

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: SURVIVING AND THRIVING: A NARRATIVE
INQUIRY INTO THE LIVES OF FIVE FILIPINA
TEACHERS IN A U.S. URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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This study centers five Filipina non-native English speaking (NNES) teachers, who teach English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). It explores how we construct our identities as persons and as teachers who are surviving and thriving in one U.S. public urban¹ school district. This study emphasizes the meanings of our experiences as language learners and as ESOL teachers in relation to our identity construction, and highlights the effects of cultural, linguistic and interpersonal elements on our identity transformation.

The specific purpose of this study is to seek alternatives to (1) develop and enrich our understanding of the diverse learning and teaching journeys of Filipina NNES ESOL teachers that Mid-Atlantic Public Schools (MAPS) hired between 2005 and 2006, (2) understand and co-construct our identities as supported and marginalized, (3) look at other Filipina NNES ESOL teachers to juxtapose their experiences to my own, as a person with an insider/outsider perspective, and (4) to use our narratives to inform MAPS

and other U.S. school district's efforts to recruit, support and retain Filipino teachers as well as other international teachers.

Through narrative life history interviews, email follow-up interviews, informal conversations, and questionnaires, the study explored Filipina NNES ESOL teachers' experiences of becoming and being ESOL teachers in MAPS. The study hopes to encourage local and state policy makers and curriculum developers to design professional development plans for Filipino teachers, and to encourage researchers to do further research on the lived experiences of other K-12 international teachers; which may include groups such as Chinese, Taiwanese, Korean, Hispanic, Indians, Nigerians, Jamaicans, etc. through additional qualitative research designs like case study, portraiture and ethnography.

SURVIVING AND THRIVING: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY
INTO THE LIVES OF FIVE FILIPINA TEACHERS
IN A U.S. URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

By

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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Dedication

To

Flordeluna

Ligaya

Naruto

Halo

May you continue to inspire other women through your life stories...

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1: SITUATING THE STUDY

My first teaching job in the states was exasperating. There were six Filipino teachers that came to teach with me in the same school. All of us experienced culture shock and discrimination. The principal discriminated us against the local teachers. She was disappointed that many of us could not speak Spanish. She harassed and threatened us. We did not want to go back the next day but we had no choice. That was our job placement. The human resources people explained to us that we were greatly needed in that school, so we were all excited to come to work, only to find out that there were six American teachers in that same school who were losing their jobs because they were not highly qualified according to the state standards. Little did we know, we were sent to replace them. We realized the tension and the maladroit feeling those teachers must have had when they saw us. The principal was also acting indifferently because she was trying to protect them. We finally realized that we were sent to that school to take the jobs away from those six Americans.

-Joie

In 2009, I went to my principal to ask for her support for my nomination to the Outstanding Educator's Award. She was excited about it. However, I felt she wanted another teacher to be nominated. She asked me if I could help and support that teacher. I guess she didn't really understand what I was asking her. I came to her because I believed that being my principal; she was the most ideal person to nominate me. I was hoping she would, but she refused. She said somebody else should nominate me just to be fair. The insulting thing was, I

ended up being the nominator of this other teacher that my principal was supporting. I felt that something wrong happened there. For the first time, I felt I was a victim of racial discrimination.

-Flordeluna

“Was it because I am brown skinned that my colleagues won’t speak to me?” I often thought. There was a time when I told my supervisor, “Do I have to show and post all my certifications just to show everyone that I am a good teacher?” It was really hurtful and exhausting. I endured one whole school year feeling that way. I studied very hard. At one point, I felt really bad because there was a meeting and nobody even told me so I was left alone in my room upstairs while everyone was attending the meeting downstairs. Nobody even looked for me. I felt so frustrated and annoyed. I thought that’s the downside of being a Filipino—a minority. No matter how highly educated you are, you will still feel strange among your co-teachers who are native English speakers. That’s why joie, I am waiting for you to be up there in the central administration office, so we can say that there’s a Filipino teacher, who became one of them in the higher ups, emailing everybody and signing important papers.

-Naruto

Since I am a Filipino, I do not really complain. If I have questions I ask people nicely. I guess my principal appreciates that fact that I am a doer and not a complainer. He receives a hundred and one complaints a day. I should spare him for that. There are a hundred and plus staff in our school. Can you imagine if I would be with the complainers? My students have high scores, so my principal

knows I am doing my job. I really don't want to speak to authorities, as much as possible. If I see administrators in the hallway coming towards me, I will literally avoid them. I will go inside a classroom instead of talking to them in the hallway. Sometimes I worry that they feel I am cold, but that's just me. They are very nice to me but I just do not want to engage in conversations with them unless it is necessary. I just write emails if I need anything. I have no other experience dealing with my principal outside the professional level, so I really do not know how he thinks of me personally. Although I really respect my principal, there is a distance, which is only on the professional level. You have a gift of interpersonal skills Joie, but I do not. I am more intrapersonal.

