

**A design to promote intercultural competence in the classroom based on students'  
intercultural experiences**



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**Santander de Quilichao**

**2023**

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**2023**

**APPROVAL**  
**UNIVERSIDAD DEL CAUCA**

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**A design to promote the intercultural competence in the classroom based on students' intercultural experiences**

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Oral defense location and date: Santander de Quilichao, Cauca. Month XX, 2023

**DEDICATED TO**

**Our mothers, Claudia Ceron and Dora Hernandez who have been our inspiration in  
our lives.**

**Our families for being present when we need them**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

*Firstly, we want to thank God for bringing us here, culminating one of our biggest dreams of becoming teachers, and giving us great virtues and health. In the same way, for the strength to overcome all obstacles to move forward.*

*To our mothers, Claudia Ceron and Dora Hernandez, for their unconditional support to achieve our dreams and hopes, for educating us with good values, and for becoming responsible and persevering people in every step we have taken throughout our professional career and life.*

*To our family for their help, support, and unconditional love.*

*To our teachers because they were an essential guide in our education and character development as teachers.*

*To our tutor, Cristian Salazar, who has guided us throughout our career and in the same way to carry out this project, which left us with a lot of learning and satisfactory results. Thanks for supporting us and for those words of encouragement, for they have been a motivation and example to follow.*

*To our classmates who participated in this project.*

## Resumen

Este trabajo presenta una propuesta de diseño de actividades relacionadas al desarrollo de la competencia intercultural desde los semestres iniciales del programa de Lenguas Modernas inglés y francés. De esta manera, se llevó a cabo una entrevista, donde se recopilaron relatos sobre las diferencias, choques y experiencias culturales vividos por siete estudiantes del programa en el exterior. Lo anterior, para luego elaborar y poner en práctica un diseño de actividades que promuevan la reflexión sobre ciertas situaciones que pueden ser problemáticas para los estudiantes en distintos contextos culturales.

Para la implementación del diseño, se trabajó con una muestra de 47 estudiantes entre el primer y segundo semestre para probar la fiabilidad y efectividad de algunas de las actividades propuestas. Los resultados indicaron que el programa debería promover actividades interculturales más significativas para aprender inglés desde un punto de vista contextualizado y alentar a los estudiantes a convertirse en mediadores interculturales. En este mismo orden de ideas, los resultados tuvieron un impacto positivo puesto que los estudiantes expresaron que implementarían el diseño en su práctica docente.

**Palabras clave:** Competencia cultural, choques culturales, diseño, actividades, cultura, idiomas, estudiantes, reflexión, Programa de lenguas Modernas, desarrollo de la competencia intercultural.

### **Abstract**

This work presents a proposal for the design of activities related to developing intercultural competence from the initial semesters of the Modern Languages program, English and French. In this way, an interview was conducted, where stories about the differences, shocks, and cultural experiences lived by seven students abroad were compiled. The above was to develop and put into practice a design of activities that promote reflection on specific situations that can be problematic for students in different cultural contexts.

To implement the design, 47 students between the first and second semesters were part of the development to test the reliability and effectiveness of some of the proposed activities. The results indicated that the program should promote more meaningful intercultural activities to learn English from a contextualized point of view and encourage students to become intercultural mediators. The results positively impacted students since they expressed that they would implement the design in their teaching practice.

**Keywords:** Cultural competence, culture shocks, design, activities, culture, languages, students, reflection, Modern Languages Program, development of intercultural competence.

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## Introduction

Currently, the number of migrants around the world has increased over recent years. Consequently, there has been certain closeness between different cultures and ethnic groups. According to the 2019 official study, the International Organization for Migration (2019), reported a wide range of international migrations. In the middle of the year, 272 million people migrated, meaning 3.5% population worldwide. It states that the world is increasingly exposed to interculturality, given the coexistence of various cultures in a shared context. Therefore, it is appropriate to acknowledge how to best coexist with the apparent linguistic and cultural disparities. Then, intercultural competence plays a crucial role, as when it comes to learning a foreign language, culture, and language have an inherent relationship.

By coinciding in the same context, people tend to gain experience regarding the respectful perception and understanding of diverse cultural communities, which is relevant when just acquiring a new language. However, such insight brings many challenges, rules, knowledge, perspectives, notions, and opportunities in labor, academic or social fields. Therefore, when studying a second language, it is essential to know both the linguistic and cultural background, recognize it and overcome any misconceptions that may occur throughout the educational process.

Intercultural education conforms to a set of values to understand cultural differences. Intercultural competence has become a serious matter when learning a language due to the current internationalization of the global markets. Therefore, educational institutions should have in their content the development of intercultural competence for citizens who, although they can recognize the cultural references of a community, at the same time are capable of learning and valuing that diversity, along with the linguistic rules. “Therefore, teachers must exploit this

potential and promote the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence” (Paricio, 2014, p. 216). That is why language and culture cannot be taught separately but must form a duality that teachers must transmit to learn the language effectively.

This qualitative research seeks to use a didactic design oriented to promote the development of intercultural competence to complement the educational process in the Bachelor of Modern Languages program in Santander de Quilichao. The plan contains real stories of students who had experiences abroad and faced different ways of perceiving society, its beliefs, traditions, etc. The didactic design proposes to become a support resource for students, with intercultural awareness, in the process of training in English/French in the Bachelor of Modern Languages program at the University of Cauca.

## CHAPTER I

### Problem Statement

In the Modern Languages program at the University of Cauca, Santander de Quilichao, under the Educational Project of the Program (PEP) guidelines, implemented some reforms to strengthen the teacher education of students from the beginning of their academic careers. However, it was evident that the subject of intercultural communication was not one of the main focuses of this modification due to the reduction in the hours of study in the new curriculum. In this sense, it is essential to mention that culture and language are two intrinsically related concepts; educators cannot just teach a language without considering culture. Kramsch (1998), a renowned writer and language teacher, describes the relationship between language and culture as follows:

Language is a system of signs that is seen as having itself a cultural value. Speakers identify themselves and others through the use of language; they view their language as a symbol of their social identity. The prohibition of its use is often perceived by its speakers as a rejection of their social group and their culture. Thus, we can say that language symbolizes cultural reality (p. 3).

Although the new reform to the curriculum brings certain benefits and a current vision of the program, the fresh perspective of the intercultural dimension in the PEP guidelines represents a setback. This new reform reduced the hourly intensity in the classroom for intercultural competence from 8 hours a week to 4. As a result, students in the last semesters, eighth and ninth, only study this subject at this point in their careers. Sagredo (2005; 2008), describes the critical connection between learning a language and the inclusion of cultural aspects since the latter alludes to the historical and pragmatic course of its native speakers, causing significant



changes in the evolution of a language. Consequently, linguistic and communicative skills must work along with the intercultural vision to correctly apply their use; it is not enough to know the theoretical and grammatical aspects.

A survey was carried out to establish a study to determine if the students were interculturally competent when facing possible cultural shocks abroad before completing their studies. Additionally, this survey proved that the subject of intercultural communication in English and French (1 and 2) didn't provide an adequate theoretical-practical basis for intercultural interactions focused on acceptance, understanding, and integration into an environment culturally different from their own. For that reason, the results were taken as a basis for this research, which indicated that the development of this competence is not equivalent to two semesters of the program, but language teaching is connected to an intercultural vision.

Culture is a dynamic process, meaning cultural processes are always in constant change; therefore, it is essential to mention that this competence is not an apprenticeship of only one or two semesters; it has to be part of the constant training of the students and their academic autonomy to keep up to date during the career and at the time of exercising it.

Kramersch (1998), Byram (2009; 2012), Sercu (2005), and Balboni (2006; 2015), among other authors, have highlighted the relevance of teaching these two aspects comprehensively; they agree that to achieve a process of acquiring a second language is relevant to do so from a deeper understanding of their culture, to improve communicative competence, starting from the development of intercultural competence.

The current project promotes the development of intercultural pedagogical activities that facilitate language learning. Research studies were directed mainly by the writers, researchers, and professors Claire Kramersch and Michael Byram. Also, this project counts on a survey of the

students regarding the development of intercultural competence in the program. This communicative ability encourages interactions by understanding cultural differences and their importance in learning a language from an educational context. Students can develop types of interactions in different social settings. However, the classroom is a fundamental instrument and of great help so that they can perform better in other intercultural scenarios. Also, students could practice outside the school and open up to cultural exchanges in other countries or with people who have traveled abroad.

Similarly, the classroom should use an indirect immersion context. For instance, this research developed a design with didactic activities to promote cultural immersion within the program and, from there, understand and practice it. This set of activities is based on some program students who shared their intercultural experiences to elaborate this design.

### **Rationale**

Intercultural competence is the ability of people to interact with other cultures appropriately and, in this way, adapt to them. It is also the ability to function in eminently intercultural environments. For Byram et al. (2002a), the intercultural dimension in teaching practice is seen as:

So, language teaching with an intercultural dimension continues to help learners acquire the linguistic competence needed to communicate in speaking or writing and formulate what they want to say/write correctly and appropriately. But it also develops their intercultural competence, i.e., their ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities and interact as complex human beings with multiple identities and individuality (p. 9).

The students, in this case, of French and English, are taught to be knowledgeable about grammar, in general terms, the culture, and the linguistic skills involved in learning these languages: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Then, they are prepared to be competent in them, and to be able to interact in scenarios belonging to these languages. At the same time, they can transmit this knowledge when teaching. However, as already mentioned, when it comes to the ability to act in eminently intercultural situations, specific strategies are needed for adequate reasoning of one's culture and that of another.

We surveyed ten students who have had experiences abroad to analyze how students acknowledge intercultural aspects. The survey examines whether the concepts and elements learned about the development of this competence were functional or not, in an eminently intercultural environment, from the respondents' point of view. So, the questions were open-minded and simple-answer for students who have traveled and experienced interculturality firsthand. Thus, it is proposed to establish if the respondents used the elements of the intercultural communication subject and if they consider whether it is essential to deepen their academic training or not.

The results proved that the students surveyed believe it is necessary to implement practical aspects in teaching English, from a cultural perspective, not only as one more subject but along as learning the foreign language from the grammatical and phonetic concepts. The survey showed that 100% of the students have had cultural shocks and have felt frustrated when they find themselves in another country. Although this is precisely part of facing a foreign culture, there was a lack of understanding, acceptance of other realities, and the ability to set limits. These concepts should be deepened throughout our educational process. Most of them had already seen the matter of intercultural competence before traveling. The impression of a foreign

culture and its particularities should have been better conceived and understood more consciously.

According to the interview, more than 80% of students agree that it is necessary to implement more intercultural activities from the beginning of the career in the classroom; not only concerning cultural events, festivals, or typical foods but also the deep analysis and critical posture against the behaviors, beliefs, prejudices or values that may exist in another culture. On the other hand, respondents felt comfortable interacting with native speakers even though more than 50% of the students had problems speaking and understanding the language due to dialect variants and cultural variations.

Therefore, learning a language does not only imply knowing its rules by heart; it is also experiencing it, understanding it from an objective perspective, and putting it in context; Otherwise, it can bring difficulties to the students once they are directly immersed in the culture of the language learned since when trying to communicate, students will find differences that can lead to a vague interaction or a misunderstanding of the message. To think and act from an intercultural dimension goes beyond recognizing culture as part of the curriculum, knowing traditional celebrations, or only recognizing its presence in languages.

In the practice of the linguistic knowledge acquired throughout the degree, whether by teaching the language or traveling abroad, some cultural clashes can occur that can be avoided by taking into account intercultural competence as a basis. As proposed by Byram (2002b), the purpose of this intercultural process is for students to become intercultural mediators to learn to respect, serve as representatives of their own culture, and obtain successful communication.

“Popular creation, art, and social action are transmitted along with language. Therefore, some

socio-cultural factors must be incorporated into the language teaching-learning process”  
(Sagredo, 2005, p. 1).

As future foreign language teachers, it is necessary to bear in mind that, for there to be successful communication, it is not enough just to understand and produce the words, but also to do everything possible so that the students understand the cultural context, the awareness of the one’s own culture compared to that of others, cultural and individual identity, among other concepts to be discussed.

### **Problem question**

How to promote the development of intercultural competence through a didactic design based on intercultural experiences to complement the academic training of students of the Bachelor of Modern Languages at the University of Cauca?

