efforts or find new strategies to accomplish their goals while those with low self-efficacy may give up or change their goals to a mediocre solution (Bandura, 1999). Self-efficacy beliefs are important because they influence how SA students enact agency in ways that have positive or negative effects on their adaptation to the classroom.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown why the combination of these three theoretical perspectives provides my research with a strong understanding of the SA student's adaptation process during the direct enrollment experience at a local classroom. Social constructivism allows me to examine the students' meaning-making process through their interaction with the cultural environment. Kim's (2001) theory works to explain both the process of adaptation as well as the factors influencing it. Finally, the concepts of agency and self-efficacy beliefs from SCT (Bandura, 1989) help me investigate the decision-making process during cultural adaptation. The process approach of these theories is favorable to my research's aim of understanding how students adapt to the classroom rather than solely analyzing learning outcomes. The following chapter provides a literature review that critically examines the past research on SA students focusing on environmental and individual aspects that could impact SA students' stress, adaptation and growth when directly enrolling in a Spanish university classroom.

Chapter 3: Literature review

This chapter begins by providing a more detailed analysis of the context of my research including the subtleties of SA programs, IaH in Spain and the limited relationship between the two. Secondly, it analyzes the previous research on the cultures of learning in both countries and hypothesizes which differences may require SA students to adapt. There is little SA research focused on student adaptation; therefore, I will provide an analysis of the literature related to environmental, individual and communicative factors impacting learning outcomes. This is followed by a critique of previous quantitative research on learning outcomes and how qualitative research is contributing to a deeper understanding of the SA learning experience. I conclude the chapter with my research questions that aim to fill the gap in the previous literature.

3.1 The context of the study

The 21st century has seen rapid changes with the expansion of global economies caused by an increasingly interdependent world. Globalization has created “the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness” (Held et al., 1999, p. 2) through a rapid advancement of technology allowing an increased ease of travel, trade and communication which transcends geographic boundaries. It has also created a demand for workers with a new skill set based on 21st-century competencies including intercultural communication, global awareness, and linguistic skills among others. The internationalization of HE is a reaction to the changing world landscape as it aims to prepare students for a 21st-century workplace in an increasingly global community.

Education has always been in its essence international; however, internationalization of HE as a term only appeared in the literature in the 1990s (de Wit, 2013). It is the incorporation of international, intercultural and global dimensions in HE through a comprehensive strategy that integrates into the purpose, functions and delivery of HEIs (Knight, 2008). Internationalization is conceived as a process, not

an end goal, which aims to improve the quality of HE to keep pace with the global knowledge economy (de Wit, 2013). Mobility projects tend to be the most visible aspect of internationalization; however, there is a growing recognition that they only impact a small percentage of students and therefore more emphasis is required on IaH activities for all students to gain from the benefits of internationalization.

My research focuses on the experience of SA students from U.S. universities in Spanish university classrooms. U.S. SA programs are the main 'abroad' aspect of U.S. higher education. Currently, the SA literature overlooks the academic component of SA programs, which can be attributed to its history and characteristics that distinguish it from mobility programs in other regions. Internationalization of HE, especially 'at home' components, vary greatly depending on national HE systems, political and economic support, and institutional cultures. I will begin by reviewing the unique qualities of U.S. SA programs and internationalization 'at home' in Spain to provide a proper backdrop of the specific context in which my research is situated.

3.1.1 U.S. study abroad

In the 1920s, the U.S. SA began as Junior Year Abroad; organized study programs for students involving language training, host family, cultural activities, excursions and coursework either at a local university or study center. Its essence resembled the "Grand Tour" model of the European elites who would send their children around Europe to gain social and cultural knowledge (Hoffa, 2007). The Grand Tour is a "term is used primarily as a derogatory description of international study, loosely connoting the travel experiences of the young and wealthy, intended to broaden their cultural horizons, but often suggesting leisurely, desultory, elitist, unintellectual and unprofessional aims" (Gore, 2005, p. 28). I contend that the critique remains relevant today as students and SA programs continue to emphasize travel while academics are viewed as a requirement to be fulfilled to justify the sojourn.

After World War II, the Junior Year Abroad model persisted, reinforcing Grand Tour discourse that SA was not about academics but leisure and cultural learning. Post 9/11, a shift occurred with students

desiring to have authentic intercultural experiences, learn languages and cultures and improve their global awareness (Gore, 2005). Nowadays, researchers and practitioners are working to shift the discourse away from the Grand Tour image towards the idea of SA being an intercultural learning experience (Vande Berg et al., 2012). Nevertheless, the two paradigms are still prevalent as SA students, especially in Europe, continue to travel extensively while simultaneously expressing desires for culture and language learning. SA students' competing priorities impact their decisions surrounding adaptation as traveling combined with the short sojourn can be an easy justification not to invest time in integrating in the local culture.

Post 9/11, the U.S government renewed its interest in SA as a means of providing graduates with a global vision and international competencies to maintain America's economic competitiveness and protect American interests overseas (NAFSA, 2003). In 2005, congress established the Lincoln Commission to examine how to increase the number of U.S. students studying abroad. The report, *Global Competence and National Needs*, begins with "what nations don't know can hurt them. The stakes involved in SA are that simple, that straightforward and that important. For their *own future and that of the nation*, college graduates today must be *internationally competent*" (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln study abroad fellowship program, 2005, p. iv). It embodies the U.S government's political rationale for internationalization of HE; future leaders need knowledge of other countries for building political and economic relations (Knight & de Wit, 1995).

It established a goal of sending 1 million students abroad annually, which would be roughly 50% of all graduates (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln study abroad fellowship program, 2005). It was later supported by the Senator Paul Simon SA Foundation Act in 2009, which recommended providing grants to HEIs for expanding SA opportunities to students; however, the bill died in Congress. It has since been reintroduced in 2019, but remains unapproved (NAFSA, 2020). From this, I deduct that broader support to make SA a priority is still lacking from the U.S. government.

Nevertheless, SA participation has still increased significantly, although not nearly the numbers imagined. Participation rose from less than 100,000 students studying abroad for academic credit in 1993/1994 to 341,751 in 2017/2018, about 10.9% of undergraduates (Institute of International Education, 2019). The push to increase the number of students studying abroad has led to a widening of program options (e.g., volunteering, interning, J-terms, etc.) for students. The trend continues towards the development of short-term, low-cost programs which provide less time and incentive to adapt. In 2017/2018, 64.6% of students participated in shorter programs of eight weeks or less, much fewer than those taking part in semester (33.1%) or yearlong sojourns (2.3%) (Institute of International Education, 2019). It brings into question whether the SA industry intends for students to have meaningful intercultural interactions which could lead to adaptation or prefers to respond to industry demands that often leave students observing the host community from afar (Ogden, 2008).

The U.S models of SA can be mapped on a continuum with the three main program types: island, hybrid and direct enrollment (Norris & Dwyer, 2005). The term 'direct enrollment' can create confusion because it is frequently used interchangeably with 'exchange program'. I will use direct enrollment to refer to the act of taking classes at a local university whether through a hybrid or exchange program. I will use the term 'exchange programs' to denote the modality in which students directly enroll in classes at the local university through a bi-lateral agreement without any on-site support staff. The complete list of terms I will use in this dissertation can be found below.

Table 1*Definition of Terms*

Term	Definition
Local or Host Students	“Individuals who are nationals of a country that accepts (and hosts) international students” (Ward, 2006).
International Students	Individuals who are nationals of a foreign country enrolled in institutions of higher education. Includes both ‘degree seeking students’ enrolled for the entire academic program or ‘exchange students’ enrolled in select classes for a semester or year.
Study Abroad	“Study abroad refers to credit-bearing study that occurs outside cultural or political borders of the United States” (Harvey, 2013).
Island Program	A U.S. program which “replicates most aspects of the American college/university learning context in a self-contained context, a bubble, within the host country” (Norris & Dwyer, 2005).
Hybrid Program	A U.S. program in which “the home institutions offer support and services and which encourage students to take coursework offered by the program as well as courses taught by host- country faculty at the local university” (Norris & Dwyer, 2005).
Exchange Program	Through an interinstitutional agreement “students directly apply for admission to and participate in the courses and extra-curricular offerings of the host institution...with minimal orientation, and support services are offered through the host university’s office for visiting foreign students” (Norris & Dwyer, 2005).
Direct Enrollment	When a student enrolls in class(es) at a foreign HEI and receives credit at their home university through an exchange or hybrid program.

The exchange model is commonplace in Europe (Norris & Dwyer, 2005). In this model, bilateral exchange agreements allow students to pay home tuition while studying in a partner institution. Students must work with an academic advisor to choose courses that will be approved for credit transfer. These advisors may or may not have much knowledge of the intricacies of the host institution. Students are responsible for organizing their own housing and travel arrangements. Some choose to live in the host HEIs residences while others live in shared flats with other young people. Exchange students do not have an on-site coordinator from their home university and rely on the international offices of the respective host HEIs as their primary contacts for support.

On the other end of the spectrum, island programs are run by U.S. HEIs through a residence director and staff who are familiar with the U.S. culture. The academics are tailored for a U.S. audience following norms of the U.S. system of HE by providing discussion-based classes, multiple assignments and grade inflation (Ogden, 2008). Many courses are conducted in English to overcome language barriers that prevent students from going abroad (Goldstein, 2015). In those courses taught in the target language, there is a tendency to use “foreigner talk” rather than authentic speech to make it more comprehensible for second language learners. Island programs’ centers lack the presence of local students in the classroom hence reducing opportunities to interact with native speakers unless through extracurricular activities (Isabelli-Garcia & Isabelli, 2020). This model inherently leads to co-national student bubbles due to group orientation weeks, group travel and group accommodation or paired homestays. The advantage of these programs for U.S universities is that they have complete control of the academic content and can therefore tailor the content to U.S students’ needs, making course credit easily transferable (Sally, 2015). They also can set calendar dates to match U.S academic schedules hence facilitating the exchange experience for both students and HEIs (Goldstein, 2015).

Hybrid programs are a mix of the two models through which the U.S. university or third-party providers offer student services for students who directly enroll in a couple of classes at a local HEI. The model emerged as a way to assist with the barriers U.S students faced when enrolling in local classes (Norris & Dwyer, 2005). These students normally take courses at a study center, primarily in English. Commonly, they take at least one class about local culture and history. Additionally, students enroll in foreign universities in classes either alongside local students or in courses specially tailored for international students. Housing options range from host families to residence halls. The on-site staff help with the administration and logistical aspects of the stay from airport pick up, orientation, weekend trips, enrollment and any emergency situations that may arise.

The continuum of the U.S. model of SA programs is can be framed using Sanford's (1962) challenge and support theory which argues that when students are presented with too much challenge and little support, they retreat from the learning situation; however, when there is too much support and little challenge, students do not engage with learning (Sanford, 1962). Designing academically enriching SA programs depends on maintaining the delicate balance of placing students in sufficiently culturally immersive situations in which they are likely to experience acculturation stress but supporting them enough so that they learn from the experience.

Island programs are often criticized for providing too much support and little cultural immersion (Ogden, 2008). In fact, I would argue some are little more than a branch campus in which students must show great initiative to find ways to integrate into the local community. Exchange programs are immersive cross-cultural programs; however, the experience may be too overwhelming to learn from (Vande Berg et al., 2012). Furthermore, extra-curricular activities such as internships and volunteering are less readily available and there is no on-site staff to lead activities for guided reflection that support cultural learning. While hybrid programs may seem the natural solution, too often the in-group pressure remains, and students continue to interact amongst themselves rather than with locals. Additionally, academic guidance (e.g., course selection) is likely improved; however, given the lack of attention given by SA research or conferences to the academic context, I question whether the challenges of cultural adaptation in a new academic setting are truly being addressed.

Since the 1990s, research in the field of SA has proliferated as stakeholders pressure HEIs to demonstrate the quality of their education, including the added value of SA (Ogden & Streitwieser, 2016). The SA community originally believed that it naturally develops language and intercultural competencies through immersing students in another culture. Therefore, research in the field of SA traditionally analyzed these learning outcomes of students (Ogden & Streitwieser, 2016; Paige et al., 2004; Sanz & Morales-Front, 2018). Based on mixed early results focused on one or two domains (e.g., second language

acquisition, intercultural communication, global learning, etc.), experts began to question whether immersion in another culture was sufficient to develop the desired skills (Hammer, 2012; Jackson, 2012).

Recently, researchers have turned their focus to determining which variables predict intercultural competence and/or language acquisition and developing recommendations for program design or intervention methods to enhance learning. The variables considered are related mainly to the program design (e.g., duration, language of instruction abroad, housing, extra-curricular activities and orientation or mentoring programs) or sojourner factors (e.g., personality, level of host language competence, previous international experience, gender and race) (Jackson, 2012; Ogden & Streitwieser, 2016). When analyzing and/or comparing SA programs, researchers frequently reference Engle and Engle's (2003) classification system. It defined characteristics of SA programs based on seven measurable items to classify SA programs' level of cross-cultural contact:

- 1) **Length of student sojourn:** from short term (2-8 weeks: summer, J-term, Maymester), medium (1 semester), long term (academic year)
- 2) **Entry target-language competence:** elementary, intermediate, advanced
- 3) **Language used in course work:** English, foreign language, mixed
- 4) **Context of academic work:** Home institution, in-house, international students, direct enrollment
- 5) **Types of student housing:** collective residence hall, collective homestay, individual homestay
- 6) **Provisions for guided/structured cultural interaction and experiential learning:** none, integration activities, service-learning, internship, formal cultural integration program
- 7) **Guided reflection on cultural experiences:** none, orientation initial, orientation ongoing, mentoring, reflective writing and research (Engle & Engle, 2003)

Individual variations remain one of the constant themes throughout the SA literature (Collentine, 2009; Collentine & Freed, 2004) leading to inconclusive results about learning outcomes which resulted in

researchers recognizing the need for more qualitative research in the field (Pellegrino, 1998; Wilkinson, 1998). Qualitative research informs the SA community on the student perspective of their experiences and highlights underlying factors affecting their learning. My research uses a qualitative approach to understand the students' perspective on the local academic context to better comprehend their challenges and how to support their adaptation process. The approach also allows for a deeper understanding of the local environment, providing a more holistic understanding of the setting in which the students are adapting and learning: the Spanish university classroom.

3.1.2 IaH in Spain

Since Spain's entrance into the European Union (EU) in 1986, "internationalization has emerged as a dynamic element in Spanish higher education, with the European dimension of this effort standing out as a factor affecting the pace and shape of the phenomenon" (Rumbley, 2007, p. 8). For this reason, to understand my research's context, it is important to comprehend the EU internationalization strategies and how their implementation has and continues to impact the Spanish HE system. It is also relevant to understand the challenges that Spain faces to achieve a comprehensive internationalization that goes beyond 'abroad' components and incorporates IaH related initiatives considering the latter impact the SA students' classroom experience.

In the EU, the European Higher Education Area's (EHEA) objective is to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of HE in Europe (European Higher Education Area, 2021). The increased compatibility of degree structures has fomented the mobility of students, professors and staff throughout Europe through programs such as the highly successful Erasmus Program which began in 1987. Over 10 million people have participated with 853,000 people studying, training, or volunteering abroad in 2018 (European Commission, 2019). While mobility has increased greatly, the implementation of comprehensive internationalization plans both on the national and institutional levels have still shown uneven results.

The two main legislations which have supported internationalization in the EU are the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Declaration. The Bologna Process is a multi-national reform “and changes currently undertaken by European states, with varying scope and pace, to implement the goal of creating a barrier-free EHEA characterized by ‘compatibility and comparability’ between the HE systems of the signatory states” (Papatsiba, 2006, p. 95). The Bologna Process was inspired by the Sorbonne Joint Declaration in 1998 which recognized the necessity of the creation of an EHEA to encourage “a common frame of reference, aimed at improving external recognition and facilitating student mobility as well as employability” for the age of the knowledge society (European Higher Education Area, 1998). In 1999, the Bologna declaration was signed intending to harmonize degrees in Europe, while respecting individual countries' diversity, in an effort to enhance the competitiveness of Europe in higher education. The declaration was an intergovernmental commitment with a non-binding agreement meaning countries commit to their achieving the goals; however, each state determines how to implement the changes (Marginson & van der Wende, 2007).

In 2000, European Commission released the Lisbon Strategy whose goal was to make the EU “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge economy in the world” (Marginson & van der Wende, 2007, p. 46) by 2010. Its goals for education were to equip citizens with the abilities and competencies to be competitive in a globalized world and knowledge society to improve the quality of education. It underlies the following targets: increase in investment in human resources, decrease the number of students not reaching higher education, diversify the education offer, foster mobility and defining basic skills to be provided through lifelong learning (European Parliament, 2000). Since the Lisbon Strategy was introduced by European Commission, a supranational institution, it was a legally binding document that put top-down political pressure on signing countries to achieve its goals.

The Spanish road to internationalization of HE began after Francisco Franco’s death in 1975. This event ended Spanish isolation and drove them to join the European Union in 1986 (Rumbley, 2007). As

another way to become closer to Europe, Spain eagerly joined the Bologna Process in 1999 and set forth on harmonizing its HE system. It is an important participant in the Erasmus program, becoming the leading sending and receiving country in 2018 (European Commission, 2019). It developed a national internationalization plan for HE focused on increasing the attractiveness and competitiveness of Spanish HE. While Spain shines in terms of mobility, other aspects of internationalization have been seen as uneven at best (Tarrach et al., 2011). This was due in part to the political and economic situation caused by the 2008 recession which could not sustain the ambitious internationalization plan (Rumbley & Howard, 2014). Furthermore, following global trends, IaH initiatives are ad hoc and sparse due to the limited understanding of comprehensive internationalization among university staff and professors.

In 2008, Spain created the public foundation Universidad.es to promote Spain as a global destination for HE (Pérez-Encinas et al., 2017). However, in 2011 funding was cut and it was merged into what became the SEPIE. In 2015, Spain announced its internationalization plan, one of only sixteen countries in the EHEA to have a formalized plan. It recognizes Spain's HEIs strength in developing international partnerships and fomenting credit mobility as well as its challenges such as insufficient funding, limited interest and knowledge about international aspects of the staff, attracting international students and an agency to promote internationalization (Ministerio de Educación Cultura y Deporte, 2014). The general aim of the internationalization strategy was to:

To consolidate a strong and internationally attractive university system that promotes mobility of entry and exit of the best students, professors, researchers and administrative and service staff, the quality of the tuition offered, the potential of Spanish as a language for higher education, the internationalization of teaching programs and activities for R+D+i, contributing to the improvement of the international attractiveness and competitiveness of Spain, as well as the

socio-economic development of its immediate knowledge-based environment.³ (Ministerio de Educación, 2014, p. 32)

The plan was quite comprehensive, tackling various aspects that affect the quality of higher education. It divided the twenty-four initiatives under four pillars: 1) consolidate a highly internationalized university system, 2) increase the international attractiveness of universities, 3) promote the international competitiveness of the region surrounding each university and 4) intensify cooperation in HE with other world regions (Delgado, 2017).

While the strategy was founded on the idea that internationalization must go beyond mobility (Ministerio de Educación, 2014), the action lines still focus on attracting international students, cooperation with other regions and mobility (Howard & Rumbley, 2014). Additionally, while the plan itself is ambitious, it was not accompanied by any additional funding to achieve its goals leaving institutions to rely on funding from abroad through programs such as Erasmus + and Horizon 2020 (Delgado, 2017). Short-term leadership has also been seen as a problem in embedding an internationalization vision within the HEIs and sustaining it over time (Howard & Rumbley, 2015). Finally, Spanish HE is characterized by a high degree of decentralization meaning each Autonomous Community is responsible for its implementation, contributing to the inconsistent response.

Most Spanish HEIs continue to focus their policies on increasing mobility, which is where they have seen the most success. Geographically, there is a clear emphasis on building relationships within Europe and Latin America due to a shared linguistic and cultural history. Spanish HEIs have been successful in establishing relationships with European institutions and promoting credit mobility between their

³ Original text: “Consolidar un sistema universitario fuerte e internacionalmente atractivo que promueva la movilidad de entrada y salida de los mejores estudiantes, profesores, investigadores y personal de administración y servicios, la calidad educativa, el potencial del español como idioma para la educación superior, la internacionalización de los programas formativos y las actividades de I+D+i, contribuyendo a la mejora del atractivo y de la competitividad internacional de España, así como al desarrollo socioeconómico de su entorno próximo basado en el conocimiento.”

institutions. Spain received 51,321 and sent 40,226 students and trainees to study abroad through the Erasmus + program in 2018, more than any other participant country (European Commission, 2019). Other important sources for funding are Banco Santander and Fundación Carolina, both of which support mobility between Latin America and Spain through scholarships.

The Spanish university is conceived as a public good by its citizens; therefore, it is not surprising that the most prestigious universities are public. 85.6% of undergraduates attend public institutions which represent 50 of the 82 HEIs as of 2018 (Ministerio de Ciencia Innovación y Universidades, 2019). Public HEIs do not rely on the recruitment of international students as sources of income which can account for their low numbers of only 5.0% of students in BA programs, 20.8 % in Master and 25.1% in Doctorate programs during the 2017/2018 academic year (Ministerio de Ciencia Innovación y Universidades, 2019). The large majority of degree seekers come from Latin America and other EU-27 countries. However, this trend is shifting with the increasing number of private universities relying on international students for funding (Pérez-Encinas et al., 2017). There are also few international professors teaching in Spanish HEIs, with 2.1% in public and 5.3% in private (Ministerio de Ciencia Innovación y Universidades, 2019), largely due to internally focused hiring practices (Rumbley & Howard, 2014). The low level of English of current Spanish professors and lack of international professors is a challenge for creating more courses in English which could attract foreign students.

Spain's HEIs internationalization efforts continue to focus on 'abroad' rather than IaH components. Yet, Spain is not alone, as the lack of proper understanding of internationalization beyond mobility is common among stakeholders across Europe. The "Trends 2015: Learning and Teaching in European Universities" survey, indicated that the top three aspects of internationalization that are viewed as enhancing learning and teaching by HEIs staff and professors are mobility of students (66%), mobility of staff (43%) and international collaboration in learning and teaching (41%) – all of which are related to mobility and international collaboration (Sursock, 2015). De Wit (2013) also identified common

misconceptions about internationalization such as it means increasing classes in English, attracting international students, having many international partners, and adding internationally focused electives. These beliefs are underpinned by a belief that mobility or the presence of international students in the classroom guarantees graduates with global competences; nevertheless, IaH activities are key for mobility to have its intended impact and to reach all students.

Bengt Nilsson introduced the concept of IaH in 1998 at Malmö University in Sweden as a way of understanding internationalization in the Swedish context. He recognized two important factors contributing to the need for IaH: the majority of students were non-mobile and growing numbers of the immigrant population (over 30%) enrolling in university was creating increasingly multicultural classrooms (Wächter, 2003). He defined it as, “internationalisation at home is any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound student mobility” (Nilsson, 2003, p. 31). This definition of IaH is not based on what it specifically entails but instead distinguishes it from what it is not: mobility. In 2006, Jane Knight cemented this contrast by organizing all internationalization initiatives under two binary terms: home and abroad, using IaH to encompass all activities taking place at home (Knight, 2006).

Similar to the definition of the internationalization of HE, it emphasizes the intentionality by stating the purposeful integration of the intercultural dimension and its intended effect on all students. Leask (2015) added to the discussion by identifying three main parts of the curriculum to be internationalized: the formal, informal and hidden curriculum. The formal curriculum is the syllabus, what is being taught and assessed for credit as well as the activities included in the degree plan. Beelen (2019) highlights tools that can be used in the formal curriculum to develop IaH: comparison of literature and cases from different contexts, online collaboration with students abroad, lectures by local and international guest lecturers, engagement with local international and intercultural organizations and learning from international students.

The informal curriculum refers to support services and activities organized by the institution that support learning but are not assessed such as mentoring programs, orientation activities and social events. Finally, the hidden curriculum refers to the implicit and hidden messages sent to students, often unintended, due to choices made regarding the informal and formal curriculum. For example, which knowledge is deemed important is implied through required readings. Or, who needs to adapt to who is implied through requiring international students to complete intercultural competency courses (Leask, 2015). All three are considered “connected and interactive, rather than discrete—experienced by students as a dynamic interplay of teaching and learning processes, content and activities in and out of the classroom” (Leask, 2015, p. 9).

Beelen’s (2019) literature review looked at the perspectives of academics on IaH and found the primary obstacles to be: lack of engagement, low interest, faculty apathy, academic’s perception of knowledge as already universal, lecture’s lack of skills for internationalization of the curriculum, language skills and intercultural competence skills. The IAU’s 4th Global Survey (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014) also reported: “three staff related obstacles that universities include among their top three obstacles: limited experience/expertise (including linguistic skills) of faculty and staff (30%), limited faculty involvement/interest (22%) and limited capacity/expertise (16%)” (Jones et al., 2016, p. 60). Professors are experts in their field of study and may not possess the necessary intercultural skills or interest in internationalization to implement it in their classroom. Academics play a key role in IaH; however, they frequently do not know how to apply internationalization to their curriculum or do not believe it is relevant to their teaching (Knight, 2006).

Rumbley & Howard (2014) recommended that Spain focuses on IaH aspects since they are low-cost initiatives that improve internationalization. However, if academics are expected to develop more internationalized curriculums, there must be professional training that supports it. In IAU 4th Global Survey, only 37% of HEIs in Europe reported using professional development to support the integration

of international elements in teaching (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). Furthermore, I could not find any post-graduate level degrees on international HE management in Spain which indicates a lack of professionalization opportunities for support staff as well. Without a better understanding of internationalization by the academic and non-academic staff at the university; it will remain reduced to benefiting the few students who participate in mobility programs and/or enroll in internationally focused courses.

3.1.3 U.S. study abroad in Spain

In the current relationship between U.S. SA programs and Spain, opportunities for intercultural learning of all students are being missed. Spain receives the third most SA students coming from the U.S. behind Italy and the United Kingdom (UK). In the 2017/2018 academic year, Spain received 32,411 students from the U.S., 9.5% of all American students studying abroad (Institute of International Education, 2019). However, the majority of these students do not study at Spanish HEIs, rather through programs delivered by U.S. HEIs or third-party providers (Pérez-Encinas et al., 2017). While this may constitute an economic contribution to Spain, which one report estimates to be almost 200,000,000 euros yearly (Grasset et al., 2014), it says little about engagement between SA students and Spanish students, professors and staff (de Wit et al., 2017). If SA students rarely enter a Spanish university classroom, it creates an obvious obstacle for intercultural learning for all students.

Furthermore, simply placing U.S. or any other international student for that matter, in the classroom does not ensure learning outcomes (Leask, 2015). At Spain's current level of internationalization, the SA students who directly enroll at a public Spanish university will likely find themselves in a predominately Spanish academic culture (e.g., few international and some exchange students) with professors who have not been trained in intercultural classroom management. If IaH in Spain remains ad hoc with little training offered to professors, their ability to embed intercultural learning in the curriculum and take advantage of the multicultural space will remain based primarily on their

interest and motivation. Equally, if the SA community remains without a deeper understanding of the direct enrollment experience, initiatives to facilitate students' adaptation and learning from the experience be inadequate. My research aims to understand the SA students' experience in the Spanish university to contribute to both the understanding of direct enrollment during SA and the role of the local Spanish HEIs in their adaptation as part of the greater IaH discussion.

3.2 Interculturality in the classroom

Direct enrollment is considered the most culturally immersive but also the most academically challenging context for SA students. Applying Kim's (2001) theory, the new and unfamiliar university culture is likely to produce a disequilibrium in the student as they realize their taken for granted assumptions about learning are put into question. Nevertheless, facing this challenge can result in new learning (Kim, 2001) as well as teachable moments for developing intercultural competence (J. Bennet, 2008). However, to best help SA students learn from their experience, there must be an understanding of the possible cultural differences that arise within the academic context. The following will take a culture of learning perspective to understand the U.S. and Spanish academic cultures and then analyze their relevance for SA students directly enrolling in Spain.

3.2.1 Cultures of learning

The university is a setting that represents and manifests culture; therefore, it is not surprising that differences within the classroom exist across cultures. Students' assumptions about learning come from previous experience in the classroom (Adams, 1992; Powell & Anderson, 1994). Students and teachers may be unaware of cultural differences in education and their implications for relating to each other (Fryberg & Markus, 2007). As a quote from a UK student in a Mexican university exemplifies, "my expectations of university life would be that it was no different here than at home. I didn't even consider that it would be" (Bacon, 2002, p. 641). When expectations about learning are not met, it can result in misunderstandings which leave students with a negative view of the institution (Bacon, 2002; Kinginger,

2009). Unfortunately, “although there is increasing sensitivity to the challenges of intercultural education, the burden for successful adaptation to the new educational milieu is placed largely on the international students” (Ward et al., 2005, p. 165). For short term sojourners such as SA students, this burden is more difficult to overcome due to the short time frame to learn and adapt to the new academic culture.

While there is robust literature related to learning styles and approaches, commonly associated with the work of Kolb (1974) and Entwistle & Wilson (1970) respectively, there is significantly less literature analyzing student learning regarding their cultural community (Manikutty et al., 2007) and hardly any within the U.S. SA literature. Jin & Cortazzi (1993) coined the term “culture of learning” to understand cultural differences in the classroom resulting from their research on what was considered good teaching and learning in China and the UK.

A culture of learning’ might be defined as socially transmitted expectations, beliefs and values about what good learning is, what constitutes a good teacher and a good student and what their roles and relationships should be; about learning and teaching styles, approaches and methods; about classroom interaction and activities; about the use of textbooks; about what constitutes good work (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996a, 1996b; Jin & Cortazzi, 1993, 1995). (Yuan & Xie, 2013, p. 24)

The concept focuses on understanding different expectations for learning within cultural communities and provides positive strategies to learn from and appreciate different methods. It argues for a cultural synergy approach to multicultural educational settings that stresses the role of reflection and conversation between students and professors about learning (Yuan & Xie, 2013).

The majority of the existing literature examines differences between Eastern Confucianism versus Western Socratic academic traditions in relation to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions: collectivism versus individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity versus femininity (Hofstede, 1980). Hofstede’s first four cultural dimensions are based on a factor analysis of a worldwide survey of more than 100,000 IBM employees from 1967 and 1973 (Hofstede, 2021). The two dimensions most associated with

influencing academic cultures are individualism-collectivism and power distance (Ward, 2006). The most salient difference that arises from these dimensions is the value placed on discussion in individualist, low power distance societies versus the value given to professor's knowledge in collectivist, high power distance societies.

The individualism/collectivism dimension refers primarily to the degree of interdependence societies keep between their members. Individualist cultures believe that people should look out for themselves and immediate family members while in collectivist cultures people are tied to the close "in-group" to which they are loyal (e.g., extended family, community, organization, country, etc.) (Hofstede, 1980). Power distance refers to the "extent in which less powerful people in society accept inequality in power and consider it as normal" (Hofstede, 1986, p. 307). Societies with high power distance more readily accept the hierarchy and those in power are given a great deal of respect. Conversely, in low power distance societies, individuals with lower standing seek a justification for those in power. They are more likely to question authority and attempt to equalize power (Hofstede, 1980). The bulk of research on cultures of learning compares Eastern Confucianism (collectivist/high-power distance) and Western Socratic (individualist/low power distance) traditions.

Confucianism values are based in collectivism, the use of reason, respect for others, the ability to forgive. Education is based on rote learning and memorization of the classics which involves deep learning strategies (Kingston & Forland, 2008). Knowledge is seen as central to learning and it is believed skills will be developed later. High power distance is reflected in the greater distance between the professor and student in the classroom, meaning students expect the professor to initiate communication and are less likely to question the professor (Hofstede, 1986). Learning is professor-centered; hence the professor directs the learning, modeling for the students who are expected to be passive (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998). Following collectivist values, harmony should always be maintained and therefore students are not supposed to question professors in class as that may lead them to lose face (Hofstede, 1986; Powell &

Anderson, 1994; Ward, 2006). Students also value working together over trying to stand out as the best student (Ward, 2006). This is frequently misconstrued as a lack of motivation by Western professors (Samovar & Porter, 2004). Despite the high-power distance within the classroom, relationships outside the classroom are closer as professors are viewed as parental and moral figures. The Chinese consider a good student to be hardworking, respectful, prepared for class, and must know before answering questions (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998).

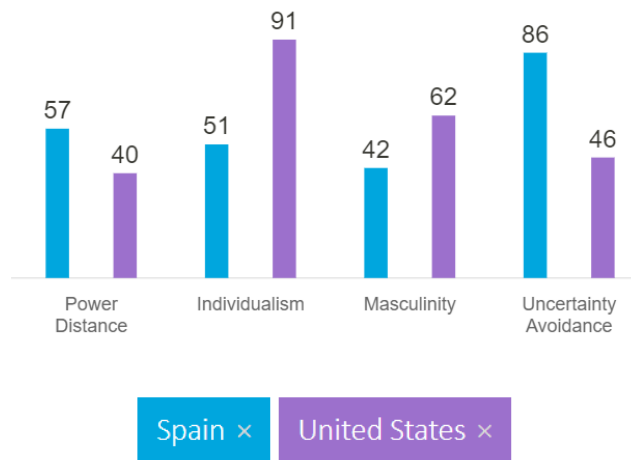
On the other hand, the Western Socratic traditions of learning are centered on the development of skills through a constructivist approach that relies on discussion, interaction or group activities. Socrates' education style was through dialogue, a legacy seen in the Western learners' emphasis on discussion in the classroom as essential to the learning process (van Egmond et al., 2013). Knowledge is seen as negotiable and intended to be questioned rather than accepted at face value (Powell & Anderson, 1994). Low power distance is evident as students are encouraged to voice their own opinions and disagree with the professor who is not viewed as having absolute knowledge (Samovar et al., 2016). Students are expected to be independent learners who question the professor, think critically and actively participate in class (Kingston & Forland, 2008). Individualistic values are reflected in the relationships between students, which are based on competition and conflict in the form of debates or discussions. Students aim to stand out by asking and answering questions (Ward, 2006). Professors are expected to be enthusiastic, organized and provide clear explanations. Learning should be student-center allowing students a certain independence to develop their own interests (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998).

To a lesser extent, Hofstede (1986) connects uncertainty avoidance and masculine/feminine dimensions to educational cultures. Uncertainty avoidance refers to whether people of a culture are nervous by uncertain situations that they perceive to be unpredictable. Cultures with strong uncertainty avoidance prefer strict rules to follow and avoid situations with ambiguity. Conversely cultures with low uncertainty avoidance, individuals are more likely to take risks and have more relaxed attitudes towards

principles (Hofstede, 1980). Strong uncertainty avoidance cultures prefer structured learning situations, professors should know all the answers, use academic vocabulary, and intellectual disagreement is viewed negatively. On the contrary, low uncertainty avoidance cultures are comfortable with vague assignments, unstructured learning situations and professors who do not claim absolute knowledge and therefore encourage disagreement as part of stimulating discussion (Hofstede, 1986).

The masculinity dimension refers to a societal preference for men to be assertive, competitive and strive for material success while women should care for the family. The feminine cultures lean towards more overlapping social roles for men and women. Society preference cooperation, modesty and a non-material definition of quality of life. In masculine societies, teachers praise good students and reward strong academic performance. Students compete and seek to stand out from peers. Meanwhile, in feminine societies, teachers avoid making distinctions between students based on performance and value social adaptation, solidarity and collaboration in class (Hofstede, 1986).

In Hofstede's (1980) framework, societies fall along the continuum rather than at one extreme or another (e.g., 0 or 100). The graphic below from Hofstede's Insights (2021) illustrates the dimensions for the U.S. and Spain. U.S. culture is ranked high for individualism and relatively low for power distance, both characteristic of its Western Socratic tradition of education (Tweed & Lehman, 2002). Spain ranks in the middle of the continuum for both individualism-collectivism and power distance; however, it is also considered a more feminine society with a high uncertainty avoidance in comparison to the U.S.



0 = Low Power Distance, Collectivism, Feminine, Little Uncertainty Avoidance
 100 = High Power Distance, Individualistic, Masculine, High Uncertainty Avoidance

Figure 5

Hofstede's dimensions for Spain and the U.S. (Hofstede's Insights, 2021)

Western education has long looked down on Eastern perspectives, perceiving them as rote memorization that involves only surface learning (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998). Considering the large numbers of international students from Asia in Anglo-Saxon countries such as the UK, Australia, USA, and Canada, much of the research has been taken from a deficit model that considers Asian students in lacking language skills and “correct” learning methodologies (Carroll & Ryan, 2005; Ward, 2001). These ethnocentric views of learning and communication have led to the misunderstanding of international students’ behaviors. Due to their silence in the classroom, Asian students are often stereotyped as passive learners who lack understanding, engagement and critical thinking rather than considering their behavior as cultural (Yuan & Xie, 2013). U.S. academic culture tends to assume that their approaches to learning are superior in all ways (Stewart & Bennett, 1971); however, my research will not presume academic superiority to Spanish academic culture nor aim to find the “correct” teaching methodology. Rather it will focus on discovering the participants’ perspectives about the Spanish academic culture and which, if any, they perceive as causing acculturation stress.

Hofstede's dimensions provide a helpful framework for understanding the impact of culture in education when generalizing on a group or community level.; however, several relevant weaknesses should be taken into consideration. First, Hofstede (1986), theoretically explains how cultural dimensions impact education based on anecdotal evidence rather than empirical data from an educational setting. Furthermore, he makes no distinction between the different levels of education even though there are significant differences between learners and teachers in a primary, secondary or tertiary education (Signorini et al., 2009). He also focuses on differences rather than similarities even though some researchers have found more commonalities than variations between Socratic and Confucian traditions (Trahar, 2007). Furthermore, as Signorini et al., (2009) critiques, "Hofstede over states the effects of collectivist and individualistic nations on learning and neglects at the same time other explanations for educational differences, such as socio-economic factors, funding of education, population, training and qualifications of lecturers, etc." (p. 255). When comparing U.S. and Spanish higher education, there are significant differences in funding and cost, which may impact both the student and professors' expectations, behaviors and attitudes in the classroom.

Another important limitation of Hofstede's dimensions is their oversimplification of culture by generalizing by nation state. When examining individuals in a context-dependent situation, the dichotomous nature of the dimensions is too simplistic and deterministic to draw direct conclusions without the risk of stereotyping. "Binary descriptions of learning characteristics can stereotype learners within what can be very large, complex, and dynamic systems of cultural practice and risk homogenizing and essentializing individuals within them" (Ryan, 2013, p. 41). It is not accurate to assume all students and professors will act the same based on their national culture. SA students directly enrolling in Spain are required to have strong language skills meaning many may come from multicultural backgrounds.

Moreover, Hofstede divides education traditions into two large groups, Confucian and Socratic, while ignoring interregional differences as well as students from South America, Africa and Eastern Europe

entirely (Signorini et al., 2009). For Hofstede, both the U.S. and Spanish HE area of Western Socratic tradition, which I would argue overlooks great historical and cultural differences. U.S. education is inherited from the UK traditions while Spanish education has closer ties to continental European tradition. Lastly, HE institutions within a nation state do not all function in the same way as organizational culture impacts teaching and learning culture in each institution as well (Signorini et al., 2009). The SA students' home universities are also diverse in type, size and academic culture which will impact how they perceive the host university. To overcome the overgeneralizing cultures by nation state, Signorini et al., (2009) recommend

starting with examining micro-cultures, for example, one particular learning setting in higher education in combination with an individual's relevant experiences. This would allow U.S. to develop 'small' models, which can gradually be expanded into larger models of 'culture' and intercultural learning. (p. 262)

Therefore, my research uses cultures of learning to consider different general patterns that illustrate how culture impacts education on a group level, but I use the ethnographic methodology to capture the individual characteristics of students and their context-dependent interactions and perspectives to understand the lived academic experience during SA.

Finally, Hofstede's model treats culture as static; however, culture is dynamic and changing. Therefore, HE systems and their cultures of learning undergo constant transformations as well. For example, China's education has changed rapidly during the last 20-30 years with a growing shift from professor-centered to student-centered learning in China (Ryan, 2010) which is closing the cultural gap between education systems. In fact, Ryan's (2013) study found more commonalities than differences between descriptions of good scholarship and effective learning from professors in the UK, U.S., Australia, and China. Therefore, when researching in the field, it is important to consider learning cultures as fluid entities with individual diversity among them (Jin & Cortazzi, 2013). For this reason, I will first compare

the U.S. and Spain cultures of learning from a nation state level to provide a generalized overview and then follow with a background on changes seen in the Spanish HE to understand its diversity as well.

3.2.2 HE in the United States and Spain

Spain has received little attention in research using the frameworks related to cultures of learning perhaps since Spanish universities have relatively few degree-seeking international students. Spain does receive large numbers of exchange students from Europe, the U.S. and Latin America but maybe it is assumed that European and Latin American students would not experience academic differences due to Spain's adherence to the European HE policies and the fact that Latin American universities of ex-colonies are based on the Spanish model. The U.S. academic philosophies and social culture present more salient differences; however, most U.S. students tend to take courses in their own educational facilities hence avoiding the possible stress of learning in a new cultural environment.

There is a scarcity of rigorous research on the cultural differences that U.S. students may find while studying at a Spanish university. Professionals in the field of SA in Spain who work with students directly enrolling in local universities are likely aware of culture differences; however, few academic articles explore the topic (see Pandor, 2017; Rueda, 2006; González, 2004). Goldoni (2009) ethnographic research also illustrated how one student was unable to overcome miscommunication with her Spanish professor even within the confines of an island program.

In this sub-section, I will examine the characteristics of HE academic culture in Spain and the U.S. and consider which could theoretically and/or have been found to create stress for U.S. SA students studying in a Spanish university. I will draw in part from Hofstede's dimension and also incorporate other cultural (e.g., monochromical/polychronic) and historical (e.g., academic tradition) aspects of HE systems to provide a more complete picture. I will address characteristics such as degree structure, pedagogy, time orientation, perspective on academic success, relationships between students and relationships with professors.

The structure of HE in Spain and the U.S. has a key difference: U.S. education focuses on the whole human, emphasizing the development in many disciplines rather than focusing exclusively on one field (Althen et al., 2003) whereas Spain focuses on developing professionals of a specific discipline. “All colleges and universities in the United States offer approximately two years of “liberal education”...They do this out of the conviction that HE is not simply preparation for a career, but a general enrichment of citizenship and life” (Nussbaum, 2018, p. 292). Spain follows the European tradition of university system in which they study a specific degree which prepares them for a profession. This tradition dates back to the 10th and 11th centuries during which trade schools were created in Spain to produce and distribute knowledge of a specific profession (Rodríguez-San Pedro, 2008). Currently, most Spanish and U.S. bachelor’s degrees are comprised of four years. However, while the U.S. student will spend the first two years on interdisciplinary courses; Spanish students will concentrate on their given subject of study. SA students are generally in their 3rd year; however, due to this structural difference, they likely do not have the same academic background as Spanish students which could create difficulties when previously knowledge is required in a course.

In U.S. HE culture, good learning is synonymous with critical thinking (van Egmond et al., 2013) and considered to be more analytic (Cohen, 1969), separating subjective and objective ideas hence breaking knowledge down into components. The emphasis on an analytical and independent thinking style originates from Socratic tradition (van Egmond et al., 2013). The analytical style also means that students in the U.S are expected to be objective in their writing, backing up any subjective knowledge (e.g., opinions) with empirical evidence. U.S. students are also more pragmatic and likely to engage in trial and error before fully understanding a theory or concept (Samovar et al., 2009; Stewart & Bennett, 1991). The culture’s low uncertainty avoidance can also attribute to their “doing” mentality which leads to a preference for practical over theoretical knowledge based on the belief that what actually works is more valuable than “unrealistic” theory (Althen et al., 2003).

Spanish HE follows European tradition that emphasizes theoretical knowledge and learning deeply one's discipline. "Europeans tend to interpret Americans' pragmatic bent as a failure to conceptualize. According to most Europeans, solutions should be attempted only after the problem is thoroughly understood" (Stewart & Bennett, 1991, p. 155). U.S. students may be lacking in theoretical knowledge required of courses and/or unaccustomed to assimilating theory which could lead to academic difficulties during direct enrollment.

The U.S. is considered a monochronic culture meaning punctuality is of high regard and time is considered as very valuable (Powell & Andersen, 1994). Due to the monochronic culture, turning assignments in on time and keeping to a strict preestablished time schedule for assignments and classes is very important. Even exams are frequently timed and students who are slower are disadvantaged (Powell & Andersen, 1994). Punctuality is also of great importance and therefore arriving late to class is considering wasting another persons' time.

Conversely, Hispanic cultures are considered to be polychronic which means they do multiple things at the same time, value the present moment and view time as more flexible (Hall, 2000). They can be more laid back when it comes to deadlines and being "on time" compared to monochronic cultures. The polychronic orientation presents itself in HE through a greater flexibility in time schedules and a lesser importance given to deadlines of assignments. In Rueda (2006), U.S. students reported that Spanish professors would miss class without prior notice on occasion and some of Pandor's (2017) participants also complained about professors arriving "late" to class.

US students also prefer for objectives to be well structured and organized so they can efficiently accomplish them (Althen et al., 2003). Even though the U.S. culture is considered a low uncertainty avoidance which would indicate less structure and more flexibility, the monochronic nature of the culture combined with the expectations and desire for academic success seem to be predominate as U.S. students prefer a structured syllabus that outlines every detail of the course, especially evaluation dates and their

requirements. Conversely, Spain has high uncertainty avoidance which Samovar et al., (2009) explain accounts for their classrooms being structured with specific objectives and clear assignments to reduce uncertainty. However, I believe that differences across education levels may be impacting this characterization of Spanish education as studies on HE have found U.S. students to be stressed by the lack of structure in organization of the class and the syllabus (González, 2004; Pandor, 2017). It seems the polychronic orientation also outweighs the uncertainty avoidance dimension leading to a more flexible course structure which is modified through informal discussions between professors and students throughout the course.

US cultural traits of individualism and masculinity are reflected by how students define academic success. As, Pastor Cesteros and Pandor (2017) point out, being successful for an American student means receiving the maximum note, an A. American students are competitive with grading and value maintaining a high grade point average (GPA). Spanish professors consider success to be the transmission of knowledge without giving greater importance to the final mark. Most Spanish students are more concerned with passing and are not obsessed with achieving the highest mark (Pandor, 2017).

Samovar et al., (2009) also note that in Spain “student evaluations do not emphasize how well the student did, but rather what needs to be improved” (p. 334). For example, one student in Pandor’s (2017) study complained that he received a 3 out of 10 for one ‘small oversight’ on a formula that consequently made the rest of the answer incorrect. He believed that in the U.S. only a few points would have been deducted. In the U.S. HE system exams are design to encourage academic success and grades are even sometimes curbed to maintain higher grades; therefore, normality of lower marks in Spain could create a stress for students.

Furthermore, for U.S. students, academic success is also viewed as important to secure a good job upon graduation (Samovar et al., 2009). U.S. universities cost a significant amount of money which is considered an investment in a person’s future that is perceived to be dependent on grades. The significant

cost of education can lead to consumeristic views toward the classroom in which students feel they deserve to pass because they pay for and attend the class, even if the quality of their work is low. In Spain, students must show they acquired sufficient academic knowledge to pass the course which proved problematic for some SA students in Goldoni (2009) ethnographic study.

In Pandor (2017), three of the seven main cultural differences indicated by SA students at Spanish universities demonstrated the emphasis U.S. student put on their grades: the lack of opportunities for examination, heavily weighed final exam, and less opportunities to receive a high mark. Goldoni's (2009) ethnographic research found that students even within their SA center were concerned with the lack of homework and graded assignments during the semester which resulted in an increased pressure on the final exam/paper. Pandor (2017) points out that especially for students whose grades directly transfer instead of pass/fail, the desire to achieve the maximum grade in this new system can cause a lot of anxiety. The importance of good grades for SA students can also lead to difficulties during groupwork. In Covert (2011), one student expressed her frustration communicating to her Chilean classmates that "this will affect my grades back where I'm from, and we need to take it seriously and get it done" (p. 137). While this research is referring to students in Chile, the cultural difference of value given to grades may also cause similar problems in Spain.

Interpersonal personal relationships between students in the classroom is related to individualism-collectivism and masculinity-feminine dimensions (Hofstede, 1986). Individualism in U.S. cultures manifests itself in the belief that individuals are responsible for their own lives and futures and therefore, there is a high degree of self-reliance and value given to personal accomplishments (Althen et al., 2003). Furthermore, the masculine society is reflected in their maintenance of more competitive relationships (Hofstede, 1986). In the U.S., students believe they are self-reliant and do not rely on peers for academic help. They rarely go out of their way to speak to other students in the class unless for a group project and tend to socialize outside of class instead. The tendency for courses to be graded on a curve

further emphasizes their success in relation to other students making them less likely to use cooperative skills (Althen et al., 2003).

Unlike the U.S, Spanish classrooms are characterized by a lack of competition in which students do not compete for grades (Samovar et al., 2009). This could be attributed the cultural traits of collectivism and feminine societies' whose members prefer relations of collaboration and solidarity. Therefore, information and ideas are shared amongst students rather than being considered belonging to one student (Samovar et al., 2009). I would also consider that the difference in educational structure and university life impact students' relationships. In Spain, students to take the majority of their classes with the same peers throughout their degree which allows them time to form friendships, whereas in U.S. HE students freely select electives within their major or minor and therefore rarely know their classmates providing less incentive to collaborate.

The mismatch in desire for cooperation or competitive relations between students can result in negative perceptions of the other. As a Japanese student in Liberman's (1994) research perceived it, "American students seem to want to show off their knowledge and intelligence in class and are often overconfident and egotistical; discussions seem to be like competitions" (p. 184). Yet for American students, the collaborative nature can be viewed a cheating. For example, in Covert (2011), a SA student was upset when a Chilean peer asked him for the correct exam answers to study because he perceived it as insincere and dishonest. However, another possibility is that the Chilean student's behavior followed collaborative norms between students which clashed with the U.S. student competitive relationship especially for evaluated assignments. In Spain, where students are less concerned with their grades or competitive, I can imagine a similar situation may arise.

Relationships between students and professors also vary based on the level of formality, interaction in the classroom, and role of the professor in students' learning and/or academic success. The low power distance in U.S. society is attributed to egalitarian relationship in which students' viewpoints

are valued by professors (Althen et al., 2003). In the U.S., knowledge is considered negotiable, and learning is viewed as being created together through discussion (Powell & Andersen, 1994). “Learning is viewed as an enterprise of exploration, experimentation, analysis, and synthesis—processes that students engage in along with their teachers and professors” (Althen et al., 2003, p. 108). U.S. professors are seen as facilitators of discussion, organizers of the course and friendly critics (Pratt, 1991). U.S. educational culture is generally regarded as student-centered.

According to Hofstede, the slightly higher power distance and high uncertainty avoidance in Spanish society lends itself to a more professor centered teaching methodology.

The Spanish culture considers teachers to be experts; students are expected to agree with their teachers at all times or be viewed as disloyal. On examinations and written assignments, students are expected to repeat the teacher’s ideas rather than provide their own thoughts or creative answers. (Samovar, et al., 2009, p. 334)

Again, it should be considered that Samovar et al., (2009) does not distinguish between levels of education in this characterization and I would still assume more independent critical thinking is required by Spanish professors in higher education. The professor centered lecture class’s didactical value is its ability to provide information, clarify and simplify complex ideas, help facilitate understanding, orient the contents, and stimulate interest and thoughts (Morell, 2009). Nevertheless, as Gil Martínez & Llorián González (2000) point out, international students unaccustomed to this methodology may need to learn to detect the important elements of the lecture and how to take useful notes.

In fact, Pandor (2017) research found that one of the principal difficulties the U.S. students perceived was that rather than discussion-based classes, they found Spanish professors relied on monologued lecture style classes. In Kinginger’s (2013a) SA research, the lecture class and local student’s behavior during it was also highlighted as a key cultural difference in France. A student enrolled in local classes complained,

they [local students] always talk. like they don't pay—they don't pay attention to professors, the professor doesn't really engage the class. he kinda just presents material, um and he says what he has to say, he needs to fit it all in, whether or not his students learn it. (Kinging, 2013a, p. 339)

Covert's (2014) students also considered the local students as being rude due to their side conversations during the lecture. In the U.S., lecture class exists; however, the behavioral expectation is that students silently pay attention.

Even the physical space of the classroom reflects the educational culture and relationship between professor and student. In many smaller U.S classrooms it is common to find desks which can be moved into a circle to facilitate groupwork and debate (Pandor, 2017). The professor walks around facilitating discussion at the same egalitarian level of the students. Whereas, in Spanish universities' the predominate format is an amphitheater with individual desks or continuous benches facing the lecturing professor (Forgas Berdet & Herrera Rodrigo, 2000). The physical space is reflective of the cultural distance between the professor and the student and their roles in the classroom.

Pandor's (2017) research also found that U.S. students found it difficult that the professor did not play an active role in the students' academic success noting a lack graded assignments with opportunities for feedback as well as less supervision and more autonomy on the part of the student. In the U.S., academic failure is also seen as a fault of the professor not just the student and therefore professors have a sense of commitment to the students success whereas in Spain this is not considered the professors responsibility (González, 2004). The professor's role in the traditional model is only to teach (e.g., provide a lecture) without being required to concern themselves with the students' job, learning (Morales Vallejo, 2012). This may be problematic for SA students who are accustomed to a more student-centered approach in which the professor is expected to guide them towards academic success.

In fact, Pandor (2017) found that U.S. students were stressed by the lack of supervision and greater autonomy expected of them as students. Goldoni's (2009) ethnographic study of an island program in Spain illustrated an extreme case of this cultural difference. A student was placed in a Spanish course above her level and when she made mistakes, she perceived her professors' remarks as direct and critical but without concern for her individual learning or improvement. Her attitude towards the class became negative. She stopped paying attention, showing the professor respect, or seeking help but still felt entitled to a passing grade in the course. The researcher also reported that the professor was heard saying she hated the student and had a history of unequal treatment towards students with lower skills (Goldoni, 2009). The story represents a clash in cultural expectations on the role of professor in students' learning and the U.S. consumeristic view of education (Goldoni, 2013).

Relationships between students and professors in both countries tend to be more informal; however, this does not always manifest in the same way. The small power distance in U.S. society means people function on an interpersonal level of equality in spite of status (Stewart & Bennett, 1991) and prefer egalitarian, informal relations, using first names rather than titles (Althen et al., 2003). However, researchers have found both the use of first names (Althen et al., 2003) and the more formal Mr./Mrs./Dr. (Rueda, 2006) when addressing professors. U.S. students also use other informal behaviors such as eating in class, informal postures and clothing or reading which could be considered rude in other cultures, including Spain. Students in the U.S. show respect through their tone and more formal vocabulary when speaking to professors (Althen et al., 2003). U.S. culture also tends to be more politically correct and courteous which Latin cultures can view as insincere (Pandor, 2017).

In Spain, students also commonly use the informal you form "tú" instead of the formal "usted" (Red de Español Académico, 2015). Spanish professors do not always dress as formally as professors in the U.S. (Forgas Berdet and Herrera Rodrigo, 2001). Relationships in Latin cultures are also characterized by closer physical space which can be interpreted by U.S. students as invading their personal space and

even inappropriate (Pandor, 2017). López López & Pereda Guinea (2013) also note that foreign students in Spain may be surprised by the informal conversation between professors and students that takes place before lecture class. Some of Pandor (2017) participants also reported confusion due to Spanish professors' use informal colloquial vocabulary during lectures.

In Spain, the traditional model of learning holds that the professor is the expert who transmits knowledge through a lecture while students take notes, memorize and repeat on exams (Morales Vallejo, 2012) while the U.S. model holds that the professor is a facilitator of discussion. Even though European HEIs are considered to be of Western Socratic tradition; this traditional professor-centered learning style is seemingly closer to Confucian learning tradition which could present cultural differences for U.S. students. However, as previously mentioned, academic cultures are not static, and diversity exists between and within HEIs in any given nation state. To understand academic culture at the individual classroom level, it is valuable to comprehend the factors changing HE and the challenges causing resistance since they account for the diversity of academic cultures SA students in my research will experience within the Spanish HE system.

3.2.3 Spanish HE in transition

During the last 30 years, Spain has been shifting from professor-centered to student-centered learning due to the Bologna Process which is reshaping the Spanish academic culture, although it is still uncertain if the objectives have been achieved (López-Sidro, 2011). The process has been chaotic due to misconceptions about Bologna due in part to a lack of attention paid to official documents and the media's negative coverage that focuses on student protests and disgruntled professors and leaders (Bajo Santos, 2010). In the classroom, the major source of resistance stems from the adoption of student center learning methodologies which the Bologna Process is perceived to have imposed on professors.

In 2002, during the European University Association conference in Zurich, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) was defined as "a student-centred system based on the student workload required

to achieve the objectives of a programme. These objectives are preferably specified in terms of learning outcomes” (European Union Association, 2002). Before credits were calculated by lecture hours, emphasizing the professor’s teaching. They would now be calculated focusing on students’ workload, hence shifting the focus to the students’ learning. Additionally, the objectives were defined in terms of learning outcomes that go beyond the understanding and memorizing contents (Gil, 2017), marking a shift to competency-based learning and a change in the role of the professor from teaching to facilitating student learning (Del Pozo Andrés, 2009).

It was in the London communiqué in 2007 that student-centered learning was explicitly introduced as a methodology shift stemming from the Bologna process. It states, “there is an increasing awareness that a significant outcome of the process will be a move towards student-centred HE and away from teacher driven provision” (European Higher Education Area, 2007). Furthermore, the European Union Association released the Lisbon Declaration which made specific reference to efforts to overcome the challenges of shifting towards student-centered learning such as making learning outcomes explicit, encouraging critical thinking and active learning, and motivating professors to shift towards the new paradigm (European Higher Education Area, 2007).

Student-centered learning requires the professor to adapt new methodologies that combine the learning of contents with learning to apply, analyze, evaluate, critical thinking, design, elaborate, interpret, reason, plan etc. in order to develop competencies (Montero Curiel, 2010). This can include methods such as presentations, written assignments, group work, case studies, project learning, collaborative learning, learning by problems and more (del Pozo Andrés, 2009; Montero Curiel, 2010). Lectures are not incompatible with students centered learning; however, they should be transformed into active learning situations through generating interaction, using exercise, discussion, case studies and questions (Morales Vallejo, 2012). Student centered learning does not deny the value of theory, nor does

it separate it from the teaching of practical elements; rather it combines theory and practice to facilitate the development of competencies.

Similar to the challenges affronting IaH in Europe, the promotion of student-centered learning by the EHEA has not been backed up with any European document supporting methodological ideas of how to implement this new system nor significant funding. The incorporation of student-centered learning has been slow and uneven in Spanish universities with much left to the discretion of professors who for the most part do not receive training (Villa Sánchez et al., 2015). The European Union Association's Trends 2010 reports

the paradigm shift to student-centred learning, which is critical to improving education, represents both a cultural challenge to some teaching traditions and a financial one to address costlier requirements such as human resource development, new classroom infrastructures and smaller student-staff ratios. (Sursock & Smidt, 2010, p. 4)

Therefore, it is not surprising that there are many obstacles to shifting to a student-center learning model stemming from both professors and students.

Spanish professors are mainly ex-students of the university who performed well in the traditional model of learning. University professors are expert investigators in their fields but do not generally receive pedagogic training. Therefore, most implement methodologies that they have vicariously learned during their academic careers (Monereo & Pozo, 2003). The shift places a large burden on professors who must redefine their curriculums in terms of learning competencies and the time students spend learning. Furthermore, professors continue to be valued and evaluated based on the success of their investigations rather than their teaching practices, lowering motivation and interest as little reward is given for shifting towards student-center learning (del Pozo Andrés, 2009). The prioritizing of investigation over teaching is also due to competition for funds, promotion structures and salaries as well as the continued myth that the best investigators are the best professors (Monereo & Pozo, 2003).

Professors have also resisted change because some believe why change what has been working forever, others see it as an imposition from above without a reward, and others perhaps simply do not know how to properly implement it. Furthermore, student centered learning is associated with Anglo-Saxon education which only furthers resistance due to the criticism that it betrays European university tradition (López-Sidro, 2011). However, professor-centered learning leaves the risk of bad lectures which create passive learners, deterring students from coming to class and overutilizing memorization over analyzing. The shift may be a consequence of structural changes; however, refocusing the emphasis on concerning oneself with students' learning should be obvious rather than resisted (Morales Vallejo, 2012).

For the shift to be successful, students must also play an important role in the process of their own learning and can no longer remain passive in class (López-Sidro, 2011). At the HE level, its implementation becomes more difficult considering it was not necessarily incorporated in previous education and therefore students are unaccustomed to active learning (Gil, 2017). Professors have seen that students can initially reject this methodology due to the added commitment required on their part (Villa Sánchez et al., 2015). Additionally, if assignments are not properly designed students may view continuous learning as “busy work” (del Pozo Andrés, 2009; Gil, 2017). Nevertheless, “it seems that the student-centered methodologies positively influence the results and satisfaction of the students”⁴ (Otero, Ferro, y Vila, 2012; Mills et al., 2009; Tigelaar, Dolmans, Wolfhagen, y van der Vleuten, 2004 in Villa Sánchez et al., 2015). Other methods such as case studies and cooperative learning methods have also been well received by students (Pérez Álvarez, 2012).

Currently, Spanish HE uses four main methodologies of teaching which are prevalent in the European system: theoretical, practical, seminars and tutoring (del Pozo Andrés, 2009). The “*clase magistral*” or lecture class continues to be the most prevalent to transmit theoretical knowledge although

⁴ Original text: “Parece que las metodologías más centradas en el estudiante inciden de manera positiva en los resultados y satisfacción de los propios estudiantes”

the professor now uses more dynamic methods rather than exclusively transmitting knowledge. The “*práctica*” or practical class use smaller groups to solve problems or cases through class discussion. The “*seminarios*” or seminars are used to facilitate discussion between students and professors about key concepts of the course. Finally, the “*tutoría*” or office hours are used for one-on-one personalized assistance to students who request it (del Pozo Andrés, 2009). Professors may rely more on one methodology than another, but it is important to recognize that Spanish HE should not be considered as a static or solely professor-centered education but rather an academic culture in transition as it converges with new EU models.

Equally, U.S. HE teaching practices should not be considered strictly student centered as they are not homogenous across or within universities. Since the 1990’s there has also been a shift towards a more active or student-center learning; however, traditional lecture class are still prevalent if not dominant across some campuses (Cox et al., 2011). This is due in part to professors’ lack of awareness or belief that the shift in teaching methodologies will improve student outcomes despite the increasing empirical evidence (Cox et al., 2011). Other factors impeding change are large 100+ student lecture halls. In larger classrooms, relationships with professors can be more distant and formal as well (Althen et al., 2003). Therefore, while the image of U.S. Socratic HE culture may be commonly considered as student-centered; the reality is much more diverse with traditional lectures still present.

The body of SA scholarship which aims to understand cultural differences between the U.S. and Spanish academic cultures is limited to Pandor’s (2017) and Rueda’s (2006) studies cited throughout my comparisons of U.S. and Spain. However, both studies are constrained by their methodologies that part from an assumption that students will experience specific cultural differences rather than exploring how SA students perceive the culture of learning which could work to identify other differences and/or similarities. They also take a dichotomous standpoint of U.S. culture versus Spanish culture rather than viewing cultures as dynamic and diverse. Students’ perspectives are based on their individual previous

experience in the U.S. compared to their new ones in the Spanish classrooms which naturally will be diverse. The research also only considers the viewpoint of U.S. SA students of hybrid programs without including the local professors and students' perspectives making it more difficult to bridge the gap between learning cultures and facilitate their adaptation to the Spanish university.

I strongly agree with Pandor's (2017) argument that SA programs play a central role in properly preparing students for any challenges they will face in a new academic culture to help them take advantage of direct enrollments' learning opportunities. Both investigations highlight cultural differences and provide suggestions of how to prepare students for the experience; however, neither addresses how students adapt to the cultural differences. I believe a deeper understanding of how SA students cope with and overcome these challenges is key to providing proper support to SA students who choose to directly enroll in a local university abroad.

3.3 Student adaptation to the academic context

There is a substantial amount of literature on the adaptation of international students (long-term sojourners seeking full degrees) to foreign universities which focuses on the classroom but little pertaining to exchange students (short-term sojourners). Perhaps, this is due to their longer stay which gives them more intrinsic and extrinsic reasons to adapt to the new environment than SA students (Kim, 1988). My research focuses on adaptation process of SA students in a Spanish university; however, considering the dearth of previous research, I will theorize from the broader literature on exchange and international students to fill in gaps in past scholarship.

I will consider the students' adaptation process using Kim's (2001) structural model outlined in the previous chapter. At the center of the model is host interpersonal communication and ethnic interpersonal communication. In my research, this refers to the communication between SA students and national students and professors, and within their U.S. cohort, respectively. I will first review environment and individual factors that influence whether or not there is interaction between international and local

students in the classroom. I will draw from Allport's (1954) and Pettigrew's (1998) revision of intergroup contact theory, Stephan and Stephan's (1985) theory of intergroup anxiety, and Tajfel and Turner's (1979) self-identification theory to deepen the understanding of cross-cultural contact between students. I will also draw on the theoretical framework of SCT (Bandura, 1986) and the role of self-efficacy beliefs and agency in students' decisions surrounding host and ethnic communication. I will conclude by analyzing past research on interactions of foreign students with local students and professors in the academic setting is most often reported through groupwork.

3.3.1 Environment conditions

The interplay of the environmental factors of Kim's (2001) structure model shapes the student's adaptation process. In my research, ethnic group strength is represented by the pull to interact with program cohort peers. The host receptivity and pressure to conform vary by the SA students' perceptions of local students and professor at the host university. Often host receptivity and ethnic group strength feed off each other as both groups perceive the other is uninterested in interacting and therefore do not initiate contact. Additionally, SA programs facilitate the formation of co-national friendships and HEIs support services for exchange students encourage international friendships. The perception of difference, assumption that the other does not wish to interact and anxiety of initiating the conversation are important environmental barriers to interaction.

3.3.1.1 SA student cohort relationships

Research on SA students often uses Bochner et al., (1977) model to analyze friendship networks and most commonly concludes that U.S. SA students' primary friendships are their co-national cohorts (Savicki, 2010), even though they generally expect and desire more host national contact (Mendelson, 2004; Pitts, 2009). These strong co-national friendships demonstrate a high level of ethnic group strength (Kim, 2001). Since U.S. cohorts travel in groups and frequently have program activities, both curricular

and extracurricular, separated from the host society, it is not surprising that they have been seen to develop strong bonds and solidarity (Goldoni, 2009; Isabelli, 2006; Twombly, 1995).

When faced with cultural differences, students use these bonds to cope with difference and provide practice advice (Savicki, 2010). “These ethnic support systems serve adaptation-facilitating functions for new immigrants and sojourners during the initial phase of their adaptation process” (Kim, 1988, p. 64). The relatively easy communication allows for stress-free activities to relieve the anxiety of being abroad but also prevent long term development of host communicative competence (Kim, 2001). Furthermore, since SA peers often do not have more experience in the host culture, the facilitating attributes of ethnic communication within the cohort are minimal.

When developing local friendships is more difficult than anticipated, SA students retreat into their co-national groups (Pitts, 2009). While they may emotionally adjust; socio-cultural adaptation may be limited. Furthermore, the U.S. bubble effect can close them off initiating or developing deeper relationships with host nationals because their need for friendship is already covered. Staying within the co-national cohort can be detrimental to language and cultural learning (Isabelli, 2006). Sometimes, even students who realized that co-national relationships are hurting their language learning choose to maintain the behavior because being part of the group is more important (Pyper & Slagter, 2015).

Hendrickson’s (2016) in-depth interviews revealed that island program students made friendships during the first week’s orientation program and even on the group flight before arrival. SA students also mentioned a pressure to do activities with the group consistent with a high level of ethnic group strength reported in SA programs. Forbes (2004) theorized that when contact happens between groups rather than individuals, stereotyping between cultural groups persists. The existence of a large U.S. cohort rather than individual student sojourners increases ingroup sentiment which produces “us” versus “them” mentalities consistent with a defense orientation (Bennett & Bennett, 2003) that limits cultural adaptation.

Another theory that supports the formation of strong cohort group is Tajfel's and Turner's (1979) work on intergroup differentiation. It maintains that one evaluates their own group positively through attempting to differentiate from other outgroups. The necessary conditions for intergroup differentiation are that the individual must self-identify as part of the in-group, the social situation must allow for the evaluation of differences, and that finally, they must perceive the out-group as comparable and therefore be in close proximity. The goal is to maintain superiority over the outgroup on some dimensions (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). It is a common psychological tendency used to simplified cognitive social representations into groups rather than understanding each person as an individual (Kim, 2009). In the case of SA students, their socialization as a cohort abroad provides them with an ingroup in the face of being an outsider in the new culture. SA students' proximity to the new culture by living abroad, provides opportunities for the comparison of a variety of attributes. When students' identities are put into question by the host culture, they may use ingroup differentiation to return to feeling superior to the host culture.

3.3.1.2 SA student multinational friendships

SA students who participate in exchange programs do not have a large co-national cohort or group trips and therefore have less ethnic group strength pull that prevents interaction with locals. However, fewer co-national relationships do not necessarily directly equate to strong national friendships since multinational associations are also present. Hendrickson (2016) found that SA students studying at local universities also had significantly more multinational than local friendships. These results are comparable to research on Erasmus students who have also been seen to interact more with other international students than local or co-national students (Van Mol & Michielsen, 2015). Exchange students commonly build their network during host university orientations or other activities designed for the international student population but unfortunately are attended by few local students.

In the European Student Network (ESN) international-friendliness survey, the social adaptation of Erasmus students was measured by the development of friendship networks (Josek et al., 2016). Exchange

students reported frequently attending entertainment and leisure activities; however, 65% felt that social activities are attended by mostly international students and only 17% felt there was an even mix with national students. In Vazirani's et al., (2018) study in Spain, Erasmus students felt it was difficult to establish relationships with Spanish students outside of the classroom and therefore socialized more with international students. Exchange students are in the same situation and therefore are open to new friendships, maintain similar lifestyles and face similar adaptation challenges to bond over. These results are consistent with Bochner et al.,'s (1977) characterization that international friendships are mainly for socializing.

This tendency is also in accordance with Turner et al.,'s (1987) self-categorization theory which suggests that new groups arise when outgroup members perceive they face common experiences and that their ingroup differences are smaller than their differences with the majority outgroup. Shared experiences of discriminatory behavior on the part of the majority group can further push individuals to create a new ingroup. The phenomena can be explained by the 'rejection-identification' model developed by Branscombe et al., (1999). It theorizes that minority group identification, in this case with other international students, allows people to counteract the negative psychological effects of the perceived rejection by the host community and regain self-esteem from their new group identification. Their new self-identification as an international student provides them an ingroup and reaffirms their self-worth as a member of a group. SA and exchange students, regardless of their background, face similar challenges and possible discriminations; therefore, I must consider it possible SA students will choose to interact with multinational students in the classroom more than local students who are not in the same situation.

Research on friendship networks has consistently indicated that U.S. SA students spend more time with cohort friends than locals since ethnic communication is stress free (Kim, 2001), provides emotional support (Bochner et al., 1977) and helps maintain a positive view of their identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Even SA students on exchange programs are likely to self-identify as an international student and create

a new group with other foreign students. However, considering national students have insider knowledge about the host culture within the classroom, it is unlikely they will adapt if they do not communicate with local students as well.

Hendrickson (2016) research was novel in that it confirmed the impact of program design on friendship networks. While it provided indications of how strong ethnic groups are developed in island programs, it did not provide an understanding of how the direct enrollment experience facilitated friendships with international students and national students. A further examination of facilitators and barriers to bridging the gap between SA and national students is needed to understand how both in and out of classroom programming can facilitate cross-cultural communication.

3.3.1.3 Reception of international students in Spain

Research on the experiences of international students (SA, exchange or degree seeking) in the classroom in Spain is scarce even though the Mediterranean country is a popular destination for exchange students due to its friendly culture and climate (Pérez-Encinas et al., 2017). There is little empirical data on the perceived host receptivity or conformity pressure of the local university. In the broader literature on international students, foreign students have reported feeling the local students were indifferent to their presence (Brown, 2009; Gareis, 2012), or friendly but difficult to establish friendships (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). The gap between students has been attributed to lack of interest on the part of host students, lifestyle differences, concerns of academic level, discrimination, and anxiety and uncertainty which prevents interactions (Ward, 2006). For the individual SA students, the level of host receptivity is dependent on the local professors' and students' desire to reach out to international students and/or if they take initiative, whether they feel welcomed.

In Spain, support services are primarily focused on admissions, enrollment, practical information and language support (e.g., Spanish classes) (Perez-Encinas & Ammigan, 2016). There is little institutional support for the integration of international students outside of a welcome orientation and buddy

programs. Even so, whether or not the buddy pairings lead to deeper relationships is still inconclusive since across Europe, participants of the ESN survey evaluated the service quite low - 4.53 out of 10 (Josek et al., 2016). Social integration with local students is left primarily to student organizations such as the ESN; although their activities are generally attended in majority by international students (Josek et al., 2016) resulting in multinational friendships rather than integration with local students.