-Halo

It is sad that now I feel I am less sharp and less smart than I used to be. I taught gifted students in the Philippines so I was always on my toes. I always read interesting science concepts then I often shared them with my students. Back then, I read and analyzed things a lot, but now I felt I got stagnated here in the states. I miss my friends in the Philippines. When we come together, we often talked about intellectual matters. We had the free will to include interesting concepts in our lessons. I believe that's what's lacking in teaching in the states. Creativity is compromised. That's why sometimes I feel I am becoming dumb.

-Ligaya

This study centers five Filipina non-native English speaking (NNES) teachers, who teach English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). It explores how we construct our identities as persons and as teachers who are surviving and thriving in one U.S. public

urban¹ school district. And, it emphasizes the meanings of our experiences as language learners and as ESOL teachers in relation to our identity construction, and highlights the effects of cultural, linguistic and interpersonal elements on our identity transformation. The quotations above were from the voices of the five Filipina participants in this study. This study investigates how our cultural and language learning backgrounds shaped who we are as Filipina ESOL teachers, how we have become teachers, what obstacles and challenges we have faced due to the status of non-nativeness, how we have grown, and how we plan to continue our careers.

A growing number of school districts in the United States are hiring teachers from foreign countries to fill shortages in Math, Science, ESOL and Special Education. The trend is most evident in poor urban and rural districts (Whipple, 2003; Chen, 2009). Kate Walsh, a member of the Maryland State Board of Education, said it has become more common to hire overseas. She said that all poor districts have a harder time recruiting. According to McCawley (2005) “Anytime you're teaching kids in the inner city, it's very hard to get teachers to stay. Foreign teachers can enrich students' education by exposing them to other cultures” (p. 6).

Due to teacher shortages, Mid-Atlantic Public School system's (MAPS) recruitment specialists had gone to the Philippines to recruit teachers over the last five years. There were more qualified teachers than jobs in the Philippines so MAPS recruitment

¹ In the acclaimed book *City Schools and the American Dream*, the term urban is understood as “less likely to be employed as a geographic concept used to define and describe physical locations than as a social or cultural construct used to describe certain people and places” (Noguera, 2003, p. 23). The term urban is applied in this dissertation in line with the “common parlance” noted in *City Schools...* to describe “relatively poor and, in many cases non-White” school communities that surfaced as a result of “demographic and economic transformations that occurred in cities throughout the United States during the past 50 years” (Noguera, 2003, p. 23).

specialists coordinated with school systems and teacher associations there, arranged hundreds of interviews and brought more than four hundred Filipino educators back to the county since 2003 (McCawley, 2005).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) School Staffing Survey (2009), 83% of public school teachers in the United States were non-Hispanic White; 8% were non-Hispanic Black, 6% were Hispanic; about 1% was non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaska Native; about 1% was non-Hispanic Asian, and less than 1% was non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (p. 4). Thus, Filipino teachers belong to the 1% non-Hispanic Asian category. Although the national statistics does not show a considerable high number of Filipino teachers in the United States, the increasing number of these teachers in several states including Maryland cannot be ignored.

The MAPS, for example, recruited eighty Filipino teachers in 2005, and one hundred eight in 2006. Filipino teachers are sought because Philippine certification requirements are very similar to American requirements. According to the school board chairman of MAPS:

We're not training the teachers in the United States, so we need to start looking at places where there are more qualified teachers. The Philippines recognize our shortages. They have been very aggressive in getting us to come and recruit (McCawley, 2005, p. 7).

These teachers, having grown up in a nation with strong ties to the United States, have strong English language skills and advanced degrees. Many have spent more than a decade in classroom instruction, with classroom sizes of forty or more students. MAPS

also recruits from other countries, and many other teachers come from the Caribbean, Africa and Europe, with the school system using the Internet as a recruiting tool.

Background of the study

My Positionality as a Researcher

The core of critical and postcritical ethnography lies in the attempt to understand power relations from multiple perspectives (Villenas, 1996). For the researcher who finds him or herself betwixt and between multiple spaces of domination and subordination, the research project can become very complex and problematic.