### **Objectives**

#### **General objective**

To develop a didactic design to promote intercultural competence in English based on experiences abroad of the students of the Bachelor of Modern Languages program of the Universidad del Cauca, North Campus, in Santander de Quilichao.

#### **Specific objectives**

- To identify the perception of a group of students from the Bachelor of Modern Languages program at the University of Cauca who have traveled abroad regarding intercultural competence.
- To organize the intercultural experiences of the group of students of the Bachelor of Modern Languages program abroad to collect those expectations, experiences, and difficulties that arose throughout their stay.

- To structure a series of didactic activities taking into account the experiences of students abroad, together with the theoretical and curricular documentation of the program, to strengthen the formation of intercultural competence in it.

## CHAPTER II

### REFERENTIAL FRAMEWORK

#### Background

This section presents previous studies and research on intercultural competence nationally and internationally. In the compilation process, documentation of an international nature was evidenced rather than a national one. Therefore, this project will be mainly based on foreign investigations that will provide a relevant perspective to the issues addressed throughout the document.

The different investigative backgrounds hereunder that contributed to the development of this project are presented, starting from the national level:

Cano et al. (2016), in their study at the Universidad del Norte in Barranquilla, Colombia, refer to the importance of cultural education in students. Recognizing another culture is the key to intercultural education. They argue that it is not only about examining one's own, but it is also necessary to explore and live a more diverse life by promoting intercultural exchange through teaching-learning methods and materials.

Sercu et al. (2004), in their study *of teaching of culture in the learning of foreign languages. EFL teachers in Spain as cultural mediators* focus mainly on the development of intercultural competence in students who are learning a second language and, like this work, propose a guide for teaching English.

One of its main focuses is to contribute through the integral growth of the individual based on the experiences of different language teachers worldwide. Therefore, this investigation proposes a reflection concerning the professional development of teachers and how they emphasize their foreign language classes, keeping in mind the role of culture, social aspects, how this information is transmitted, and how it can be improved. One of these approaches was about the skills and competencies traditionally studied in language learning, meaning the ability of students to reflect on the multiple facets involved in the identity of the individual and thus to know the other better and to know oneself better.

Intercultural education must be one of the main objectives; since there is some resistance in many teachers about the relevance of this aspect, many perceive it as giving general or partial knowledge of the cultural context of the language in question. However, the aim is to integrate intercultural competence properly; that is, a second language student can face any social, linguistic, and cultural exchange.

The educational counselor, María Silvina Paricio Tato (2012) in Coruña, Spain, investigated the intercultural competence in the teaching of foreign languages, in which she specified the importance of developing intercultural competence in the training of foreign language students. She also studied the importance of this subject throughout history, its beginnings, and advances. As in the present work, this document aims to give different guidelines to teachers to enhance the development of this subject. Simultaneously, it clarifies the significance of the intercultural dimension for the application in the comprehensive teaching of language and culture.

Laura González Fernández, in 2018, researched the development of intercultural competence in the teaching of English as a second foreign language for translation and

interpretation. In a methodological research proposal, a diachronic perspective about the intercultural dimension in teaching foreign languages is evidenced. Furthermore, it provides an overall performance of the theories of the study of this subject. It is worth mentioning that the document is prepared with a methodological approach for translation and understanding in the foreign language. Likewise, it is intended to develop intercultural methodological activities to support the development of this competence in the classroom. Therefore, it is pertinent to consider the guidelines and concepts addressed in this work for the evolution of our design of intercultural material.

Byram et al (2002), elaborated a study about developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching, with a practical introduction for teachers. Different important concepts are worked on, giving a practical guide for applying the intercultural dimension for teachers. It is based on the author's own experiences concerning the problems and frequent doubts that educators face when exercising interculturality in the classroom. In addition, they propose intercultural communicative competence. This document presents concepts such as intercultural awareness, intercultural skills, and existential competence, which complete the development in terms of why and how students can cultivate these skills.

### **Conceptual framework**

Interculturality is linked to various critical concepts for its application in the educational field. However, only some were relevant to the issues addressed in this project that seeks to prioritize interculturality in the program. The Bachelor of Modern Languages is an academic program that prepares students as future language teachers; as Sercu (2005), explains, when students are put in contact with a foreign language, a series of knowledge and visions of the world are shared, different from their conceptions, which is why these differences should be



taken advantage of so that teachers can promote the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence along with the languages, which proposed that the development process of this dimension be from the initial semesters.

Therefore, for the application of this work, the following concepts were contemplated:

### ***Interculturality***

It is the primary approach developed in this document. Learning and teaching are the fundamental basis for studying a new language and new culture, recognizing others, and being aware of society's cultural diversity. It alludes to the presence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures -also, the possibility of generating shared artistic expressions acquired through dialogue and an attitude of mutual respect. According to Byram (2002), "intercultural communication is communication-based on respect for people and equal human rights as a democratic basis for social interaction" (p. 9).

### ***Culture***

It is a fundamental part of intercultural competence. It is a set of behaviors, values, ideas, beliefs, religions, ideals, and traditions that are part of a country, community, or social group. Therefore, it is a concept involving different social components relevant to learning a foreign language. For Kramsch (1998):

One way to think about culture is to contrast it with nature. Nature refers to what is born and grows organically (from the Latin *nascere*: to be born). Culture refers to what has been cultivated (from the Latin *colere*: to develop). The word culture evokes the traditional nature/nurture debate: are human beings primarily what nature determines them to be from birth, or what culture allows them to become through socialization and schooling? (p. 4).

### ***Intercultural competence***

First, intercultural competence was seen as part of language teaching and its relationship with it, starting in the 1970s, since this learning process was based on a more linguistic and grammatical perspective rather than a cultural one. Byram et al. (2001), explain that this neglect in the application of intercultural awareness is because, previously, linguistics and its educational methods represented a fundamental role, thus eluding culture as part of language learning training.

Intercultural competence is vital in learning a foreign language since it is key to mediating intercultural interactions, their differences and similarities, having successful intercultural relationships, and avoiding stereotypes, ethnocentrism, contempt, and judgments toward what is different. The student can assimilate, understand, and, sometimes, even accept the differences, not only grammatical and phonetic, of a language but also cultural diversity. Throughout the studies of professors Byram (2009), Kramsch (1998), and Sercu (2005), among other authors, strategies, advice, and a broad definition of intercultural concepts for learning a new language have been proposed. To understand each one of them, it is crucial to recognize the meaning of intercultural competence, according to Byram (2002): “ability to ensure shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their individuality” (p. 10).

### ***Strategy***

It is how decisions are made to reach a particular goal with a specific objective; in this case, said objective would be in the educational field, specifically in learning a foreign language. The strategy is like a bridge in charge of connecting the actions and the objectives. In short, it is

a plan to implement those actions and goals and, thus, achieve the main objective to obtain a successful result.

When it comes to learning strategy, it refers to the pedagogical models that are followed and how knowledge is acquired to be significant and beneficial for the students; it is the process through which an organization formulates objectives and how they are directed to achieve its goal (Halten, 1987, cited by Castillo, 2012).

### ***Pedagogical strategies***

Orozco (2016, cited by Toala et al., s.f.) states that strategies are the system of activities (actions and operations) that allow the completion of a task with the required quality due to flexibility and adaptability to existing conditions. The strategies are the system of actions and operations, both physical and mental, that facilitate the confrontation (interactivity) of the learning subject with the object of knowledge and the relationship of help and cooperation with other colleagues during the learning process (interaction) to perform a task with the required quality.

Based on the above, one of the primary purposes of the pedagogical strategy is for students to interact in proposed activities based on this. It is important to highlight that the process focuses on a problem. The idea is for students to investigate the topic, try to come up with possible solutions, and develop their knowledge.

### ***Learning strategies***

They are a guide to achieving the objectives proposed in learning development. Depending on their use and purpose, these strategies may vary in how they include activities, techniques, or methodologies. In the present investigation, the primary purpose of these strategies is to learn and solve academic problems, especially in learning a foreign language,

which is intended to guide students so that they learn in a motivational, affective, and effective way.

The strategy used for students must be consistent with their training process and the curriculum of the university in which they study. According to Weinstein and Mayer (1986), learning strategies can be defined as behaviors and thoughts that a learner uses during the learning process to influence its encoding process.

### ***Didactic Design***

By what West et al. (1991), express, it is a plan, sketch, or scheme that serves to project or plan ideas, actions, and objects, in such a way that the project is oriented to the development of practice. It is equivalent to the plan in architecture and can contain a specific type of structure of ideas or actions. However, there are different ways to make a design. For this reason, the pattern is used as a guide for the teaching design. It helps see things more clearly during the design process while making it easier to pay attention to detail.

This approach will be carried out based on different ideas and playful activities, which will be developed all over the research work, leading them into practice in the educational field, specifically in the learning of the English language, through intercultural competence and skills.

## CHAPTER III

### Methodology

#### Qualitative Methodology

Within this research, the study of the different investigative approaches was taken into account according to the parameters and characteristics of the renowned researcher Roberto Hernández Sampieri. In accordance with the project's objective and its peculiarities, the pertinent approach is the qualitative approach and the singularities it represents for the investigation; as it provides coherence to the process, understanding, and data collection for the development of the content.

The qualitative methodology is based on the behavior of people concerning a specific topic, their relationship with the environment, experiences, and knowledge in common, which - sometimes- are beyond our understanding and control. The main objective is to precisely work with people through an interview to execute the didactic design with proper interpretations. Taylor and Bodgan (1987) define qualitative methodology as research that produces descriptive data: people's words, spoken or written, and observable behavior.

The main objective is to develop a series of activities that promote intercultural awareness in the Bachelor of Modern Languages program at the University of Cauca, based on the intercultural experiences of some program students; the obtained information served as a guide for intercultural design. Furthermore, the action research method is used to recognize, explain and understand the phenomenon of the study in detail to analyze it and use the data collection results to elaborate the didactic design.

According to Lewin (1946, cited by López, 2012), the Action Research (A-R) design is a form of self-reflective questioning carried out by the participants on certain occasions to improve

the rationality and justice of situations of the educational and social practice itself. Also, “it enhances knowledge of said practice and the conditions in which the action is carried out” (p. 6).

The purpose of the application of this design is to collect a series of intercultural experiences from students, where the cultural impacts and their resolution of problems are evidenced throughout the stories analyzed in the investigation. Therefore, as already mentioned, a series of intercultural didactic activities are provided as a helpful guide for the university community. Thus, applying the A-R design is proper for developing this project since it is consistent with the process and objectives of this work.

According to Stringer (1999, cited by Salgado-Levano, 2006), this type of design consists of the development of three phases that help understand and organize ideas, to obtain practical results that resolve the phenomenon in the course of the investigation. The three phases are: observe, think and act. Consequently, in the first place, it seeks to examine the interviewees, their behaviors, responses, and experiences regarding their intercultural exchanges. Secondly, it is intended to reflect on the results obtained about cultural misunderstandings to generate ideas and establish the design of activities. Finally, it seeks to accomplish the proposal of intercultural didactic activities.

The didactic design refers, according to Alves (1962, cited by Abreu et al., 2017), to the “systematic set of principles, norms, resources and specific procedures that every teacher must be aware of and know how to apply to safely guide their students, in learning the subjects of the programs, taking into account their educational objectives” (p. 85), in all possible surroundings: knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

### ***Participants and Sample***

Participants are “the set of all the elements we are studying, about which we try to conclude” (Levin and Rubin, 1996, p. 20). This project aims to work with students of the Universidad del Cauca, Santander de Quilichao, from the beginning of their academic training. According to Tamayo and Tamayo (2004), the sample is “the part of the population that is selected to carry out the investigation and constitutes a representative part of it to which the statistical analysis is applied” (p. 94).

In this investigation, non-probabilistic sampling was used, based on a process in which the probability is unknown, according to Sabino and Reyes (cited by Arias-Odó, 1999). The non-probabilistic demonstrator is a technique in which “the researcher selects samples based on subjective judgment, instead of making the selection randomly” (QuestionPro, 2021, para. 1); it is not experimental; it is cause-based, and people can choose to participate or not (sample of voluntary participants).