The broader literature shows that local students may refrain from including international students due to negative stereotypes about academic or language level leading them to doubt foreign students' ability to positively contribute to group work (Barron, 2006; Harrison & Peacock, 2010). There is a common belief among local students that their grade will be negatively affected if they work with international students (Carroll & Ryan, 2005); however, De Vita (2002) research on cultural mixed groups found that the average mark for group work was higher than the individual's mark for other assignments. In the Spanish classroom, international students have consistency been found to be segregated, forming their own teams in group work unless the professor socially engineered the groups (De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2014; Martínez Rubio et al., 2007; Vazirani et al., 2018).

The few existing studies in Spain, point to an indifference on the part of Spanish students who, although they do not necessarily view intercultural contact negatively and are open to helping, will not necessarily initiate contact. Sánchez's (2004) investigation on the opinion of local Spanish students in a public university on international students found:

- 87% percent reported no contact with international students
- 70.1% considered the lack of contact with international students was unfavorable
- 17.4% believed that Spanish students were interested in contact with foreigners
- 81.2% felt international students should initiate contact
- 94% perceive international students as self-segregating in co-ethnic groups
- 62% believed international students are unwilling to interact with locals (Sánchez, 2004)

These results show Spanish students believe that international students either do not want to interact or should be the ones to initiate contact. However, if local students do not initiate contact, international students will perceive a low level of host receptivity that only pushes them further into their multinational groups which in turn reinforces the Spanish students' belief they do not seek interaction.

Also interesting is that while local students believed the lack of contact was unfavorable, they still considered Spanish students were not interested in contact. On an individual level it seems Spanish students are open to interaction, but when speaking in group terms, the divide remains. Vazirani, et al.,'s (2018) research found some international students felt Spanish students included them in the classroom and helped them when lost or if the professor's support was missing; however, others felt the local students did not understand their challenges.

The aforementioned studies contribute to understanding the perception of host receptivity and its impact on the integration of international students in the academic setting in Spain. However, Sánchez's (2004) research is based on a questionnaire focused on measuring intercultural contact through close ended questions and gathering intercultural attitudes within the university using open ended questions. Both tools are limited because the questions are predetermined around topics the authors view important rather emerging from the participants' point of view. To gain a deeper understanding, Sánchez (2004) recommends "ethnographies on group attitudes and perceptions must continue developing qualitative as well as quantitative, rigorous studies for further generalizations" (p. 312). Vazirani et al., (2018) used a qualitative approach of semi-structured interviews to capture students' and professors' point of view; however, it is limited by its small sample size (13 Erasmus students & 2 professors) which only represented the faculty of education. Additionally, they used only one interview and therefore could not examine whether there was a change in integration or adaptation over time. By using pre- and post- interviews, my research aims to capture the students' points of view and whether or not it changes throughout the semester.

Considering international students overwhelmingly show they desired more contact, I believe that the idea that they self-segregate is likely a projection of local students' own anxiety towards intergroup contact and preference towards comfortable co-national interactions. It is easier for local students who are on their home turf to be complacent and assume that international students exclude themselves (Smart et al., 2000). For example, in Ireland, Dunne (2008) found that home students' perceptions indicate that although they view intercultural contact positively, they also view it with uncertainty and therefore do not consider it worthwhile. Local students may avoid cross-cultural contact as the uncertainty surrounding communication causes them anxiety (Harrison & Peacock, 2010).

Anxiety-Uncertainty Management (AUM) theory suggests that both the cognitive factor of uncertainty and affective factor of anxiety are principal variables mediating intercultural adaptation and the effectiveness of interpersonal communication with others (Gudykunst, 1995). Applying AUM theory, local students will be unlikely to engage with international students if there is too much or too little uncertainty and/or anxiety surrounding the interaction because the intercultural contact will be viewed as too stressful or not worthwhile respectively.

These findings are also consistent with Stephan and Stephan's (1985) theory of intergroup anxiety which stems from contact with outgroup members. They hypothesize that people are concerned about four types of negative consequences: 1) negative psychological consequences for the self, such as feelings of embarrassment, frustration or offending others; 2) negative behavioral consequences for the self, such as being taken advantage of, discrimination or poor performance; 3) negative evaluations by members of the outgroup, such as fear of rejection; 4) negative evaluations by the ingroup, such as disapproval and possible reproach.

In the ESN survey, local European students perceived the top three barriers for interaction to be lack of opportunities, lack of confidence to approach international students and low language skills (Josek et al., 2016); the latter two reasons indicating a level of anxiety due to a possible negative evaluation by

international students. Local students may not wish to offend the international student by accident and/or be perceived as racist (Dunne, 2008; Harrison & Peacock, 2010) which would result in negative psychological consequence for the self. Dunne (2008) also found host students to be concerned about peer-pressure from bringing an outsider to their inner-group.

Stephan and Stephan (1985) also postulated that intergroup anxiety is reduced for those individuals who have had many past intergroup experiences which were positive and had a perception equal status. However, in Sanchez (2004) study, only 1.66% of local Spanish students had experienced a positive intercultural contact inside the university meaning few students have reduced anxiety about interacting with internationals. Approximately 11.5% of Spanish students participate in exchange programs⁵ abroad and have had intercultural experiences; however, considering SA students enrolled primarily in 3rd year courses, many of those students may currently be abroad or already in 4th year courses. Another 5% of undergraduate students in Spain are international (Ministerio de Ciencia Innovación y Universidades, 2019) and theoretically more open to interacting with SA students; however, this remains a low overall percentage.

International students who perceive discrimination on the part of the host society are less likely to engage with locals and more likely to stick with other international or conational students (Brown, 2009). The discrimination may come from the local students; however, discrimination living in the host society at large also leads to a lack of desire to engage. Non-European minority students, especially those with more salient features that differ from the host society (e.g., wearing a hijab, color of skin, etc.) have also reported negative experiences in the community leading to segregation rather than integration into the host society (Brown, 2009). Many SA studies have found that feelings of racial discrimination or sexism

⁵ In the 2017/2018 year, there were 1,291,114 total undergraduate students. Considering there are four course years, we can approximate there are 322,788.5 3rd year students eligible to SA of which 37,237 or 11.5% participated. (Ministerio de Ciencia Innovación y Universidades, 2019)

were important barriers to integration with locals (Anderson, 2003; Goldoni, 2009; Isabelli, 2006; Polanyi, 1995; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Twombly, 1995).

In Spain specifically, qualitative SA research shows that some students of ethnic minorities experience discrimination from their host society (Goldoni, 2013; Quan, 2018; Talburt & Stewart, 1999). In Talburt & Stewart (1999), an African American female felt discriminated and sexualized by local people due to cat calling and daily unwanted attention or comments. In Goldoni (2013), an African American man of Dominican background also felt like an outsider who was unwelcome by the Spanish people who viewed, “him at times with curiosity, superiority, suspicion, fear, or rejection” (Goldoni, 2013, p. 363). In Quan (2018), an Iranian American with a low Spanish level felt the locals did not accept her due to her Spanish and the way she looked.

In three all cases, the perceived discrimination caused the student to withdraw from interaction with local Spanish people which negatively impacted their adaptation. However, “not all students of color face discrimination abroad, and in some cases, students may find the abroad climate and host community to be more welcoming than their at-home institutions or their U.S. peers” (Quan, 2018, p. 35). While this body of research is useful in understanding the impact of perceived discrimination, these are individual stories which cannot be blanketly used to generalize the experience of all ethnic minorities in Spain.

Since a high level of Spanish is required to directly enroll in classes in Spain, a significant percentage my participants are of Latin American descent. Nevertheless, their experience with the Spanish language and level of differentiating features to the local population, both of which impact their perceived reception by the host society, varies greatly. SA research has found that heritage speakers may face discrimination towards their linguistic variation from the host society (Shively, 2016). They negotiate their identities based on how they perceived to be received by the new cultural environment and how they interpret the cultural practices. The process of identity negotiation affects their choices and attitude toward language learning and engaging with local people (Kinging, 2013b).

When students perceive they are received negatively by the host society, many choose to withdraw from interacting with the host nationals (Petrucci, 2007). For example, in Quan's (2018) study, the SA student perceived the host mother viewed her as an incompetent Spanish speaker. This combined with her insecurity about her Spanish level for someone with Mexican American identity led her to social mainly with her U.S. peers rather than native Spanish speakers for fear of being misunderstood or making mistakes. However, not all heritage students choose to withdraw. Riegelhaupt and Carrasco's (2000) study of a bilingual Chicana teacher found even though she felt discriminated against by her middle-class Mexican host family, her desire to improve her Spanish led her to understand the differences between her Chicana Spanish and Mexican Spanish and modify her speech to improve communication with the community. As a results, she became more confident in her Spanish and knowledge of sociocultural contexts (Riegelhaupt & Carrasco, 2000). In this case, the adaptation may also be due to the strong host conformity pressure to change communicative patterns to avoid negative reproaches from the host family.

The conformity pressure does not necessarily come in the form of discrimination, but also the recognition on the part of the sojourner that their communication will improve if they adapt their speech patterns. In Quan et al., (2018) one student reported, "I would say something in Spanish and then my teacher would say, 'oh, that's correct, but [...] we don't say that here.'" (p. 446). In this situation the Spanish professor respects and legitimizes her linguistic variation while explaining how to better communication with the Andalusian community. The positive experience with this professor and her tandem buddy broadened her awareness and motivated her to learn and speak another variety of Spanish (Quan et al., 2018). Drawing from these studies, I assume that students of ethnic minorities and/or heritage speakers' adaptation choices will depend in part on how they perceive the professor and students in the classroom react to any linguistic or cultural differences.

In conclusion, it is common that local students view interactions with international students with uncertainty, indifference, and challenging due to lifestyle differences and occasionally discrimination. SA students tend to stick to their co-national cohort groups for the same reasons in addition to being an easy coping strategy when confronted with cultural differences. This research's setting, SA students directly enrolled in a local classroom in Spain, demonstrates both high ethnic group strength and a perceived low host receptivity; neither of which are favorable to cross-cultural adaptation (Kim, 2001). However, these conclusions are generalizations on a group level based on overarching trends in the literature. Individual actors bring unique characteristics, motivations, and agency to the classroom which will impact their integration and adaptation choices as well.

3.3.2 Predisposition characteristics

Student's individual characteristics, past experiences and motivations are equally important in understanding their adaptation process. Kim (2001) identifies preparedness for change, ethnic proximity/distance and adaptative personality as key predisposition elements that impact adaptation. In my research, ethnic proximity and preparedness for change are valuable in understanding the possible differences between heritage speakers and non-native speakers' adaptation process as the former theoretically have a linguistical and cultural background that should facilitate adaptation but who's visual and speech patterns may or may not be simultaneously disadvantageous. Also relevant is the SA literature which demonstrates how qualities such as motivation, agency, self-efficacy and extroversion impact students' decisions to interact with the local community to which Kim's (2001) adaptive personality characteristics of openness, resilience, patience and positivity play a role.

In the broader international student literature, the lack of quality interactions between international and local students has been attributed to cultural distance (Bochner et al., 1977; Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Gareis, 2012) which is consistent with Kim's (2001) assertion that ethnic proximity impacts host communication. Cultural distance has been related to degree of integration (Trice, 2004) and

whether a lack of common interests makes conversations across cultures more difficult (Smart et al., 2000). Often language level is used as an indicator of cultural distance. International students with higher levels of the host language are found to have more positive experiences and satisfaction with their friendships with locals (Gareis, 2012). Furthermore, local students feel more comfortable interacting with them (Harrison and Peacock, 2010).

Nevertheless, the potential impact of students' language level must not be overemphasized considering most direct enroll students have been filtered for a high L2 level (Scally, 2015) and cultural differences can be more stressful than the linguistic ones (Stephenson, 1999). In my research's context, cultural proximity/distance refers to the level of difference perceived between the culture of origin of the SA student and the Spanish culture. Cultural proximity will influence both interpersonal interactions but also how students perceive the cultural of learning at the Spanish university.

3.3.2.1 Cultural proximity and the case of heritage speakers

SA students who directly enroll in Spain are either non-native speakers with a high Spanish level, heritage or native speakers who often have a linguistical variation from Latin America. Cultural backgrounds have been found to impact cultural adjustment as Nguyen et al., (2018) noted, "notably, similarities and differences emerged based on students' race, ethnicity, and language proficiency, and these background variables shaped their experiences, their communication with locals, and subsequently, their personal and cross-cultural development" (p. 125). While comprehensive statistics are still missing, demographics show that 10.6% of students studying abroad identify as Latin American and 4.4% as multiracial (Institute of International Education, 2019).

The cultural proximity of a heritage or native speaker is often assumed to be close to the Spanish culture; however, linguistic variations, past experience with the language, level of identification with U.S. or heritage culture and the history of colonization in Spain may actually present a larger cultural proximity than expected. There is growing body of literature on the experiences of heritage speakers during SA and

the influence of identity in their language and cultural learning that can help my research understand the advantages and disadvantages for their cultural adaptation.

The most commonly used definition of heritage speakers is “a student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or merely understands the heritage language and who is to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language” (Valdés, 2000, p. 1). Heritage students often speak the heritage language at home but attended almost all formal education in English (in the U.S case), limiting their opportunities to develop higher level competence needed when studying in a Spanish university. Research has shown that heritage language learners are also not a cohesive group as each student’s individual background (e.g., cultural, language level, social class, experience with their native language, attitude towards heritage language, etc.) and experiences in the host society context affects how they negotiate their identity and learning (Quan et al., 2018).

Heritage speakers of Spanish who study abroad in Spain have the advantage of higher linguistic ability and cultural understanding to build connections within the host community. Since these students are advanced learners, they can obtain more input, interaction and output of the language. They also “bring more formulaic expressions to SA communicative contexts and can therefore spend more attention resources on form, whereas novices must attend primarily to meaning” (Collentine, 2009, p.22). They are capable of picking up on higher level pragmatics and sociolinguistic aspects of the language and incorporating them into their own speech (Moreno, 2009). Heritage speakers are likely to pick up on linguistic variations and expand their language repertoire which in turn helps to deepen relationships within the speech community (Quan et al., 2018). Direct enrollment also allows them to expand their formal register due to the academic setting. Finally, they may have closer cultural values and norms from their upbringing which are compatible with the host society, which eases adaptation (Kim, 2001). For example, those who maintain cultural values (e.g., polychronic) may find it easier to adjust to the classroom norms (e.g., flexible timing with assignments). In the direct enrollment setting, their higher

Spanish level gives them advantage in understanding verbal communication which is beneficial to adapt to the classroom.

While heritage speakers may have advantages, they also face unique challenges that are often ignored or unknown to administrators, professors and the host society at large. A heritage speaker than may feel more pressure to speak at a native level and therefore feel inadequate with their own level. Those with less exposure to their heritage language may feel limited in their linguistical range and therefore are more likely to feel self-conscious about their level and even guilty for not speaking better (Moreno, 2009; McLaughlin, 2001). Whereas non-native speakers are expected to be learners; heritage speaker's high communicative abilities and nativelike pronunciation cause the host society to position them as native speakers and holds them to the same bar (Quan, 2018). In the classroom, a professor may expect that a heritage speaker understands at a native Spanish speaker level without recognizing they may be missing sociocultural knowledge of the language and classroom. The same professor may reach out to help a non-native speaker based on the assumption that they may be "lost". In this case, the linguistic cultural proximity of heritage speakers may hinder their adaptation.

It is also not safe to assume that being of Latin American decent means that the host society will perceive them as culturally similar, depending on physical attributes, which may make them stand out from the mainstream Spanish people.

Often, salient ethnic characteristics work against the stranger's adaptation as they introduce a psychological barrier between the stranger and the natives. The quality of "standing out," of being different, makes it particularly difficult for the stranger to ease into the host social milieu. (Kim, 2001, p.83)

If the SA student perceives discrimination such as the previously mentioned African American - Dominican student (Goldoni 2013), it may be more difficult to integrate in spite of their linguistic advantage.

Heritage students often also have multicultural identities that incorporate both being American and the background of their parents (Moreno, 2009). They show agency and choose to position themselves within one ethnic group or another. For example, to lower the expectations of native speakers, some choose to position themselves as being “American” (Moreno, 2009). Others lower expectations of themselves as McLaughlin (2001) study found the Chicanas “confidence grew as they interacted with peers and in their classes experienced success and compliments, and most of all, accepted their own Spanish skills at their developing state, even if they did not arrive at a native level” (p. 89). In the classroom, some may position themselves as “American” L2 learners to lower expectations of the professors and themselves. On the contrary, others may choose to position themselves as Latin American to build relationships with local people and gain an insider perspective (Van Der Meid, 2003). These students can choose to use their background to their advantage to build relationships with the local students and professors to learn the norms of the classroom.

Additionally, Nguyen et al., (2018) did not examine specifically heritage speakers experiences but rather compared the intercultural adjustment of monocultural to multicultural students. The qualitative interviews discovered that the intercultural adjustment trajectories varied between groups. Monocultural students experienced being a cultural “other” for the first time, which helped them empathize with how minorities or immigrants may feel in the U.S. Multicultural students drew on coping resources from having been the “other” in the U.S and therefore able to move beyond the monocultural students’ surprise at being discriminated against to investigate deeper how identity, race, ethnicity, nationality, and gender norms played out in the host country, showing a higher level of intercultural understanding (Nguyen et al., 2018).

This study is valuable as it demonstrates how intercultural adjustment is different for monocultural versus multicultural students. However, as the researchers point out, quantitative methods used to measure cultural intelligence are tested mainly using white male populations and may not be valid

for multicultural samples (Nguyen et al., 2018). In fact, I contend that the richness of the study is derived from the qualitative interviews which demonstrate a much more nuanced understanding of the host cultures of the multicultural students due to their abilities to engage in host communication even though monocultural made greater improvements on the cultural intelligence scale. I can draw from this research that the cultural background of the students will likely impact their adaptation journey in the Spanish classroom as well.

Heritage speakers can use their own fluid identities to achieve different positionings depending on how they want to be perceived by the local communities which can be beneficial to their adaptation. However, they should be prepared by learning about sociocultural linguistic differences before the sojourn and professors should positively reinforce linguistic variations within the classroom (Quan et al., 2018). A space to reflect and share with other about their experiences would also help them negotiate their identity. Scholars have advocated more research is needed understand how to better help heritage speakers negotiate their identity and achieving learning goals (Shively, 2016; Burgo, 2018). The past literature serves to understand the experiences of heritage speakers; however, it overlooks their experiences within a HE classroom of a subject other than the heritage language.

For all speakers, cultural differences may be more difficult to adapt to than linguistic challenges. In research on SA students in Chile, Stephenson (1999) noted that overall “whereas they expected to have the greatest difficulty in adjusting to the use of Spanish, many found that cultural differences were more stressful than linguistic ones” (p. 35). In fact, two of the three items in which the difficulty to adjust decreased throughout the semester were related to language use in the direct enrollment setting: understanding Chilean professors and using Spanish in the classroom/academic setting. The results suggest that language level may not play as large of role in SA students’ adaptation to the classroom as they expect in the beginning of the semester. Further research is required to understand if becoming accustomed to using Spanish facilitates learning or adaptation to the local university. Parting from the

idea differences cultural proximity will provide certain advantages and challenges during SA, it is important to understand how SA students perceive their identity affects their adaptation to the new culture.

3.3.2.2 Motivation, agency and self-efficacy and adaptation

Kim's (2001) model also highlights traits associated with an adaptive personality, focusing on the importance of openness, strength (coping capacity) and positivity. Other personality traits such as respect and curiosity (Deardorff, 2006), extroversion (Dewey et al., 2014) and tolerance for ambiguity (Gudykunst, 1995) have also been associated positively with adaptation. SA literature generally does not focus on individual traits outside of language level, gender, and previous experience abroad; however, a growing body of research on SA examines the impact of motivation, agency and self-efficacy on students' choices abroad. The following will analyze characteristics reported to influence students' decisions to interact with the local people and how they could impact their adaptation process to the local classroom.

Extroversion/Introversion

Researchers have long assumed that extraversion improves language learning due to more risk-taking behaviors that result in host communication (Dewey et al., 2014). However, results have been inconclusive since extroverts may communicate more easily with people in a social setting; however, introverts may be better at developing deeper discussions in smaller groups (Leaver et al., 2005). In the classroom, extroverts may be more likely to approach local students, overcoming a main barrier to interaction. Nevertheless, introverts may develop good relationships through a buddy program, small group work or if a local student initiates contact.

Considering extroverts are better at establishing new friendships, they may also have difficulties not hanging out with their SA cohorts to seek out native speakers. In Quan's (2018) study, an extroverted student was unable to convey her personality in Spanish and had difficulties building relationships with locals. Rather than persisting, she socialized with international students in English and left with a negative

view of culture and people. Additionally, Stewart (2010) points out “even for those students whose personalities were more outgoing and gregarious, cultural conventions that conflicted with their own convictions and practices were also found to hinder the process of developing a personal identity in the target language community” (p. 153). In this case, openness to learning rather than judging the host community was key in determining interactions.

Motivation

Cross-cultural adaptation is facilitated by an affective competence which includes “flexibility in cultural identity, which is reflected in the willingness to learn the host language and culture and to make some changes in original cultural habits” (Kim, 2001, p.108). Students who come into the experience with an open mind and take actions to integrate in the host society can take advantage of the added learning value of SA while those who fear cultural differences and reclude into peer cohorts end up with less integration and cultural learning (Jackson, 2012). “The more intense the strangers’ motivation to adapt, the more they are likely to make an effort to learn about and participate in the host environment with enthusiasm and perseverance” (Kim, 2001, p. 109).

Motivation first impacts which type of program students choose (e.g., island versus direct enrolment program) (Anderson et al., 2015). Goldstein (2015) found that students who prefer more immersive models of SA had higher motivational cultural intelligence and language learning interest than those choosing island models. Pastor Cesteros and Pandor (2017) suppose that those who choose direct enrollment do so “because it constitutes a great cognitive, academic and personal challenge for them and consequently, it provides the opportunity to make great advances in their linguistic and professional competences”⁶ (p. 17). Those who voluntarily choose to sojourn are more likely to be prepared for the experience than those that do so involuntarily (Kim, 2001); therefore, those that choose to directly enroll

⁶ Original text: “porque constituye un gran reto cognitivo, académico y personal para ellos y consecuentemente, les brinda la oportunidad de conseguir grandes logros en cuanto a sus competencias lingüísticas y profesionales.”

are likely to have more integrative motivation for learning about the host culture that would facilitate their adaptation. Those who do so involuntarily, may only be motivated to pass their classes and not view it as an opportunity for cultural or language learning.

Once abroad, students choose strategies for academic success based on previous learning experiences and do not necessarily adjust their way of being a student. A semester sojourn may not provide enough time for students to learn the new academic culture and adapt. In fact, O'Reilly et al., (2015) confirmed that long term U.S. students in Ireland had higher levels of adaptation than SA students including academic satisfaction, instrumental social support, and indicating deeper relationships with host nationals. While quantitative research did not allow for an understanding of their motivations, it could be that temporary sojourners "may not consider any serious commitment to adaptation" (Kim, 2001, p. 109). Students may choose direct enrollment because they are motivated to engage in language and cultural learning; however, this motivation may not translate into adaptation to the academic culture.

A theoretical framework linking motivation and language learning was developed by Gardner and Lambert (1972). It proposed two motivational orientations: integrative; a desire for language learning and positive view towards target culture; and instrumental, to obtain a practical benefit from learning the new language. Student likely choose to directly enroll due to integrative motivation for cultural learning; however, they are likely to show a level of instrumental motivation to do well academically. Yager (1998) found integrative motivation was a stronger determinant than instrumental motivation in language learning for SA students in Mexico. Hernández (2010) also found that students with positive attitudes towards the local culture, which is associated with integrative motivation, were more likely to have informal interactions Spanish locals and greater language gains.

This research is useful because it shows that integrative motivation to improve Spanish, make local friends and learn about the culture will likely impact students' learning, integration and adaptation. However, the pre- and post-test methodology of these studies does not allow for an understanding of

whether or not this motivation changes over time depending on their experiences. Motivation should be treated not as a static state but rather something that varies throughout the sojourn as a response to students' experiences (Sanz & Morales-Front, 2018). SA students participate in relatively short-term programs making it more likely that when goals are not achieved quickly, they become disillusioned and reprioritize; choosing to have fun and travel rather than focusing on their initial goals. If during the first weeks of class students do not make local friends, they may give up and focus on their co-national or international friendships.

Students' agency may also change because "learner's agency is jointly dependent on the initiative of the learner and the reception of others in the learner's environment" (Allen, 2010, p. 3). In Isabelli (2006) study, she found that students' motivation changed based on positive or negative experiences with the host society, which lead to a change how they enacted agency to adapt. In this case, two of the students maintained positive attitudes and continued to build social networks; while the other two became increasing negative about the host country and socialized in English with friends from the U.S. Positivity is also an important characteristic of an adaptative personality (Kim, 2001). Most SA students also directly enroll with the expectation of making local friends. However, when it is more difficult than they had imaged, their motivation to continue to seek those relationship can suffer (Pitts, 2009). Since their stay in the classroom is only transitory, it may also lower motivation to adapt to the new academic and social culture of learning.

Agency

SCT (Bandura, 1986) states that the learners' agency is determined by the combination of intrinsic motivations and experience in the target environment. "Agency plays a key role in how sojourns unfold. Students are individuals ('social agents') with their own aims, needs and concerns" (Jackson, 2012, p. 461). Students use agency when making decisions about learning how to adapt to the local culture. For example, in Covert (2014)

when engaging with Chileans, participants enacted techniques that enhanced their learning, such as observing, picking up social and cultural cues, mimicking behavior and communication, practicing Spanish language skills, using trial and error when interacting, and seeking knowledge about Chilean culture. (p. 172)

When in the local classroom, students' ability to take initiative to interact with other students or professors in the classroom and use strategies to pick up on the local academic culture are likely to impact their adaptation process. In the local Chilean classroom, Covert (2014) found that one student adapted to a perceived lack of punctuality during her group project by bringing her laptop to study on while waiting. Covert's (2014) study provides a couple of concrete examples of how personal agency affects intercultural learning during direct enrollment; however, it does not focus on adaptation process in the academic context.

Furthermore, students may exhibit agency that is both positive for adaptation (e.g., seeking out native speakers for conversation) as well as detrimental. Covert (2014) found some used agency to purposefully continue behaviors students knew to be against the culture, hence inhibiting their adaptation. In Pyper & Slagter (2015) students have reported that their Spanish learning was hindered by their "personal choice to speak English with other students in the group" (mean of 2.89) followed fairly closely by "using technology in English" and "lack of support from peers" (2.30 and 2.22, respectively)" (p. 94). SA students choose behaviors they knew would have a negative impact on their learning. "I don't mind that my Spanish ability was hindered by being part of that community [SA cohort]. That's a choice that I made that they were a priority over my Spanish ability" (Pyper & Slagter, 2015, p. 95). SA students make conscious decisions which balance their learning goals with their need for friendship among other goals. Most of the body of research on motivation and agency focuses on language learning rather than adaptation; however, language and cultural learning, and the desire for host communication are integral parts of adaptation.

Self-efficacy beliefs

Whether or not students decide to enact agency is also dependent on their self-efficacy beliefs about the results of the action (Bandura, 1989). Students who are afraid of making mistakes or being poorly received by the native speakers, may be less likely to engage in target language conversations. Conversely, those who believe the communication will be successful, will attempt to interact with native speakers regardless of the accuracy of speech. “Communication self-efficacy is specifically evident when looking at how a person chooses to communicate and whether a person chooses to communicate at all” (Milstein, 2005, p. 224). In the classroom, regardless of their objective Spanish level, SA students with higher self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to engage in conversations with local professors or students.

The relationship between self-efficacy and academic success or foreign language learning has been well documented; however, very few SA researchers have explored the role of self-efficacy during SA (Covert, 2014). The handful of present studies measure self-efficacy as an outcome of SA (Pawlak et al., 2020) rather than a contributing factor to cultural adaptation. The research shows a positive correlation between SA and increased self-efficacy beliefs (Cubillos & Ilvento, 2012; de Diego-Lázaro et al., 2020; Hessel, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2018; Petersdotter et al., 2017) which corresponds with Bandura (1997) theory that self-efficacy beliefs are built over time based on mastery experiences – in this case through studying abroad. Drawing on past experience in unfamiliar environments, students may feel more comfortable in the foreign situations, have better coping mechanisms and the internal ability to maintain high self-efficacy beliefs. Correspondingly, prior experience abroad has been correlated with language learning gains (Brecht et al., 1995; Klineberg & Hull IV, 1979), more host national contacts (Savicki, 2010), and great intercultural competence growth (Pederson, 2010).

Cubillos and Ilvento (2012) research on SA students in France and Spain found a significant positive correlation between SA and improved self-efficacy for all components of foreign language learning, the net gain being the greatest for listening and speaking skills. They also found that the amount

and quality of interaction with the local community was a significant factor in self-efficacy gains. Both results are consistent with Hessel's (2019) research on Germany students in the UK. Petersdotter et al., (2017) study on German Erasmus students also concluded "social contacts seem to play a decisive role in developing higher self-efficacy while sojourning" (p. 177). This body of research shows that interaction with the local community leads to higher self-efficacy (Cubillos & Ilvento, 2012; Hessel, 2019; Petersdotter et al., 2017); however; due to the pre- and posttest methodology, it does not explain how students' perceive the interactions to affect their self-efficacy or adaptation.

I expect that students who engage with local students and professors will see greater gains in their self-efficacy beliefs which leads them to continue such host communication that is positivity associated with adaption. In fact, Nguyen et al., (2018) found that students with higher cultural intelligence and self-efficacy also rated higher on the intercultural adjustment scale. Furthermore, students with higher self-efficacy and cultural awareness in a service-learning program in Nicaragua and Malawi received higher ratings from their clinical supervisors of the internship (de Diego-Lázaro et al., 2020). Given these previous findings, it is possible that those with higher self-efficacy and intercultural skills will exhibit more success adapting in the classroom and perhaps a higher academic performance.

I found one study that considered self-efficacy as an input factor rather than outcome. Pawlak et al., (2020) research on incoming and outgoing students in Poland analyzed the relationships between motivation, self-efficacy and self-regulation during SA. Self-regulation was defined as "self generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals" (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 14). Using a questionnaire to measure these three items, Pawlak et al., (2020) found that those with high motivation and self-efficacy reported engaging in more self-regulatory strategies, either facilitated from within or by teachers. The role professors played in encouraging self-regulation was evident during the stay but not before or after, suggesting a lack of orientation or post-

sojourn support. They conclude that students need to be made aware of self-regulation strategies in order to take advantage of their exchange experiences (Pawlak et al., 2020).

This study is novel in its aim to connect the three domains; however, the survey method left many key components unclear: what are the students' motivations, which are the target skills and did they improve, which are the self-regulatory decisions and how exactly are they being facilitated. Furthermore, the survey taken only once making it impossible to determine shifts in the three domains during the stay. Nevertheless, the study suggests that if personal goals are aligned with behaviors that favor cultural adaptation, self-regulation strategies either from within or by professors could facilitate student adaptation during direct enrollment.

SA students who are motivated to learn about the local academic culture, enact agency in ways that are conducive to learning and maintain their self-efficacy relatively high in the face of challenges are more likely to successfully adapt. An "adaptive personality serves as the power of initiative and being an agent in the living of one's life" (Kim, 2001, p. 172). Those with high self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to persevere in the face of obstacles and be patient with the adaptation process (Bandura, 1997). The ability to 'ride out' a low period and remain positive is part of an adaptive personality (Kim, 2001). When taking a class at a local university, students are likely to face challenging moments due to differences in the culture of learning or just being a new student in an established situation. Individual motivation, agency and self-efficacy beliefs impact whether they become frustrated and withdraw or remain positive and continue to tackle the challenge.

3.3.3 Host communication

Establishing relationships with local people is a key component for facilitating the cross-cultural adaptation and learning of SA students both in and outside of the classroom.

Indeed, the critical importance of the host communication activities of strangers cannot be over-emphasized. Adaptive transformation occurs in and through such communication activities,

which, in turn, facilitate learning of all other aspects of the host culture including its economic, social, political and aesthetic dimensions. (Kim, 2001, p. 63)

For SA students directly enrolling in Spanish classes, host communication with local students and professors is necessary to improve their understanding of the cultural norms in the new learning context.

3.3.3.1 Benefits of interactions with local students

Positive cross-cultural interactions in the classroom have been seen to provide benefits for student sojourners such as lowering initial disorientation, anxiety, and mitigating culture shock (Sawir et al., 2008), more positive academic and social-cultural outcomes (Ward & Masgoret, 2004), improving communication competence (Arkoudis et al., 2010; Ward & Kennedy, 1993), greater overall satisfaction (Hendrickson et al., 2011; Ward et al., 2005), psychological adjustment (Marginson & Sawir, 2011; Searle & Ward, 1990) and academic success. In fact, Klineberg and Hull IV's (1979) research on SA students found that the most important variables for coping were social contacts with locals and prior experience abroad.

In the academic context, perhaps the most important benefit of interaction with local students is academic support. Wan et al., (2013) surveyed 831 international students in seven Malaysian universities and found a significant positive relationship between social integration and academic adaptation. "The higher the ability of the students to adapt socially into the new environment, the better their capability is in making adjustment academically" (Wan et al., 2013, p. 34). Many others have also found that interactions with locals benefits international students' academic results (Trice, 2004; Gareis, 2000). These results highlight the importance of improving intergroup relations for academic adjustment.

Nevertheless, research findings on international students have consistently affirmed a lack of interaction between foreign and host students (Dunne, 2008; Leask & Carroll, 2011; Ward, 2006; Ward & Masgoret, 2004; Zhou & Zhang, 2014). This confirms that the university context provides proximity for intercultural contact but does not guarantee it (Smart et al., 2000). However, despite the dearth of interactions that the literature reveals, international students desire and expect more interaction with

host students (Brown, 2009; Gareis, 2012; Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Klineberg & Hull IV, 1979; Ward et al., 2000; Ward & Masgoret, 2004). International students view contact with locals as a way to improve their language skills and learn about the culture (Brown, 2009) yet often find it difficult to bridge the cultural gap. Local students do not necessarily have the same expectation for contact (Marginson & Sawir, 2011; Smart et al., 2000). Often both international students and home students assume that it is the responsibility of the other to initiate the relationship (Leask & Carroll, 2011; Smart et al., 2000; Ward, 2001) resulting in a stalemate in which neither initiates contact.

SA research has shown that increased interaction with host nationals relates positively to adaptation. Pedersen et al., (2011) study of 248 college aged U.S. students used the Sojourner Adjustment Measure to measure acculturation during SA. They found that social interaction with host nationals was a positive factor while social interaction with co-nationals was a negative factor for acculturation. Covert (2014) coincided in her finding that

participants wanted to adapt to Chilean culture and they viewed social interaction with Chileans as the most effective way to learn how to do so. They used two strategies to encourage social interaction: deliberate engagement with Chileans and deliberate disengagement with Americans and the English language. (p. 172)

Savicki (2010) research on 59 SA students in four countries in Europe also showed that contact with local people was significantly correlated to language use and a higher level of functional coping such as active coping, planning and positive reinterpretation strategies. Savicki's (2010) and Pederson et al.'s (2011) studies reaffirm the connection between engaging with locals and adaptation; however, their quantitative methodology does not allow for an understanding of how the students find ways to interact with locals. Furthermore, they do not address the students' adaptation within the local academic context.

At the center of affective component of host communication competence is sojourns' attitudes toward the host society and themselves (Kim, 2001). However, cultural contact does not necessarily result

in a significant reduction of stereotypes or improved intercultural competence during SA programs (J. Bennet, 2008). Allport (1954) theorizes that cross-cultural contact leads to a reduction of prejudice if under certain circumstances. The following will analyze to what extent groupwork fulfills the conditions for cross-cultural contact to reduce prejudice according to Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory and Pettigrew's (1998) additions to it. I will explore research on groupwork as it is most common situation for SA students to interact with local students in the classroom. The bulk of this research is on international students rather than U.S. SA students due to the aforementioned scarcity of studies on the local academic context; however, it still serves to understand cross-cultural interaction between students.

3.3.3.2 Intergroup contact theory

Allport's (1954) intergroup contact hypothesis stipulates that four conditions are necessary for intergroup contact to reduce prejudice: equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation and support from authorities. He theorized that contact leads to increased knowledge about outgroups which would lead to a reduction in anxiety and enhanced empathy. Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analytic test of the intergroup contact theory confirmed that in 94% of cases contact reduced prejudiced and in the 19% where Allport's conditions were met there was a significantly larger magnitude of the reduction. Further, it indicated that the quality (being positive in nature) of the contact correlated to stronger reduction in prejudice. Therefore, Pettigrew added a fifth condition for intergroup contact to reduce prejudice: "the contact situation must provide the participants with the opportunity to become friends" (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 76).

Intergroup contact in classroom situation most commonly happens during group work; a situation that can fulfill Allport's (1954) conditions and in the best of circumstances Pettigrew's (1998) 5th condition. First, both parties must expect and perceive an equal status within the situation. Students theoretically have an equal status within the classroom and project; however, if foreign students feel they are perceived by local students as "lesser" (e.g., for their language skills or knowledge of academic norms) the

condition may not be fulfilled (Ward et al., 2005). Secondly, there must be an active common goal so that both parties are orienting their efforts for the same aim. Group work provides a common task that students must work together to achieve; however, the design of the assignment will affect how much collaboration is required in practice (Leask, 2009).

Thirdly, the obtention of the goal must be dependent on cooperation rather than competition. Since the grade is shared, students are forced to cooperate rather than compete. Fourthly, acceptance rather than prejudice is more readily possible when the established norms of society sanction it. If the professor sets a standard that students of different cultures must work together, it is more likely students will accept the norm. Finally, group work could theoretically help to develop friendships; however, it depends on whether the project entails a high quantity and quality of time spent together and depends on all members to achieve the task (Leask, 2009).

Nevertheless, the potential for a negative reaction to intergroup contact exists and can lead to worsen anxiety and the avoidance of interaction with those of other groups. Barlow, et al. (2012) found that in cases when there was negative contact, it led to a greater increase in racism and discrimination than the positive contact's ability to reduce prejudice. The perception of rejection by the host society lowers the motivation of the sojourner to adaptation (Kim, 2001). SCT supports this theory as negative reinforcements lead people to avoid repeating behaviors (Bandura, 1971). In the direct enrollment context, if a SA student has a negative experience with a local professor or student, it will likely worsen their anxiety for future interactions and lead to a possible avoidance of future contact. Nevertheless, if a student has a high-self efficacy and persists in the face of setbacks or has a high-level intercultural competence and does not attribute the negative interaction to the host society as a whole but rather the individual; it is still possible the contact with reduce prejudice.

Pettigrew (1998) review of intergroup contact theory empirical studies suggested that while Allport's work established conditions that could lead to a reduction in prejudice, it did not look at the

process of change. He suggested there are four processes at play: learning about the outgroup, changing behavior, generating affective ties and ingroup reappraisal. The first considers that learning about the outgroup can reinforce stereotypes as well overturn negative views. Only when the learning corrects these prejudice views will it be reduced. For this to happen, Rothbart and John (1985) found the outsider should be considered a typical member of the outgroup, their behavior must be inconsistent with the stereotypes and often occurring. For SA students in the direct enrollment setting, it is possible that the local actors' behaviors reinforce stereotypes or contradict them. For example, a difference could be the notion of time. If Spanish students and professors arrive "late" to class it, could strengthen the stereotype; however, if Spanish students arrive "on time" for groupwork, it may reduce the prejudice as the individual is typical and behavior is inconsistent. A negative perception of local behaviors is less likely to lead to adaptation than when they evaluate the behaviors positively.

The second process considers behavior as the first step towards attitude changes (Pettigrew, 1998). When the expectation for intergroup contact requires a behavioral change, it has the potential over time to cause a change in attitude. During intercultural group work, SA students may need to adjust their behaviors depending on the level of host conformity pressure that students and professors exert on them to adapt to the local norms for groupwork. If a SA student recognizes that their adaption results in an improved relationship that correlate with better social or academic results, the positive effect of adaption will lead to more positive impression of the host society. During one semester it is unclear how many groupwork opportunities study will have that would make new situation feel comfortable as "appropriate rewards for the new behavior enhances the positive effects further" (Pettigrew, 1998, p.71).

The third process is own of introspection towards one's ingroup. As one has more outgroup contact, they reconsider their own socialization process and may identify less strongly with their ingroup (Pettigrew, 1998). Reid and Garson (2017) argue that in order for groupwork to have an effect on intercultural learning, the assessment must include a reflection on the process of working in an

intercultural team in addition to the product of groupwork. The reflection process is not commonly embedded in the SA curriculum, despite the calls for guided reflection on cultural learning (Engle & Engle, 2003; Paige & Vande Berg, 2012). Furthermore, I found no evidence in any of the SA literature of programs facilitating reflection on the direct enrollment experience and how one's own educational socializing process may impact their perspectives.

The last process refers to the development of affective ties toward outgroup members, mainly through friendship which leads to empathy and sympathy for others. Empathy towards others can also lead to increased contact and friendship (Pettigrew, 1998). Interaction is a precursor for building affective relations. Unfortunately, the experience of directly enrolling in a Spanish classroom does not guarantee contact will be initiated by either party. Pettigrew (1998) considered, "intergroup friendship is potent because it potentially invokes all four-mediating process" (p. 75). However, in order for friendships to develop it requires time; therefore, Pettigrew used a long-term perspective. In a semester exchange, it may be difficult for students to develop deeper bonds considering SA students often have competing priorities (e.g., travel) and co-national friendship groups to balance time with as well.

Depending on the nature and quality of the group assignment there is the opportunity for Pettigrew's (1998) four processes. Not all groupwork requires extensive contact nor allows time for off task conversation (Leask, 2009). If groupwork requires deeper collaboration students will have more opportunity to hear different cultural perspectives on the assignment hence learning about the outgroup. They may modify their behavior to accommodate those working with a different time orientation (e.g., monochronic versus polychronic cultures) as found in Covert's (2014) research on U.S. students in Chile. Potential for developing affective ties may exist in group work; however, it would be more likely if the project is throughout the semester allowing for friendship formation (Pettigrew, 1998). The project may allow for learning about viewpoints of other cultures which could lead to a questioning in one's own cultural perspectives as well.

Research has also shown that groupwork does not always fulfill Allport's conditions and it can still lead to a reinforcement of stereotypes rather than decreased prejudice. In the UK, Turner's (2009) analysis of graded reflection papers about a groupwork project found students noted more negative stereotypes rather than benefits from the intercultural exchange. "Indeed, accounts indicate that although they can intellectually account for the challenges of working in intercultural groups, students are less able to respond behaviorally or affectively" (Turner, 2009, p. 252). Rather than a synergic approach, groupwork was based on unequal relations between local students who performed in the "correct" ways and international students who were expected to adapt to local norms hence not fulfilling the equal status condition.

3.3.3.3 Research on multicultural groupwork

Environment and predisposition factors have proven formidable barriers to cross-cultural contact in both the Spanish classroom and throughout the SA literature as seen in the previous sections. In the classroom, groupwork is the most common facilitator of interaction between international and national students. Unfortunately, both international students and national students have been reported to prefer working among their ingroup (Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Volet & Ang, 1998). Volet and Ang (1998) found that reasons for avoiding group work with outgroups were related to: language; ease of communicating while working; cultural-emotional connectedness, feeling more comfortable and sharing a communication style; pragmatism, perception that it would be easier to organize; and negative stereotypes, either ethnocentric notions or related to work ethic. All students preferred to choose groups by what is easier and more comfortable for them.

In Spain, few studies have analyzed the impact of multicultural groupwork in higher education. The literature mainly focuses on the increasing diversity in the local population due to immigration rather than the experiences of international or exchange students. In one study in Spain, De-Juan-Vigaray et al., (2014) found that when engaging in intercultural groupwork the students considered the advantages were

learning about other cultures, practicing other languages, and gaining international perspectives while the disadvantages included cultural and linguistic differences, cultural misunderstanding, and stereotyping between groups. Both local and international students recognized the challenge for foreign students to express themselves; however, believe they were not unsurpassable and that cultural learning benefits made it worthwhile.

This is consistent with Montgomery's (2009) research in the UK which found student's perceived multicultural backgrounds to be an added value. "A major question is the extent to which communication problems are real or whether they are impeded by a lack of goodwill—from either side—to make an effort to understand each other and to tolerate a degree of broken English" (Volet & Ang, 1998, p. 13). This requires openness, which is a dimension of an adaptive personality that allows sojourns to seek new knowledge and to communication with cultural others (Kim, 2001). A desire to understanding the other is necessary from both sides to make the group work a beneficial experience for all. These studies, especially De-Juan-Vigaray et al., (2014) study in Spain, are useful because they combine a variety of perspectives to understand how all students view intercultural groupwork, Nevertheless, they do not examine whether groupwork improved the quality of relationships or facilitated adaptation.

Multinational classrooms provide an opportunity for cross-cultural contact; however, they do not guarantee interaction nor a positive outcome from the contact. While positive cross-cultural contact can improve intercultural competence, global learning, decrease prejudice and anxiety for interacting with those outside one's culture; negative contact can lead to stereotyping and a perceived discrimination (Pettigrew, 1998). The perception of discrimination can cause international students to further segregate themselves into their own groups where they are comfortable and their identity is secure (Turner et al., 1987). Reid and Garson (2017) research demonstrated that by purposefully integrating intercultural communication and self-reflection into multicultural group work, it is possible to improve students'

intercultural experiences. In order for both SA students and local students to learn from multicultural groupwork, positive cross-cultural encounters in the classroom must be facilitated.

Researchers and practitioners across the board agree that initiatives must be taken to facilitate cross-cultural interaction, intercultural learning and bi-directional adaptation in a university classroom. Otherwise, left to their own devices, both home and exchange students will likely stay in their comfort zones and engage with co-national students. In Spain, 78.8% of Spanish students in Sánchez (2004) study felt that the university should be responsible for improving integration of foreign students and 94.7% felt intercultural programs should be used. Pandor (2017) also emphasized the role of the SA program in facilitating the cultural adaptation and integration of SA students in the academic setting. However, neither study used an ethnographic approach which would allow for an understanding of the students' perspective and unearth what they perceive to facilitate or hinder cross-cultural interactions and adaptation. My research aims to gather this key insider information to provide specific recommendations to support student adaptation and consequently learning.

3.4 Learning during SA

When discussing learning in the SA context, researchers consistency predefine the desired learning outcomes as second language acquisition, intercultural competence and to a lesser extent, global citizenship. SA is considered by stakeholders to be the best environment to develop these competencies. For language learning, the rationale is that the combination of formal classroom instruction with immersion in the target speech community will best improve target language skills because students have more opportunities to interact with native speakers (Freed, 1995). It is also assumed that by gaining firsthand cultural knowledge about the host country that students will improve their intercultural communication competencies and expand their worldview. Practitioners have focused on program design to facilitate these competencies and then quantitatively test for factors that are positively associated with improved outcomes.

In 2012, Vande Berg et al., published a state of the art on research on learning during SA titled, “Student learning abroad: What Our Students Are Learning, What They’re Not, and What We Can Do About It,” which is still the principal reference on the topic today. Vande Berg et al., (2012) argue there has been a shift in epistemology of SA research from a positivist approach to relativism and now an experiential/constructivist approach due to the recognition on the part of the SA community that students are not learning what has long been assumed that time abroad will teach them (Vande Berg et al., 2012). Early positivist and relativist research found slight overall improvements in competencies; however, with great individual discrepancies. Today, more researchers are using a constructivist approach and qualitative research to discover explanations for the variation in learning outcomes.

The early results are actually unsurprising since theorists have long argued that neither cultural knowledge or language competence automatically equal cultural competence (J. Bennett, 2008) nor does cultural contact necessarily equal a reduction of prejudice (Allport, 1954). Cognitive cultural knowledge is only part of intercultural competence; however, attitude and skills are needed to interact in culturally appropriate ways with people from other cultures. For example, those with high language competencies still run the risk of becoming fluent fools,

someone who speaks a foreign language well but doesn’t understand the social or philosophical content of that language.... Eventually, fluent fools may develop negative opinions of the native speakers whose language they understand but whose basic beliefs and values continue to elude them. ... To avoid becoming a fluent fool, we need to understand more completely the cultural dimension of language. (J. Bennett, 1997, p. 16)

Referring to Kim’s (2001) adaptation model, language competence and knowledge about the host culture may help facilitate host communication competence and adaptation; however, other individual and environmental factors are also at play.

Recent research challenges the immersion assumption that language and intercultural skills are automatically acquired through a sojourn abroad. Many take a constructivist view that learning “occurs through transactions between the individual and the environment, with humans being principal agents of their own learning” (Vande Berg et al., 2012, p. 18). The authors argue that SA students learn best when educators intervene to facilitate this interaction; however, the research on how best to intercede remains scarce. The goal of SA under a constructivist paradigm is to help student develop interculturality, gain the capacity to shift worldviews and interact more effectively with cultural others. Kim’s (2001) holds that this process of intercultural transformation happens along the stress-adaptation-growth cycle during which people gain functional fitness, psychological health and an intercultural identity. Researchers are increasingly adopting a constructivist epistemology and qualitative methods to understand the interplay between individual and environmental aspects as well as agency to better understand intercultural learning.

There is a scarcity in literature about the role of direct enrollment in student learning during SA through either a positivist or constructivist lens. The central debate is which program type best promotes learning outcomes: exchange programs due to their immersive nature, island programs due to their support structures or hybrid programs as the middle ground. On the one hand, evidence has shown that students in exchange programs develop more host-national friendships (Hendrickson, 2016; Scally, 2015) and maintain relationships longer after the program has ended (Norris & Dwyer, 2005). Sojourners with more host national friends have been found to have higher gains in intercultural competence and language acquisition (Isabelli, 2006). Developing relationships with locals and the aforementioned competencies are both of central importance to cultural adaptation (Kim, 2001).

However, others argue that these programs are only good for motivated students that can rise to the challenge of living abroad but that they fail to provide the necessary support to overcome academic and sociocultural differences needed by the majority of students (Vande Berg, 2007). Direct enrollment

in local universities provides opportunities for students to engage with the local culture more than isolated SA programs; however, it is not a guarantee that students will adapt to the university classroom. Instead, this “sink or swim” method can have a negative impact on learning if the student is unable to adapt to cultural differences (Vande Berg et al., 2012). In fact, in the Georgetown Consortium study, direct enrollment was not a statistically significant factor for the development of intercultural communication or language competence (Vande Berg et al., 2009). However, it was noted the results could have been affected due to small and unbalanced samples.

The SA community concerns itself largely with program variables and learning outcomes rather than considering learning as part of a larger adaptation process. In fact, in Ogden and Streitwieser’s (2016) “Research on U.S. Education Abroad: A Concise Overview,” the word ‘adaptation’ only appears once in relation to intercultural learning theories. “Much of the research [on intercultural learning] has also been informed by Bennett’s (1993) heavily-cited, Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity... Allport’s (1954) Intergroup Contact Theory, and Pettigrew’s (1968, 1998) addendums” (Ogden & Streitwieser, 2016, p. 11). By measuring learning using the DMIS/IDI, researchers are missing the students’ perspective on how learning occurs during SA and how they feel it is best supported. By using Kim’s (2001) stress-adaptation-growth process of cross-cultural adaptation as my theoretical framework, I consider student learning to be both an important facilitator and outcome of the adaptation process.

The following will provide an overview of the vast literature regarding student learning during SA. Focusing the research on the students’ point of view will provide new insights of how to facilitate both learning and adaptation during direct enrollment. I will begin with a review of traditional research that uses a positivist or relativist perspective, highlight the methods, results and the limitations which led to a call for more qualitative research methods with a constructivist approach. I follow with an overview of research from the constructivist approach which I divide in two camps: the interventionists and qualitative

researchers. I will conclude by turning to the scarce research on the direct enrollment setting and how my research will fill this gap.

3.4.1 SA learning assumptions

Research on student learning during student abroad is a relatively new with the bulk of research coming from post 1960s and not proliferating until the 1990s. In fact, *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, a journal dedicated to SA research specifically only began 1995. Considering academic exchange can be traced back to beginning of universities, the slow development of research reflects the core SA assumption that physically being abroad automatically leads to learning. Early positivist researchers tested the assumption and when mixed results came back, a relativist approach was taken that assumed it was due to the lack of actual immersion and therefore sought to reform programs for deeper integration (Vande Berg et al., 2012). Exchange programs or the use of direct enrollment is considered to increase immersion in SA and hence learning; however, research under these paradigms shows inconclusive results on its learning benefits.

The positivist approach assumed that students would have L2 and intercultural competence gains from classroom learning combined with the mere experience of physically being abroad. The belief was that students would learn about the world through observing their new and different surrounding. Culture was viewed as stable and learning was focused on landmarks, museums and cultural artifacts; big “C” culture aspects (J. Bennett, 2015). It was assumed that by sending students with good GPA’s and language skills and preparing them with a Do’s and Don’ts lists about the target culture, they would achieve the learning outcomes. This model was most popular under the “Gran Tour” narrative of SA (Gore, 2005); however, its features (e.g., requirements, preparation, big “C” cultural focus) remain today.

The relativist view was based on the immersion assumption; that if students had the maximum amount of local contact, they would learn to understand the culture and find commonalities that bring them together (Vande Berg, et al, 2012). It shifted the view of SA as a learning experience based on

surface level culture to focus on interactions with local people to understand the underlying values of the culture; little “c” aspects (J. Bennett, 2015). Therefore, the SA community sought to increase interaction with the local environment and deepen the immersion (e.g., homestays, longer stays, direct enrollment, socializing with locals, etc.). From a relativist approach, investigations sought to understand the quantity and quality of immersion and measure against learning outcomes. However, within this paradigm students were still able to circumvent aspects of the host community by staying in American cohort groups, taking classes in U.S. centers and travelling in groups. In addition, it was assumed they would learn the little “c” aspects through cross-culture contact; however, cross-cultural contact does not necessarily lead to intercultural understanding and can reinforce stereotypes if misinterpreted (Allport, 1960) or not contextualized and understood within the culture (Wilkinson, 1998).

The positivist approach theorizes that language learning is superior in the SA context than in the home university classroom based on the increased access to three fundamental components of language learning: input (Krashen, 1985), interaction with native speakers, (Long, 1996) and output (Swain, 1985). In the relative paradigm, “the assumption that target language immersion is beneficial to learning remains, but the quantity and quality of immersion is brought into question” (Benson et al., 2013, p. 37). In general, SA research illustrates a wide variation with regards to engaging in input, interaction and output as well as proficiency gains. The same principle is pertinent when the immersion assumption is applied to intercultural communication learning. Administrators presumed that students will gain intercultural competence from the mere experience of studying abroad and therefore traditionally focused on logistical rather than intercultural programming (Hammer, 2012).

Researchers and practitioners began to question the immersion assumption as students came back claiming to be transformed, all the while emphasizing the great relationships they had made with peers from their SA programs (Vande Berg et al., 2012). Ogden’s (2008) article, he describes a concerning shift in SA towards colonial students who watch the foreign culture from a far without engaging with the

local people. There are concerns about the commercialization of SA which caters to the SA student's comfort rather than intercultural learning (Engle & Engle, 2003). "The inherent irony is simple: we build education abroad programs based primarily on U.S. student demand and then secondarily concern ourselves with issues of intercultural" (Ogden, 2008, p. 7). Concerns that consumer culture is causing programs to be designed in ways to increase comfort which frequently decreases the engagement with local communities (Citron, 2002; Ogden, 2008; Vande Berg, 2007) has led researchers to assess what intercultural is taking place (Vande Berg et al., 2012).

These approaches influenced early SA research whose methods relied mainly on input and output factors to determine learning outcomes. Many early studies showed a general linguistic advantage of SA mainly through quantitative methods such as the ACTFL's Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). (Freed, 1998). SA literature that aims to assess intercultural competence in SA students frequently uses the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), a 50-item questionnaire created by Michael Hammer (2012) which is theoretically based on the DMIS (Ogden & Streitwieser, 2016).

The IDI measures intercultural sensitivity along five of the DMIS's six worldviews: Denial to Adaptation. It assesses intercultural competence, defined as "the capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural differences and commonalities" (IDI LLC, 2020). The IDI includes qualitative interviewing that consists of contextualizing questions when evaluating individual development and developmental interview guides for focus groups to analyze on group level how students engage with culture, identify and deal with difference (Vande Berg et al., 2012). The qualitative information is used to inform and support the quantitative results; however, they do not capture the relationship between learning and the cultural adaptation process. In the context of SA, it is used to measure the pre-SA and post-SA intercultural sensitivity of students to determine if there was any growth in intercultural competence which could be attributed to their stay abroad.

The results on SA student learning from researchers using the OPI test and IDI exam show a generally positive impact of SA on learning; however, they do not explain what happens between the pre- and post-test (Harvey, 2013). Possibly the most significant early study was Carroll's (1967) study of 2782 language majors that found SA as significant factor in predicting language proficiency. Freed's (1995) study of fluency found support that SA students speak faster and with more smoothness than at home students. Lafford's (1995) study also found SA had a greater range of strategies for maintaining a communicative situation than at home. However, grammar gains have been inconsistent when comparing SA to at home groups and may depend on the pre-departure proficiency of the students (Collentine & Freed, 2004; DeKeyser, 1991; Lafford & Collentine, 2006). Early studies based on language tests and self-reports pointed to greater gains in speaking and listening than reading and writing (Sanz & Morales-Front, 2018); nevertheless, they demonstrate the potential of SA to improve language competencies in all aspects (Kinging, 2013).

Vande Berg et al, (2012) argue that only programs that deeply immerse students in the host culture and provide expert cultural mentoring consistency show improved intercultural competence results. The IDI has been used throughout the recent SA literature including multiple Ph.D. dissertations because it provides an evaluation tool based on theory to "prove" intercultural competence development. Most famously, the Georgetown large scale project of 1,300 U.S college students in 61 SA programs compared the IDI and OPI scores of students to the program features developed by Engle and Engle (2003). The results showed that when compared to the control group at home, both language and intercultural competence were improved. However, when comparing across program features, significant positive correlations between SA and intercultural competence were found in students who received cultural mentoring on site and those that engaged with host family members (Vande Berg et al., 2009).

Under the premise that deeper immersion will improve learning, researchers examined the impact of program elements such as type of residence, length of stay, and type of experience (study,

internships, service learning). Research on homestays development of linguistic and intercultural competence has shown that the amount and quality of time spent with the host family impacts learning (Di Silvio et al., 2014; Vande Berg et al., 2009; Wilkinson, 1998). Longer stays have been seen to correlate with higher levels of language learning (Davidson, 2010; Lafford & Collentine, 2006; Carroll, 1967) as well as higher levels of intercultural sensitivity (Dwyer, 2004; Medina–López–Portillo, 2004; Strange & Gibson, 2017) However, impacts from short term stays have also seen the desired competence gains; language (Llanes & Muñoz, 2009); intercultural competence (Dwyer, 2004; Gaia, 2015) and global interests (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004). Studies have begun to analyze how service-learning programs can promote global competence (Horn & Fry, 2013). However, there are few studies within this paradigm that consider the academic component as a factor that impacts learning.

Scally's (2015) research in Spain aimed to compare the intercultural learning in three types of programs: island, hybrid and exchange. Quantitative methods were used including a modified version of Freed's Language Contact Profile, pre-study surveys, post-study Likert scale designed questionnaire based on Deardorff's (2006) Model of Intercultural Competence. The exchange students were slightly older with more previous experience about, reported developing more significant relationships with locals abroad and viewed it as an authentic experience. However, even though they reported the highest-pre-level intercultural scores, their final scores were lower compared to the hybrid group. The author attributed these results to the lack of facilitated cultural understanding, lack of defined SA goals and possible withdrawal from stressful situations that studying abroad can present. Both hybrid and exchange students showed higher results than the island program students (Scally, 2015). The study is valuable because it shows that more immersion through direct enrollment can have a positive impact on learning but that it should be facilitated for maximum effect.

Nevertheless, the present research is limited because it has only sought to measure exchange programs against other program models. It does not seek to understand the direct enrollment experience

from the students' perspective which would allow for an understanding of how the students are learning in the local academic context. Furthermore, quantitative methods only allow researchers to assume direct enrollment contributed to the results rather than gaining the insider perception. Additionally, it does not allow for a deeper understanding of which specific competences, skills or knowledge students believe they are learning from the experience. It is possible they may not even be learning language or intercultural competencies but other equally valuable skills. Norris and Dwyer's (2005) analysis of a long-term large study of IES's (a third-party provider) statistical data on SA learning concluded that different program models offer different learning prospects; however, a better understanding of the opportunities that each model offers is required. My research seeks to fill in these gaps about learning during the direct enrollment experience.

The direct enrollment context provides opportunities for language learning and contact with local people; however, depending on the classroom (e.g., professor centered teaching likely provides only input), personality (e.g., ability to initiate conversation with local students), and students' ability to adapt to the new environment, learning is likely to vary greatly. Furthermore, the increasingly interconnected world is diluting the immersion setting. English as the lingua franca makes it easier for students to rely on English in daily interactions with local and international contacts. Many European universities now offer courses in which the language of instruction is English (Kinginger, 2010). Technology also makes it easy to stay connected on social media with written stimuli in English as well as speaking in English to friends and family back home over Skype/Facetime/WhatsApp (Sanz & Morales-Front, 2018; Savicki, 2010). Some programs use a language pledge to combat the use of English, which has shown to contribute to language learning (Grey et al., 2015). Therefore, the SA and local classroom setting is not as linguistically immersive as it once was when communication in English was further out of reach.

Research from the positivist and relativist approach have shown that the SA consistency correlates with an improvement in students' L2 and intercultural competence. However, they cannot

account for why some students regress in their learning while others show great development. They are limited in their reliance on pre- and post-test scores of instruments that do not distinguish specific aspects of either L2 or intercultural competence learning nor pick up on nuances on the upper end of the spectrum. Furthermore, they do not consider how students arrived at such learning or its relationship to their cultural adaptation.

Great variation in learning outcomes persists leading researchers to recognize the need for more qualitative research in the field (Pellegrino, 1998; Wilkinson, 1998). In language learning, Freed's (1995) review of L2 acquisition during SA found

striking individual differences in learning styles, motivation and aptitude, the features of the specific language to be learned, the degree to which they are actually "immersed" in the native speech community and the interaction of these variables with formal classroom instruction in the SA context. (Freed, 1998, p. 32)

Some have tried to account for these discrepancies by looking at individual characteristics. For example, Terzuolo's (2018) study found that personal characteristics of "female gender, self-declared multicultural identity, and having a grandparent born and raised abroad were associated with statistically significant increases in IDI scores for those who studied abroad" (p. 90). This research indicates that perhaps personal characteristics are just as, if not more important than program design for understanding intercultural gains during SA. My research's use of qualitative methods adds to the current body of literature by allowing for a better understanding of why specific personal characteristics are significant and how they affect the learning process.

Both the OPI and IDI provide overall scores for L2 learning or intercultural competence respectively. The OPI test provides a global score for language improvement without descriptive factors of the components of language learning (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, listening, fluency) (Freed, 1998). The IDI also does not assess whether or not some components (e.g., cognitive versus affective or

behavioral aspects) may develop more than others. These instruments are useful for measuring overall learning during SA but cannot determine the potential impact of direct enrollment on learning as it cannot be separated from the larger experience. Qualitative interviews allow me to understand how specific elements are learned and provide insight into why some are more prominent than others.

Furthermore, gains on the upper end of the scale of both the IDI and OPI may be more subtle and therefore difficult to measure. The OPI is criticized for not being able to pick up on nuances of higher language levels or distinguishing language aspects (Freed, 1995). Since students are required to have a high language level to directly enroll in local class, it is unlikely large improvements will be found using the OPI. The IDI views adaptation as the last stage of intercultural sensitivity development in which people are “capable of shifting cultural perspective and changing behavior in culturally appropriate and authentic ways” (Hammer, 2012, p. 124). If students begin on the upper end of the scale, there is little room for growth. Therefore, it is difficult to compare gains by program type as pre-IDI and OPI scores tend to be higher for students in direct enrollment than island programs (Sally, 2015). Considering direct enrollment students are generally on the upper end of the scales, the qualitative approach will allow me to explore the subtleties of learning for this often-overlooked group of learners.

Additionally, I found only one study whose aim was to verify if language learning correlated to intercultural learning by measuring using the OPI and IDI (Watson & Wolfel, 2015). No statistical correlation was found between the two domains; however, this may be due to the relatively short time frame during which only small language proficiency gains were seen and therefore likely did not impact the amount of quality interactions with the local community. Nevertheless, the researchers did find a correlation between amount of time interacting with locals and IDI results (Watson & Wolfel, 2015). This study demonstrates the limitation of these methods when attempting to understand the connection between language and intercultural learning and how that could impact adaptation.

The IDI is also limited in its understanding of the process of development of intercultural competence. To begin, adaptation is considered the final stage reflecting an intercultural mindset and an end goal rather a process through which students learn. Its rigid use of stages does not take into consideration that intercultural competencies may fluctuate back and forth over time depending on a student's ability to adapt to a specific circumstance or cultural stress. I believe that Kim's (2001) stress-adaptation-growth model which considers adaptation as cyclic and continual, falling back during stressful moments and jumping forward again as students adapt and learn from the experience is a more adequate representation of the actual learning process.

Finally, this type of research only considers learning as an outcome rather than part of a greater adaptation process. As Kim's (2001) model argues, an intercultural transformation is both an outcome and contributing aspect to gaining host cultural competence and participation in the host community. Second language and intercultural communication skills influence their host communication which regulates their adaptation process and are consequently improved through adaptation. Acquiring language competence allows people access to many of the benefits that native speakers enjoy. Learning of the host language allows sojourners to become fully functional and participate in host society (Kim, 2001). In the host classroom, improving host communication competence may become necessary for both the academic and social adaptation. Learning is both a facilitator and outcome of adaptation.

Continuing to debate the possible benefits and drawbacks of direct enrollment using these instruments is unlikely to arrive at any useful conclusion that could help students overcome cultural stresses, adapt and learn from the experience. For this reason, it is important to use qualitative methods that capture from the students' point of view how and what they are learning from taking classes at a local university. There is a general shift towards a constructivist approach to SA research; although, none have focused solely on the academic context. The following will explore how students learn from navigating in the new culture, including a couple of references to direct enrollment.

3.4.2 A shift towards the qualitative approach

The experiential/constructivist approach considers that students create meaning from their experiences abroad. It does not assume the environment contains static cultural meanings from which all learners will arrive at the same conclusion. In fact, the meaning taken from the environment is a combination of each students' prior experience and present needs which shape how they perceive the new setting. The desired learning outcome is an intercultural competence which allows them to shift cultural frames and adapt to different context rather than learning only through cultural knowledge (Vande Berg et al., 2012). It recognizes that this experiential learning is highly personal and outcomes vary greatly among students due to both personal and contextual factors. Most learners achieve better outcomes when trained professionals intervene and facilitate the process of making meaning within the new environment (Vande Berg et al., 2012).

SA research began to use qualitative studies to better understand the role that personal and environmental factors play in how students perceive the local environment. It has allowed for a deeper understanding of the meaning of SA students' experience. It is better equipped to take into consideration the plethora of variables in the SA experience: the student's personality, host society, program features, and specific experiences or critical moments that inform students' perspectives. More specifically, studies have sought to understand student factors such as the role of identity; how gender and race can impact SA students' experiences; motivation, to what extent language and/or intercultural competence may or may not be the goal of SA for students; and quality of interactions with the host society; whether or not interactions are commonplace and go beyond superficial topics. Considering the goal of my research is to understand how students make meaning from their experiences directly enrolling in a local university, this approach will also inform my work.

Constructivists use qualitative methodologies such as case studies and, on a few occasions, ethnography. Researchers employ methods such as pre- and post-interviews, focus groups,

questionnaires, journal or diary studies, narratives, self-reports and blogs to better understand the student perspective. Deardorff (2006) found that institutions and scholars believed both qualitative and quantitative methods should be used for assessment; however, intercultural scholars felt the best way was through case studies and interviews (90% agreement) followed by diaries, self-reports, observations and self judgements. Interestingly, many who advocate for the constructivist approach and incorporate its principles in their interventions, continue to rely on the IDI and OPI/SOPI instruments to validate whether or not learning outcomes are gained.

I view the results of research using a constructivist approach as falling into two camps. First, there are those practitioners and researchers that advocate for the use of interventions which seek to improve intercultural competencies through facilitated learning. This body of literature still lacks the student perspective on how interventions support their learning. Secondly, there is a proliferation of qualitative research that seeks to better understand how personal and situational factors influence learning and explain differences in previous quantitative research. Given the nature of this research, the majority are institution specific and limited in sample size which makes generalizability more difficult; however, they can be useful in theory building (Ogden & Streitwieser, 2016). While it lacks a focus on direct enrollment, I believe this second group better informs my research because it relies on students' perceptions on their experiences which are essential for developing proper interventions.

The interventionists

Those that advocate for the use of interventions focus on intercultural learning more than language learning, although it is not ignored completely. I could not find any studies within the intervention literature that make correlations between the two domains even though they clearly affect each other as Covert (2014) found "participants sensed improvement in their Spanish language skills and were able to engage in more interculturally competent communication" (p. 171). Research on intercultural competence in SA emphasizes the need for mentoring, pre and post orientation, guided

reflection, and engagement with the local community to be successful (Hammer, 2012). The most common intervention is curricular; the addition of a course focused on intercultural development during SA. Facilitated learning courses often include the pre-departure, in-country and re-entry phases of SA. A review of the most prominent intervention courses (Vande Berg et al., 2012) shows the following commonalities: intercultural theory, culture specific information (if given onsite), reflection activities, the promotion of intercultural contact and often an instructor who acts as a facilitator of learning.

One modality is to teach the course on-site such as the American University Center of Provence's (AUCP) *French Cultural Patterns* (Engle and Engle, 2004), the Council on International Educational Exchange's (CIEE) *Seminar on Living and Learning Abroad*, the University of Minnesota Duluth's course *Psychology of Group Dynamics* and Westmont in Mexico's *seminar*. Another option, Bosley/Lou's *Intentional, Targeted Intervention* (ITI) has two versions, with and without an instructor. It pairs international students coming to the U.S. with U.S. SA students and uses online classes, journal writing, and peer feedback. The University of the Pacific's imbedded the intervention into the School of International Studies curriculum by requiring SA and two intercultural courses. Finally, there is the self-taught option of the University of Minnesota, *Maximizing Study Abroad Guides*, which students can use independently during their sojourn (Vande Berg., et al 2012). This list is not all-encompassing as certainly there are some other universities with similar initiatives such as Boston College's *Advanced Intercultural Communication* course for SA; however, I selected these as examples since they have been tested by researchers to compare against non-intervention programs.

The Georgetown Consortium Research Project included 60 SA programs which did not use interventions. These students' average IDI gain was 1.32 points (out of 90) which was not statistically significant. However, programs with intervention courses showed increases of 19.78 points (School of International Studies), 14.4 (Westmont in Mexico), 13.43 points (AUCP), 11.56 points (Minnesota: Duluth), 9 points (CIEE), 8.08 points (ITI instructor led). Lower scores were found for interventions without an

instructor such as ITI (6.65 points) and MAXSA (4.47 points) (Vande Berg., 2012). Qualitative results (e-journal entries and interviews) did show students who used the MAXSA guide had a better understanding of culture and the host culture than those who did not use the MAXSA guide (Paige et al., 2004), a finding that demonstrates limitation of these quantitative findings. The difference in scores demonstrates that while providing information about intercultural learning may help students process their experiences, having an instructor who guides the reflection process is perhaps even more valuable. Harvey's (2013) research on CIEE's program supports this notion as it found the professors' intercultural and pedagogic skills played a role in the gains of students.

Researchers in the field agree that programs must be intentionally designed to facilitate intercultural competence (J. Bennett, 2008; Paige & Vande Berg, 2012; Selby, 2008). If one accepts the IDI as the measure for intercultural competence, this body of research strengthens the argument that exchange programs do not provide enough support for learning goals to be met. However, the researchers argue for a constructivist view on intercultural teaching and learning but then use a pre- and post- test way of measuring learning outcomes which does not explain the adaptation process that leads some students to make large gains and others to regress. A more nuanced understanding of how students make meaning of their experiences without interventions is needed to properly inform SA practice (Thomas & Kerstetter, 2020). Therefore, my research takes a constructivist approach to understand how students interpret the local classes and what aspects facilitate or hindere their learning.

Furthermore, in a review of the course syllabuses I could find online (CIEE, AUCP, and MAXSA), none address the relationship between culture and academic setting. This is unsurprising due to the absence of research on the direct enrollment experience of SA students. If the challenge is the direct enrollment experience, supports (e.g., course interventions, mentoring, orientations, etc.) should address potential challenges of studying in a new academic culture. The work of interventionists has been key to establishing the need to facilitate learning during SA; however, evidently more qualitative research from

the students' perspective on the direct enrollment experience is required to develop solutions that fit the issues that they identify as significant and to be affecting their learning.

Qualitative researchers

Qualitative methods have proven useful in understanding results of previous studies on SA student learning that rely on pre- and post-testing. Researchers highlight the impact of identity, gender and race, agency/motivation and interactions with locals and cohort peers on the student experience. The body of literature informs my work because it provides an understanding of how certain aspects influence students' host and ethnic communication which results in different learning outcomes in the greater SA setting. While few have touched on the direct enrollment experience, considering the university classroom manifests culture; I expect similar topics to influence the students' experiences - regulating with whom students communication, how they choose to adapt and what they eventually learn from the direct enrollment experience.