Researchers must question who ultimately will benefit from the project; how the research could possibly be interpreted and used when in the hands of the dominant; as well as their own place in the power dynamic of the way the society is organized (Villenas, 1996).

I am a researcher who found myself studying in my own community, where I, on one hand, am the researcher, and on the other hand the researched. The learning process usually begins with questions of boundary crossings (Villenas, 1996). What identity do I perform at any given moment—that of the researcher or that of the researched? What happens when both identities are performed simultaneously and are in dialogue? Can I really be an insider once I have aligned myself with academic institutions? These questions went through my head as I was planning my study. As Bartunek and Louis (1996) noted, most critical qualitative researchers are highly educated, socially privileged, and in written texts, their macro-analyses are legitimated and privileged over the local knowledge of the natives. Even if the researcher self-identifies as being a part of the community of the local natives, alliances with the academy creates power positions of privilege over the research participants.

As a result of this privilege, the insider-outsider question becomes very complex. Villenas (1996) posited that for researchers who struggle to discern their place along insider-outsider continuum, it is helpful to understand that the continuum is not rigid; in fact, we may occupy various spaces and degrees of *insiderness* and *outsiderness* depending on who we are speaking with, the topic of the discussion, who is present, and a whole host of other external factors. When we study our own, we are constantly crossing fluid boundaries and renegotiating out multiple identities (Villenas).

In my case, the insider-outsider dilemma was always a site of conflict as I navigated through the field and engage in my research. In this study, I attempted to engage key questions in qualitative narrative inquiry research as I explored the impact my perceived identities had on my study, as well as my own identity performances (conscious and unconscious) that helped shape those perceptions of me.

I also turned the critical eye on to myself, as I tried to understand my cultural performances and the implications it had on my research. Before attempting to produce a critical narrative, it was important that I engaged myself in self-discovery and critical reflexivity such that I had a strong sense of consequences of my multiple roles, identities, and positions as I interacted with others in my study. As I reflect I realized:

I worked very hard to sound like a native speaker because I am an English instructor in the Philippines. I believed having this ability to speak in a native-like accent increased my credibility to be respected as an English college instructor. I was very confident until I came to teach in the U.S. I often found myself being corrected of my pronunciation by my colleagues. Although I didn't

feel I was being put down, I still felt a little embarrassed of myself, because all the while I thought I have the native-like fluency.

- Joie Austria

This quotation echoed the self-image I had and the challenges I had endured in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in MAPS. I was ecstatic to teach in MAPS as an ESOL teacher, but I was not fully cognizant of my marginalized status. I came to understand and accept the ever-present conundrum that teaching in the U.S. public school system, as an international teacher is political (Chen, 2009, Lu, 2005, Park, 2006). Upon conversing with other Filipino teachers, I came to a realization that I was not alone. I was not the only one experiencing challenges and marginalization. Many of us were often resentful and exasperated with ourselves when we felt we were not experiencing success in our own classrooms.

We consider ourselves as outstanding teachers in the Philippines, but why do many of us struggle teaching here in the U.S? Why do we have to constantly prove to our students, colleagues and administrators that we are effective teachers? Does this have to do with our past learning and experiences in our home country? How do those experiences influence our identities as Filipina NNES ESOL teachers? My learning and teaching experiences in the Philippines had been transformed into my belief system about what teaching is, and this belief system became part of my identity. In understanding identity, one's experiences play an important role in identity formation (Watkins-Goffman, 2001). The teachers who leave their home country and immigrate to a new country might have a more complex sense of identity because they often struggle to seek an identity in a new context while they are in the process of adapting to a new culture

(Lu, 2005). Many of my colleagues who are White categorized me as Asian. Asian students and teachers are stereotyped as model minorities. This stereotyping labels Asian students and teachers as a hardworking, self-sufficient and self-reliant (Lu, 2005; Watkins-Goffman, 2001). This image of how others saw me shaped my identity in relationship with others, so I assiduously worked and tried to find a way to help myself rise to the ranks from being an ESOL department chair to an ESOL instructional coach. However, I still felt marginalized. In particular, as an international teacher, I was and still am an outsider in relation to the commonly understood meaning of *minority*, which often refers to African-American, Asian-American or Hispanic-American. While swinging between my past and my present experiences teaching in MAPS, I often chose to keep my voice silent (Lu, 2005; Park, 2006). I felt distraught to reveal my struggles with regards to my identity as a person, as a teacher, and recently, as a teacher coach. Yes, I am Asian, but particularly, I am a Filipina nonnative English speaking teacher. There were many of my colleagues who questioned my authority to teach ESOL and even my being a mentor teacher for pre-service ESOL teachers. I felt I needed to debunk this native speaker fallacy—that only native speakers of English are the ideal English teachers. But in the process, I surmised that I was also embracing the deficit model of language teaching. I learned I must put on a mask so I can conceal my identity as a non-native English-speaking teacher; that way, I didn't have to be embarrassed being questioned about my credibility to teach or supervise American teachers. I felt that as an ESOL instructional coach, I needed to speak and think like a native speaker of English. At times, I felt proud to be mistaken as a native speaker, and embarrassed to be recognized as a NNEST. But then I realized I don't have to obscure my own identity just