### **Data collection instruments**

The researchers used specific resources to study the phenomenon to obtain the most relevant information to collect data. In this document, the researchers implemented the following instruments for its development and execution:

1. Informed Consent (see Annex A). The students who participated in the survey, accepted an informed consent to be part of the project.
2. Student survey (see Annex B). This survey is carried out with open questions and straightforward answers to students who traveled and experienced interculturality first-hand. The objective was to determine if they consider themselves interculturally competent when facing a series of cultural shocks abroad.

3. Semi-structured interview (see Annex C). The interview consisted of the different intercultural experiences of the students from the Bachelor's degree modern languages program at the University of Cauca, understand the difficulties and cultural differences they evidenced throughout their stays.

### **Stage I**

In this first phase of the research project, a survey with eleven closed questions and three specific open questions (Annex B) was carried out on ten students. The purpose of the execution of this research resource was to expose the importance of the application of intercultural activities, regarding the development of intercultural competence in the Modern Languages program of the University of Cauca, Santander de Quilichao headquarters, in addition to exposing the point from the point of view of other students who have gone through a similar experience in their training and exchange process.

The results showed that 100% of the respondents consider that more intercultural activities should be carried out, which potentiate a critical and comprehensive vision regarding the differences between cultures. Likewise, the students agree that they have felt a barrier when communicating and that, at some point, they had a cultural shock in their experience abroad. All respondents think it is necessary to implement more cultural knowledge in their learning of another language.

With the above, the results of the survey were satisfactory to carry out this investigation and to be able to establish specific points that must be treated in the intercultural didactic design. Therefore, this first stage indicates the importance in this matter of teaching how to cope with cultural differences. This design aims to help the student become an intercultural mediator, as proposed by Byram (2009; 2012), one of the principal authors of this project.



## **Stage 2**

For this second phase, a semi-structured interview (Annex C) was carried out with the students of the program, who had intercultural experiences abroad. The idea was to exploit the intercultural experience of the participants, developing twelve open questions based on the cultural clashes, differences, and solutions they came up with to overcome the problems. In this order of ideas, discrimination, xenophobia, and depression due to being away from home were also discussed. Depending on the results of this research resource, a didactic design of intercultural activities was developed, in which cultural content, personal experiences of the interviewees, and recreational activities were integrated that allowed students to participate actively, to make them aware of their own culture, that of others and the value of differences.

## **Stage 3**

In this phase, the purpose is to put into practice the didactic design, hand in hand with some students of the Bachelor of Modern Languages in the first semester. In the design, a series of mainly playful activities will be presented and put into practice, in which the students will be the protagonists. The purpose is to study how they develop in purely intercultural scenarios, to later reflect on this fact since one of the objectives of these activities is the critical development of intercultural awareness. The intercultural didactic design will include activities such as:

- Interaction games: students must share about their hometown and the city they would like to visit.
- Role play: students must interact in pairs and do some of the examples shown in the design, pretending to be in a certain situation and socializing about how they would react.

- Debates: the researchers give the topics to be discussed; in this way, the students will be able to debate and share ideas, among other intercultural activities that will be explained in detail throughout the investigation.

#### **Stage 4**

In this last phase, the purpose of the execution of the design is to evaluate the performance of the students against the proposed activities. Therefore, it is intended to test the knowledge learned in the first semester of the program, where a survey is proposed at the end to reflect on some of the activities and establish the research's effectiveness.

#### **Ethical issues**

Following the ethical principles of research and taking awareness of culture and its value as the primary basis, the subjects' individuality, ideologies, identities, and other constitutive elements of it are recognized. The researcher must weigh these aspects in the approach to the problem, the object of study, the methods and techniques to be implemented, the selection of resources, and, in general, all the elements that shape the research (Gonzalez, 2002).

Consequently, this research exposes some aspects addressed in Resolution 8430 of 1993 as a national regulation, which mentions the ethical aspects and criteria to be considered in research conducted with human beings. According to this, the present investigation does not present any risk for the participants or the researcher since no intentional intervention or modification of the individuals' biological, physiological, psychological, or social variables is carried out. Thus, this study will be developed under the following ethical criteria:

1. The research has a social value that will seek to lead to a better understanding of the educational quality of students, based on their reflection and, as a consequence, to improve said perceptions, taking into account their training needs.

2. The scientific validity of the research is established in the previously presented methodological design. Likewise, this is oriented to the production of knowledge about the specific educational scenario in which it will be developed.
3. Although the research participants (students) are selected considering their needs, they will be free to participate in the activities proposed for their development. In the same way, they may withdraw their participation when they consider it pertinent. Throughout the process, the well-being of both the participants and the institution, and the researcher will be sought.
4. The research is carried out only with the authorization of the active students and with the subsequent (verbal) informed consent of each of the participants, if applicable.
5. The information obtained throughout the investigation will be treated by the strict terms of confidentiality and will only be used for this study. Likewise, the products of the techniques to be implemented (survey and interview) must be verified and approved by the participants before being considered for data analysis.
6. The investigation results will be presented to the educational institution and the participants.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH**

### **Interview analysis**

In this research phase, we analyzed the responses of the ten students interviewed. The main elements for developing our design were generally highlighted based on their intercultural experiences. Only information relevant to the investigation is attached to the document to illustrate the students' opinions since they were interviewed for more than half an hour. The points on which all the students agreed in their answers are added. The information has been

outlined to make it more accurate. The analysis was done question by question, attaching the students' responses in abbreviated form.

### **1- What motivated you to leave your comfort zone to travel abroad?**

Students had different personal motivations which inspired them to travel. However, the most common was that most wanted to put their careers into practice and improve their language to obtain unique and professional growth.

“To look for new challenges and face the real world.” - Participant 1

“A teacher encouraged me to do it because I did not feel good about my English pronunciation”- Participant 2

“To look for self-knowledge and a way to grow personally and professionally. Thanks to my studies at the university, I had the opportunity to travel to recognize a culture from another country whose language is the one I will teach eventually.” Participant 4

### **2- At what point did you recognize the other as different from the values you grew up with?**

The students acknowledged recognition when they realized that the culture, the place, and the people were different from what they were used to. They were more aware of the diverse intercultural world in which we live.

The previous statement makes us consider the importance of recognizing our culture to accept a new one.

“I realized that absolutely everything is different from what I've known and learned, with simple facts such as, for example, the greeting in another language being very different. I knew I did not belong in that place. Still, I had to adapt”- Participant 3

“When I noticed how people solve problems.”- Participant 5

**3- What intercultural knowledge do you think you acquired in your experience abroad?**

Most respondents agreed that in their intercultural exchange, they received cultural knowledge such as protocols, cultural norms, empathy, an open mind, and respect toward people with different notions of the world.

“The program should implement new intercultural strategies. We need to become teachers capable of transmitting not only the language but also managing in the context, interpersonal skills, not taking anything personally, and learning humor. That is the knowledge I acquired during my stay.” - Participant 1

“The relationship of power distance, issues such as individualism and collectivism, Latin people do not have that marked as much.”- Participant 3

“To be more aware of how to solve my problems through dialogue and respect”-  
Participant 4

**4-According to your experience, do you believe that intercultural exchanges play a fundamental role in professional development as a teacher of foreign languages?**

The participants felt that intercultural exchanges are crucial in professional development. Especially for foreign language teachers’ training because it is essential to know about the language they are learning; in the same way, it helps them improve it and teach it correctly to their future students.

“It represents the best of the country and the reality of your country of origin. You start to be an intercultural mediator—empathic regarding sensitive issues. Professor of culture” -

Participant 9

“Yes, because you lost the fear of facing another culture. Undoubtedly, the experience all students have to live. You cannot stay in your comfort zone. In another place, you must speak English” - Participant 1

“It is essential to experience firsthand because a language is not learned only in a notebook; many things of grammar have better learning when it is context-based.”- Participant 2

“I consider an exchange helps in professional development as a teacher since it raises awareness, helps us improve the language, and invites our future students to explore a new culture.” - Participant 5

**5-According to your personal experience, could you describe any occasion that you can consider a culture shock?**

All respondents had different personal experiences, which, according to their criteria, it can classify as cultural shocks. The most frequent and common were dealing directly with another language, speaking it, and fully understanding it in a different environment. Also, they mentioned that it took work to adapt to people's behavior.

Some of those differences were:

” People and their relationship with the body and cultural expressions in the US. Also, they don't care about physical appearance and the perception toward representation of money; they see it as the most important thing on earth.”- Participant 3

“In a conversation between Latinos and only two Americans, one of the Latin women put her hand on the leg of an American guy. He was uncomfortable; he explained that this approach is not allowed with someone who is not close because it looks like harassment, which was a surprise. After all, our culture is very affectionate. I learned that you should be more cautious in similar circumstances.” - Participant 7

“It was a cultural shock for me to see how easy it is to get a gun.”- Participant 2

**6-According to your point of view, what cultural aspects (religion, morality, arts, protocol, law, history, economics, etc.) do you think are essential to know before the exchange abroad?**

For the participants, a common factor they found was that there is a great variety of cultures and religions in other countries. Some mentioned that there are different protocols regarding standards, treatment between people, laws, etc.

“Before coming into direct contact with culture, it is vital to have prior knowledge, as this allows for better coexistence with the people.” - Participant 5

“Knowing a little about everything, religion, culture, and among others”- Participant 1

“Religion because people from my culture tend to be more believers in religious aspects.”

Participant 4

“Morality is very different; our culture is related to religion, and, on the contrary, American culture is not.” Participant 3

**7-What are the aspects of your culture you could represent and share throughout your stay abroad?**

The students expressed their sense of humor, joy, and way of interacting with others with enthusiasm and motivation. Other aspects, such as gastronomy that vary greatly depending on the region, the traditions, and the festivals they celebrate as Colombian people, play a fundamental role in a cultural exchange regarding representing cultures.

“Our joy and enthusiasm and our attitude to face adversity”- Participant 1

“Our Dancing moves, contagious energy, the affection, and the Latin warmth”-

Participant 2

“Waste awareness”- Participant 3

“Colombian gastronomy, the way of thinking, and the joy because it is very much part of our culture to be joyful. Also, our Christmas celebration.”- Participant 4

**8- During your stay abroad, did you have a negative experience as a Colombian, or on the contrary, did you have a positive experience that marked you?**

Some participants had negative experiences depending on the situations they encountered. Each case is personal and varies a lot.

“During my trip, I had good and bad experiences as a Colombian woman. A bad experience was when I visited a place where we were only women, but most of them had a different sexual orientation than mine. Therefore, they excluded me from many things.”-

Participant 5

“I had a negative experience. Most people assumed that because I’m Colombian, I have done cocaine or even sold it.” - Participant 10

**9-How was your adaptation to this new culture? Easy, hard? why?**

Like any adaptation process, it wasn't challenging for most respondents initially. The adaptation process is complex. Still, when facing the culture and the circumstances, people get used to it, and their experience improves.

“It depends greatly on the personality and how much you’re willing to learn about the people and their behaviors”- Participant 9.

“Both challenging and accessible at first. The adaptation process becomes more manageable and bearable over time. But, of course, it also depends on the person's willingness to learn.” - Participant 10



“It was not easy but not difficult because I was open to meeting new people with new cultures and beliefs. The tricky part is understanding, processing, and respecting them.” - 3

“I had an excellent coexistence, and my adaptation process was fast because I could live in an entirely French environment. I felt like being at school.”- Participant 4

“The adaptation was complex because when I arrived in the new culture, they had their jargon, which I did not know, so I felt outside that social circle.”- Participant 8

### **10-Do you feel comfortable sharing your culture in another country?**

All students felt comfortable sharing their culture because they see it as a way of feeling at home. It reveals a little of what Colombian culture means. Students should reflect on whether they know enough about their own culture.

“They appreciate our customs and culture. Cultural identity plays a vital role”

“Yes, because I like to share my culture, especially the typical food, the preparation, the flavor, and the stereotype of women because people tend to believe they all look the same.”

“Yes, it was very nice because my job was to make Colombian culture known. It feels excellent how students and people are interested and excited to learn about Colombian culture, which was enriching and gratifying.”

### **11-Do you think intercultural communication should only have been part of two semesters of the degree?**

The students agree that extending the hourly intensity of the intercultural communication subject is relevant. They consider it vital to be interculturally competent when learning another language. Learning a language is necessary to know its culture and what it implies.