Polayni's (1995) journal study was one of the first to demonstrate the value of qualitative research on SA. An often-cited large-scale Russian study found that men outperformed women on the OPI exam with higher listening and oral skills after studying abroad (Brecht et al., 1995). However, Polayni (1995) determined that whereas men reported fun, romantic experiences with Russian women, while women reported incidents of discomfort due to unwanted advances of Russian men. She concluded that their opportunities for quality interactions and more complex conversation were limited due the aggressiveness of Russian men which affected their language learning. The qualitative data revealed that students' experiences were gendered and innately different. It also led future researchers to question the role of gender in the SA experience. Consistently, results showed that experiences of discrimination or sexual harassment caused students to withdraw from interacting with the local society (Anderson, 2003; Goldoni, 2009; Isabelli, 2006; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Twombly, 1995). While this research did not

report sexist experiences within the classroom, even a negative experience outside the classroom may impact students' opinions of and/or desire to interact with locals in the academic setting.

Identity is another important factor that qualitative studies recognize affects students' desire to interact with the local society. Often students' identities are challenged by living in a new cultural environment which may result in them recoiling into their cohort groups (Goldoni, 2009; Kinginger, 2010; Pellegrino Aveni, 2007; Pellegrino, 1998; Wilkinson, 1998). Wilkinson's (1998) qualitative research on students in France found that SA students formed peer groups to conserve their native identity in the face of cultural differences. Pellegrino asserts the withdrawal from the host society is due to negative interactions as a "social psychology security" through which students self-preserve their identities (Pellegrino, 1998).

In a second language setting, students struggle to present their identity as they would in their first language (Pellegrino Aveni, 2007). While SA students try to position themselves as competent speakers and develop a second identity, they can find resistance since the hosts may position them as foreigners; outsiders. Those who feel their U.S. identity is threatened by their interactions with locals, withdrew into "us" versus "them" mentalities and are more likely to stereotype (Pellegrino Aveni, 2007). Kinginger (2010) found when students were confronted by negative international perceptions of the U.S., especially from their host families, "they react defensively and recoil into national superiority, cutting themselves off from the very people who are most likely to nurture their language" (p. 224).

This trend persists even in host countries where the local language is English. In Dolby (2005), SA students in Australia had to confront the often controversial or negative image of the U.S. abroad. Due to their strong national identity, many took a defensive position while few explored different perceptions of the U.S. identity. Overall, "their 'global imagination' was quite limited, and they tended to focus on negotiating and making sense of their American identity, to the exclusion of being able to truly experience and absorb others' perspectives and daily realities" (Dolby, 2005, p. 112). In all these studies, SA students

who are unable to negotiate their identities when challenged by host nationals show less growth and intercultural transformation.

Conversely, Pitts (2009) argued that students may actually use co-national talk as a way to understand their changing identity and what it means to be from the U.S. when faced with stress caused by challenges to their identity. The ethnographic research found that “through co-national talk, students were able to create culturally competent norms, behaviors, and expectations and begin the process of cultural adjustment” (Pitts, 2009, p.458). Pitts (2009) contends that cohort relations actually help SA students shift towards the more intercultural identity of Kim’s (2001) cross-cultural adaptation model; even though Kim (2001) considers co-national communication as negative for adaptation after the initial period. Pitts (2009) claims that perhaps in short term sojourns, co-national support allows for an immediate development of skills and lowers stress from expectation gaps. This ethnographic work enriches the discussion about co-national relationships by adding the student perspective of how they believe co-national talk contributes to their adaptation.

However, I contend her argument is limited because it did not include how interactions with host nationals affected their adaptation and intercultural learning. In contrast, Hendrickson’s (2016) research in Argentina found that local friendship formation led to a deeper/wider range of observations, space to practice and adjust their communication patterns and more intimate relationships than co-national friendship. These relationships helped students gain insight into why host individuals communicate and behave as they do. This is useful for understanding the link between friendship formation and adaptation; however, it does not detail how the direct enrollment experience facilitates those local relationships.

I found one study that qualitatively analyzed identity negotiation within the direct enrollment setting. Tian and Lowe (2014) used unstructured interviews to understand the identity shifts of eight U.S. students during a five-month direct enrollment SA program in a local university in China. They found support for Kim’s (2001) theory that intercultural identities emerge from the stress – adaptation – growth

model. Students began the experience with strong “us” versus “them” identities and had negative reactions to Chinese professors and society. Through interactions with professors and Chinese friends, they began to question their U.S. identity, stereotypes about Chinese people and grow to view people more universally. Tian and Lowe (2014) highlight five terms that represent their emerging identities: reflectivity, understanding, admire, love, and decentered appreciation. While not all SA student’s identities shifted to the same degree, a shift towards more intercultural identity was present.

Concurrent with the interventionalists, Tian and Lowe (2014) suggest that with a proper orientation, the initial stresses at the university may have been lessened and students would have developed a more intercultural identity. This research is highly relevant as it demonstrates the phases of Kim’s (2001) stress-adaptation- growth model in a direct enrollment setting. However, it is limited because the students mainly took intensive Chinese courses and there is no reference to the impact of their experiences in undergraduate course with local students. Furthermore, it focuses on the development of intercultural identity without considering other learning students may have found significant from the experience. I aim to fill these gaps through focusing on the SA students enrolled in local undergraduate classes and allowing their insights to guide my research.

Other qualitative research that indicates how the direct enrollment experience of U.S. SA students impacts their learning is scarce. Covert (2014) narrative inquiry study of U.S. students in Chile reported that a student demonstrated a more tolerant attitude towards differences in concepts of time in a group project; however, it is unclear as to whether this learning was attributed by the student to the group work experience specifically or living in Chile. In Bacon (2002), a UK student in Mexico claimed not to have been impacted by the academic setting; however, the researcher noted her application of knowledge learned in classes to her understanding of Mexican society. “Even though her understanding of how the university fit into the culture was still incomplete, she was beginning to understand the rules of Mexican culture” (Bacon, 2002). Bacon’s (2002) concluded that academic and social spheres were important and

intertwined in the student's learning. This study is not of U.S. students; nevertheless, it shows how cultural learning from the local classroom may facilitate students' understanding of the local culture outside of the class as well.

Qualitative research in the SA field has brought to light underlying factors influencing the experience which result in the variation of SA student experiences and learning outcomes. They use methods that allow for a deeper understanding of the complex issues surrounding the sojourn which is valuable for supporting students. The literature also shows the unstable nature of time spent abroad and how students' progress and regress in terms of the degree of their immersion, adaptation and learning. Furthermore, it illustrates how students use agency when making decisions about their learning abroad (Covert, 2014).

My research is part of the shift in SA literature towards a constructivist approach using qualitative methods. Scally's (2015) research showed that students who directly enroll are likely to have more previous experience abroad, higher starting intercultural development and language skills. They also tend to make more local student friendships (Hendrickson, 2016; Scally, 2015; Norris & Dwyer, 2005), which is positively associated with increased host communication that theoretically would facilitate their adaptation and growth. Currently, the local academic context has not been found statistically significantly to improving learning outcomes; nor, has there been sufficient qualitative research to understand what students perceive they are gaining from the experience. My investigation seeks to overcome these past limitations and understand how and what students are specifically gaining from the experience in the local classroom since I consider that such an understanding is required to properly facilitate the students' adaptation and learning process.

Chapter 4: Objectives and methodology

This chapter states my thesis' goals and the research questions that guide the investigation. Furthermore, it discusses the decision to choose ethnography as the appropriate qualitative research method. My research uses a constructivist epistemology and a social constructivist theoretical perspective. In the following, I will review the guiding principles of ethnographic research and explain the rationale for choosing this methodology to answer my research questions. I will detail the methods used during my data collection and analysis. Finally, I conclude by providing my reasoning behind the selection of narratives to illustrate my results.

4.1 Research questions

The purpose of this research is to understand the direct enrollment experience of SA students from the U.S. taking classes at a large public university in Spain from their point of view. Through this emic understanding of the direct enrollment experience, I strive to enhance the intercultural learning value not only for the exchange students but for the local students as well through a series of recommendations for SA programs to enhance their adaptation and learning support and for Spanish universities to develop their IaH initiatives.

The research questions (RQs) that guide this analysis are:

- RQ1: How do SA students in a direct enrollment context perceive the culture of learning in the Spanish classroom?
- RQ2: How do SA students in a direct enrollment context report they adapt to the academic and social culture of the Spanish university classroom?
 - RQ2.1: Which factors do SA students perceive facilitate and hinder their adaptation to the Spanish classroom?

- RQ3: How do SA students perceive the impact of their direct enrollment experience on their learning and growth abroad?

In the section 4.4, I briefly elaborate further upon how I developed these RQs since they are grounded in the emerging themes from the data analysis. The present research uses a social-constructivist perspective and an ethnographic methodology to gain the necessary depth of analysis to answer the RQs.

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 Social constructivism

I will approach the research from a social constructivist theoretical perspective which assumes each student constructs knowledge based on their individual experiences and social interactions in the classroom. Social constructivism is a sub-category of constructionism epistemology that views knowledge as something that is not objectively out there but rather constructed and reproduced by individuals through interactions with the environment (Tracy, 2013). “Constructions are not more or less ‘true,’ in any absolute sense, but simply more or less informed and/or sophisticated. Constructions are alterable, as are their associated ‘realities’” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111). Hence, constructionists do not concern themselves with searching for an objective reality as they consider reality to be relative to each person’s frame of reference (Driscoll, 2014; Tracy, 2013). Therefore, I do not view my participants as holders of objective truth; rather they provide perspectives based on their constructions from their series of interactions in the classroom.

Constructionism as defined by Crotty (1998) is “the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (p. 42). Knowledge is constructed as people try to make meaning of their experiences. Reality is based on individuals’ histories, characteristics and interpersonal relationships which shape the

nature of interactions with the environment. Therefore, different people may construct meaning of the same phenomena differently (Crotty, 1998). In the context of this research, SA students' interpretations of the same local classroom are viewed as being influenced by their past experiences with higher education and the interpersonal relationships they form in the classroom.

While constructionism looks at how knowledge is constructed by, for and within a community; constructivism shifts the focus to understand the individual psychological process of construction of meaning from their experiences and interactions (Crotty, 1998; Hruby, 2001). Social constructivism is a type of constructivism that emphasizes the social-cultural and historical context in the individual's meaning-making process. In this perspective, the SA students' experience attending local classes is viewed as being informed by their previous background experiences attending university. The social constructivist paradigm is appropriate for my research because it allows for an understanding of the adaptation process from the student's perspective, focuses on how each actor constructs meaning due to their personal and environmental background rather than as a social group, and emphasizes the process of their learning based on their social interactions in the immersion setting.

Research with a social constructivist perspective views knowledge as being mediated through the relationship between the researcher and participant (Tracy, 2013) and created together as the investigation proceeds (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Knowledge is therefore viewed as being co-constructed through the interaction between the researcher and participant. During my research, I learn how SA students adapt by discussing the topic in a fashion that allows them to highlight what is relevant to them. Interviews are "semi-structured to allow for considerations of each participant's individual context and positioning, and to enable the ongoing co-construction of knowledge throughout the study" (Huot, 2018, p. 13). Semi-structured interviews permit me to direct the conversation to the topic of their perspective of the Spanish university; however, the participants share events and descriptions that are relevant to

them. This results in a co-construction of knowledge based on this social interaction between the researcher and participant.

The capacity to communicate effectively with cultural others is not viewed as being developed by mere immersion in the local university context but rather something that is learned through interactions between the individual with a specific cultural makeup and the new environment (Vande Berg et al., 2012). Applying the social constructivist perspective to my research's aims emphasizes the role of interaction between the student and the local classroom in the process of negotiating meaning to understand the new culture of learning.

The goal of research with a social constructivist perspective is to understand the why and how from the participants' point of view of what is relevant and interesting (Tracy, 2013). Given the purpose of the present research is precisely to understand how students make meaning and adapt to the local class during a SA period, the social constructivist perspective allows me to understand the experience from their point of view. The ethnographic methodology entails a social constructivist epistemology which by triangulating research methods, allows for the necessary depth of understanding to answer the research questions.

4.2.2 Ethnography as the appropriate method

The ethnographic approach corresponds to the research's social constructivist perspective and goal of understanding how students adapt and create meaning from their experiences taking classes in a Spanish university classroom. It provides this research with the necessary depth of analysis to understand the multiple perspectives of the SA students as they make meaning from their social experiences studying in an academic institution abroad. Since adaptation is viewed as a process (Kim, 2005) rather than an outcome, ethnography is an appropriate choice as it allows for an extended time in the field necessary to observe the students' progression. The interpretivist naturalistic nature of ethnography allows for observation in the field from which "thick description" can be developed (Geertz, 1973). Its holistic

approach includes the emic perspective of multiple types of actors, hence enriching the data. These key characteristics of ethnography allow me to gain the depth of understanding necessary to answer the research questions.

Process-orientated approach

Literature reviews of SA research frequently highlight the use of a learning outcome approach by using pre- & post-test such as the OPI and IDI for language learning and intercultural competence respectively (Freed, 1995; Isabelli-Garcia & Isabelli, 2020; Ogden & Streitwieser, 2016; Paige & Vande Berg, 2012). To evaluate which factors influence results, hypotheses are derived from predefined individual and program characteristics assumed to affect the SA experience. These studies are important in demonstrating the added value of SA; however, results still show a wide range of learning outcomes and inconclusive data across variables which the methodology cannot explain.

Therefore, rather than focusing on learning outcomes, my research concentrates on the adaptation process. This requires a deeper understanding from the participants' point of view about which aspects facilitate or hinder their learning for which a process-orientated methodology is required. As Goldoni (2007) argues, the

process-oriented approach is particularly useful to analyze the participants' process of language and cultural immersion, capture the view about their goals and experiences, monitor changes in the sojourners, and also ascertain how the design and the delivery of the program can be improved. (p. 3)

Ethnographic research allows me to gather their views on their adaptation process throughout the entire semester.

Turning more specifically to the academic context where my SA research is situated; the most relevant SA research on the academic context abroad used pre- and post-tests, treating it as an independent variable which did not result to be a statistically significant factor (Vande Berg et al., 2009).

This study has been key in arguing for facilitated learning during SA; however, its methodology is limited in its understanding of how students are learning within each of the variables (e.g., academic context) because it lacks their perspective on the experience.

SA researchers who used ethnographic methods have discovered some of these underlying meanings that participants give to experience. For example, Brecht & Robinson's (1995) study showed the value of ethnography methodologies (e.g., participant observations and interviews) when researching the SA academic context finding that cultural differences (e.g., professor-centered teaching methods) accounted for most negative reactions to classes in Russia. While ethnography may not provide measurable learning outcomes during SA, it allows for an equally crucial component for improving programs: understanding of how learning is facilitated, hindered and perceived by students while studying abroad. This is key to properly designing programs and/or interventions for learning.

Interpretive naturalistic nature

The ethnographic approach involves the researcher's presence in the naturalistic setting in which the phenomena are being experienced by the participants (Tracy, 2013). It gives the researcher the privilege of observing and interpreting the experiences, in terms of the meaning being given to them by the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In the SA context, the interpretivist naturalistic nature of ethnography allows the researcher to live the student's experience in the social world they are experiencing to gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives.

The naturalist approach holds three essential assumptions: the social world is being created and recreated as it is perceived and interpreted by people; actors' accounts of the social world provide access to knowledge of it; and since people lived in a social context, it is best to study them in their natural setting (Brewer, 2000). In my research's classroom context, the naturalistic approach allows me to observe and experience the social world alongside the students and professors. Through interviews, I gain access to the actors' accounts of the classroom culture; hence gaining knowledge of it based on their perspectives.

The approach is most appropriate for understanding complex individual perceptions because of its focus on “thick description” which takes into consideration the context, intentions and meaning given to them and their evolution over time (Geertz, 1973). This approach corresponds to my aim to understand the SA students’ adaptation to the classroom over the course of the semester, a personal and complex process that ethnography allows me to describe in detail so that readers will feel they are present alongside me in the field (Brewer, 2000).

The few studies on SA students enrolled in the Spanish higher education system have predefined possible “culture shocks” and then measured them (Pandor, 2017; Rueda, 2006). By using an interpretive approach, I can go beyond predetermined characteristics, learning outcomes and cultural differences to understand from the participants’ point of view how they adapt to the Spanish academic culture, what factors they believe influence the experience and what and how they learn from it.

Ethnography provides the necessary exploratory approach that allows emerging questions to arise based on what participants find relevant rather than relying on predetermined assumptions (Creswell, 2014). It also allows for enough flexibility to modify the original research questions (Creswell, 2014) as themes come to light rather than relying on a priori assumptions about teaching and learning in the U.S. and Spain. Also, by observing the scene, it is possible to discover the tacit knowledge about the culture of learning in the classroom. In the context of this research, it is valuable considering the dearth of information comparing cultures of learning in the U.S. and Spain.

Emic perspective

Ethnography allows for an emic understanding of the multiple realities being constructed by the actors in the classroom. It helps us comprehend how they perceive the classroom norms and their reasons for given adaptation strategies. The purpose of taking an emic perspective is to understand the social situation from the “natives’ point of view” (Geertz, 1974); allowing me to transform into the student and my participants into the teachers (Spradley, 1980). This method allows my participants to teach me about

the Spanish university classroom and how to adapt to the cultural differences found. Emic perceptions are still bound by cultural and historical characteristics, but the perspective provides a deeper understanding of their relationship. The insider perspective allows me to gain a richer understanding of how students view their own learning while abroad and elicit explanations for the wide range of results observed in past SA research.

This approach also allows me to discover tacit knowledge about the culture from the insiders' perspectives which they may not be aware of (Tracy, 2013). In this case, both U.S. and Spanish cultures of learning are based on the taken-for-granted assumptions of the participants about higher education. Ethnography allows me to understand the meaning participants assign to cultural artifacts and experiences (Spradley, 1980). Through observing the classroom and asking participants to explain specific tacit culture elements, I can gain deeper insights into the meaning given to the insiders. Considering it is the subtle unwritten rules of the classroom which lead to misunderstanding in the classroom, this qualitative approach is most suitable for unearthing these differences.

Holistic

Ethnography allows for a holistic understanding of the social scene (Creswell, 2014). It permits the researcher to contextualize the actions of the participants to gain a complete understanding of their perspectives. It allows for an exploration of multiple participant meanings, developing a well-rounded understanding of the situation at hand. In this case, I can access the emic perspective of not only the SA students but the professors and other students in the room as well. Tracy (2013) describes qualitative researchers as "bricoleur" or those that interweave together multiple perspectives from the different types and sources of information to create a useful research synthesis. By using a wide range of informants, "individual viewpoints and experiences can be verified against others and, ultimately, a rich picture of the attitudes, needs or behavior of those under scrutiny may be constructed based on the contributions of a range of people" (Shenton, 2004, p. 66). This technique allows me to analyze the

perspectives of participants, the observations, and the cultural artifacts to gain a better understanding of the root of any miscommunication in the classroom and the elements facilitating or hindering adaptation.

Critiques and quality criteria

Ethnography has been criticized for not fulfilling the standards of natural science based on a positivist paradigm (Brewer, 2000). These criteria for trustworthiness are internal validity, generalizability, reliability and objectivity (Sheldon, 2004). Instead, ethnographic researchers rely on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) alternative criteria for trustworthiness which are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as standards suitable for qualitative research. These constructs take into account the interpretive nature of the research to add trustworthiness to the quality of the research and overcome the critiques of ethnography.

The criteria for trustworthiness of positivist research are based on the assumption that there is an objective reality and therefore, criticizes qualitative methods for being highly subjective, relying on the researchers' views, perspectives and relationships with participants (Bryman, 2012). The aim of this research is not to generalize the experiences as a sole reality but rather to deepen our understanding of the SA student experience at the Spanish university. This corresponds to the social constructivist epistemology of ethnography which views the construction of knowledge as subjective and therefore does not concern itself with objectivity. Nevertheless, the subjective nature of the researcher and potential impact on the results must still be addressed using confirmability. Confirmability entails a reflection on the part of the researcher about his/her own beliefs and predispositions that shape the methodological decisions through a step-by-step description of decisions and procedures taken (Shendon, 2004). In my research, it ensures that the results are the perspectives of the students, professors and staff rather than reflecting my preferences on the SA experience.

Positivist research is also judged on its external validity which is the extent to which its results can be applied to another situation (Merriam, 1998). Since ethnographic research is based on small sample

sizes in specific environments, it is difficult to claim the findings would be similar in another situation (Shendon, 2004). Instead, ethnography concerns itself transferability which requires providing enough “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) about the context so that the reader may determine if the results could be applicable (Shendon, 2004). My research does not assume or imply the same results would occur with all SA students at any university in Spain; however, by properly conveying the boundaries of the research, inclusion criteria and the field description, the reader can take into account the specific context from which the data was collected and infer the relevance of the recommendations for their HEI and/or SA program.

Ethnography has also been criticized for being difficult to replicate considering its unstructured nature and reliance on the researcher as the data collector who subjectively chooses what to focus on (Bryman, 2012). Instead of trying to prove the research’s reliability to obtain the same result if replicated, dependability is used to demonstrate to readers how the research design evolved due to changing conditions in the setting (Baxter & Babbie, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The research design and implementation, operational detail of data gathering, and a reflective appraisal of the effectiveness of the process are used to explain the research practices and methods (Shenton, 2004). It shows the reasoning behind the evolution from the original open questions to the final result due to the changing social setting and the researcher’s more nuanced knowledge of the setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). It allows the researcher to focus on what is important in the participants’ view and justifies the reasoning behind their decisions.

Finally, positivist researchers are concerned with the internal validity of their research that ensures the test measures what it is intended whereas qualitative researchers use the construct of credibility which focuses on how close their results are to reality (Shendon, 2004). In my investigation, credibility is used to show the results represent the reality of how SA students adapt to the Spanish classroom. Credibility is established through the use of good practices (Bryman, 2012) and reflexivity in

which ethnographers no longer claim an absolute truth but rather use a reflexive commentary on the effectiveness of the techniques and methods used (Shendon, 2004). “Ethnographers substantiate their findings with a reflexive account of themselves and the process of their research” (Brewer, 2000, p. 50). For this reason, I will reflect on my own identity and past experience in higher education in the U.S. and Spain which could influence my choices and interpretations as a researcher and also weave it throughout my description of the decisions made during the data collection process.

4.3 Data collection

I recognize that my personal social-cultural experiences with SA, as a student and a program coordinator could potentially influence the way I interpreted the data. Therefore, I used self-reflexivity to guard against my inherent biases. “Self-reflexivity refers to the careful consideration of how researchers’ past experiences, points of view, and roles impact these same researchers’ interactions with, and interpretations of, the research scene” (Tracy, 2013, p. 2). Knowledge of oneself and awareness of how your past experiences influence your perspectives is vital to understanding one’s subjectivity.

As a SA student, I believed the most important goal was to meet people from the local culture and interact with them to learn about the language and culture. Nevertheless, as an administrator, I came to understand that not all students are at the same intercultural level, their goals may be different, and therefore their perceptions of the experience will be different. I aimed to take a nonjudgmental orientation (Fetterman, 2010) by suspending my personal values and views on how I would study abroad and rather focus on understanding my participants point of view.

Before I started interviewing American students, I had not thought about my own experiences as part of an adaptation process. As I began interviewing the students, I started to reflect on my past experiences noticing both similarities (e.g., not understanding the expectations for assignments, a snide comment from a professor, finding friends in class to help you, amongst others) and differences (e.g., very engaging discussion-based class, local students not approaching you, gaining international perspectives,

amongst others). I believe that my own experience helped me to empathize with students with similar experiences and my genuine openness and curiosity allow me to remain open to those with contrasting experiences to my own. I recognize that one class cannot be considered a full representation of Spanish higher education. Furthermore, my background (e.g., socio-cultural, L2 level, etc.), past experience at other foreign universities, and motivation (e.g., no concern for the final grade), certainly influenced my adaptation process in comparison to the SA students.

4.3.1 The study field

4.3.1.1 UAM description and internationalization

In my research, the Spanish university classroom is the field of study as it represents the intersection of the topic (internationalization of HE) and territory (Spanish university) (Lindolf and Taylor, 2002). I used a convenience sample when I selected the UAM as the field for data collection. Convenience samples are typically used because they provide quick, easy and inexpensive access to the site and participants (Tracy, 2013). By choosing my own university as the study site, I could leverage my position in the ORI of the science faculty to create a network within the international offices of the university. I positioned myself as both a local Ph.D. student and as an employee, depending on the participant and/or gatekeeper. Finally, my internship schedule was from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm from Monday to Friday at the UAM (15km from Madrid city), which made it practically impossible to conduct the research at any other university.

As an outsider to the host culture, the convenience sample also allowed me to use the first eight months of my internship to familiarize myself with the UAM culture, hence becoming an insider of the international offices to a certain extent. “The development of an early familiarity with the culture of participating organizations before the first data collection dialogues take place” (Shenton, 2004, p. 65) is an important element to increase credibility in qualitative research. For this reason, I also immersed myself by enrolling in a master’s class on research methodology to familiarize myself with the academic

culture and by joining a tennis class to experience an extra-curricular setting as well. Given my insider understanding of U.S. culture, university and SA programs, I intentionally chose to research exchange students from the U.S. The UAM was also a logical choice because it is one of three large public universities in Madrid which receive the majority of SA student hence providing more recruitment opportunities. While the sample was convenient, it was also purposefully chosen given my personal background and local situation.

The UAM is a prestigious large public research university in Madrid, Spain. In 2018, it ranked 1st in the QS World University Rankings, 5th in the Times Higher Education Rankings and 6th in Shanghai Jiao Tong University Rankings of HEIs in Spain (Spanish Service for Internationalisation of Education, 2018). During the 2017/2018 academic year, 23,461 students were enrolled in undergraduate programs and 6,797 in postgraduate programs (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2018). The university has eight faculties and offers 44 degrees with 54 study plans. The majority of the classes are taught in Spanish with a reduced offer in English, mainly in the International Studies program or elective classes.

In 2016, the UAM developed an internationalization plan for 2025 reflecting the European modernization agenda for HE and Spain's internationalization of HE plans. The strategy was developed on three actions as recommended by the EU: 1) International mobility of students and workers 2) Internationalization of study plans 3) Cooperation and strategic alliances. However, they added a fourth action necessary for internationalization to be transversal and structural: 4) Development of an institutional culture of internationalization⁷ (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2016).

The action plans are aimed at the development of international programs and networks, increasing participation in mobility programs, increasing the visibility of international components, improving the reception of foreign students, and the English level of both professors and students. There

⁷ Original text: "Movilidad internacional de estudiantes y trabajadores, Internacionalización de los programas de estudios, Cooperación y alianzas estratégicas...Desarrollo de una cultura institucional de internacionalización."

is no direct mention of IaH. There is a recognition to improve the integration of foreign students on campus; however, there is no mention of any motive such as improving intercultural competences, global awareness or stimulating European identity among the local students and staff. The internationalization of academic degrees also focuses on developing a larger offering of courses in English but does not mention the IoC itself. The internationalization plan remains primarily structural, top-down and English focused rather than a comprehensive plan of internationalization.

There are three main offices that are responsible for the administration of incoming and outgoing exchange students at the UAM: SERIM, ORIs of each Faculty and Study Abroad in Madrid (SAM). The SERIM is responsible for the inter-institutional agreements with international universities as well as managing the Erasmus budget. The ORIs of each faculty are responsible for the academic agreements of exchange students of their respective students, promotion of mobility programs to local students and reception of incoming students. Finally, the SAM office focuses on developing and facilitating programs tailored to students from outside of Europe. According to the office's director Gretchen, the department has two primary purposes: to develop programs that fit the academic needs of the international students and to guide them by providing extra support beyond the administrative SERIM and ORIs offices. The SAM office developed a Diploma in Spanish Language, Culture and Civilization (DiLe) program designed for only international students. Although offered by the UAM, these courses will not be considered UAM courses because local students are not present in the classroom.

4.3.1.2 SA programs

I recruited participants from U.S. SA programs and universities who directly enrolled their students in the UAM. The participants of the investigation came from seventeen different HEIs, through nine different SA programs. For this research, I considered all U.S. SA students without on-site support from their home university as participants of an "exchange program". I refer to "hybrid programs" those in which students took at least one course provided by the U.S. program. All hybrid programs were

through U.S. universities rather than third-party providers. Furthermore, as it proved relevant to the research results, I will make a distinction between “on-campus” and “off-campus” programs. Students from “on-campus” programs attended at least four courses (undergraduate or DiLe) on the UAM campus. Whereas students from “off-campus” programs took most of their classes at their U.S. program center downtown, an average forty-minute commute.

To describe the nine programs, I have adapted Engle and Engle’s (2003) level-based classification system for SA programs by adding two variables that impacted students’ experiences that were particular to the setting. The two additions are 1) program location being on-campus or off-campus and 2) support provided for course selection and enrollment ((1) U.S. SA program, (2) SAM + U.S. SA program, (3) ORIs of UAM).

All programs coincided on the length of student sojourn (1 semester to 1 year – Level 4 or 5) and entry target-language competence (pre-advanced to advanced – Level 4 or 5). All programs used a mix of English and target language classes; however, I cannot confirm exactly to which extent. Some exchange students also took 1 or 2 classes in English. None of the SA program staff interviewed explicitly indicated providing a guided reflection on the cultural experience throughout the semester; however, they did encourage cultural learning (e.g., required Spanish culture course) and the staff did provide mentoring for cultural learning to varying extents. Exchange program students did not enroll in a Spanish culture course or have an on-site contact from their home university in Spain.

The following table shows the remaining aspects which I could accurately quantify. All university program names have been changed to protect their anonymity.

Table 2*Characteristics of SA programs' universities*

Program	University Size*	Type of Program	Academic support**	UAM courses	Experiential learning***	Housing	Engle & Engel Level	Student Participants
Exchange Program	Large public	Direct Enrollment	3	2-4	None	Apartment	5****	13
Stoughton University	Large Private	On campus hybrid	1	2-4	Internships, Culture course	Host family	5	10
Brockton University	Medium-Large Private	On campus hybrid	2	2	Culture course, volunteering	Host family	4.5	8
Attleboro College	Small private	Off campus hybrid	1	1-3	Buddy program	Host family / Apartment	4.5	6
Cranston University	Medium-Large Private	Off campus hybrid	1	1-2	None	Dormitory / Host family	3	4
Foxborough College	Small Private	Off campus hybrid	2	1	Culture course	Host family	4	3
Fall River University	Medium-Large Private	On campus hybrid	1	1	None	Host family	4	2
New Bedford University	Medium Private - Small Private	Off campus hybrid	1	1	Buddy program, volunteering	Host family	4	2
Narragansett University	Large Private	Off campus hybrid	1	1	Internship	Dormitory / Apartment	4	2

*Small (<5000), Medium (5000-15000), Medium-Large (15,000-30,000), Large (>15000)

** (1) U.S. SA program, (2) SAM + U.S. SA program, (3) ORIs of UAM

*** All programs (except exchange) offer internships, volunteering and buddy programs. I've indicated the activities in which my participants took part.

**** Full immersion but lack any structured experiential or guided cultural reflection

4.3.1.3 Relationship between UAM and Study Abroad

The relationship between the U.S. universities and the UAM is bound through an interinstitutional agreement that is managed by the SERIM. Regardless of the program, all U.S. SA students' applications first go to the SERIM office to be vetted against the stipulations of the agreement. Once accepted, the finalization of the learning agreements which validate the credit transfer and class enrollment is processed by the ORIs of each faculty. I will briefly discuss the main differences between hybrid and exchange programs that affected the students' adaptation: 1) academic enrollment advising, 2) arrival orientation and 3) cultural integration opportunities.

Hybrid programs have the benefit of experience with past SA students from which they recommend certain academic courses and/or professors. Some SA staff relied on their experience while others collaborated with the SAM office to facilitate the process as indicated in the table above. Hybrid programs tended to prepare the majority of the paperwork and manage the contact with the ORIs for the students. For academic advising, exchange students rely on the ORI and their academic coordinator in the U.S. who had little knowledge of the UAM according to the SA students. Course selection proved to be the most difficult part of their arrival; however, they all managed to complete the enrollment with the ORIs assistance.

The hybrid programs provide their own orientation programs (3-5 days) to help the SA students adapt to life in Spain. Since their enrollment was handled by the SA program staff, few hybrid program students attended orientation meetings of the UAM or even checked in with their corresponding ORI. Exchange students checked in with both the SERIM and the ORI of their faculty upon arrival and attend the SERIM general orientation. However, providing an orientation to the faculty is at each ORI's discretion. In the second semester, one faculty did not hold an orientation and the exchange students felt lost (e.g., could not find classes, were unaware of how to change classes, could not connect to the WiFi, etc.).

The local institution's ORIs' role is primarily administrative except for the Buddy program. The exchange students' cultural integration activities are led by the ESN; however, they were mainly with other international students (e.g., Erasmus students). The hybrid programs provided many opportunities (e.g., buddy program, volunteering, internships, home stays) for SA students to interact with the local community but also provided opportunities solely with their fellow SA students (e.g., orientation, weekend trips, co-curricular sports, common space at their center). I attribute the discrepancy between what is offered and taken advantage of (see: 'Experiential learning' column of Table 2) as it impacts the level of in-group bonding of hybrid program students.

4.3.2 Recruitment & selection criteria

Considering the wide range of learning outcomes found in the SA literature, I choose a maximum variation sample to capture the variety of experiences that could be influencing these outcomes. "A maximum variation sample is one in which researchers access a wide range of data or participants who will represent wide variations of the phenomena under study" (Tracy, 2013, p.135). A maximum variation approach allows for the inclusion of underrepresented groups and results in a broad spectrum of data (Tracy, 2013). In SA literature, exchange students' experiences, heritage or native speakers and non-social sciences or business majors are generally underrepresented. I believe it is vital to capture this variation considering the unique nature of the individual and environmental factors that influence their adaptation. Furthermore, inclusivity and diversity are highly relevant in SA field's current agenda making it important to understand their perspectives as well.

I utilized the snowball technique, obtaining informants from other informants (Brewer, 2000). It was useful in obtaining access as my connection with the gatekeeper to one faculty opened the door to the gatekeepers of the other faculties. The gatekeepers of the ORIs and SA programs also became informants who assisted me in recruiting their students as participants as well. Snowballing does have the risk of skewing the data as participants share contacts of similar backgrounds (Tracy, 2013). I worked

to mitigate this effect by contacting all of the SA programs and UAM faculties at the start of the semester which allowed me to reach most SA students directly.

In January of 2017, I entered the field as an intern in the ORI of the Faculty of Sciences. Through July 2017, I familiarized myself with how the different international departments interact between themselves and with partner universities. I gained an early familiarity with the university culture which allowed me to network and establish trust with the UAM international offices and SA programs' staff. This insider knowledge and development of relationships works to ensure the credibility of the results obtained (Shenton, 2004). Additionally, my multicultural identity as an U.S. citizen living in Spain allowed me to build rapport with all groups of participants since I could understand and relate to their experiences. I began officially recruiting SA student participants on September 6th, 2017 and remained active in the field until my last interview on June 27th, 2018.

I classified the participants into five categories: SA students, SA program staff, UAM professors, UAM international office staff, and UAM students. The primary participants were the SA students. The other categories were secondary participants used to enhance my understanding by interweaving different perspectives together. The UAM international office staff and SA program staff were the gatekeepers and informants who provided me access to the SA students and a historical account of experiences from the past years' students. The UAM professors and students provided perspectives on the Spanish HE classroom and acted as insiders which hold tacit cultural knowledge. The following explains the selection criteria for each group of participants, the recruitment process and its results.

4.3.2.1 UAM international office staff and SA staff

In my research, the main gatekeepers were the UAM international offices and SA program staff. Gatekeepers are "actors with control over key sources and avenues of opportunity" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p27). As administrators of the mobility, these participants had direct access to the SA students who would be attending classes and whose approval would provide validity to my research for

the SA students. Gatekeepers “will operate in terms of expectations about the ethnographer’s identity and intentions” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p60). Therefore, I used the plurality of my identity as a local Ph.D. student and intern (e.g., fluent in Spanish and understanding of Spanish culture) and U.S. identity (e.g., native English speaker and from “Boston”) to connect with the different staff members. I also emphasized the purpose of the investigation was to understand the students’ adaptation to the Spanish classes to help improve the experience for future students; recommendations which would benefit the gatekeepers as well. I believe my emphasis on understanding rather than evaluating was key to my success in recruiting staff members.

Entering the field was facilitated by my relationship with my superior Noelia during my internship in the ORI. I knew that personal relationships in Spain are frequently developed over coffee; therefore, I came in before work for a 9:00 am coffee with the staff. At the UAM, I used the snowballing strategy as Noelia convinced her international office staff colleagues to meet with me even when they claimed to be too busy. The responsible for exchange students at the SERIM could not provide me with a student list because of data protection laws but did provide me with a list of their home universities and the faculty where they would take classes. I approached the heads of these ORIs who allowed me to speak to potential participants at the welcome meeting, via email or during enrollment.

My approach with SA programs’ staff was more cautious because I knew that SA programs tend to be very protective of their students’ wellbeing. I could have obtained access directly through the ORIs; however, I felt it was important to respect the role of the SA programs in their student’s experience. Additionally, by gaining their support, I would benefit from deeper insights into their programs and past students’ experience and obtain easier access to their students. Therefore, I emailed the SA programs staff to set up an introduction and all but one program responded. They agreed to present me to their students enrolling in the UAM either in person before a group class or an orientation event, or via email.

In addition to the access provided by the SA and ORI staff, Gretchen, the director of the SAM program, was the key actor during my investigation with whom I maintained a relationship throughout the research. Key actors act as cultural brokers as they can straddle two cultures, providing insights into both communities. They are excellent sources of information and provide access to participants but are rarely non-bias or representative of their participant group (Fetterman, 2010). She held a Ph.D. from the U.S and previously worked as a director of a SA program in Madrid for sixteen years. Therefore, she understood both the U.S. perspective on SA as well as the local university and culture. Finally, she was also the main contact at the UAM for two of the universities' SA programs and therefore could put me directly in contact with those students.

The results of the recruitment process of UAM international office staff and SA program staff are found in the descriptive statistics below.

Table 3*Administrative research participants*

Total number of participants	11
Study Abroad Staff	6
UAM International Offices	5
Job title	
Study Abroad Staff	
Director study abroad	1
Assistant director study abroad	2
Academic coordinator	2
Program coordinator	1
UAM International Office Staff	
Study Abroad coordinator	1
ORI coordinator	4
Gender	
Study Abroad Staff	
Female	4
Male	2
UAM International Office Staff	
Female	4
Male	1
Years of experience in mobility programs	
Study Abroad Staff	22, 18, 18,14, 5, 4
UAM Staff	16,16,12,10,3
Previous mobility experience	
Study Abroad staff	
Studied the US	2
None	3
UAM Staff	
Ph.D. in Serbia	1
Erasmus exchange in EU	3
Teaching exchange in U.S.	1
Ph.D. in the U.S.	1

4.3.2.2 SA students

The key qualifying criteria for a SA student participant was that they had been acculturated in the U.S. HE system and were directly enrolled in at least one class at the UAM. I choose to cast a wide net to obtain a diverse sample and therefore, did not exclude students based on age, nationality, Spanish level, or degree level. Heritage or native Spanish speakers could be considered to have an advantage in

adaptation; however, I choose to include them since the culture of learning is still different, the average student that directly enrolls also has a high target language level, and cultural proximity can sometimes prove more difficult as professors' expectations may be higher of a native speaker than a non-native speaker. In the end, the maximum variation strategy proved to enrich the data as a wide range of individual characteristics shaped their experiences.

I gained access to the SA students through the ORIs and SA staff. I emphasized three benefits of participation: having an on-campus contact for assistance (especially for exchange students), advice on travel and ongoing in Madrid, and an opportunity to improve the SA experience for future students. In the first semester, I was able to recruit four students at the ORIs orientations, two through a SA staff's email, two snowballed from another student and two from Gretchen's introduction. Unfortunately, when two different off-site SA staff introduced me to their students in person and I left my information, none of the students emailed me to participate. I realized that my five minute introduction was not sufficient to convince them and if I had no follow-up contact, it was easy for them to 'ignore' my request.

I decided to improve my strategy for the second semester by also contacting the professors who had many U.S. SA students pre-enrolled in their classes before the semester started to ask for permission to observe their classes. All eight professors agreed and even though some students dropped out of these classes; this strategy allowed me to observe some SA students from the first day of class and locate other SA students I would not have met otherwise. Another strategy arose when I accidentally missed the orientation meeting of the faculty of Philosophy and the Arts, and the ORI staff allowed me to meet students one-by-one on enrollment day. Eight of these ten SA students agreed to participate.

Additionally, Gretchen invited me to go on a tapas tour of one SA program to meet the students in a social situation. I choose a covert approach and did not tell them about my research that evening. It made it easier to approach them later and eventually six SA students participated. Gatekeepers also forwarded my email searching for participants to their students through which six more participants

joined. Finally, the Stoughton University program had about 17 students and allowed me to recruit before their Spanish culture class. This time, I had more time to chat with them and most importantly instead of giving them my information, I asked for their information and followed up personally. This strategy yielded ten more SA student participants.

The recruitment process resulted in 50 SA student participants of whom 47 completed both the beginning and end of semester interviews. I also observed at least one class of 45 of the 50 students. Their characteristics are found in the table below.

Table 4*SA student research participants*

Total number of participants		50
Program Type		
Direct enrollment		13
On-campus hybrid program		20
Off-campus hybrid program		17
Faculty*		
Education		2
Economics and Business		9
Philosophy and the Arts		33
Psychology		10
Science		3
Courses at UAM**		
1		18
2		13
3		7
4		12
Gender		
Female		34
Male		16
Year		
Sophomore		2
Junior		43
Senior		1
Master		4
Age		
19-22		43
23-27		5
40's		2
Spanish level		
Non-native (upper-intermediate/advanced)		25
Native or heritage speaker		25
Experience Abroad		
Lived abroad		10
Traveled abroad		46
Never went abroad		0
Parent(s) from another country		
Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Panama, Puerto Rico, Spain, Iraq and India		28

*Seven SA students took classes in two faculties and have been counted twice.

**Does not include DiLe classes

4.3.2.3 UAM professors and students

UAM professors and students were included in the study to gain an insider perspective on the Spanish university culture of learning. Informant triangulation allows the researcher to gain a rich picture of the variety of viewpoints and experiences of the phenomena hence enhancing the research's credibility (Shenton, 2004). In this case, it was vital for discovering the tacit cultural knowledge about the Spanish classroom which the SA students could not necessarily explain.

The primary criteria for the selection of the UAM professors was that they be a professor of my SA student participants. In the first semester, the students introduced me after class so I could ask for access to the next class for observation. None of the professors said no; however, it was a long process. Therefore, in the second semester I reached out to the professors via email. As previously mentioned, I also contacted eight professors before the semester began of which six ended up participating; including one whose U.S. students dropped his course but due to his previous experience with U.S. students was interviewed as well. The rest were recruited after the SA student confirmed participation.

I emphasized that my aim was to understand the U.S. students' adaptation to a local university classroom. Professors generally had a very positive attitude toward my research, wished me good luck, and let me know their door was open if I needed anything. Only one professor denied me access as he/she did not feel his/her class would be relevant. Another was hesitant to be interviewed because he did not like participating in investigations about pedagogy. When I made it clear my purpose was to understand cultural adaptation, he spoke to me for over an hour over coffee. Finally, once I had to ask for permission last minute when the lab professor arrived rather than the primary professor who had previously approved observation. She was caught off guard but agreed to allow me to enter the class.

The eligibility criteria for the Spanish students was that they be full-time students of the UAM. In the end, I decided to include one student from another large public Spanish university because she was at the table during the informal focus group and her opinion was not an outlier. I chose a random sample

to generalize about the larger student body (Tracy, 2013). Therefore, I recruited students from the classes I observed during breaks or after class, in the cafeterias, terraces, train station and quads. I approached students directly, introducing myself as a Ph.D. student and asked if they had fifteen minutes to tell me about their university and its international aspects. I only used the snowballing technique twice when SA students presented me to a friend. I found the Spanish students very open to participating with only one saying “no” because she had to study. Even during the classroom observations, they would include me in their group activities and on a couple of occasions invite me to ride the train or have a coffee/beer.

The descriptive statistics for the UAM professors and students can be found below.

Table 5*UAM professor and student research participants*

UAM participants		
Total		88
Professors		23
Students		65
Gender	<u>Professors</u>	<u>Students</u>
Female	10	43
Male	13	22
Faculty	<u>Professors</u>	<u>Students*</u>
Education	-	7
Economics and Business	2	12
Law	-	5
Philosophy and the Arts	14	33
Psychology	7	8
Science	-	4
Nationality	<u>Professors</u>	<u>Students</u>
Spanish	20	60
U.S./Spanish	1	
German/U.S.	1	
Dutch	1	
Ukrainian		1
Uruguay/Spanish		1
Spanish/Italian		1
Spanish/Argentina		1
Student Year	<u>Professors**</u>	<u>Students</u>
1 st	1	19
2 nd	9	12
3 rd	6	22
4 th	4	9
2 nd /3 rd /4 th (Elective)	2	-
6 th or Master	1	3

**Four Spanish students are in a double degree in Business Administration and Law meaning they attend class in both the Economics and Law Faculties. One student was studying engineering at another large public university in Madrid and has been counted as Science.*

***Year of the class I observed.*

4.3.2.4 Summary

All participants who were interviewed received an informed consent form which detailed the research's purpose, duration, benefits of participation, participation's involvement, measures taken to

maintain confidentiality, contact information in case of a problem, consent to use their data and the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Informed consent is considered a key ethical consideration when conducting research involving human beings (Tracy, 2013). I encouraged participants to ask questions about the research and did not observe their classroom if they did not seem comfortable with it. An example of the informed consent forms can be found in Annex I.

I used pseudonyms for all participants and U.S. university names to maintain the participants' anonymity as ethical research requires (Fetterman, 2010; Tracy, 2013). I numbered the direct quotations from participants in sequential order. The number is followed by the abbreviation which refers to the participant being quoted. I used personal labels for the SA students who I selected for the creative narratives containing the first three letters of their pseudonyms (e.g., Lucia = LUC), the SAM director Gretchen (GRE) and myself (MKM). The rest of abbreviations indicate the participant category (below) followed by their assigned number (e.g., PROF_3).

Table 12

Participant abbreviations for direct quotations

Participant category	Code
Study abroad students	SAS_#
Study abroad program staff	SAPS_#
UAM international office staff	IOS_#
UAM professors	PROF_#
UAM students (local students)	LS_#

In addition to the formal participants who have been detailed above, I also had five informal participants whose conversations I did not record as informed consent was not provided. I had a 45-minute conversation with three students from an on-campus hybrid program; however, only one had

directly enrolled in a law class. I also had a 30-minute conversation with the previous rectorate of internationalization at the UAM, one professor from the Philosophy and the Arts Faculty and the previously mentioned hesitant professor from the Economics and Business Faculty. These participants provided interesting background; however, their data was not directly used in the results.

Table 6

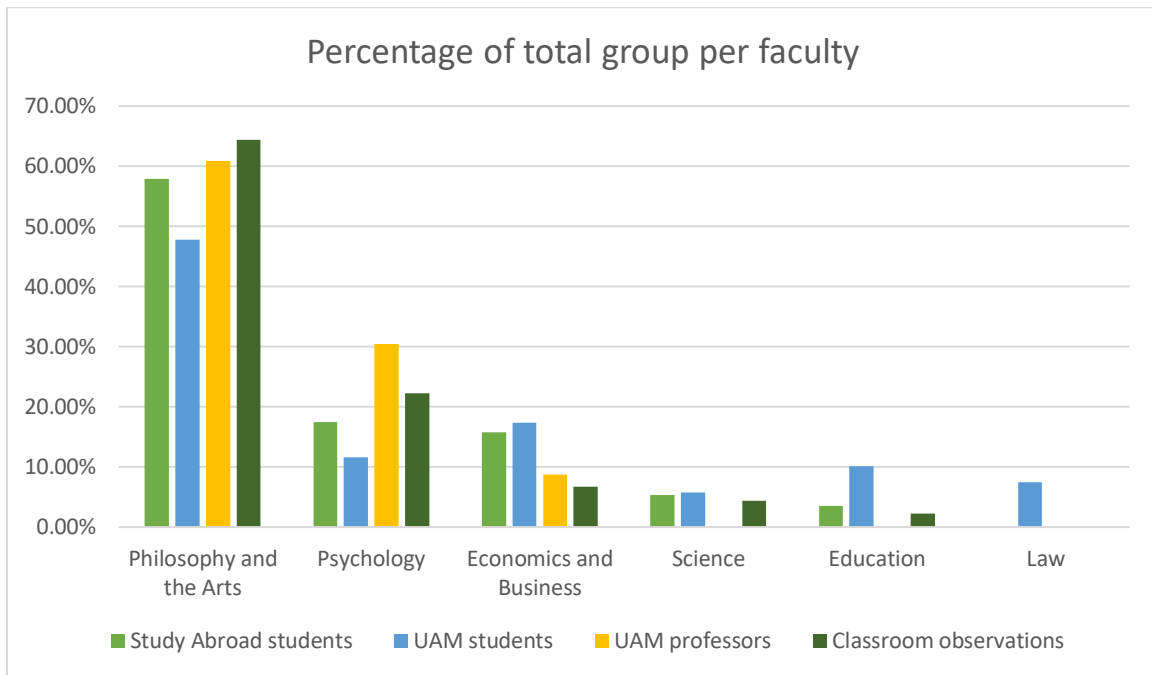
Summary of all participants

Total number of participants	154
Formal interview	149
Informal interview	5
Participant type	
Study Abroad student	52
Study Abroad staff	6
UAM international office staff	6
UAM professor	25
UAM student	65
Gender	
Female	99
Male	55
Faculty	
Education	9
Economics and Business	24
Law	6
Philosophy and the Arts	81
Psychology	25
Science	7

While there is clearly a heavy skew towards the Faculty of Philosophy and the Arts due to the fact most of the SA students took classes in this faculty, when segmented by participant type, similar breakdowns are found across that faculties.

Figure 6

Participant breakdown by faculty



**Seven SA students took classes in two faculties and have been counted twice. Four Spanish students are in a double degree in Business Administration and Law meaning they attend class in both the Economics and Law faculties. One student was studying engineering at another large public university in Madrid and has been counted as Science.*

4.3.3 Methods

The data was formally collected from September 2017 to June 2018. The study sites, “specific local, physical place in which the researcher and the social actor coexist” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 79) in this field were the classrooms, professor’s offices, hallways, cafeterias, quads and the train. In the sites, I decided to take the role of a moderate participant who “seeks to balance being an insider and an outsider, between participation and observation” (Spradley, 1980, p.60). I choose this method as it allowed me to be an active member of society (e.g., campus life) and the flexibility to opt in and out of activities (e.g., attending classes) (Tracy, 2013). It allowed me an insider role due to my participation in the social scenes

with a simultaneous outsider role as the non-Spanish researcher through observation (Spradley, 1980). The insider role was used to gain a deeper understanding of my participants' perspectives while the outsider role was used to maintain my objectivity (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

I organized the data collected using an excel sheet. The excel sheet had a tab for each of the following: contact log, activity log, participants' data, students' characteristics, statistics, observed class list, observation schedule, calendar, possible students and possible courses. Additionally, I had a fieldnote journal; a running diary about how one is conducting the investigation which includes feelings, discoveries, surprises and involvement (Spradley, 1980). I collected information obtained from informal conversations, details on the investigative process, ideas for improvements and my personal feelings and anxieties. I used the fieldwork journal to send interim reports to my thesis directors on my progress. Finally, I collected my primary sources of data through semi-structured interviews, participant observations and informal focus groups whose processes will be detailed in the following.

4.3.3.1 Participant interviews & informal focus groups

For both interviews and focus groups, I used a semi-structured approach that gives "access to people's meaning-endowing capacities and produces rich, deep data that comes in the form of extracts of natural language" (Brewer, 2000, p. 66). Semi-structured interviews have the advantage of unstructured interviews in that they provide the necessary flexibility for participants to expand on topics that were relevant to them while also providing a degree of guidance by covering general topics which are comparable across interviews, common to structured interviews (Tracy, 2013). Since I had narrowed down the focus of my research, the approach allowed me to organized the prompts by topic around the guiding research questions (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). By slightly modifying the questions depending on the category of participant, I maintained the same themes to allow for a comparison across the different types of actors (Tracy, 2013).

Rather than following the strict protocol of structured interviews which standardizes the interview leaving little room for modifications or for the participant to vary their response, I used open-ended questions which increased the depth of insight and followed up with probes about the emerging topics according to what the participants found relevant (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). For example, I used guiding questions such as, “what was your first impression when you arrived at the UAM campus?” that allow participants to highlight what they consider important. The semi-structure approach allowed me to obtain comparable data while still focusing on the participant’s perspective which is key to collecting ethnographic data.

The semi-structured approach also allowed me the flexibility to add member-checking questions in the second interviews based on my participant observations in their classrooms. “Credibility asks whether the researcher’s conclusions “ring true” to the native/informant” (Baxter & Babbie, 2004, p. 344). By asking participants for feedback on my interpretations, it helped ensure that my initial conclusions about their experience were accurate to them, hence increasing its credibility (Tracy, 2013). Member checking questions helped verify both correct conclusions (e.g., students began sitting in the back of class due to frustrating with teaching method) and incorrect assumptions (e.g., U.S. students being uncomfortable with local students commenting negatively on the U.S. which turned out to be expected and interesting for the SA students). The extent to which I used member checking questions in the second interview depended on the number of classroom observations of the participant and the depth of my relationship with them.

To capture the perspective of local students, I choose to use informal focus groups which were also semi-structured. Focus groups have the benefits of being a low-cost way to significantly increase the sample size as multiple participant opinions can be gathered at once (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Tracy, 2013). In my investigation, I was able to interview 65 local students in five weeks at no cost. I refer to the

focus groups as “informal” because they were not organized ahead of time but rather arranged based on a convenience selecting achieved by approaching students on campus in common areas.

A limitation to this approach was that the focus groups were relatively shorter (average of 14 minutes, 54 seconds) than a more structured approach which can be 60-90 minutes (Tracy, 2013). The shorter length was due to two main factors. First, I was conscientious of their time, as some had to return to class and interest level, as a few seemed they were only being polite whereas others seemed to enjoy the discussion and/or the platform to express their frustrations about the university. Secondly, some students did not hold strong opinions, especially 1st-year students. Furthermore, many could not give extensive opinions about international students due to a lack of previous experience or interaction with them. Nevertheless, by keeping the conversation focused on their perspectives about their university and the classroom experience in particular, I was able to avoid irrelevant tangents and obtain the data which answered my research questions.

“Good focus groups require strategically combining participants with similar others” (Tracy, 2013, pg. 169) and for participants to have the same reference point (Tracy, 2013). Another benefit of my use of convenience sampling was that it resulted in participants who were close friends who were mainly from the same degree program and therefore shared similar classroom experiences. The interviewer’s role is to “encourage discussion and the expression of differing opinions” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 294). This was facilitated by the previously established trust between local students who were not shy about openly disagreeing.

It is recommended to first engage in participant observation before conducting focus groups to familiarize oneself with the field (Tracy, 2013); therefore, I waited until the second semester to conduct them. I had the opportunity to gain first insights into the perspectives of Spanish students during a reflection session for those who were involved in the Buddy program. It provided me with a base understanding of some of the factors which may impact exchange student integration, both individual

characteristics (e.g., language level, motivation, priorities) and environmental (e.g., other friend groups, timetables). They also discussed their own challenges as a mentor (e.g., not wanting to overwhelm mentee, shyness, not knowing answers to their doubts, etc.) as well as culture shocks their mentees faced (e.g., professor expectations, workload and type, gaps in previous knowledge, etc.) at the UAM. These perspectives gave me a first glimpse into the Spanish students' opinions to inform my focus groups, keeping in mind these are also local students who desired interaction with international students. Another benefit of waiting was that I could use the focus groups to check tentative conclusions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016) about the Spanish university based on the SA students' perspectives.

I worked to develop a friendly relationship with all participants. "Prescriptions for researchers indicate that fieldworkers should be unobtrusive, honest, unassuming, self-revealing, and reflective listeners" (Bogdewic, 1991 in Pitts & Miller-Dau, 2007, p. 178). I am by nature open and self-revealing, which I used to create a rapport with each participant. For example, one student had arrived late, tired from the night before and clearly unhappy to be there. Therefore, I spent more time with background questions during which I also offered stories about being isolated growing up or not fitting in. At the end of the interview, we spoke for another two hours because he was curious about my experiences living abroad. My ability to adapt and relate to each participant through exposing personal challenges and experiences abroad was critical in building trust.

I began the interviews primarily using "generative questions - non-directive, non-threatening queries that serve to generate (rather than dictate) frameworks for talk" (Tracy, 2013, p. 147). As such, I began with warm-up questions about their background, motivations and goals for studying abroad. I used grand tour questions to elicit a description of the UAM and the classroom, teaching methodologies and cultural differences. I used questions about their behavior to understand their adaptation process and interactions with students and professors. I relied on open-ended questions which allowed participants to describe the phenomena in their own words, hence eliciting an emic perspective (Brewer, 2000).

Furthermore, I avoided using academic jargon (Tracy, 2013) and instead used terms such as cultural differences, changes, talk, and learning instead of stress, adaptation, communication and growth respectively. I was also careful to be deliberately naïve (Tracy, 2013), allowing the participants to explain the phenomena in their own words especially as interviewees began to repeat the same insider secrets (e.g., join the class WhatsApp group). I used directive, data referencing questions to test emerging hypotheses, especially when comparing data with local students' perspectives (e.g., do students arrive late to class?). I ended interviews with identity enhancing questions (e.g., what recommendation would you give to future students?) so they would feel positive about their participation in the research (Tracy, 2013). A full list of interview questions by participant group can be found in Annex II.

The interviews took place at the convenience of the student(s) to ensure their comfort (Tracy, 2013). I interviewed students in public spaces such as on-campus at the cafeteria, in the hallway or outside on the quad and occasionally at a café downtown and the professors and staff in their offices. I provided participants with these easily accessible options and allowed them to dictate the location and time of the interview. The interactions were held in English and Spanish depending on the participants' preference to allow them to fully express themselves. I used a voice recorder application on my phone which recorded and automatically uploaded the interview audio files onto my Google Drive so I could later download them onto my personal laptop. The time spent conducting interviews can be viewed below.

Table 7*Total time spent conducting interviews and informal focus groups*

	Total Time	Range	Average length
Study Abroad Students 1 st Interview	31 hours, 15 minutes, 0 seconds	15 min 34 sec – 66 min, 38 sec	38 minutes, 16 seconds
Study Abroad Students 2 nd Interview	21 hours, 55 minutes, 53 seconds	13 min, 44 sec – 81 min, 55 sec	21 minutes, 56 seconds
UAM Professors	11 hours, 56 minutes, 20 seconds	20 min, 21 sec - 53 min, 56 sec	32 minutes, 34 seconds
UAM Students	6 hours, 57 minutes, 3 seconds	7 min, 16 sec – 30 min, 54 sec	14 minutes, 54 seconds
Study Abroad Staff	4 hours, 13 minutes, 1 second	34 min 3 sec – 49 min 59 sec	42 minutes, 1 second
UAM International Office staff	3 hours, 13 minutes, 28 seconds	18 min, 05 sec – 54 min, 44 sec	38 minutes, 42 seconds
Total: 79 hours, 30 minutes, 45 seconds			

4.3.3.2 Participant observations

Participant observation is best suited when the aim of the research is to gain an understanding of people's attitudes and behaviors in their natural setting (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). Participant observations allowed me to witness firsthand the social phenomena that the SA student participants were experiencing which augmented my understanding of their perspectives. I utilized participant observation as a way to triangulate observations against the data obtained through qualitative interviewing which enhances the confirmability and credibility of the results (Shenton, 2004). Instead of basing the claims solely on the stories of the students, which may be influenced by a desire to provide a socially acceptable answer, observations allowed me to confirm their perceptions by watching the scene unfold with my own eyes. The method triangulation supports my claims that the results are warranted from the data gathered, also enhancing confirmability (Baxter & Babbie, 2004).

The classroom was the natural focal social setting of my participant observations given the research's focus on adaptation to another culture of learning. Good observational settings are accessible and allow the researcher to be unobtrusive while witnessing the activity taking place (Spradley, 1980). The classroom is an ideal location because I could sit discreetly in the back rows and watch the class unfold. I could inconspicuously take fieldnotes on my computer (or in my notebook) in the moment, keeping the time gap between fieldwork and notes to a minimum.

In addition, I spent my free time sitting at tables in the hallways and cafeterias which allowed for an informal collection of observations and led to spontaneous conversations. The fieldnotes are used to provide "thick description" needed to reach the criteria of trustworthiness for qualitative research (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). My observations enhance the credibility of the research by "showing" the reader using excerpts from my fieldwork journal of what I am "telling" them about the phenomena at hand. I took forty-three pages of fieldnotes from participant observations in classes and twenty-seven pages of notes on the data collection process, informal conversations and my perceptions in my reflexive journal.

I chose to take the position of an observer-as-participant according to Gold's (1958) typology of participant-observation roles in which "participation in the field is limited and the role of the researcher is to the fore" (Brewer, 2000, p. 84). While in the classroom, the primary participants, the SA students and the professors were aware of my research study. In most cases, I took a covert approach with the Spanish students since they were not the main subjects of the investigation. I played the role of the outside observer during most of the class; however, I also opted to be an insider on occasion by participating in group activities or making small talk during breaks to build rapport with students.

Three problems associated with field observations are the effect of the researchers' presence on the setting, the researcher's selective perception and interpretation, and the limited extent to which the researcher can observe all relevant aspects (Pawluck et al., 2005). To the first point, my presence in the classroom could have caused some students to feel they were being watched and perhaps pay more

attention. For this reason, I sat in the back of the classroom unless they invited me to sit with them. I maintained an informal, friendly rapport with most participants, which I believe led them to tell me when and why they were not paying attention, had skipped class, came in late, or talked to friends during the lecture. I also would speak to them briefly during a downtime in the class about what was going on in class, their opinion of the professor or the students, and perhaps what they did that weekend or travel plans so that they viewed my presence as a natural part of the setting. This helped lessen the effect of my presence on their behavior in the classroom.

I worked to limit the effect of selective perception by paying attention broadly to all elements before focusing on details or emerging patterns (Emerson et al., 1995). I wrote my initial impressions of the size, space itself, noises, and actors to avoid forgetting what stands out when I had become accustomed to the setting (Emerson et al., 1995). The classroom had reoccurring scenes, “social actors’ self-defined scope of social action” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 79) such as lectures, class discussions, group work and side conversations between students. I began by capturing the entire scene and later focused my fieldnotes on themes pertinent to the research questions such as teaching methodology, interactions between students, interactions between students and professors, reference to the U.S. or English language and SA students’ participation in the classroom. As one gains experience, it is important that “the field researcher is open to and indeed searches for different forms of that event, for variations from or exceptions to an emerging pattern” (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 29). After the first interview, I would be attentive to the narratives SA students perceived as surprising or different to confirm and interpret them myself. It was important to remain attentive even as data saturation seemed eminent.

Furthermore, as one researcher with fifty participants, I could not observe all relevant classes; nor was it always possible to determine when a classroom might have a critical incident. Critical incidents are unique people or events (Tracy, 2013) which in this case could be a turning point in adaptation. In the second semester to capture more of the social phenomena, I obtained early access to the classroom to

witness the adaptation from the first day and was therefore able to observe more incidents which students later brought up in the interviews. I aimed to observe a range of class types (e.g., practical, theoretical, and labs) across the different faculties to gain a more holistic perspective; although, due to the high prevalence of SA students in the Philosophy and the Arts faculty, the majority of the observations took place there.

During the academic year, I observed 90 classes from forty different subjects in five faculties during a total of 125.5 hours. I used a fieldnote journal to record my observations. It had a left column header with the details of the observation to improve the accuracy of the data (Tracy, 2013). I included the date, location, class name, time, actors (non-SA) and SA students. In the first semester, I used a notebook and began by diagramming the room for cultural artifacts. I relied on shorthand until I switched to the computer and could write descriptions in complete sentences. Any verbatim quote was marked with quotations and left in its original language.

Table 8*Statistics of subjects and classes attended*

	Subjects	Classes
Faculty / Degree		
Education	2	2
Sciences of Physical Activity and Sport	1	1
Teaching in Elementary Education	1	1
Economics and Business	3	6
Business Administration	1	1
Economics	1	1
Philosophy, Politics and Economy	1	4
Philosophy and the Arts	23	58
Art History	1	3
Hispanic studies	3	5
History	6	16
History and Music Science	1	2
International Studies	6	11
Master in Spanish Language	1	2
Modern Languages, Culture and Communication	1	4
Philosophy	2	3
Social and Cultural Anthropology	2	12
Psychology	10	20
Sciences	2	4
Chemistry	1	3
Mathematics	1	1
Subject Year of study		
1 st year	1	1
2 nd year	17	36
3 rd year	7	22
3 rd or 4 th year	2	10
4 th year	6	3
2 nd /3 rd /4 th year	6	16
Master	1	2
Subject Type		
Obligatory	25	59
Elective	15	31
Class Length		
60 minutes		50
90 minutes		12
120 minutes		26
150 minutes		1
180 minutes		1
Total	40	90

Outside of the classroom, scenes such as coffee breaks, cigarette breaks, and hallway conversations between classes provided sites from which to collect data on unrecorded informal conversations which provided additional insights to the investigation. I purposefully spent my free time on campus in the hallway in case a participant walked by. This technique was useful for tracking down students, maintaining rapport in between interviews and learning about their day-day. Students also provided me with unsolicited oral accounts by providing updates, news, or changes from the last time we spoke (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). I took advantage of downtime in classes to get updates on their lives both in and out of university providing me a more holistic picture of the SA student's experience beyond the classroom.

I also downloaded official documents from the UAM website such as course syllabuses and internationalization plans, as secondary sources. The documents must be viewed as slightly biased sources that should be analyzed as social products (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In this case, they reflected the lofty goals for internationalization of the university which could at least in part have been written for quality control and rankings. The courses syllabuses were also useful to compare the discrepancy in expectations between professors and students.

Table 9

Summary of all data collected

Type of Data	Hours spent collecting data	Single-spaced typed pages
Interviews	79.5	1697
Classroom observations	125.5	43
Investigation journal		
• Informal observations and conversations	~695*	27
• Buddy program evaluation	2	6
• Interim reports		8
Analytic Notes		240
Total	~902 Hours	2021 Pages

**Estimation: 30 hours per week for 30 weeks minus the time spent on interviews and observing*

4.4 Data analysis

In ethnographic research, the data analysis begins at a superficial level simultaneously with the data collection during the researcher's time in the field (Brewer, 2000). My aim was to understand the meaning that my participants had given to their experiences. "Members' meanings, however, are not pristine objects that are simply "discovered." Rather, these meanings are interpretive constructions assembled and conveyed by the ethnographer" (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 108). The emerging themes were constructed according to what was relevant to the SA students throughout the investigation. During this process, "it is expected that the initial interests and questions that motivated the research will be refined, and perhaps even transformed, over the course of the research" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3). I tracked the evolution of my ideas through analytic notes taken in my fieldwork journal during the data collection period.

I organized my participants' perspectives using Kim's (2001) stress-adaptation-growth model: stress, differences in culture of learning; adaptation, to academic and social culture; and growth, including intercultural and language learning. This resulted in the primary research questions:

1. How do SA students perceive the culture of learning in the Spanish classroom?
2. How do SA students adapt to the academic and social culture of the Spanish university classroom?
3. How does the direct enrollment experience of exchange students contribute to intercultural learning, language skills and personal growth of all students?

In July 2018, with the data collection phase completed, I began a more formal phase of data analysis. I followed Brewer's (2000) recommendation of data analysis using a combination, but not necessarily all, the following steps: data management, coding, content analysis, qualitative description, establishing patterns in the data, developing a classification system of open codes and examining the negative case. Additionally, I began by using Tracy's (2013) recommendation to first organize the data "so as to make

them simple to read and absorb” (p. 185). Finally, I selected four classrooms including eight SA participants to provide exemplars that illustrate the answers to the research questions using impressionist narratives.

4.4.1 Organizing and preparing the data

Ethnography research involves high quantities of data making it essential to maintain a clear system of organization (Tracy, 2013). I kept the audio and transcriptions files in separate folders by participant type using a labeling system indicating a combination of name, type, semester, year, date, and faculty. Once the audio files were organized, I used NCH Express Scribe Transcription software to transcribe the data. The transcription process was key in searing my participants’ stories into my memory due to the active, engaged nature of transcribing.

From July 2018 through March 2019, I performed the first transcription in batches based on participant type to detect themes and discrepancies within the group. I observed differences across the faculties in terms of teaching methodology, degree structure, and general atmosphere. Therefore, during the second listening of the interviews, I decided to group them by faculty, degree studied and course year so that I could compare data that referred to the same or a similar social scene (e.g., SA students taking anthropology classes, SP anthropology professors, SP anthropology students). This time, I edited the transcriptions, adding in Chat Conventions (found in Annex III) to produce the final data document for analysis. Additionally, I took analytical notes based on the emerging patterns: U.S. university and Spanish university description and teaching methods, culture shocks, barriers and facilitators to integration, adaptation strategies, communication with student peers and professors, and learning from direct enrollment experience. I compiled with these notes by faculty with descriptions about the nuances of each faculty and/or degree which provided the context of the social scene.

Both rounds of transcription took approximately three minutes for each minute of audio. The interviews had a total of 4770 minutes of audiotape from which I can estimate the entire process took approximately 26,820 minutes or 447 hours. I decided to perform the transcriptions myself because even

though it is time-consuming, it is not time-wasting since it allows for a closer examination of the data (Tracy, 2013). Especially considering the time-lapse since I had left the field, it permitted me to refamiliarize myself with the data and gain new perspectives for analysis. This process took through October 2019 to complete.

4.4.2 Data management and coding

I used Atlas Ti qualitative data and research analysis software to assist in the analysis of the high volumes of data obtained. Software programs help to identifying patterns by aiding in the organization and categorization of the data. Furthermore, I could organize the codes in hierarchal trees to understand how they fit together and relate to each other (Fetterman, 2010). Atlas Ti allowed me to merge overlapping codes and split codes which served to make semantic relationships. I also exported segments related to a certain code or group of codes, allowing for a closer reading and analysis of the data. Additionally, I kept analytic memos where I stored the codebook, ideas, research questions and a diary related to the analysis process and status. Finally, I performed multiple readings of the full transcriptions and segments by code since a proper analysis is underpinned by a deep knowledge of one's data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

During the first reading, I used index coding through which I grouped data by what people in the field are saying or doing (Brewer, 2000). This method is used to organize a large amount of data into manageable units (Brewer, 2000). In my research, it resulted in ten broad themes that answered the research question(s) which can be found below.

Table 10*10 index codes*

Research Question	Code	Description
1	SP Uni	Perceptions about the local university campus, culture, organization, internationalization, and students
1	Shock	Cultural differences perceived between the U.S. and Spanish university and classroom
1, 2	US Uni	Perceptions about U.S. higher education, its teaching methodology and SA programs
1, 2	SP Methods	Perceptions about teaching methodology in the local university classroom
2	Adapt	Adaptation strategies used by SA students in the local university classroom
2	Facilitate	Factors that were perceived to facilitate SA students' adaptation to the classroom
2	Hinder	Factors that were perceived to hinder SA students' adaptation to the classroom
2, 3	Professors	Perceptions about relationships and/or communication between students and local professors
2, 3	Students	Perceptions about relationships and/or communication between local students or SA students with local students
3	Learning	Perceptions about what and how SA students are learning from the experience in the local classroom

During the second reading, I used open coding to develop codes and sub-codes that explain that data (Brewer, 2000). "Coding is the active process of identifying data as belonging to, or representing, some type of phenomenon. This phenomenon may be a concept, belief, action, theme, cultural practice, or relationship" (Tracy, 2013, p. 189). Some examples of the phenomenon in my investigation were: concept, of time; beliefs, about what is good teaching; actions, behavioral choices of SA students; theme, SA programs' influence on experience; cultural practices, rituals within the classes; and relationships, with SP students.

The codes were then used to identify segments that belong to the phenomenon. I used free coding to mark the segments related to the emerging patterns, "in vivo" codes to indicate common jargon and slang used by participants (e.g., un rollo) (Tracy, 2013), and auto coding to search for key terms (e.g., participa(te)). This process resulted in 324 first-level descriptive codes underlying the who, what and

where of the data (Tracy, 2013). There were 144 codes related to the first research questions, 88 to the second research question, 60 related to the third question and 32 codes that were discarded because they had an insignificant number of corresponding segments or did not answer the research questions.