to please other people. I told myself that I must confront my struggles and confusions with my own identity as a person and as a teacher. To explain this phenomenon, Norton (1997) states that:

Whereas immigrant learners'/ teachers' experiences in their native country may be a significant part of their identity, these experiences are constantly being mediated by their experiences in the new country, across multiple sites in the home, workplace, and community (p.14)

With silence, I concealed my own inner voice within me, but the struggles lingered. I wondered if other Filipina ESOL teachers had experiences like me. I wondered if anyone else from my cohort of Filipino teachers were experiencing similar struggles and difficulties in terms of the convoluted issues relating to language and identity. I also wondered if there were any disconfirming voices and experiences among Filipina ESOL teachers so I could compare or differentiate them with my own. These thoughts made me recognize how important it is to listen to the voices and stories of Filipina ESOL teachers in order to unearth responses to my exploration.

Purposes of the Study

The central purpose of this study is to develop and enrich our understanding of the educational and teaching journeys of four Filipina teachers and myself who are both evident minorities and NNES teachers navigating through our teaching profession in MAPS. I accomplished this through listening to each of our life history narratives and making sense of our lived experiences (Chen, 2009; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Lu, 2005; Park, 2006). Highlighting the identity co-constructions and perceptions of these five Filipina teachers would provide insights for other NNES teachers and other international

teachers in MAPS (e.g., Amin, 2001; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Norton, 2000; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004; Pavlenko & Blackbridge, 2004; Park, 2006).

A second purpose of this study is to comprehend the degree to which we perceive and co-construct our identities as supported and/or marginalized. Although we teachers have stories to tell about our learning and teaching journeys, it is irrefutable that each of us has experienced marginalization in our own teaching environments due to our gender, race, social class, and language. The data from this study problematized the notion that all Filipino teachers come to teach in U.S. public schools with similar experiences, identities and goals. Exploring how we come to co-construct and perceive our identities intertwined with concerns about language, gender, race, and social class serves to distinguish us, Filipina teachers and the diversity elements characteristics of our lives. Furthermore, the identity co-constructions and perceptions highlighting these differences could help to inform, build upon, and critique the existing research about NNES teachers (Chen, 2009; Lu, 2005; Park, 2006).

A third purpose of this study entails looking at the lived experiences of four Filipina teachers and myself, as they are told to me as opposed to looking for certain aspects of their experiences as commensurate with my expectations as a researcher with a similar positionality as a Filipina NNES ESOL teacher (Park, 2006; Chen, 2009; Lu, 2005). These expectations stemmed from my own personal experiences thus bringing my insider/outsider perspective on teaching and learning contexts in MAPS.

The final purpose of this study is to inform and encourage MAPS and other U.S. district efforts to recruit, support and retain Filipino teachers in MAPS. The data from this study hope to inform the growing body of theoretical knowledge in the literature on

issues that directly influence the lived experiences of Filipina teachers, as well as other international teachers in U.S. public schools. I tried to accomplish this effort by listening to the pedagogical and practical suggestions that emerged from our narratives. This study hopes to pave the way to a better understanding of and a deeper inquiry into Filipina NNES ESOL teachers' distinctive contributions to the TESOL program in a U.S. public schools context.

Statement of the Problem

While there is a large body of research about teacher identity (Anderson, 2001; Chen, 2009; Clandinin & Connelly, 1987; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Huber & Whelan, 1999; Gimbert, 2001; James, 2006; Lu, 2005; Park, 2006) there is diminutive research about lived experiences of Filipino/a teachers in the United States. Due to the growing number of Filipino/a teachers in the U.S. public school system, this phenomenon cannot be taken for granted. Between 2003 and 2009, approximately a thousand out of ten thousand teachers employed in MAPS were Filipino teachers recruited from the Philippines. In order to fill in the gap in the literature, I investigated and explored the lived experiences of Filipina ESOL teachers in MAPS. In the next section of this chapter, I detail the foundation of the problem in order to understand more deeply the reasons for hiring Filipino teachers to teach in MAPS.