“I believe these subjects are essential, and the intensity of classes should be longer. It is a significant subject that can guide students in dealing with cultural shocks. It can be of great help that they can be apathetic when learning about a different culture at any moment.”

“Many people do not have the opportunity to travel abroad directly, so it is preferably more knowledge in the career.”- Participant 9

“I believe intercultural communication is the first thing a student should learn about another culture to delve into the language.”- Participant 7

“The subject of intercultural communication should be given throughout the degree in a more didactic way, with examples of possible situations students can experiment abroad.” - Participant 4

**12-What would you improve regarding the content of the program Modern Languages degree at the University of Cauca about developing intercultural competence?**

The students agreed that more intercultural exchanges should be done before graduating. In this sense, future teachers should be prepared to face real contexts and problems. Also, they concluded that the program should provide the necessary tools to be interculturally competent, not take anything personally, respect, understand, and not judge those who are different.

“Reading about other cultures is different from facing them face to face. Hold meetings to understand the realities typical of American culture better so that students can put them into practice in a more didactic way. Basic rules include traffic signs, alcohol regulation, management of coexistence, etc.” - Participant 2

“Expanding knowledge such as doing more activities, more dynamics, identifying more cultural things, and in this way, facing them. Also, learn not to judge things such as that the

greeting is not as important as it is for us or the habit of bathing in the morning...etc.” -

Participant 8

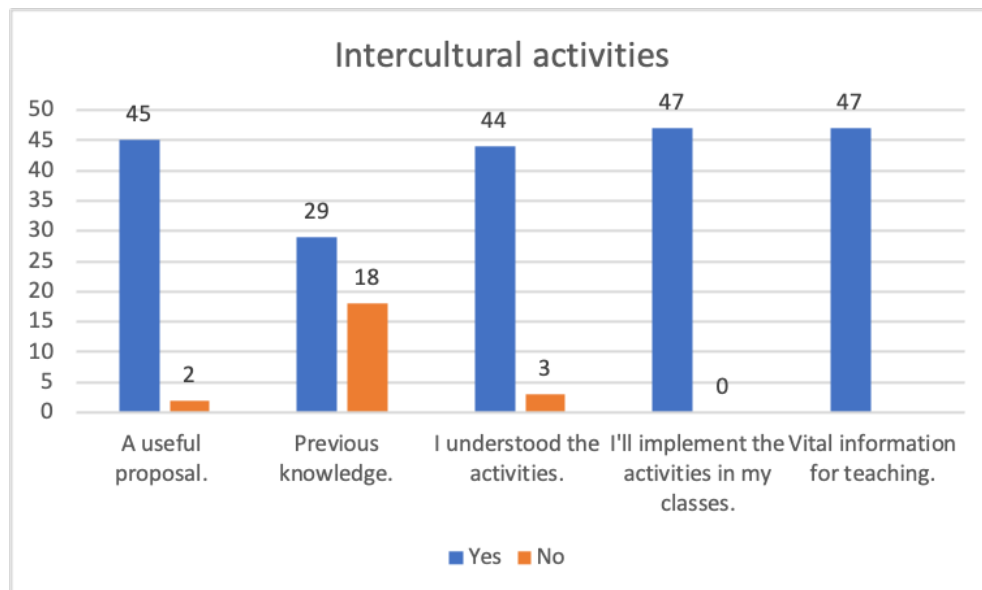
“To get more spaces to share experiences abroad.”- Participant 8

### **The Design Proposal for Intercultural Activities**

As mentioned throughout this project, the interviewees' diverse experiences were considered for developing intercultural activities. These personal records inspired most of the suggestions about cultural shocks and the development of interculturality in the class. This is not only to provide possible solutions to common cultural problems but also to guide students to become interculturally competent, as stated by Byram above.

The following proposals for the intercultural design were made to test the feasibility and accuracy of the investigation. In total, 20 activities were developed, and ten were taken into place with the students of the first and second semesters of the bachelor's degree in modern languages of the Universidad del Cauca, Santander de Quilichao. To carry out the activities, the consent signed by the participants was considered before their application. As a result, there were 47 students, 28 from the first semester and 19 from the second semester, who were actively willing to contribute throughout the activities.

At the end of the sessions, a survey was made in which the students had to express their honest opinions regarding the investigation. This survey consisted of seven items, five closed questions, and two open questions (Annex B) about the performance in content and application. In this order of ideas, the four most important statements of the results were considered and presented in figure 1, Intercultural Activities.

**Figure 1.***Intercultural Activities*

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

Firstly, according to the results presented in the chart, there is evidence of no acknowledgment regarding the intercultural aspects mentioned throughout the investigation. Furthermore, 18 out of 47 students from only the first two semesters of the degree had some prior knowledge about the project themes and activities.

Secondly, it was concluded that the design of cultural activities was fully understood and served its purpose as a guide for students in the conscious performance of cultural issues that can arise in an intercultural context. Lastly, all the participants would implement these proposals in their future teaching work since they consider it transcendental in this field.

As mentioned above, 20 activities were carried out. The following ten are those that were implemented in the first semesters. Most of them were inspired by some of the cultural and linguistic problems evidenced in the student interviews. These proposals are expected to

optimize the acquisition of cultural terms and elements in English-speaking countries and worldwide. The activities could be a tool to practice English from an intercultural point of view.

The proposals for the intercultural didactic design were primarily made in English for its practice. The lexicon and language level of the students were taken into account to have better results in the activities. Additionally, some students' opinions about the content and application are mentioned, along with videos and didactic tools provided to make the dynamic as understandable as possible.

The activities are shown in the order in which they were applied, their objectives, and their development step by step with the students.

### **Beyond the words.**

#### ***Table 1.***

#### *Beyond The words.*

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Development</b>
-To encourage students to study interculturality.	<b>Beyond the words</b>	According to the instructions, students listened to some intercultural statements and expressed whether they related. Afterward, some cultural concepts were explained, which they had to summarize and reflect on by the end of the session.

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*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

### **Description of the activity**

#### **Step 1**

The first semester students were divided into groups of four and five people. There were 18 in total.

#### **Step 2**

It started by saying the intercultural statements below.

When the students identified with these, they were supposed to switch places with their classmates; otherwise, they had to clap once. These actions were meant to determine if they understood the statements and to know how many students related.

- I Respect people belonging to other cultures.

19/19 students changed places.

- I accept any traditional food from any culture, even if I don't like it.

7/19 students changed places and 12/19 students clapped.

- I can get along well if I live with another person regardless of religion, race, or culture.

5/19 students changed places and 14/19 students clapped.

- I feel comfortable in any type of environment different from my own.

7/19 students changed places and 12/19 students clapped.

- I assimilate differences with people very well.

9/19 students changed places and 10/19 students clapped.

- I share traditional customs with people from other cultures in my country.

5/19 students changed places and 14/19 students clapped.

- I feel comfortable surrounded by people with behaviors, beliefs, and traditions different from mine.

6/19 students changed places and 13/19 students clapped.

- I constantly educate myself to be interculturally competent.

4/19 students changed places and 15/19 students clapped

- I love traveling and learning about new cultures.

19/19 students changed places.

These statements were redacted based on some stories shafted by the students from the interview.

### Step 3

Finally, the class reflected on their interculturelity competence and realized they were nor as tolerant as they thought they were.

**Duration:** 30-45 minutes

**Material:** copies of the concepts with meanings, cardboard, tape, and markers.

**Place:** classroom.

**Participants:** students of modern languages second semester

#### *Table 2.*

##### *Concepts.*

Objective	Activity	Development
-To encourage students to learn about cultural concepts.	<b>Concepts</b>	some cultural concepts were explained, which they had to summarize and reflect on by the end of the session.

### **Step 1**

Each group took cardboards with cultural, interculturality, and multiculturalism concepts written on them. Then, they had to write sentences, words, or drawings about what came to their minds from those concepts.

Interculturality refers to the presence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions acquired through dialogue and an attitude of mutual respect. According to Byram (2002), “Intercultural communication is communication-based on respect for individuals and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction” (p. 9).

Culture is a set of behaviors, values, ideas, beliefs, religions, ideals, and traditions that are part of a country, a community, or a social group. Therefore, it is a concept involving different social components relevant to consider in learning a foreign language.

Multiculturalism refers to the coexistence of different cultures in the same social and geographical context. It does not mean that there is an equal relationship between cultures. Instead, they share a context and recognize each other in it.

### **Step 2**

Finally, the researchers explained the concepts. Then, once everything was clear, they distributed some sheets to each group where the students defined the concepts and, in the same way, a sheet with the concepts and the meaning. In this way, there was a clearer understanding of each concept and dialogue with the students.

During the reflection, the students manifested the relevance of interculturality in their education.



**Duration:** 30-45 minutes

**Material:** copies of the concepts with meanings, cardboard, tape, and markers.

**Place:** classroom.

**Participants:** students of modern languages second semester

### Let's chat about differences!

#### *Table 3.*

Let's chat about differences!

Objective	Activity	Development
-To reflect on some cultural behaviors and views towards other countries based on real experiences.	<b>let's chat about differences!</b>	Students discuss cultural behaviors and differences related to intercultural experiences abroad.

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

#### **Description of the activity**

##### **Step 1**

The researchers gave the first-semester students some situations that can occur in a context different from theirs. Then, they made groups of four and five people to discuss the possible solutions or the feelings that could be triggered.

##### **First situation:**

You are in a very conservative town on the outskirts of New York, where there are hardly any migrants. You are walking around the city to get to know it, and you start talking on the phone with a friend in Spanish. Suddenly, a person a few meters from you yells at you: "You're in the US. Speak English!" What do you think about this?

### **Second situation**

The day's meals in the United States and Europe are very different. For example, eating lunch as well as Colombian people do is not customary. In the US, people tend to eat a snack for lunch or have brunch, which is breakfast and lunch in a meal. Would you adapt to this pace of life?

### **The third situation**

Imagine being in a big city in Europe or the USA and getting lost in the subway. You ask some people for help, but they are rude and ignore you. What would be your reaction to this type of behavior?

How would you feel in this situation? Would you understand this behavior?

### **The fourth situation**

Imagine that you and your friend are in a meeting with people from different countries. You feel comfortable in the place until they start talking about Colombia and the perception of our country. Unfortunately, their comments do not go beyond cocaine, violence, cartels, corruption, and Pablo Escobar. What would you do? How would you react? How would you feel? What would you say?

### **Step 2**

Each group discussed the situation to find the most suitable solution.

Once they finished, they shared their conclusions with the rest of the class. For example, for the first one, they concluded that as language teachers, it is essential to learn not to take things personally and improve our patience and tolerance toward ignorance. However, one student stated that he wouldn't control his emotions when these things happened. He said he

would face this person to educate her. Some students considered that it wouldn't be the right thing to do as it could lead to a fight.

Regarding the second situation, the participants agreed that they would try even though adapting would be challenging. However, if they didn't accomplish it, they would try as much to eat as in Colombia to avoid losing weight and keep up with healthy habits.

As for the third situation, students stated they would feel frustrated and angry because Colombian people are friendly and helpful when someone is in need. There were some divided opinions on this situation. Some students said they could figure it out on the phone to avoid problems. Others said they wouldn't take it personally and find a police officer or a map to get back on track. Eventually, the rest mentioned they would get outraged, and if people said anything offensive to them, they would take it seriously and respond.

Finally, the students agreed on the exact solution for the fourth situation. They mentioned the importance of educating people about stereotypes; instead of taking it as an offense, they see it as an opportunity to make people understand our culture and leave aside any prejudice about Colombians. However, even though the students agreed on this solution, some added that they would feel insulted, and if someone made those kinds of comments with an offensive purpose, they would react badly.

### **Step 3**

Lastly, they collectively reflected on the situations concluding that they should work on becoming mentally more robust to face similar circumstances.

**Duration:** 30-45 minutes

**Material:** A Canva presentation

**Place:** classroom.

**Participants:** Students of modern languages first semester

### Let's grab a bite

**Table 4.**

*Let's grab a bite*

Objective	Activity	Development:
<p>-To encourage students to participate in a shared cultural context actively.</p>	<p><b>Let's grab a bite</b></p>	<p>The classroom was divided into groups of 4 or 5 people. According to our instructions, they needed to figure out what to do in a restaurant, from ordering to paying.</p>

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

### Description of the activity

#### Step 1

The topic was introduced with a friend's story who struggled to order food during a date in the US. We mentioned how frustrating that situation was and how we could prevent ourselves from going through the same.