Table 11

Examples of codes

RQ	Code	Description	Inclusion criteria	Example
1	SP Uni_Bad_Theory	Segments that reference lecture-based classes in which professors explain theories and concepts and the participant views it negatively	Included only if there is a negative judgement towards the lecture style teaching style. No neutral or positive opinions.	SA student: “otherwise you’re just sitting there and one of my classes is literally the professor reading off a paper and like we have to copy what she's saying. It’s the most fucking boring thing I’ve ever &*=laughs done in my life”
2	Facilitate_UAM_SP Students_Approach	Segments that reference local students approaching SA students which facilitated their adaptation to the classroom	Includes segments in which local students took the initiative to start the communication and it was viewed as helpful in the classroom	“as much as you can try to make friends even with a couple of the students here &-um because even I can't even say we really did it since like we essentially made friends at the beginning because they approached U.S. which was really lucky, but it’s been so helpful throughout the semester.”
3	L2_ How_ Socializing	Segments that reference learning Spanish through speaking to Spanish people	Can include socializing with the host family, Spanish students, other friends. Communication in an informal environment	“I’m still, feel like my Spanish is getting better (be)cause we're trying more and now that we've made friends with Spaniards I feel like it’s happening more”

4.4.3 Establishing themes and patterns

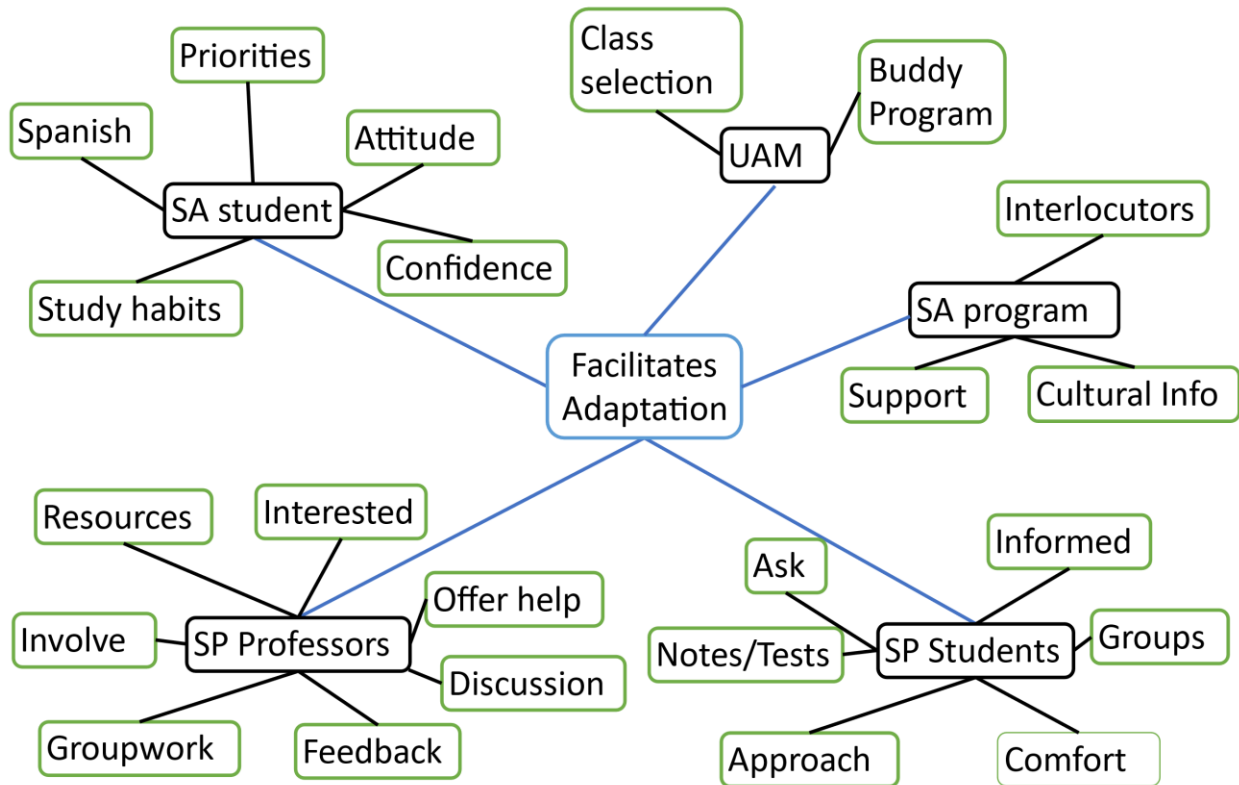
I established interpretative second-level categories representing themes by creating semantic relationships and mental maps to connect the codes. These categories are used to explain and develop a theory based on the identified patterns (Tracy, 2013). I checked for my perception bias by quantitatively

checking the number of segments related to each code. Codes with very few related segments were either merged with other related codes or filtered out. The SA students' experiences varied greatly; nevertheless, common themes and patterns emerged answering the research questions.

I choose to use mental maps to show similarities among the codes rather than taxonomies as there was no clear hierarchal connection in the codes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The categories are based on theoretical concepts which are commonly related to the framing literature (Tracy, 2013). For example, Kim's (2001) adaptation model emphasizes the importance of the environment and individual factors which are regulated by communication. Therefore, to understand how SA students adapted to the classroom, I drew a mental map for the facilitating aspects. Drawing from Kim's (2001) model, the codes (in green) have been grouped into five main categories (in black) including environmental factors (e.g., SA program and UAM), individual factors (e.g., SA student), and communication (e.g., local students and professors) as illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 7

Mental Map



Another technique I used to link categories together was semantic relationships. Cultural domains are categories of cultural meanings which are comprised of smaller categories. They consist of ‘cover terms’ which are linked to ‘included terms’ through a ‘semantic relationship’. Semantic relationships assist the researcher in discovering cultural domains through defining the included terms by placing them inside the cultural domain (Spradley, 1980). For example:

Figure 8

Semantic relationships

Included terms	expectations of the professor	talking about school	asking Spanish students	interacting with students
Semantic relationship	are a type of	is a topic of	is a way to	is a way to
Cover term	culture shock	conversation with students	adaptation	L2 learning

From this, I deduced that one way in which SA students adapt to the differences in expectations of the local professors is by speaking with local students about school. Furthermore, by interacting with students, they improved their L2 as well.

Using the semantic relationships and mental maps, I wrote out my ideas of the answers to the research question using examples from the extracted segments to provide illustrative data and explanations based on the perspectives of the participants. During this process, I sought out negative cases to scrutinize all of the data and avoid personal bias (Brewer, 2000) as well as to revise my arguments to incorporate the data better (Tracy, 2013). In my study, the negative cases served to illustrate that while patterns emerged based on environmental or individual factors, the SA students' agency was an intangible element that could change the outcome of their experience regardless.

The full list of first-level codes and second-level categories can be found in Annex IV. They are first ordered by code group and then by most to least grounded segments within the second-level category. It is important to note that multiple segments in the same category often correspond to the same participant. Therefore, the number of codes per category is indicative of the frequency of a perception but does not reflect exactly how many participants correspond to it. To prevent any perception bias, I double checked the source of the codes to understand how the code represents the data.

4.4.4 Selection of the narratives

The analysis resulted in a range of perceptions that illustrates the complexity of understanding cultures of learning and adaptation during the direct enrollment experience. Since it is not possible to generalize, I decided the best way to illustrate the social phenomenon would be by telling the creative, impressionist narratives reflecting multiple themes which arose. I choose stories that were exemplars, which are “examples that illustrate vividly and concretely the abstract properties of each coding category” (Baxter & Babbie, 2004, p. 370). I will tell four stories since I acknowledge that no one story can “provide the answer or the interpretation” (Tracy, 2013, p.253).

The stories reflect the salient themes and patterns resulting from the data analysis. The narratives were selected based on their ability to illustrate multiple patterns, the level of thick description (Geertz, 1973) provided by the students and professor, the amount of observation and the depth of the relationship I developed with the participants allowing for an emic perspective. Participants “are framed as unique characters rather than lumped together as generic types” (Tracy, 2013, pg. 254). Nevertheless, each creative narrative serves as an exemplar for the theme(s) that are grounded in multiple participants’ perspectives and experiences.

The results are underpinned by the theoretical frameworks of Kim’s (2001) integrative communication theory of cross-cultural adaptation and Bandura’s (1986) SCT. Since my research questions are organized around Kim’s (2001) stress-adaptation-growth model, I decided to structure the tales around it as well. Each narrative begins with an overview of the individual, the student’s cultural background and the environment, description of the course and classroom setting. Then, I describe the SA student’s perception of the local culture of learning, highlighting the cultural differences or *stress* of the student, while recognizing the similarities with their home university as well. I follow by illustrating the factors that influenced (facilitated or hindered) the students’ *adaptation* strategies. The tale concludes by demonstrating the student’s perceived *growth* or learning from the experience in the classroom. I

weaved in host and ethnic communication in the classroom as well as students' self-efficacy beliefs and agency throughout the tales as key influencers in their adaptation.

Furthermore, the stories are connected to prominent trends considered to affect learning according to previous SA literature such as program design, friendship networks, agency, motivation and self-efficacy, and heritage speakers. It also relates to trends in the literature related to cultures of learning and IaH such as the relationship between students, relationships with professors, the role of group work and expectations about learning. This allows me to place these SA students' experiences within the greater body of research allowing for a fruitful discussion of the results.

In the following chapter, the specific reasons regarding the selection of each story will be detailed as well as the extent to which their experiences represent the common themes and patterns experienced by all students and which components are unique to the individual.

Chapter 5: Results

In this chapter, I will present the findings of my ethnographic research in two forms. First, I will overview the general trends which emerged from the collective experiences of the participants to answer each research question. I will examine both the most common perceptions as well as the outliers to demonstrate the range of SA student adaptation strategies.

While I could have attempted to quantify all patterns observed, I limited myself to using quantity terminology because I do not believe exact numbers contribute to the results. First, ethnography's value is in its "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) and depth of analysis of multiple perspectives. Secondly, the numbers are unlikely to be accurate due to the numerous experiences of SA students in different courses. Thirdly, SA students reported aspects that most stuck out to them; however, they may have agreed with others' perceptions as well if directly asked. Finally, using general terminology allows me to explain the range of perceptions while still providing a sense of their occurrence.

Instead, I will indicate the frequency of the theme using following general terms, from most to least often: most/majority, half, several/some, few, and a couple. I make no distinction (e.g., SA students believe that...), when summarizing multiple patterns or referring to the general consensus (more than most/majority) without claiming absolute authority. The term 'important' refers to patterns relevant to a majority of students whereas "not frequent" refers to a shared perception of only a few SA students. I will also occasionally distinguish by personal or environmental characteristics (e.g., faculty, type of U.S university, L2 level, etc.) when relevant.

In the second half of this chapter, I will illustrate these patterns through four stories of eight students, which allows me to delve into the intricacies of the interplay of variables involved in shaping SA students' adaptation process. All of translations from Spanish to English are my own. I have placed the original Spanish text in the footnotes. There may be grammatical errors in the quotations from participants both in Spanish and English due to the vernacular of spoken language.

5.1 Descriptive results

5.1.1 Culture of learning in the Spanish university

Cultures of learning are based on implicit knowledge about teaching and learning which are socially constructed (Jin & Cortazzi, 2013). The following patterns emerged from the data surrounding how SA students perceive the culture of learning at the UAM.

Table 13

Emerging patterns

	RQ1: How do SA students in a direct enrollment context perceive the culture of learning in the Spanish classroom?				
	Teaching methodology	Academic norms	Behavioral norms	Relationships with professors	Relationships with students
Most frequent	Lecture/PPT	Syllabus	“Being late”	Helpful	Cooperative
Cultural stress	Magistral	Assignments Grades	Talking during class	Directness	
Relevant	<i>Prácticas</i>	Degree structure	Laid-back	SA student initiate	
		Independence		Informal	

My findings showed that most SA students found the teaching methodology of professors to be more or less similar to the U.S. and cultural differences, stressful or not, were more often associated with the unspoken expectations regarding academics, classroom behaviors, and communication with professors and/or students. While the teaching methodology was visible, classroom expectations were not always communicated in an explicit, verbal manner often leading students to find out by doing something the “wrong” way. In the following, I will briefly detail the general perceptions that SA held about the Spanish classroom.

5.1.1.1 Teaching methodology

The results of my research showed that SA students perceived three types of teaching methodologies in the Spanish classroom: lecture with a PowerPoint, the most common; a monologued

magistral lecture, the most stressful; and *prácticas*, a positive difference. Most SA students' classes were broken into a two-hour class of theory and a one-hour *prácticas class* per week; however, only some SA students perceived a methodological difference between the two types of classes. Their view of the teaching methodology and subsequent reaction to it (e.g., whether it seemed normal or stressful) depended on the specific professor, their previous HE academic experiences, and the strength of their beliefs surrounding the role of discussion in learning.

Lecture with a PowerPoint

(1) SAS_1: *I'd say they're [the classes] again **pretty similar to the U.S.** [medium size university] in that they are mostly **following a PowerPoint**. They know what they want to say and then they **leave time for questions and discussion**. It's not just I'm lecturing the whole time which is really nice.*

Most SA students felt the lectures to be comparable to HEIs in the U.S. Of the classes I observed, over half of the professors used a PowerPoint presentation to guide their lessons. Approximately half of Spanish students concurred that the average class was a PowerPoint lecture which included questions, discussion and debate. A majority of professors confirmed they use a lecture style but leave space for participation and answering questions.

Most SA students felt comfortable with the PowerPoint lectures because they structured the information, found the professors knowledgeable and engaging, allowed for questions and mixed in information from the real world to keep it practical. For non-native speakers it was easier to take a passive role in the classroom, listening and following a PowerPoint even if they were more accustomed to discussion classes as long as the class was interactive or interesting enough not to bore them. The SA students' desire to actively participate in these classes depended more on personality (e.g., desire to participate, confidence in subject knowledge and Spanish ability) than their objective language skills.

Magistral Classes

(2) SAS_2: *One of my classes is literally the professor **reading off a paper** and like we have to copy what she's saying. It's the most fucking **boring thing I've ever done in my life** and I hate that part ... just very magistral like **'I'm the professor. You're the student. I'm going to talk for two hours and you are going to listen.'**⁸ ...If you don't want to be here then I don't care, but I'm just gonna talk anyway.*

Only a few SA students described the teaching methodology as a professor-centered monologue which allowed little room for discussion or questions. Some attributed this to the chairs being blotted to the floor facing the professor making it impossible to form a circle that would facilitate discussion. The two SA students who were most critical about the *magistral* classes were heritage speakers with a strong preference for small discussion-based classes. It is possible that other SA students were not critical of the *magistral* classes because their Spanish level was lower, so they were concerned with comprehension or they were worried about critiquing their professor knowing I was in contact with them.

Interestingly, about half of the Spanish students were critical of professors' teaching methodology and were not shy about expressing their dissatisfaction with the *magistral* classes. The prevalence of non-interactive lecture classes and final exams gave Spanish students the impression that professors expected them to copy the lecture notes, memorize them and repeat them on an exam such as in high school.

(3) LS_1: In my case I have many complaints because it seems to me that the **dynamics of high school continue a bit**. It continues as a very **one-sided education**, very one-sided discourse, it has to be the teacher dictating the class **and it's horrible**.⁹

⁸ Original text: "SAS_2: Yo soy el profesor. Tú eres el estudiante. Yo voy a hablar por dos horas y tú me vas a escuchar."

⁹ Original text: "LS_1: En mi caso tengo muchas quejas, porque me parece que se continua un poco con las dinámicas de instituto. Se continua como una educación muy unilateral, unos discursos muy unilaterales, tiene que estar el profesor dictando clase y es horrible."

Many Spanish students felt that their lack of involvement caused them to disconnect, talk to friends, surf the internet, and in some cases, skip class entirely and rely on friends' notes.

Some SA students sometimes picked up on this dynamic; however, most were either more concerned with understanding the material and expectations for the assignments or viewed it as a cultural experience. A couple even found the lectures without PowerPoints more engaging due to the passion of some teachers, "(4) SAS_3: I did like that **he's very passionate**. He could talk forever about the subject, which is evident, but **I do like that** because it's **not like he's standing there reading** the PowerPoint." Spanish students also made exceptions for good lecturers. "(5) LS_2: I like the teacher. I like it because **she explains very well** and you can see the emphasis she places on many things because she **puts a lot into it...**It shows that it is **something that she lives and transmits.**"¹⁰ Professors who were perceived to explain their topic very clearly, engage the students, and care about students' comprehension were still viewed positively by the students despite the lecture style.

A couple professors viewed the magistral class in a positive light, citing its value for transmitting theoretical knowledge. Some admitted relying on it more than they would like due to large classes, difficulties getting students to participate and the lack of teaching assistants. A few Spanish students took some responsibility for the professors' struggles to make the class more dynamic. They reported not reading the lectures before class, showing up late or not at all for class, or not being accustomed to critical thinking due to previous education experience based on repeating information.

Even though SA students remarked preferring discussion classes in the U.S., it generally did not lead to a negative opinion of the UAM classes. Those SA students who were critical of the *magistral* class shared the same concerns as Spanish students and professors who both expressed desires for more

¹⁰ Original text: "LS_2: La profesora me gusta. Me gusta porque explica muy bien y se ve el énfasis que hace en muchas cosas porque pone mucho pie y a veces se le nota hasta en los gestos y en plan, eso me gusta porque se nota lo vive en plan, se nota que es algo que lo vive y lo transmite."

student-centered learning while recognizing the restraints of the Spanish HE system's resources and engrained cultural/historical aspects.

Prácticas classes

(6) SAS_4: *Here it's a lot of you know **questions!** A lot of **group work** between the students so I feel like it's more of an **interacting type** of teaching style. And like I said most of my classes involved some kinda of **discussion** whether it is of homework or a **presentation**, so I think it's very, [they] make sure people are very **involved**.*

SA students viewed the *prácticas* classes as a positive difference between their education in the U.S. and the classes at the UAM. They were familiar with some methodologies such as debates, group work or discussion; however, they also reported new approaches such as role plays, students teaching the class, project-based learning, and even playing sports. SA students felt the *prácticas* classes made it easier to stay engaged, helped students remember the material and provided different perspectives on the topic. Additionally, professors felt that the activities helped students see the practicality of the theories, be more creative, and use critical thinking.

Conclusion

My findings show that it is too simplistic to generalize Spanish higher education as only passive professor-centered learning, which is what many SA students were warned about by SA advisors or peers upon arrival. The results point to a system in transition represented by great diversity in teaching methodologies along a spectrum from *prácticas* to *magistral* classes. Furthermore, the stereotype of U.S. higher education as discussion-based was accurate for SA students taking small liberal arts classes but not for the majority who reported large lecture hall classes as well. Finally, most SA students felt the UAM professors cared about their learning and used interactive lectures as their teaching methodology, which was more similar rather than different to the U.S.

5.1.1.2 Academic norms

(7) LUC: *The problem is they treat us like seniors I think or treat us like the grade we are in coming here. But **we don't know how the Spanish system works at all and so we come, so I came into all these classes with seniors **not having any expectations or idea.*****

Degree structure

SA students' first surprise was that the university was divided into faculties and that degrees followed a rigid course structure instead of a flexible system of majors and minors. My research showed that although students selected courses within their majors, several found themselves lacking previous knowledge in comparison to Spanish students. For example, none of the students taking science courses, even those who found tutors, passed their courses largely due to this gap. As one student explained, "(8) SAS_5: [the level] is not necessarily higher, simply these subjects are not given there [the U.S.] or you do not take them in a certain order and that is why I suddenly felt a little lost"¹¹ SA on-site advisors maintained lists of recommendable classes from past SA students to overcome the cultural gap; however, exchange students' reported their advisors lacked knowledge about the courses which often led to poor course selection.

The syllabus

The most common difficulty for SA students in terms of academic expectations was understanding the syllabus. SA students described syllabuses in the U.S. to be rigorous, detailed and to outline day by day each assignment and its requirements whereas the UAM syllabuses seemed more like an open guide. My analysis of the UAM syllabuses revealed a common structure containing course details, objectives based on competencies, general and specific contents, an extensive bibliography, types of classes, the workload in terms of hours, general evaluation (e.g., exam x%, continuous evaluation x%), and a course

¹¹ Original text: "SAS_5: [el nivel] no necesariamente más alto simplemente que estas asignaturas no se dan allá o no las llevas con un cierto orden y por eso me siento de repente un poquito perdida"

calendar. However, I could not be sure how closely the professors followed the syllabus, which may have led to the SA students' confusions. Professors may briefly explain the syllabus the first day, but SA students remained unsure about which readings were obligatory or optional and when they were due.

(9) SAS_6: I went to the professor and was like, "**which chapter are we are on? What can I read?**" She was like "there's a bibliography, there are six books and you pick it up and it should be there" **and I was like "what!? What page? What are you talking about?"**

As this SA student's confusion shows, many were accustomed to a textbook rather than a bibliography list and therefore unsure how to follow the syllabus. Spanish students generally used the syllabus for important dates but did not expect daily assignments to be indicated for each class.

Independence

In the U.S., students were accustomed to being more dependent on the professor to explicitly lay out the assignments and expectations whereas Spanish students felt they were responsible for decisioning when and if they complete their work. This was particularly difficult for students coming from small liberal arts schools in which the student/teacher ratio is small.

(10) SAS_7: I would say the **biggest difference that I notice is just the independence** when it comes to outside of class work because in the U.S. its literally like the **professor is herding a flock of sheep** like "tomorrow you're all gonna hand this in and if you don't have it, **I'm gonna chase you down.**" It's like **elementary school** in a way um but here it's more like "**read the lectures if you want**, don't read the if you don't want, you might fail the final exam **whatever.**"

However, a few SA students mentioned that making expectations and deadlines clear did not constitute handholding. "(11) SAS_8: It's also like at the **very least tell us when things are due.** (pleading) I am not expecting you to like you know help you every step of the way but **at least tell me a date.**" Either way, the experience was universally viewed as more independent in which the professor provided the resources, but it was up to the student to complete the work.

Assignments

Furthermore, SA students perceived instructions for assignments, presentations and exams to be vague rather than specific leaving them with doubts about what to study. One student explained, “(12) SAS_8: Don't get me wrong, it's **not like everything is a mystery** but I don't know, some things I **wish were a little clearer.**” Many were disorientated due to the lack of rubrics, a cultural tool that was not present in Spanish classes. Most local students agreed that professors did not explicitly indicate the contents of exams; however, they felt for the most part it was implied or could be deducted based on the focus the professor gave the class. “(13) LS_3: I think that is something that **you gradually sense**, ¿no? What the teacher wants from you, you feel it out little by little from some things he says. **Maybe he tells you explicitly, but he doesn't always have to.**”¹² Explanations were provided throughout the semester, closer to the assignments' deadlines.

Spanish students recommended the best way to study was by taking good notes, reviewing everything, talking to students from the past year, speaking to the professor, and if possible, getting examples of last year's exams. Professors indicated that the baseline requirements to pass are to attend class, read the literature, take good notes and study. They emphasized the importance of the ability to connect theory to practice/real life and critical thinking to receive a good mark. Most SA students reported being unsure of these expectations for assignments.

Grades

For SA students, the uncertainty surrounding expectations for the assignment was frequently connected to their desire for good grades. Students who were not taking classes pass/fail and/or accustomed to being high achievers expressed more stress regarding grades. Furthermore, they found receiving a maximum grade was not normal in Spain as one student explains,

¹² Original text: “LS_3: Creo que eso es algo que vas intuyendo ¿no?. Lo que el profesor quiere de ti, lo vas sintiendo poco a poco por algunas cosas que dice. A lo mejor te lo puede decir explícitamente pero no siempre tiene porque hacerlo.”

(14) SAS_9: We got a seven point five and they [Spanish students] are like a **seven point five is really good** and I'm like 'that's a C, like that's a seventy-five, **like alright you guys say it's good**' like (laughs).

Furthermore, SA students were stressed about having few opportunities for grades with heavily weighed final exams or assignments. They were less concerned about having fewer assignments when they were written assignments perhaps because exams were perceived as more unpredictable.

Conclusion

Upon arrival, SA students were stressed by what they perceived as a vague syllabus that did not indicate daily readings and had few assignments. Moreover, they quickly learned getting a good grade was more difficult in Spain. Professors reported that they expected students to do the assigned readings, take notes, and apply a critical view to the information learned. As one student told me after her exams, "(15) SAS_2: Like I was **shocked at how easy** they were... I'm not particularly like an amazing! student... They were **very just general questions based off of stuff we had obviously learned.**" The director of her program mentioned that she scares the students a bit so that they keep up in class despite the lack of homework and generally, SA students do well in the end. In practice, the academic expectations are likely more similar than perceived by SA students but are just not presented using the same cultural artifact, the syllabus.

5.1.1.3 Behavioral norms

My findings showed SA students identified three important differences regarding behavioral norms: class starting time, talking during class and relaxed nature of students. Based on their experiences in the U.S., SA students expected classes to start exactly at the time that appears on their schedule only to find that at the UAM classes generally began ten to fifteen minutes "late" and Spanish students would sometimes filter in throughout the entire class. SA students perceived this as part of the more relaxed culture and generally appreciated the flexibility. Spanish participants explained the reason for beginning

“late” was to allow time between classes for students to arrive which was not built into the schedule as in the U.S. Additionally, professors were understanding that the train does not always run on time, so tardiness may not be the students’ fault.

Overall, SA students felt that the environment of the UAM was more laid-back than in the U.S. Several were shocked by the fact local students spent leisure time smoking cigarettes or drinking a beer in the cafeterias. The relaxed nature of the local students was more noticeable to type-A personalities¹³ or students who came from universities with a “stress culture”. SA students perceived Spanish students to be less rushed and worried about their assignments which was difficult for a few students during group projects. Lastly, SA students found local professors to be more relaxed with deadlines, tardiness, etc.

Most SA students viewed local students talking during class negatively. I observed it to some degree in most classes. They viewed it as both a lack of respect but also a distraction which made it more difficult to understand the professor. “(16) SAS_10: it really bothers me actually cause I’m like **‘guys the professors trying to teach us. Please just stop for a minute.’** So that different in the Autónoma. **It bothers me to be honest.**” SA students perceived that the professors did not mind and would continue teaching for whoever was listening; however, as one professor noted “(17) PROF_1: it bothers me because **there are many students and it gets lost**, I mean the rum rum, **the rum rum** of the back of the class is bothersome **because it distracts you.**”¹⁴ Another professor even commented to me during class that they are too old for these childish behaviors.

Spanish students admitted to talking but generally did not feel it was obstructive to the class. They felt that a little whispering or a couple of comments to a friend was within reason. One group of Spanish students explained there are many reasons for talking:

¹³ SA students who either referred to themselves as type A or placed a high value on efficacy, getting things done quickly and high achievement.

¹⁴ Original text: “PROF_1: Me molesta porque son muchos y se pierde, o sea el rum rum, el rum rum del fondo de clase es molesta porque te distrae.”

“(18) LS_4: It depends on the **teacher**, if it is one who commands authority

LS_5: and it depends on the **subject of the class**. That some may be more **boring or ignored**.

LS_6: some classes are more **entertaining** or also some are **more important** or difficult and people are more attentive

LS_5: or some students who **come from another year** and already know what is being said and start talking or not be so attentive

LS_6: or people who next year are **going to change degrees** well, they come to class and they are not really interested in what we are doing then they start talking.”¹⁵

Most Spanish students accepted talking during class as normal whereas the SA students and professors viewed it as rude and impacted students’ ability to pay attention and learn. Only a few SA students who made friends in class consequently began talking during class as well.

5.1.1.4 Relationships with professors

My results show that the majority of SA students felt professors were willing to help them and recognized that it was their responsibility to reach out to the professors. In a few instances, SA students reported professors to provide direct negative feedback in class. These events were often turning points in which the student decided to withdraw interaction with the professor and/or classroom. Finally, SA students perceived professors as maintaining more informal relationships with students and relying on verbal rather than written communication to explain assignments and changes in the schedule.

Helpful / Kind

The majority of the SA students felt that their UAM professors were helpful especially if they took the initiative. SA students recognized that it was their responsibility to reach out to the professor for help

¹⁵ Original text: “LS_4 depende del profesor, si es uno que tenga autoridad LS_5 y depende de la materia de, la clase. Que algunos pueden ser más aburridos o pasan. LS_6: algunos son más entretenidas o también algunas son más importantes o difíciles y la gente está más atenta LS_5 o alguno que vienen de otro año y ya sabe lo que se está dando y se pone a hablar o no esta tan atento LS_6: o gente el año que viene que se va a cambiar de carera pues, vienen a clase y en verdad no le interesa del todo lo que estamos haciendo entonces pues se pone a hablar.”

either due to a SA coordinators' advice or because the professor told them to ask for help if needed. One student ran up to me on the quad to emphasize, "(19) SAS_10: I'd like to add to my record **how accepting my professor was to help me** and how he made me feel welcome." Spanish students also confirmed that some professors reached out to check in on exchange students but that generally professors would help any student who sought it. The findings showed that SA students generally viewed the professor as nice/kind, attentive and understanding towards them.

Informalities

Most SA students perceived the relationship between Spanish students and professors as informal while still respectful. They reported the use of the informal you "tú" for addressing professors. SA students also mentioned that professors were open to discussion for deciding deadlines. As one student explains:

(20) SAS_11: I think it's funny that the **professor asks "would you rather** have a fifteen-minute break or just end class fifteen minutes early" ...I think professors in the states like try to command this like kinda authority that **people don't conceive of in the same way**.

Professors were also seen as accessible in the cafeterias for a coffee as one professor explains:

(21) PROF_2: here in Spain, it's that here in philosophy **we are very informal**. The treatment is very, **let's say there is not much distance**. It's easy to see in the hallway, **breaks with the teacher** or they comment things to you.¹⁶

With the exception of some professors that lectured and left quickly, Spanish students also felt professors were accessible to help and flexible.

Informalities became more challenging when important information was communicated through informal channels such as WhatsApp or verbally at the end of class. Especially for non-native speakers, it was difficult to keep up with scheduling or assignment changes made through student-professor

¹⁶ Original text: "PROF_2: Aquí en España, es que aquí en filosofía somos muy informales. El trato es muy, digamos no hay mucha distancia. Es fácil ver en un corredor, descanso con el profesor o que te comenten cosas."

discussions. Furthermore, each class had a WhatsApp group through which professors would sometimes communicate scheduling changes whereas in the U.S., this information would have likely been communicated via a formal online platform. SA students who were not in the WhatsApp group reported showing up to canceled classes.

Direct negative feedback

The majority of the negative experiences that SA students had with local professors were due to the direct way of communicating, especially when occurring in front of the class. In fact, my results showed that all participant groups felt Spanish people are more direct as a SA advisor explained:

(22) SAPS_1: But I think that the most important **cultural shock is the paralinguistic**, that is, how we Spaniards communicate beyond the language, as are the messages here. The **Spanish are much more direct**. We **don't have much moral block** when it comes to saying things. So, for a culture like the North American that can be very shocking. **Sometimes very, very incompressible** for some students.¹⁷

A few key incidents of cultural miscommunications were related to the Spanish language in which professors' reportedly told heritage students that they did not know Spanish and/or English.

While this directness could be interpreted as miscommunication across cultures, some Spanish students also indicated their professors were not open to their ideas and believed students do not participate in class because they fear the professor shutting them down. "(23) LS_7: The professor that I have this year, for example if **you are wrong, she makes a big deal of it in class**"¹⁸ It is possible that

¹⁷ Original text: "SAPS_1: Pero yo creo que el choque cultural más importante es la paralingüístico, es decir cómo nos comunicamos los españoles más allá de la lengua, como son los mensajes aquí. Los españoles son mucho más directos. No tenemos mucho bloqueo moral a la hora de decir las cosas. Entonces para una cultural como la Norteamérica eso puede llegar a ser muy violento. A veces muy muy incompresible para algunos estudiantes."

¹⁸ Original text: "LS_7: La profesora que tengo este año por ejemplo si te equivocas, monta un espectáculo en clase."

beyond paralinguistic differences, the traditional distance between professor and student may still impact interactions in the classroom.

5.1.1.5 Relationships between students

SA students considered that Spanish students had good relationships based on cooperation and viewed it as a positive cultural difference compared to the competitive nature of U.S. HE,

(24) SAS_11: I like **interconnection between the students here** though. Like everyone depends on each other... **shares their notes** with each other and like shares the textbook with each other and I feel like **in the U.S. at least in the business school, it's so competitive**. So so, competitive. Like everyone like is like did you find your internship yet for the next summer? Do you know what you're doing with your life? What's your career path for the next five years?... **it's more collaborative here** which I really like.

The collaborative academic culture was perceived as part of the laid-back Spanish attitude and social aspect within the classroom. The majority of Spanish students verified that the relationship between students was good and that each class had a WhatsApp group to discuss class matters and/or send jokes, memes, etc. Each smaller group of friends also had another WhatsApp group where they were more likely to share notes. Local students relied on each other academically to find out when assignments were due, the expectations of the professor, and to study for exams. Spanish students had similar schedules allowing for the same free time to socialize in the cafeteria or outside on the quads. SA students viewed the collaborative nature positively because even if they did not participate directly in all their activities, it often still benefitted them academically.

5.1.2 Academic and social cross-cultural adaptation to the Spanish classroom

My investigation's results demonstrate that SA students choose multiple adaptation strategies depending on the moment in the semester, their experiences in the classroom (especially ones involving

local professors and students), and their self-efficacy beliefs. In the following, I will elaborate on the five adaptation strategies that emerged from the data and the environmental and individual factors that SA students viewed positively and negatively influenced their adaptation process.

5.1.2.1 Adaptation strategies

The main five adaptation strategies that emerged from the analysis are found in the table below.

Table 14

Adaptation strategies

RQ2: How do SA students in a direct enrollment context report they adapt to the academic and social culture of the Spanish university classroom?		
	Description	Illustration/Quote
Withdrawal	SA students who purposefully choose not to focus their efforts on engaging in the class	“(25) KAT: So, we sit in the back... I mean it’s just rude to sit in the front and just be staring and not actually be paying attention plus he’ll probably call on you and you don't want that either ”
Separation	SA students who sit with other exchange students (SA or multinational)	“(26) SAS_13: um I guess like from my own fault like we’ll kind of isolate ourselves... cause we’re just all like Americans so we kind of just huddle around (laughs) and just like not really integrated in the class”
Social integration	SA students who communicate with local students to understand academic expectations and socialize	(27) SAS_6: cause apparently there is like an underground network of things going on MKM: how did you find out about this underground? SAS_6: my friend (laughs). She was like ‘I have all the readings he's gonna talk about in class.’ I was like ‘bless your soul this is great, I can know like read up on and know what the hell is going on. ”
Academic integration	SA students who communicate with local professors to understand academic expectations	(28) VAL: “ I learned that those meetings [with the professor] are really helpful so before I would turn anything in , I would request a meeting with the professor and say “ hey am I going in the right track? ”
Relaxing expectations	SA students who modify their expectations and set new more realistic goals for themselves.	(29) SAS_14: “worst case scenario, I fail a class. That’s not really the end of the world. I can retake a class at home and I have space in my schedule and I won't do honors, but do I really need honors? ”

The ‘withdrawal’ strategy refers to SA students who choose not to engage beyond the bare minimum with their courses and decided to focus on extra-curricular aspects of the SA experience. They withdrew by not participating during class or seeking help outside of class which limited their contact with

local professors and students. The principal reasons for choosing to withdraw were either the professor rejected their idea when they tried participating or they held strong a negative opinion of the magistral teaching methodology. Only one student decided to give up because he decided the course was too difficult to pass. There were also a couple of instances of professors “intimidating” students with a direct and arguably insensitive comments.

I define the ‘separation’ strategy as the choice of SA students to either sit alone, with their SA peers, or multinational peers. Fewer than half the participants reported choosing to sit with other U.S. students in class. Only one of these pairs had any significant communication with local students. Some SA students relied on multinational (e.g., Erasmus) students and others sat alone. Many students combined this strategy with the academic integration or in a few select cases social integration during group projects (e.g., a group of two SA students and two Spanish students). However, their primary socialization in and outside of class was not with local students. Students who choose to separate were generally aware it limited their interactions and potential learning from local students.

Academic integration refers to SA students who adapted by actively engaging with the professor to help them do well academically. This included participating in class or meeting with professors for extra help. Three main facilitators lead SA students to seek academic integration: professors’ interactive teaching methodology that included SA students in the discussion, professors offering support to SA students, or SA students asking for help. A little over half of the SA students used academic integration as a strategy to do well in the class. The majority of SA students viewed this as a means to achieving a good grade rather than a path to cultural learning.

The fourth approach was ‘social integration’ which refers to frequent contact with local peers inside and outside of the classroom. The approach included groupwork and studying together but also informal activities such as going to the cafeteria during breaks or attending social events on and/or off campus. The three main ways interactions began were: a group project, SA student initiating conversation

with local students or vice versa. While most SA students spoke briefly at some point to local students at least on a superficial level, only some students reported repeated interactions resulting in social integration in the classroom. Social integration was considered beneficial for both cultural and language learning as well as succeeding academically.

The last strategy was 'relaxing expectations', an approach that manifested differently depending on the SA student. SA students entered the new classroom environment with certain expectations of themselves as students based on previous experiences in the U.S., especially in terms of grades. By accepting themselves as international students in a different system, they were able to create more realistic goals. Some changes included lowering standards for grades, realizing Spanish 'fluency' was not required to pass, focusing on cultural and/or language learning and/or just trying to do their best. A little less than half of SA students used this strategy to lower their stress in the classroom.

Those who chose 'withdrawal' or 'separation' communicated less with local professors and students than those using 'academic integration' or 'social integration' in the classroom setting. Less communication results in less knowledge about the classroom norms which made adaptation more difficult. It is also important to mention that these strategies were not static but changing as individual and environmental aspects influenced their experiences in the classroom. Students used self-regulation and agency to choose different strategies at different points of time depending on the class. In the following, I will outline the results of the key factors influencing SA students' decision-making processes.

5.1.2.2 Facilitators and hindrances

My investigation found five categories of patterns that were most significant in influencing SA students' adaptation: the UAM, SA program, local students, local professors, and SA students. I consider the first four to be environmental factors; however, the most crucial element was the SA students themselves. My results showed that motivation, self-efficacy beliefs and agency regulated individuals' characteristics and proved better in determining how students decided to adapt to the given classroom.

Table 15

Facilitators and hindrances

RQ2.1: Which factors do SA students perceive facilitate and hinder their adaptation to the Spanish classroom?					
	Individual	Environmental			
	<i>SA Students</i>	<i>The UAM</i>	<i>SA Program</i>	<i>Local Students</i>	<i>Local Professors</i>
Facilitate	Priorities High self-efficacy Spanish Take initiative Relaxed attitude Self-discipline	Buddy program	Interlocutor Support Cultural knowledge	<u>Adaptation</u> Practicalities Academics Comfort <u>Interaction</u> SA Reach Out SP Approach Group work	<u>Adaptation</u> Resources Interested Answering questions Feedback <u>Interaction</u> Involvement Discussion Group projects
Hinder	Priorities Low self-efficacy Spanish Low confidence / Anxiety Assume negative outcome Academic background	ESN (International students) Poor class selection	Peer cohort Short term Headquarters	<u>Adaptation</u> “Lazy” group member <u>Interaction</u> Short time Pre-formed groups	<u>Adaptation</u> Directness <u>Interaction</u> Magistral Not present

The UAM

The UAM was the least important factor in the students' adaptation process because the ORIs were regarded as purely administrative entities. Most students enrolled smoothly especially those from SA programs; although, the few who had difficulties found it very frustrating. SA students reported that the UAM provided two integration programs: the buddy program and the ESN. The buddy program provided SA students with the contact information of a local student to help them integrate; however, not many took advantage of the program and/or had difficulties meeting with their buddy. The few who established a relationship found their partner to be the key facilitator in learning the practicalities of the UAM, making local friends and even helping them study.

The ORIs essentially use the ESN to organize the welcome week for international student orientation and integration. SA students from exchange programs viewed the ESN as a primary place to make friends with multinational, mainly Erasmus, students. These international friends fulfilled socializing needs and provided someone to sit with in class which provided emotional support; however, these friendships were not reported to have helped understanding classroom expectations. Furthermore, most SA students mentioned speaking in English rather than Spanish with these friends. Nevertheless, they also reported learning about other cultures through their multinational friendships.

Finally, improper class selection was viewed as an important barrier to adaptation primarily for exchange program students. SA students who attended classes above their level (e.g., primarily in the Science faculty) found it increased their stress. The main reason for the improper selection was a lack of understanding of their home university advisor about the UAM's degree structure and courses with some universities insisting students take 3rd or 4th year courses which did not match their previous knowledge. A few students in the popular Philosophy and the Arts faculty, could not enroll in their pre-approved courses and ended up in courses they were not properly prepared for.

SA Programs

One of the arguments for using SA programs rather than exchange programs is to have on-site personal to support SA students so that cultural differences do not hinder their experience. The results showed SA programs facilitated adaptation by acting as interlocutors between the SA student and UAM, providing cultural knowledge and emotional support. While SA staff and students valued these services, most ORI staff felt it sheltered students from challenges that are an integral part of learning during exchange. SA programs also produced important hindrances to adaptation: a short-term orientation, inherently encouraging peer cohort friendships and the long distance between their headquarters campus and the UAM. The key factors were recognized by all participant groups.

Even before SA students arrived, most SA programs had facilitated their students' course enrollment directing them towards courses that students had reviewed positively in the past. If an issue arose during the semester, SA programs staff reached out to professors to help solve the problem. SA staff also provided orientations including practice and cultural knowledge, mainly about Madrid/Spain, although a few students mentioned a short presentation about studying at the UAM as well. During the semester, SA students relied on their SA staff to help overcome any problems, concerns or even just to vent their frustrations. SA students viewed the role of the SA as a positive factor in helping them navigate being a student at the UAM.

However, SA students also perceived that the SA program promoted ingroup socialization with other U.S. students. They reported developing friendships during the first weeks of orientation and group trips. Many took UAM classes with SA program peers and acknowledge it lowered their need to interact with Spanish students. Often, only one of the two students would interact with the professor and the other would rely on their friend. The short-term nature of the SA program (4 months) also lessened their desire to try to establish local friendships. Additionally, by the time students understood the local classroom norms, the semester was almost over; leaving no time to adapt. Finally, there was a noticeable

difference between SA programs with their own headquarters in downtown Madrid versus those programs run on the UAM campus. Barring a couple exceptions, SA students with their program downtown reported having few opportunities to build relationships outside of class because they needed to go back to Madrid for their next activity.

Local professors

SA students highlighted four situations in which they would communicate with professors. On the first day of class, most SA students introduced themselves to professors as exchange students and/or to resolve an administrative problem. A few professors welcomed the international exchange students privately as well. Secondly, SA students communicated with professors during breaks or after class to ask clarifying questions about expectations or assignments, inform if they would be missing class, resolve subject-related doubts, or just to maintain a good relationship with the professor. Thirdly, some SA students interacted with their professors during class. Mainly the professor would facilitate the SA students' participation in the class although a couple of students enjoyed participating on their own accord. The professors asked for their perspectives as international students, help with English, referenced them for being from the U.S, or generic classroom questions. The last type of interaction was during office hours; however, few students took advantage of this opportunity.

SA students perceived interactions with their local professors as a primary source of information to facilitate their academic success and on occasion, their social integration as well. SA students reported that professors helped them academically by offering resources, showing interest and/or approaching SA students, answering questions, and providing feedback. Furthermore, professors facilitated social integration by involving them class, using discussion-based rather than *magistral* classes and assigning group projects even if not all ended positively. Lastly, some professors called on SA students to provide examples from their country which offered a platform for them to contribute to the classroom and for

local students to recognize their presence and value in the classroom. Positive experiences communicating with the professor increased SA students' comfort being in the classroom.

Most SA students felt that local professors supported them academically; however, not all professors were viewed as accessible. SA students felt discouraged from relying on professors in three situations: large lecture halls, when professors left quickly after class and/or courses with multiple professors. A few SA students reported avoiding future interactions with their professors after incidents following direct negative comments as well.

Local students

The SA students' interactions with Spanish students were generally limited due to Spanish students' preestablished groups of friends, a mutual perceived lack of interest and lifestyle differences; however, they certainly were not non-existent. Findings showed three situations in which students interacted: the classroom, on the campus (e.g., cafeteria, study rooms, and the quad) and off-campus. I have categorized the type of relationships into five categories based on the level of interaction and the extent to which it extended to informal spaces outside of the classroom.

Table 16

Types of relationships with local students

Type of relationship	Description
Introduction / Small talk	Students present themselves: where are you from? do you like Madrid?
Specific moments	SA students need clarification regarding assignments or ask for notes Group work during class
Classmates	Students sit with their group during class but do not meet outside of class
University "friends"	Students sat together in class and would study or get coffee/lunch together
Friendships	Students built deeper quality relationships which they socialized outside of school

The three main topics of conversation between SA students and local students were school-related, the U.S. and Spanish culture (e.g., things to do in Madrid) and personal life. The topic of conversations depended greatly on the level of the relationship. Most SA students only had short

interactions with classmates to solve academic questions either for a group project or regarding assignments. Some SA students would also discuss U.S. and Spanish culture, politics or recommendations for leisure time. Finally, only a few students developed friendships and reported expanding the conversation to their personal life. The final two types of conversation were more useful for learning about Spanish culture and resulted in deeper intercultural learning.

The frequency of contact and subsequent quality of the relationship corresponded positively to the SA student's learning and adaptation in the classroom. For starters, SA students believed that being part of the class WhatsApp group was beneficial to their adaptation. It allowed them access to class notes, to remain informed about changes (e.g., class cancellations, assignment deadlines, etc.), and a space to ask any questions. While many found WhatsApp useful for academic adaptation, a few reported using it to learn about Spanish culture or language. SA students who interacted with local students found their collaborative relationships beneficial to their academic success, reporting that locals were willing to share notes, past exams, and even to help them study for exams (e.g., tutoring).

SA students with deeper relationships reported higher levels of comfort and lower anxiety when asking questions regarding academics, Spanish culture and/or language. It was important for SA students' adaptation to have at least one local contact in class and was often a turning point in their classroom experience. SA students who sat with local students reported feeling more integrated than those who sat apart, either alone or with a SA peer. The majority of students who came to campus for only one class sat alone or with a friend, listened to the class, asked the professor if they had a question and then left campus. They implemented study techniques from the U.S. and, if anything, relied on the professor to clarify any doubts. These SA students did not adapt their behaviors and demonstrated less awareness about the Spanish university culture.

Only a few SA students reported negative experiences with Spanish students, either being excluded or receiving an insensitive comment about their nationality, which they attributed to the specific

student rather than Spanish students as a whole. Group projects were also a source of contention for a few students due to the perception that the local students were too relaxed, not pulling their weight or not considering their opinions. In these situations, SA students adapted by either doing the project for everyone, allowing the local students to take over or reaching out to the professor. This situation mostly resulted in a negative view of their group members, but only in one case did it lead to pessimistic view of the local students as a whole.

Facilitators and hindrances of interactions

Since my research demonstrated that in most cases interactions with local students were positively attributed to adaptation, I must consider what factors facilitated or hindered the development of relationships. As mentioned in the previous section, professors also can play a role in encouraging interactions by involving students in the class, using small groupwork and assigning mixed group projects. The majority of participants believed that the students (SA and local) were responsible for initiating interactions rather than UAM staff and professors or SA advisors.

The SA students' ability to initiate contact was shaped by individual motivations, self-efficacy beliefs and agency which I will detail in the next section. Almost half of the SA students reported that local students initiated the first contact, some attributing this to them being alone and looking lost. These students ended up sitting with the local students throughout the semester. A few SA students were "adopted" by a Spanish group of friends. All felt it was "luck" that the local person(s) reached out. The rest reported being approached by Spanish students who were open and/or nice.

The most common way that students developed relationships that I denoted above as classmates, university "friends" or friendship was due to extended group projects. Group projects were viewed as providing a way to meet and spend time with local students they would not have otherwise. Some professors even took the initiative to mix the groups which was viewed as positive for integration as one student explained:

(30) SAS_9: There has to be at least one international student in each group, so that like forced us to be in this group and like spread out. Cause if not, I'm sure like all the international kids would have just made one group.

Projects that ran the length of the semester encouraged a more constant contact, generally resulting in a separate WhatsApp group, a local contact SA students felt comfortable with and sometimes SA students sitting with their local group mates during class. Conversely, those who did not have group projects for their classes reported it as a reason there was less need to speak with local students.

The SA programs and ESN promote co-national and multi-national group bonding which proved an incredibly strong force preventing communication with locals. Furthermore, local students already formed bonds with their classmates during the first year and therefore, were not necessarily looking for new friendships. Both groups had their social groups pre-established hence lowering the incentive to meet new people. Nevertheless, the local groups were occasionally useful because meeting one local person could lead to an invitation to sit with or hang out with their whole group of friends.

Furthermore, since most SA students attended only one semester at the UAM, it lowered the outcome expectancy for such a relationship for both groups. The findings showed that the lack of inter-group interaction was not due to a negative preconception of the other but rather the assumption that the other would not be interested in developing a relationship. Most SA students who did not create friendships with local students attributed it to lifestyle differences and/or their competing priorities (e.g., SA students travelled on the weekend) instead of blaming the Spanish students. Overall, both groups felt that more interaction would be beneficial but that it should not and could not be forced.

SA students

My results showed that although some SA programs and classrooms (e.g., course subject, local professor and students) were more conducive to adaptation than others, the most important factor was how the SA students used their agency to facilitate or hinder their adaptation. The categories that

emerged as having the most impact on students' decision-making were priorities, self-efficacy beliefs about their Spanish level, ability to take initiative based on outcome assumptions and confidence level, academic background and study habits.

In the first interview, SA students reported common goals for the semester such as traveling, learning about Spanish culture, improving their Spanish, meeting people and passing their classes. The short period meant these goals became competing priorities. SA students consistently reported extensive traveling as a barrier to establishing deeper relationships with local people; however, they did not regret it because they felt it was a once in a life-time opportunity. Heritage and native speakers were less likely to prioritize learning the Spanish language and meeting Spanish people due to their high initial level and equal interest in learning about other cultures from international students, respectively. Those who purposefully aligned their actions with the goal of learning Spanish (e.g., actively looking up vocabulary, finding tandem partners, reviewing papers with native speakers, and following a language pledge/staying in Spanish) and meeting Spanish students (e.g., staying longer on campus, getting a buddy, accepting social invitations, engaging in mix group work, and initiating contact) were more likely to improve their host communication which had a positive impact on their adaptation.

A second factor that facilitated or hindered SA students' adaptation was their self-efficacy beliefs about their Spanish level. SA students with a native level felt comfortable communicating in Spanish and asking questions when needed. Heritage speakers' and non-native speakers' self-efficacy beliefs rather than their objective L2 level proved more accurate factor impacting their interactions. On the one hand, heritage speakers reported more comfort in the classroom than non-native speakers. On the other hand, some heritage speakers reported feelings of self-consciousness about their level and/or variation of Spanish as a reason for deciding not to interact with local people. Meanwhile, some non-native speakers assumed their role as language learners and sought out interactions with locals to improve. Therefore,

the SA student's objective Spanish level was not the key influencer of the decision to interact but rather their self-efficacy beliefs about their ability to communicate and motivation to improve their Spanish.

SA students who prioritized and had the confidence to start conversations by approaching strangers reported obtaining important academic information, establishing more social relationships and consequently speaking more Spanish. Those who did not feel comfortable taking the initiative reported it was due to shyness, anxiety, and low confidence about their Spanish. Whereas, facilitating factors included a more relaxed attitude, concern about doing well in class, and/or prioritizing local friendships. Their decisions were also regulated by forethought, meaning SA students initiated conversation when they believed the interaction would lead to a positive rather than negative outcome.

Finally, SA students only reported one facilitating and one hindering aspect to their academic adaptation, self-discipline and academic background respectively. SA students felt that due to the independent nature of the Spanish university it was important to be self-disciplined by keeping up with the readings, attending class, taking notes, and not procrastinating about studying. SA students also mentioned that courses in which they were missing prior knowledge were more difficult because they had to play catch up on the subject in addition to understanding classroom norms and expectations.

Those SA students who communicated with local students and professors gained insider knowledge about the academic and social culture of the UAM that facilitated their adaptation to the classroom. SA students who had high self-efficacy beliefs about engaging in communication with locals and used agency to prioritize such relationship were the most successful in integrating and adapting to the local classroom.

5.1.3 Learning and growth from the direct enrollment experience

SA students' adaptation strategies to UAM's academic and social culture varied greatly resulting in significant variation in how and what they reported learning from the direct enrollment experience. SA students who interacted with local students and/or spent more time on campus demonstrated richer

learnings. My findings focus on learning which SA students accredited specifically to the UAM classes; however, I recognize that other aspects of the SA experience likely influenced their learning such as the homestay, internships/volunteering, courses for international students (DiLe or within the U.S program) and other social situations (e.g., bars, attending church, traveling, etc.). The chart below organizes my findings on how and what SA students reported to be learning in the direct enrollment setting.

Table 17

Learning from direct enrollment

RQ3: How do SA students perceive the impact of their direct enrollment experience on their learning and growth abroad?					
		What			
		L2: Spanish	Academics	Intercultural / Global learning	Personal Growth
How	<i>Presence in UAM classes</i>	Listening Vocabulary	New subjects More in depth / theory	Spanish university system Spanish systems & values	Independence
	<i>Interactions with professors</i>		Academic expectations Subject knowledge		Comfortable
	<i>Interactions with students</i>	Speaking Colloquially	Academic support	Cultural knowledge of Spanish lifestyle The collective view of learning	Laid back / Relax

5.1.3.1 *Immersion experience in Spanish classroom*

(31) SAS_7: *Even though I'm not super integrated with the school, it's still very interesting for me to be in class with Spanish students and to hear their opinions on, any like political issues, for example regarding immigration and what people think and just even to be in this kinda environment and get to take classes with the local students is a different experience than I would have had if I just stuck to an American campus here.*

The findings showed that being immersed in Spanish HE life provided SA students with surface culture learning about the Spanish HE system and how deeper cultural values were reflected in the university. They reported encountering a higher level of Spanish language, listening to Spanish perspectives and experiencing another way of being a university student. In this section, I will focus on learning attributed to “immersion” referring to physically being in the local classroom and on campus.

SA students reported that the UAM classroom provided an input of authentic Spanish, from native speakers for native speakers, which was not modified for Spanish learners such as the case of U.S. program courses. The courses’ assignments (e.g., readings, presentations, papers, and studying for exams) required a higher level of Spanish academic language which obliged them to improve. SA students reported that the most important language gains were listening/understanding and increased vocabulary due to the time spent listening to contextualized high-level Spanish. Three types of vocabulary were reported: academic terminology and acronyms, Spanish from Spain and slang. Heritage and native speakers were more likely to pick up on higher level syntax while non-native speakers focused on understanding and increasing vocabulary.

Reading and writing were not frequently mentioned except for the few who read extensively in Spanish and/or had many written assignments, respectively. SA students also did not report improving their speaking through taking classes at the UAM because for the most part, they did not participate in class either by choice or because the lecture-style classes inherently did not leave much space for students’ contributions. Finally, direct enrollment may have obliged them to use the language more than if they were to take classes in English; however, not many students intentionally choose to improve their Spanish through the content and instead focused on getting by and passing.

Many stimuli offered surface culture learning about the Spanish HE system. SA students described cultural aspects such as the classroom layout, cafes, food/drink, public transport, students’ and

professors' behavior and interactions. I have previously described SA student learning about the Spanish university culture in section 5.1.1. and therefore, will not elaborate here again.

However, cultural learning did not always mean that students agreed with or accepted every aspect of how higher education was organized.

(32) SAS_15: I feel like **it's very rigid** and there's not much flexibility in your decision of classes...I don't think it's **necessarily fair to the kids here**, to have to know what you want to do when you come in and not have the opportunity to explore.

While most SA students would agree with the above statement, some SA students felt the degree structure was beneficial because it prepared students to be professionals in their degree upon graduation rather than being required to do a master (e.g., psychologists). In fact, other SA students reported valuing the academic content of the UAM course either because such a class was not offered at their home university or due to a perceived greater depth of knowledge of the professor.

In the UAM classes, students also gained knowledge about aspects of Spain such as its political system, economy, health care, education, feminist movements, youth unemployment, international business and Catalonia separatist movement among others. Most students respected for different viewpoints even if they disagreed; however, in at least one case it did not lead to intercultural learning. “

(33) ASH: It kinda like **blows my mind because its basic econ** and like it's like principles of economics that you can contest, **but you also can't contest them.**” Even if SA students did not feel very integrated at the UAM or fully accept new opinions, being in the classroom with people from other cultures provided them with new perspectives from both Spanish and international students.

My findings also showed that SA students attributed an increased feeling of independence due to the nature of the academic culture and because direct enrollment pushed them outside of their comfort zone. Since SA students could not rely on a syllabus to provide weekly assignments, students had to learn to manage their own time independently and not to procrastinate. As Meredith reflected, “(34) MER: It

definitely **taught me a lot about just taking initiative** in things and yeah I think that was kinda one of the big things.” By leaving their comfort zone and taking a more difficult academic path, SA students were forced to learn to be more independent.

My results also showed many SA students were not able to articulate their growth, perhaps due to the early timing of the second interview. It seemed many had not reflected on what they might have learned from the experience as one student showed, “(35) SAS_10: I was trying to think what I learned the most...**I don't know I learned so many things...** but I don't know, after a year **it's hard to say this** really stood out to me. **Everything stood out to me**”. Nevertheless, SA and ORI program staff noted that exchange students gain personal growth and independence from the experience.

5.1.3.2 Interactions with professors

*(36) SAS_17: The professor was **so accommodating and nice to us**. Like he wanted to make sure that **we felt comfortable** and we were doing well, that we felt that we were like enjoying ourselves in the class. He would **always check in with us** in the projects and make sure that we were understanding the assignment and making sure that we weren't falling behind **which was really helpful**.*

My research found that SA students perceived their interactions with professors facilitated their academic integration. The reciprocal relationship between learning and adaptation was evident. Unsurprisingly, communication with the professor was the most frequent pattern that emerged relating to how SA students learned the academic expectations of the class. Professors provided explanations for doubts about assignments, deadlines, and practicalities. A few provided extra resources or offered taking the exam in English. Since conversations with professors were generally brief to clarify doubts, students did not report intercultural or Spanish language learning directly from conversations.

Positive interactions with professors were key in helping SA students feel comfortable in the classroom. For example, one student forgot how to say a word and the professor helped her find the

Spanish word. "(37) SAS_6: He was helping me like **he was like very understanding**. He wasn't like trying to put me down or anything. So, I just felt like **very comfortable talking** in that class." Positive experiences increased SA students' desire to continue participating, engaging and learning. SA students who felt supported by the professors were more confident in their ability to do well in the course.

5.1.3.3 Interactions with local students

*(38) SAS_6: through the **school** is where I met my **friends** and through them is where I **learned Spanish culture**.*

The UAM classroom provided SA students with a contact point for interactions with Spanish students which is non-existent within U.S. island programs. Those who interacted in and outside of class reported improving their speaking and knowledge of colloquial Spanish, receiving more academic support, gaining an insider perspective into the culture and collective view of learning, and becoming more laid back/relaxed in the classroom. The extent of their learning was dependent on the type and depth of their interactions, whose variables I detailed in section 5.1.2.

The direct enrollment experience provided opportunities to meet Spanish students with whom they could practice Spanish, leading to improved fluency and knowledge of slang. Groupwork with Spanish students also required SA students to be added to WhatsApp groups through which they reported practicing Spanish digitally. The classroom served as a springboard for longer conversations if students socialized in the cafeterias or outside of the university with the Spanish students.

SA students specifically reported learning colloquial Spanish and Spanish words from Spain, from Spanish students either in class, during groupwork or through friendships.

(39) SAS_18: I think I'm definitely improving with more **colloquial language** that's definitely easier when I'm around a lot of students cause then I can be like "**what did he just say** I've never heard that" and **they'll teach me those things**.

For heritage or native speakers, it was easier to pick up on slang from Spain; nevertheless, most reported preferring to use their linguistic version of Spanish and only adding a few popular words such as “*vale*” [English: ok] or “*guay*” [English: cool] to their spoken vocabulary. Often, non-native speakers expressed understanding the professors better than the local students due to their use of slang. However, those involved in groupwork or who made friends were more likely to learn and adopt the use of Spanish slang.

The amount and quality of interaction with Spanish students was directly related to the SA students’ learning about the Spanish university culture and ability to take advantage of the collaborative student relationships. Those SA students with deeper interactions were more likely to report being in the class WhatsApp group, borrowing notes from Spanish students, receiving tutoring and/or studying with Spanish students, and understanding the expectations of the professor which they viewed helped them academically. Most SA students, whether they interacted with Spanish students or not, perceived a link between socializing and academics. Those who took advantage of it felt their academic learning improved and were more likely to view the collaborative culture positively. Finally, interactions with Spanish students helped normalize the grading system which allowed SA students to relax their expectations about their grades.

The classroom provided Spanish and international perspectives about social issues and many took this information at face value. SA students who made Spanish friends or maintained better relationships with classmates held more positive attitudes, demonstrated deeper insights about Spanish culture, and showed more intercultural understanding. For example, a couple of political science students were shocked to find communism still existed as a valid political system for Spanish students. However, one demonstrated a deeper intercultural growth as seen below.

(40) SAS_9: If a **Spanish person** like walks by a homeless man **they're always like “oh society is to blame** for that person like society should have done more for that person”. yeah. Like an **American walks** by a homeless person and they're like **“that guy like messed up somewhere**

down the road like the opportunities were there he just didn't take advantage of it." ...That's very European too...**it's just a different perspective.**

The ability to shift between worldviews is an important component of an intercultural identity, which the SA student demonstrates through his understanding of U.S. and Spanish views of homelessness.

Furthermore, none of my SA students reported being offended by comments by Spanish students about how the U.S. is viewed from abroad even in terms of U.S. foreign policies. In one class I visited, Spanish students expressed strong opinions about U.S. gun laws; yet the SA student was not disconcerted, commenting that if you are studying abroad, you should be open to hearing other opinions.

Finally, SA students consistently described the Spanish students as reflecting the values and lifestyles representative of a more relaxed and collaborative culture than the U.S. Most SA students learned to appreciate the laidback student lifestyle of the university and use the collective culture to help them academically. However, there were a few type-A personalities who were accustomed to high-stress academic environments and were not able to adapt, especially in terms of groupwork. Again, those SA students who developed local friendships through more extensive interactions with local students were more likely to learn to relax.

5.1.3.4 Cases showing little growth and learning

*(41) SAS_8: I think yeah, it's just the way in terms that people act and kinda, just you know the relaxed [nature] of it all and the fact that people like **drink beer outside in the middle of, that's crazy...I don't think I've gotten anywhere too deep into the culture** but I'm definitely more aware.*

Unfortunately, about half of SA students showed up to class and left without interacting beyond what was minimally required by them. Although they reported learning on a surface level, they seemed to miss out on deeper learning outcomes common of those who interacted with Spanish people. SA students who did not use agency to improve their language, cultural and personal learning through the UAM experience,

reported less contact with local people and less learning overall. The students who made the effort to spend time on campus and become active participants in university life were able to provide much more detailed examples and nuanced understandings of cultural differences.

The majority of non-native Spanish speakers seemed to think taking classes at the UAM would automatically improve their Spanish. Most of them primarily socialized with U.S. students in and outside of class, spent little time on campus, did not follow a language pledge and consequently reported little use of Spanish. Not surprisingly, native speakers also reported little improvement of their Spanish beyond learning vocabulary from Spain. If heritage speakers reported only slight progress, it was because they already felt fluent. There was also one heritage student who mentioned he was speaking worse due to only speaking in English with his Erasmus friends. To conclude, either the level was already high enough that only slight improvements were made, or SA students interacted primarily in English.

5.2 Student narratives

It's eight-thirty am and the Cercanias train is packed with students going to the UAM campus which is located 20 minutes outside of the city. The train arrives and students spill out onto the platform to be subsequently funneled through the doors, entering campus like the stampede that leaves a stadium after a football match. Through the gate there is a quick market loudly playing reggaeton on the radio. Turns out it sells food, coffee and even bottles of alcohol as one American student later jokes, "(42) SAS_9: like you could get rum and cokes and like you could like drink."

*Student activism on campus is quickly apparent as posters line the entrance to the main road protesting violence against women. As a Spanish student proudly explains, "(43) LS_8: you see there is a political scandal and the next morning you see a banner."¹⁹ To the left is the first building, *Filosofía y Letras* [Philosophy and the Arts] café where professors are having a morning coffee on the high-top tables outside*

¹⁹ Original text: "LS_8: O sea tú ves que hay un escándalo en la política y la mañana siguiente ves una pancarta"

the building. To the right, there is a large green space filled with trees, the preferred hangout spot for students during breaks and also where fiestas (parties) are held. The campus is large with separate buildings for each faculty with their own cafeterias and libraries. The atmosphere is relaxed but do not let that fool you, the UAM is nationally and internationally considered one of the best universities in Spain.

5.2.1 Intercultural miscommunication

I selected this story because it demonstrates most of the factors that facilitated and hindered the adaptation of the SA students to the Spanish classroom. Lucia copes with what she perceives as a boring lecture that is not conducive to her learning by withdrawing her engagement in class. She decides to focus on her co-curricular SA experience instead by creating strong bonds with her cohort and traveling around Europe. Lucia's experience does not represent a typical experience but rather it illustrates the majority of the key cultural differences that SA students collectively perceived in the Spanish classroom. On the other hand, Katherine's experience in her psychology class represents the social and academic integration adaptation strategies representative of other SA students that facilitated learning in the classroom.

Furthermore, their stories illustrate how SA students may choose different adaptation strategies when they have a U.S. friend in class as opposed to being alone. This narrative illustrates the separation strategy commonly used when SA program friends shared a class. The story allows me to describe themes associated with the separation strategy such as conational peer bonding as an emotional coping method, how professors' expectations can be missed due to the lack of integration and the reliance of one of the pair to communicate with locals. Lastly, it shows how learning about the academic culture from one class can be applied to overcome a cultural misunderstanding in another class.

I selected Katherine and Lucia's stories to illustrate these common phenomena because both students had a very open descriptive way of telling stories that provided rich points for analysis. Furthermore, I observed more of their classes and interviewed two of their three professors as well as one of their SA advisors allowing for multiple perspectives. I also had more informal conversations about

their lives outside the university which helped contextualize their perspectives. This story allows for a discussion of many key themes from multiple perspectives which provides a richer and more multifaceted understanding of the experience.

5.2.1.1 The SA students: Lucia and Katherine

The director of SAM set up my first meeting with Lucia and Katherine in her office. Fortunately, I had similar SA host family and travel experiences as them which allowed me to build a good rapport. They were both very enthusiastic and talkative, instantly dishing their complaints about the UAM classes. Lucia and Katherine did not know each other before the SA trip; nevertheless, they quickly became each other's primary friendship and emotional support during the semester. They were attending the UAM through Brockton University's program, which had a total of four students during the first semester. The program included living in a host family, trips and a class taught by their director about Spanish culture and history. The students were obliged to directly enroll in the UAM with the assistance of the SAM director as their liaison and professor of their independent study course.

Coincidentally, Lucia was from my hometown although she grew up in Boston, Massachusetts. Her family was from Bogota, Colombia which she frequently visited to see family. She found the Colombian people especially welcoming and made friendships easily. In Spain, she spent much of her time traveling. Lucia lived with another Brockton University student who attending a different local university in a homestay which she described as a typical Spanish grandmother who dotes over you and always wants to give you food.

Katherine grew up in Tennessee in a Uruguayan family with four children. She never visited Uruguay due to economic constraints. She was on a full scholarship to Brockton University which covered her participation in the SA program as well. She chose to study in Spain since it provided the opportunity to travel to Europe. She was living with a sixty-two-year-old Spanish woman and her daughter. There were cultural clashes from the start. The grandmother would tell her she was not speaking like a

Madrileña (a person from Madrid) or speaking the “wrong Spanish” when she used a Uruguayan accent and vocabulary. The host grandmother and daughter were also fighting which made her uncomfortable, leading her to change host families for the last month. Unfortunately, this experience affected her overall SA experience and impression of Spanish culture.

Neither student mentioned improving their Spanish as a priority for this trip because they were comfortable with their Spanish and any variation differences were easy enough to pick up in context. Both were interested in learning about Spanish culture; however, they focused more on big “C” aspects of culture such as art, history, and visiting museums rather than learning about cultural values or lifestyle. In the beginning, Lucia mentioned wanting to make Spanish friends but not knowing how. Meanwhile, Katherine was concerned about socializing because she did not drink alcohol and was introverted. Their main priority seemed to be traveling in Europe since they were gone at least half of the weekends.

Katherine and Lucia took four classes at the UAM: one through the DiLe program, one independent study and two undergraduate classes. For the undergraduate classes, they were enrolled together in a humanities course, but Katherine took psychology and Lucia took literature for the second undergraduate course. First, I will explore their solo experiences which varied due to their personality and perception of the receptivity of the locals. I will highlight critical moments of interaction with professors or students in the class that marked the SA students’ experiences. Secondly, I will explore how once together in class, their interactions, perceptions, and adaptation strategies changed.

5.2.1.2 Katherine’s psychology class: Talk to people!

In the U.S., Katherine’s favorite way to learn was to attend straightforward lectures, take notes and study alone. Upon arrival at the UAM, she was confused about the expectations of the professor and surprised by the fact that the students already knew each other. Furthermore, she was amazed to find out they help each other by sharing notes, materials and studying together. Even though Katherine described herself as shy, she took an active role in adapting to the classroom by setting up a meeting with

the professor and responding positively when the local students included her. Her experience participating in the collaborative learning environment led her to value the Spanish university culture and helped her contextualize the negative experiences she had in the shared humanities class.

First impressions and confusion

Due to the problems with her enrollment, Katherine missed the first week of classes during which the professors tend to provide some explication of the assignments on the syllabus. In the psychology class, she was the only international student in a class of about 75 students and the only one who was late and lost. Katherine was intimidated by the fact that everyone in her class already knew each other from being in the same degree program, year and group. During the second week of class, she still did not have access to Moodle so while she could attend class, she could not do the readings. Additionally, she was confused about the class schedule which included three types of classes: lecture, reading and laboratory of which the latter two were broken into smaller groups.

Social integration and adaptation

Fortunately, being confused ended up working in her favor because it led to an incident in which she met a Spanish student who integrated her into the social scene of the class.

(44) KAT: So, it's been a little bit of a struggle **but because of that "buh!" I got in the know! (laughs) because of this girl.** Her name was Julia. um so I like went to class one day, that was like supposed to be for a lecture, like for when he gives a PowerPoint and **nobody showed up.** So I was like, "I'm not doing something right, maybe they're in a different room, but there was this girl and **she was like "are you here for the lecture"** and I was like "yes! how'd you know" and she's like "oh we're not having it today, **you don't have it on the weeks that you have reading"** and I was like "**how am I supposed to know that**" and she was like "oh, **he said that** like the first few weeks of class" and I was like "oh, that's why I didn't know." yeah. **It's not on the program** ...but she got me into this, like **communal document program** that like everyone, like somebody

photocopies the material to read and then uploads it so that everyone can read it and I was like “ah **yah know that’s really cool.**” So, you only have to buy one copy, it's in the library too so now I don't have to yah know find it every week or take pictures of it or photocopy or spend money that yah know, it's online. **So that's really helpful** and yah know they also like have study groups and stuff, so **I think it's really! important to know someone or make a friend cause, I mean it's really hard otherwise.**

Katherine was confronted with a different way of organizing the classes and interacting with other students. She was accustomed to schedules being clearly stated in the syllabus rather than verbally in class and students maintaining competitive relationships. Interacting with Julia taught her that Spanish students were collaborative and share resources and provided her with access to a local group which helped her academically. Julia also continued to take Katherine under her wing by presenting her to other friends in the classroom who were also “in the know” and kept her informed.

Katherine also learned that the students hang out in one area of the Annex part of the building to study between classes. Even though she normally studied alone, she decided to join them because she felt it was a good atmosphere to study. This was key because Katherine did not have the same academic background in psychology as the local students and was therefore missing prerequisite knowledge for the class. Fortunately, Julia was also there to help her with that.

(45) KAT: She was like “**I’ll stay after class** and explain this from this other course that **you haven't taken but really need to know for this section**” yah know like. That was critical for having been in this psychology class, not that the material was impossible it was **just so much more manageable with having known the people.**

Katherine also became better friends with Martina who was in her section for laboratory classes. During the classroom observations, Katherine sat with Martina during both the lecture and lab. They invited me

to sit with them for the lab during which they talked mainly about the course material; however, afterward when we took the train back to the city together, we discussed each other's cultures.

Katherine felt that she was very lucky to have met Julia and accredited her integration in the class to Julia more than her personality or initiative.

(46) KAT: So, when she helped me out **literally she was my ticket in** and like there's **no way I could have like pulled any strings on that**, that just like happened to happen to me which was great cause then I met other people. **She introduced me to her friends that was phenomenal.**

Although Katherine viewed herself as shy and did not give herself credit for her integration; from my perspective, her desire to do well academically pushed her to be outgoing in the class. She would ask questions to students and the professor, participate when called on and offer information if not.

Academic integration and adaptation

Katherine also perceived that the professor of the psychology class facilitated her integration in the classroom by asking her pertinent questions when the topic related to the U.S. and by checking in with her for comprehension. In a class of 75 students, especially with her being a native Spanish speaker, she could have easily blended in with the other students. However, the professor was keen to include her in the class discussion which in turn helped the other students realize she existed. The professor took actions that facilitated her integration, but Katherine also proactively sought help by asking for office hours so she could catch up on what she missed the first week of class.

(47) KAT: I mean **he'll definitely give you his attention** but I like went to his office hours and I like knocked on the door, and he was like "come in" and I was like "ok" so I come in and he's like in the dark like completely and he was like, he turns around in his chair **and he's like "what can I help you with" and I'm just like "oh my gosh"** I was trying to tell him yah know "I came late, I don't really understand I just wanted to ask you some questions" **and he was like "ask them"**.

She felt he came off as a bit angsty and direct during this first interaction but gave him the benefit of the doubt by assuming perhaps he was analyzing her reaction. Whether that was true or not, the fact that she looked for an alternative explanation and did not take it personally showed her openness to cultural differences. She later described him as being very funny in class and helpful with her questions.

Katherine also considered her psychology professor to have better control of the class and teaching methodologies. She preferred how he got students to stop talking by walking up and down the aisles and standing next to people who were talking until they stopped whereas the humanities professor would “let them talk”. She also felt that the professor’s teaching methodology was more dynamic because he did not read off his notes. The professor had a PowerPoint and would ask questions, call on students and encourage class participation leading Katherine to believe the students were quiet because they were engaged.

The discussion-based class combined with the professor directly calling on Katherine made the local students aware of her, which made it easier for her to interact with local students. However, she also made an effort to say “hi” to students especially once she realized that relationships would help her do well academically in Spain.

(48) KAT: In all honestly the way that the professor talked to me really helped other people notice me. Cause sometimes **it’s not that they don’t like you**, it’s just like “oh another person out of like the thousands” and **they have all this other stuff to do so they aren't gonna go necessarily out of their way to greet you**. But because the professor **made me like the forefront** like five times, everybody recognized me and **if I smiled and said “hi” they would smile back and wave and be like “hey”** yah know or they would help me out if I was like blatantly doing the wrong thing they would be like “whoa that’s not it.” I’ve had that happen once or twice, they would just like let you know that this is what you're supposed to be doing right now and I’m just like “ok”.

The professor's opinion of Katherine's involvement in the class also confirmed her perception of the experience. He mentioned that because of bureaucratic problems she started the class late which is normal. He felt that she was socially integrated into the class as she hung out with the same group from pretty much the beginning of the semester. He also confirmed that she participated in class when called upon and attributed her high level of Spanish to facilitating this participation. Finally, he made an intentional effort to include her, or any other international students, to provide an international perspective on daily life matters considering he only knows Spanish examples.

(49) PROF_3: For example, I like to use a lot of examples from **everyday life in my classes** and so of course, the everyday examples are the **ones I'm familiar with**.

MKM: Spain

PROF_3: with a very clear cultural environment, that is, students from different countries can compare everything

MKM: a little more

PROF_3: of course, and **another type of debate could be posed**, for example. One of the classes I was talking about the influence of culture on personality, and I asked them... "do you think Katherine, a psychology student of a certain age, seem more like you students of psychology of the same age, Spaniards, more than an American of the same age who is not a student?" Well, **having a Katherine in class allows for this kind of thing.**²⁰

²⁰ Original text: "PROF_3: por ejemplo, yo me gusta usar muchos ejemplos de la vida cotidiana en mis clases y entonces claro, entonces los ejemplos cotidianos son los que yo conozco. MKM: España PROF_3: con un ambiente cultural muy claro, que sea estudiantes de diverso país se podría comparar todo MKM: un poco más PROF_3: claro y se podría plantar otro tipo de debate, por ejemplo. Una de las clases estaba hablando de la influencia de la cultura sobre la personalidad, y les preguntaba ahí... "vosotros creéis que Katherine, estudiante de psicología de una determinada edad se parece más a vosotros estudiantes de psicología de la misma edad, españoles, aquí aun estadounidense de su misma edad que no sea estudiante." Pues este tipo de cosas me permite que hay una Katherine en clase.

The professor viewed the multiculturalism in the classroom as an opportunity to bring international perspectives to the local students. He also mentioned that he can sense which international students are comfortable speaking and does not pushing those who seem hesitant. In fact, most SA students who were asked for daily life examples responded without a problem.

Katherine was arguably much more lost at the beginning of her psychology class both academically and socially than she was for her humanities class. In the psychology class, the structure was more complicated, there were more scheduling changes, and she was the only exchange student. However, the challenging situation pushed her to take the initiative to reach out to both the professor and the students hence adapting using academic and social integration strategies. Feeling part of a local group lowered her stress considerably and she realized that in Spain there was no stigma about helping other students. As she reflects,

(50) KAT: I know it **seems like it's impossible** to get yourself in there but **honestly, I find that Spanish people are really nice**, like if you **show an interest** then **they are not gonna be like "ew yah no"**, yah know especially the girls.

Her integration helped her academically but also led to intercultural learning as well.

5.2.1.3 Lucia's literature class: Resignation and withdrawal

At her university in the U.S., Lucia was accustomed to lecture or discussion-based classes; however, she would only attend the discussion-based classes because she did not feel she could learn or pay attention during a lecture class. Therefore, it is not surprising that she was shocked by the *magistral* pedagogy used in a literature class and the professor's distant attitude towards her as an international student. Furthermore, she felt the local students were very cliquey and had no interest in talking to her. She did not feel integrated and/or supported in the class by the professor or the students nor did the teaching methodology meet her expectations. By the first interview, she had already decided not to give

much importance to the UAM aspect of her SA experience and focus on traveling and socializing with international students instead.

First impressions and confusions

Lucia reported being extremely frustrated during the first weeks at the UAM. She described the teaching methodology as a lecture style lacking any analytical reasoning. At her university in the U.S., lecture classes were reserved for large introductory classes which Lucia would not attend as she preferred to study the textbook in the library. However, her small classes were discussion-based which is why she was shocked to find that even though the literature class was small it was still lecture-based, and no one participated.

(51)MKM: and what's that class like?

LUC: **awful** (giggles)

MKM: why is it awful?

LUC: it's just, he's a little bit like, how do I say this in very nice words, little bit rigid. (laughs)**he'll talk and will be like "don't interrupt me** for the next hour and forty five minutes and then the last fifteen minutes you can ask questions" ...you sit down and he starts talking and he sits there with this packet of notes clearly from like previous semesters whatever and he reads them to us and **he just talks, occasionally he'll stand up and come to the center of the room and keep talking** about the same thing and he'll sit back down and do the exact same thing and no one asks questions because **he doesn't not encourage them** until the last, and then the last! fifteen minutes when you've forgotten all your questions he's like "*preguntas?*" [English: questions].

LUC: "no? *ok, Bueno*" [English: Ok, good]. **I'm like well, no!** (laughs)

She felt Miguel, the professor, did not encourage participation, discussion or ideas that were different from his own and that he expected the students to take notes, memorize and repeat on the exam. In her opinion, no one in the classroom felt comfortable participating for this reason.

(52) LUC: I noticed in my own classes for example...he'll ask a question and then he'll answer it himself. A lot of professors like they have **one answer they are looking for** I think and one, again the **professors word is the word of god**, so like they have one idea in their mind so I feel like a lot of times when people participate their **ideas are kinda shot down**...so I feel like people are discouraged to answer because there is **only one acceptable answer and that's the professors**.

During the classroom observation, I noticed that the professor would insist that it is important that the students explain things very well and use precise language. Frequently, Miguel's questions were met with silence until he told them "(53) PROF_4: until you don't answer me, we are going to continue looking at each other."²¹ Students seemed timid about answering, perhaps because they felt the professor was looking for one answer and were concerned about being incorrect. One Spanish student explained that students do not participate "(54) LS_1: because they are afraid to participate, to be told, 'how stupid, what you said is nonsense. You are not prepared, you do not have the necessary knowledge to say that."²² Others added that some professors would intimidate them or ridicule them in front of the class.

Another cultural difference was that her grade would be based on one final project or exam. Since the exam was at the end of the semester, she did not feel she had any homework. However, at the same time, she felt already behind in the class because the professor would make references to concepts that the Spanish students already knew from prerequisite courses.

(55) LUC: So, I'm constantly like the whole class I'm constantly **googling what the heck he's talking about** because it's all **contextual or like theories in Spanish literature** that I just know because **I'm thrown into a senior level class**, but besides for like that, **then I go home and I'm like ok there's no work to do.** (laughs)

²¹ Original text: "PROF_4: Hasta que no me digáis, vamos a seguir mirándonos"

²² Original text: "LS_1: porque tienen miedo a participar, a que te digan, "que tonto lo que has dicho es una tontería. No estas preparado no tienes los conocimientos necesarios para decir eso."

Lucia felt there was little work involved; however, there were six required readings on the syllabus. I felt maybe she was just unclear about when to read the assignments and rather than independently setting deadlines for herself, just assumed there was no homework.

In addition to Lucia's negative view of the teaching methodology, she also had an early run-in with this professor. She asked to take the final exam early because she was leaving Spain before the end of the semester. This interaction turned into a critical moment for her.

(56) LUC: Yeah, about the final exam, that was the **only time I talked to him**. I introduced myself, um I said where I was from and I was like "I'm gonna be leaving before the final exam, would it be possible to take an alternative" um and **he goes "let me think about it."** I said "ok, thank you so much" and he's goes "it **doesn't** mean you can take it." and I was like "**ok well thank you for speaking with me**" and I walked out and **he never addressed it again and I was like "ok."**

She was very concerned because she needed to take the final to receive credit for the class. This interaction gave her the impression that the professor did not care about international students or their problems and that she was just a bother in his class.

Unfortunately, Lucia was also having difficulties making Spanish friends in the class. She did not perceive the UAM as having a good integration system for international students. She felt a bit like an outcast in her class, due in part to an early experience when she was trying to make friends.

(57) LUC: I remember the **first week I like tried...**I was on one side of the room **and I tried and sat, and nobody would sit next to me**. One boy sat next to me and on the break, **he moved away back next to his friends**. I was like ahh (laughs). **literally I'm friendly**, and I try to talk to people but there just like, they're all in their last year, **very into their own groups**.

Lucia perceived that the local students were not interested in meeting international students; however, she did not detail multiple attempts at initiating conversation. She also mentioned that the "(58) LUC: classes aren't very well integrated," which places the role of integration on someone other than herself. I

did not visit the class until halfway through the semester when she had already decided to give up on relationships in class and to sit by herself.

Additionally, she felt that since the class was lecture-based there was less interaction in general and therefore not a good place to meet people because there was no reason to talk to anyone. The only students she spoke to in class were two French Erasmus girls.

(59) LUC: I think that if discussion were encouraged in the classroom, then we would have to be sharing ideas and talking but because **we're solely in there to listen to the professor**, it's **really hard to make friends when you're sitting there in silence**, copying notes for two hours. Right! when you're not talking to anybody, there's **no reason to talk to anybody** other than like to ask them for the homework or something but yeah there's **no homework because there's only final exams** so, I just don't think that the way classes are taught are meant to facilitate discussion or interaction between international students and Spanish students.

Outside of class, she tried to meet Spanish friends through the ESN group which she viewed as the UAM's integration program for international students. However, few Spanish students attend the ESN activities, meaning she could only meet other international students. She also signed up for the Buddy program; however, it took her a long time to meet her buddy. They started hanging out on campus, grabbing lunch or a coffee and off-campus to go dancing or to grab an ice cream with her friends. However, when Lucia's buddy invited her to her hometown, she could not go because she already had travel plans. Her buddy was surprised about her problems meeting students in class. Lucia thought,

(60) LUC: Spaniards always **think they are open but then like they are super closed off** to people they don't know kind of thing, like once you get, I feel like once you get to know Spaniards their fine and their super welcoming and nice, **but its breaking that wall, really that like, the outsider thing**, I think, and I don't think any of them are mean people, I'm sure everybody in that class is

super nice and once you get to know them they are super friendly **but I don't think any of them reach out to try and make anybody else feel welcome.**

As an international student myself, I knew many Spanish people considered themselves the friendliest in Europe; however, I could sympathize with Lucia's point of view, especially knowing she compared her experiences in Colombia, just as I compared mine to Argentina – both arguably “friendlier” cultures.

Speaking with the Spanish students, some felt they were very friendly:

(61) LS_9: **we are all open**, that is

LS_8: you **ask someone** and they will tell you and they will already **tell you all about their life and their love problems** and then they will also tell you how the class is going (laughter)

LS_9: indeed, all the gossip of the course and **then how the class is going.**²³

Others were perhaps more realistic, “(62) LS_10: I mean, you will notice that us **Spaniards are very open**, but it is true that if the situation does **not arise, you do not approach**, you are in your class.”²⁴ Reflecting a few local students' opinion that they do not make an effort, she continued. “(63) LS_10: here I see the Erasmus [students], that the poor guys are here, **nobody approaches them**, nobody, you know that in the end they make a **small group amongst themselves because we are not receptive**”.²⁵ The common thread throughout the Spanish students' opinions is that the exchange students were expected to initiate the conversation.

²³ Original text: “LS_9: somos abiertos todos o sea LS_8: tú preguntas a alguien y ya te va a decir y ya te va a contar todo su vida y sus problemas amorosos y luego también te va a contar como va la clase (risa) LS_9: efectivamente, todos los cotilleos del curso y luego cómo va la clase.”

²⁴ Original text: “LS_10: O sea fíjate que somos muy abiertos los españoles, pero sí que es verdad que, si la situación no da pie, tampoco te acercas, estas tú en tu clase.”

²⁵ Original text: “LS_10: Aquí yo veo a los Erasmus, que los pobres están aquí nadie se les acerca, nadie les, sabes que al final hacen grupito entre ellos porque no estamos como receptivos.”

Withdrawal and academic adaptation

After only a few weeks of not establishing friendships at the UAM, Lucia decided to shift her priorities away from the university and instead focus on socializing with international people outside of school and traveling. Her goals for SA were:

(64) LUC: make more friends, not fail Miguel's class (laughs). **Just travel a lot** and do as much as I, see and do as much as I can well in Spain like I've kinda just put **this UAM on the backburner** of things that I don't care about as much **because I realize it's not worth getting upset over**...like it is what it is, I come here, **I'll do the best I can** but I'm not like letting it bother me anymore, cause the first few weeks of class **here I was really like just not happy at all** so it was making everything else miserable so now I'm just putting my energy into like the things **I do love, like going to dance classes on Monday night or travelling on the weekends or wine** just like enjoying the things that I know I can only do while I'm here and that's what it's about.

During her last interview, she reported being happy with the SA experience due to her host family, traveling and non-Spanish friendships.

Her view of the literature professor improved slightly after one day during roll call, Miguel thanked her for always coming to class. She realized that not only did he know who she was, but maybe that he did not dislike her after all. Additionally, she noticed that he was supportive of international students who tried to speak Spanish and would not direct questions that require previous knowledge about Spain at them. Her opinion of the class also became more balanced when her DiLe class changed professor to someone she found even more lecture-based and intolerant of students' ideas than Miguel.

LUC: he's changed, yeah, he's actually, **he's still a little bit of a meany**, (laughs) you can quote that if you want (laughs). um but then when **he gets to know you the nicer he is**...yeah he's maybe not, awful. (laughs). He's ok, he's definitely I think of, I also, **my opinion of him changed because**

now I'm comparing him to my new other lit professor for narrative **and he's awful**. Like before I was comparing him to **Daniela who is an angel and like amazing** and great.

As she became more comfortable with Miguel as a professor, she began to participate more in class. In fact, when I attended her class, she made a comment to which the professor agreed and continued. In this class, she adjusted her study habits and behavior slightly once she felt more accepted in the classroom. Her strategy to be academically successful was to attend class and take lots of notes because if the professor's word was "**the word was god**" so clearly the exam would be based solely on the lecture notes. She adjusted to the situation begrudgingly but did not value it at all.

(65) LUC: **I think in the U.S., I definitely think more because I'm talking more and discussing** more so I don't have to write as many things down because my brain's processing it so I can just write a note to myself to jog my memory. **But now I have to memorize everything** the professor is saying **so I'm writing ten times more notes** than I ever had.

Another challenge she faced was not having the same historical and cultural context as the Spanish students. Instead of reaching out to the professor for help during office hours, she would do supplemental research on her own to catch up. When asked about office hours, her answer said it all.

(66)MKM: ok and have you gone to *tutorias* [=office hours] in any class?

LUC: **what does that mean?**

MKM: like meeting the professor in his office, I forget what that's called in English, like office hours

LUC: no.

MKM: did they offer them?

LUC: yeah, I haven't really need to, **like I could go complain but that's the only reason I'd go**. I don't need to for like help with like class because there's nothing, **it's just memorizing what they're saying**, like I've spoken to teachers after class about like exams or stuff like that"

Given her high Spanish level and having been at the UAM for three months, I was surprised she was unaware of the word for office hours in Spanish. She took an individualist approach to learning, perhaps due to her lukewarm view of the local professor. However, her overall lack of adaptation was evident when I asked her to describe the Spanish university culture.

(67) LUC: (pauses) I don't know if there's a noun for this **I can only think of a verb, to regurgitate** (laughs) I think it's very, students are, **don't necessarily think for themselves** very often is what I've noticed and it's very much just what the professor says is what's final...**I don't necessarily think there's a lot of analytical work** being done here, not to say that all classes are like that, because I have one class that is, but in general I've just noticed it's a **lot more lecture based and a lot um less discussion based.**

Of the professors that Lucia had at the UAM, she found two of four to be analytical; yet her entire description of Spanish academic culture was based on her negative view of the lecture styled classes. The cross-cultural contact led to stereotyping rather than a shift in perspective or adaptation.

Lucia's strategy to deal with her stress and frustration with the UAM was to vent to the SAM director and her U.S. peers. This coping mechanism made her feel better emotionally; however, it did seem to help her feel more comfortable or improve her learning in the UAM classes.

(68)MKM: and what strategies did you use to adjust to it?

LUC: um, **venting to Gretchen (laughs)** and just realizing it's a different culture and a different place and I'm here for one semester and to just **make the best of it and travel and soak up as much as I can of like a different lifestyle** that's not yah know, I came to a different place **I can't expect everything to be that way**

MKM: be the same

LUC: yeah, **I have to take it for what it is.**

Her strategy was to accept things how they were but not trying to develop a deeper understanding of the university culture. Since she was not interacting with Spanish people, she did not have any cultural mediators to help her interpret the experiences. In her mind, she had “accepted” the cultural differences, but clearly, she did not recognize them as valid ways of doing things. She did not demonstrate a change in mindset or a deeper understanding of culture. In fact, she informed me she had no desire to live abroad again. One could argue that had she chosen more dynamic classes or been lucky with Spanish students that approached her, perhaps it would have been different. However, I believe her closed and negative attitude combined with a quick inclination towards withdrawal would have produced similar results.

5.2.1.4 Shared humanities class: Moving to the back of the room

Both Katherine and Lucia reported similar culture shocks upon their arrival at the UAM; however, their attitudes and adaptation strategies differed greatly. I believe that Katherine’s experience in her psychology class combined with a more open mind about the academic culture provided her with a more balanced overall opinion about the direct enrollment experience. Unfortunately, her negative experiences outside the classroom combined with her vicarious experience of Lucia’s troubles soured her overall intercultural experience. In this case, cohort support was emotionally fulfilling but had a negative impact on Katherine’s adaptation. Conversely, the relationship helped Lucia academically because Katherine found out the professor’s expectations through speaking with local students.

First impressions and confusions

The first weeks of school were a bit chaotic for both girls although it affected Lucia more than Katherine. For Lucia, the struggle to get enrolled caused her a lot of stress but also frustration. She organized her schedule with Gretchen through emails. Gretchen would speak to the ORIs only to find that the classes were full. The back and forth continued for a week.

(69) LUC: I switched classes a million times because then they wound up not like not having the room so the **first week of here was just hectic** and they sent me from one office to other to the other like non-stop...so the first week of class, **I didn't actually go to class.**

MKM: you were just trying to get your schedule set?

LUC: yeah, I was just trying to get the schedule set and it was like from **one office to the next to the next cause nobody talks to each other** (laughs) so it was pretty unorganized and then like Moodle wasn't working, like everything was **just like not working**

Considering U.S. students are accustomed to having their schedules organized long before the semester begins and can sign up online, going from office to office was perceived as a mess. Gretchen explained to Lucia that the limited availability for international students in classes happens globally, but Lucia still felt it was unfair that preference was given to Spaniards.

Katherine faced the same enrollment problems plus she needed a special permission for the psychology class; however, her reaction was quite different than Lucia's.

(70) KAT: when I was matriculated [=enrolled], I was matriculated about two and a half weeks late

MKM: was there a reason for that?

KAT: **just because of my program the way that Autónoma handled the international students, I actually was matriculated last week into a class that I've been going to since the beginning of the semester,** but I have been officially matriculated.

I sensed that she did not blame the UAM but viewed it as part of being an international student. To avoid falling behind, she joined the classes before she was enrolled officially rather than waiting like Lucia. Her overall attitude remained positive whereas Lucia was already judging the university.

The undergraduate humanities course they took together was held twice a week: one day with a two-hour lecture and one day the class was split into two sections for an hour *prácticas* class. In the classes I attended, there were 16-25 students in a room that would fit perhaps 40 students. The room was divided

into two columns of desks. The Spanish students sat together with the more participative students sitting in the front left. The Asian students sat together and the other foreigners sat alone. The first two times I visited the class, both Lucia and Katherine missed class. Once because they were tired from a trip to Zaragoza and another because of sickness. When I attended and only Lucia was there, she sat by herself in the middle right. I attended with Katherine at the end of the semester and she sat in the back, explaining that they had given up on listening to the lecture.

The class started ten to twenty-five minutes after the scheduled time. The professor started by trying to see if students had done the reading, but most students continued to whisper amongst themselves. The professor spoke gently making it difficult to hear him in the back. He sent the class notes and readings via the Moodle platform before class and then read from his notes to go over the material. He occasionally asked what seemed to be rhetorical questions since he did not leave much time for an answer. Students did not ask or answer many questions, especially those that did not sit in the front left. The only time they seemed engaged is when he made references to Spain. For example, he made jokes about Spanish expressions, asked for another word for '*joder*' (English: fuck) and referenced an image of Spanish companies like Iberdrola.

At the beginning of the class, both students described this professor as very sweet, kind with good intentions but they were shocked by how the local students talked to each other during the class. In some classes, you would hear a constant humming of students whispering during the class as the professor was giving the lecture. When I attended this class, it was neither very loud nor silent compared to others I had visited; however, Lucia and Katherine found it very rude how the students would talk in class, especially since the professor was already soft spoken.

(71) LUC: I think to me it's like **they have some things that are super no no**, like something that are super! rude and **some things that are like, !! consider rude but they don't...**You can't eat in class like at all like even so much as like anything more than water is crazy um and **that is super**

normal in the U.S. but then other things like talking while the professor is talking or passing notes to each other or laughing in the back is like totally normal and to me, **I'm just like that's so rude he's like literally in the middle of a lecture.**

To try and understand this behavior or at least see if it was considered normal or not, Katherine turned to her program director.

(72) KAT: I asked my director and was like "is it common for people to talk in class?" **He was like "unfortunately yes" and I was like "well now I don't feel so bad if I like bring my apple or banana out in the middle of class."** (laughs) I'd rather be eating my banana than like talking but yah know there are like, different um forms of yah know showing disrespect yeah. So, I think that they're less ah angry about that, I don't know.

While the SA students generally placed the blame for talking during class on the Spanish students, Katherine also attributed it to the professor's teaching methodology.

(73) KAT: it's like, **I don't wanna say the difference is the professor but it kinda is....** I think that's probably part of the reason why they start talking, yeah...they are like "oh well most of what he's probably saying is in our program like **literally word for word so**", I mean like if **he's not gonna talk directly then we have time to just talk or chat** and it's just like ahh.

Even though Katherine held a strong negative view of the local students talking, her quieter psychology class gave her another perspective that allowed her to empathize more with local students by recognizing that the professors' teaching methodologies also influences students' behavior.

The withdrawal strategy

At first, the students adjusted by sitting up front so that they could hear the professor. However, as the semester unfolded, their perception of the professor's teaching methodology became more critical. They disliked that the professor would follow the notes instead of creating a discussion-based class. Yet, the professor desired participation in his classes through discussions of practical problems.

(74) PROF_5: **I would like them [the classes] to be very participatory. I partially achieve it**, so eh depending on the moment in general the philosophy of the classes eh try that in the classes we are solving practical problems, practical cases. It may be that many times **it is difficult for students because they are used to other things**...I think it's important here to ask a series of questions that allows them, some are asked before, a general indication, others are questions that **force them to explore the text from different perspectives that many times one realizes that they have not read it**. So, eh the class should be to discuss discuss but many times it is for eh to read the text first, **so a lot of time is wasted**.²⁶

I noticed there was a disconnect between how the professor viewed his class and the SA students. SA students felt local students did not participate because of the lecture style and their preference for talking amongst themselves; whereas the professor felt they had not done the readings. In speaking to other Spanish students, when professors provided the information necessary for their notes on the PowerPoint, they were less likely to listen because they could read it by themselves at home.

The professor asked questions out loud to elicit participation but did not ask specific students for input nor have them work in small groups. For example, during one class the professor asked about U.S. subcultures and while the Spanish students answered, Lucia did not speak. Had the professor called on her, she may have added her opinion to the class. While I did not witness it, the professor recalled that Katherine participated in class, even turning around to address the class because she was sitting in the

²⁶ Original text: "PROF_5: que tipo, a mí me gustaría que fuese muy participativas. Lo consigo a medias, entonces eh dependiendo del momento en general la filosofía de las clases eh pone acercar a las clases hacia resolución de problemas prácticos, casos prácticos. Puede ser eso muchas veces se les resulta complicado a los alumnos porque están acostumbrados a otras cosas.... me parece importante entonces aquí es en hacer una serie de preguntas que les permitan, algunas se hacen antes, indicación general, otras son preguntas que les obliga a un explorar el texto desde diferentes perspectivas que muchas veces uno se da cuenta que no se lo han leído. Entonces eh la clase debería ser para discutir discutir pero muchas veces es para eh hacernos con el texto primero, entonces se pierde mucho tiempo."

front. However, I'm assuming this was towards the beginning of the semester because later they began sitting in the back of the room since they were not paying attention.

(75) KAT: **Unfortunately, we stopped sitting in the front** and we started sitting in the back. That was a behavior change for sure because we thought **he's gonna give us all the notes...**we read the material that he gives us, we read the notes, but otherwise like there's no, there's, it doesn't help participating cause he goes in circles...**I mean attendance isn't even necessary so like we come, but like why!**, somedays only half the class or less will be there... so we come because I don't know it's sort of just engrained in us that we have to go to class and um we don't really participate... **plus I mean I can't hear him and everyone else is talking.**

Katherine and Lucia were equally unhappy with the professor's methodology and the other students' behavior leading them to disengage from the class. They choose to sit in the back together and pay less attention, using the time to work on other assignments instead. The professor incorrectly believed they sat in the back because they were shy and did not want to be asked questions. He also noticed that they attended fewer classes as the semester wore on but did not know why. Lucia explained:

(76) LUC: As time went on, we realized that A, **everything he says is written down in the notes**, B when we do ask questions, he **doesn't answer them very well** and like doesn't not make sense. um and he **just we just realized that sitting in front did us. No, absolutely no, like it confused me more** to take notes because he said everything out of order then it was on the note thing....it just took more work trying to pay attention than it did to just read our notes at home, so we **slowly moved to the back because we realized we were wasting our time trying to pay attention.**

The girls bonded over their frustrations with the class. If Katherine had been alone, perhaps her strategy would have resembled that of the psychology class; however, having a co-national friend in the class made it easier to stick together and complain instead of navigating the cultural differences. The students felt

they could pass the course by reading the notes; however, before they even got to the final exam, there was confusion about the professor's expectations for the group project.

The group project's multiple miscommunications

The professor felt cultural diversity was positive for group work. He encouraged but did not require groups to incorporate foreign students. He admitted that when there were large numbers of international students in the class, they normally ended up working together. Such was the case of Katherine and Lucia who ended up working with a Russian girl Oksana and an Ecuadorian guy, Alberto who was raised in Spain. Katherine approached Ana to join their group while waiting for class to start and Alberto after the professor asked in class if anyone was still missing a group and he said "yes". The girls expected Alberto to have a better idea of the assignment because he grew up in Spain and were frustrated to find he seemed equally lost and did not contribute to the project.

(77) KAT: So Alberto's been living in Spain, his whole life but he's not Spanish he's actually from Ecuador, but it doesn't really matter, I see him as a Spaniard, because one of his parents I think is Spanish and he's lived here his entire life so it like doesn't matter, but then again the **three of us girls are visiting and we had this group project to do together and he does didly!** I mean like he doesn't do like absolutely anything. Our first meeting he didn't come and he made some excuse. Our second meeting um which like was already like a week before our presentation, he came in and he was like "**I haven't done anything I don't know what I'm supposed to do at all.**"...and he understood the directions the least which was ironic because we're the ones studying here from like a different country, and our Spanish are all like different like I'm Latina Spanish and obviously the girl from Russia doesn't have Spanish as a second language at all like she's learned it by herself ... and Alberto **is like totally just up in the sky doesn't help at all!** The night before our presentation he sends us in our group chat, he sends like, his work, two paragraphs that he had written a conclusion and an introduction which was all he had to do really and write questions

which he didn't do either um and he was like *"echa un ojazo o vistazo"* [English: take a look] or whatever and "um let me know if this is good enough." **And it wasn't of course but he wasn't gonna do anything else and I just, and in the end it was like we did all of the work** which yah know is always the story in, a ah, **always the story in a group project** but it just happened to be like the **only Spanish guy in our group yah know**, and he came into our presentation fifteen minutes late and he's just always laughing it off but we're not laughing at this point like I'm just getting really genuinely upset. So that same day our **professor also got upset with us** and made it seem like we, didn't understand the directions well. **He didn't say anything to Alberto, he just said something to us three girls!**

From my perspective, many issues collided with this group project. On the one hand, it seemed like Alberto was the typical group member that rides coattails which does happen in group work as one professor explained "(78) PROF_6: a lot of times, the student follows the **law of the least amount of effort**"²⁷ Additionally, he was the only "Spanish" member, meaning the expectation was that he would understand the assignment better than the exchange students. Finally, he was a male, which exasperated the situation since Katherine faced multiple sexist situations in the final weeks of her stay outside of the classroom. It is possible that the professor was expressing his problems with their presentation towards them because he recognized they did the project and not Alberto, but from their perspective, Alberto should have been held equally if not more responsible since he was the local student.

Katherine explained that after they finished their presentation about an article they had chosen from the professor's pre-approved list, he assigned them an extra part because he felt their article did not have enough content. Katherine was frustrated because she felt in that case it should not have been an option in the first place and the professor was to blame for providing unclear instructions. Therefore,

²⁷ Original text: "PROF_6: Muchas veces el alumno intenta hacer la ley de mínimo esfuerzo"

instead of clarifying the instructions with the professor, Katherine decided to ask a “good” Spanish student to help them understand the assignment.

(79) KAT: So we went up to the girl after class who's always! participating, she's really! great, very smart, **she's on top of the game**...So we go up to her after class, we are like “listen we don't understand the directions it was, the way he told us **we were still very confused**” so we were like **“help a sister out”** and so she was like “yes, actually he doesn't know what he wants either like he told me one thing and then I overheard him telling my friend something completely different and we had ask the same exact question so he doesn't even really know what he wants” and she was like **“listen this is what I did and this is what I would like aconsejar [advise] that you would do.** um just get examples, examples, examples.” and like she told us like what she had done and like how it would apply to ours and she was like “I really loved your presentation. **I think you guys did very great presenting, even as foreigners.**”

Katherine overcame the miscommunication with the professor not by confronting either Alberto or the professor but by turning to a fellow female student for help, a strategy she had learned from her psychology class. Interestingly, Lucia, who I interviewed first, did not even mention this incident. Perhaps it impacted her less since she relied on Katherine to handle all the interactions and solve their problems. The professor also highlighted this dynamic.

“(80) PROF_5: eh in fact the other impression I have is like eh Katherine was almost the host of the other's life, **there was a relationship of how dependence** in fact in classes many of the interactions between the other [Lucia] and me, Katherine was present as the mediator.”²⁸

²⁸ Original text: “PROF_4: eh de hecho la otra impresión que tengo es como eh Katherine hacía de casi anfitriona de la vida de la otra, había una relación de como dependencia de hecho en clases muchas de las interacciones entre la otra y yo, estaba presente Katherine como mediadora.”

Even though Lucia considered herself outgoing, in the classroom setting it was Katherine who asked for help while Lucia took a back seat. Nevertheless, the incident still demonstrated how their separation and lack of engagement cumulated in miscommunication about the assignment.

5.2.1.5 Conclusion: Impact on learning during direct enrollment

The SA students' learning was affected by the strategies they utilized to adapt to the local classroom norms. Overall, Lucia's decided to do things by herself and focus on other aspects of SA while Katherine chose to find support among local students and professors through which she gained an appreciation for aspects of the Spanish HE culture. Nevertheless, since these two students were the only ones from their program at the UAM and they took four of their five classes together, they became each other's moral support. Unfortunately, while commiserating helped emotionally, it only affirmed their shared U.S. cultural views rather than trying to gain a deeper understanding of the Spanish culture.

(81) KAT: relationship wise, **well I bonded a lot with Lucia** at the beginning it was kinda tense, um I don't know just cause I didn't know her at all...but we ended up becoming really good friends. I'm like so sad she's leaving and I think it was mostly because **she was someone that I could always like confide in talking to and we related on a lot of things especially since we were both Americans** so if we felt like in a moment like 'this wouldn't fly in America' or like something like 'oh I miss home.' I could tell her and I wouldn't feel like I was being a baby yah know.

Katherine and Lucia strong bond extended beyond the classroom which helped them cope with living abroad but also led them to retreat into cultural superiority when behavioral norms for the HE classroom were violated (e.g., students talking in class or walking in late). They relied on each other to uphold their beliefs about "appropriate" classroom norms rather than searching for other interpretations of these behaviors which may have led to a better understanding of the culture.

Nevertheless, their adaptation strategies were not always similar depending on the situation. Lucia chose to "accept" things for what they were, distancing herself from uncomfortable situations and

enjoying her SA experience through travel and socializing with international students. While Katherine also traveled a lot, she adapted more to the UAM student culture by not being afraid to speak up in class and taking the initiative to talk to professors and students which taught her about the university culture.

Lucia's grand tour style of SA meant that most of her learning was done through traveling, museum visits and her cultural class, "(82) LUC: I think I've learned probably more this semester from traveling and from like the cultural classes than I have like all of college." Through the class and travel she learned about "(83) LUC: art history and going to the different museums and like, it's one thing to learn about it in the U.S. but then to see different like baroque styles and neoclassic and like everything in real life." She viewed traveling as a way to learn about European history, referencing visiting palaces in France and concentration camps in Germany.

However, when asked about what she liked about Spanish culture she only mentioned the family culture, which she felt was similar to her Colombian culture and other superficial aspects of living in Spain such as good transportation and traveling. She did not seem to take away any deeper understanding of the Spanish culture outside of the surface aspects. She mentioned using Spanish from Spain and expanding her academic vocabulary through class and speaking to her host mom; however, she admitted her Spanish learning decreased when she stopped paying attention in class. Nevertheless, her explanation indicates that she did not feel it was her fault, but the "poor" teaching methodology.

(84) LUC: I guess in my classes, but the thing is like maybe Miguel's class because I have to pay attention so much but in my other **classes I just can't pay attention anymore because they are so awful so I just**

MKM: you're just zoned out

LUC: yeah basically

MKM: ok

LUC: it's rough. **I've checked out mentally of those classes.**

Her attitude shows that physically being in a situation is not the same as being actively present which is required for learning. Lucia's frustration and helplessness due to the teaching methods was detrimental to her overall learning. Additionally, since she made primarily international friends through the ESN and CityLife groups, she spoke English during the majority of her time in Spain except with the host family. When asked if she would do anything different, she mentioned attending the international student events sooner, which highlights that for her it was more important to have emotional support through international friends than meeting local people, learning the local culture and language.

Much of Katherine's learning was also focused on big "C" culture aspects from her DiLe literature class and her culture class. She reported learning about history, museums, and current events; nevertheless, she also valued meeting Spanish people to understand the culture.

(85) KAT: Yes, **I was able to meet people. I think I really got a taste of Spanish culture.** I got to see like different arts and history and language and ah I don't know. **Meet people and realize this is a living breathing country** that's not just yah know history um and how its evolved and like what it is now or what it was before and how it sees itself now, like it as a country which is very interesting. **I learned a lot of this in my culture class but then I actually got to live it** and I actually got to see all of it and see how its evolved which I think was my main goal was just to get another aspect, another perspective of life! in a different country.

Katherine valued interactions as part of her learning process beyond classes and observations. She also added that her Spanish grammar and vocabulary improved through speaking to her professors, host family and friends in psychology class, especially with Martina.

Katherine demonstrated a deeper understanding of the Spanish HE system than Lucia which she attributed to her contact with local students and professors, especially in her psychology class. Even though she was upset at Alberto for not helping with the group work; she was more forgiving because her relationships with the Spanish students helped her appreciate the benefits of this system as well.

(86) KAT: **I really love the group effort, so I think Lucia would have said that it was a negative** for her because she thinks that you know, obviously everyone should **pull their weight in a group and that's true**...this needs to be done **like all together like but I understand** like how it would be like **feeling of never getting left behind must be really nice** cause you know that your classmates **got your back**.

Even though Katherine was clearly frustrated with Alberto's effort in their group project, even perhaps more so than Lucia who did not mention this situation, her experience benefiting from the group effort in her psychology class helped her put issue with Alberto into perspective. It allowed for a more balanced evaluation of the cultural differences in student relationships. Even though Katherine was equally checked out in the humanities class as Lucia, her overall impressions of the UAM academic culture demonstrated more intercultural learning than Lucia.

This story represents multiple perspectives of the Spanish classroom and how different adaptation strategies impact the SA students' experiences and learning from the direct enrollment experience. Katherine's and Lucia's experiences being the only SA student in a class illustrated the benefits and drawbacks respectively. Furthermore, it demonstrates how strategies may change when students have a co-national peer in class. Finally, their narratives provide insights into why sometimes cross-cultural contact in a multicultural classroom does or does not lead to intercultural learning.

5.2.2 It's not always easier for heritage speakers

I chose the stories of three master students of teaching Spanish as a second language to explore the unique challenges of heritage speakers and advantages of being a non-native speaker. Considering many direct enrollment students are heritage or native speakers, including half of my participants, I felt it was essential to address how identity can influence the experience. Some, such as Lucia and Katherine, did not feel their Spanish impacted their classroom experience; however, it did not guarantee cultural adaptation either. For others, the fact their Spanish sounded natural meant professors were not

necessarily aware of their struggles with academic Spanish. Furthermore, some heritage and native students reported miscommunications due to differences in linguistic variations of Spanish.

I recognize that these are master students with previous experience abroad and a higher maturity level. Nevertheless, since their stories are exemplars of the results from the full data set and therefore I still feel they are appropriate for exploring these issues. Another benefit of using their stories is that the students were more reflective and self-aware which allowed for better insights into their experiences which many bachelor students could not fully articulate. Lastly, the professor in this story exemplifies common teaching methods that were perceived positively by all students even though the SA students still misunderstood the academic expectations regarding assignments.

I met Sara after the UAM faculty's orientation for undergraduate exchange students. Even though she was not required by her program to attend, she decided to use it as an opportunity to check out the campus. Over a coffee, I developed a rapport with her through chatting about our experiences studying abroad in Spain and traveling in Argentina. Sara was a non-native speaker, who considered herself a Spanish learner and embraced her errors. She chose a social integration strategy, purposefully sitting with Spanish students in the class to improve her Spanish. She also used the academic integration strategy because it was her normal strategy to be academically successful in the U.S. She did very well at the UAM, scoring the highest of all students on the first paper, by attending office hours and seeking grammatical help from her on-site Attleboro College tutors.

When I attend Sara's class, I met the another two Master students. Valeria and Maria were both born in the U.S. and grew up speaking Spanish at home. Valeria experienced many encounters of "linguistical racism" during which Spanish speakers either did not understand her "Mexican" words or told her she was speaking incorrectly. This lowered her confidence in her own language abilities and also led to her preference to speak English with Spaniards because she felt it held a "superior" status compared to her "Mexican Spanish". Maria also had experiences of being told she was speaking incorrectly but

instead of switching to English, she would explain that is not incorrect, just different. During my first chat with them during the class break, I built rapport by sharing my similar experiences due to my “Argentinean” linguistic variation of Spanish.

In class, Maria and Valeria sat together in the back resembling the separation strategy and participated when called on or during group work in class. However, after the first assignment which both failed, they became more self-conscious with their Spanish and spoke less. It was not until after the second or third assignment and seeing how office hours had helped Sara, did they switch to an academic integration strategy by asking the professor for office hours which allowed them to pass the class. Neither took the initiative to speak to Spanish students because they felt the Spanish students already had their friend groups, the class did not provide a space to talk, and their priorities for friendships lay elsewhere. Even though they had the “advantage” of being a heritage speaker, their stories demonstrate how this was not an automatic benefit compared to the non-native speakers.

5.2.2.1 The SA students: Sara, Valeria and Maria

Sara, Valeria and Maria were studying a Master’s in Applied Languages or Spanish Language and Literature through Attleboro College which required one year of study at Attleboro College in Madrid during which they could enroll in one or two classes at the UAM. All three students were under a language pledge which they took seriously, always writing and speaking to me in Spanish unless being interviewed. The three students shared a teacher education of Spanish course at the UAM and Maria also took an additional poetry course.

Sara was twenty-four years old and had studied Spanish during her undergraduate degree in a small liberal arts school in Ohio. She had studied abroad before in Spain for three months in Santiago de Compostela and a couple of months in Salamanca. She had also traveled for three weeks in Argentina. She had an advanced level of Spanish and was confident in herself as a Spanish learner. She knew she stood out as a foreigner but reported feeling comfortable in her own awkwardness. She spent the first

month adjusting to life in a big city as opposed to the Amish country where she was from and completing her moving practicalities “to do” list. She lived in a host family of one older woman with a big family. During the week, she was busy with school and on the weekends stayed in Madrid rather than traveling since she had already visited much of Spain. Her goals for the year were completing her classes, improving her Spanish and meeting local people.

Valeria was a twenty-seven-year-old with an undergraduate degree in education during which she studied for a year in Madrid at an American university. She taught Spanish for five years in Texas before coming to Spain. She lived with her husband who was also Mexican descent and another student in the program. She socialized mainly with cohort peers but reported following the language pledge. She enrolled in the Master with the intention of applying for a doctorate program back in the U.S. the following year. Her main goals were to do well in academically and expand her and her husbands’ worldviews by living in another culture.

Maria was a twenty-six-year-old from New York who did her undergraduate in English and had studied Spanish translation and interpretation. She lived in South Korea teaching English after college for a year and in Colombia for four months. In Madrid, she was living with an older roommate with whom she did not cross paths often. Although most of her friends were from Attleboro College’s program, she had various Spanish language exchange partners and socialized using online apps to meet people. She had a proactive attitude towards both learning Spanish and the culture. During the week, she focused on school and on the weekends, she stayed in Madrid. Maria chose to take two classes at the UAM because she wanted to get out of her comfort zone and experience the life of a Spanish student.

5.2.2.2 The classroom: Teacher education of the Spanish language

The teacher education of the Spanish language class had about twenty full-time master students from the UAM who were of both national and international (mainly Chinese) backgrounds. It was a small classroom, typical of the Philosophy and the Arts building, with two columns of desks and an aisle in the

middle. The international students sat spread out between the groups of Spanish students. The professor provided the students with a dossier of assignments, which was divided into three chapters of how to teach Spanish: grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

I showed up about ten minutes early to observe the class and found a seat in the back left middle. Sara was already there on the mid-back left-hand side reading the Metro 20 newspaper in Spanish. A girl behind her asked about Moodle platform and they talked for a couple of minutes before Sara returned to her newspaper. At 9:00 am, the scheduled start time, a male Spanish student came in and sat down next to Sara. I was surprised that Sara was sitting with a group of Spanish students rather than near Maria and Valeria who were sitting alone on opposite sides of the classroom.

The professor began class at 9:05am by asking them if they had any questions about the assignments before launching into the explanation of a topic. Then, she told them to get in groups and discuss problems of Spanish learners. Maria switched seats to sit by Valeria and they formed a group with the Chinese and Spanish students. Sara was worked with the Spanish guy and girl to her left. After ten minutes, there was an open discussion facilitated by the professor. I was surprised that the professor seemed to know both the names and country, heritage or part of Spain of each student.

The professor later explained, “(87) PROF_7: The thing is that **learning the names is very useful** because when you say in a class, “who knows that?” **Only the two who dare answer, not the two who know the answer.**”²⁹ Throughout the lesson, she took advantage of the diversity in the classroom by having Spanish students ask the foreign students their perspectives as Spanish learners themselves. As the professor explained to me:

²⁹ Original text: “PROF_7: Es que lo de aprenderse los nombres es muy útil porque cuando tú dices en una clase, “¿quién sabe eso?” Solo se contestan los dos que se atreven, no lo dos que saben.”

“(88) PROF_7: It is very useful to have foreign students because they will **teach you how they have learned Spanish**. So, it is very useful for Spanish students to see how it is also **done in other countries**. So, in the master's degree, it is very good, very very positive.”³⁰

The professor taught using active methodologies. From the first day, she set the expectation for participation by having the exchange students present themselves and asking all students to share their opinions. For the U.S. students, the teaching methodology was similar to the U.S.; however, the expectations for the assignments were a complete mystery, one which Sara was able to solve faster than the Maria and Valeria due to their different adaptation strategies.

5.2.2.3 Sara – Don't be shy, ask for help!

A master's level class on teaching Spanish as a second language offers an added challenge for students who are still Spanish language learners themselves. Not only was Sara not a native speaker, but she also did not have previous knowledge of education. Nevertheless, Sara did very well academically in the course. She was comfortable in her awkwardness as an exchange student and did not let it impede her from interacting with local students or participating in class. Sara provides an example of how a non-native student can overcome the language barrier, improve their Spanish and do well even in a demanding local classroom.

On the first day of class, Sara decided to come to the UAM by herself rather than with her Attleboro College peers. Since her goal was to learn Spanish, she purposefully chose to sit near Spanish students so she could build relationships with them. She had been told by Attleboro College that Spanish students are shy and that she should take the first initiative to speak to them. Even though she was timid herself, she decided to strike up a conversation with a Spanish student:

³⁰ Original text: “PROF_7: es utilísimo tener estudiantes extranjeros porque te van a enseñar como ellos han aprendido español. Entonces es muy útil para que los alumnos españoles vean como se hacen también en otros países. Entonces en el máster es muy bueno muy muy positivo.”

(89) SAR: like **“Hi, I’m Sara,”** and I think it was actually the fact that, because you know you have to get materials for before class. So I had gone to pick up the packet of papers that we needed and they were stapled and I had like maybe like eighty pages, eighty pages that were held together with like this one single staple and **I was like this is not gonna last very long (laughs)** and so the guy, Francisco who ended up sitting next to me had come in and he had put on a spiral binding on his **and I was like “you can do that? like how do you do that?”** So that's what got the conversation started.

This conversation was based on school, a topic they had in common. It led to him guiding through her what the professor wanted and introducing her to two other students. All three Spanish students had taught Spanish abroad and were interested in her opinion as a learner, which made the relationship mutually beneficial. Throughout the semester, Sara sat in the same place with the three Spanish students and would work together whenever they broke into groups. She integrated into the social aspect of the class by putting herself out there and asking a class-related question on the first day before everyone had settled into their groups.

Sara was not surprised by the interactive teaching methodology of the professor or that she used international students as examples. She provided me with an example:

(90) SAR: You know we'd have to work on our pronunciation and **people giggle and laugh** and you know it's all, all in like fun and stuff and it is kinda **your face gets red and you get embarrassed** and like **well I said that really bad** (laughs) the pronunciation wasn't that great but I mean that's

MKM: but you didn't mind that she used you as a guinea pig?

SAR: no, I mean, **I was expecting that in many ways** because that was the kind of class I was in so, **I've had lots of experience with that in the past anyways**, so I've gotten used to it. (laughs)

While another student may have been embarrassed, Sara did not view this negatively because she had similar previous experiences, felt the professor was inclusive and had local students' support.

However, Sara was confused about the expectations for the assignments and did not feel the professor made the requirements clear.

(91) SAR: The instructions that our professor had given us **were a little confusing** because she would say like four pages writing and she said that **we could go over by a little bit** and **we don't really know what that means**.

Sara turned to her Spanish friends for help with these technical aspects; however, she was still unsure about the content. Instead of writing the paper and seeing what happened, she decided to meet with the professor during office hours. The professor recommended she use her experiences and perspective about the process of learning Spanish as an advantage in writing the assignment which she found very helpful. In addition, Sara sought feedback from a tutor at Attleboro College about the content and her Spanish. Much to everyone's surprise, Sara received the highest grade in the class on the assignment which boosted her confidence in the class.

Sara perceived that the key to her success was not being afraid to ask questions and to take the initiative to speak to local people. She did not view this as an adaptation but rather her normal behavior to do well academically. She was more nervous at the UAM than Attleboro College but pushed herself to ask questions anyway. She was self-aware of her limitations as a non-native Spanish learner and took initiative to succeed in the class instead of waiting for the local professor or students to approach her.

5.2.2.4 Valeria – You don't speak the "right" Spanish

(92) VAL: **We're not Mexican. We're not just American.** So yeah, sometimes I'd rather speak in English because **no one's gonna correct me cause they don't know**, yah know how to correct. So, in Spanish they are going to find different instances and they will tell you and that hasn't been the only time that that happened but yeah.

MKM: so many people have corrected you?

VAL: **yeah and corrected my friends, and corrected people around me so+...**

Valeria described her Spanish as Mexican with a Texan influence. Valeria found that when she was speaking English in Spain, people at bars would come up to her and want to practice with her. She perceived this as English being viewed in a positive light. However, when speaking in Spanish, she found herself being corrected or misunderstood. Valeria observed that Spanish people were very direct, especially when correcting her Spanish. She concluded that Latin American Spanish was not well respected in Spain as English.

(93) VAL: One of my friends... she was coming into town and she said '**tengo una reservación**' [English: I have a reservation] and the guy was like '**no it's reserva**' [English: reservation]. Whereas *reservación* is completely fine in Latin American because of the influence, the proximity and it's not considered wrong. I mean it's in the yah know, **the people would tell you that's not right**, or anything that ends in "ción" that is similar to English is very Latin American, **it's looked down upon, so you'd rather say it in English**. You'd rather say reservation because people are not going to correct you but if you say *reservación* yah know a variation and much more for us because **we are Mexican American**.

It bothered her how people were not open-minded or aware of the linguistical variations in Spanish. Instead of arguing and/or explaining it is a lexical variation and not incorrect, she preferred to switch to English so they could not judge her. She chose to avoid the stress that confronting people on their intolerance would entail and preferred to brush it off. Nevertheless, it still left her feeling:

(94) VAL: but to me whenever you categorize a, you know certain word that Latin Americans used, or Mexican Americans or Hispanic Americans **is wrong, then you're telling them 'no, my language is above you're language and you need to get educated'** and so it's kinda like you're not accepting that the language has evolved...it brings up a lot of feelings of like **superiority of Spain over Latin American things** like that which is not at all what I think they mean or anything but to me, to people who are trying for like Latin Americans to get equal representation or more education

because I mean if you compare the level of education that a lot of Spaniards have to Latin Americans, then it's yah know it's way lower for Latin Americans in the U.S. among the Spanish [speaking] population so you kinda wanna yah know **empower everyone and accept that that is Spanish whether you like it or not**. So, it stems from a lot and so **I don't wanna think about that every time I talk to someone**.

Even though she believed they probably did not mean to be inferring superiority over her, it still brought up feelings of injustice that she preferred to avoid. She emphasized there being linguistical differences, not a right and wrong to communicate showing an intercultural awareness on her part.

Nevertheless, the expectation of negative reactions from Spanish people made it difficult for her to maintain her confidence. (95) VAL: I tried to be **a little bit more secure of myself** because it just yah know being a Latin American or having Latin American decent in Spain is **a little bit intimidating** because yah know **you say things differently**." She realized that the people were not going to change and that she would have to adapt, not by changing her Spanish but by becoming more secure in her own identity and not worrying if they would correct her for being "wrong". Her confidence in her Spanish impacted her comfort level in the classroom at the UAM. She was more afraid to make mistakes than in her Attleboro College classes where she knew everyone respected her cultural background.

The professor felt that the local master's students were generally open-minded concerning linguistical variations of Spanish. In fact, she made a point in class to highlight the topic:

(96) PROF_7: And I insist a lot in the classes for those who are going to teach later because many people who believe, "well, that is not said in Spanish." **Sorry "it is not said in your! Spanish, but the other one it is.** " And I think that what you have to integrate in the Spanish class for foreigners, of course, is teaching the differences and also to the Spaniards **so they realize that there is more**

than one rule. That the average Spaniard may not know it, but the **Spaniard who studies modern languages** or Hispanic studies or a master's degree in the language **has to know it.**³¹

The professor admits that maybe the average Spanish person is not conscious of the differences, which coincides with the fact Valeria faced these issues in the street, restaurants, hotels, etc. Even though the professor and students were open-minded; Valeria's experiences outside of the classroom still affected her confidence to speak in Spanish in class.

Valeria felt that the teaching pedagogy was pretty similar to the discussion-based classes in the U.S and that it kept students engaged. The only slight difference she noted in the teaching style was that it was a little more relaxed, "(97) VAL: I mean it's **discussion style** but it's not like "**oh my gosh if I didn't read the reading** I'm gonna be completely lost." So, I mean it's a **little more laid back.**" She found the classroom to be relaxed and enjoyable; however, she was surprised at the differences in evaluation.

Valeria was most shocked by the lack of assignments, expectations of the professor and grading style. First, she was concerned that her grade was based on three major grades whereas her university had more practical assignments and participation counted for a higher percentage. Secondly, according to the assignment's description, it was supposed to be four pages long. She assumed that this meant the professor would not read anything over four pages; and therefore, spent a lot of time carefully selecting examples to stay within the limit. Later, she was confused when she found out that Sara had gone over the four-page limit and done much better. Finally, she realized there were differences in grading norms making it more difficult to get a high mark at the UAM.

³¹ Original text: "PROF_7: Y es lo insisto mucho en las clases para los que van a dar clases después porque mucha gente que está con, "es que eso no se dice en español." Perdona "no se dice en **tu!** español, pero el otro sí." Y yo creo que lo que tiene que integrar en el aula de español para extranjeros desde luego, enseñando las diferencias y a los españoles también a que se den cuenta de que hay más de una norma. Que el español de la calle quizás no lo sabe, pero el español que estudia lenguas moderno o estudios hispánicos o un máster en lengua lo tiene que saber.

After not doing well on the first essay, she tried to improve on the second essay by incorporating the professor's feedback from the first essay rather than asking for help. Valeria did not intend to interact with the local students because she already had a good social circle from Attleboro college. Furthermore, since the local students were already friends from taking their classes together, she did not feel they were interested in making new friends. She only interacted with local students during in-class group work. She also decided not to ask for office hours because she perceived them as a one-sided situation in which the professor tells the student what they did wrong. Furthermore, she did not want the professor to think she was making excuses and just trying to get a better grade.

After the second essay, she realized she still did not understand what the professor expected and decided to ask for office hours. The professor helped her understand the expectations by showing her examples of other students' work and explaining each requirement. She realized that grammatical and stylistic mistakes were graded harder than in Attleboro College which she attributed to the professor's expectations of them as future professors. Furthermore, she realized she had summarized but that the professor wanted her to evaluate the texts by taking a stance and giving an opinion.

(98) VAL: I think as a teacher she wanted me to really be able to **see if a book is good or if it's not**, so I can use it in my class which **was very! different** from every single one of my classes because I always had to **keep like non-bias perspective on my essay**, so yah know of course I had to take a stance and I had to have a thesis, but I had to support it with facts not just well, yah know um those are a little bit different when commenting the textbooks because it was more off like **what I think based on** what I've learned is best for my students.

After meeting with the professor, Valeria did much better on her third essay and also became more comfortable with the professor in class. Valeria learned, admittedly a bit late, that it was important to ask for help and make sure you are on the right track when studying in a different academic culture.

5.2.2.5 Maria – *Perhaps it's an advantage but does not negate cultural differences*

Maria considered herself a heritage speaker which she explained to me as:

(99) MAR: **it's about location**...so I was born into a family, I'm first generation American. So, my family spoke only Spanish at home because they were still learning English and then **I picked up on the language because of the constant exposure but I never learned it formally until maybe high school** and my world was mostly in English because most of the time you spend as a kid is at school or in spaces especially in the U.S. **where you are talking in English.**

Only after college, Maria decided to deepen her knowledge of Spanish by studying translation and interpretation leaving her quite confident in her knowledge not only of Spanish but also its lexical varieties. She reported situations in which Spanish people questioned her word choice but in contrast to Valeria, she preferred to confront the situation by explaining that there are linguistic differences but that her word is not incorrect. In fact, she saw the SA experience as an opportunity to live in a context where Spanish was not perceived negatively as sometimes occurred in the U.S. Overall, she viewed her Latin American heritage and Spanish skills as an advantage in Spain.

However, Maria also reported feeling more culture shock living in Spain than when she taught English in South Korea due in part to her expectation that her Latin American culture would be more similar to Spanish culture. Before coming to Spain, she spent four months in Colombia where she found the people were very warm and inclusive. She assumed that her experience in Spain would be similar.

(100) MAR: whenever I spoke to someone in Spanish, whenever I interacted with someone in Spanish, it actually was always with **Latin Americans and so I was very used to that kinda warm and kinda like, instant glue like when you meet these people** (laughs) and I'm not saying it's everybody obviously but most people that I met that are Latin American are like that, but here it's a much slower process and **that's not necessarily bad, it's just so different** ... I wouldn't say that

it was very shocking because I was already told that **Madrid is a little bit distant** the people um, but it was just different, a different experience with people who speak Spanish.

She felt people in Madrid had their busy lives and tight-knit friend groups which made it difficult to integrate herself. She believed that knowing Spanish people was necessary to learn about the culture but found it harder than expected to make friends. She had a positive outlook and a desire to explore the richness of Spanish culture despite these challenges.

Upon arriving at the UAM, Maria was confident in her Spanish wanted to get to know Spanish students. Nevertheless, she found it difficult to connect with local students which she attributed to her own shyness and fear of being an outsider. She began to seek relationships through language exchanges outside of the UAM instead. In time, she did not feel a connection to the UAM campus or see the classroom as a place to make local friends. “(101) MAR: well, um but we haven’t really connected mostly I guess because **I’m not really a student of the UAM**, I’m in that kinda weird grey area, of like **I don’t see you most of the time.**” She only interacted with students during group work and relied on the teacher for academic questions. Also, she did not interact much with international students because they would speak in English and she wanted to follow the Spanish language pledge.

Maria was not surprised by the discussion-based teaching methodology of her two professors and found them to be very knowledgeable. In fact, she was impressed that her poetry professor brought in Latin American poetry instead of the Spanish centric perspective she had expected. She was also inspired by the experiential approach to education. She highlighted cultural differences such as the amount, expectations and grading of the assignments which she found challenging because it seemed everyone except her had an implied knowledge about the academic expectations.

(102) MAR: The professors, since the classes are big and people are already doing their master and everything, the **expectations are kinda implied**. Like in one class everybody somehow knew that the format that they expected was APA and **I didn't know, because I wasn't part of the**

master's programs. So, things like that where things are understood by the general people, the general population there um are not understood to a foreigner like me (laughs) so so yeah **so it was a lot more challenging** because of the fact that wasn't kinda in on all of the details.

MKM: how did you find out that?

MAR: the hard way.

She found that the expectations were different in terms of style, formatting, and an emphasis on grammar. She was accustomed to having assessment requirements specified through rubrics. Maria felt that her grade was lowered significantly due to formatting issues such as references or the length of the paper, which at least in her experience (and mine as well) are considered secondary to the content in the U.S. Also, her grammar was weaker due to her lack of practice writing in academic Spanish. In addition, there were fewer assessments: three papers in one class and just a final essay in the other. The feedback was provided in the form of notes on her essay; however, she could not keep the essay which she found made it difficult to improve.

Maria's approach to adapting to the culture was being open to the new culture and observing. In the classroom this meant sitting alone and observing. She learned the hard way, doing poorly on the first assignment, that there were different expectations for the assignments. She applied the formatting recommended in the feedback and passed the second assignment but still lost many points for grammar and language. To adapt, she reached out to the Attleboro College tutor for help with the third assignment rather than the local professor because it was difficult to get to the UAM from the Attleboro College campus downtown. I also believe this had to do with her being more comfortable with Attleboro College staff. In retrospect, she felt she should have reached out sooner to the Spanish tutor to help her adapt to the high level of academic Spanish that was required.

In the classrooms, her participation depended on how confident she was feeling in the class.

(103) MAR: In the education class **um I started off pretty confident** cause I though we're just gonna study content, this is gonna be kinda fun. **But the more challenging it got, the less confident I got and probably the less I participated** and then and obviously because I thought I was gonna fail (laughs) and then um in my poetry class I was a little intimidated by the fact that everyone spoke so well (laughs) that **um I started off with a low confidence but then we had a presentation** and I realized I could speak well and the professor kinda gave **me a pat on the back kind of thing and my confidence went up**, so it was kinda a reverse thing in both classes.

Her seating choice also reflected her confidence and eagerness to partake. She sat up front and participated more in the poetry class which she was also more passionate about. In the education class she was more intimidated and less sure of herself; therefore, she chose to sit in the back with Valeria and observe. Although, she found the education class more entertaining because it was a dynamic class; she participated more in the poetry level because she was more confident.

Maria felt that the only real barrier to getting to know Spanish people were her own self-doubt or fear of making a cultural misstep. Even though she recognized it was important to be open to making mistakes, her fear of them held her back. Nevertheless, she was very perceptive of the culture by observing people and cultural artifacts in public spaces. She had many exchange partners and stuck to the language pledge which she felt help her to be proactive in her learning. While she certainly demonstrated a knowledge of Spanish culture, it was attributed to her extra-curricular activities rather than the UAM classroom experience.

5.2.2.6 Conclusion: Impact on learning during direct enrollment

All three students reported important learning outcomes from the UAM class; however, the depth and type of learning were shaped by their adaptation choices. The academic content was highly valued by all three students especially since the subject directly impacted their language learning. Valeria was very

impressed with the professor's deep knowledge of Spanish linguistics and believed it will make her a better professor in the future.

(104) MAR: So, for example when I taught Spanish back in the United States there were a lot of irregular patterns and so whenever I would teach them to my students, whenever they wouldn't match the pattern, **I would say "oh those are just irregulars you know they don't fit the pattern"** but **she went a step above and beyond and she said "no, the reason why they are irregular is because** you know in their Greek form they were this, in their um Latin form they were this. So that's what makes them irregular when they came to be part of the Spanish language."

Valeria and Maria reported academic learning; however, their separation strategy was not conducive to academic success. Sara's adaptation strategy of communicating with local students and professors proved more successful in demonstrating her learning on exams.

All students believed the class helped to improve grammar and vocabulary due to its demand for a higher level of Spanish, in-class discussion and essay writing. Valeria appreciated that the professor corrected some false cognates from English that are probably used in Texas but not technically formal Spanish.

(105) VAL: The other day I used *expectaciones* instead of *expectativas* [English: expectations] and I had yah know **my professor corrected me so I really do think that's a good thing** because then I'm like getting to practice all of these things that the **word processor cannot correct me on**.

None of the students felt the class improved their speaking because they did not practice Spanish beyond class participation. Even though Sara made friends, she noted it was difficult to spend time with them due to the distance between the Attleboro College campus and the UAM. For this reason, Maria also focused on practicing Spanish with locals outside of the UAM.

From an intercultural learning perspective, the students valued listening to the opinions of international and Spanish students. Furthermore, Sara perceived that the experience at the UAM taught

her about the university aspect of Spanish culture. Another positive intercultural learning was Maria's reflection on her identity as a Spanish speaker as well as her perception of the relationship between Spain and Latin America.

(106) MAR: In the U.S., I don't think that Spanish carries so much prestige. It was all about “oh there are so many Spanish speakers that you should speak Spanish” or something like that and then also it was the language of immigrants and you **associate struggle with immigration.** You associate financial hardship, so not good or positive associations but **here since Spanish is the main language and I see people in sorts of leadership positions** and things like that it's been different now, the way I see the culture and the language. I feel like it's a lot, **I've had a more positive experience within this group.**

Additionally, she believed there was a tension between Spain and Latin America due to the history of imperialism; however, her classes also taught her about the growing collaboration between the two regions and the positive aspects of the Spanish culture. While being in Spain made Valeria more self-conscious speaking Spanish at least to Spaniards, Maria felt it improved her perception and pride in her heritage language.

Overall, even though Sara objectively had a lower Spanish level than Valeria and Maria, her adaptation strategies helped her do well academically and have local classmates to sit with while neither Valeria and Maria felt like a part of the UAM student body nor viewed it as a place for cultural learning. The experience negotiating their identity as heritage speakers in and outside of the classroom impacted their overall experience and their academic difficulties made them more self-conscious speaking Spanish the class. Even though, they still passed the course and valued the learning from the exposure to a higher level of Spanish learning and academic content; their experiences highlight the importance of further understanding how identity impacts heritage language learners experience.

5.2.3 Same classroom, two different experiences

The following story highlights the role that personality and program structure have in shaping the direct enrollment experience. The observed classroom had two non-native speakers with previous experience abroad but who were from different programs and did not interact with each other. This provided a unique opportunity to analyze how different perceptions, attitudes and behaviors lead to different adaptation strategies and results in a relatively consistent environment. Their stories represent two patterns related to individual predisposition and SA programs. The first looks at the impact of the hybrid program's location on the feeling of belonging at the UAM and the perceived opportunities to meet native students. The second theme analyses how being self-conscious as an outsider versus accepting oneself as an exchange student impacts how the experience unfolds.

The SA students often wondered if they had been in a different class would the experience have been different. This story suggests that perhaps students' choices are more important than classroom variables. Ashleigh was outgoing and not afraid to embarrass herself, which earned her both international and national friends with whom she did her group work and met in the cafeteria. Her program was also on-campus meaning she spent all day at the UAM whereas, Meredith's program was off-campus, so she always had to run back right after class. She was very shy about approaching other students meaning her only contact with local students was during the group project. Both students felt they gained international perspectives from the class and learned to relax within the class structure; however, Meredith rarely interacted with people at the UAM, whereas Ashleigh became part of the class, which led to more intercultural and language learning.

5.2.3.1 The SA students: Ashleigh and Meredith

Ashleigh and Meredith were both juniors at medium-sized universities in large U.S. cities, Caucasian females with a high level of Spanish and past SA experience. A significant difference was that Ashleigh was very blond and wore American-styled clothes making it obvious she was American;

whereas Meredith had dark hair and could easily pass as a Spanish student. They both enrolled in only one UAM class from the International Studies degree. Even though they were in the same class, two key factors shaped their experiences differently: personal characteristics and program location.

Ashleigh was from Texas and a double major in international affairs and Spanish at Fall River University. She spent the first semester of her junior year in Quito, Ecuador. She lived with a host family that was like a second family to her while she took classes at a U.S center and directly enrolled in one class in English at the local university. She had only two years of college-level Spanish before going to Ecuador but had previous exposure to Spanish from her Mexican friends. She reported greatly improving her Spanish in Ecuador and was confident in her level by the time she arrived in Spain.

In Madrid, she was living in a host family with whom she had less of a connection than her family in Ecuador. During the first month, she traveled on the weekends both with her program and alone around Spain. She felt her best experience was in Cuenca because they were able to find a “local” spot and spend time with Spaniards. She was excited about the opportunity to directly enroll in a local class in Spanish because she felt it was a different experience to interact in their language rather than in English and wanted to make friends with Spanish students. Although she would have liked to take more UAM classes, her SA program classes were preapproved for credit at Fall River University and she was having difficulty getting even this UAM class approved.

Meredith was a double major in global liberal studies with a concentration in identities and representations and Spanish with a minor in global public health at Narragansett University (NU). She previously lived in Zaragoza, Spain for nine months in high school, had studied abroad for four months in Argentina in college and spent one month in Chile volunteering at a hostel. She felt prepared for the direct enrollment experience and was focused on learning both Spanish language and the academic content. She spent the first semester in Madrid taking classes at the NU center, living at a residence hall with other NU students, hanging out with her mostly American friends, traveling and exploring the city. She chose to

move into a shared flat with two Spanish and one French person and enrolled in the UAM class to increase the immersion for the second semester.

5.2.3.2 The classroom: International Studies

In the class, there were about 25 students who would show up on any given day even though there were 40-50 students on the official list. The class met in the mornings and would normally begin 10 minutes after the scheduled time. The room was organized into two columns of benches of desks with flip-down chairs facing a PowerPoint presentation. Ashleigh sat in the front left with the Brazilian exchange students and Spanish students whom she introduced me to briefly as I entered. Meredith sat in the back right near her group members. During the lecture, the students were generally quiet although during lulls in class they would whisper and laugh amongst themselves.

The professor used a PowerPoint to outline theories as she walked up and down the aisle explaining them. Ashleigh felt students intervened frequently in class; whereas Meredith felt it was many lecture-based with little participation. This discrepancy could be attributed to differences in their home universities. It was certainly more lecture-based on the two days I attended class; however, I cannot draw a definite conclusion from only two classes. Neither student felt there was a difference between the practical and lecture classes. Overall, this class was typical of the standard lecture class.

5.2.3.3 To stand out or blend in - Embracing oneself as a foreigner or shying away?

(107) ASH: There are no other Americans. Well, ok I'm not exactly sure because no one looks blatantly American or like clearly not Spanish.

(108) MER: I know there's this one [American] girl with really blond hair. Is that her? I could definitely tell she was American, but I don't know if she has like the same concerns as I have.

Ashleigh was a self-assured student who would make fun of herself as a Spanish learner and a foreigner in the classroom. She was aware that she stood out but was also accustomed to being in this position after

her experience in Ecuador. At the UAM, she used her obvious difference as a way to be noticed and make friends, learning to lean on them for academic help. She noticed cultural differences in the classroom such as the setup of the class, students not showing up, scheduling changes, and Spanish from Spain but her attitude was to keep an open mind about the experience, relax, and learn what she could from it.

Meredith described herself as a very shy person, even in English never mind in Spanish. She had imagined that she would make a ton of Spanish university friends that she could present to her NU friends and all hang out together. Within the first two weeks, she realized that taking one class at 9:00 am and then leaving for class downtown was going to make it difficult to build relationships. During the first couple of weeks, she felt very insecure just “(109) MER: sitting and being there and **being foreign and not understanding** things.”

Meredith felt that at NU professors understood she was a Spanish learner but at the UAM she needed to present herself as a competent Spanish speaker and therefore was less confident about asking for help when needed. While she noted some of the same cultural differences as Ashleigh, she also felt the teaching methodology was more lecture than discussion based. Throughout the semester, she became more comfortable in the class and was able to eventually lean on her group members for academic help; however, she did not feel like part of the university culture as she was not really on campus and her relationships with the students were limited to the classroom.

First impressions and confusions

Upon arrival, Meredith was most shocked by how students would show up thirty minutes late for class or leave fifteen minutes early when the class was only an hour. She felt the UAM students seemed less mature than American students which she attributed to different life experiences and how Spanish students tend to live at home during college while students at NU live in a big city. Ashleigh echoed the sentiment, but she prefaced the opinion and admitted U.S. students had some faults as well,

(110) ASH: I might be misinterpreting, so you know a lot of **Spanish students live at home** because it makes sense for them and that I think I've noticed like a certain, **I feel like American students are much more mature** when they go off the college, **I mean like in certain ways they're idiots, (laughs) more than the Spanish** but in other ways you know I, at least myself. I run my own life when I'm in college back home and being **here there's a lot more of a familiar atmosphere to being in college** which is interesting.

Ashleigh's attitude was one of curiosity and self-reflection on her own college experience. This differed from Meredith's opinion of, "(111) MER: even though they were **only like a year younger** than me, I felt like **quite a large age difference** just in terms of, I don't know, **I imagine we spent our weekends, things differently.**" Without actually knowing, Meredith assumed local students were different which to me sounded like a way to justify to herself the difficulty in developing deeper local relationships.

On the first day of class, Ashleigh found herself completely lost. She was hoping that her Spanish would be good enough but as the professor quickly went over the syllabus, "mumbling" in Spanish from Spain, Ashleigh "(112) ASH: was like '**oh my god.**' I was like, I literally wrote down in my notebook, '**all you have to do is pass,**' because that is what it's going to be on my transcript (laughs)." She decided that she would focus on getting good grades in her program classes which counted towards the GPA and reset her expectations for this class to pass and gain a cultural immersion experience.

(113) ASH: **when I'm at Fall River University, I really, I get stressed about things** like that.

I want to figure everything out on the first day. If the **syllabus doesn't have the dates on it, I'm pissed**, like I got to have like everything to a T, and I think that I am learning, gradually, especially after my semester in Ecuador, to sort like, to say like, in this class **that I'm taking, I don't know everything and its ok...**And I don't have to take it month by month, **I can take it day by day and as long as I'm doing my best and doing the most learning that I possibly can** and getting the most out of the class that I can, it's ok. And

like its ok, like **it's ok if I am not fluent in Spanish yet** and I'm taking the class, like **it's a learning experience** and that what's important. So as much as it does stress me, **I'm really trying to let it not stress me**, like I'm working toward that a little bit yeah.

Instead of comparing herself to heritage or native speakers; Ashleigh took direct enrollment experience as an opportunity to learn Spanish as well as the content. She adjusted her expectations and focused on classroom learning from a holistic perspective rather than just getting a good grade. She adapted to the stress of not completely understanding everything in the class by appreciating the experience for the learning opportunities it presented and not focusing on her deficits compared to others.