“I had been living on the outskirts of New York for a couple of weeks. One day a friend invited me on a date in the city, and I was very excited. Unfortunately, my friend only spoke English, and I was comfortable doing my best. The problem was that everything changed when the waiter took our order. I panicked because I had no idea how things worked in that place and had never been to any restaurant in the USA before.

I got confused with the courses at the restaurant. I didn't even know what it was. Fortunately, he managed to explain to me and took care of everything. I never forgot the embarrassment.”

### **Step 2**

After the story, the students felt that it could've happened to them and that it would've been embarrassing if they didn't know how to do it. They manifested the importance of comprehension even the most obvious things to avoid misunderstandings.

In this order of ideas, the researchers reviewed some previous knowledge about food vocabulary by playing a game called Mystery box, where the researchers hid different foods such as apples, bananas, spaghetti, beans, kiwi, bread, carrot, and corn. Students had to guess what was inside by touching it, no peeking or anything of the sort.

The students had fun doing this warm-up as it showed them what the activity would be about. They did eight rounds with different foods. Only five students could guess what was inside the box: a banana, an apple, spaghetti, bread, and a kiwi.

### **Step 3**

The researchers divided the students into groups of four or five people after the mystery box game. Then, we gave them a menu and explained how to order and use phrases such as I'd like, I'd have, I'd love, may I have, and can I get. Also, we considered it essential to explain appetizers, entrees, and the main courses in the US. In the end, we provided them with the bill, where they learned how to tip and how the taxes work in the US.

### Step 4

Once they understood the topic, they role played. One of the students was a waiter taking orders, and the rest used the correct expressions for the waiter's questions. Lastly, the researchers gave them receipts where they tipped the service.

### Step 5

We discussed the activity and shared a reflection.

**Duration:** 30-45 minutes

**Material:** A box, random food, audio, a menu, and receipts

**Place:** classroom.

**Participants:** students of modern languages second semester.

### Idioms

*Table 5.*

Idioms

Objective	Activity	Development
- To include students in intercultural interactions and possible everyday situations where students are the main characters.	<b>Idioms</b>	The students got divided into groups of four. They had to interpret a set of idioms. The researchers gave an example describing the action that each one of them represents.

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

## **Description of the activity**

### **Step 1**

A warm-up called "Chinese Wisper" was carried out. In a circle, the students had to say an idiom in the ear of a classmate. "Butterflies in my stomach" was used to play in this first step of the activity.

### **step 2**

We asked if there was prior knowledge of any idioms before introducing them using some slides to help the students understand the illustrations. Then, we distributed two idioms per group and asked them what they could tell from them. The following idioms are the ones we used as examples. Nonetheless, for this activity, the idioms could vary as there is a large vast of them online. It could depend on the ones the teacher wants to explain if related to a specific theme.

- Hit the sack.
- Hit the books.
- Stab someone in the back.
- Go cold turkey.
- Cut to the chase.
- Up in the air.
- On the ball.
- A piece of cake.
- A couch potato.
- Eat like a bird.
- A smart cookie.

- A bad apple.

### Step 3

The idea was for the students to know the meaning of each idiom. Therefore, they could play a Charades game where they had to act out all the idioms, and the rest of the students had to guess which one was. However, the complete activity couldn't be carried out due to the students' different academic responsibilities.

### Step 4

As part of the exercise, the students should socialize on the previous topic as a group, making sentences to put the expressions into context.

**Duration:** 30-45 minutes

**Material:** Slides, board.

**Place:** classroom.

**Participants:** students of modern languages second semester

## My experience abroad

*Table 6.*

My experience abroad

Objective	Activity	Development
- To share some real intercultural experiences along with advice and warnings about what cultural exchanges could imply.	<b>My experience abroad</b>	The main focus is on students who have traveled during their academic training and are interested in sharing their exchange process.



- 
- To encourage students to experience the culture and language firsthand.

The researchers carried out a set of questions, where students freely expressed their personal experiences.

On the other hand, students who haven't traveled but are willing to do it in the future were also asking and constantly contributing to the discussion.

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*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

### **Description of the activity**

#### **Step 1**

The researchers invited ex-intercultural exchange students to talk about their experiences abroad; as examples, we used our own experiences (Researchers). However, the students couldn't attend, but they permitted them to share their experiences and cultural advice with the students.

#### **Step 2**

The researchers, along with other students' intercultural experiences, shared their good and bad personal experiences and aspects such as: what they learned, what they liked, what caught their attention, how they felt, and what they would have wanted to know before the trip, what people are like, etc. Likewise, participants were actively involved in the discussion by asking and giving their opinions about intercultural experiences.

A set of questions were suggested to develop a meaningful activity.

**Questions:**

Why did you decide to travel abroad?

Did you go through an agency or something similar?

What did you like the most about your trip?

What do you think of that culture?

Have you ever been made to feel bad for your country of origin?

Did you have any culture shock?

Do you recommend having an intercultural exchange?

**Step 3**

The researchers talked to the participants about what they thought of the activity carried out and if they found the meeting significant for their plans. Some of them were invested in the conversation and experiences. They were excited about traveling around the world. Some had already planned on traveling in a couple of years; hence they found this information helpful and encouraging to fulfill their goals.

As it is previously stated in this investigation, when it comes to learning languages traveling and meeting people from different cultures is significant in the learning process. Sometimes students need motivation and testimonies to realize that if someone else could do it, why they could not.

This document aims to encourage open spaces where students can get information about people who had the opportunity of traveling.

**Duration:** 30-45 minutes

**Material:** video beam and copies of questions.

**Place:** classroom.

**Participants:** students of modern languages second semester

## Stereotypes

*Table 7.*

Stereotypes

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To be aware of the difference.</li> <li>- To reflect upon stereotypes.</li> <li>- To develop a critical awareness of different cultures.</li> </ul>	<b>Stereotypes</b>	<p>Students were given some cards containing information about different cultures around the world. Those cards worked as tags.</p>

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

### **Description of the activity**

#### **Step 1**

We started this activity by discussing a real-life story about stereotypes and the problems they could bring.

The story was on CNN (Chavez, 2022), news about a woman who lied about being kidnapped and alleged two Latin women had taken her. She stated they fed her with tortillas, listened to Mariachi music, and had their eyebrows tattooed, among other stereotypical beliefs toward the Latino community.

Then, students reflected on this situation stating how unfair certain societies perceive Latin American countries. Sometimes they would assume the worst just because of some stereotypes that aren't realistic on most occasions.

### **Step 2**

The group was divided into groups of 4 or 5 and gave them some tags they had to stick on their backs. Firstly, students had to guess their nationality as they couldn't see their own, but those of their classmates. Students would give each other clues about their countries until they found out all of them. The challenge was to try to do it by avoiding stereotypes.

### **Tags:**

The tags were names of nationalities around the world, such as Danish, Brazilian, Japanese, Peruvian, American, French, Hungarian, Argentinian, Russian, Spanish, Mexican, Swiss, Indian, Italian, British, Ukrainian, Irish, Scottish, Turkish, Chinese, Angolan, Canadian, Cuban, Nigerian, Congolese, and Thai.

At the end of the activity, students reflected upon the situation and how difficult it was to describe a nationality different from theirs by avoiding to offend any culture. Students mentioned the importance of knowing history and being interculturality competent in order to coexist peacefully.

### **How to act towards differences.**

**Table 8.** How to act towards differences.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Development</b>
- To be aware of the differences between cultures.	<b>How to act towards differences.</b>	Students were divided into groups of four and five. They got different nationalities and

- 
- To put into practice what they have learned throughout the activities.
- were given a cultural conflict, which they had to solve respectfully.
- 

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

### **Step 3**

Once they knew their nationality, they had to create a situation where there could be some cultural misunderstanding due to their nationalities and how they would solve it.

### **Step 4**

We reflected on the problems and solutions to conclude the activity. They shared what they considered important about the activity and what they needed to improve regarding the cultures around the world.

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Material:** tags

**Participants:** second-semester students of modern languages.

**Place:** classroom.

### **A collective cultural sharing**

**Table 9.** “A collective cultural sharing”

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Development</b>
- To identify the distinct traditions in the classroom.	<b>A collective cultural sharing.</b>	The role of the student was to participate and expose the culture to which they belonged.
- To be aware of what is essential to know our own		

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culture before learning

another's.

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*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

### **Description of the activity**

#### **Step 1**

To Dialogue in a group about the place of origin of each student, dealing with basic details such as city, capital, climate, population, etc.

#### **Step 2**

Students will be given minutes to explain their backgrounds. They could make slides or posters with more detailed and relevant regional events, such as tourist places, customs, food, dances, etc. The presentation could be in groups if they come from the same places. However, the most relevant information is the answers to these questions:

- What does your culture perceive as an inappropriate action or behavior?
- What traditions in your culture would an outsider consider odd or inappropriate?
- How are punishments implemented according to your traditions?
- How is religion in your culture?

#### **Step 3**

After the collective cultural sharing, the idea is to reflect on those unknown cultural facts that might come up. Therefore, the students should give each other feedback about the presented information, share their opinions, or ask for any unclear information. The main objective is the development of cultural awareness in our country.

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Material:** video beam

**Place:** classroom.

**Book club!**

*Table 10.* Book club!

Objective	Activity	Development
To promote reading skills.	<b>Book club!</b>	The students will know some of the favorite books for people in the United States, which means the more important stories for Americans.

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

**Description of the activity**

**step 1**

The activity will begin with a "warm-up" asking the students which city or state of the USA they would like to visit or which catches their attention. Then, the students will divide into groups of 4 or 5; each group will randomly choose two famous cities in the USA. Finally, they will have to search about t curiosities and relevant items from each city. and share them with their classmates.

**Step 2**

We will distribute a list of the most-read books about American culture to modern language students and some copies of them to motivate reading about a different culture.

**Example of books:**

**4 3 2 1 by Paul Auster**

A cast of characters that appears in tetrads and centers on protagonists who are the same yet different has an odd quality, and those who claim that Auster's mastodon novel, 4 3 2 1, represents a return to realism ignore the inflated tone of the fantastical woven into the fabric of the tale. Although Auster has previously used alternativity, 4 3 2 1 pushes his love of unknowability to a new level. It subverts reader expectations by introducing a constitutive element of heterogeneity to the text's core. It would be absurd to claim that 4 3 2 1 creates a literary method that is consistent with a new kind of twenty-first-century culture by bringing myth and "the mundane" together. (OpenEdition, s.f.).

**Killer on the Road: Violence and the American Interstate by Ginger Strand**

The federal government's construction of the interstate highway system following World War II is the topic of this unusual thriller tale. In fact, these highways drastically altered American culture, eradicating many country roads and small communities as well as giving rise to the dreaded "killer on the road" in place of the amiable hitchhiker. The interstates let criminals flee, while the roads encouraged the development of rest areas and seedy communities that eventually became home to predators. As the events of Killer on the Road unfold into horror, mystery, and victimhood, you're kept on the edge of your seat (Keenan, 2020).

**I'VE BEEN HERE ALL THE WHILE: BLACK FREEDOM ON NATIVE LAND  
BY ALAINA E. ROBERTS**

Since a group of immigrants arrived and simply took over the country without applying for asylum, the United States has had a bit of a geography problem for \*checks notes\* its entire history. This book only covers a small portion of that history because there is a lot of ground to



cover (sorry, I had to). It does so by examining how the "40 acres and a mule" offer made to recently freed slaves intersected with "Indian Territory" and the ongoing conflict between Native and white imperialists over ownership of land, property, and resources. I like this strategy because in the United States, racial and cultural conflict and cooperation are often seen as being between White people and [insert minority group here] (Gómez, 2021).

### **“Beloved” by Toni Morrison**

Beloved depicts the tale of Sethe, a runaway slave who kills her daughter in a similar way to the real-life account of Margaret Garner, an African American enslaved woman who killed her own kid to evade being captured and sold into slavery. This study guide quotes the author's usage of the n-word while obfuscating its use in the text, which deals with physical and psychological trauma (SuperSummary, 2020).

### **Step 3**

The previously mentioned books will be shared to encourage reading for students that want to learn more about American culture. In the same way, we will give a book impression of one of them.

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Material:** a list of the most read books in American culture and copies of some of these books.

**Participants:** students of modern languages.

**Place:** classroom.

## Film Forum

*Table 11.* Film Forum

Objective	Activity	Development
<p>To enrich students' knowledge through cinema, watching famous movies about stereotypes, social problems, and cultures.</p>	<p><b>Film forum</b></p>	<p>Students will be invited to participate in the screening of representative films where they could reflect on the concepts of difference and empathy.</p>

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

### Description of the activity

#### Step 1

The idea is to invite the Students of the Modern Languages program to participate in the broadcast of the Film Forum that is proposed to be presented every two weeks.

#### Step 2

Some questions could be asked about the movies to provide feedback on their thoughts about the activity and the film. They will express whether they find this a helpful activity or whether they can learn about another culture through a movie.

#### Movies:

- Lost in translation- Sofia Coppola
- Un horizonte muy lejano-Ron Howard
- Avalon- Barry Levinson
- Babel-Alejandro G.
- Made in America-Ezra Edelman

- And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him
- Babies-Thomas Balmès

**Questions:**

- Do you consider the plot to be problematic?
- Did you find any cultural shock?
- Is interculturality important in the movie?
- How do you feel about the message of the movie?
- Did you feel uncomfortable at any point along the movie? How come?

**Duration:** 2h and 30 minutes or split into two days, 1 hour and 15 minutes.

**Material:** video beam movie.

**Participants:** students in the second semester of modern languages.

**Place:** classroom.

The following activities and the previous ones are proposed to improve students' intercultural competence. The only difference was that they were not put into practice with the students because every activity needed a specific amount of time from the researchers and the students. They are only a reference for those interested in learning more about the intercultural field of other cultures, particularly American culture.

**Polite expressions tree**

**Table 12.** Polite expressions tree

Objective	Activity	Development
-To learn popular kinds of expressions, including phrases in the English	<b>Polite expressions tree</b>	Students build an expressions tree on the board where the students will choose the one

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language.

that most catches their attention in Spanish and try translating it into English.

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*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

### **Description of the activity**

#### **Step 1.**

To draw on the board a big tree with polite Spanish expressions, where the students have to pick two of them trying to translate them into English.

#### **Step 2**

To divide the classroom into groups of 3 or 4 students, after they translate, they should have to create an example using each expression in context.

#### **Step 3**

After listening in the group, the examples, we will give the correct spelling of each expression. This time in English, they will divide into pieces, which the students must organize and compare with the ones they translated.

#### **Step 4**

We will use the following expressions and examples for the activity ( Alkhalili, 2020):

**“I was wondering if..” (me preguntaba si...)**

Example: “I was wondering if you can come for a diner with me”

**“By any chance” (por casualidad)**

Example: “By any chance you have the money that I lent you?”

**“Do you mind if...” (te importaría si...)**

Example: Do you mind if you clean up the mess your dog left behind?”

**“Sorry to bother you” (lamento molestarte)**

sorry to bother you but I need you move your car of my parking spot

**I’m afraid (me temo que...)**

Example; I am afraid I cannot come today to work because I am not feeling well.

**Duration:** 40 minutes.

**Material:** board and flashcards.

**Participants:** students of modern languages.

**Place:** classroom.

**Interview my favorite famous foreigner**

*Table 13.* Interview my favorite famous foreigner

Objective	Activity	Development
<p>-To know a little more about different cultures through students’ favorite artists.</p>	<p><b>Interview my favorite famous foreigner</b></p>	<p>The activity will be in pairs. Where they will have to choose a famous foreign artist and play the role of a reporter and a prominent person who will be the person interviewed.</p>

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

**Description of the activity****Step 1**

Students will ask to choose a partner to work with as a group. Among them, they will choose a famous person who is from another country and they will have 30 minutes to organize the activity.

### Step 2

In the character interview, they will have to answer questions such as:

Where are you from? What language do you speak? What is the typical food of your region? How would you describe the place where you grew up? What do you like the most about your country? What areas in your country would you recommend visiting?

### Step 3

At the end of the interviews, teachers could ask the students what they thought of the activity and what caught their attention about the characters they interviewed.

**Duration:** 40 minutes.

**Material:** the internet.

**Participants:** students in the second semester of modern languages.

**Place:** computer room with internet connection.

### The color game

*Table 14.* The color game

Objective	Activity	Development
-To make a dynamic activity with intercultural and general knowledge questions.	<b>The color game</b>	The teacher will choose different colors, and each one will have a question.

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

### Description of the activity

#### Step 1

Students should make groups of 4 people.

## Step 2

We will choose five colors with questions related to culture, each group must choose a color, and each member will answer the question.

The questions will be the following:

- What is culture and interculturality for you?
- What are you proud to represent from the region where you were born?
- in a single word, define your country.
- What culture draws your attention? why?
- What would you share in another country of your culture?

## Step 3

At the end of the color activity, the groups must choose another color. This time these colors will have the most representative cities of Colombia, such as Bogota, Medellin, Cali, Cartagena, and Barranquilla.

The students will have 15 minutes to prepare something representing the city. They must keep the city they have a secret because the other groups will guess which one it is. The representation can be acted or drawn.

## Step 4

Finally, the activity and the acquired knowledge will be socialized to know their insight on the topics.

**Duration:** 1h and 30 minutes.

**Material:** color, flashcards, markers, and paper.

**Participants:** Students of modern languages.

**Place:** classroom.

## Where do you think this food is from?

*Table 15.* Where do you think this food is from?

Objective	Activity	Development
-To recognize the traditional food of other countries.	<b>Where do you think this food is from?</b>	Some printed photos of the most representative foods worldwide will be needed. The students will have to guess to which country they belong.

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

### Description of the activity

#### Step 1

Students will observe the printed photos of the kinds of food.

#### Step 2

The photos will paste on the board, and each student should write under each one where they think it belongs.

#### Step 3

We will ask them why they think it belongs to those places, and we will write the correct location and distribute a small piece of writing about why they are famous.

The typical food will be the following (Travinmad, 2020):

Lobster roll (United States)

the bagel (United States)

ceviche (peru)

steak (Argentina)



spaghetti carbonara (Italy)

ratatouille (French)

Fish & chips (England)

### Step 3

The class will discuss if they liked the activity and which food they have already eaten, or which one they would like to try.

**Duration:** 1h.

**Material:** flash cards.

**Participants:** students of modern languages.

**Place:** classroom.

**Do you know where the countries are located?**

**Table 16.**

Do you know where the countries are located?

Objective	Activity	Development
-To know more about the locations of countries to improve students' geographic knowledge.	<b>Do you know where the countries are located?</b>	The teacher will carry a map of the world or show it on a slide. The students will have to locate a list of countries on that map.

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

## **Description of the activity**

### **Step 1**

The teacher will paste a world map without names or a slide on the board. Then, students will randomly choose a paper with the name of a country.

### **Step 2**

Each student will proceed to put each country on the map where they consider they belong in the map.

The countries will be the following:

- France (French)
- United States (English)
- Germany (German)
- Spain (Spanish)
- Italy (Italian)
- United Kingdom (English)
- Russian (Russian)
- Mexico (Spanish)
- Austria (German)
- Switzerland (German, French)
- Thailand (Thai, English)
- Syria (Arabic)
- Greece (Greek)
- Canada (English, French)
- Poland (Polish)

- Ukraine (Ukrainian, Russian)
- Morocco (Arabic)
- Singapore (Mandarin, English)
- Korea (Korean)
- Ireland (English, Irish)
- India (Hindi, English)
- Egypt (Arabic)
- Senegal (French)
- Monaco (French)
- Guinea (French)

### **Step 3**

After all the countries are on the map, the teacher should correct the countries that need to be located correctly.

### **Step 4**

Ultimately, the teacher should ask them why they thought of that option, what official language they speak in each one if they were shocked by the changes in each country, and what they thought of the activity.

**Duration:** 30min.

**Material:** printed map and flashcards.

**Participants:** students of modern languages.

**Place:** classroom.

## My special traveling boxes

**Table 17.**

My special traveling boxes

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Development</b>
- To learn more about the students' goals.		Each student will share their
- To encourage the students to have goals to achieve.	<b>Our special traveling box</b>	dreams and goals especially those of traveling.

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

### Description of the activity

#### Step 1

Students must write their dreams and goals and put them in the box. They can use phrases, photos, words, or whatever they want.

#### Step 2

At the end of the activity, each student will be free to share what they put in the box. The idea is to turn the box into a time capsule to open in the future. This way, it could motivate students to be aware of their goals, help each other accomplish them, and always remember what they are studying for.

**Duration:** 1h.

**Material:** paper boxes, newspaper.

**Participants:** students of modern languages.

**Place:** classroom.

## Let's meet each other!

**Table 18.**

Let's meet each other!

Objective	Activity	Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to demonstrate the diversity in a classroom.</li> <li>- To recognize and respect others as being different.</li> <li>- To get to know each other better.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Let's meet each other!</b></p>	<p>It will be discussed culture, interculturality, diversity, value, and respect.</p>

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

### Description of the activity

#### Step 1

Students should form a circle to discuss what they think about culture, interculturality, diversity, value, and respect.

#### Step 2

In addition, students will answer some personal questions such as:

- Where are you from?
- What is your favorite place in your hometown to visit?
- What do you like most about your culture or the place where you come from?
- In one word or a short phrase, define yourself.
- Which ones are your goals and dreams?
- Which place in the world would you like to visit and why?

### Step 3

The class will discuss what they think about the activity and if they already know some of these personal answers from their classmates.

### Reflection of “a letter from an immigrant” by Carlos Dorado

*Table 19.*

Reflection of “a letter from an immigrant.”

Objective	Activity	Development
- To reflect on a text written by someone who has lived abroad.	<b>letter from an immigrant</b>	Students must read the letter and answer some questions based on it.
- To encourage empathy.		

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

### Description of the activity

#### Step 1

The students will be given the text to read and reflect on it.

#### Step 2

The text will be the following: (original)

Es muy triste dejar la tierra que nos vio nacer, nuestra familia y nuestros amigos! Son decisiones valientes motivadas por lograr un sueño, el cual siempre comienza con una pesadilla, y donde hay que acostumbrarse de nuevo a todo; pero sobre todo a volver a vivir. ¡Es algo así como si tuvieses que morir para volver a vivir!

Comienzas a notar detalles que antes ni siquiera los percibías, y haces comparaciones en todo lo que ves, y ese cielo azul que ni lo notabas, y quizás hasta te aburría, cómo lo

extrañas ahora; mientras que la nostalgia se va poco a poco apoderando de uno ¡Era feliz y no lo sabía, quiero ser feliz y no sé cómo volver a serlo!

Esa nostalgia que termina atrapándola entre las paredes de una casa, que todavía le falta mucho para llegar a ser un hogar. Esa nostalgia que me atormenta de recuerdos, y que me lleva continuamente al pasado, impidiendo ver el presente, y sólo soportable por la esperanza de un futuro.

Esa añoranza o sentimiento de pena que produce la ausencia, la privación de la familia, de un país, de unas costumbres, de unos amigos, de cosas muy queridas. Los recuerdos te persiguen, sin saber cómo ni dónde colocarlos, y son muchas las noches que te quedas viendo la luna, pensativo, a sabiendas de que esa luna que estás observando, es la misma que ve la gente que tuviste que dejar atrás.

Recuerdos que reviven, y ahora se vuelven más nítidos inclusive que en el momento en que ocurrieron, y que se niegan a morir, recordándonos continuamente lo que nos entristece, sin poder borrarlos de nuestra mente.

Y no es una cuestión de que el país donde has ido a parar sea mejor o peor, es que simplemente no es el tuyo, ni tú eres de él. Quizás hasta sea más bonito que el mío, mejores sus costumbres, más culta su gente, más cívica su sociedad...pero no es el mío; y ese proceso donde yo llegue a sentirlo mío, y él me sienta como suyo, quizás sean mis hijos los que lleguen a alcanzarlo, pues yo busqué un futuro en otro país; no otro país.

Habrán recuerdos, personas y lugares, que ni la escoba del tiempo logrará borrar, y a pesar de que los recuerdos son algo así como una pizarra donde tienes que ir borrando unos para poder ir escribiendo otros, esos que te hicieron llorar durante muchas noches, nunca se borrarán porque..... son la pizarra de tu vida.