Ashleigh did not report being shocked by anything about the UAM, except that she felt the campus was like high school. Instead, she described cultural aspects in terms of being interested in understanding them. She even mentioned she would not mind taking one very heavily lectured-based class because even if she would not enjoy it, she felt it would be "(114) ASH: cool to have that perspective." The main differences she found at the UAM were related to the relationships between professor and students, the expectations for assignments, the more collaborative styled classroom instead of "(115) ASH: keep to yourself, an American style classroom." The teaching methodology was not surprising because at her U.S. university she had the "(116) ASH: run of the gambit" from large lectures to small discussion groups. She was happy to find that her professor encouraged discussion which she felt kept her more engaged.

Meredith's first impression was also that the campus felt like a high school. This could be attributed also to the fact both students attended classes in large cities; whereas the UAM is on campus, divided into small faculties and the students stay in the same classrooms. Overall, she was more shocked than Ashleigh about the teaching methodology.

(117) MER: I guess I expected it to be different cause I knew, I just knew that the Spanish education system is different from the U.S. but **I didn't expect it to be as different as it is...**I don't know how

you could even be so explicit too as to say as to what they do differently **because I feel it's a very subjective idea as to what's seems right and wrong** for like how they structure things but yeah. Compared to her home university, Meredith did not feel the class was discussion-based but rather a PowerPoint lecture with the same couple of people participating. She also noticed the room did not have loose desks that can be organized into circles to facilitate discussion. Nevertheless, she enjoyed the professor's teaching style even though she felt the language barrier made it more difficult for her to follow. To adapt, she decided to start taping the classes so she could listen again to understand better.

Ashleigh found the relationship between the professor and students to be one of equal respect in which the professor was open to hearing the opinions of the students both relating to the material but also in the scheduling of the class. Ashleigh perceived that the professor's attitude towards class discussion was, "(118) ASH: **It's not a what I say goes** and that's it. It's very much like you can disagree with me and **we can talk about this.**" Even though Ashleigh did not always agree with the other students' opinions, especially the Brazilians viewpoint on economic development; she appreciated how the professor allowed for the discussion and found it interesting to hear the different opinions. Meredith also appreciated that the professor was open to students' questions and discussions when they arose.

The local students wanted to change the class schedule because it was a bit inconvenient to have three short hour-long classes early in the morning. Ashleigh described the professor-student relationship as frank when the professor said, "(119) ASH: alright so **you guys want to make this change** to our schedule, so **talk amongst your peers** and like **we can get it done** because that works for me too." As the students tried to rearrange the classes there was a lot of back and forth and talking over each other. Not surprisingly, Ashleigh got lost; however, she just asked her friends, "(120) ASH: **hey like wait, so this is what we're doing now?**" and they filled her in. While changing schedules in the U.S. is uncommon, she viewed it positively because she also found it inconvenient to wake up early and felt it showed mutual respect between the professor and student.

However, Meredith was stressed out by the changes in the schedule and did not relate it to a closer student-professor relationship. For her, scheduling changes were more problematic because she had to get back to class on her NU campus right after class. Additionally, there were two group sections A or B; but she could only attend one of them and was unsure which section she was supposed to be in. Overall, she was extremely confused about when class was happening.

(121) MER: just how the class is structured or what's the scheduling of it because like I mentioned there's the *desdobles* [English: sections] like A and B and then there's the two hour class on Thursday and I was like ok for it to work with **my schedule I need to be in the *desdoble* A** and have the class on Thursday but then she was like well we're supposed to be learning on Thursdays we are actually going to be learning on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, **but I actually wasn't totally sure if that was what was actually happening**. So, there was just a bunch of confusion, I wasn't even sure until this week that Wednesday classes **were actually a thing, until my group partners like mentioned it**.

Meredith also ended up relying on her groupmates to figure out when class was taking place; however, it stressed her more because it impacted her schedule negatively whereas it benefited Ashleigh's.

Both students were equally confused about the assignments and if there was any daily homework. They were used to a more structured U.S. system as Meredith describes, "(122) MER: we have our syllabus and like you know **exactly** what you have to do for **each day, every day**." Not knowing if and/or what was the homework was concerning for Meredith, although she was trying not to let it stress her out which was Ashleigh's strategy:

"(123) ASH: So, for this *grado* [English: undergraduate] class, not only is there like no reading to do, I actually, **I seriously don't understand what the homework is**. I'm telling you I'm really getting by day to day, I don't understand it. um to be honest the work level seems very minimal and as far as studying goes...

MKM: what is your assessment for the *grado* class?

ASH: (laughs) **I don't know. I don't know.** (laughs) I think there is a midterm, over what I am not sure. I know there is a presentation which people have on assigned days on the semester um at which our groups will get together about the topic um and then there is a final, but I don't know what it is.

MKM: ok

ASH: **yeah, I'm really like day by day. I figure things work.** I figure more things out every day that I go to class

Ashleigh decided to adapt by relaxing her expectations for needing to know about assignments and assuming she would learn as she goes.

Even though Meredith seemed more stressed about the UAM class than Ashleigh, when the midterm finally came around, neither student passed it. Neither had approached the professor about the midterm nor asked the Spanish students for help. Both felt they had not studied very much and did not study the right things. In fact, Meredith's confusion about the scheduling led to her believe the exam was on Wednesday only to find out on Monday night via her group chat that the exam was on Tuesday. To pass the final exam, both students adapted by taking advantage of the collaborative nature of the classroom and studying more of the correct material.

Professor's facilitation of adaptation

Developing relationships with local students was more difficult for Meredith than Ashleigh due to their personality differences. Fortunately for both students, the professor organized the group projects and intentionally broke up the exchange students. "(124) ASH: **She separated us out** and I think that was like **absolutely key**, for me anyway because **if she had just put us all together** there would be **no opportunity to interact with other students from Spain.**" During the *prácticas* classes, they worked in groups which Ashleigh felt forced her to practice Spanish and interact with Spanish students. For

Meredith, group work was her only social integration in the class. The daily projects gave her a group to sit with in class and helped her gain confidence by talking to one of the Spanish students in particular. Meredith perceived the project also forced her to ask more questions and be involved in the class. The professor facilitated the social integration of both SA students by assigning mixed groups which later helped them adapt academically as well.

Ashleigh also felt the professor helped her stand out by referencing her when speaking about the U.S. "(125) ASH: So sometimes she will mention something like **'so like in the US'**, and then she'll look at me and I'll be **'hm I know it.'**" These teaching methods made her feel the professor knew who she was and made her comfortable asking questions. Meredith also mentioned that the professor would check that the international students were understanding but did not mention being referenced as being from the U.S. This may be because her physical attributes made her blend in with the local students.

Since the professor made it obvious Ashleigh was an exchange student, she felt more comfortable in making mistakes. For example, for her presentation for the group project she felt,

(126) ASH: I think they were all expecting me to be like absolute like shit (laughs) and then **when I proved myself to be like slightly less than shit, then they were like "oh, oh my god"** having them have that knowledge, like me not having to be like "hey I'm an American," helped out to, **not that they wouldn't have not known anyway** because [points to herself].

Ashleigh lowered her expectations for herself as a non-native Spanish speaker in a local classroom. She often referenced being obviously a foreigner and rather than viewing it as something that made her awkward, she used it to take the pressure off herself to be perfect. On the other hand, Meredith remained self-conscious about being an outsider and refrained from participating in class.

Social integration and adaptation

Meredith was much less engaged in the group work with her Spanish classmates because she was not on campus to join all the meetings. Originally, when they were organizing the assignment, Meredith

felt she would have arranged the information differently; however, since the Spanish students had all their classes together, during breaks sometimes they would do her part for her. “(127) MER: They were like, ‘oh we just met up and ended up doing all of it or like don't worry about it.’” She felt this differed from the U.S. where people tend to do their parts separately and would not do someone else’s work. While the group chat helped Meredith to figure out what assignments were expected; the relationship did not develop past the academic matters. In retrospect, she would have liked to take more than one class at the UAM because she felt the fact she had to rush back downtown after class did not give her many opportunities to integrate into the campus and develop relationships.

Fortunately, Ashleigh made friends in the class from the start. Her ability to laugh at her embarrassing moments and openness to the experience helped her social integration which in turn helped her succeed academically. Before attending class, Ashleigh had been warned that Spanish students have their groups and it would be difficult to make friends but did not find that to be the case. It surprised her how friendly the students were despite having their clicks:

(128) ASH: This girl walked in and she just goes “hola” and like the people were like “hola” and this other girl walked in and she was like “hola” and then **everyone was like “hola” and it was so bizarre to me** and was like “oh my god are they all just like saying hello to each other”, like good morning, because in an **American classroom, no one! would say that to you if they didn't know you. No one!** would be like good morning everyone, no one would respond (laughs) and so it was very much like a, so nice.

Not only did she find that they were friendly in general but towards her as well. First, she made friends with two Brazilian students that showed up late for the class and when the professor asked if they were exchange students, Ashleigh waved to them. Even though she felt like a “(129) ASH: dumbass after it” she was happy because they became friends. This embarrassing incident allowed her to make preliminary friendships as Spanish students approached her to see if she needed help or was lost, and also out of

curiosity about the U.S. One of the Brazilian guys was also popular and introduced her to others in the class. She attributed social integration to the students being very nice and inviting her to have coffee rather than her initiative to make friends. Nevertheless, considering Meredith was unable to develop the same relationships, I believe her friendliness, sitting up front near other students and accepting herself as an exchange student did facilitate her social integration.

The Spanish students informed her of the smaller daily assignments. She had a group chat where she “(130) ASH: could be like ‘hey I really don't understand what I'm supposed to do tomorrow, can you help me out?’ and they were totally cool with trying to help.” Whenever she got lost as the class she would:

(131) ASH: **ask the people next to me, um the Spanish student** and a lot of the time **I find they are confused too and they'll be like “hey, wait what was?”** so yeah there's a lot of team work in the class.

MKM: feel like you're not the only lost one in that sense?

ASH: I feel like **I'm probably one of the most lost ones but yeah definitely it's not just me.**

On the one hand, she was able to find out what was required of her and understand the professors' expectations. On the other, it was comforting for her to know she was not the only one confused and normalized asking friends for help. In the end, it was her Spanish classmates that helped her figure out what she was supposed to be studying.

(132) ASH: **but I learned what to study specifically from my Spanish classmates...**definitely being able to study and how to study, and then I'd say there also like a social element to it, **being able to study with your classmates I think is important here.**

While she took the blame for not studying enough on the first exam; finding out from the Spanish students what she needed to study was key to her success on the final.

Meredith adapted by slowly feeling more comfortable with the UAM professor and students, and through talking to her NU advisor. As previously mentioned, the students would keep her up to date with assignments. She also became more comfortable asking the professor questions when she was confused and realized, “(133) MER: **she was always much more willing to explain things to me than in my head I thought she would be.**” When she was unsure if a culture difference was normal, such as scheduling changes, she would ask her NU advisor who would reassure her and tell her not to stress about it. Finally, after the midterm she realized that everything on the test was on the PowerPoints, so she focused her effort on memorizing them for the exam. Her strategy also allowed her to be academically successful even though she was less socially integrated with the classroom.

5.2.3.4 Conclusion: Impact on learning during direct enrollment

(134) ASH: So just like do it, it's going to be extra work and you're going to feel overwhelmed, but it is so worth it not only in terms of language learning but also in terms of your going to grow as a learner in a number of ways.

(135) MER: I think I learned quite a bit of reliance and patience (laughs) yeah it forced me to...A be out of my comfort zone and then B do something about it...it definitely taught me a lot about just taking initiative in things.

Both Ashleigh and Meredith adapted to the classroom by interacting with local students; yet their stories, perspectives and experiences were very different. From my perspective, Ashleigh was able to learn more from the experience due to her decision to relax/shift her academic expectations, use the content for language learning and practice speaking through deeper interactions with students. Meredith's shy personality, higher level of stress from the cultural differences in the classroom and SA program's location prevented her from deeper cultural and language learning.

Ashleigh viewed the UAM class as a way to force herself to immerse in the Spanish culture, improve her L2 skills and interact with Spaniards. While both students used the UAM class to improve

their understanding, Ashleigh made an active effort to use the class to improve her Spanish fluency through both the content and interactions with other students.

(136) ASH: My group, our country that we are assigned is Jordan, important country whatever. I don't really care about it. But if the research that I'm doing and the reading that I'm doing is **helping me improve my Spanish fluency, like that's like ten times more important to me** then me like finding out the history of the country of Jordan. Does that make sense?

The local students also taught her Spanish slang from Spain and the use of pronoun *vosotros*³². Ashleigh still wanted to improve more in terms of speaking; however, reported greatly improving from the start of the semester. Since Meredith did not speak much in class or with her classmates, direct enrollment served to increase her exposure to a Spanish environment compared to if she had stayed in the U.S. NU bubble.

Overall, both students reported learning about the educational aspect of Spanish culture from the UAM; however, Meredith's perspectives were more superficial based on what she observed on campus for a short period of time whereas Ashleigh's opinions were based on her relationships with local students. Meredith interpreted that the educational culture was more social due to them taking coffee before or after class or hanging out having a beer at noon. Rather than strictly social, Ashleigh saw the academic culture as collaborative and learned these relationships can help you do well. Both students also felt that grades mattered less, but Meredith attributed it to students not paying the same amount in tuition as in the U.S.; whereas Ashleigh learned perhaps grades are not so important.

Ashleigh reported the UAM class was useful "(137) ASH: to **make Spanish friends** and interact with locals so to speak, um I think that's an incredible opportunity just to **learn an entirely different culture.**" Overall, she gained cultural and language knowledge from her interaction in the classroom; whereas Meredith felt the experience contributed more to her personal growth. She learned that the next time she is out of her comfort zone, she should take initiative to overcome possible cultural differences.

³² The formal "you all" which is used in Spain but not most other countries in Latin America.

These experiences demonstrate factors that consistently impacted SA students' experiences. First, those with programs downtown struggled to find the time to develop deeper relationships. Secondly, those students who accepted themselves as foreigners and relaxed their expectations adapted better to the class than those who were self-conscious about their Spanish level because it impacted their ability to interact with locals. I believe that regardless of the specific UAM class, Ashleigh and Meredith would have chosen the same adaptation strategies due to these SA programs and personality traits leading to similar learning outcomes.

5.2.4 Just say "YES" to everything

The last story exemplifies how one student's motivation and agency allowed him to gain a high level of social integration and reap the benefits of direct enrollment. It is a negative case example because few students demonstrated such level of intentional cultural and language learning or developed closed friendships in the classroom. I chose to finish with this story because it highlights many aspects that can facilitate social integration in the classroom even despite the individual (e.g., non-native speaker) and situational (e.g., SA program downtown) challenges. This student also represents the aggregated facilitating factors and positive perspectives on the Spanish culture of learning.

Tom was the only SA program student who managed to balance his life between integrating into the culture while still maintaining co-national or international friendships to a lesser degree. I realized that Tom was unique on the first day when he sat toward the front of the classroom but was constantly looking over his shoulder as if trying to join a conversation rather than using his phone or computer like most other SA students. In every subsequent class he made an effort to integrate with the Spanish students by sitting further back in the class and jumping into conversations.

Through his group project, he was able to solidify his relationships, going to the cafeteria with the students, talking during class to them, and hanging out during breaks. One day, we were sitting on the steps waiting for class to begin and at least five people said "hi" to him. He attributed his capacity to make

friends to the friendliness of the local students, the fact he took three classes with the same students and always spoke Spanish. He did not need to rely on the professors because his Spanish friends answered all his questions and gave him their class notes.

Tom adapted from the beginning by relaxing his expectations for good grades, participating in class, joining the students when they invited him, and essentially just being another Spanish student. The experience was not without struggle. He reported not achieving his high expectations for making Spanish friends or language learning even though he was very satisfied with his experience at the UAM. Even though he downplayed his accomplishments, I witnessed a SA student who managed to integrate himself entirely into the social dynamic of the classroom which provided him with immense intercultural learning. I believe the discrepancy between my perception and Tom's was likely due to the combination of his high expectations for SA and that he was not privy to the experiences of other SA students at the UAM whereas I could compare and recognize his accomplishments.

5.2.4.1 The SA student: Tom

Tom's background was similar to other non-native SA students. He had some exposure to other cultures through travel and spoke upper intermediate Spanish. His SA goals were to learn Spanish, meet local people and travel, just like most of the participants in my investigation. He was not particularly outgoing and gregarious or a center of attention sort of student. In fact, he described himself as an introvert. What set him apart was his agency and motivation to make his goals a real priority by taking the language pledge seriously (e.g., listening to music, TV and reading in Spanish) and organizing his life around the UAM instead of his downtown campus.

He was a 20-year-old Caucasian male from California. Growing up he traveled with his family to Europe on various occasions. He also participated in two school trips to Ecuador and El Salvador, which he preferred to Europe because of the opportunity it provided for him to practice Spanish. He was a religion major at Attleboro College in Vermont. He chose to SA in Madrid because his brother had

recommended it. Attleboro's undergraduate SA program features a language pledge, a homestay with a host mom, a one-day trip during orientation and a two-day trip mid-semester. The Attleboro College academic coordinator explained they purposefully avoid organizing too many trips because it results in SA students hanging out amongst themselves. Most of the SA program students took one or two courses at either the UAM or another local Spanish university in Madrid.

Tom's felt he could achieve his goals through "(138) TOM: a lot of language and full cultural immersion." He chose the UAM over the other local university because he heard that the students who were serious about learning Spanish went to the UAM. Then, he decided to take three anthropology classes rather than one and an extra-curricular salsa dance class at the UAM. Many SA students mentioned wanting to do extra-curriculars at the UAM; however, only Tom followed through by building his schedule around it. He also purposefully selected classes from the same group of anthropology so he would be with the same local students for all his classes, making it easier to build friendships.

Many students were concerned about taking multiple local classes because they were less confident in their ability to get a good grade in an unfamiliar system. Tom did not feel grades should be his priority during SA but rather learning about the culture and language.

(139) TOM: It's just, this maybe isn't the best way to go about thinking about it but it's so low on my priority list. Like there are **so many other things that I want to achieve here, more than I want to get to like get As** or good grades on my tests. So perhaps the way that it's going to change is, maybe I care less about the preparation. So in terms of how I mentioned **that I like to start things early, if I maybe don't get to start something early....maybe**

MKM: not the end of the world

TOM: it's not the end of the world because I didn't come here to get As on my assignments, **I came here to get better at Spanish. I came here to become immersed in Spanish culture** and la la la and everything else.

MKM: and does it affect your GPA?

TOM: **it does, I mean it does matter but (laughs)**

His general perspective was that while doing well and passing is important, it was not the primary reason for being in Spain. Tom was more concerned about the cultural immersion aspects of the experience which is why he followed the language pledge except when having lunch with SA program friends. It was evident that his choices at the beginning of the semester were aligned with his goals hence putting himself in the position to accomplish them.

5.2.4.2 The classroom: Anthropology

I attend one of Tom's second-year anthropology classes off and on throughout the semester with the enthusiastic support of the professor. There were about sixty students of which perhaps six were exchange students and two were international students from China. On the first day of class, Tom was sitting in the second row on the left side looking at the blackboard near the international students. The class began with a PowerPoint that included videos and cultural references, a few from the U.S. At the end of the class, the professor asked the exchange students to present themselves to the class by sharing their name and country. Tom described the first days as:

(140) TOM: I started chatting with a few of the people in my class and they said, **"oh do you want to come sit next to us for the class" and so I said "sure"** and I went and sat next to them from the class and that was great. So, my first impression in that first class was positive. I was like "oh the students are so nice here". So, it was a really **positive first interaction...The next few times were not as positive** in that I'd walk in the class and the students would already be talking to each other and I had no idea how to break into a conversation. So, I just felt a little awkward **I'd just sit down and kinda turn around (laughs) and indicating "hey, if you wanna talk to me you can talk to me"** um so but then then it got better.

One month later, during my second observation, I saw that Tom was integrated into the classroom dynamic, sitting midback on the right and talking to one of the Spanish girls. Then, he called out to Spanish student in the back to make a YouTube reference. Everyone laughed. Tom asked if the seat was taken and the Spanish student responded, “by you.” The entire interaction was in Spanish and Tom did not seem to miss a beat. During class, he whispered occasionally to the person next to him and hung out with the local students during the break.

When trying to create a conversation with Spanish students Tom explained it was important to introduce himself and ask about the class or professor. As the class progressed, he continued to take the initiative in joining conversations.

(141) TOM: I usually, I'll try to, **I'll jump in the middle** of their conversations, so I'll try to be on topic there. Like for example there were some people talking about the fact that one girl's mouse, **or her keyboard wasn't working** for her computer, **so I said something** about “oh yeah **sometimes I hate technology**. It's like it's so great but then it's so horrible at the same time.” So, things that, **I try to be on topic** with jumping in on a conversation.

Tom viewed the fact that classes began ten minutes late as an opportunity to speak with local students. During breaks, instead of sitting by himself using his cellphone, he went outside with the other students as they smoked; even though he did not smoke. In between classes, he joined local students in the cafeteria when they invited him. After witnessing his initiative, I assumed he was an outgoing person. However, he described it as:

(142) TOM: **I tend to be more introverted** ah so but it's interesting I feel as if my **Spanish personality is a little different than my English** personality and its sort of like I go into all these things with a **sort of ‘fuck it mentality’**” (laughs) I'm gonna **play that foreigner card and if I don't understand something then like it's ok**. So, I think I tend to be a little bit more outgoing in Spanish than I would be in English.

Tom used the fact he was a foreigner to care less about what other people thought and become more outgoing. He also used it to get local students' attention and joke around. By mid-April when Tom's group was waiting for silence to give their presentation, he exaggerated his accent and said, "Hola, ¿qué tal? Silencio porfa" [English: Hi, how are you? Silence please] and the class burst out in laughter.

(143) TOM: (laughs) yeah that was the hardest part. I found that the joke always just makes everyone lose it, is **if I speak in like a really pronounced American accent** like 'hola, ¿cómo estás?' [English: hi, how are you] and then like **they'd lose it so like tried that and it worked.**

While some students were self-conscious about their accent, he intentionally used it to make the local students laugh as a way of making friends.

The professor was conscientious of including international students in the class which facilitated social integration. She encouraged them to mix between Spanish students, first-generation immigrant students and international students for the group project. Additionally, the project involved group work outside of the UAM campus. They were expected to visit a multicultural neighborhood in Madrid to analyze the role of language in intercultural relations. This assignment required the students to spend time together outside of the classroom which provided an opportunity for Tom to get to know the students better. It also gave international students who speak different languages an opening to positively contribute to the project. The professor felt this project helped with their integration in the class.

(144) PROF_8: I have seen that it has helped them a lot eh. Why, for various reasons. One, because they show how **they are useful to the group**, they contribute, and everyone wins. Also, because they are **not alone or isolated**. They also benefit from local knowledge, right? Because of course for them because sometimes it is difficult, for example it is not that **they do not know the neighborhood, it is that they have not heard of the neighborhood** nor do they have a previous representation of the neighborhood then eh and then what I have seen that they have **established friendship links**, right? Hm I mean I see them, I do not only see them working on the project, I

also see them in the hallways. I see them sitting in class, because also this dynamic of this project work, they have not only had to be in the group when **they go around the neighborhood but also in practical class, right?** Then in class they would sit apart if it was not already with the group in most of the practical classes and then, well, **I believe that they already established connections.**³³

Tom's case illustrates this case as he began to sit with his four group members, two Spanish guys and two Spanish girls. During my last observation in late April, I joined them during the break in the patio and we all played a game called "Ninja" that Tom was already familiar with from having played during multiple breaks with them.

The professor had other techniques to include students from other cultures. The professor felt that using a Powerpoint makes students passive but nonetheless kept it to provide international students with visual support. She would ask them as native speakers to translate or pronounce phrases for her in foreign languages and to share examples from their culture related to the material. She was aware that some students might be shy about speaking in class and therefore, would provide them with the question the day before so they could come prepared.

Tom also acknowledged that she would incorporate the international students' opinions in the class. During one in-class group exercise, they had to discuss strategies for the social integration of international students at the university. Tom recalled,

(145) TOM: **It was never about how necessarily to incorporate them into the classroom but more like into the social life** so they talked about having pizza party or have pizza gathering where other

³³ Original text: "PROF_8: yo he visto que les ha ayudado mucho eh. Porque, por varias razones. Una, porque revelan su utilidad al grupo, aportan, y todos ganan. También porque no están solos o aislados. Ellos también se benefician del conocimiento local ¿no? porque claro para ellos pues a veces es difícil en no con, por ejemplo, no es que no conocen el barrio, es que ni han oído hablar del barrio ni tienen una representación previa del barrio entonces eh y luego lo que he visto que han establecido enlaces de amistad ¿no? hm quiero decir les veo, no veo solo en los grupos de trabajo, también los veo por los pastillos. Los veo sentados en clase, porque también esta dinámica de este trabajo por proyectos, no solo han tenido que estar en el grupo cuando van por el barrio sino también en las prácticas en clase ¿no? Entonces en clase ya se sentaba separados si no hubiese con su grupo en la mayoría de las clases prácticas y entonces, pues yo creo que ya establecida enlaces.

Spanish students and international students got together um ah like other social events and they very rarely talked about like the classroom specifically.

MKM: my topic (laughs) **do you think they would actually go to those sorts of events though?**

TOM: um I doubt it (laughs) doubt it, yeah some yes, some yes, um but well a few, a few yeah

This revelation was interesting because although Tom had found a way to make local friends, he was still aware of how difficult it was to break in. I interviewed the Spanish students who sat in the back on the “loud side” of the classroom and they did not report interacting much with the international students.

(146)MKM: and do you usually talk to exchange students?

LS_11: not really

LS_12: yes, I have talked a lot to a girl

LS_11 let's see, yeah, I've spoken once but

LS_13: yeah, hello, how are you?

LS_11: but yeah

LS_12: but then other people in class have made **very good friends with the Californian**

LS_11: **who is the Californian?**

LS_12: the one from the...

LS_13: **isn't he French?**

LS_12: no, he's Californian (laugh)

LS_11: I thought he was French

LS_14: (laugh) he is Californian

LS_13: But isn't his name Jack or something?

LS_12: no, Tom.

LS_14: his name is Tom

LS_11: but it's a French name

MKM: he's American

LS_12: He's American, He's Californian

LS_11: you get the idea right? (laugh)³⁴

Even though the professor presented the foreign students, referenced them in class, and Tom had given a couple of presentations in front of the class; not all the students were aware of his presence in the class. I believe this is quite telling of how difficult it is for exchange students to become part of the class.

5.2.4.3 Tom's adaptation: When in Rome, do as the Romans do

Tom noticed cultural differences at the UAM such as teaching methodology and student behaviors; however, his desire to understand the culture meant he interpreted them differently than other SA students. He credited his adaptation strategy to a friend who had already studied abroad in Argentina. Her advice was to just say “yes” to everything, even if you do not feel like doing it and get involved early in activities. For Tom, the social integration strategy provided him with a better understanding of the Spanish culture, a way to practice Spanish, academic and emotional support in the classroom. Furthermore, by relaxing his academic expectations, the uncertainty surrounding professors' expectations was less stressful and he was able to focus on his goal of cultural and language learning.

First impressions

Upon arrival, Tom had preconceived ideas about the Spanish classroom which he learned from his older brother who studied abroad at the UAM and the Attleboro College on-site staff. This did not deter him from taking more classes because:

³⁴ Original text: “MKM: ¿y suelen hablar con la gente de intercambio? LS_11 la verdad que no LS_12 si yo he hablado con una chica bastante LS_11 a ver si una vez he hablado, pero LS_13 si hola que tal LS_11 pero si LS_12 pero o luego otra gente en clase ha hecho muy buenos amigos con el californiano LS_11 ¿quién es el californiano? LS_12 el de la prom[¿] LS_13 ¿este no es francés? LS_12 no, es californiano (risa) LS_11 yo pensé que era francés LS_14 (risa) es californiano LS_13 ¿pero no se llama Jack o algo así? LS_12 no, Tom. LS_14 se llama Tom LS_11 pero es un nombre francés MKM: es americano LS_12 es americano, es californiano LS_11 ¿te haces una idea no? (risa)”

(147) TOM: I figured **if I wanted to be as quote on quote Spanish as possible** just try the things just do the things that the Spanish students do, **even if that means that the classes might not be what I have in the United States** or the classes or the composition like whose in the class, how the class goes might be different than the U.S. **I was willing to sacrifice what I knew for trying to immerse myself as much as possible in the culture.**

Tom was less concerned about feeling comfortable in the class than he was about having an authentic experience. Furthermore, he comprehended that a genuine experience in another culture was likely to involve cultural differences.

He had three main expectations: the students would be very disrespectful to the professors, he would not understand anything, and there would be zero work until the final exam. Upon arrival, he did feel that the students would come in twenty minutes late or just leave early and not come back.

(148) TOM: There's in the back of the class, especially there will always be students, chatting to each other and not paying attention **but I thought that was like the entire class would be doing that**, but I found that's only a **very small percentage of students** who do that and **it's probably the exact same as in the United States** where you have kids who also don't pay attention in class so in that regards, it's not that different.

He critically reflected on student behavior in the U.S. instead of negatively viewing the Spanish students' conduct. He also found there were some group presentations and readings to do during the semester and not everything was left to the end. He was pleasantly surprised that he could understand most of what the professor was saying which gave him confidence in his Spanish abilities. Overall, Tom only felt there was some truth in the expectations given to him.

Tom was a bit surprised about the lecture-style classes even though he had been warned. He chose to attend his home college because his preferred learning style is small discussion classes. The teaching style of the professor talking for the entire class while the students took notes was a surprise.

Also, the fact that scheduling changes were often made on the fly was a challenge because sometimes he had class back downtown and could not accommodate the change.

(149) TOM: So um definitely in terms of the professor **just lecturing without any student like asking any questions** of the students that was a big difference, um it oh, another big thing that I found, the professor just, the classes just kinda start and kinda end whenever the professor just wants the classes to start and end...so **that's just very different** than the United States when you have the class starts at this time and ends at this time and we are going to use all that time.... **so that was a big change.**

Rather than use negative terms to describe the cultural aspects of the teaching methods, he uses words such as difference or a change. To adapt to the lecture class, he decided to use the lectures as a way to pick up on Spanish phrases; hence using the course subject to learn Spanish as much as Anthropology.

Tom was unsure about most professors' expectations except for the above-mentioned course due to the group project. For another class he explained:

(150) TOM: our *simbolismo* [English: symbolism] professor **keeps alluding to an essay** that's due **and I have no idea when that's coming**, if we already know when it is. I have no idea and then in my *antropologos de España* [English: anthropologists of Spain] that class I have no idea. **I heard from some of the Spanish students** that we have, a small little writing assignment and then **I think we have a final exam, but I have no idea.**

While other SA students were stressed about not knowing when assignments were due, Tom figured that the Spanish students would tell him or the professor would eventually let them know. He thought that being patient and going with the flow helped him adapt to the UAM.

Social integration and adaptation

Tom's anthropology class had just as many cliques as any other Spanish class. He attributed the fact that he was in three classes with the same students as giving him an advantage in socially integrating

himself, but he also took the initiative to meet local students. He approached students, asked questions, joined in conversations, sat near to the local students and perhaps most importantly, said “yes” when they finally invited him to the cafeteria with them.

(151) TOM: It started off being the first day of class I talked to them and that was that and **then I would consecutively start sitting closer and closer to them**, like I started off sitting on the left side of the room in the very front and then I moved to the right side off the room and **then I started moving back and back and back** and um and then one time one of the **girls asked if I wanted to go to the cafeteria with them and I said “yes definitely.”** So went to the cafeteria with them the one day, then the next day when **they were all leaving I kinda like hung around kinda implied like “hey what are you guys doing”** and they said “oh we're going to the cafeteria, Tom do you wanna come?” and I said “of course yeah” and then **they invited to me over to one of their houses and I said “of course I’ll come to this.”** So, and then I kept sitting like close to them, kept going to the cafeteria, when they would go to the cafeteria and then things developed from there. So that isn't to say, **I think I was really lucky that they actually asked me if I wanted to go to the cafeteria first of all, but I think I had to be close to them in order for that to happen.** So. I think making the effort to sit close to them and interact with them in the class paired with the fact that I just got lucky with the people.

Tom did not perceive that being in the classroom itself was enough to make friends in the class. He recognized that he had to make an effort to sit near other students. Since the majority of his classes were on campus, he did not have the obstacle of needing to go back downtown; however, he could have left class quickly to meet Attleboro College friends. Instead, he lingered, which is admittedly awkward, but it allowed the local students to realize maybe he wanted to be included. Finally, since he was not traveling every weekend, he was able to accept social invitations to a classmate’s house which allowed him to deepen his relationships.

Just like many SA students, Tom was shocked by the smoking culture in Spain and at the UAM. Tom found, “(152) TOM: but here everyone smokes even people who don't smoke regularly will like if someone passes them a cigarette, they'll smoke it (laughs) so it's like so that had surprised me.” Some SA students would not hang out with students that were smoking; however, for many Spanish students socializing revolves around smoking or at least hanging out in the cafeteria. Therefore, Tom would still go to the foyer of the cafeteria with them while they smoked or hang out on the “Prado”, the area between buildings where they played games. He took advantage of those small social events to build friendships instead of being completely put off by people smoking and avoiding them.

As the semester went on, Tom integrated into Spanish student life, even assimilating by participating in Spanish behaviors that he would never have done at his home university. For example, if bored, he maintained side conversations in class. He was more likely to skip class to hang out in the cafeteria with his friends and “(153) TOM: because it's so normalized here, I don't feel bad about showing up to a class like fifteen minutes late, um like obviously I try to be on time every day but like I don't feel bad about showing up super late to class.” Not only was he no longer surprised by these behaviors that some SA students never could accept or understand, but he also participated in them.

Spanish friends also helped Tom adapt to the academic culture. Being included in the WhatsApp group allowed him to know when the schedule changed. He also had local students in the class to turn to when he missed something or was confused. Spanish students generally took notes by copying word for word, which at first seemed strange compared to his use of bullet points, but in the end, he viewed it positively because if he missed something he could borrow notes from a friend.

(154) TOM: **If I need notes, I can talk to them**, like for this *pensamiento* [English: thought] notes I'm gonna need to ask people in my class for notes because I don't really trust mine but that's been I think, **that's been one of the biggest positives in my entire time here in Spain is the friendships that I formed in the class so that's helped a lot.**

The relationships also made him more comfortable about participating in class and presenting in front of everyone. On the one hand, he was more comfortable with his Spanish, but also

(155) TOM: because I'm close with the people in the class I don't feel as much *verguenza* [English: shyness] sorry I can only think of the word in Spanish, when I need to talk **so I feel more comfortable sharing in the class.**

His natural use of the word *verguenza* in this quote shows he may often be thinking in Spanish. Also, for his first presentation, he made a script and prepared for a long time. Later in the semester, I saw a presentation in which he looked completely natural and knowledgeable about the topic. Tom told me later that he had only glanced at the PowerPoint right before class. The social integration in the class gave him the support and confidence to participate more in class.

While it might seem that social integration and adaptation was easy for Tom, he did not perceive it that way. He had such high expectations for SA that after the first month, he was doubting whether it would be possible to achieve these goals.

(156) TOM: I wouldn't call culture shock it was more just disillusionment, it was I thought I would be speaking Spanish twenty four all the time, and I really wanted that and I was excited for that. **I thought I was going to make Spanish friends and hang out with Spanish friends all the time** and in terms of the Spanish twenty-four seven, it has happened only a few times like when I go a day only speaking Spanish. In terms of the Spanish friends, I would say I have Spanish acquaintances, **but I wouldn't say I have, yet any really close Spanish friends,** maybe that will come later but for some reason **I thought that would happen in the first three weeks I was here.**

He expected it would be easier to be invited out by Spanish students and when the relationships felt more like classroom acquaintances, he had to readjust his expectations. Further complicating the matter was that he had other friends at Attleboro College as well as Erasmus friends. In the beginning, he felt social pressure to hang out with the Attleboro College students and struggled to find a balance. After the first

month, he was struggling to adjust to the reality of the experience which was “(157) TOM: not bad, it was just different,” from what he expected. However, by the end of the experience, he realized that he just needed to learn to be patient.

(158) TOM: Um ok so one of the biggest things I think is, I've learned this is gonna sound really cheesy but **I've learned to be patient like really patient** because as I mentioned in the beginning **I wanted things to happen right away**. I wanted to be friends with Spanish students right away and **I felt really bad and really frustrated when that didn't happen** but, it eventually happened. So I think from that, if you just be patience and keep trying to put in the work, **things are going to come out of it...**It's a ton of fun so in that regard **putting yourself out there and good things will come**.

Rather than giving up when making local friends was more difficult than expected, he decided to keep putting in the effort and found that with time it was possible to develop local friendships.

Tom adapted to the culture by immersing himself as much as possible in the culture and putting himself in positions to meet Spanish people. He made it a priority and followed through despite the bumps along the way. He did not hang out only with cohort peers or travel every weekend which would have made it more difficult to socialize with Spanish. Instead of choosing the safe road to maintain a high GPA by taking most of his classes in his U.S. institution, he chose to orient his academic and extracurricular life around the UAM to have more opportunities to meet locals. Rather than relying on luck, Tom made conscious decisions to help to achieve his learning goals.

5.2.4.4 Conclusion: Impact on learning during direct enrollment

Tom's adaptation to the UAM and integration into Spanish university life were integral to his learning about Spanish culture and university. His friendships allowed him to gain an insider perspective into the culture rather than relying on a superficial evaluations based solely on observations. Finally, he clearly improved his Spanish even if it was not as much as he originally had expected or desired.

First, Tom learned about the implicit rules of the UAM. His friends put him in the WhatsApp group where most information about the classes, especially changes were shared. Tom perceived that at least in the anthropology degree there was a more collective and relaxed atmosphere than in the U.S. As he described it,

(159) TOM: the students here are a lot more **relaxed during the semester than at my own university** um there's definitely an air of I'm at the university not necessarily to learn, yes that's an important part, but it's **also like to hang out with my friends** and complain about all those things that come up in the university with other people.

Secondly, he also felt, without wanting to generalize, that the experience at the UAM showed him "(160) TOM: that the idea of flexibility and **just sort of taking things as they come** is like a big thing in Spanish culture. Like don't stress about it, **it'll be ok and that definitely came out in my classes.**" This was reflected in the flexibility in scheduling for classes and learning details for assignments gradually.

Finally, he believed that the UAM classes improved his comprehension of Spanish greatly, especially with phrases that the translation did not help him understand how to use it in a sentence. For example:

(161) TOM: Also I've been able to pick up on **certain functions of speech**, like one of my professors always says '*y tal y cual*' [English: this and that] when he's talking about and this and that and so before I didn't know how to use that but now, **since he uses that literally all the time, that's a function of speech now that I understand a little better.**

However, Tom's goal was to leave Spain one hundred percent fluent in Spanish. While he felt he improved during the four months, he insisted he needed more time to become fluent. He reported that Spanish speakers often complimented his Spanish and what I overheard in class was quite good; however, he rated his Spanish lower due to his goal of achieving an almost native level. Fortunately, this did not impact his

confidence to practice speaking since he believed the best way to learn Spanish was to stay in Spanish as much as possible.

Due to his agency to integrate himself, he was able to get firsthand perspectives about Spanish culture from his Spanish friends. The topics of conversations were not limited to the class or small talk. He spent significant time in the cafeterias and the “Prado” just hanging out with the other Spanish students as the only foreigner. Tom would say he just got lucky by having very nice people in his class. Considering most other international students were not hanging out with Spanish students but rather sitting up front together, I would accredit his efforts to integrate with him making friends.

This story demonstrates many facilitating factors to social integration to a local classroom which led to the SA student’s adaptation. First, the professor’s methodologies of integrating international students provided them with opportunities to interact with local students. Secondly, Tom demonstrated that it is important for SA students to prioritize actions that facilitate rather harm their learning objectives. Furthermore, he showed that perseverance and patience are also required to break into pre-established groups and develop relationships. Lastly, Tom’s experience reveals the multiple roles that local relationships provide in the direct enrollment setting, all of which improve academic, intercultural and language learning.

5.3 Conclusion

The stories exemplify the themes that emerged from my data and explain how SA students perceive the Spanish university, adapt to and learn from the direct enrollment experience. SA students’ agency and interactions with local professors and students were important influences through which SA students negotiated their understanding of the new academic culture. Additionally, external influences of the SA programs and UAM impacted their experiences. I utilized Lucia and Tom’s stories to illustrate the extremes of the data set because they represented the majority of the collective hindrances and facilitators of adaption respectively. The other stories allowed me to explore the wide range of more

typical experiences as mediated by the abovementioned factors. In the following, I will discuss my comprehensive results including perspectives from local administrators, professors, and students for a richer analysis of the data.

Chapter 6: Discussion

My findings have important implications regarding the direct enrollment component of SA students in Spain. First, I will add to the discussion on cultural differences between the U.S. and Spanish HE systems and the impact of IaH in Spain. Secondly, I will examine the adaptation process of SA students, paying specific attention to how their motivation, agency and self-efficacy beliefs impact their decisions to interact with local students and professors. Finally, I will place my findings within the debate surrounding SA program design and the impact of direct enrollment on SA student learning outcomes.

6.1 A transitioning Spanish higher education

Cultures of learning are socially constructed expectations, beliefs and values of students and professors about teaching and learning (Jin & Cortazzi, 2013). The literature generalizes Spanish academic culture as traditionally “professor-centered” even though it recognizes that the Bologna process is shifting HE towards a more student-centered approach. The U.S. HE system is considered a prime example of the Socratic tradition of “student-centered” learning, even though traditional lectures are still present (Cox et al., 2011). My research found few SA students had difficulty adjusting to pedagogic differences, coinciding with Pandor’s (2017) findings that SA students in Spain are stressed by differences such as expectations and support for assignments especially since they directly impact their grades.

My research observed that differences in SA students’ taken-for-granted assumptions in terms of academic requirements, classroom behaviors, and communication with the professor were perceived as more stressful than the lecture format. I attribute this to three main factors. First, while the teaching methodology is visually obvious, expectations were not always communicated in an explicit written manner meaning students frequently learned them only after doing something the “wrong” way. Secondly, my results suggest that the teaching methodologies in Spain and the U.S. are closer than originally supposed and there is more heterogeneity than the cultural dichotomous standpoint assumes.

Lastly, SA students marked concern for understanding academic requirements is related to the importance of grades in the U.S.

Another important contribution of my research is that while Pandor (2017) highlights only cultural differences that are viewed as stressful for SA students, my study found that SA students appreciated and positively valued some of the differences as well. The implication is that differences should not be understood as inherently negative but rather they present a learning opportunity that can contribute to SA students' personal growth. In the following, I will discuss my findings in relation to past comparisons between the U.S. and Spanish HE's culture of learning and highlight the nuances which my research discovered due to the ethnographic methodology.

6.1.1 Teaching methodology

The literature on teaching methodology in the U.S. and Spain describes U.S. HE as student-centered with an emphasis on critical thinking and analysis while Spanish education is professor-centered with a focus on acquiring theoretical knowledge and repeating. My results demonstrated that although some participants would agree with this dichotomous view, it is too simplistic for two central reasons. First, even though SA students' primary learning style preference was discussion, they reported their U.S. HEIs to use a range of styles including lectures without any student participation depending on the university (e.g., larger universities versus small liberal arts colleges) and class (e.g., introductory versus major classes). The SA students also varied in their participation and/or emphasis on analytical, critical thinking and discussion as necessary characteristics of a good class.

Secondly, Spanish students also showed a preference for and/or described their classes as dynamic, practical and interactive. Most Spanish professors describe their teaching as lectured based but value their students' ability to think critically and apply theory to practice over repetition. Interestingly, Spanish students were more critical than SA students of the Spanish professors' use of *magistral* lectures which illustrates a shift in the Spanish students' cultural views surrounding pedagogy. However, the

professors may desire critical thinking, but the students perceive they expect a repetition of contents so evidently professor-centered learning is persisting. Nevertheless, how all actors defined good pedagogy showed a convergence around a preference for active learning.

Del Pozo Andrés (2009) poses four main methodologies of teaching in European higher education: theoretical, practical, seminars and tutoring.³⁵ My research supports this categorization; however, it also uncovered a range of teaching methods utilized within the theoretical class depending on the professor. Del Pozo Andrés (2009) acknowledges that the *magistral* (e.g., theoretical) class is still predominant in Spain; however, I agree with Vallejo's (2012) suggestion that much of traditional teaching in Spain incorporates interactive aspects, in- and out- of classroom activities and multiple evaluation methods rather than only dialogues followed by a final exam. My narratives show a full spectrum of types of lecture classes with Lucia's *magistral* class, Meredith and Ashleigh's PowerPoint lecture, the master's student's interactive education class and Tom's project-based assignment.

Pandor (2017) found that 18.95% of SA students perceived the use of a monologued lecture as one of their top three difficulties. My participants who would agree with this statement, whether SA students or Spanish students, viewed the methodology as lacking critical thinking, disengaging, and not conducive to learning. While Pandor (2017) considered it a significant stressor, my analysis offers two reasons explaining the 80.05% who did not choose this option. First, most SA students felt professors used a PowerPoint with some interaction and secondly, many students felt the methodology was similar to their home university.

Pandor (2017) only determined aspects that SA students found difficult to adjust to whereas, my research also discovered unique pedagogies that SA students viewed positively. A central strategy of the Spanish university's shift to student center learning is by implementing *prácticas* classes. Even though SA students were not familiar with this concept, it was not viewed as overwhelming and if anything, they

³⁵ Original text: "la clase teórica, la clase práctica, el seminario y la tutoría"

were impressed and preferred these classes. Their ease in adjusting to *prácticas* classes supports the idea that U.S. education is pragmatic and that students are accustomed to engaging in tasks even without fully comprehending a theory (Stewart & Bennet, 1991).

The literature generalizes that Anglo-Saxon cultures of learning are based on individualistic traits that encourage participation such as wanting to stand out, give opinions, and challenging the professor while the high-power distance of Spanish culture leads to little participation (Hofstede, 1986). Both Rueda's (2006) and Pandor's (2017) research found the American system to be more interactive than the Spanish classroom and while my research does not empirically discount the validity of this assumption, SA students did not always choose to participate due to personal preference, confidence in Spanish level and/or shyness of being a foreign student. Furthermore, Spanish students were not necessarily averse to participating, especially in specific degrees or when professors used methodologies that required it.

In fact, the couple of professors who had experience teaching in the U.S. felt it was equally difficult to get students to participate in class in the U.S. and Spain. A SA student remarked, "(162) SAS_19: it feels kinda similar to my classes like in the states where people aren't really participating as much as the professor might want to." This coincides with the Spanish student's opinion that at the UAM

"(163) LS_2: **in practice, there is debate**, but there is very little participation, **the same people usually participate**, and everyone reads the text because they have to submit a remark **but there is very little participation**. And I think most of it is out of **shame or fear like**, I think it's a bit of both."³⁶

This local student acknowledges that even in the *prácticas* class when the professor seeks to facilitate debate, most Spanish students are still not comfortable sharing their opinions resulting in the same few

³⁶ Original text: "LS_2: en la práctica, hay debate, pero hay muy poca participación, siempre suelen participar las mismas personas y toda la gente se lee el texto porque hay que entregar un comentario, pero hay muy poca participación. Y yo creo que la mayoría es por vergüenza o por miedo en plan, creo que es un poco de ambas."

students contributing to class. Considering various SA students reported not participating in the U.S. for similar reasons, it is possible that achieving inclusive discussion classes is a challenge in both countries.

On the other hand, especially Spanish students of political science, anthropology and international studies degrees were quite willing to voice their opinions and debate. In fact, a visiting professor of political science from the U.S. reported that contrary to his previous notions, if anything, Spanish students participated more than U.S. students. The decision to participate in the class for both cultural groups depended on personal preference and the professors' ability to facilitate discussion. However, SA students expected to be required to prepare a reading for discussion in class whether or not they intended to participate whereas the Spanish did not seem to hold this expectation of the class.

Expectations of teaching methodology come from previous education. Gil (2017) argues that introducing active learning pedagogy is difficult when it was not present before which some Spanish students recognized:

“(164) LS_15: I think that what people in **Spain have is a bit of essentialism**, right? No? I'm here and you tell me what to do.

LS_16: yes

MKM: but **do you like to talk in class?**

LS_15: no

LS_16: no and that is seen in the dynamics when the **professors try to do group dynamics and such, it fails** because of what Debi says, because **people are going to stay like this and do nothing**.

LS_15: but **it's our Spanish educational system in general**, that is, you go to high school, they won't let you speak. They don't let you talk at school. **So, you get to university, you have to do critical thinking and you don't know how to think critically** because in your life you have not been told that you have critical thinking. Then you go to university and well, over the years I think you improve a little, but it is more a **matter of the student himself** and what the student is interested

in and what the student wants than what the teacher can tell them because this **country is made to repeat (laughs) to repeat what they tell us**³⁷

Other Spanish students recognized behavioral decisions such as not showing up to class and/or not doing the assigned readings before class which made it challenging for professors to make the class interactive and/or based on a debate.

Vallejo (2012) argues that professors may resist using dynamics or activities because they take time away from imparting content; however, it is worse when students are not engaged as they are more prone to skip class, talk to a friend or use the internet. The Spanish students reported engaging in these disengaged behaviors in *magistral* classes whereas in participatory classes they felt “(165) LS_17: you learn more than technically, you come to class you know, because you want to and because you like it.”³⁸ One professor noted that students come to class since his incorporated student-centered learning.

As Monereo & Pozo (2093) argue, theory and practice are not contradictory, separate spheres. Professors should find coherence between the two; the practical application of the theory that will help students in their professional lives. For this reason, some professors choose not to follow the imposed structure of two hours of lecture and one hour of *prácticas* per week but would rather flexibly incorporate practical elements where they felt fits best. In fact, most professors, whether they agreed or not with new pedagogies, did not approve of the structural imposition as Villa Sánchez et al., (2015) notes and prefer to incorporate changes at their discretion.

³⁷ Original text: “LS_15: Yo creo que la gente en España lo que tiene un poco es el esencialismo ¿no? No, yo estoy aquí así y tu dímelo lo que tengo que hacer. LS_16: sí MKM: pero ¿les gusta hablar en clase? LS_15: no LS_16: no y eso se ve en las dinámicas cuando los profes(esores) intentan a hacer dinámicas de grupos y tal, falla por eso que dice Debi, porque la gente va a quedarse así y no hace nada. LS_15: pero es nuestro sistema educativo español en general o sea tú vas al instituto, no te dejan hablar. En el colegio no te dejan hablar. Entonces tú llegas a la universidad tienes que hacer un pensamiento crítico y tú no sabes tener un pensamiento crítico porque en tu vida no te han dicho que tienes un pensamiento crítico. Entonces tú llegas a la universidad y bueno pues con los años yo creo que vas un poco mejorando, pero es más una cosa del propio alumno y lo que le interesa el alumno y de lo que quiere el alumno que lo que le puede decir el profesor porque este país está hecho para repetir (risa) para repetir lo que nos dicen.”

³⁸ Original text: “LS_17: y aprendes más que lo que técnicamente, vienes a clase sabes, porque quieres y porque te gusta.”

These results support a more balanced view of Spanish HE and Del Pozo Andrés's (2009) assertion that the traditional monologued *magistral* is shifting towards a more interactive lecture and *prácticas* classes. Furthermore, it suggests not all SA students are necessarily looking to participate even if perhaps they would participate more in the U.S. Therefore, active versus passive learning, may not be such a cultural difference, especially when comparing SA students who are out of their comfort zone to Spanish students. The influence of individual professors' pedagogical philosophies and SA students' learning preferences result in a more complex understanding of cultures of learning when analyzed on an individual level rather than a group level.

6.1.2 Professor-student communication

I found four cultural dimensions to impact the classroom expectations for professor-student communication: monochronic-polychronic time orientation and high context-vs-low context of Hall (2000) and power distance and collectivism-individualism of Hofstede (1986). Hall's (2000) orientations of U.S. (monochronic and low-context) resulted in two important differences with the Spanish (polychronic and high-context) HE system: the meaning given to the syllabus and attitudes towards being "on-time". The perceived degree of resulting stress was higher for the former than the latter.

My observations coincide with Pandor's (2017) research that mentions complaints of SA students about the professors being late, but it is not a top-rated difficulty for adaptation. Even though punctuality is an important U.S. cultural trait (Powell & Anderson, 1994), it was simply commented on rather than viewed negatively. I believe this could be due in part to the high prevalence of multicultural students from polychronic backgrounds in my investigation, the "vacation" mentality of studying abroad, and students getting lost and requiring flexibility themselves.

My research also provides interesting insights into Rueda's (2006) claim that Spanish professors sometimes miss class without warning. For scheduling changes, I found the Spanish academic culture uses verbal communication in class which is common in high context cultures and informal communication

methods such as WhatsApp. Therefore, it is possible that SA students simply do not always receive the message because they expect to receive it via formal written communication which is common in low context cultures (e.g., email). Furthermore, some SA students perceived classes as beginning late because they did not realize that the “official” start time of classes is fifteen minutes after the time written on the schedule. For the local actors, the class was in fact starting “on time”.

My research confirmed that SA students believe the syllabus, a written tool (low context), is the main way for professors to communicate assignments and should be set in stone (monochronic) from the start of the semester. These orientations contrasted with the Spanish system in which the syllabus was more flexible (polychronic) and the assignments were explained verbally (high context) throughout the semester. Pandor (2017) and Gonzalez (2004) found that the structural differences of the class created stress. My results discovered that the underlying reasons for this were confusion about daily homework, required versus optional readings and/or what exactly was being assessed.

Secondly, the level of stress was correlated to the high importance students in the U.S. give to grades (Samovar et al., 2009) which is also attributed to the competitiveness of individualist cultures (Hofstede, 1986). My research coincided with the previous literature that SA students were stressed by classes having fewer graded assignments, the lack of homework, and heavily weighed final exams (Pandor, 2017; Goldoni, 2009). To complement previous findings, I found the level of stress was regulated by three factors: if the course was taken pass/fail or direct transfer of grades, the type of assignments, and public versus private school.

Pandor (2017) found that those students with direct transfer of grades were more stressed than those taking pass/fail; however, I also noted that SA students were less concerned if they understood their SA programs’ sliding scale. Test-based assignments (e.g., mid-term and final) were viewed as more stressful than project-based assessments which allowed for more student autonomy which corresponds with the U.S. “doing” mentality (Althen et al., 2003). Finally, SA students from expensive private schools

were more concerned than students from public schools about the possibility of needing to repeat a course because it would incur a higher tuition fee. However, none of my participants demanded a higher grade such as in Goldoni's (2009) study and any demonstration of a consumeristic view of education was related to the expectation that the HE administration should be more organized.

Hofstede considers the U.S. to have a lower power distance than Spain; however, given they are both in the middle of the spectrum, it is not surprising that both formal and informal communication between students and professors were present for both cultures. In Spain, a low power distance was evident in the SA students' perception of informal relationships between professors and students as illustrated by Ashleigh's surprise about class time negotiations. Furthermore, the Spanish professors considered that SA students were more formal and respectful when addressing them than Spanish students which is consistent with Althen et al., (2003) assertion that U.S. students demonstrate respect through their tone and formal vocabulary, common in high power distance.

On the other hand, there was evidence of a high-power distance between professors and students when the lecture was perceived as a traditional *magistral* class if the professor left directly after class and/or gave direct negative criticism on the SA students' idea(s). SA students perceived these professors were not interested in their academic success which mirrors Pandor's (2017) results that SA students expected professors to play a more active role in their learning. However, not all professors maintained a high-power distance even if their course used a lecture format or had fewer opportunities for feedback on assignments. The few students, such as Sara, who took advantage of the office hours found the professors facilitated their academic success; unfortunately, both Spanish professors and SA students reported a limited attendance to these hours.

SA students' evaluation of the cultural differences depended in large part on their personality, the professors' perceived availability and evaluation of the result. SA students who were more laid back, especially about grades, and could go with the flow of the Spanish system adapted easier than type-A,

competitive, A-seeking SA students. Perhaps most importantly, even though Spanish professors may be perceived as less actively involved because they do not check homework or provide extensive feedback; many SA students spoke highly of their communication with those professors.

6.1.3 Student-student communication

Hofstede's (1986) cultural dimensions of individualism-collectivism and masculine-feminine were prevalent in my participants' understanding of interpersonal relationships of students in the U.S. and Spanish HE. All groups of participants described Spanish students' relationships as collaborative which was a surprise for the self-reliant SA students. Whereas in Covert's (2011) study in Chile, SA students viewed associated collective behaviors as cheating; my SA students were pleasantly surprised and as seen in the narratives, SA students took advantage of the collaborative system to assist themselves academically. Neither Rueda's (2006) nor Pandor's (2017) research on differences in HE in Spain highlighted relationships between students perhaps because they focused on pedagogy and professor-student communication.

Rueda (2006) reported that Spanish students were more relaxed and led balanced lives between studying and leisure on campus. Most of my SA students appreciated the laid-back nature of the Spanish university, especially when compared to the more stressful and competitive university experience which is typical of masculine societies such as the U.S. (Hofstede, 1986). SA students who were adversely impacted by the laid-back attitude during group work reported being frustrated at the situation such in Covert's study (2011). However, overall, the majority did not evaluate this trait negatively.

On the other hand, SA students did not appreciate when friendly relationships in the classroom resulted in talking while the professor was trying to teach (e.g., Lucia and Katherine). However, the collective relationships between students proved to be such an important factor in facilitating SA students' adaptation that some students such as Katherine could overlook the drawbacks. The overall positive evaluation of the collaborative relationships between students, especially for those who managed

to participate in them, demonstrates that even if two academic cultures have traits on the opposite end of a cultural dimension it does not always lead to a negative judgment and/or cannot be adapted to.

6.1.4 Bologna's impact in Spain

I concur with Barraji3n L3pez et al., (2016) that it is difficult to "capture in writing a series of academic routines that constitute our [Spain's] university tradition and culture" (p. 1746)³⁹ which represent the status quo without going into nuances. Further complicating matters is the clear impact of the internationalization of HE in Spain, even if most students and professors have a limited understanding of its purpose, strategy or benefits. The term "Plan Bolonia" (The Bologna Plan) was tossed around in a handful of interviews with Spanish participants to describe both internationalization abroad (e.g., opportunities for exchange) and teaching methodology (e.g., aim for more practical learning). Three of the five U.S. SA administrators credited Bologna to the approximation of Spanish teaching methods to the U.S. while recognizing that the importance of contextual knowledge and a heavily weighted final exam may not change significantly.

Overall, my investigation confirmed previous analysis that Bologna's process is advancing student-centered learning in Spain although slowly, mainly because professors are left to implement it with limited support, training or incentive (Monereo & Pozo, 2003; del Pozo Andr3s, 2009; Soriano Garc3a, 2008) and students are still unaccustomed to active learning (Gil, 2017; L3pez-Sidro, 2011). The current state of Spanish teaching methods in HE is in transition due to shifting views of professors and students on what constitutes good learning due in part to internationalization.

Nevertheless, the diversity of classes present in the UAM does not contradict Jin & Cortazzi's (2013) cultures of learning theory as it acknowledges that:

³⁹ Original text: "Plasmar por escrito una serie de rutinas acad3micas que constituyen nuestra tradici3n y cultura universitaria."

cultures are complex, dynamic, changing, with (obviously) shared common values but (less obviously) internal diversity of recognized differences, too, so there is no expectation that every member of a particular group thinks or must behave in identical or even similar ways, despite group trends. Thus, the notion of applying a cultures of learning framework to classroom. (p. 2)

Cultures of learning provide a framework to better understand a range of teaching and learning philosophies due to general patterns that exist within cultural groups without going as far as to stereotype the individual as adhering only to one cultural group's preferences (Jin & Cortazzi, 2013). My research illustrated that underlying cultural differences in learning can be viewed positively or negatively. It would be useful for SA students to be aware of the differences in cultures of learning to assist them in developing strategies to identify, adapt and learn from them.

6.2 Adaptation to the Spanish higher education classroom

There is very little SA literature surrounding the adaptation process of SA students, especially in the direct enrollment context. The majority of SA literature based on pre- and post-testing of variables believed to impact learning cannot account for the individual variation because they do not explain what happens during the sojourn (Harvey, 2013). Even so, I found considerable overlap between the factors that facilitate or hinder adaptation with those variables previously seen to affect SA student learning, hence supporting the integral link between cultural learning and the adaptation process (Kim, 2001). Most importantly, central to the SA student learning and adaptation process was their ability to develop quality relationships with local people at the UAM.

The adaptation process was influenced by the SA program and the specific class as well as SA students' individual characteristics as seen in Kim's (2001) structural model. However, the impact of these factors depended on the SA students' motivation, self-efficacy beliefs and agency which were crucial in adjusting their adaptation choices throughout the semester. My research shows support for applying SCT (Bandura, 1986) to understand the decision-making of SA students' adaptation process. SA students used

a combination of adaptation strategies, some of which facilitated adaptation (e.g., academic and social integration and relaxing expectations) and others that hindered adaptation (e.g., withdrawal and separation). Their choices were not static but rather self-regulated depending on the class and/or the moment in the semester.

In the following, I will discuss how even though IaH is not explicitly understood by professors at the UAM; SA students perceived that many professors facilitated their adaptation. Then, I will examine how agency proved to be key in overcoming or succumbing to situational challenges and personal characteristics. I will also highlight the important role of motivation and self-efficacy beliefs in shaping how SA students use their agency.

6.2.1 Evidence of IaH despite a lack of training

At the UAM, the internationalization of HE was primarily understood by professors and students in terms of mobility and teaching in English. These results coincide with past European-level surveys on internationalization (Sursock, 2015) and common misconceptions highlighted by key researchers in the field (de Wit, 2013; Leask, 2015). Mobility, the Erasmus + program, in particular, was the most visible aspect of internationalization which is likely due to the low percentage of international students from outside Europe as well. The UAM's "Plan Doing" aimed at improving the English level of professors further reflects the focus on increasing the academic offer in English as a primary internationalization strategy, rather than focusing on IaH training. Lastly, bureaucratic barriers to enrolment continue to be perceived by all actors as blocking U.S. students from directly enrolling as reported by Pérez-Encinas et al., (2017).

I also found that Tarrach et al.,'s (2011) report that IaH in Spain is uneven at best continues to hold weight. Since the 2008 financial crisis, Spain has not followed through on its ambitious internationalization plan with funding (Rumbley & Howard, 2014) leading to the use of primarily Erasmus + or Horizon 2020 funds to support internationalization efforts (Delgado, 2017). At the UAM, there were no training programs to provide professors with the awareness and skills to effectively teach in a

multicultural classroom. The local participants of my research consistently confirmed a lack of funding for internationalization efforts resulting in a lack of training and resources. The lack of training is a global phenomenon as reported in the IAU's 4th Global Survey (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014) and viewed as the main barrier to IaH by top researchers in the field (Beelen, 2019; Leask, 2015).

Even though Spain is a top country for EU and U.S. exchange programs (European Commission, 2019; Institute of International Education, 2019), the scarce existing literature on IaH in Spain paints a rather bleak situation for IaH. Spanish professors have been found to lack knowledge on expectations, problems and needs of exchange students (Soriano García, 2008). Nevertheless, my SA students viewed Spanish professors as the important facilitators of their adaptation to the classroom. While I do not claim that all Spanish professors are implementing IaH strategies and that international students are integrated into every classroom, I believe that more IaH is present at Spanish universities than originally assumed by the above-mentioned literature. The discrepancy likely stems from the fact that professors associate internationalization with mobility and are unlikely to connect their pedagogical strategies with IaH specific terminology. By allowing professors and students to describe their pedagogies, I found many important examples of IA H which facilitate adaptation, which I will discuss in the following.

Facilitators of adaptation

Local professors used pedagogic methods that reflect IaH principles, whether they were aware of it or not. Past literature recommends that professors spend time using ice breakers (Croese, 2011) to help students bond with classmates (Arkoudis, 2006). Some related strategies used by UAM professors were introducing the exchange students on the first day, introducing themselves to the SA students or responding positively to SA students who presented themselves. To further improve exchange student reception and promote integration, professors could also promote intercultural learning as a two-way process that benefits local students (Leask, 2009).

Rather than viewing SA students from the deficit perspective; internationally aware professors viewed them as an opportunity to increased intercultural learning of all students as recommended by Leask (2009). This strategy was described by one professor, “(166) PROF_9: ask them [international students] to participate so that they can broaden the views of the whatever the topic you’re teaching, both for yourself and for the students.” Upon arrival, SA students may not participate due to negative outcome expectancy, “(167) SAS_20: I thought at first that the Spanish kids were gonna like look back and be like ‘whoa’ like but they all just acted normal and didn't like say anything or like look at me differently.” By inviting SA students to share their cultural knowledge, they help them gain positive firsthand experiences resulting in increased self-efficacy beliefs on their ability to participate regardless of the topic.

Lastly, group work is generally accepted as the primary way to integrate international students into the classroom. Left to their own devices, students are likely to form groupwork with co-nationals due to preestablished friendship groups (Harrison & Peacock, 2010), practical reasons (Volet & Ang, 1998) and concerns for academic performance (Harrison & Peacock, 2010). My results found some support for each reason depending on the situation. From an IaH perspective, professors should socially engineer the groups (Carroll & Ryan, 2005; de Vita, 2002); however, some believe their job is solely to teach the content (Arkoudis, et al., 2010) as I found. Nevertheless, this view ignores social forms of learning and understanding (Smart et al., 2000). My results coincided with De-Juan-Vigaray et al., (2014), Martínez Rubio et al., (2007) and Vazirani et al., (2018) research in Spain that SA student usually formed their own groups unless the professor socially engineered the groups. Some professors did encourage mixed groups or assign multicultural groups, hence contributing to the social integration of the SA students in the class. In fact, few SA students did groupwork strictly amongst themselves.

Nevertheless, the nature of the assignment proved crucial in determining the amount of integration achieved because as Leask (2009) argues the design must prevent students from doing it disjointedly because it eliminates the exchange of perceptions. Feedback and follow-up during the project

also are useful for conflict resolution (Carroll & Ryan, 2005), which was missing in group projects that ended poorly (e.g., Katherine and Lucia). There is room for improvement as some projects were done primarily via WhatsApp and Google Drive; however, other projects provided SA students with Spanish contacts to ask for clarifications and people to sit next to in classes (e.g., Meredith). Finally, Tom's anthropology assignment was thoughtfully designed, requiring semester-long and off-campus contact, which helped to build friendships resulting in a positive evaluation of the host culture, which is consistent with Pettigrew's (1998) extension of the contact theory.

Even though SA students generally found Spanish professors to be helpful, they still highlight some aspects to improve which correspond to IaH recommendations of previous literature. Professors could be more explicit about classroom norms such as expectations for participation and criteria for assessment (Kingston & Forland, 2008; Carroll & Ryan, 2005). Consistent with Pandor (2017), students desired more feedback during the course which Carroll (2008) argues helps students learn and adapt to the expectations of the professor. The largest barrier to building relationships with professors was cultural which coincides with Stephenson's (1999) research that found that during direct enrollment the cultural differences were stronger barriers to adaptation than the language itself. However, direct communication did not only impact exchange students. Spanish students also complained that professors would chastise them for being "wrong". I believe this phenomenon likely stems from the traditional professor-centered teaching; however, it requires further investigation which is outside the scope of my research.

Lastly, it is important to address possible feelings of discrimination in the classroom. I do not presume that my SA students do not perceive any discrimination during their semester in Spain; however, within the UAM, results did not reflect the level of prejudice found by Anderson (2003). Gondoni (2009), Isabelli (2006), Talburt & Steward (199) and Twombly (1995). Some professors were not respectful of linguistic differences of heritage speakers as seen in Shively (2016), which caused them to refrain from

speaking in class or interacting with the professor. However, other professors were considerate and helped them gain a deeper knowledge of the language such as in Quan (2018).

According to literature, the principal burden for adaption is usually placed on international students (Smart et al., 2000; Ward, 2006) which suggests that the host conformity is strong in the HE context. Host conformity pressure is “reflected in the expectations of the natives that strangers ought to learn how to communicate in accordance with the local codes and norms” (Kim, 2001, p. 154). As often reported (Pederson, 1991), professors expected SA students to adjust to learning at a native level of Spanish, the academic cultural norms and ways of interacting between students. This host conformity pressure was positive for adaptation when combined with academic and social integration strategies that allowed SA students to obtain the necessary knowledge of the local academic culture.

Overall, there was little evidence of a cultural synergy approach – a two-way process of adaptation – (Jin & Cortazzi, 2013) between local professors and SA students. Nevertheless, professors’ intrinsic desire to educate all their students resulted in the use of accommodation strategies resulting in the SA students’ view of local professors as welcoming, kind and facilitating their understanding of the Spanish HE system. As Kim’s (2001) model demonstrates, a positive view of host receptivity combined with host conformity pressure helped facilitate adaptation. I believe that with a little training or at least a space to discuss their strategies, local professors could harness their natural tendency to help all students to better facilitate the academic and social integration of all international students.

6.2.2 The key to adaptation: motivation, self-efficacy beliefs and agency

The professor is typically viewed as the main proponent for IaH in the classroom; however, the sojourning and local students have an equal if not larger responsibility for their own learning as well. The role of agency, motivation and self-efficacy beliefs in the SA field has been largely overlooked by past SA literature; however, they proved essential to understanding how Kim’s (2001) factors interacted with adaptation to the classroom. My findings support Covert’s (2014) arguments that “students are the

primary agents for their own intercultural learning and development” (p. 175) and that “they need to do more than soak up” (p. 175) the host culture especially if they wish to adapt to the academic and social norms of a new university. “The natural adaptive drive is reflected in an instinctive curiosity and the power of initiative in pursuit of ‘efficacy,’ a sense of being an agent in the living of one’s life” (Kim, 2001, p. 35). Congruent with Nguyen et al., (2018) findings on short-term programs, general self-efficacy was an important characteristic of better intercultural adaptation.

SA students who chose academic or social integration strategies had more frequent interactions with local students and professors which facilitated the learning of cultural norms that allowed SA students to adapt to the Spanish university. “Through active participation in host interpersonal communication activities, non-natives can begin the process of constructing a set of potentially satisfying and supportive relationships with natives” (Kim, 2012, 236). The development of connections with local professors and students facilitated SA students’ academic and social adaptation with the depth of these relationships affecting the degree of adaptation and learning. Furthermore, I found a positive relationship between social integration and academic adaptation as seen in previous research (Wan et al., 2013; Ward & Masgoret, 2004).

The elements in Kim’s (2001) structural model of cross-cultural adaptation were useful in understanding the factors influencing SA students’ adaption process in the direct enrollment setting. By coupling the model with SCT, I gained a deeper understanding of differences found in the SA student’s decision-making process. SCT’s theorizes that the interactions between cognitive and personal factors, environmental factors and behavioral factors shape decisions. (Bandura, 1989). Agency and self-efficacy were important regulators of environmental or individual characteristics that shaped their interactions impacting how the semester unfolded. The following will analyze Kim’s (2001) influencers in the SA context using an SCT perspective.

Reception of UAM institution

The informal curriculum of IaH (e.g., buddy programs, orientation and social events) (Leask, 2015) plays an integral role in how SA students perceive their reception by the host HEI. In my study, the UAM was not perceived as having a strong informal curriculum but rather providing mainly administrative services as reported by Perez-Encinas & Ammigan (2016). The ESN was responsible for integration activities for exchange students; however, as found in the ESN survey (Josek et al., 2016) the events were attended mainly by international rather than national students. Similar to Hendrickson (2018), the evaluation of the UAM's buddy program depended on the quality of contact SA students achieved with their local contact. Agency was required to follow up to meet their local buddy and to involve oneself in other extracurricular activities (e.g., Tom taking a salsa class).

Local professors

As mentioned in the previous section, SA students generally felt that professors were friendly and willing to help them. Most would agree with Pandor (2017) that local professors expected students to be more independent, provided less supervision and were less involved in their academic success. Nevertheless, SA students recognized it was their responsibility to adapt by approaching their professors to clarify their doubts. The positive or negative perception of the professor's receptivity shaped SA students' outcome expectancy which regulated their self-efficacy beliefs determining whether or not to approach professors. My research also suggests that instrumental motivation to do well academically encourages students, even those primarily using a separation strategy, to communicate with professors to learn of the academic expectations (e.g., Valeria and Maria).

Bridging the gap with local students

"The actual experience of U.S. students in European universities is rarely that of untroubled integration" (Woolf, 2007, p. 500). Indeed, the depth of integration at the UAM varied significantly. Most SA students maintained primary friendships with their co-national cohorts or multinational students, a

finding that is not novel by any means (Savicki, 2010). On the other side, Spanish students have little contact with international students even if the majority believe this undesirable (Sánchez, 2004). Spanish students reported not having opportunities for contact, lacking English language skills, or confidence to approach exchange students – all evident in Josek et al., (2016) study on Erasmus students in Europe. Some were even unaware of their presence in the class as one student explained, “(168) LS_16: many times, I don’t look for them nor do I notice them”.⁴⁰

On a group level, my findings support the overall picture painted by the literature of a limited mixing between groups due to cohort socializing pressure, lifestyle differences and differing views on classmate relationships. However, upon closer analysis, almost all SA participants felt the Spanish students were friendly, open to helping them academically, and attributed any lack of contact to themselves. Even if the majority of Spanish students are uninterested in international students’ presence (Sánchez, 2004), it only takes one or two positive interactions with local students for SA students to develop a favorable impression of the host receptivity. The keys to social integration were putting oneself in situations that favor interaction and having the motivation and self-efficacy beliefs to use agency to initiate contact with local students.