“Dicen que quien sabe de dolor, todo lo sabe” Los emigrantes llegan a momentos en su vida donde ya no saben qué hacer con tanto dolor, mirándole todos los días a la cara. Sin embargo, será ese dolor el que los enseñará a vivir de nuevo.

“*El futuro será mejor mañana....., el futuro será mejor mañana*”; es esa frase la que nos hace soportar el presente, mientras el futuro termina siendo presente. Hasta que un buen día, te das cuenta de que ya el futuro es pasado y te preguntas: *¿Mereció la pena?* La respuesta te atormenta, te confunde, ya que nunca sabrás si lo que perdiste fue menos de lo que ganaste.

Y algún día, los hijos de tus hijos dirán: “*Creo que mis abuelos eran venezolanos*”, ajenos al dolor con el que esos abuelos construyeron los cimientos para que ellos tuvieran un nuevo país, un futuro; y lo que nunca se llegarán a preguntar es: *¿Lo que hicieron mis abuelos, mereció la pena?* Porque la respuesta ya será muy ajena a ellos.

Para estos nietos, éste será su país, y quizás algunos en un futuro -por curiosidad- vendrán a Venezuela, para ver dónde nacieron sus abuelos, sin llegar a imaginarse, las lágrimas que derramaron cuando se fueron.

Carlos Dorado.

### **Step 3**

Students must answer the following questions:

- What do you think of the text?
- Do you like it?
- Would you feel the same in a similar situation?



#### Step 4

After answering the questions, students should read and share their answers with the other students.

**Duration:** 1h.

**Material:** sheets paper with the letter.

**Participants:** students of modern languages.

**Place:** classroom.

#### My relative who emigrated

*Table 20.*

My relative who emigrated

Objective	Activity	Development
-To know a little about their relatives who have gone through experiences of migration to other places regardless of, whether it has been in the same country.	<b>My relative who emigrated</b>	Students will investigate in their homes if there are family members that have migrated currently or in the past.

*Note:* Authors' elaboration.

#### Description of the activity

##### Step 1

Before starting the activity, the teacher will ask the students to investigate their relatives who migrated to different cities inside or outside the country. They will ask the following questions:

- What was his/her motivation to move?

- Where did he/she move and why?
- Was it easy or difficult to adapt?
- What was the most challenging part of the process?
- Was it a good decision? Would he/she do it again?
- Would he/she recommend emigrating or moving out of his/her comfort zone?

### **Step 2**

After looking for a relative who has emigrated, students will ask them the previous questions and make a short personal conclusion about their feelings about doing this exercise.

### **Step 3**

Students will use the information they collected. The group will discuss the most impacting aspects after interviewing their relatives and what they think about it.

### **Step 4**

At the end of the dialogue, the students will do a small survey to determine if they liked the activity and what they learned from it.

### **Questions**

- Did you like the activity?
- Did you know this about your family?
- Did you learn something about them?
- Was this activity beneficial in your career?

## REFLECTION

From a global point of view, the world is constantly changing. Over the last few years, large waves of migration have caused a particular imbalance in the economic and political spheres. However, this entails big problems at the social level. People generally need to prepare to deal with many ways of thinking in the same context. The world is no longer recognized by places separated from each other. It is a continuous movement of cultures living together in the same area.

In the book *Migration and Culture*, Nuria Zans and Jose Manuel Venezuela Arce state, “the challenge is to understand that diversity enriches life and contributes as a condition to development.” Development as humanity is intricately related to our interpersonal interactions, how we embrace them, and how we deal with our coexistence. Our evolution as a global society depends on how intercultural competent, we are to establish agreements aside from differences.

The University of Cauca has been characterized as a university with quality programs for all students in the country. It has also provided spaces for support and dialogue for the region's different cultural and racial sectors. As is known, Colombia is a multi-ethnic country where different cultures, races, and ethnic groups coexist. Finding our identity and knowing our traditions is part of the intercultural exercise that this research aims to portray.

In this order of ideas, for the modern languages program, an intercultural design was elaborated in the present investigation for the acquisition of languages together with their cultures. Since there are so many ethnic groups in the Cauca region, one begins by learning to be aware of and understand the differences between communities in the same context. Once that collective intercultural awareness is developed among people, and they know their identities within this society, learning and coexistence can occur more naturally.

It is essential to highlight the development of the intercultural communicative competence proposed by Michael Byram, already mentioned above. The main characteristics of this concept are to explore one's identity to understand the language to be acquired. When you are aware of that contrast, you start perceiving beyond the purely linguistic aspects, meaning those linguistic intentions within the discourse to communicate successfully.

In addition to being aware of cultural differences, it is also understanding, respecting, accepting, analyzing, and, most importantly, not judging behaviors and attitudes that are contrary to one's own. Empathy and tolerance are fundamental parts of language learning.

Intercultural competency development is emphasized since, as previously mentioned, it is crucial for language learning. Knowing how to read between the lines and understanding different ideologies and world perspectives are just as important as learning the grammar rules of a language. This is precisely what was developed throughout the investigation.

When interviewing students about the importance of competition in their careers, some suggestions were found regarding intercultural communication. This subject is not something of one or two semesters; it must be shared and understood from the beginning of the degree. Many of the students interviewed traveled abroad long before finishing their studies and faced an unknown world. Therefore, they agreed that learning languages based on a cultural context are more effective than an academic one.

Some of the anecdotes of the interviewed students were transformed into intercultural activities for teaching English. They are context-based activities where students learn how to socialize, share and reflect on those cultural issues. One of the main ideas of this project is to encourage students to know independently and enrich themselves with knowledge about distinct practices worldwide.

In this order of ideas, the activities developed in class served as a lot of reflection and self-criticism for future teachers. For example, in the activity about stereotypes, the students needed to learn relevant information from most countries, so it was difficult for them to avoid stereotypes. They all agreed that it is pertinent to investigate the world and its peculiarities even more when a language is going to be taught. This learning is a dynamic process that never ends and depends on autonomous education to become brilliant teachers.

During the design application, the students also expressed their intrigue about how feasible it was to teach based on context. However, as the activities got underway, they decided it would help them to become more interculturally competent. In addition, they expressed that, they would implement this design for their future classes.

The design of intercultural activities is a proposal guide for future teachers or students who find the development of intercultural competence important for their educational process or those considering traveling abroad. In this way, it is intended to encourage a new generation of future teachers willing to go beyond the academic to prepare students for real life and the goals this entails, making them respectful, self-critical, mentally strong, and analytical regarding their own culture and the one they want to learn. The objective is to make students aware of the different cultural experiences that learning a language can bring, taking into account that they are subjective experiences only to provide examples of possible problematic situations for which they can prepare to prevent them.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the proposal exposed at the beginning of this project, which was to design strategies that motivate modern language students to learn English through intercultural activities focused on improving the cultural learning of the English language. We could obtain positive results, such as most students considering that the proposed activities are an excellent implementation to strengthen intercultural competence. They had a good disposition and desire to learn; they supported the development of some of the activities, which they called vitally essential to complement their professional training.

The first step was interviewing students with previous experience abroad who had already traveled to another country, particularly the United States. One of the main objectives was to identify if all of them, or at least most the majority, thought there were deficiencies or some cultural shock when they traveled or faced another culture and another language. In addition, they were a guide to develop the didactic activities and, mainly, to know if the hypothesis that culture and language should go hand and hand in the learning process of a new language, as we mentioned above in the problem statement Kramersch (1998), p. 6.

The second step was to organize how we would collect essential information from students, starting with previous research about intercultural competence, interviews, a series of real stories of students who shared the same interests—for example, the same desire to visit another country and grow professionally, the creation of the didactic activities, the development of those activities and finally data collection.

Furthermore, with the results obtained we noticed that these students shared thoughts similar to ours. They went through particular situations which led to wondering if the cultural

aspect is essential in a language. Therefore, they said that the development of intercultural competence must be constant from the beginning of their training as language students.

On the other hand, this investigation is inspired by the stories above and in the student's testimonials and interviews as well. We found that all of them had some shock and/or cultural impacts in their exchange which is entirely normal when people change their comfort zone. Nonetheless, they all agree that they could prevent many of those issues if they had prior knowledge of intercultural competence before their trip. It would also help them to know more about how to take action in certain situations. Such as a case mentioned in the interviews, where a student did not realize the importance of respecting personal space in American culture, which shocked him because his whole life was in a very caring environment. That example and many other situations could occur in a culture different from ours. We must realize that we are all different and live in a diverse world. Language is one of many things to learn from another culture. We also need cultural knowledge when traveling to another country.

Along the same lines, we structured a series of activities and some of them were focused on helping the students to recognize the value of knowledge of one's own culture and to self-knowledge because they were able to perceive essential aspects that even they ignored before doing the activities, which encouraged them to be closer to their roots and culture.

The testimonials and answers of each student participating in this project were essential. They inspired us to develop each activity. Thanks to that participation, we could achieve our objectives since we could identify a student's possible culture shock in another country. Likewise, each session was mainly implemented with didactic strategies with a cultural focus to improve skills such as speaking and listening in English because they were made 100% in English with real-life examples.

To conclude, one of our goals in this project was not only for the students to participate in the activities but also to have conscious learning and practice them before and after they travel. Although the time was not enough, we could not put into practice all the activities we made; hopefully, the first activities could be carried out to serve the students as a guide for their academic training.

### **Recommendations**

We suggest the best course of action to keep developing intercultural competence is to continue implementing its content in the classes, which could be throughout the proposed activities. Given that the hours on the subject have been reduced, this proposal design could help students acquire critical perspectives toward their own culture and those of others. This way, they can question how they would act in a particular case and learn not to take any matter personally.

Finally, the university should continue encouraging students to participate in intercultural exchanges to practice what they have learned throughout their studies and fully immerse themselves in the English language, culture, and everything that learning a new language encompasses.



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## **Annexes**

### **Annex A. Consent for Research Participants**

This survey aims to provide the students participating in the research with a clear idea of the intention and the importance that their contribution can make to the researchers and, in turn, of the role each of them has in it.

This research is carried out by the students Daniela Cueros Hernández and Angie Nathaly Tello Cerón from the Universidad del Cauca, Santander de Quilichao campus, to create a didactic design aimed at improving intercultural competence in students and, in this way, propose the development of this competence.

If you voluntarily agree to participate in the project, you will be asked to answer the questionnaire honestly, consisting of eleven simple and three open questions. The results will allow the researchers to obtain a guide for the elaboration of the project. Furthermore, the information collected will be anonymous, so your identity will not be compromised.

The researchers will be aware of any concerns. They will respect if at any time the student decides not to be part of it or if they disagree with any of the questions set out in the survey, for which they have absolute freedom not to answer and let know about it.

Thank you for your participation.

I voluntarily agree to be part of the survey carried out for the research project developed by the students Daniela Cueros Hernández and Angie Nathaly Tello Cerón.

I know that the information obtained will be confidential and contribute to the mentioned degree project. Similarly, I understand that I have complete autonomy in participation and that, in the event of any disagreement and/or wanting to withdraw from the survey, I must inform those in charge.

Participant Name

Signature

Date

---

**Annex B. Survey on the development of intercultural competence at the University of Cauca, Santander de Quilichao campus**

Participant Name :

Date :

Dear participant:

Next, you will find a series of questions related to the development of intercultural competence in the Bachelor's degree in Modern Languages at the University of Cauca, Santander de Quilichao, and your experience with the application of this knowledge abroad as an intercultural mediator. Thank you for answering honestly.

Please mark the answer you consider pertinent:

- Are you a student or graduate of the Modern Languages program at the Universidad del Cauca, Santander de Quilichao?

Yes

No

- Have you had any kind of intercultural experience abroad?

Yes

No

- Have you felt frustrated abroad due to cultural differences?

Yes

No

- Have you experienced cultural shocks?

Yes

No

- Do you see yourself as an intercultural mediator?

Yes

No

- Are you comfortable talking to a person from another culture?

Yes

No



- Do you think that more intercultural knowledge should be taught in the process of learning English in the degree?

Yes

No

- At the time of traveling to your exchange, have you already seen the intercultural subject in the Bachelor's degree of Modern Languages?

Yes

No

- Do you think it is important to learn the culture of a language, beyond just grammatical and phonetic concepts?

Yes

No

- Do you consider that learning in English should be carried out from an intercultural point of view in the classroom?

Yes

No

- Would you have liked to learn more about the culture of the country you traveled to?

Yes

No

Please answer the next questions:

- Do you consider that the subject of intercultural communication provided you with the necessary tools and knowledge to deal with intercultural scenarios?
- Could you describe any culture shock you had while abroad and how the activities carried out in class helped you overcome the problem? If not, how would you have liked the activities on intercultural competence in the Bachelor of Modern Languages program to have been?
- Do you think that education regarding the development of intercultural competence should be increased? why?

**Annex C. Semi-structured interview**

- What motivated you to leave your comfort zone to travel abroad?
- At what point did you recognize the other as a being alien to that set of values with which you grew up?
- What intercultural knowledge do you think you acquired in your experience abroad?
- Based on your experience, do you believe that intercultural exchanges play a fundamental role in professional development as a foreign language teacher?
- Based on your personal experience, could you describe any experience that could be considered a culture shock?
- According to your point of view, what cultural aspects (religion, morals, arts, protocol, law, history, economy, etc.) do you think are important to know before the exchange abroad?
- What do you consider were the aspects of your culture that you were able to represent and share throughout your stay abroad?
- During your stay abroad, did you have a negative experience as a Colombian, or on the contrary, did you have a positive experience that marked you?
- How was your process of adaptation to this new culture? Easy, hard? why?
- Are you comfortable sharing your culture in another country?
- Do you think that intercultural communication should only have been part of two semesters of the degree?
- What would you improve in terms of content in the Bachelor of Modern Languages program at the University of Cauca, in relation to the development of intercultural competence?

**Annex D. Invoice that is delivered to the customer. Indicating the products consumed.**

  
 1345 2nd St  
 Santa Monica, CA 90401  
 11/24/2018 07:53 AM  
 VISA DEBIT CARD PURCHASE  
 QTY DESC ----- AMT

AMT \$  
 SUBTOTAL \$  
 TAX \$  
 TOTAL \$

  
 1345 2nd St  
 Santa Monica, CA 90401  
 SALE  
 11/24/2018 TRANS: 007085  
 07:53 AM AUTH: 688440  
 \*\*\*\*\*9483 AMEX  
 PRICE  
 SUBTOTAL  
 TIP  
 TOTAL

Factura donde se agrega el tip Price y subtotal es el valor total de la factura donde se señalan los productos consumidos.  
 Total es el precio final con el tip estipulado por el cliente.

  
 1345 2nd St  
 Santa Monica, CA 90401  
 Date: 02/15/2019 09:00 AM  
 Card Type: MASTERCARD  
 Acct # MASTERCARD  
 Card Entry SWIPED  
 Trans Type: PURCHASE  
 Trans Key: 779629465C0182C  
 AUTH CODE: 779629  
 Check: 7796  
 Check ID: 77  
 Server: STEVEN TAB 7  
 SUBTOTAL:

TIP: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*CUSTOMER COPY**

Subtotal es el valor total de la factura donde se señalan los productos consumidos Total es el precio final con el tip estipulado por el cliente.  
 Nota: ESTE RECIBO ES SOLO COPIA DEL CLIENTE


**Annex E. Evaluation interview**

Por favor conteste con honestidad las siguientes preguntas, para nosotras es muy importante su punto de vista.

1. ¿Cree usted que la actividad realizada le serviría de ayuda en un contexto intercultural?  
Si/no ¿Por qué?
  
2. ¿Implementaría esa actividad en una clase?  
Si/no, Por qué?
  
3. ¿Le pareció agradable la actividad?  
Si/no ¿Por qué?
  
4. ¿Entendió al pie de la letra la actividad realizada?  
Si/no ¿Por qué?
  
5. ¿Cree que es importante este tipo de actividades interculturales en la formación de un estudiante de lenguas modernas?  
Si/no ¿Por qué?
  
6. ¿Tenía conocimiento previo de los temas tratados en la actividad?  
Si/no ¿Por qué?
  
7. En una puntuación del 1 a 10 ¿cómo calificaría la intervención?

Agradecemos su participación y disposición en la actividad realizada.

## Annex F. Infographic



**Southington**  
**APPETIZERS**

**Mini Cheese Burgers\***  
Three of our famous mini cheese burgers with Parmesan fries  
14.69

**Baked Jalapeño Poppers GF**  
We aren't responsible for the heat in these fresh jalapeño peppers stuffed with chicken, bacon & cheese, topped with cilantro cream sauce & pico de gallo  
11.29

**Buffalo Shrimp GF**  
5 large crispy shrimp tossed in your choice of mild, hot or insane sauce, served with a carrot & celery heart salad & ranch  
11.99

**Wings & Tenders GF**  
*Available in: mild, hot, insane, Kentucky bourbon BBQ, honey mustard, garlic pepper Parmesan or our award winning hot sauce - WICKEDLY HOT*  
1/2 order wings - 11.59  
tenders - 9.19  
full order wings - 19.39  
tenders - 12.89

**American Nachos GF**  
Fresh potato chips topped with chili, red onion, tomatoes, jalapeños & American cheese sauce  
11.49

**Meatballs**  
Our famous meatballs, basil & ricotta cheese  
13.00

**Firecracker Cauliflower**  
Buttermilk-fried, served with sweet chili glaze, red cabbage & frisée  
9.99

**Blue Chips GF**  
Fresh potato chips topped with tomatoes, warm blue cheese sauce, bacon, red onion & jalapeños  
11.29

**FLAT BREADS**  
*On Hand-Stretched Hearth-Fired Dough*

**The b Mac**  
Seasoned ground beef, burger dressing, shaved iceberg lettuce, pickles, onion, cheddar and Monterey Jack blend with sesame seeds  
15.00

**Caprese**  
Grape tomato, fresh mozzarella, olive oil and chiffonade of basil  
13.00

**Brussels and Bacon**  
Olive oil, Brussels sprouts, red onion, chopped bacon, goat cheese and balsamic drizzle  
13.00

**The Fig**  
Fig jam, red onion, crumbled blue and goat cheese with arugula and balsamic glaze  
14.00

**Forest Mushroom**  
Forest mushrooms, caramelized onions, goat cheese, arugula and balsamic glaze  
13.00

**Shrimp Scampi**  
Garlic and herb shrimp, mozzarella & Parmesan cheese blend, topped with chives  
15.00

**Cheese**  
San Marzano tomato sauce topped with mozzarella cheese  
11.00 (Add pepperoni +2)

**Flat Bread of the Moment** - Ask your server  
*Sub a sweet potato flour gluten-free crust +5*

### CERTIFIED BLACK ANGUS BEEF

**Our fresh, never frozen, chuck is hand-cut by our butchers and ground in-house within hours of hitting your plate.**

Order "Some Pink" or "No Pink." Comes with your choice of fancy fries or organic mixed greens.  
Substitute a hand-formed 6oz plant-based patty for 2.79 extra - V, GF

<b>Breakfast Burger*</b>	Bacon, cheddar cheese, jack cheese, fried egg & spiced maple aioli on a croissant bun	15.59
<b>Baja*</b>	Avocado, jalapeños, tomato, jack cheese, lettuce & chipotle spread	15.59
<b>Blue Cheese*</b>	Caramelized onions, blue cheese & bourbon BBQ sauce	15.99
<b>Bacon Cheese*</b>	American cheese, bacon, caramelized onions & garlic mayo	15.99
<b>Bacon Cheeseburger Deluxe</b>	Bacon, American & cheddar cheeses, lettuce, tomato, pickle, ketchup, mustard & mayo	15.79
<b>Tavern Classic*</b>	Lettuce, tomato, onion & special sauce	13.49
<b>3 Shrooms*</b>	Sautéed mushrooms, mushroom spread, truffle mayo & Swiss cheese	14.79
<b>Buffalo Chicken</b>	Melted blue cheese, shredded carrots & crisp celery: mild, hot or insane	13.29
<b>Crispy Chicken</b>	Crispy chicken patty, bacon, lettuce, tomato & chipotle ranch on a toasted sesame bun	13.79
<b>The Italian Job</b>	Fresh ground chicken burger, mozzarella, roasted tomato, roasted red pepper sauce & pesto	13.79
<b>Philly Steak Burger*</b>	Our sliced steak, garlic mayo, mushrooms, onions & cheese sauce	15.69
<b>The Squealer</b>	Half pork, half beef burger with bacon, lettuce, pickles, American cheese, tomato, spicy mustard & mayo	14.59

### SOUPS & ENTRÉE SALADS

**Chili GF**  
With a dollop of horseradish cream  
cup 5.99 / bowl 7.99

**California Cobb**  
Iceberg & romaine topped with chicken, baby tomatoes, avocado, boiled egg, bacon & blue cheese with a truffle ranch  
14.79

**Garden Salad V | GF**  
Iceberg lettuce, tomato, cucumber, carrots & lemon thyme vinaigrette  
small 4.99 / large 6.99

**Caesar Salad**  
Romaine with garlic croutons, fresh grated Parmesan cheese & Caesar dressing  
small 5.39 / large 10.99

**Super Salad V | GF**  
Kale, shaved Brussels sprouts, red cabbage, apple sticks, carrots, candied walnuts & fresh mozzarella tossed in a sweet & spicy vinaigrette  
12.59

**Burger Salad\***  
Iceberg & romaine topped with our cheeseburger\*, bacon, cheddar cheese, tomatoes, pickles, red onion, tater tots, special dressing & topped with organic frizzled onions  
15.29

**Hand-Crafted Dressings**  
Truffle Ranch, Lemon Thyme Vinaigrette, Caesar, Blue Cheese, Special Dressing, Oil & Vinegar

**Add To Any Salad:**  
Chicken +4.99  
Burger +4.99  
6oz Plant-Based Patty +6.99

### BUILD YOUR OWN BURGER

<b>Choose Your Patty</b>			
Beef - 12.49	Chicken - 12.49	Pork - 12.49	Plant Based Patty - 15.29
<b>Choose Your Bun</b>			
Potato Bun	"In The Grass" <i>Bun-less, atop iceberg lettuce.</i>		
Sesame Seed Bun	Gluten Free Roll +1.99		
Croissant Bun	<i>Most burgers can be prepared gluten free.</i>		
Pretzel Roll +.99			
<b>Choose Your Toppings</b>			
Lettuce	Mayo	Yellow Mustard	
Tomato	Garlic Mayo	Spicy Mustard	
Red Onion	Ketchup	Special Sauce	
Dill Pickle	Sliced Jalapeño		
<b>Premium Toppings</b>			
Chili +1.99	Bacon +1.99		
Cheese +.99	Avocado +2		
Caramelized Onions +.69	Fried Egg +1.59		
Sautéed Mushrooms +.99			
Shaved Philly Steak +2.99			
<b>Upgrade Your Side for 1.99</b>			
Parmesan Fries GF			
Sweet Potato Fries GF			
Truffle Fries			
Buttermilk Coleslaw V   GF			
Sriracha Fries GF			
Green Fries V   GF			
Caesar Salad			
Garden Salad V   GF			
All sides are 4.29 a la carte.			

Disco \dis-koh\ your side +.99  
verb: to cover any item with gravy and house-made cheese sauce for extra goodness.

### BIG PLATES

<b>Shepherd's Pie GF</b>	Our fresh ground beef, fresh corn & house-made mashed potatoes & gravy topped with organic frizzled onions	15.79
<b>Fish 'N Chips GF</b>	Crispy fried Wild Alaska Pollock & hand-cut fries served with buttermilk coleslaw & tartar sauce	16.99

### MAC 'N JACK

**The Original V**  
Organic pasta, 4 cheeses & caramelized onions  
14.29

**Buffalo Chicken** 16.99

**Pulled Pork** 16.99

### DESSERT

**Warm Cookie Skillet**  
Jumbo homemade chocolate chip cookie topped with three scoops of ice cream, chocolate syrup, whip cream and a cherry  
6.75

**Cheesecake Tart**  
With seasonal toppings  
6.75

**Chef's Special Dessert**  
Ask your server for details  
6.75

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Thoroughly cooking meats, poultry, seafood, shellfish or eggs reduces the risk of foodborne illness. \*These items may be cooked to your liking. Before placing your order, please inform your server if a person in your party has a food allergy. GF = Can Be Prepared Gluten Free V = Vegetarian