SA cohorts

The SA program model “directs students into co-national groups and inhibits their ability to develop meaningful host national and/or multi-national friendships” (Hendrickson, 2016, p. 62). The strong ethnic group strength often proved stronger than host receptivity when determining interpersonal communication patterns. My research had four important findings which add to the understanding of the role of SA cohort group friendships in adaptation.

First, Pitts (2009) suggests that co-national talk can help students develop culturally competent skills; however, my research indicated it was not as useful as interacting with locals. “The more individuals

⁴⁰ Original text: “LS_16: Muchas veces ni me fijo a ver, ni me entero.”

gathered and shared information regarding culturally appropriate behavior, the better equipped the group was as a whole” (Pitts, 2009, p.457). Some SA students indeed used their conational friends as a proxy to communicate with locals to understand the classroom expectations and lower their stress. However, firsthand experiences are more valuable than vicarious experiences in developing self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977). These students did not increase their confidence and/or their ability to interact in Spanish with host nationals. Those that interacted directly with locals learned and adapted better to UAM academic culture.

Secondly, SA programs that are not located near local universities provide logistical challenges for students to spend enough time in the local environment to develop relationships. Even though the physical distance between SA centers and local universities has not been reported in previous SA research, I found it to be a significant barrier. Nevertheless, it is possible to overcome this obstacle if the SA student is both very motivated to develop local friendships and organizes their schedule at the local university rather than SA center (e.g., Tom).

Thirdly, Hendrickson (2016) found that hybrid program students had more multinational relationships than SA students solely studying at SA centers. My research adds to the findings by noting that exchange students reported far more multinational friendships than hybrid program students based on a shared identity as international students consistent with Turner & Tajfel’s (1979) self-identification theory. As one student explained, “(169) SAS_21: we have met more Erasmus definitely. I feel like they are easier to like open up to. I guess or they're more like approachable... SAS_22: cause like here people here have like their own clicks already.” Another reason could be that twelve of thirteen exchange students were already bilingual and therefore did not necessarily aim to improve their Spanish through local friendships.

Lastly, while many have argued that both locals and international students assume it is the responsibility of the locals to initiate contact (Leask & Carroll, 2011; Volet & Ang 2000; Ward, 2001; Knight

& Schmidt-Rinehart, 2010); my SA participants felt it was their responsibility to initiate conversation, understanding that locals already had their social groups. "(170) SAS_23: I mean I figured like and I would have to put in a lot of effort into getting to know people um because of that innate barrier. (laughs) people already have their formed groups." SA students who used a separation strategy generally did not blame the Spanish students for not approaching them. "(171) SAS_13: I guess like it's my own fault um like we'll kind of isolate ourselves.... just all like Americans so we kind of just huddle around." SA students are aware that their extensive cohort contact inhibits their ability to establish deeper local friendships but similar to past findings, choose to engage in co-ethnic interactions because their desire for emotional support is more important to them (Pitts, 2009; Pyper & Slagter, 2015).

Even though the island part of the hybrid program strongly influences SA student commitment to host communication, individuals' intrinsic motivation for social integration could overcome this barrier. For example, Sara purposefully sat next to local people instead of cohort peers due to an intrinsic desire to learn Spanish, demonstrating key cognitive processes of forethought and intentionality (Bandura, 1977) in her learning. She also showed high self-efficacy beliefs by maintaining a positive psychological and affective state by being comfortable with being uncomfortable. Even though SA programs push students towards conational relationships, SA students adapt by enacting agency to actively seek out communication with local professors and students.

Lifestyle

Past research has found off-campus socializing differences such as drinking culture (Brown, 2009) and living situation (Dunne, 2009) can impede relationship formation. In Spain, it was less the drinking culture than the socializing culture that created a barrier for interaction. Local students commonly lived at home and socialized on the weekends; whereas the SA students socialized during the week and traveled in Europe on the weekends. Furthermore, Spanish students socialize on campus in cafeterias over coffee, lunch, beer and smoking while SA students met up downtown. Spanish students highlighted the good

atmosphere of the cafeterias as a positive aspect of their university and a way to develop friendships as one student described “(172) LS_15: Also, the cafeterias, we are here almost more than inside (laughs) the classroom. So, there are many spaces where you can really have conversations and make friendships.” SA students observed that Spanish students socialized in the cafeterias; however, few adapted their socializing patterns to build relationships such as Tom.

Student relationships: Competitive versus collaborative

In the U.S., students maintain competitive relationships with their peers in the academic environment (Althen et al., 2003; Hofstede, 1986); therefore, SA students assume that Spanish students interact similarly. This initially deters them from initiating conversations for academic support until they find out “(173) SAS_24: they're so willing to do it, it's so normal. It's so normalized in this academic culture and like it's awesome.” Even one positive interaction is enough for SA students to learn that collaborative learning is normal in Spain, which proved the main reason for the positive evaluation of local students Katherine, Sara, Ashleigh and Tom's stories all demonstrate how local students helped them integrate both academically and socially.

Collaborative relationships also helped students relax their expectations about grades, resulting in lowered anxiety. Pandor (2017) noted the difficulty to achieve a high mark as an important concern for SA students during direct enrollment. Spanish students help SA students adapt to the system by recognizing the grading system was simply different. For example, when Ashleigh failed her first exam, she was very embarrassed until speaking to her Spanish classmates.

(174) ASH: I went out to coffee with them [Spanish friends] a few days and we were talking about the test and they were like what did you get on the test and I was like “oh I failed” and they were like “oh ok you just need to study the book.” So, they helped me out a lot.

U.S. students initially base their expectations for grades and relationships with local students on U.S. academic norms. Once SA students realized the collaborative culture, they use self-regulatory processes

to change their behaviors and initiate future contact with local students resulting in lowered anxiety about grades and increased comfort in class.

Fortuity versus agency

Bandura (2006) argues that fortuity plays a role in agency because one can never be certain who they will come across. SA students (e.g., Ashleigh, Tom and Katherine) who encountered Spanish students who approached them and offered help and/or to join their circle, attributed the relationships in large part to good luck rather than their decisions surrounding their socializing patterns. While partially true, Bandura (2001) argues that alongside fortuity, individual agency is exercised to choose which environments to interact with and how they perceive them. Fortuity is a factor that affects the first contact; however, SA students had to put themselves in proximity to Spanish students (e.g., choice of seat and classes), say “yes” when invited to socialize and prioritize those relationships.

I believe that the bird-eye view of intergroup relationships among SA and local students is more negative than the reality. One explanation for this is that as Pitts (2009) argues, SA students complain, often with humor, to their SA peers and advisors as a way of adjusting and lowering stress (e.g., Lucia). While Pitt (2009) viewed this as positive for constructing meaning from their experiences, it mainly worked to reinforce negative attitudes towards the Spanish UAM community and likely led SA advisors to form a more negative perception of local actors than the collective SA group perceived.

Consequently, SA orientations inform SA students that it will be very difficult to integrate with local students, highlighting the presence of an in-group and out-group. While true to an extent, as Kim (2009) argues that “categorical cognitive behavior constrains intercultural communication as it creates self-fulfilling prophecies, prompting us to see behavior that confirms our expectations even when it is absent” (p. 55). Furthermore, people are more likely to attempt goals they view as achievable (Bandura, 1989). Therefore, if SA students believe it will be tough to make friends in class, they will be less likely to try and persist if faced with a setback. After “failing” to integrate, SA students then confirm the SA

advisor's assumption, leading to the same advice for the next group. Strategies to use agency in ways that adapt to the local academic culture such as Tom and Sara exhibited would be more valuable when preparing students for a successful adaptation. Even if SA students only develop superficial relationships in the classroom due to the short-term sojourn, preestablished friendships groups, SA cohort pressures, it is still enough interaction to allow students to adapt to Spanish norms.

Preparedness

Ward's literature review (2006) emphasizes that language or communicative competence is an important factor in the cultural adaptation of international students. Since SA programs vet SA students for language level (Pandor, 2017), Kim's (2001) preparedness factor seemed to have little impact on adaptation. Similar to Stephenson's (1999) survey, even though non-native and some heritage SA students were still concerned with their language level upon arrival, they became comfortable understanding professors and using Spanish in the classroom rather quickly. As Milstein (2005) argued, self-efficacy beliefs and outcomes expectancy rather than objective linguistical preparedness guided SA students' decisions of with whom communicate, limiting or expanding their opportunities for cultural learning that would facilitate their adaptation.

Cultural proximity

Kim's (2001) theory states that cultural proximity is normally beneficial for adaptation. Nevertheless, when comparing advanced L2 learners to heritage speakers in the direct enrollment context, my results aligned with Quan's (2018) findings that heritage speakers still face adaptation challenges, just different ones from non-native speakers. SA students' ability to negotiate their identity shaped their adaptation choices. The main factors which complicated the relationship between cultural proximity and adaptation were the motivation for host communication, the discrepancy between objective language level and self-efficacy beliefs and professors' expectations based on their identity.

SCL theory claims that individuals attempt goals to which they attribute a high value (Bandura, 1977). Two primary motivations for interacting with Spanish students are opportunities for language learning and cultural learning; however, native speakers and some heritage speakers were not motivated to learn Spanish or interact with local students because it holds little linguistic value. Past SA research has found intrinsic motivation to be a stronger determinant of language learning (Yager, 1998) and informal interaction with locals (Hernández, 2010) than instrumental motivation. Non-native speakers with high intrinsic motivation for cultural and linguistic learning experience consequently achieved deeper academic and social integration than some heritage and native speakers.

As seen in Quan (2018) not all heritage speakers had a high efficacy belief about communicating in their heritage language depending on past experiences with the language. Concurring with Moreno (2009) and McLaughlin (2001), heritage students reported lacking exposure to Spanish in an academic environment. As one SA student pointed out “(175) SAS_21: I’m fluent in Spanish but I had never like studied! or done anything academically in Spanish.” Nevertheless, professors assumed they are Spanish students based on their name, native-like pronunciation and similar physical characteristics. As seen in Quan, (2018) they felt held to the same expectations for a high academic written level due to their fluency. In SA, the close ethnic proximity does not always facilitate adaptation because professors cannot always recognize their challenges, often holding them to a higher bar than non-native speakers. Even heritage speakers that began with high communicative self-efficacy in Spanish may lose confidence if they receive low notes on early assignments (e.g., Valeria and Maria).

It is easier for non-native speakers to position themselves as L2 learners in the classroom which elicited support from the professor; however, heritage and native speakers who were comfortable communicating in Spanish also interacted more easily with local students and professors. Furthermore, many held cultural values and norms (e.g., relaxed attitude) that prove a good “cultural fit” (Searle & Ward, 1990) for adapting to Spanish academic culture. Cultural proximity influences the SA student

adaptation process; however, motivations, self-efficacy beliefs and identity negotiation also shape their experiences in the classroom.

Adaptive personality

SA researchers have found that open-mindedness (Jackson, 2012) and a positive attitude (Isabelli, 2006) facilitate integration. These two aspects of Kim's (2001) adaptive personality waned over time as SA students did not have the strength to "absorb 'shocks' from the environment and to bounce back without being seriously damaged by them" (Kim, 2001, p. 85). When faced with challenges or incoherency in expectations, SA students such as Lucia, became negative and closed off to Spanish people. Furthermore, openness and positivity was of little use if SA students did not use agency to engage in host communication which would allow them to learn social norms to adapt to.

These characteristics are also impacted by the fact that the immersion setting is not as culturally nor linguistically immersed as imagined (Kinging, 2010) and personal and environmental factors influence the actual immersion level (Isabelli-Garcia & Isabelli, 2020). SA students who followed the immersion assumption rhetoric were less likely to make intentional efforts to adapt as one student remarked, "(176) SAS_14: I came here to learn Spanish and that's gonna happen so...like the immersion...it's like what I wanted and no matter how difficult it is, it's gonna be helpful and it's gonna improve my Spanish." Directly enrolling in a local class reflected a positive predisposition to learning; however, as Jackson (2012) argues, agency impacts how the sojourner unfolds which in this case determined whether or not students make intentional efforts to adapt to the Spanish university culture.

Another relevant aspect of openness is extroversion/introversion of which research has shown mixed results (Masgoret et al., 2000). Introversion has been negatively correlated to psychological and behavioral adaptation to a new culture (Searle & Ward, 1990) and with learning language because they avoid risk-taking behaviors such as initiating conversations with locals (Dewey et al., 2014). SA students such as Meredith reported they were too shy to approach local students or as Maria explained, the only

real barrier to meeting people was her “(177) MAR: own shyness or fear of making a mistake.” Nevertheless, Tom and Sara were also self-described introverts; however, their motivation for L2 learning led them to seek local interactions in the classroom. As Sara explained, “(178) SAR: you have to take the initiative to speak to other people um or otherwise you're not gonna make any friends or do anything.”

It is plausible that, statistically speaking, extroverts adapt better than introverts due to their ability to establish quick friends in class (e.g., Ashleigh). However, my findings suggest that extroverts also face multiple challenges during SA. They can become shy due to low self-efficacy beliefs in their Spanish as one SA student notes. “(179) SAS_6: I just get like really shy cause I feel like the few interactions that I've had with professors, it's just I forget that I can speak Spanish....so, I'm like I'm gonna save myself the trouble.” Similar to Quan’s (2018) study, when extroverted participants could not convey their personality in the new culture, they may retreat to safe co-national or international communication instead (e.g., Lucia). My data indicates that both extroversion and introversion can be facilitators or hindrances to adaptation depending on students' self-efficacy beliefs on their ability to interact in the foreign academic context, their motivations and propensity to enact agency in ways that are or are not conducive to adaptation.

Adaptive personality enables individuals to withstand challenges and gain learning which is vital to their intercultural transformation (Kim, 2001). Of the characteristics associated with adaptive personality, strength proved more important than openness and positive in predicting adaptation strategies. Neither self-efficacy beliefs nor agency is static but rather dependent on interactions with the environment (Allen, 2010) which is why even though most students were eager and open to socially integrating at the UAM, few demonstrated the strength to persist in their goal.

When I asked an SA advisor if she felt it was more important for her students to travel and have fun or to make Spanish friends, she responded “(180) SAPS_2: theoretically no, but in practice yes. That

is, they say one thing, but their behavior is generally different, of course there are exceptions.”⁴¹ Especially after realizing it would be more difficult than expected to socially integrate, SA students self-regulated to prioritize travel, socializing with cohort friends and off-campus activities that hindered their adaptation. Very few demonstrated the patience and persistence required to integrate socially and academically as Tom explains.

(181) TOM: I wanted to be friends with **Spanish students right away** and I felt really bad and **really frustrated when that didn't happen** but, it eventually happened. So I think from that, if **you just be patience and keep trying to put in the work**, things are going to come out of it...also I think also just being able to roll with the flow and **not get to worked up** with not knowing what your **assignments** are, not necessarily knowing what your final exam is going to be like **just rolling with the flow** because it eventually comes out after a bit, but **you just have to be a little patience**.

Tom highlights the importance of strength elements of patience and persistence for both meeting local people and adapting to the academic culture. SA students demonstrated an intercultural transformation through changes in their outlook on being a university student which I denominated the relaxing expectations strategy of adaptation is a unique finding in the SA literature.

Motivation, agency and self-efficacy beliefs are not static (Bandura, 1997). SA students adjusted their goals and priorities for the semester to adapt to the new academic culture by relaxing their expectations for themselves as students. SA students used self-regulatory and self-reflection processes to reposition themselves as exchange students hence lowering the pressure for high grades and even Spanish fluency. SA students recognized they did not necessarily need to be fluent to be academically successful and/or redefined fluency as the ability to communicate with cultural others.

⁴¹ Original text: “SAPS_2: teóricamente no, pero en la práctica sí. Es decir, ellos dicen una cosa, pero su comportamiento es diferente en general, por supuesto hay excepciones.”

(182) SAS_24: it was definitely one of the **hardest academic things I've ever done**, I still did it and I'm utterly and entirely confident that **I'm gonna more than pass** all of my class. **I'm not gonna get all A's. I'm not. I'm fine with that....**I had this idea if I didn't understand and take in every **single word** all the time, **I wasn't gonna understand. You don't do that in English anyway.**

My findings demonstrate that SA students demonstrate strength through patience with themselves as learners, persistence in the face of a difficult situation and by shifting their expectations for themselves as students. Regardless of the specific environmental or individual characteristics of students, SA students who demonstrated greater strength in their adaptive personality traits were more likely to achieve social and academic integration and relax expectations, which facilitated their adaptation.

Conclusion

The natural tendency of an open system is to resist the deculturation process involved in adaptation. When an individual experiences stress, they respond defensively as they attempt to maintain their internal structure. Those who are unable or unwilling to adapt to the new challenges, may remain in a state of maladaptation and continue to engage in defensive behaviors such as withdrawal and hostility (Kim, 2001). In my results, the withdrawal adaptation strategy demonstrated SA students who remained in this state (e.g., Lucia). Consistent with Kim's (2001) theory, such students chose to minimize disappointment through selective attention, highlighting the negative experiences and minimizing the positive counter example which did not fit into the general construct they developed of the Spanish university culture. These results confirm past SA research which has also found that negative views of the host university or professor led to disengagement from the classroom (Kinger, 2004; Goldoni, 2009; Pelligrino-Aveni, 2005).

Nevertheless, for most SA students, the state of stress propelled them to overcome the challenges through new cultural learning, demonstrating that Kim's (2001) stress-adaptation-growth model is useful for analyzing how SA students adapt to the Spanish HE classroom. The process was cyclical in which SA

students discovered new challenges, adapted and learned throughout the semester. Even for SA students who chose a separation strategy, the stress pushed to them engage in host communication to overcome the specific academic differences; even if, their overall adaptation and cultural learning remained limited. Students with an instrumental motivation to be academically successful were more likely to use an academic integration strategy whereas though who had an intrinsic motivation for cultural and/or language learning more often used a social integration strategy. Finally, congruent with Kim's (2001) process model of adaptation, academic, cultural and language learning were both a part of the adaptation process and a learning outcome.

6.3 Direct enrollment, program design and learning outcomes

My research contributes greatly to the debate on the academic component of SA programs and the added value of direct enrollment to SA student learning due to its nuanced understanding of the experience from the students' perspective. I believe that direct enrollment opens the door for new learning opportunities that are not available to SA students otherwise. It is a particularly beneficial option for students with advanced L2 skills; however, as a cultural experience, it could also benefit SA students with lower L2 skills to take courses in English at a local university as well. The concern that direct enrollment is too challenging and will lead students to withdraw from learning was rare; however, I agree that it may lead to prejudice and stereotyping. Both hybrid and exchange programs should provide support to SA students in terms of course selection, encouraging students to engage with actors from the local university, and most importantly facilitating their understanding of their intercultural experiences.

6.3.1 Are our students sinking?

*(183) SAPS_3: look, just because **it's difficult for them**, in the end I think they are **satisfied with themselves**. I'm not saying **they like it or they didn't like**, or that they felt it was*

*amazing or they felt it was horrible, the experience at the Autónoma. **But they say, "I can do it"***⁴²

SA practitioners often argue that the direct enrollment experience is "too challenging" for all SA students, many of which have never left the U.S. and have low L2 skills. Sanford's (1962) challenge/support hypothesis suggests that if SA programs are too immersive, they run the risk of being so difficult that students will retreat from learning. Direct enrollment is viewed as the ultimate immersion challenge because unlike home stays or volunteering, the results impact the SA students' highly valued GPA. Especially in an industry where consumeristic views persist, academic failure would mean a loss of investment and could reflect poorly on the SA program. For all actors, the "safer" option is to take SA program courses.

Following the "sink or swim" metaphor, researchers suggest that when SA students are left to their own devices too many of them sink rather than swim, disengaging from unpleasant, unfamiliar situations (Vande Berg et al., 2012). When applied to homestays, volunteering, interacting outside of school with locals, etc. SA students can easily avoid contact by hiding in their room, stopping their immersion activities and spending time with peer cohort friends. However, once enrolled in a local class, SA students proved reluctant to leave due to their greater desire for academic credit. Kim (2001) argues that most sojourners eventually handle challenging situations as did the majority of my SA participants; however, not all provided reflections that demonstrated deeper intercultural learning.

Academic failure was primarily linked to exchange program coordinators' lack of knowledge of the local university system leading to poor course advising. Only one student reported giving up on a class because it was too much work while others who believed they would fail a course continued attending, studying and trying to pass the exam. Exchange students seemed less concerned about failing a course

⁴² Original text: "SAPS_3: mira, justo porque les cuesta, y se les hace difícil, al final yo creo que se sienten satisfechos de su mismos. No te digo que les guste o no les guste o que les parezca fabuloso o les parezca horrible, la experiencia en la autónoma, pero dicen "yo puedo vale."

because the cost to repeat back home was relatively low. SA advisors of hybrid programs reported that academic failure was not frequent among their students because they filtered applicants, only allowing those with the proper language level and motivation. Additionally, they tracked courses based on student reviews to provide the best opportunity for a good experience.

Negative experiences during SA have led to increased prejudice and ethnocentric attitudes as seen in many investigations (Bacon, 2002; Covert, 2014; Goldoni, 2009; Kinginger, 2010). The development of prejudiced attitudes from cultural contact is another form of “sinking”; however, very few SA students demonstrated this maladaptation (e.g., Lucia). In these cases, SA students’ frustration with the university culture led to increased intolerance for at least some aspects of Spanish culture, which limited their intercultural learning. My results suggest that fewer students were “sinking” during direct enrollment than Vande Berg et al., (2012) fears; nonetheless, I agree that support for intercultural learning is required to prevent as many students as possible from maladaptation.

6.3.2 Hybrid programs’ role in keeping students afloat

Both exchange and hybrid program designs have benefits and drawbacks. Exchange programs provide access to SA to larger often public universities that do not have resources and students who do not have the means to go through a third-party provider. My research confirmed that exchange programs facilitate local and international friendships (Hendrickson, 2016; Scally, 2015) and provide a more international experience outside of a preestablished U.S. student bubble. However, these students also experienced more academic frustrations than hybrid students, had no advisor to provide emotional support or reflection that could improve their attitudes, and were not offered Spanish culture courses to improve the knowledge component of their intercultural learning. These factors support Scally’s (2015) argument that hybrid programs better support SA student learning.

However, within Norris & Dwyer’s (2005) static spectrum of island, hybrid and direct enrollment (exchange); I found that hybrid programs showed individual variation due to the variance in ingroup

socializing pressure. Scally (2015) reported that island students have the lowest IDI gains; similarly, my SA students who were part of larger off-campus island programs and only took one UAM class demonstrated the least intercultural and L2 learning. These participants felt they pertained mainly to their island program, spent less time at the UAM and prioritized their cohort peer relations. SA students from hybrid programs that expected them to be more independent, to follow a language pledge, live in a homestay, and/or take multiple UAM classes showed greater learning from the direct enrollment experience. This suggests that there are many elements within the program design of hybrid programs that have a significant impact on SA student learning.

The Georgetown study highlights housing and experiential activities as the key design components of SA programs as (Vande Berg et al., 2009). Even so, they caution that the aspects

will not automatically result in effective oral proficiency or intercultural learning. To **maximize the potential** of this design intervention, a **second intervention** is necessary, a well-trained **cultural mentor** who, in this case, can work to **motivate students** to spend more free time with the host family. (Vande Berg et al., 2009, p. 31)

Hybrid programs encouraged learning through a Spanish culture course and by acting as a cultural liaison for students coping with a difference; however, no SA student reported participating in a facilitated intercultural learning program. My research suggests a second intervention is required to improve the chances of SA students learning from the direct enrollment immersion experience as well.

6.3.3 Swimming at varying speeds

*(184) GRE: And so, I do believe **that kids learn a lot**. I do believe that it's still the most important thing we can do for students is to **make it available to them** that they have kind of study abroad experience. It does **not mean that everyone is going to improve their Spanish**. It doesn't mean that you know their knowledge about Spanish culture suddenly maybe like "wow, I get it I understand." You might say **god you lived in Spain and you still***

don't know what this is? Right, but somehow taking these kids out of their comfort zone, somehow the coexisting in a different culture in a really healthy thing. And I think it is difficult to say what is it that they are exactly [learning] (laughs)

The direct enrollment immersion experience offers a plentitude of learning opportunities for SA students. SA students choose to study at the UAM to gain an authentic experience of what it is like to be a Spanish student at university. Similar to previous research, SA students exhibited a high level of individual variation in learning (Alred et al., 2018) depending on their motivations, commitment to learning and level of interactions within the local university.

My results contribute to the field's understanding of the added learning value of direct enrollment, filling the gap in previous SA research which considered direct enrollment as a variable in language learning, intercultural learning (Vande Berg et al., 2012; Scally, 2015), and friendship formation (Hendrickson, 2016; Norris & Dwyer, 2005). I also discovered that SA students valued the academic content of the courses which has largely been ignored by program design debate on learning outcomes. Furthermore, the findings provide new insights on learning for advanced language learners and heritage or native speakers which the language tests cannot detect.

Academics

Direct enrollment allows for a larger academic offer including classes not offered in students' U.S. institutions, increasing SA opportunities for non-traditional majors and allowing students to explore new subjects. Furthermore, professors had a high level of expertise and depth of theoretical knowledge and often held higher expectations for content learning than U.S. professors. In SA program centers, professors are expected to tailor to U.S. expectations and norms (Ogden, 2008); however, the UAM exposed them to new ways of teaching and learning based on a more collaborative approach. Finally, SA students most valued the opportunity to hear international perspectives on the subject.

Spanish language learning

The results were valuable to understand how the direct enrollment experience impacts the different facets of language learning and learning opportunities for non-native, heritage and native Spanish speakers. SA improves language acquisition in large part due to its facilitation of opportunities to interact with native speakers, although with individual variation (Freed, 1998; Isabelli-Garcia & Isabelli, 2020). Direct enrollment facilitates interaction with native speakers by placing SA students in a new local environment; however, learning depended greatly on the agency of the SA to initiate and build relationships with local classmates and professors.

Previous research which uses the OPI to measure linguistic gains has been unable to capture the nuance involved in the upper end of the scale (Freed, 1995; Scally, 2015), which may explain why direct enrollment has not been deemed significant in improving language competencies (Vande Berg et al., 2012). However, it is not relevant to compare the advances of lower level or intermediate level Spanish learners to advanced language learners or heritage speakers because the learners' needs are inherently different. Furthermore, in the case of heritage speakers, language is also connected to identity negotiation, which impacts their interactions with locals as well. Finally, native speakers only report slight improvements of sociolinguistic learning because they are already fluent. From a quantitative perspective, these lower gains would indicate that direct enrollment has a lesser impact on learning; however, the comparison is inappropriate because there is less room to improve on the scale.

In comparison to SA program classes that engaged in "foreigner talk" (Isabelli-Garcia & Isabelli, 2020), the direct enrollment setting provided native level input which was particularly useful for improving heritage speakers' Spanish as they could pick up on the higher-level syntax as seen in Moreno (2009), slang and varietal differences as seen in Collentine (2009) rather than focusing on meaning. Direct enrollment required heritage students to raise their level of written Spanish, learn subject-specific vocabulary and incorporate new colloquial or Spanish from Spain linguistic variation in their knowledge

base. It also provided sociolinguistic learning which Quan et al., (2018) found was a key learning for heritage speakers during SA. SA program classes are often too comfortable for heritage or native speakers to engage in linguistic learning because they are targeted to non-native speakers; whereas direct enrollment pushes them to develop a higher level of Spanish language.

Non-native Spanish speakers focused more on comprehension with most reporting understanding classes with relative ease after the first months. Direct enrollment was particularly useful for improving listening and vocabulary. Those who interacted with local students picked up on more colloquial Spanish, another element that is not measured by the OPI. Nevertheless, consistent with Isabelli-Garcia (2006) and Kinginger (2008), SA students needed to be active in their language learning to make more notable gains, especially in reading, writing and speaking domains. As one student explained:

(185) SAS_23: I would say yes [Spanish is improving], **at first it wasn't because**, well at least for the first week...**there wasn't a decision**. I don't know after the first week **I like made an active decision** to not like passively learn any like Spanish. I was like **if I don't know a word, I am going to look it up**. I am going to write it down. I am going to look at the translation and then I am going to review it often...so it has been an **active choice on my part to like really learn**, that's made it that's allowed me to progress even then, I still feel like I am moving at this like really slow pace.

Agency used for L2 learning was also demonstrated by those students who followed the language pledge. Grey et al., (2015) found that the language pledge is beneficial for non-native L2 learning; however, some argue that language pledges are ineffective because students can easily ignore them. I believe the language pledge to be useful because it sets the tone and expectation within the SA program center for language learning and makes it easier for SA students to identify peers who are also serious about improving their L2. It also reduces the negative impact of peer cohort communication allowing non-native speakers and heritage speakers alike to improve their language skills in a more comfortable interpersonal situation and then apply their acquired skills when interacting with the host community.

Intercultural competence

There is a scarcity in SA research on the impact of direct enrollment on intercultural competence. The Georgetown Study found the class composition of SA students, international students and local students to increase IDI scores (Vande Berg et al., 2009); however, Scally (2015) only found improvements for hybrid students, not exchange students. My ethnographic methodology allowed a view into the experiences of SA students between the pre and post- test that offer plausible reasons why past research has not found direct enrollment, especially when through exchange programs, to significantly improve SA students' IDI scores.

First, physically being on campus did not necessarily lead to intercultural learning because some students did not engage enough with the social aspects of the university, viewing it solely as an academic experience. The UAM director explained their attitude was

(186) GRE: "I'll focus when I am here [at the UAM] and **do well and the end of the story**", but I personally think they've **lacked this whole sort of intercultural experience** that has just kind of you know by passed them. Because **you got also be here physically here a little bit more.**

Secondly, as J. Bennett (2008) argues. those who learn international perspectives do not necessarily gain intercultural competencies. Exchange students who did not have local friends to interpret cultural differences in place of the SA advisors were more likely to maintain negative views towards certain aspects of the Spanish university culture. SA advisors can redirect the conversation when students vent about cultural differences, which one believed "(187) SAPS_4: leads them to their own learning"⁴³. However, a few students (e.g., Lucia) continued to struggle to cope with the cultural differences in the classroom.

Finally, I strongly believe that direct enrollment does allow for significant intercultural growth which simply is unlikely to be detected by the IDI due to the culture specific nature and the fact that SA students who directly enroll likely begin with higher IDI scores. At the UAM, SA students gained cognitive

⁴³ Original text: "SAPS_4: les llevamos por su propio aprendizaje."

knowledge on international perspectives, emotional learning reflected in their appreciation of a more relaxed way of being a university student and skills of collaborative learning.

In comparison to island programs, direct enrollment allows SA students access to a new local environment where they can observe university culture in the natural environment. At a minimum, SA students viewed direct enrollment's added value as learning about Spanish culture as Meredith explained:

(188) MER: I learned about yeah, the college culture... I think I just got an **idea of what it's like to be a young person** at college here...and being in a class, um **seeing how those people spend** their time, getting a taste for what it's like, in **the day to day**.

Although this specific cultural learning did not always lead to intercultural learning, for many students it shifted their perspective of the university as a stressful and competitive place, to a more relaxed and collaborative way of being a student.

Bacon (2002) noted a bidirectional relationship between learning from the local class and understanding the local culture. Similarly, SA students made connections between the UAM university culture and Spanish values and lifestyle, especially in relation to views on time.

“(189) SAS_24: I think that the mindset and the approach the people have here of like, **you pass time, you don't spend time**...you just like go about doing what you need to do and it will all get done, don't worry about it. Tranquila. [English: be calm]”

I believe the experience was particularly beneficial for SA students who were accustomed to high-stress academic environments. “(190) SAS_17: I learned that like oppressional Olympics, like aka **stress competitions that like occur in New Bedford are like pretty silly** like competing to be the most stressed and competing to have the most things to do (laughs)”. While relaxed views on time have been reported as stressful (Covert, 2014); in my research, it proved to be important intercultural learning.

An important part of the knowledge component of intercultural competence is the ability to understand international perspectives on societal norms. SA program centers' professors may add an

international perspective; however, direct enrollment allows for unfiltered input of local and multinational students as well. For example, political science students learned that communism still existed as a valid political orientation for some local students. Furthermore, past research has seen that SA students recoil into national superiority when faced with negative perceptions of the U.S. (Kinging, 2010). Since part of my participants' motivation for directly enrolling was the opportunity to hear new perspectives, they welcomed Spanish students' strong opinions on U.S. gun laws and/or international policies, rather than being offended. I believe this discrepancy illustrates the open predisposition of this profile of SA students and resonates with findings that exchange students begin with a higher level of intercultural competence (Scally, 2015).

Personal growth

SA research's main focus has traditionally been language learning and intercultural competence; however, the sense of independence, accomplishment and confidence that SA students gain has often been overlooked. As one SA program staff explains:

(191) SAPS_5: what they learn is a lot of **skills for life**. They learn the skill of dealing with their frustrations (laughs), **adapting** to a new system, **surviving**, studying on their own and being very **responsible, communicating with others**, you see very shy students that you know they realize that unless they go and talk to the teacher, the teachers not going to talk to them so um **they learn a lot of skills**.

The UAM academic culture pushes SA students to act autonomously by reaching out to professors and students allowing them to gain confidence in their host communication ability. Furthermore, the lack of small daily assignments forced SA students to be responsible for managing their time and not to procrastinate. The concern of the direct enrollment experience being “too challenging” is exactly what makes it a rewarding learning experience for students.

Nevertheless, I agree with scholars that SA students should be supported through guided reflection if we want students to swim faster, especially considering the limited time to accomplish their many goals for SA. It was evident my participants did not have a space to process their experience or learning. By using interventionalist educational programming during the semester, I believe we could enhance learning within the direct enrollment experience by teaching about intercultural competence, self-efficacy and agency; and providing a space for students to reflect and negotiate their identities. Hopefully, this way we could speed up the swimming and prevent students from sinking.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and recommendations

The SA experience is hailed as the golden ticket for providing cultural and linguistic immersion that can only be achieved through living abroad. In the U.S., rising costs of HE and SA have led stakeholders to justify its learning value with empirical evidence (Ogden & Streitwieser, 2016). The commercialization of SA has led to a proliferation of programs and a growing number of island programs from which students rarely step out of their U.S. isolation, treating the experience as an excuse for tourism and pleasure (Lewin, 2009). The direct enrollment experience combats this trend, allowing students to step outside of their safe bubble and immerse themselves in foreign HEIs, which reflect the cultural values of the society.

Nevertheless, direct enrollment is not fully taken advantage of by SA programs due to logistical and linguistic barriers, as well as presumed cultural barriers (Hendrickson, 2016). Some consider direct enrollment to be a “sink or swim” environment, only feasible for the few students who can adapt to the new and unfamiliar (Vande Berg et al., 2012), even though the effects of direct enrollment on learning remain inconclusive (Ogden and Streitwieser, 2016). These preconceived notions about direct enrollment are maintained in the SA discourse, yet few researchers have attempted to understand the student’s perspective of the experience, how they adapt and what specific learning outcomes does this more challenging modality add to SA.

The dissertation has demonstrated that each SA students’ adaptation process to the university classroom context is unique. There is no one individual or environmental characteristic that can guarantee a students’ adaptation nor do “favorable” characteristics ensure SA students will use their agency to take advantage of the opportunities presented. However, the investigation did identify commonalities within the strategies of SA students and professors that facilitated integration in the classroom and lead to richer learning outcomes. The following recommendations draw on the experiences and perspectives of all participants. They aim to provide a favorable environment for initiating intercultural communication as well as foment the SA student’s capacity for making decisions that will help achieve their learning goals.

It is imperative that HEIs aim to provide all students with intercultural competencies through both IaH initiatives and SA programs (de Wit, 2013) to achieve quality and excellence in HE in the 21st century. Therefore, the recommendations are not only aimed at benefiting the SA students but also the local students and professors. In the following, I will discuss the limitations of the research, recommendations for all actors involved in the sojourn, and implications for future research.

7.1 Limitations

The main limitation of the research were the constraints on my time as the sole researcher for observations, interviewing and building relationships due to the time required to gain access and overlapping schedules. In the first semester, I asked for permission to attend their classes after recruitment and therefore missed the early semester classes which would allow me to better observe the adaptation process. However, I was able to visit more classes of each participant and develop deeper bonds since they were fewer students.

In the second semester, I began observations the first day of classes; however, since there were forty SA students, I attended fewer classes of each SA student due to overlapping class schedules and interviews. Furthermore, the interviews were shorter than in the first semester to accommodate all many participants. Another shortcoming was that none of the SA students were enrolled in the faculties of law, computer science, or medicine and therefore, I did not observe these faculties, each of which has its peculiarities. Nevertheless, the method obtained a variety of perspectives due to the large number of participants and classes that I observed, which lead to a broader understanding of the social situation.

Additionally, since I was attending multiple classes, it also became difficult to develop relationships with Spanish students in the observed classes. Therefore, I was only able to ask a few Spanish students more specific questions related to the SA student's opinion of the class. Furthermore, I quickly found that few Spanish students had any sort of contact with the exchange or international students. The

lack of contact made it difficult to determine if Spanish students perceived they learned anything from international students.

Another limitation was the self-reporting methodology used to comprehend SA students' learning. Self-reporting is useful in determining students' self-efficacy beliefs about their communicative competence but impossible to draw objective quantitative conclusions. Additionally, in most cases, the timing of the second interview was right immediately or after the final exams. It was not ideal for self-reporting of intercultural learning as students did not have time to reflect on their experience. Also, most students had not received any grades or feedback at the time of the interview, which could have influenced their perceptions.

I was able to achieve a balanced sample in terms of language level, gender (proportional to SA as a whole), and program type (direct enrollment, on-campus and off-campus hybrid programs). However, I did not ask students to identify specifically as heritage speakers or native speakers unless they brought it up. I did not delve into issues of identity with every participant, making it more difficult to draw conclusions. Finally, none of the students came through third-party providers, which may or may not have influenced their experience depending on the level of support and cohort pressure.

7.2 Recommendations

The results of this investigation demonstrated that the direct enrollment experience presents SA students with attainable challenges. Intercultural, language and academic learning were perceived to be achieved through communication with professors and students in the classroom. The classroom is assumed to provide opportunities for cross-cultural contact; however, if students are left to their own devices, they may not interact. Considering the aim of internationalization is to improve the intercultural and global dimensions of HE, institutions should promote interaction between international and national students (Leask, 2009). This cannot be achieved by one party's actions, but rather a comprehensive set of

initiatives in which all actors are responsible for facilitating the integration of international students for the benefit of all.

The following will present recommendations for all groups involved in the exchange process and the intercultural classroom. First, I will discuss ideas for U.S. SA professionals keeping in mind the delicate balance between challenge and support in SA. I believe they should not shield students from uncomfortable or difficult situations or promote in-group behavior but rather allow students to overcome the challenges by facilitating their learning, promoting awareness of cultural differences in the classroom and providing strategies to overcome them. Secondly, I will turn the conversation to the SA students by providing strategies to integrate socially and academically into the classroom. I will highlight the role of their motivations, goals and decisions in achieving their desired outcomes for the experience. Lastly, I will focus on IaH aspects that the local universities can improve to support the ORI, professors and Spanish students in creating an integrated intercultural classroom which would enhance global learning for all.

7.2.1 SA professionals

During SA, for support to be effective, it must contain pre-departure, during sojourn and return programming (Jackson, 2012; Savicki, 2020; Vande Berg et al., 2012). According to the SA students, their programs provide brief, mainly administrative orientations to organize their SA semester. Upon arrival, the program orientations provided them with cognitive; cultural knowledge about Spain and the Spanish classroom; behavioral, suggesting they speak to their professors and local students; and affective recommendations, reminding the students they can come and talk when needed. Students did not mention any support upon return; however, they may have been unaware it would be provided. If students are to take advantage of the additional immersion of direct enrollment, they must be supported during their adaptation process. Here, I will discuss recommendations for all three timeframes of the sojourn, making a distinction in some cases between exchange and hybrid programs.

The pre-departure support is vital in pairing the right students with the right program, course selection and setting expectations for the experience. The language level is the first consideration when students intend to participate in direct enrollment as a minimum level is required to be successful at a local university. This study highlighted two important factors regarding language level. First, the student does not need to be a native speaker to be successful as long as a classroom communication level is not above the student's ZPD. Secondly, it has been seen that students tend to overestimate their language level compared to test results (Carlson et al., 1990). Nevertheless, these self-evaluations should not be disregarded as this research shows that a student's self-efficacy about their language level can play an important role in them successfully overcoming the challenges of being a non-native speaker in the classroom. Students should be allowed to directly enroll if they believe their level is sufficient and have a sufficient base knowledge. Another option is to pre-approve courses in English in case their language level is not high enough so students can at least receive the cultural experience.

Secondly, course selection is key to academic success. Academic advisors need to understand the difference between the U.S. general education-based system versus degree-based systems of HE. SA students are normally in their third year, yet this does not mean their previous knowledge within their major is at a third-year level in a foreign HE system. In many cases, a second-year course may be more appropriate considering their background knowledge. Optional classes may also be better choices for SA students since they require less prior knowledge. Finally, SA students should be recommended to take courses within the same degree and year so will spend more time with the same students and have more opportunities to develop relationships.

For hybrid programs, they also should be encouraged to take at least two courses to avoid viewing the local university as somewhere they go for one class and leave. Multiple classes can also help to prevent overgeneralizing or stereotyping based on one "bad" professor. Advisors should avoid placing SA students in the same courses because it lowers their motivation and the necessity to speak to local students since

they can easily stick together. It would be pertinent that advisors use course surveys to elicit a description of the teaching methodology, previous knowledge required, communication with the professor and assessment used.

Finally, considering that grade equivalence across countries is not 1 to 1 (e.g., an 8.5 in Spain does not hold the same value of an 85 in the US), I recommend that schools either use a sliding scale or provide a pass/fail option to take some of the unnecessary academic pressure off the SA students (Pastor Cesteros & Pandor, 2017). This way the grade reflects the extra challenge of studying in a foreign university and non-curricular learning outcomes which are otherwise not evaluated. This would promote the informal learning aspects of the experience as the SAM director explains, “(192) GRE: take the academic pressure off because these kids that come over, you know if they had less academic pressure maybe they would have more interest in actually sort of making an effort to interact.” Advisors should emphasize that the local university provides learning opportunities beyond the classroom content.

Currently, the number of Latin Americans studying abroad is half of what would be expected considering their numbers in HE. Financial and family concerns are main barriers to participation (McClure et al., 2010). Exchange programs are cheaper than traditional SA programs and heritage speakers have the advantage of fulfilling the language requirements but may not be aware of these opportunities. At the same time, heritage students may have different needs related to language learning and how they experience their identity abroad. Most on-site language courses are taught for non-native language speakers, which are far below the level of heritage speakers. Courses should be developed oriented towards heritage speakers that focus on higher-level reading, writing, grammar and linguistic variation in languages. Orientations should contain segments that address how identity for all students may be experienced differently when abroad depending on how host nationals perceive them and how they position themselves. I do not recommend segregating heritage speakers but rather emphasizing the role of identity as a part of the adaptation process for everyone.

SA students reported that their pre-departure orientations were mainly related to cultural aspects, health and safety and practical matters. Only one SA program had a pre-departure meeting specifically to speak about the UAM courses. The director mentioned one purpose of the meeting was meant to scare them so only students who were very certain they could be successful would choose direct enrollment. Exchange programs especially cannot assume that the host university will explain the intricacies of their academic culture considering the host university personnel will likely assume their academic culture universal.

Pre-departure meetings for students who directly enroll should have a significant portion related to how culture can affect teaching and learning abroad. Meetings should be careful not to guarantee specific differences will exist considering academic cultures are constantly changing and vary greatly depending on the professor. It is more important for students to be aware of possible classroom differences and be provided with strategies to adapt. It would also be pertinent for SA advisors to highlight how SA students' decisions and priorities will affect their experience. Students should be made aware of both the opportunities and challenges of direct enrollment to help them make the best of the experience.

SA advisors of exchange programs should not assume that the local university will provide their students with this training. I recommend they hold an online orientation for their students the week before the first class to reinforce the aforementioned topics. This training should contain a self-reflection on their U.S. culture of learning as a starting point for understanding other cultures. Furthermore, they should set specific goals for the semester and discuss within the group how to accomplish them. For example, if the general goal is to "learn Spanish", specific goals could be "find two language partners to practice Spanish with weekly" or "write down unknown vocabulary from class and look it up in a dictionary". The students must take an active role and responsibility for their learning rather than blaming situational circumstances for their inaction.

Throughout the semester, SA students should be encouraged to maintain a reflective journal about their experience. This assignment could be added as part of the local culture course in the case of hybrid programs. SA on-site personnel or SA advisors from exchange programs should hold a meeting once a month either on-site or virtually with the students to provide SA students with a space to reflect on cultural differences and work together to find solutions. Upon returning home, program evaluations should include reflection essays so students can assimilate their experiences. It is also recommendable to create spaces where they can share their experiences with future students or speak to past students about adjusting back to U.S. college life. A meeting with a career counselor would be useful to inform them how they can apply what they learned abroad to their future careers.

Summary

- **Language level:** SA students must have upper-level knowledge of the host language; however, self-evaluation and motivation should be considered.
- **Course selection:** Students should be encouraged to take more than one course in the same group (degree & year). They should be recommended 2nd year and optional courses. When possible, they should not take classes with cohort peers. Programs should maintain lists of courses that were positively evaluated by previous SA students.
- **Grades:** U.S. HEIs should use a sliding scale or pass/fail option
- **Heritage speakers:** Develop language courses specifically for heritage speakers and very advanced non-native speakers. Recognize the role of identity while abroad during orientation.
- **Orientation:** Include adaptation strategies for learning in a new academic culture.
- **Exchange programs:** Run online orientations which include information about the academic experience before classes begin.

- **Journals and debriefing:** Students should maintain reflective journals and/or essays during the semester. A monthly debriefing session perhaps as part of a course (on-site or online) should be held to discuss challenges faced and brainstorm effective adaptation strategies.
- **Return:** Students should have a space to reflect on what they have learned. They should be given platforms to share their experience with future and past students. They should receive career advice on how to leverage their learning in their future career.

7.2.2 SA students

Awareness of cultural differences in the classroom is a good place to start in assisting SA students in their adaptation to the new university. For many students, it is their first time living abroad or being confronted with another culture. Students should be made aware that their behaviors, beliefs and values are governed by culture and how they view a university class, teaching methodology and learning styles are based on their cultural perspective. Beyond awareness, it is important to emphasize how attitude and predisposition can alter your perception of the class.

SA students should be encouraged to view the direct enrollment experience as more than an academic course. It should be considered an opportunity to learn about Spanish culture, meet Spanish students and improve their language abilities. SA students should be encouraged to keep journals to record their perspectives and reflect on them. SA students should recognize they are in a new academic context and cut themselves some slack in terms of academic expectations. It is not to say they should procrastinate or be lazy; however, the focus should be on what can they learn from the course content and the context of the local class rather than just worrying about the final grade. Finally, SA students should be encouraged to develop relationships with local professors and students.

Below, is a summary of the recommendations for SA students.

Academic success

- **Take easy classes:** Do not take science classes or upper-level classes that require a lot of previous knowledge if you do not have a strong background in the subject. Take more elective classes or second-year classes if possible.
- **Make student contacts:** ask local students who the delegate is of the class and have yourself put in the WhatsApp group. Find at least one person in each class you feel comfortable asking questions to so you can clarify assignments and scheduling changes.
- **Communicate with your professor:** do not wait until after the exam to ask the professor what they expect of you. Do not be afraid to ask questions early and meet before exams.
- **Don't procrastinate:** in the independent learning environment of the UAM, you are expected to keep up with your work, studying throughout the semester. Just because there are "no assignments" does not mean you should not be reading and studying. Time management skills are important to keep in mind.
- **Take a lot of notes:** many professors provide information verbally and most exams are based on lecture notes. If you do not have the best notes, ask a local student for their notes.
- **Do not wait but be patient:** do not wait to try and reach out to other students and professors. At the same time, do not stress yourself about not understanding everything or making friends in the first week. Things take time but you need to be proactive to integrate.
- **Shift focus to all learning:** rather than focusing solely on how to get an A, recognize you can improve Spanish and learn about culture in the class as well, which may be just as valuable if not more than getting a "perfect" grade.
- **Grades:** understand that a 9 or 10 is very difficult in the Spanish system. Norms for academic success are different so while you can aim high, understand that a 7 is considered a good mark. Take classes pass/fail if concerned.

Relationships with local students in the classroom

- **Take the initiative:** While you may get really lucky, it is unlikely that Spanish students will approach you out of the blue. They have their own friend groups and daily life. Take the initiative and approach people. While you may get unlucky and find an uninterested person, the majority will be nice and helpful. Example of a conversation starter: “Oh I’m from the United States this is my first day in the university, what do you know about this professor?”
- **WhatsApp group:** On the first day, ask around to find out who is the student delegate of the class and ask if they can put you in the WhatsApp group. This will help you break the ice and become accustomed to asking students for help. Joining the WhatsApp group will keep you informed of changes in the classes and allow you to ask questions if needed.
- **Seating:** Try to sit near local students so it will be easier to ask them questions. You may have to move around a bit during the first few classes until you figure out the class dynamics.
- **Small talk:** The class is something you have in common. Therefore, ask students questions regarding the class whether you know the answer or not. It can be helpful to break the ice and establish a line of communication. Also, it helps you gain confidence in approaching people.
- **Be present:** If you are not on campus, it will be hard to develop relationships. If you are on your phone during breaks or before/after class, then you will not be approachable. Try to linger and strike up a conversation or spend some time in the cafeteria.
- **Always say “yes”:** If a Spanish person is nice enough to invite you for a coffee or to hang out, just say “yes”. It is normal to feel nervous about hanging out with local students but getting there is half the battle. If you say no, they will likely not invite you again. If you say yes, it may be the start of a friendship.
- **Academic help:** Spanish students are much more collaborative than U.S. students. Do not be afraid to ask for academic help whether it is borrowing notes, being in a group together, or even

help to study. Some SA programs pay for student tutors. Do not wait until the end to take advantage of the opportunity as you may become friends in the process.

- **The same group:** take courses in the same degree and group so you will have more opportunities to enter the dynamic of the class.

Relations with local students outside of the classroom

- **Language exchanges:** sign up for a language exchange through the local university and your SA program. Multiple partners increase the probability you will meet with the person. Also, do not wait too long to write to them because they will only get busier. If you meet your language exchange partner in the beginning it is more likely you will establish a relationship.
- **Join extracurriculars:** local universities offer plenty of sports and clubs to join. Reach out early and get involved. Meeting students is much easier over a common interest and students are more likely to hang out afterward.
- **Fiestas:** Spanish people love *fiestas* and they serve as a great ice breaker. The university is likely to have many fiestas and other events throughout the year. Read the signs, grab a drink and go out to the quad to join in the festivities.

Relationships with professors

- **Present yourself:** at the end of the first class present yourself to the professor so they are aware you are an exchange student. It will help to establish a rapport.
- **Ask questions:** never be afraid to ask questions during the class, during the breaks or after class. The only way to learn the professors' expectations is based on what is said during class and through asking questions. Do not wait for a professor to offer help, initiate contact.
- **Office Hours:** if you are confused by the topic, expectations, assignments, deadlines, etc. do not hesitate to ask for office hours as professors will help clarify any doubts.

- **Participation:** take the opportunity when professors ask for perspectives from other countries to share your point of view rather than just giving yes and no answers. It shows the professor you are engaged and also helps remind local students you have something to contribute.
- **Negative experiences:** If a professor makes a comment you feel was “mean” or “strict” or “insensitive” etc. ask your SA advisors, host family or local student for their interpretation. Try to give the professor the benefit of the doubt and continue trying in the class. Withdrawing from communication will only be to your disadvantage.

Final recommendations

- **Acceptance of oneself as a foreigner:** no one is going to expect you as an international student to know everything. It is ok to ask questions, it is ok not to know, it is ok to be lost. You do not have to be perfect. If you want to learn and grow, then you just have to be open-minded, put in the effort and step outside of your comfort zone.

SA students should be made aware that how they choose to spend their time and develop their friendship networks will inevitably affect their experience. Students should be encouraged to travel before or after the term rather than during it. SA students should be encouraged to branch out on their own, to take courses by themselves and to get involved in activities without their cohort friends. Being alone makes them more approachable since Spanish students generally try to help people who look lost; however, they should still be prepared to take the initiative to start conversations as well.

7.2.3 Local universities

If local universities aim to achieve the goals of their internationalization plans, they must create initiatives for IaH and support the projects long term. Most internationalization plans are focused on mobility, international recognition and improving the English offer. For internationalization of HE to be successful, a more comprehensive project is needed that includes professor training on teaching in

multicultural classrooms and greater support to the international offices so they may encourage the Spanish students to explore international options on and off-campus.

The UAM receives thousands of exchange students every year and an increasing number of international students. Additionally, second-generation immigrants are beginning to attend university more regularly, increasing local diversity in the classroom as well. Professors cannot be expected to naturally know how to handle a diverse group of students in terms of culture, language competence and prior knowledge. Professors can be a key facilitator and/or barrier of the exchange and/or international students' integration in the classroom. Therefore, they must receive proper training if the interculturality of the classroom is to be taken advantage of to create learning for all students.

Professors may perceive this training's goal as giving special treatment to international students. It is vital for the success of such training for professors to understand that the goal of IaH is to improve the intercultural competencies of all students. The Lisbon Strategy envisions that all students in the 21st century, regardless of the degree program, will develop intercultural competencies. The integration of international students in the classroom provides them with opportunities to gain these skills. SA students already identified many IaH strategies being used in the classroom by professors based on their desire for their students to learn and feel comfortable in class, the training should build off of them.

The course should be viewed by the professors as supporting their professional development and enhancing the quality of their teaching. It should begin by allowing professors to discuss their difficulties regarding multiculturalism in the classroom and draw from each other's experiences. Both positive and negative experiences can be the starting point for further discussion. This strategy would also help discover institution-specific problems which later sessions can work to solve.

The training should include elements of intercultural competence, cultures of learning and teaching in a multicultural classroom. An example of such a program is the Excellence in Cultural Experiential Learning and Leadership (EXCELL) intercultural skills intervention program that has been

introduced in diverse disciplines in Australia. It aims to improve intercultural awareness of professors so they can develop methodologies that promote interaction among international and national students and subsequently work towards increasing their intercultural awareness as well (Mak & Kennedy, 2012).

A cultural synergy approach should be taken so that professors recognize they should also adapt as well as the international students. Training should begin by creating awareness surrounding their own culture of learning, examining their own beliefs about teaching and learning methodologies as well as communication in the classroom. A range of alternative cultures of learning can be discussed to raise awareness and hopefully increase openness to international students' learning differences.

Specific recommendations for professors:

- **Introductions:** All students should be given an opportunity to present themselves at the beginning of class – in a large class it may be more practical for just foreign students to present themselves to raise awareness of their presence.
- **Participation:** The professor should try to involve international students in the classroom by encouraging their participation using daily life examples / common knowledge related to their home country. They should avoid questions that assume previous knowledge.
- **Groupwork:** The professor should separate the international students into different groups because students will tend towards what is easy and comfortable if left to their own devices. If intercultural learning is to be achieved, cross-cultural contact should be promoted as an added value. Assignments should require all students to actively participate.
- **Office hours:** Professors should let all students know when and how they can be contacted. They should be encouraged to set up office hours to clarify any doubts and/or stay a moment after class for any questions. If they have any resources in English or knowledge of introductory textbooks on the subject (in case of a lack of prior knowledge); they could share these as well.

- **Discussion:** Active learning methodologies help student integration because they provide international students with a space to share their opinion and interact with other students. If the class consists solely of the professor speaking, there is little room for students to learn from each other regardless of nationality.
- **Social inclusion / WhatsApp:** The professor should ask the class delegate to put the exchange students in the WhatsApp group on the first day. This way any changes to the schedule, assignments, class cancellations, etc. will be made known to the exchange students as well.
- **Heritage speakers:** professors should not assume that heritage speakers do not face any challenges with the language in the classroom. Students are unlikely to have academic experience in Spanish and therefore lack academic vocabulary, acronyms and confidence in their abilities. Professors should also be aware of linguistic variation in Spanish and rather than assuming students are using an “incorrect” word and correct them in front of the class; look it up at home and correct the student privately if it is a key term.

Both SA professionals and professors felt that the social lives of their students are not their responsibility. Of course, this is true to an extent, especially concerning what students decide to do outside of school; however, inclusion in the classroom is important for all students to feel comfortable sharing ideas and contributes to a collaborative learning environment. If all students feel secure in contributing their ideas, it will facilitate participation in the class. Encouraging international students to mix with local students allows them to learn about each other’s cultures and different previous knowledge. Achieving a deep integration such as the case of Tom depends on the local students and SA students themselves; however, using these techniques can foment integration in the classroom.

When the ORI faculties held orientations for exchange students’ they focused mainly on practical matters such as switching classes and learning agreements. It would be pertinent for ORI personnel to have a better understanding of the academic experience of their exchange students so that the

orientation could include a segment on cultural differences they may find in the classroom and recommendations for students. The local university should provide more training about IaH to ORI staff members rather than solely focusing on administrative issues. The rectorate should provide them with the resources and plans to develop their orientations, buddy programs, SA fairs, poster contests, and other integration events that foment IaH and make international aspects more visible to the student population. The ORI should also collaborate with the ESN to find ways to include the local students in events aimed at exchange students' integration.

Spanish students most likely do not engage with international students unless they have an intrinsic motivation for culture or language learning as seen with the Spanish students enrolled in modern languages, translation and international studies degrees. There is a need for a shift in a university culture that creates awareness among local students that internationalization goes beyond the Erasmus + program. They must be informed of the benefits of having international students on campus both on a personal and professional level.

Specific recommendations for improving IaH:

- **Transversal and comprehensive IaH:** The internationalization rectorate should be someone informed about internationalization strategies and communicate them to all of the ORIs. The ORIs should work together with the professors to understand each other's challenges. The conversation should go across the rectorate, ORI staff and professors.
- **Buddy programs:** should be done by course when possible, so the pair share classes and the local students can introduce them to the group.
- **Welcome events:** should include more participation from local students and be institutional with the collaboration of the ESN.

Very specific to the UAM, I believe that the SAM office rather than the central ORI office should be responsible for U.S. exchange students considering the SAM office is familiar with the U.S. academic system and SA model as opposed to the ORI which is familiar with the European system and Erasmus + program. The SAM office could provide the same support provided by hybrid program on-site staff in terms of course selection, orientations and intercultural learning.

It would be beneficial for large universities that receive numerous U.S. students and/or have a strategy of recruitment towards the U.S. to have an office that handles these exchange programs because the cultural difference in HE between the U.S. and Europe is larger than between European countries and the academic degree structures make course selection more complex for U.S. students who need to fulfill major and minor requirements. In fact, it would be pertinent to have an office that handles all non-European exchanges.

7.3 Implications for future research

The implications of the research are both theoretical and practical. In terms of the internationalization of HE, they are useful for both the 'away' component of SA programs and the 'at home' component for teaching in intercultural classrooms. The ethnographic methodology proved appropriate for providing a more complex analysis and understanding of the process of adaptation rather than solely presenting results without an understanding of how the students arrived at different learning outcomes. The results provide insights into the debate surrounding the added value of the direct enrollment experience and how HIEs can ensure it is being achieved. It also opens the doors for further exploration of the cultures of learning even within academic systems that are presumed to have a low cultural distance. The qualitative methodology also points to specific topics for further investigation that quantitative studies could test to make my conclusions more generalizable. Finally, it demonstrated that much work is still needed if the IaH goals of Spanish HE are to be accomplished.

This research contributes to the debate about the effect of SA program models on learning. The irony of the direct enrollment debate is that while some programs prefer to impart their own courses due to the perception of lower quality education abroad (Hendrickson, 2016); the direct enrollment experience is simultaneously considered too challenging for students that it may lead to academic failure. In response to the first perception, none of the students felt that the courses were “too easy”, most felt their professors were very knowledgeable and some even reported learning content that was unavailable to them in the U.S. As far as the second perception, academic failure was more closely related to improper course selection than insurmountable cultural differences or language level. Students in exchange programs with no on-site support reported more difficulties choosing courses, having them approved by their home university and an overall lack of academic advising which led them to take courses that required previous knowledge their academic transcript did not reflect. Students in hybrid programs, especially those that had well-established relationships with the UAM, were better oriented to courses that would be appropriate for their academic level and needs.

The study also confirmed previous research connecting SA models to friendship networks (Hendrickson 2016). Hybrid program students perceived that their cohort peers who did not directly enroll only hung out with other U.S. students. Even though most participants did not develop deep relationships with local students that went beyond the university setting, they still reported developing academic relationships (e.g., sitting together during class, working on group projects) and social relationships on campus (e.g., grabbing coffee or lunch together). Exchange students reported the majority of their relationships to be with international and/or Spanish students. Even though SA advisors of hybrid programs reported creating activities that promote integration with the local community, the results showed that hybrid program models still inherently encourage friendships among SA students.

Overall, the study suggests that as long as students have a minimum language level, the direct enrollment experience is not only possible but provides opportunities to meet non-US students,

experience a new academic culture, gain international perspectives and receive higher-level Spanish input. This research showed that even students who only exhibited surface-level adaptation reported feeling more immersed in the culture and learning from the experience, especially when compared to their co-national peers in island programs.

Direct enrollment may be administratively more challenging for SA programs; however, I strongly believe it should be the standard for the SA experience rather than the exception. To better support the direct enrollment of SA students, future research should first examine the barriers to direct enrollment on an administrative level to solve bureaucratic barriers. Secondly, it would be pertinent to gain an understanding of the experience in other HEIs in Spain as well as other countries to understand if there are any common aspects of the adaptation process of SA students independent of the location. Currently, SA programs can use this research to determine transferability to their own programs; however, further research is required to develop general recommendations for SA.

When the research began, I was not surprised to find that many students who were going to directly enroll had Spanish last names; however, I was unsure how their identity and language level would affect their adaptation and perspectives of the local university. The implications of the results show that while it is important to take into consideration that heritage speakers face different challenges and have unique needs when studying in their heritage language; we cannot assume their experience will be homogenous either. The line between heritage speakers and native speakers is also fine. Each student may view their identity differently depending on their past experiences with their heritage language and culture. Considering the increasing levels of second-generation students in HE in the U.S., many of whom are heritage speakers, it is particularly prevalent to make sure their needs are being addressed when supporting SA students.

The research also highlighted the benefits of using self-efficacy and agency in the theoretical framework for understanding how SA students make choices about their adaptation considering agency

affects how sojourns unfold (Jackson, 2018). Past research has considered students as agentic and reported self-efficacy beliefs as an outcome of SA, but few have included them as part of the theoretical framework. This lens furthers the analysis by focusing on how students view their abilities as a better prediction of choices rather than only considering personal characteristics as independent variables that determine outcomes. Further quantitative research could also be used to test the relationship between personality traits (e.g., extroversion/introversion) and characteristics (e.g., L2 level or previous experience abroad) with self-efficacy beliefs and motivations to better predict SA students' decision making surrounding their adaptation and learning. Finally, research on how to help students align their actions with their motivations and enhance self-efficacy beliefs in their ability to achieve their goals during the SA experience would be a good complement to this study.

The research also has implications for the IaH initiatives at local universities. In this field, previous research has focused more on degree-seeking students than exchange students' adaptation process. Nevertheless, short-term mobility exchanges are the most prevalent source of international students in most continental European countries. While the Erasmus reports and even SA research have focused on pre- and post-language testing (as well as intercultural competence in the SA case), the adaptation experience in the classroom has been largely ignored. Future research should be done on the classroom experiences of exchange students as the time frame affects the adaptation process and therefore their challenges may diverge from long-term student sojourners.

Currently, opportunities are being missed as exchange students are present but often have little impact in the HE classrooms. All European students and professors are aware that exchange students are in the classroom, yet their integration is left in large part up to the international offices and student organizations such as the ESN, neither of which focus on integration in the classroom. The investigation has provided practical implications for how professors and students can become more aware of cultural differences in higher education, improve academic and social integration and adapt to the multicultural

classroom context. These recommendations provide a base for future action research about classroom interventions to promote the integration of exchange students.

Another unexpected topic that arose throughout the investigation while interviewing Spanish professors and students was the impact of the Bologna process on HE in Spain. There seems to be a great deal of confusion as to what Bologna entails and what changes are specific to HEIs or the Spanish ministry of education's interpretations of how to implement the Bologna Process. There is a clear shift happening from professor centered learning to student-centered learning; however, it is clear neither professors nor students are certain of what this means in terms of their role in teaching and learning. This transitional phase is driven by the EU's internationalization policies pushing for transparent degree plans based on common competencies goals. However, it is being implemented top-down with little support or training for professors. Both students and professors believed that participation and discussion are an important characteristic of a good class but difficult to achieve. I would encourage future research aims to obtain local professors' and students' opinions of the hindrances and facilitators of the transition process to provide solutions that allow the Bologna Process to be successful in Spain.

The Erasmus program in Europe facilitates the exchange of more than 300,000 students each year (European Commission, 2019). Additionally, Europe is also the preferred destination of U.S. SA students (Institute of International Education, 2020). The high number of exchange students warrants further investigation about cultures of learning across Europe as the challenges faced by U.S. students certainly are not unique to them. The ethnographic research method has uncovered underlying cultures of learning differences between the U.S. and Spain, which were not prevalent in previous research. However, it also becomes pertinent to ask about the differences which may exist across Europe and/or to what extent the Bologna Process has harmonized academic cultures in the classroom. My results could inform larger scale, quantitative studies and/or qualitative survey studies that aim to build a framework for understanding cultural differences in academic cultures.

7.4 Conclusion

The academic component of SA has been ignored for too long in the SA literature. Courses are viewed as simply the reason or excuse for an exchange to take place; however, they are not viewed by the SA community as an important location of cultural and linguistic learning unless the course is specifically designed to enhance culture-specific knowledge. Content and language integrated learning has been long accepted as an approach to learning two domains at the same time. The direct enrollment experience provides the opportunity for content, language and intercultural learning, yet the SA programs continue to use their own academic courses and researchers continue to focus on extracurricular aspects of program design to enhance learning outcomes. The direct enrollment experience must be supported both by the SA programs and local universities for all students to take full advantage of the opportunities presented. Providing such support should not be viewed as an insuperable challenge as small changes can make an enormous difference in SA students' experience, adaptation and learning outcomes.

Capítulo 7: Conclusiones y recomendaciones

Los programas de SA son reconocidos por proporcionar un nivel excelente de inmersión cultural y lingüística que normalmente solo se puede lograr residiendo en el extranjero. En los EE. UU., los aumentos continuos en los costes tanto de la educación superior como de los programas de SA han llevado a las partes interesadas a justificar mediante evidencia empírica su valor en cuanto al aprendizaje de sus participantes (Ogden & Streitwieser, 2016). La comercialización de SA ha causado la proliferación del número de programas ofertados, incluyendo itinerarios propios en los cuales los estudiantes rara vez salen de la sede estadounidense de origen. Esto provoca de manera indirecta que la experiencia se pueda utilizar como una excusa para disfrutar únicamente del ocio y las opciones turísticas del lugar de destino (Lewin, 2009). La experiencia de matrícula directa combate esta tendencia porque obliga a los estudiantes de salir de su burbuja de seguridad y sumergirse en el ambiente académico de las instituciones de educación superior extranjeras que reflejan los valores culturales de una sociedad distinta a la suya.

Sin embargo, los programas de SA actuales pueden no estar aprovechando plenamente las ventajas que ofrece el sistema de matrícula directa debido a barreras logísticas y lingüísticas, así como a supuestas barreras culturales (Hendrickson, 2016). Algunos estudios sugieren que la matrícula directa debe enfocarse como un entorno dicotómico (en otras palabras, “hundirse o nadar”), solo factible para los pocos alumnos que sean capaces de adaptarse a escenarios nuevos y desconocidos (Vande Berg et al., 2012). No obstante, en el momento de escribir estas líneas carecemos de evidencias concretas acerca de los efectos que el sistema de matrícula directa tiene sobre el aprendizaje del alumnado (Ogden y Streitwieser, 2016). Esto hace que muchas nociones preconcebidas se mantengan en el discurso sobre SA. De hecho, pocos investigadores han intentado comprender la perspectiva de los estudiantes de SA sobre sus propias experiencias, cómo se adaptan y qué aprendizaje específico aporta esta modalidad de inmersión cultural más desafiante a los programas de SA.

Esta tesis ha demostrado que el proceso de adaptación de cada alumno de SA al contexto de un aula universitaria extranjera es único. No hay una característica individual o ambiental que pueda garantizar la adaptación de un estudiante, como tampoco aquellas características normalmente consideradas “favorables” aseguran que los estudiantes de SA vayan a usar su capacidad para aprovechar las oportunidades que están verdaderamente a su disposición. Sin embargo, a lo largo de mi investigación he identificado puntos en común entre las iniciativas de los estudiantes de SA y las de los actores locales que facilitaron la integración en el aula, lo cual los llevaron a un mayor aprendizaje. Las siguientes recomendaciones se sustentan en esa idea, considerando las experiencias y perspectivas aportadas por todos los participantes del estudio. El objetivo principal es sugerir claves para proporcionar un ambiente que facilite la comunicación intercultural entre estudiantes locales y alumnos de intercambio, además de fomentar la capacidad del estudiante de SA para tomar decisiones que le ayuden a lograr sus objetivos de aprendizaje.

Por esto es imperativo que las instituciones de educación superior establezcan entre sus prioridades el desarrollo de la competencia intercultural de todos los estudiantes, tanto a través de iniciativas de internacionalización en casa como de programas de movilidad (de Wit, 2013), acercándose así a la calidad y excelencia en la educación superior necesaria para el mercado laboral en el siglo XXI. Así pues, estas recomendaciones no solo son beneficiosas los estudiantes de SA, sino también a los estudiantes y profesores locales. A continuación, explicaré las limitaciones identificadas en mi investigación y expondré las recomendaciones que sugiero para todos los actores involucrados en el intercambio, concluyendo con una breve discusión acerca de las implicaciones que puede tener mi trabajo en futuras investigaciones relativas a programas de educación en el extranjero.

7.1 Limitaciones

La principal limitación que encontré a lo largo de mi investigación fue que mi condición de única investigadora y el tiempo del que dispuse para observar, entrevistar y construir vínculos con los

participantes. Este problema se agravó ante la dificultad de coordinar horarios con muchos de los participantes. Como consecuencia de estas dificultades para combinar diferentes horarios de personas distintas, no pude observar las clases al comienzo del primer semestre, lo cual hubiera permitido evaluar mejor el proceso de adaptación completo. Al mismo tiempo, debo decir que esa misma limitación hizo que, al trabajar con menos estudiantes, la interacción con ellos fuera más profunda, pudiendo visitar un mayor número de clases de cada participante y desarrollando vínculos más estrechos con ellos.

En el segundo semestre, sí pude comenzar las observaciones desde el primer día de clase y así tuve acceso a un número mayor de estudiantes de SA (cuarenta). Sin embargo, asistí a menos clases de cada uno debido al solapamiento entre los horarios de clases y las entrevistas. Además, hubo que reajustar a la baja la duración de las entrevistas para poder acomodar a todos los participantes a mi disponibilidad horaria.

Otra limitación de este trabajo es que ninguno de los estudiantes de SA estaba matriculado en la facultad de Derecho, de Medicina o en la Escuela Politécnica Superior. Por lo tanto, no pude observar las dinámicas de las clases en estos centros. Pese a todo, creo que los datos obtenidos son suficientemente numerosos como para ofrecer una gran variedad de perspectivas, lo que redundará en una mejor comprensión de la realidad de la situación socioeducativa que viven los estudiantes de SA.

El hecho de que asistiera a clases de varias asignaturas simultáneamente, en lugar de centrarme sólo en un aula, hizo complicado desarrollar relaciones con otros estudiantes españoles porque no estuve el tiempo suficiente para crear vínculos con ellos. Por ello, a la hora de contrastar la opinión de estudiantes españoles con la de los alumnos de SA, me vi obligada a realizar preguntas más específicas a los primeros, lo cual tiene su efecto en el análisis posterior. Además, descubrí que pocos estudiantes españoles tenían contacto alguno con los estudiantes de intercambio o internacionales. Esto hizo complicado averiguar si los estudiantes españoles percibían como aprendizaje efectivo su interacción con otros estudiantes internacionales.

Otra posible limitación de esta tesis es la metodología de autoevaluación escogida para comprender el aprendizaje de los estudiantes de SA. Las herramientas de autoevaluación resultan útiles para valorar la percepción de eficacia de los propios estudiantes sobre sus competencias comunicativas, pero es imposible sacar conclusiones objetivas. Además, en la mayoría de los casos, el momento de la segunda entrevista fue justo inmediatamente o después de los exámenes finales, lo cual dejaba poco tiempo para la autorreflexión por parte del alumno de cara a autoevaluar su nivel de aprendizaje cultural. Por añadidura, la mayoría de los estudiantes no habían recibido calificaciones ni comentarios de los profesores en el momento de la entrevista, un factor a tener en cuenta de cara a su percepción global de la experiencia.

Pude lograr una muestra equilibrada en términos de nivel de idioma, género (proporcional a las estadísticas de participación en SA) y tipo de programa (de intercambio, híbridos dentro y fuera del campus). Sin embargo, no pedí a los estudiantes que se identificaran específicamente como hablantes de herencia o nativos del español, a menos que lo mencionaran ellos. No profundicé en materias de identidad con todos los participantes, añadiendo una capa de complejidad al análisis. Finalmente, no tuve oportunidad de entrar en contacto con estudiantes procedentes de proveedores externos (los llamados “*third-party providers*”), por lo que desconozco el impacto que tendría este perfil de alumnos según su nivel de apoyo y la presión de la cohorte.

7.2 Recomendaciones

Los resultados de esta investigación demuestran que la experiencia de matrícula directa presenta desafíos que en efecto resultan asequibles para el estudiante promedio de SA. Tradicionalmente se ha asumido que mediante la comunicación con profesores y estudiantes en la clase, el estudiante de intercambio logrará éxito en el aprendizaje intercultural, lingüístico y académico. No obstante, es posible que esto no sea del todo así, y que sea necesaria una ayuda externa para facilitar la interacción. Teniendo en cuenta que el objetivo de la internacionalización es mejorar las dimensiones interculturales y globales

de la educación superior, las instituciones deben promover la interacción entre estudiantes internacionales y nacionales (Leask, 2009). Esto no se puede lograr mediante propuestas unidireccionales, sino con iniciativas globales en las que todos los actores son responsables de facilitar la integración de los estudiantes.

A continuación, se presentarán recomendaciones para todos los grupos involucrados en el proceso de intercambio y el aula intercultural. Primero, presentaré propuestas orientadas a los profesionales de SA de EE.UU., teniendo en cuenta que su papel es proporcionar apoyo a los alumnos de SA en vez de resolver todos los problemas por ellos. Creo que la sobreprotección de los estudiantes ante situaciones difíciles o incómodas, o la promoción forzada de interacciones en grupo no suponen las mejores vías de acción. En su lugar, la creación de espacios donde los estudiantes superen por sí mismos los desafíos que se les presenten redundará en un mejor aprendizaje, promoviendo al mismo tiempo la conciencia de las diferencias culturales en el aula y brindando estrategias para superarlas. En segundo lugar, dirigiré la conversación a los estudiantes de SA, proponiendo tácticas para integrarse social y académicamente en el aula. Destacaré aquellos aspectos más relevantes a la hora de enfocar sus motivaciones, objetivos y decisiones de cara a alcanzar las metas propuestas para su estancia en el extranjero. Por último, me centraré en los aspectos que las universidades locales pueden mejorar para apoyar a las ORIs, los profesores y los estudiantes locales en la creación de un aula intercultural integrada que mejoraría el aprendizaje global para todos.

7.2.1 Personal de SA

Durante SA, para que el apoyo sea efectivo, se debe contar con talleres antes, durante y después de regresar de la estancia en la universidad extranjera (Jackson, 2012; Savicki, 2020; Vande Berg et al., 2012). Según los estudiantes de SA, sus programas les brindaron orientaciones breves, eminentemente administrativas, centradas casi exclusivamente en organizar su semestre de SA. Dichas orientaciones les proporcionaron conocimientos cognitivos; información cultural sobre España y el aula universitario

español; información sobre el comportamiento que debían tener, sugiriendo que hablen con los profesores y estudiantes locales; y recomendaciones afectivas, recordando a los estudiantes que están ahí para apoyarles cuando sea necesario. Dichos estudiantes mencionaron no tener ningún apoyo al regresar, aunque quizás fuera por falta de conocimiento de los servicios ofrecidos a la hora de la segunda entrevista. Para que los estudiantes aprovechen la inmersión adicional de la matrícula directa, deben ser apoyados durante su proceso de adaptación. Haré hincapié aquí con respecto a las recomendaciones que proponemos para las tres fases de la estancia, haciendo una distinción en algunos casos entre programas híbridos (*Hybrid*) y de intercambio (*Exchange*).

El apoyo previo a la partida desde la institución de envío es vital para colocar a los estudiantes correctos en el programa adecuado, asesorar en la selección de clases y regular las expectativas que el alumno pudiera tener de cara a la experiencia. El nivel del idioma es la primera consideración cuando los estudiantes tienen la intención de participar en la matrícula directa, ya que se requiere un nivel mínimo para tener éxito en una universidad local. Este estudio ha destacado dos factores importantes con respecto al nivel del idioma. En primer lugar, el estudiante no necesita ser hablante nativo para tener éxito, siempre y cuando el nivel de comunicación en el aula de clases no esté por encima de la ZPD del estudiante. En segundo lugar, se ha observado que los estudiantes tienden a sobreestimar su nivel de conocimiento de la lengua en comparación con los resultados de exámenes oficiales (Carlson et al., 1990). Sin embargo, estas autoevaluaciones tienen su importancia, ya que esta investigación muestra que la conciencia de un estudiante sobre su nivel de idioma puede desempeñar un papel importante para que supere con éxito los desafíos de ser un hablante no nativo en el aula. Los estudiantes deben poder matricularse directamente si creen que su nivel es suficiente y tienen un conocimiento básico que les permita comunicarse de manera efectiva. Otra opción podría ser de obtener el visto bueno para cursos en inglés por si acaso su dominio del idioma resultara en un impedimento así al menos tendrán la experiencia cultural.

En tercer lugar, una apropiada selección de cursos es decisiva para el buen rendimiento académico. Los asesores académicos deben comprender las diferencias entre el sistema de educación superior de EEUU, basado en la educación general, y el sistema de HE basado en grados de España. Los estudiantes de SA normalmente están en su tercer año, pero esto no significa que sus conocimientos previos en su área de conocimiento se correspondan con los del nivel de tercer año en un sistema de educación superior extranjero. En muchos casos, un curso de segundo año puede adecuarse mejor al nivel formativo previo del alumno. Las asignaturas optativas también pueden ser opciones interesantes para los estudiantes de SA, ya que suelen requerir menos conocimientos previos. Finalmente, se debe recomendar que tomen cursos dentro del mismo grado y año académico para optimizar el tiempo en común con un mismo grupo de estudiantes locales, lo que puede favorecer las oportunidades de crear vínculos y relaciones de mutuo beneficio.

Para los programas híbridos, también se les debe animar a tomar al menos dos asignaturas para evitar que vean la universidad local como un lugar sin mayor atractivo más allá del puramente académico. Varias clases también pueden ayudar a evitar que generalicen o que se creen los estereotipos basados en el profesor "malo". El personal de apoyo debe evitar matricular a todos los estudiantes de SA en los mismos cursos ya que ello reduce su motivación y la necesidad de hablar con los estudiantes locales. Por lo general, al alumnado en dicha situación le resulta más sencillo permanecer junto, al margen del resto de compañeros locales. Sería pertinente que utilizaran encuestas sobre las clases para obtener una descripción de la metodología de enseñanza, conocimientos previos requeridos, nivel de comunicación con el profesor y evaluación utilizada.

Finalmente, considerando que la equivalencia a la hora de realizar las calificaciones entre países no es directamente proporcional (por ejemplo, un 8.5 en España no tiene el mismo valor que un 85 en los EE. UU.), recomiendo que las universidades usen una escala ajustada de evaluación o proporcionen una opción de aprobado/suspense, para aligerar en parte la presión académica a la que son sometidos los

estudiantes de SA (Pastor Cesteros & Pandor, 2017). De esta forma, la calificación reflejará el desafío adicional de estudiar en una universidad extranjera y los resultados de aprendizaje no curriculares que de otro modo no se evalúan. Esto promovería los aspectos de aprendizaje informal de la experiencia, como explica el director de SAM: “• GRE: quita la presión académica porque estos niños que vienen, sabes, si tuvieran menos presión académica, tal vez tendrían más interés en realmente hacer un esfuerzo por interactuar.” El personal de SA debe enfatizar que la universidad local brinda oportunidades de aprendizaje más allá del contenido académico de las clases.

Actualmente la cantidad de personas de origen Latinoamérica que estudian en el extranjero es la mitad de lo que se esperaría considerando el número total de estudiantes presentes en niveles educativos superiores. Las preocupaciones financieras y familiares son las principales barreras para su participación (McClure et al., 2010). Los programas de intercambio son más baratos que los programas tradicionales de SA y los hablantes de herencia tienen la ventaja de cumplir con los requisitos del idioma, pero es posible que no estén al tanto de estas oportunidades. Al mismo tiempo, los estudiantes de herencia pueden tener diferentes necesidades relacionadas con el aprendizaje de idiomas y su identidad cuando estén en el extranjero. La mayoría de los cursos de idiomas de SA se imparten para alumnos no nativos, que están muy por debajo del nivel de los hablantes de herencia. Por tanto, se deben desarrollar cursos orientados a hablantes de herencia que exijan un nivel superior de lectura, escritura y gramática. Las orientaciones deben abordar temas de identidad e indicaciones sobre y cómo se puede sentir de una manera diferente cuando están en el extranjero, dependiendo de cómo el país anfitrión los perciba, así como de la manera en que se posicionen a nivel social. No recomiendo segregar a los hablantes de herencia, sino reforzar su identidad como parte del proceso de adaptación.

Durante el estudio de esta tesis, los estudiantes de SA dijeron que la orientación que recibieron antes de viajar a España estaba principalmente relacionada con factores culturales, de salud, seguridad y otros aspectos cotidianos. Solo un programa de SA tuvo una reunión para hablar específicamente sobre

los cursos de la UAM. La directora del citado programa mencionó que uno de los propósitos de la reunión era asustar a los estudiantes para que solo los que estaban muy seguros de que podrían tener éxito eligieran la matrícula directa. Los programas de intercambio no pueden contar con que la universidad de destino explique las complejidades de su cultura académica de una manera tal que el alumno las interiorice, dado que el personal de la universidad local es probable que considere la suya propia como universal.

Antes de llegar a España, los estudiantes que se matriculen directamente deben tener reuniones en las que se aborde el efecto que la cultura puede tener en su proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje en el extranjero. Las reuniones deben tener cuidado de no garantizar a los alumnos que se encontrarán con diferencias específicas, ya que las culturas académicas no son estáticas y varían mucho según el profesor. Es más importante que los estudiantes sean conscientes de las posibles diferencias en el aula y que se les proporcionen estrategias para adaptarse. También sería pertinente que el personal de SA destaque que las decisiones y prioridades que cada alumno porte consigo mismo determinarán por igual su experiencia. Los estudiantes de SA deben conocer tanto las oportunidades como los desafíos de la matrícula directa para poder aprovechar al máximo la oportunidad.

El personal de programas de intercambio de SA no debe suponer que la universidad local brindará esta capacitación a sus estudiantes. Recomiendo que se realice una orientación virtual a sus estudiantes la semana antes de la primera clase para reforzar los temas mencionados anteriormente. Esta capacitación debe contener una reflexión detallada sobre la cultura de aprendizaje estadounidense como punto de partida para comprender otras. Además, deben establecer metas específicas para el semestre y discutir dentro del grupo cómo alcanzarlas. Por ejemplo, si el objetivo general es "aprender español", los hitos específicos podrían ser "encontrar dos alumnos locales para hacer un intercambio de idioma para practicar español semanalmente" o "apuntar vocabulario desconocido de la clase y buscarlo en un

diccionario en casa". Los estudiantes deben asumir un papel activo y responsabilizarse de su aprendizaje, en lugar de culpar a los factores contextuales por su inacción.

A lo largo del semestre, se debe sugerir a los estudiantes de SA que mantengan un diario reflexivo sobre su experiencia. Esta tarea podría ser parte de un curso sobre la cultura local en el caso de programas híbridos. El personal de SA debe realizar una reunión una vez al mes, ya sea en persona en los casos de programas híbridos, o virtualmente en los programas de intercambio, donde ofrezcan a los estudiantes de SA un espacio para reflexionar sobre las diferencias culturales, trabajando juntos para encontrar soluciones. Al regresar al país de origen, las evaluaciones del programa deben incluir ensayos de reflexión que faciliten que los estudiantes puedan asimilar la experiencia vivida. También es recomendable crear espacios donde puedan compartir sus experiencias con futuros estudiantes o hablar con antiguos estudiantes sobre la re-adaptación a la vida universitaria estadounidense. Una reunión con un asesor de carrera sería útil para informarles sobre cómo pueden aplicar lo que aprendieron en el extranjero a sus futuras carreras profesionales.

Resumen

- **Nivel de idioma:** los estudiantes de SA deben tener un conocimiento acreditado de nivel superior del idioma local; sin embargo, se debe considerar la autoevaluación y la motivación mostrada por ellos también.
- **Selección de clases:** hay que alentar a los estudiantes a hacer más de un curso en el mismo grupo (grado y año). Se recomiendan cursos de segundo año y optativos. Cuando sea posible, no deben asistir a clases con compañeros del grupo de SA. Los programas deben mantener una lista de clases que fueron evaluadas positivamente por estudiantes de SA anteriores.
- **Calificaciones:** las IES de EE. UU. deben usar una escala ajustada de evaluación o la modalidad de "aprobado" o "suspenseo".

- **Hablantes de herencia:** hay que desarrollar cursos de idiomas específicamente para hablantes de herencia y hablantes no nativos muy avanzados. También hay que tener en cuenta que su identidad como hablantes de herencia influye en su experiencia en el extranjero.
- **Orientación:** hay que incluir estrategias de adaptación para el aprendizaje en una nueva cultura académica.
- **Programas de intercambio:** hay que ofrecer orientaciones virtuales que incluyan información sobre la experiencia académica antes de que comiencen las clases.
- **Diarios y reuniones de información:** los estudiantes deben mantener diarios reflexivos y/o ensayos durante el semestre. Se debe realizar una sesión informativa mensual, tal vez como parte de un curso (en personal o virtual), para tratar los desafíos enfrentados y generar ideas sobre estrategias de adaptación efectivas.
- **La vuelta:** los estudiantes deben tener un espacio para reflexionar sobre lo que han aprendido. Se les debe proveer de plataformas para compartir su experiencia con futuros y antiguos alumnos. Deben recibir asesoramiento profesional sobre cómo aprovechar su aprendizaje a lo largo de su vida profesional.

7.2.2 Estudiantes SA

Fomentar la concienciación sobre las diferencias culturales en el aula supone un buen punto de partida en la tarea de ayudar a los estudiantes de SA en su adaptación a la universidad de destino. Para muchos estudiantes de SA será la primera vez que viven en el extranjero o que conozcan otra cultura. Los estudiantes de SA deben ser conscientes de que sus comportamientos, creencias y valores están imbricados en la cultura en que han crecido, de manera que afecta a sus expectativas acerca de cómo debería ser una clase universitaria, cómo debiera ser la metodología seguida en el aula o a qué estilo de aprendizaje hay que seguir. Más allá de una actitud correcta, es importante enfatizar que su actitud y predisposición influirán en su percepción de la clase local.

Se debe animar a los estudiantes de SA a utilizar la experiencia de matrícula directa como un programa que abarca más ámbitos que una clase académica corriente. Deben considerarla como una oportunidad para aprender sobre la cultura española, conocer estudiantes españoles y mejorar sus habilidades lingüísticas. Se debe alentar a los estudiantes de SA a llevar diarios en los que registren sus perspectivas y puedan reflexionar sobre ellas. Los estudiantes de SA deben reconocer que se encuentran en un nuevo contexto académico y ser menos exigentes con sus expectativas académicas. No quiere decir que deban procrastinar o ser poco aplicados; sin embargo, deben estar abiertos ante las oportunidades que se les ofrecen, tanto a nivel curricular, como en lo personal, dejando atrás nociones de éxito basadas exclusivamente en obtener una alta calificación final. Finalmente, se debe animar a los estudiantes de SA a entablar y mantener relaciones interpersonales con profesores y estudiantes locales.

En resumen, a los estudiantes de SA se les podría hacer las siguientes sugerencias.

Éxito académico

- **Toma clases fáciles:** no tomes clases de ciencias o clases de los últimos cursos que requieran muchos conocimientos previos si no tienes una sólida formación en el tema. Si es posible, elige más asignaturas optativas o asignaturas troncales, pero de un curso inferior.
- **Haz contactos con los estudiantes:** pregunta a los estudiantes locales quién es el delegado de la clase y si te pueden agregar al grupo de WhatsApp de la clase. Encuentra al menos una persona en cada clase con la que te sientes cómodo haciendo preguntas para que pueda aclarar las tareas y/o cualquier cambio de horarios, tareas, etc.
- **Comunícate con tu profesor:** no esperes hasta después del examen para preguntarle al profesor qué espera de ti. No tengas miedo de hacer preguntas desde el principio del curso y reunirse antes de los exámenes.
- **No postergues:** en un entorno de aprendizaje independiente como la UAM, se espera que estudies durante todo el semestre, manteniéndote al día con las lecturas y trabajos. El hecho de

que "no hay tareas" no significa que no deberías estar trabajando durante el curso. El desarrollo de habilidades de gestión del tiempo es importante en la UAM.

- **Toma muchos apuntes:** muchos profesores agregan información de forma verbal y la mayoría de los exámenes se basan en los apuntes de clase. Si no tienes los mejores apuntes, pídeselos a un estudiante local.
- **No esperes, pero ten paciencia:** no esperes para tratar de comunicarte con estudiantes y profesores locales. Al mismo tiempo, no te estreses si no entiendes todo o no tienes amigos al principio. Las relaciones requieren su tiempo, pero hay que ser proactivo para integrarse.
- **Enfócate en un aprendizaje holística:** en lugar de centrarte únicamente en cómo obtener una "A", reconoce que te puedes mejorar tu español y también aprender sobre la cultura española en el aula. Estos aprendizajes pueden ser tan valiosos, si no más, a largo plazo que obtener una nota "perfecta".
- **Notas:** entiende que es muy difícil conseguir un 9 o 10 en el sistema académica español. Las normas y definición de éxito académico son diferentes, así que, si bien puedes aspirar a un 10, comprende que un 7 se considera una buena nota. Si estas preocupado, pregunta si puedes optar por la modalidad de "aprobado" o "suspenso".

Relaciones con estudiantes locales en el aula.

- **Toma la iniciativa:** si bien puedes tener mucha suerte, es poco probable que los estudiantes españoles se acerquen a ti. Ellos tienen sus propios grupos de amigos y su vida cotidiana hecha. Toma la iniciativa y acércate a la gente local. Si bien puedes tener mala suerte y encontrar a una persona desinteresada, la mayoría será amable y atenta. Por ejemplo, para iniciar una conversación puedes decir: "Hola, soy de los Estados Unidos. Este es mi primer día en la universidad, ¿qué sabes sobre este profesor?"

- **Grupo de WhatsApp:** el primer día pregunta quién es el delegado de la clase y si te pueden poner en el grupo de WhatsApp. Esto te ayudará a romper el hielo y acostumbrarte a pedir ayuda a los estudiantes locales. El grupo WhatsApp te mantendrá informado sobre todos los cambios en la clase y te permitirá hacer preguntas a tus compañeros si tienes alguna duda.
- **Asientos:** trata de sentarte cerca de los estudiantes locales para que sea más fácil hacerles preguntas. Es posible que tengas que moverte un poco durante las primeras semanas de clases hasta que entiendas la dinámica de la clase.
- **Saca tema de conversación:** la clase es algo que tienes en común con los estudiantes locales. Por lo tanto, haz preguntas sobre la clase, aunque sepas la respuesta. Puede ser útil para romper el hielo y establecer una línea de comunicación. Además, te ayudará a ganar confianza a la hora de acercarte a las personas.
- **Estate presente:** si no estás en el campus, será difícil desarrollar relaciones. Si sólo atiendes a tu teléfono durante los descansos, antes o después de la clase, no te verán cómo alguien abierto. Trata de quedarte y entrar en una conversación o pasar tiempo en la cafetería.
- **Di siempre que “sí”:** si un local es lo suficientemente amable como para invitarte a tomar un café o pasar el rato, simplemente di que “sí”. Es normal sentirte nervioso, pero llegar allí es la mitad de la batalla. Si dices que no, es probable que no te vuelvan a invitar. Si dices que sí, puede ser el comienzo de una amistad.
- **Ayuda académica:** los alumnos españoles son mucho más colaborativos que los estadounidenses. No tengas miedo de pedir ayuda académica, ya sea tomando notas prestadas, sumándote a un grupo de trabajo con ellos o incluso pidiendo ayuda para estudiar. Algunos programas de SA te dan un presupuesto para tener un tutor local. No esperes hasta el final para aprovechar la oportunidad, ya que puedes hacerte amigos en el proceso.

- **El mismo grupo:** toma cursos en el mismo grado y grupo así tendrás más oportunidades de entrar en la dinámica de la clase.

Relaciones con estudiantes locales fuera del aula

- **Intercambios de idiomas:** inscríbete en un intercambio de idiomas a través de la universidad local y tu programa SA. Si tienes múltiples mentores, eso aumenta la probabilidad de incrementar tus contactos. Además, no esperes demasiado para escribirles porque suelen estar más ocupados conforme el semestre avanza. Si conoces a tu compañero de intercambio de idiomas al principio, es más probable que establezcas una relación.
- **Únete a actividades extracurriculares:** las universidades locales ofrecen muchos deportes y clubes para unirse. Apúntate al principio y participa. Es mucho más fácil conocer a gente cuando tienes un interés en común y es probable que los estudiantes se queden después de la actividad para socializar.
- **Fiestas:** a los españoles les encantan las *fiestas* y sirven para romper el hielo. Es probable que en la universidad se celebren muchas fiestas y eventos a lo largo del año. Lee los carteles, pide una bebida y sal al patio para unirse a las festividades.

Relaciones con los profesores

- **Preséntate:** al final de la primera clase, preséntate al profesor para que sepa que eres un estudiante de intercambio. Ayudará a establecer una relación también.
- **Haz preguntas:** nunca tengas miedo de hacer preguntas durante la clase, en los descansos o después de clase. La única manera de conocer las expectativas de los profesores es a través de lo que dice preguntando acerca de aquellos aspectos que no hayan quedado claros. No esperes a que un profesor te ofrezca ayuda; inicia el contacto sobre todo si estás perdido.

- **Tutorías:** si estás confundido por un tema, las expectativas, las tareas, los plazos, etc., no dudes en pedir tutorías. Los profesores te resolverán cualquier duda en una reunión individual.
- **Participación:** cuando los profesores soliciten perspectivas de otros países, aprovecha la oportunidad para compartir tu punto de vista, en lugar de solo dar respuestas monosilábicas. Con este gesto, le demuestras al profesorado tu compromiso, a la par que ayudas a los estudiantes locales a reconocerte como alguien que puede aportar al grupo.
- **Experiencias negativas:** si un profesor hace un comentario que sientes que fue "antipático", "estricto", "insensible", etc. solicita otra interpretación al personal del programa de SA, tu familia anfitriona o un estudiante local. Trata de darle otra oportunidad al profesor y continúa esforzándote en la clase. Cortar lazos de comunicación con un profesor es probable que sólo conlleve desventajas para ti.

Recomendaciones finales

- **Acéptate a ti mismo como extranjero:** nadie va a esperar que tú, como estudiante internacional, lo sepas todo. Está bien hacer preguntas, está bien no saber, está bien perderte. No tienes que ser perfecto. Si quieres aprender y crecer, solo debes tener la mente abierta, esforzarte y salir de tu zona de confort.

Los estudiantes de SA deben ser conscientes de que la forma en que eligen pasar su tiempo y desarrollar sus redes de amistad inevitablemente afectará a su experiencia. Se debe animar a los estudiantes a viajar antes o después del semestre en lugar de durante el mismo. Se debe alentar a los estudiantes de SA a que salgan solos por su cuenta, a tomar clases y a involucrarse en actividades sin sus compañeros de cohorte. Estar solos los hace aparecer más accesibles porque los alumnos españoles generalmente intentan ayudar a las personas que parecen perdidas. Sin embargo, deben estar preparados para tomar la iniciativa de iniciar conversaciones también.

7.2.3 Universidades locales

Si las universidades locales pretenden alcanzar las metas contempladas dentro de sus planes de internacionalización, deben generar iniciativas para la internacionalización en casa y el soporte de proyectos a largo plazo. La mayoría de los planes de internacionalización se centran en la movilidad, el reconocimiento internacional y la mejora de la oferta de clases en inglés pero, para que la internacionalización de la educación superior tenga éxito, hace falta un proyecto más completo que incluya la formación del profesorado en la enseñanza en aulas multiculturales y un mayor apoyo a las oficinas internacionales para que éstas puedan ayudar a los estudiantes españoles a explorar opciones internacionales dentro y fuera del campus.

Cada año la UAM recibe miles de estudiantes de intercambio y una cantidad cada vez mayor de estudiantes internacionales. Además, los hijos de inmigrantes están comenzando a asistir a la universidad con más regularidad, lo que también aumenta la diversidad en el aula. No se puede esperar que los profesores conozcan por métodos intuitivos cómo manejar un grupo diverso de estudiantes en términos de cultura, competencias lingüísticas y conocimientos previos. Los profesores pueden ser al mismo tiempo facilitadores clave y/o una barrera para la integración de estudiantes internacionales en el aula. Por lo tanto, deben recibir una formación adecuada si la UAM quiere aprovechar la interculturalidad del aula para aumentar el aprendizaje intercultural de todos los alumnos.

Es posible que los profesores perciban que el objetivo de esta capacitación es dar un trato especial a los estudiantes internacionales. Por eso, es vital para el éxito de dicha formación que los profesores entiendan que el objetivo de internacionalización en casa es mejorar las competencias interculturales de todo el alumnado. Independientemente del programa de grado, la estrategia de Lisboa afirma que todos los estudiantes del siglo XXI desarrollarán competencias interculturales. La integración de los estudiantes internacionales en el aula les brinda oportunidades para adquirir estas habilidades de manera orgánica. Los estudiantes de SA ya identificaron muchas estrategias de internacionalización en casa que los

profesores utilizan en el aula puesto que desean que sus estudiantes aprendan y que se sientan cómodos en clase. La formación debe desarrollarse a partir de ellas.

Los profesores deben considerar que el curso apoya su desarrollo profesional y mejora la calidad de su enseñanza. Al principio, los profesores deberían tener un espacio para discutir las dificultades encontradas en el proceso de asimilación de la multiculturalidad inherente a un aula internacional, extrayendo reflexiones útiles de la experiencia. Tanto las experiencias positivas como las negativas pueden ser el punto de partida para una discusión. Esta estrategia también ayudará a descubrir problemas específicos de la institución no detectados hasta el momento y que pueden motivar un proceso de cambio a lo largo del curso en cuestión.

La formación debe incluir el desarrollo de competencias en términos de destrezas interculturales, culturas de aprendizaje y enseñanza en un aula multicultural. Un ejemplo de tal programa es el programa de intervención de habilidades interculturales *Excellence in Cultural Experiential Learning and Leadership* (EXCELL) que se ha introducido en diversas disciplinas en Australia. Su objetivo es mejorar la conciencia intercultural de los profesores para que puedan desarrollar metodologías que promuevan la interacción entre estudiantes internacionales y nacionales, además de aumentar su conciencia intercultural (Mak & Kennedy, 2012).

Se debe adoptar una filosofía de sinergia cultural para que los profesores reconozcan que también deben adaptarse a los estudiantes internacionales más allá de la relación unidireccional profesor-alumno. La formación debe comenzar creando conciencia sobre su propia cultura de aprendizaje, examinando sus propias creencias sobre las metodologías de enseñanza y aprendizaje, así como la comunicación en el aula. Hay una gran variedad de culturas de aprendizaje que se pueden estudiar y discutir para crear conciencia y, con suerte, aumentar la apertura a las diferencias académicas de los estudiantes internacionales.

Recomendaciones específicas para profesores:

- **Presentaciones:** todos los estudiantes deben tener la oportunidad de presentarse al comienzo de la clase. Si es una clase grande, puede ser más práctico que solo los estudiantes extranjeros se presenten para dar a conocer su presencia.
- **Participación:** el profesor debe tratar de involucrar a los estudiantes internacionales en el aula alentando su participación, utilizando ejemplos de la vida diaria o conocimientos generales relacionados con su país de origen. Deben evitar preguntas que supongan conocimientos previos muy específicos.
- **Trabajo en grupo:** el profesor debe separar los estudiantes internacionales en diferentes grupos porque de otro modo la tendencia que menos esfuerzo exige es juntarse entre ellos. Si se quiere lograr un aprendizaje intercultural, se debe promover el contacto entre grupos culturales como un valor añadido. Las tareas deben requerir que todos los estudiantes participen activamente.
- **Tutorías:** los profesores deben informar a todos los estudiantes cuándo y cómo pueden ser contactados. Se les debe animar a asistir tutorías para aclarar dudas y/o quedarse un momento después de clase para atender a cualquier pregunta. Si tienen algún recurso en inglés o conocen un libro de texto de introducción a la materia (en el caso que falten conocimientos previos); es recomendable que compartan éstos también.
- **La discusión:** Las metodologías de aprendizaje activo ayudan a la integración de los estudiantes porque brindan un espacio a los alumnos internacionales para compartir su opinión e interactuar con otros estudiantes. Si la clase consiste únicamente en que el profesor hable, hay poco espacio para que los estudiantes aprendan unos de otros, independientemente de su nacionalidad.
- **Inclusión social / WhatsApp:** el profesor debe solicitar al delegado de clase que coloque a los estudiantes de intercambio en el grupo de WhatsApp el primer día. De esta forma, cualquier

cambio de horario, tareas, cancelaciones de clases, etc. también se darán a conocer a los estudiantes de intercambio.

- **Hablantes de herencia:** los profesores no deben asumir que los hablantes de herencia no enfrentan ningún desafío con el idioma en el aula. Es poco probable que estos alumnos tengan experiencia académica previa en español y, por lo tanto, es posible que desconozcan total o parcialmente el vocabulario académico, las siglas más frecuentes, etc. El profesorado debe asimismo ser consciente de la existencia de variaciones lingüísticas del castellano, no necesariamente asumiendo que el alumno ha empleado un término “incorrecto” y por ende corregible en público; al contrario, es preferible asegurarse en privado de la conveniencia de usar dicho término, y si se confirmara que su uso hubiera sido equivocado (especialmente si se relaciona con algún concepto clave para la asignatura), proceder a corregir al alumno, procurando hacerlo también en un clima de confianza.

Durante el estudio que se presenta en esta tesis, tanto el personal como los profesores de SA afirmaron que la vida social de sus estudiantes no es su responsabilidad. Por supuesto, esto es cierto, sobre todo en relación a aquello que los estudiantes decidan hacer fuera del aula; sin embargo, fomentar la inclusión en el aula es importante para que todos los estudiantes se sientan cómodos compartiendo ideas y contribuya a un entorno de aprendizaje colaborativo. Si todos los estudiantes se sienten seguros a la hora de aportar sus ideas, de manera natural se facilitará la participación en clase. Alentar a los estudiantes internacionales a mezclarse con los estudiantes locales les permitirá aprender sobre las culturas de los demás habilitando la puesta en común de los diferentes bagajes educativos, sociales y culturales que existan en el grupo. Si bien es cierto que lograr una integración profunda como el caso de Tom depende por igual tanto de los estudiantes locales como de los alumnos de SA, el uso de las técnicas arriba mencionadas puede ayudar al correcto desarrollo de un entorno integrador en el aula.

Cuando las ORIs realizaron orientaciones para estudiantes de intercambio, se enfocaron principalmente en los asuntos prácticos tales como cambios de asignaturas y acuerdos de aprendizaje. Sería pertinente que el personal de la ORI tenga un mayor conocimiento de la experiencia académica de sus estudiantes de intercambio para que dicha orientación pueda incluir temario relativo a las diferencias culturales que pueden encontrar en el aula y recomendaciones para los estudiantes. La universidad local debería brindar más capacitaciones sobre internacionalización en casa al personal de las ORIs en lugar de centrarse únicamente en cuestiones administrativas. Puede resultar de interés que el rectorado brinde los recursos e ideas para desarrollar sus orientaciones, programas de mentores, ferias de intercambio, concursos de carteles y otros eventos de integración que fomenten internacionalización en casa y visibilicen los aspectos internacionales en la universidad. Las ORIs también deben colaborar con organización y asociaciones de alumnos (valga el caso de ESN) para encontrar para encontrar vías de incluir a los estudiantes locales en eventos que pretendan mejorar la integración de los estudiantes de intercambio.

Lo más probable es que los estudiantes españoles no interactúen con estudiantes internacionales a menos que tengan una motivación intrínseca por la cultura o el aprendizaje del idioma. Este fenómeno puede observarse fácilmente entre los estudiantes españoles de los grados de lenguas modernas, traducción y estudios internacionales. Por tanto, es necesario fomentar la concienciación entre los estudiantes locales de que la internacionalización va más allá del programa de Erasmus+ para crear una cultura universitaria más internacional. Deben ser informados sobre los beneficios de tener estudiantes internacionales en el campus tanto a nivel personal como profesional.

Recomendaciones específicas para mejorar la internacionalización en casa:

- **Internacionalización en casa transversal e integral:** el Vicerrectorado de Internacionalización debería informar sobre las múltiples estrategias de internacionalización a todas las ORIs. Las ORIs deberían trabajar junto con los profesores para que ambas partes comprendan los desafíos del otro. El obligado diálogo sobre internacionalización debe incluir al Rectorado, personal de la ORI, los profesores y alumnos locales.
- **Programas de mentores:** deben hacerse por grupo cuando sea posible, para que la pareja comparta clases y los estudiantes locales puedan presentarlos al grupo.
- **Eventos de bienvenida:** deben incluir una mayor participación de estudiantes locales y ser organizados por la institución con la colaboración de la ESN.

Teniendo en cuenta que en la UAM la oficina de SAM está más familiarizada con el sistema académico de EE. UU. y SA que la ORI central, que se concentra en el programa europeo de Erasmus +, quizá sería más adecuado que la SAM fuese la responsable de los estudiantes de intercambio de EE. UU. La oficina de SAM podría brindar el mismo apoyo que ofrece el personal de los programas híbridos de SA en términos de selección de cursos, orientaciones y aprendizaje intercultural.

Sería beneficioso para las grandes universidades que reciben numerosos estudiantes estadounidenses y/o tienen una estrategia de reclutamiento con vistas a los EE. UU. tener una oficina a cargo de estos programas de intercambio considerando que las diferencias culturales en educación superior entre los EE. UU. y Europa son mayores que entre los países europeos. Las estructuras de títulos académicos en instituciones españolas hacen que la selección de cursos sea más compleja para los estudiantes, principalmente a consecuencia de una falta de equivalencia directa con el sistema de requisitos exigido en el formato estadounidense de *majors* y *minors*. De manera conjunta, centralizada y coordinada con otras oficinas de intercambio cultural dentro de la universidad.

7.3 Implicaciones para futuras investigaciones

Las implicaciones de mi investigación son tanto teóricas como prácticas. En cuanto a la internacionalización de la educación superior, son útiles tanto para el componente 'en el extranjero' de los programas de SA como para el componente 'en casa' para la enseñanza en aulas interculturales. La metodología etnográfica ha resultado ser adecuada para proporcionar un análisis y una comprensión más compleja del proceso de adaptación en lugar de presentar únicamente los resultados sobre las competencias añadidas sin comprender el proceso que siguieron los alumnos a lo largo de su aprendizaje. Los resultados brindan información sobre el debate en torno al valor añadido de la experiencia de matrícula directa y cómo un IES puede intentar garantizar la consecución de los objetivos propuestos inicialmente. También abre las puertas para una mayor exploración de las culturas del aprendizaje, incluso dentro de los sistemas académicos que se suponen cercanos culturalmente. La metodología cualitativa aquí presentada apunta a problemáticas específicas que posteriores estudios cuantitativos podrían corroborar. De ser así, las conclusiones alcanzadas en este estudio disfrutarían de un nivel de generalización adicional que difícilmente puede lograrse con sólo métodos cualitativos. Finalmente, se ha demostrado que aún queda mucho trabajo para lograr los objetivos de internacionalización en casa en la educación superior en España.

Esta investigación contribuye al debate sobre el impacto del modelo del programa de SA en el aprendizaje del alumno. La incoherencia del debate sobre la matrícula directa es que, si bien algunos programas prefieren impartir sus propios cursos debido a cierta idea preconcebida acerca de la pérdida de calidad educativa cuando se estudia en el extranjero (Hendrickson, 2016); la experiencia de matrícula directa es al mismo tiempo desafiante para el alumno, con el consiguiente riesgo de fracaso académico. Con respecto a la primera percepción, ninguno de los estudiantes sintió que los cursos fueran “demasiado fáciles”. La mayoría percibía que sus profesores estaban muy bien formados y algunos incluso comentaron que fueron expuestos a contenidos que no estaban disponibles normalmente para ellos en los EE. UU. El

fracaso académico estaba más estrechamente relacionado con la inadecuada selección de las clases que con diferencias culturales insuperables o el nivel de idioma. Los estudiantes de programas de intercambio sin apoyo presencial reportaron más dificultades fundamentalmente a la hora de elegir cursos, a la hora de obtener el visto bueno por parte de la Universidad de origen, y en general a una falta de asesoría académica. Eso desembocó en que muchos alumnos se matricularon en clases que exigían una formación previa con la que no contaban en el momento de comenzar las clases. Los estudiantes de programas híbridos, especialmente aquellos que tenían buenas relaciones establecidas con la UAM, estaban mejor orientados en tanto en cuanto que conocían mejor qué asignaturas eran adecuadas a su nivel académico y sus necesidades personales.

El estudio también confirmó los resultados de investigaciones previas que analizaron el impacto del modelo de programa de SA en las redes de amistad (Hendrickson 2016). Los estudiantes del programa híbrido percibieron que sus compañeros de cohorte que no se matricularon directamente en una universidad local solo se interactuaban con otros estudiantes estadounidenses. Aunque la mayoría de los participantes no desarrollaron relaciones profundas con estudiantes locales que fueran más allá del entorno universitario, sí informaron haber desarrollado relaciones académicas (e.g., sentarse juntos durante la clase, trabajar en proyectos grupales) y relaciones sociales en el campus (e.g., tomar café o comer juntos). Los estudiantes de intercambio informaron que la mayoría de sus relaciones fueron con estudiantes internacionales y/o españoles. Aunque el personal de los programas híbridos de SA informó haber creado actividades que promueven la integración con la comunidad local, los resultados mostraron que los modelos de programas híbridos estimulan de una manera más evidente a las amistades entre los estudiantes de SA.

En general, el estudio sugiere que siempre y cuando los estudiantes tengan un nivel mínimo de idioma, la experiencia de matrícula directa no solo es posible, sino altamente recomendable de cara a conocer a estudiantes que no son de los EE. UU., experimentar una nueva cultura académica, obtener

perspectivas internacionales y estar expuesto al idioma español de mayor nivel. Esta investigación mostró que incluso los estudiantes que solo exhibieron una adaptación a nivel superficial se sintieron más inmersos en la cultura española y aprendieron de la experiencia de matrícula directa, especialmente en comparación con sus compañeros estadounidenses que no se matricularon en universidades locales.

La matrícula directa puede ser administrativamente más compleja para los programas de SA. Pese a ello creo firmemente que debería ser el estándar para la experiencia de SA y no la excepción. Si se desea respaldar mejor la matrícula directa de los estudiantes de SA, futuras investigaciones deben examinar las barreras a nivel administrativo y así minimizar la posibilidad de complicaciones burocráticas. En segundo lugar, futuros trabajos de investigación deberían explorar la experiencia de los alumnos de SA en otras IES tanto en España como en otros países para ver si existen aspectos comunes en el proceso de adaptación independientemente del lugar. Actualmente, los programas de SA pueden usar esta investigación para determinar la transferibilidad a sus propios programas; sin embargo, se requerirían más estudios, que abarcarán aspectos no tratados en este trabajo al nivel de detalle necesario para desarrollar recomendaciones generales para la matrícula directa en SA.

Cuando esta investigación comenzó, no me sorprendió encontrar que muchos estudiantes que iban a matricularse directamente tenían apellidos españoles; sin embargo, no estaba segura de cómo su identidad y nivel de idioma afectarían a su adaptación y perspectivas sobre la universidad local. Los resultados parecen sugerir que pese poder caer en la presunción de que su experiencia será similar a la de los hablantes nativos, los hablantes de herencia se enfrentan a diferentes desafíos y por tanto precisan de ayudas distintas. Cada estudiante puede ver su identidad de manera diferente dependiendo de sus experiencias con su idioma y cultura de herencia. Teniendo en cuenta el creciente número de estudiantes de segunda generación en la educación superior en los EE. UU., muchos de los cuales son hablantes de herencia, es importante asegurarse de que se aborden sus necesidades también en el momento de apoyar a los estudiantes de SA ya que se espera que este fenómeno tenga un impacto creciente en cualquier

programa de intercambio fuera de los EE. UU., pero particularmente dramático en instituciones españolas.

Además, la investigación destaca los beneficios de usar la autoeficacia y la agencia en el marco teórico para comprender cómo los estudiantes de SA toman decisiones sobre su adaptación, considerando que la agencia afecta cómo se desarrollan las estancias (Jackson, 2018). Investigaciones anteriores han considerado a los estudiantes como agentes y han reportado un aumento en las creencias de autoeficacia como resultado de SA, pero pocos las han incluido como parte del marco teórico. Esta perspectiva promueve que el análisis se centra en cómo los estudiantes evalúan sus habilidades como un mejor indicador de sus decisiones en lugar de solo considerar las características personales como variables independientes que determinan los resultados.

También se podría utilizar una investigación cuantitativa adicional para probar la relación entre personalidad (e.g., extroversión/introversión) y las características (e.g., nivel de L2 o experiencia previa en el extranjero) con las creencias de autoeficacia y las motivaciones para predecir mejor la toma de decisiones de los estudiantes de SA sobre su adaptación y aprendizaje. Finalmente, un buen complemento para este estudio serían investigaciones sobre cómo ayudar a los estudiantes a alinear sus acciones con sus motivaciones. Otra posibilidad sería investigar cómo se podría mejorar las creencias de autoeficacia sobre su capacidad para lograr sus objetivos durante la experiencia de SA.

Esta tesis también tiene implicaciones para las iniciativas de internacionalización en casa en las universidades locales. En este campo, la investigación previa se ha centrado más en los estudiantes de grado que en el proceso de adaptación de los estudiantes de intercambio. Sin embargo, los intercambios de movilidad de corto plazo son la fuente más numerosa de estudiantes internacionales en la mayoría de los países de Europa continental. Si bien los informes del programa de Erasmus + e incluso la investigación de SA se han centrado en las pruebas previas y posteriores de idioma (así como en la competencia intercultural en el caso de SA), por lo general se ha ignorado la experiencia de adaptación en el aula. Se

debería realizar investigaciones futuras sobre las experiencias en el aula de los estudiantes de intercambio, ya que el tiempo limitado de la estancia afecta el proceso de adaptación y, por lo tanto, sus desafíos pueden ser diferentes de los alumnos internacionales inscritos en un grado local.

Actualmente, se están perdiendo oportunidades porque, aunque haya estudiantes de intercambio presentes, a menudo tienen poco impacto en las aulas de educación superior. Todos los estudiantes y profesores europeos son conscientes de que los estudiantes de intercambio están en el aula, pero su integración se deja en gran parte en manos de las oficinas internacionales y organizaciones estudiantiles como la ESN, ninguna de las cuales se centra en la integración en el aula. Esta tesis ha proporcionado implicaciones prácticas de cómo los profesores y estudiantes pueden ser más conscientes de las diferencias culturales en la educación superior, usar ese conocimiento para mejorar la integración académica-social, y adaptarse ellos mismo al aula multicultural. Estas recomendaciones brindan una base para futuras investigaciones de acción sobre intervenciones en el aula para promover la integración de los estudiantes de intercambio.

Un aspecto relevante que se podría estudiar en el futuro surgió de entrevistar a profesores y estudiantes españoles y tiene que ver con el impacto del Plan Bolonia en la universidad española. Se ha producido un cambio claro del aprendizaje centrado en el profesor al aprendizaje centrado en el estudiante; sin embargo, es claro que ni los profesores ni los estudiantes están seguros de lo que significa para su rol en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje. Esta fase de transición está impulsada por las políticas de internacionalización de la UE que promueven planes de grado transparentes basados en objetivos de competencias comunes. Sin embargo, se está implementando desde los organismos superiores, con un enfoque arriba-abajo que adolece de poco apoyo en cuanto a la capacitación de los profesores a este nuevo escenario. Tanto los estudiantes como los profesores creen que la participación y la discusión son unas características importantes para una buena clase, pero lo perciben como un objetivo ambicioso y difícil de conseguir. Sería deseable que futuras investigaciones tuvieran como objetivo obtener opiniones

de profesores y estudiantes locales acerca de los obstáculos y facilitadores vividos durante este proceso de transición. Es probable que tal trabajo contribuyera a una implantación más exitosa del Plan Bolonia en España.

El programa de Erasmus + en Europa facilita el intercambio de más de 300.000 estudiantes cada año (Comisión Europea, 2019). Además, Europa es el destino preferido de los estudiantes de EE. UU. (Institute of International Education, 2020). El elevado número de estudiantes de intercambio justifica una mayor investigación sobre las culturas de aprendizaje en toda Europa, ya que los desafíos a los que se enfrentan los estudiantes estadounidenses claramente no son exclusivos a ellos. Los métodos de investigación etnográfica han descubierto diferencias culturales subyacentes entre el aprendizaje de EE. UU. y de España, un factor que ha pasado inadvertido en anteriores investigaciones. Sin embargo, también es pertinente preguntarse sobre las diferencias que pueden existir en Europa y/o en qué medida el Plan Bolonia ha armonizado las culturas académicas en el aula de diferentes países. Los resultados presentados en este trabajo pueden funcionar de marco de referencia para otros estudios cuantitativos complementarios a mayor escala y/o estudios de encuestas cualitativas.

7.4 Conclusión

El componente académico de SA ha sido ignorado durante demasiado tiempo en la literatura especializada en la materia de SA. Las clases son vistas simplemente como la razón o excusa para realizar un intercambio, pero la comunidad de SA no las considera como un contexto importante dentro de la experiencia de aprendizaje cultural y lingüístico a menos que un curso sea específicamente diseñado a tal fin. Se ha aceptado durante mucho tiempo el aprendizaje integrado de contenidos y lenguas extranjeras como una manera para aprender dos dominios al mismo tiempo. Y si bien es cierto que los programas de matrícula directa brindan la oportunidad de aprendizaje de contenido, idioma e intercultural, muchos SA continúan empleando sus propios cursos académicos. Al mismo tiempo, los investigadores persisten en centrarse más en los aspectos extracurriculares a la hora de diseñar un plan de SA que en mejorar el

aprendizaje efectivo. La experiencia de matrícula directa debe ser respaldada tanto por los programas de SA como por las universidades locales para que todos los estudiantes aprovechen al máximo las oportunidades presentadas. Dicho apoyo no debe verse como una mera serie de pautas imposibles de orientar y dirigidas a objetivos poco claros y confusos, sino a sentar las bases para un sistema de pequeños cambios que marque la diferencia en términos de adaptación al entorno y aprovechamiento de la experiencia y del aprendizaje por parte de los estudiantes de programas de SA.

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Annexes

Annex I: Informed consent form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

Project Title: Stepping outside of the study abroad bubble: *An ethnographic study of American students' adaptation process to a Spanish university classroom*

Principal investigator: Mary MacKenty under the direction of Isabel Alonso Belmonte & Daniel Chornet Roses

Research Purpose: The objective of the research is to gain a deep understanding the American study abroad student's experience in a Spanish classroom. The focus is on the adaptation process to the social and academic culture and the role of intercultural communication in it. The data collected will be used to develop recommendations to better prepare and support American students studying at the UAM, the Spanish professors who are receiving them and the coordinators of American university programs.

Duration: September 2017 to January 2018

Benefits: Person satisfaction in improving the study abroad experience for future American students studying in a Spanish classroom. It cannot be guaranteed that the participant will personally experience the benefits from the results of the study.

Participation involves: Participation includes one interview of approximately forty-five minutes. An audio recording will be used during the interview as well as direct quotes. The recording will be transcribed and stored on the researcher's computer for analysis.

My confidentiality: I will not be identified by name in the reports as pseudo names will be used to keep my anonymity. All information will be kept confidential and under a username and password in the researcher's computer. Access to the data will provided only to the researcher and her thesis directors.

Contact in case of any doubts or problems: I can contact the principal researcher Mary MacKenty (mary.mackenty@estudiante.uam.es – 622627623) or Isabel Alonso Belmonte (isabel.alonso@uam.es - 670786253).

I understand that:

1. I have read and understand the written and oral explanations provided to me as to the objectives and characteristics of the study.
2. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction by the investigator.
3. I understand that my participation in this research project is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw at any time without providing an explanation.
4. Faculty and administrators will not be present during interviews or have access to the information provided as to avoid any repercussions.
5. I consent to the data obtained being used in conferences and/or publications. The investigator guarantees that the information received with only be used to achieve the study's objectives, always ensuring the absolute confidentiality of the participant.
6. I have been given a copy of this consent form, dated and signed.

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Annex II: Interview questions

Study abroad students – 1st Interview

Warm up and Background info

Where are you from? How old are you?

Have you lived abroad before?

- What were you doing there? How long did you stay? Why did you choose to live there?

Have you travelled abroad before?

- What was your favorite part of the trip? Did it influence your decision to study abroad?

What have you been doing since you got to Spain?

- Who do you live with? Who have you been hanging out with? How did you meet them?
- What is your average weekday/weekend like?
- Describe your best experience since arriving to Spain.

University

Why did you decide to study at the UAM?

- What were your expectations for studying here at the UAM?
 - To mingle with local students? Did you expect professors to be more lenient, accommodating or strict? To learn from a different perspective? Language issue?

What was your first impression when you arrived to the UAM campus?

- Can you describe what you did when you arrived on campus on the first day?
- What most surprised you? Intrigued? Shocked?

What orientation events did you attend of your university program? Of the UAM?

- Which were the most fun, helpful, etc? Why?

How long are you on campus each day?

- What sort of things do you do on campus? Are you involved in activities outside of class?
- If so, how has that experience been?

Have you met local students? How did you meet them? What has been the most helpful thing for meeting local students? If you haven't met them, why do you think that is? (obstacles)

Classroom

Can you describe your typical class at your university in the US?

- Class size? Interactions with other students/professor? Lecture or interaction based?
- What is your major/minor in the states?

What courses are you studying at the UAM? How did you make your course selection?

Describe your typical classroom at the UAM?

- How many students? Lecture or activity based?
- Are there many other foreign students in the class? Where are they from? Where do you sit?
- How does it compare to your university back home?
- Which is your favorite class and why? Least favorite?

What is the typical lesson plan?

- How would you describe the professor's teaching style?
- Does this vary by course? How does it compare to your courses in the states? Example?
- In which ways are they the same or different?
- What is the method of assessment? Exams, essays, finales? Type of assignments/hw?
- How does the work load (type and difficulty) compare to the states?

Studying and learning styles

- Imagine you are preparing for a test. Can you describe to me how you go about it?
- How do you learn best? Reading/studying by yourself, listening to lectures, or working on projects/group activities? Why do you think that is?
- Do you think you will have to change your study habits to succeed academically at the UAM?

How is it going with the Spanish?

- What is the difference between studying in English and Spanish?
- In what language do you take notes in class?
- How do you feel studying in a second language? Do you feel you are improving your Spanish?
- For native speakers: Has anything surprised you about how Spanish people speak? What phrases have you picked up while living here? Do you pick up any new vocabulary in class? Or outside class? Was there any moment when you didn't understand what they were saying, describe?

Do you usually speak/interact with your professors?

- What did you speak about?
- How would you describe the relationship between the students and professors?
- How does the professor treat both foreign students and local students?
- Who is your favorite professor and why? Least favorite?

Do you usually speak/interact with other students in the class? Or at the UAM?

- With whom? What did you talk about?
- How frequently do you speak to your classmates?
- Have you had the chance to meet outside of class, what did you do?

Have you had any problems or confusing moments in any of your classes?

- Tell me about the incident or problem
- How did you try and resolve it?

Is there any group work required for you classes?

- What exactly is the assignment?
- How did you choose the group?
- Do you generally prefer to work in groups or alone?

- If you've started it already, how did you organize yourselves to complete the tasks?
- Are you in touch with your group members outside of the assignment? For what?

Concluding questions

After all the answers that you provided, overall how do you describe your experience studying at the UAM?

- What is the most difficult part about studying at the UAM?
- What is the best part about studying at the UAM?

What are your priorities while here in Spain? What do you want to do?

What do you expect from the rest of the semester?

- Socially, academically, etc

Study abroad students - 2nd interview

Warm-up

- So, there's only a couple weeks left. How do you feel about leaving?
 - Do you want to stay longer? Are you ready to go home?
- What are you going to miss most about Spain? Madrid? Being abroad?

Learning strategies

- How would you describe the Spanish university culture?
- What do you think is important to be academically successful in UAM classes?
- How do you find the content or information to study for the exams?
- Which of your courses did you become most comfortable in attending? Why?
- What aspects of a class made the experience more positive or negative? Why?
- Do you think you have changed your behaviour in the classroom from the beginning of the semester? In which way? Note taking, speaking to classmates, seating, etc
- What do you think has made an impact/a difference in your class?
 - Could be something the professor did, a student did, resources
 - For example, has there been anything that made class easier/harder/interesting/boring/useful/practical... for you throughout the semester?

Social Integration

- How do you feel about relating to your peers in an UAM class?
 - If don't know – challenged, interested, normal, unsure, timid, bored
 - How would you compare it to your feeling being in class in the states?
- How would you compare the amount of time you speak to classmates in the U.S. to at the UAM?
- What kind of interactions do you have with your classmates at UAM? (this question hints at the quality of the interactions).
 - How are the conversations you have with them?
 - Superficial, meaningful, friendly, intimate...
- Where do you sit in class? Did this vary throughout the semester? By class?
- Have you made any Spanish friends in your classes? In the UAM? How?
- Have you made any International friends in your classes? In the UAM? Outside? How?

- Think back to the first week, how have things evolved for you throughout the semester as far as your relationships with students in the classroom?
- What aspects of the class made it easier or harder to meet people in class?
- When did you begin to meet people? Was there something that triggered that, be it a program, connection, project, etc?
- How has your relationship with the professor evolved/developed throughout the semester? In what way?
- How do you perceive the professor's attitude towards international students to be?
 - Do you feel the professor is understanding towards the international students, including yourself, in the class?

Cultural Shock

- What is your favorite thing about Spanish culture? What are some customs or attitudes you would like to take home with you?
- How have you grown accustomed to any initial culture shocks that you may have experienced? How has your opinion about any aspect of the culture changed during your time here?
- Can you describe a moment where something about the culture confused you?
 - How did you find out why it is like that? Did you ask anyone?
- Where and with whom do you speak Spanish the most?
 - How do you feel your Spanish has developed over the course of the semester? Has it improved or changed at all?
 - What about being here helped you improve the most?
- What did you learn about Spanish culture through studying at the UAM?
 - Take a moment and think about your time in the classroom. Try to remember any cultural references that a professor may have made? How do teachers make cultural references about Spain?
 - What have you learnt about the UAM or Spain from other students?

Closing

- Do you feel your expectations for studying at the UAM were met? How?
- What have you learned from the experience studying at the UAM?
- How do you feel this experience studying at the UAM was different than if you had stayed in the U.S. for the semester?
- What are you going to take away from the study abroad experience?
- Do you feel as though you have achieved your goals for your Study abroad experience? Is there anything you would have done differently? Where there any barriers that made it harder to achieve one of your goals? Anything you needed more time for? Would you like to have stayed another semester?

UAM professors

Background

- ¿Cuántos años lleva enseñando en la UAM?
- ¿Qué asignaturas enseña?
- ¿Qué tipo de clases imparte: magistrales, clases participativas, talleres de tipo práctico, etc.?
- ¿Cómo evalúa a sus alumnos: exámenes, exposiciones orales, trabajos escritos, etc.?

Clases

- ¿Describime como seria una de sus clases típicas, de principio al fin?
- ¿Qué tipo de trabajos asignas?
 1. ¿Qué tipo de trabajos son? ¿Cómo se decide quién integra los grupos? ¿Se pide que los grupos realicen tareas conjuntas en clase o en la UAM? ¿o fuera de la UAM? ¿Durante cuánto tiempo?

Internacionalización

- Durante los últimos años, ¿ha notado algún incremento en el número de alumnos extranjeros en sus clases?
 1. ¿Cuántos alumnos extranjeros suele tener en sus clases? ¿De dónde vienen?
 2. ¿Al principio del curso te fijas en cuales alumnos son extranjeros? ¿Esta información está en tu listado o los alumnos se presentan solo o a veces ni te enteras?
- ¿Cómo afecta la presencia de alumnos extranjeros en tu clase?
 1. Como afecta esta presencia a la participacion de los estudiantes
 2. Cómo afecta esta presencia a tu manera de enseñar
 3. Como afecta tus interacciones con los estudiantes
 4. Como crees que afecta a las interacciones entre los estudiantes durante la clase?
 5. ¿Adapta o modifica su forma de enseñar de algún modo?

Alumnos EE.UU. – Choque cultural, integración y adaptación

- En estos últimos años, ¿Cuántos alumnos americanos recuerdas haber tenido en sus clases?
 1. ¿Suelen hablar en clase? Contestar/preguntar cosas?
 2. ¿Suelen hablar con usted? ¿De qué tipo de cosas?
 3. ¿Suelen hablar con sus compañeros en clase? ¿Con quiénes?
 4. ¿Diría que se comportan de forma parecida entre ellos o que depende del alumno?
 1. Si depende del alumno, ¿qué aspectos de su personalidad puede influir en su experiencia en la clase?
 2. ¿Se comportan igual que los españoles o nota alguna diferencia?
- En su opinión, ¿Hay alguna diferencia entre estudiar en la universidad en España y estudiar en los EE.UU.?
 1. Más concretamente, ¿cree que hay algún elemento social o cultural en la universidad española que pueda chocar a un estudiante americano cuando viene aquí?
- ¿Le parece que los alumnos americanos están bien integrados en clase?
 1. Académicamente: en los trabajos en grupos, exámenes etc.
 2. Socialmente: se relacionan bien con los compañeros de clase, etc.
- ¿Nota alguna diferencia entre las necesidades de los americanos en comparación con las de los españoles u otros alumnos extranjeros en clase?
 1. Al entender el idioma, exámenes, buscar bibliografía, cosas administrativas?
- En su opinión, los alumnos americanos, ¿llegan a adaptarse o a superar sus dificultades (si las tuvieran)?
 1. ¿modifican sus actitudes o comportamiento a lo largo del semestre?
 2. ¿modifican su grado de integración a lo largo del semestre?

Ultimas preguntas

- ¿Lleva a cabo alguna actividad concreta para integrar a los alumnos americanos o extranjeros en general en su clase o para ayudarles a adaptarse mejor?
 1. ¿Cree que es papel de profesor integrar a los alumnos extranjeros? Si la respuesta es negativa, en su opinión, ¿quiénes deben ocuparse de eso?
- ¿Cree que la multiculturalidad afecta el aula? ¿En qué sentido?
 1. ¿Cree que el hecho de tener alumnos americanos en su clase tiene algún beneficio para los alumnos, sean americanos, españoles o internacionales?
- ¿Ha estudiado y/o trabajado en el extranjero? ¿Dónde? ¿Cuándo? ¿Cómo fue?

UAM students

Background

- ¿En qué año estáis? ¿Qué carrera estáis cursando?
- ¿Sois todos españoles? ¿De Madrid?
- ¿Por qué elegisteis estudiar en la UAM?

UAM - Descripción

- Imaginaos que nunca he estado en la UAM. ¿Cómo la describiríais?
 1. ¿El campus? ¿los profes? ¿las clases? ¿el ambiente?
- ¿Como están las clases estructuradas?
 1. ¿Son todas parecidas? ¿O diferentes? ¿en qué sentido?
 2. ¿Cuál es la metodología más común de la enseñanza?
- ¿Podéis describir XXXXX clase para mí como si nunca la hubiera visto?
- ¿Qué aspectos te gustan más de las clases? ¿Y qué aspectos te gustan menos? O sea ¿Qué hace que una clase sea buena o mala para ti?
 1. ¿La asignatura? ¿el tema que se trate en ella? ¿el profesor o profesora? ¿el estilo de enseñanza? ¿los compañeros?
- ¿Cómo es tu relación con tus compañeros de clase?
 1. ¿De qué los conoces? ¿Estáis los mismos en todas las clases o en la mayoría?
- ¿Cómo os parece el papel de la participación en la clase? ¿Suelen participar mucho?
 1. ¿Si no, porque no os gusta participar?
- ¿Cómo suelen preparar el material para el examen?
 1. ¿Suelen leer las lecturas antes de cada clase o esperáis hasta el final?

Internacionalización

- ¿Hay alumnos extranjeros en vuestras clases? Especificar cuántos y de dónde. ¿Cómo te das cuenta si hay un extranjero en tu clase?
- ¿Soléis hablar con los estudiantes extranjeros en clase? ¿En qué situaciones? ¿Diríais que hacéis un esfuerzo para hablar con los extranjeros en clase? ¿Por qué? O ¿por qué no?
- ¿Habéis quedado con alumnos extranjeros de vuestra clase fuera del aula? Si la respuesta es positiva, ¿Dónde? ¿Por qué? ¿Para qué?
- ¿Hay algún alumno extranjero trabajando en vuestros grupos de trabajo en clase?
 1. ¿Cómo eligieron el grupo?
 2. ¿Cómo ha sido la experiencia de trabajar con alguien de otro país?
 3. Si la respuesta es positiva, ¿notáis alguna diferencia entre trabajar en un grupo sólo de españoles y colaborar con alumnos españoles y extranjeros?

4. Si la respuesta es negativa, ¿os gustaría colaborar con un grupo de trabajo formado por españoles y extranjeros? ¿Por qué sí? o ¿Por qué no?
- ¿Creéis que los alumnos extranjeros encuentran difícil adaptarse al ambiente de las clases en la UAM?
 1. ¿Cuáles dificultades creéis que se podrían encontrar?
 2. ¿Cómo creéis que se adaptan a estas diferencias/dificultades?
 3. ¿Os parece que están integrados a nivel social? ¿Y académico?
 4. ¿Notáis diferencias al tanto la integración o dificultades de los extranjeros dependiendo de qué país vienen?
 - ¿Creéis que vosotros debéis ayudarles a adaptar o integrarse?
 1. Si la respuesta es positiva, ¿qué cosas podéis hacer para ayudarles?
 2. Si la respuesta es negativa ¿Por qué no? ¿Creéis que alguien debe ayudarles? ¿O no lo necesitan?

Para terminar,

- ¿Habéis aprendido algo nuevo por el hecho de tener un extranjero en tu clase (si lo hay, claro)?
- ¿Tenéis pensado pedir una movilidad? ¿Dónde? ¿Por qué? ¿Para aprender qué?
- ¿Cómo creéis que sería la experiencia de cursar estudios en una universidad en otro país?

UAM international office staff

Para empezar

- ¿Cuánto tiempo llevas trabajando en movilidad?
- ¿Como llegaste a trabajar en eso?
- ¿Has vivido en el extranjero?

American Programs

- ¿Cuántos alumnos recibe la UAM de los EEUU cada semestre y de cuantas universidades?
- ¿Como es el proceso de recibir a un alumno de los EEUU?
 1. ¿Aplican desde su universidad, rellenan un LA, matriculan?
- ¿Cómo compararías los programas de Study Abroad con el Erasmus?
- ¿Para ti, hay una diferencia en la forma de tratar con ellos (se refiere al alumno en el caso de Samuel y se refiere a la Universidad en otros casos) que con los Erasmus?
 1. ¿Tipo de acuerdo, la bienvenida, la matrícula, lo que se espera el americano?

Choque cultural (España, UAM, Clases)

- ¿Cuándo los alumnos americanos lleguen a España, que crees que son los choques culturales más grandes que se enfrenten?
 1. ¿De la cultura española, la UAM, las clases?
- ¿Como compararías el sistema educativo de educación superior en España con los EEUU?
- ¿Cómo compararías la forma de enseñanza en las clases de grado en la UAM con los EEUU?
- ¿Consideras que todas las clases de grado tienen la misma dificultad para un alumno americano? ¿Recomiendan ciertas clases para los americanos? ¿Cuáles son las restricciones que los alumnos tienen en el momento de elegir clases?

Adaptation strategies

- ¿Suelen aprobar a las clases?
- ¿Sabes algo de sus experiencias en las clases?
- ¿Crees que los alumnos americanos se adaptan bien a las clases de grado?
 1. ¿Tienen algunas dificultades? ¿Sabes cómo superaran los problemas que enfrentan?
- ¿Para ti, hay una diferencia en la habilidad de los alumnos americanos a los que vienen de otros programas de movilidad para adaptarse a la clase o tener éxito académico?

Interactions (Americans, locals, internationals)

- ¿Con quienes piensas que los americanos se interactúan con mientras estén en España?
- ¿Como/donde crees que se conocen gente local?
 1. ¿En la UAM? ¿Las clases? ¿Fuera de clase? ESN? ¿Actividades en el centro?
- ¿Qué factores pueden hacerlo más fácil o difícil para un americano conocer a gente local?

Para terminar - Learning

- Hay muchos americanos que estudian en Madrid. ¿Porque crees que no hay muchos americanos que se matriculan en clases de grado en la UAM?
 1. ¿Convalidación de créditos, los acuerdos que hay, el nivel de español, papeleo?
 2. ¿Por qué crees que al final muchos al llegar deciden a no matricularse?
- ¿Cuáles son los beneficioso y/o dificultades para la universidad de tener alumnos americanos en las clases?
- ¿De quién crees que es la responsabilidad de mejorar la integración de los americanos (o extranjeros) en la universidad?
- ¿Conoces el plan de internacionalización de la UAM?
 1. ¿Qué aspectos te parece que están funcionando?
 2. ¿Cuáles aspectos hacen falta mejorar todavía?

Study abroad staff

Warm up

- How long have you been working with XXXX program?
- How did you get into this field/job?
- Have you lived in the U.S. before?

Program organization

- Could you describe for me the organization of the XXXX in Madrid program?
 1. Orientation, types of courses, trips, extracurricular, number of students, etc
- Why do you think students choose to come to Madrid and/or Spain?
 1. What do they expect from the experience?
 2. What do they want to do while in Spain?
- What do you consider to be the main learning outcomes of a SA experience?

Primary culture shocks (Spanish culture → UAM → Classes)

- How would you compare the Spanish higher education system to the U.S. system?
- How would you compare the teaching style at the *grado* level at the UAM to the US?
 1. The format of the classes, assessment, workload, teacher/student relationships
- Would you consider all *grado* classes to be of the same difficulty for your students?

1. How does your program distinguish between types of courses?
 2. Do you recommend certain *grado* courses?
 3. Are there restrictions on which *grado* courses they can take?
- Upon arrival to Spain, what would you consider the main culture shocks for your students?
 1. As far as Spanish culture? UAM? Courses?
 - What do you think are the primary reasons that your students choose more XXXX courses than UAM courses?
 - FOR GW/TUFTS: I've noticed that the originally more of your students were enrolled in *grado* courses and eventually did not take them. Do you know the reason behind this?
 1. Timetable, accreditation, Spanish, classroom culture, GPA?

Adaptation strategies

- For the students who do take *grado* courses, what have they said about their experience in the Spanish classroom?
- What have been their main difficulties?
- How have they overcome these difficulties?
- What have been the perceived benefits of your students being in an UAM class?
- Overall would how would you say they rate the experience? Pos/Neg/Mixed

Interactions (Americans, locals, internationals)

- With whom do you think your students interact most with while in Spain?
 1. American/International/Spanish?
 2. Why do you think this is?
- How/where do you think they meet local Spanish people?
 1. Homestay, through friends of friends, UAM, ESN, etc?
- What do you perceive as facilitators and/or barriers for them to meet local people?

Closing – Learning

- What do you consider are the major learning benefits for American students who study abroad?
 1. How do you believe these learning benefits are best achieved?
 2. How do you see the role of your university in facilitating student learning?
- How do you see your role in helping them meet **their** expectations?
- Do you see it as part of the program's role to encourage interaction with locals?
 1. What parts of the program encourage this interaction?
- Is there anything else you would like to add regarding your students' experiences studying at the UAM?

Annex III: Chat conventions

Transcription	Chat conventions	Example
Acronyms	_	U_S
Assimilations	[: word]	gonna [: going to]
Best Guess	[?]	phrase [?]
Context	[=text]	[=a faculty]
Emphasis/loudness	<word>[!]	<omg>[!]
Errors	*	been*
Facial Gesture	%fac:	%fac: raising eyebrows
Filled pause	&-	&-um, &-yah know
Gestures	@=ges:	@=ges:goodbye
Imitation	@=imit:	@=imit:motor
Interposed word	&*	&*yeah - &*mhm
Interruption	+/.	+/.
Interruption of question	+/?	+/?
Latching	+... ME ++	So I was like +... ME ++ omg
Numbers	Written out without hypen	Forty five
Omitted word	Oword	Onot
Overlaps	<word> [>] line break <word> [<]	words in bracket then open and shut
Pause long	(.), (..), (...), (time)	(.)(3.5)
Pause between syllables	^	ca^tch
Prolonging a sound	-:	here-:
Prolonging a sound	:	he:y
Quotations	"word"	"he was like"
Reformulation	<words> [///]	did he [///] how did you
Repeated segment	←p	like←plike
Repetitions (Multiple)	[x#]	so [x4]
Repetitions (Phrases)	<words> [/]	<I think> [/] I think
Repetitions (Word)	word [/]	and [/] and
Shortening	()	(a)bout
Sounds	&=	&=coughs, &=laughs
Spanish	[-spa] or [-eng]	[-spa] or [-eng]
Speaking modes	&=	&=sarcastic
Titles	Written out	Mister
Trailing off	+...	+...
Trailing off in a question	+..?	+..?
Translations	%English:	put a line below
Code Switching	@s	so @s bueno
Unclear utterance	xxx	xxx
Voice falling	↓	↓?
Voice rising up	↑	↑?

Annex IV: Code groups & categories

Code Groups	Categories	Grounded
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: Sp Uni - Students: Rude	74
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: SP Uni - Int: ORI	70
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: SP Uni - Students: Compañerismo	60
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: SP Uni - Int: By #s	58
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: SP Uni - Int: Programs	49
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: Sp Uni: HE: Campus	45
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: Sp Uni: HE: Ambiente	34
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: SP Uni - Int: UAM plan	32
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: Sp Uni: HE: Degrees	32
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: Sp Uni: Relationship St/Pr	26
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: SP Uni - Int: Neg	25
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: Sp Uni - Students: Importance School	16
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: SP Uni - Students: Grupitos	15
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: SP Uni - Students: Whatsapp	11
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: Sp Uni: HE: Size	10
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: SP Uni - Int: English	8
RQ1: Sp Uni	RQ1: SP Uni - Students: Fatal	4
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni - SA: Bubble	68
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni - SA: C (Cul know)	61
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni: Meth: Style	52
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni - SA: B (Actions)	42
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni - SA: Sede Classes	36
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni: Behave	31
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni: HE: Ambiente	25
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni: Meth: Assignments	25
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni - SA: Direct	23
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni: HE: Degrees	23
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni: HE: Size	20
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni - SA: Description	19
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni: Relationship St/Pr	17
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni - SA: A (Support)	16
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni: Meth: Expectations	16
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni: Meth: Participation	13
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni: HE: Campus	10
RQ1: U.S. Uni Methods	RQ1: U.S. Uni: Meth: Grades	6
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Sp Uni: Meth: Expectations	147
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Bad: Theory	127
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Good: Práctica	122
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Sp Uni: Meth: Lecture	114
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Good: Professor attitude	84
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Sp Uni: Meth: Mix/Changing	77

RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Bad: Prof attitude	61
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Sp Uni: Meth: Assignments	60
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Good: Theory	45
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Sp Uni: Meth: Discussion	45
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Good: Evaluation	38
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Bad: Stud attitude	30
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Challenges: Stud - passive	29
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Good: Critical Thinking	28
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Bad: Evaluation	26
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Good: Student attitude	26
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Good: Organization	22
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Challenges: UAM - size	19
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Bad: Práctica	13
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Challenges: Stud - hw	12
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Challenges: Stud - disruption	10
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Bad: Organization	9
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Challenges: Prof - old style	9
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Sp Uni: Meth: Grading	9
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Bad: Critical thinking	8
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Challenges: UAM - resources	7
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Challenges: Stud - don't come	6
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Challenges: Stud - unknown	5
RQ2: Sp Uni Methods	RQ2: Challenges: UAM - old	5
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Professor	352
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Sit - Breaks: Clarify assign/dates	38
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Sit - 1st: Present	24
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Sit - Breaks: Questions	18
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Desc - Behavior - Prof: Same	16
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Sit - During: Participate	16
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Desc - Attitude - Prof: Doesn't care	15
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Desc - Attitude - Prof: Nice	15
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Sit - During: Reference	15
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Sit - Breaks: Subject	14
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Sit - During: Int perspective	14
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Desc - Behavior - Prof: Helpful	13
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Desc - Behavior - Student: Pos (Read/Part/Analyse)	13
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Sit - Breaks: Check in	13
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Sit - Tutorias: Expectations	13
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Desc - Behavior - Prof: Accomodating	10
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Sit - 1st: Identify/Help	10
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Sit - During: English	10
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Desc - Com - Prof: Informal	9
RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - No contact: Scared	9

RQ3: Professors	RQ3: Prof - Sit - Breaks: Missing class	9
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