Foundation of the Problem

For many years, Maryland has had a shortage of qualified teachers in certain content areas. Early-career attrition, rising K-12 student enrollments, flat teacher education graduation rates, and teacher retirements contribute to the shortages. Highly qualified teacher provisions of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) have exacerbated the problem that

Maryland and other states have with teacher shortages. To address the shortage issue, both the state and federal government have instituted state scholarships in the shortage areas, as well as many strategies to attract and retain teachers (MSDE Staffing Report, 2010).

Highly Qualified Teacher under NCLB

The collection of data from the local school systems determines how many core academic subject classes are not taught by highly qualified teachers (HQT). The Division of Accountability and Assessment also disaggregates these data by high-and-low-poverty schools to determine if there is differential access to classes taught by highly qualified teachers based on poverty indicators (equity gap). Local school systems must staff their core academic classrooms with teachers who are highly qualified, and they are to ensure equitable access to classes taught by highly qualified teachers for all students. These areas pose a major threat to NCLB compliance if local school systems persist in not being able to find teachers who are highly qualified. Below is a table that shows the number of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers in Maryland public schools from K-12 (MSDE Staffing Report, 2008).

Table1. Number and Percentage of Classes Not Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers

Maryland Public Schools Kindergarten through Grade 12 (2005-2006)

Core Academic Subject	Number of Classes	Classes with NHQ Teacher	Percent NHQ Classes
English	21,269	4,536	21.33%
Language Arts/Reading	6,570	1,391	21.17%
Foreign Language	9,035	2,471	27.35%

Mathematics	23,946	6,314	26.37%
Science	18,994	4,618	24.31%
Civics & Government	10,001	1,688	16.88%
Economics	317	51	16.09%
The Arts	20,039	2,943	14.69%
History	7,410	1,063	14.35%
Geography	1,153	175	15.18%
Elementary Education	22,561	3,674	16.28%
Total CAS Classes	141,295	28,924	20.47%

Data provided by the Division of Assessment and Accountability, 2006.

The table shows that several critical shortage areas have classes that are not taught by highly qualified teachers, including foreign languages, mathematics, and the sciences.

The overall average shows that 20.47% of all core academic subject classes are not taught by highly qualified teachers.

Due to the continuing critical shortages in computer science, ESOL, mathematics, and special education, several steps have taken by MSDE to address these needs. One of these efforts is the recruitment of highly qualified teachers. In 2004-2005, there were 2,639 Maryland teacher education candidates, an increase of 1.5% over the 2,601 reported for 2003-2004. The largest number of candidates, (1,060), continues to be in elementary education, an area that never has been on the critical shortage list (MSDE Staffing Report, 2008). However, MSDE Staffing Report (2008) states, “it is clear that Maryland institutions of higher education never produced the number of new teachers needed in the state each year” (p.58).

Although Maryland institutions of higher education produced 2,576 teacher candidates in 2004-2005, only (1,439) were hired as new teachers in Maryland in the 2005-2006 school year (MSDE Staffing Report, 2008). There could be several explanations. Some candidates are not native to Maryland and return to their home states, while others may decide to move out-of-state, go to graduate school, pursue careers outside teaching, or not to enter teaching immediately. Thus, this scenario contributed to the phenomenon and decision of the MSDE to recruit international teachers from overseas (i.e., the Philippines) in order to satisfy the schools' need for highly qualified teachers.

Data on Students of Color

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) collects minority data on teacher candidates from Maryland institutions of higher education and on new hires reported by the local school systems. This information is vital because of the state's commitment to a diverse teacher workforce.

The minority designation includes Black/African-American, Asian (i.e., Chinese, Filipino, Koreans, etc.) Hispanic/Latino, and Native American. Of the 8,048 new hires in October 2005, (30.5%) were minorities. Of these minority new hires, 1,023 were beginning new hires while 1,413 were experienced new hires. The percentage of minorities was 18.8% in 2004-2005, rose to 21.3% in 2007-2008, but has dropped back to 16.9% for 2008-2009. There are 428 minority teacher candidate graduates for 2008-2009; the largest number majored in elementary education (164), followed by special education (92), and early childhood (38). All other certification areas such as ESOL, sciences, and mathematics have relatively small numbers of minorities (MSDE Staffing Report, 2010).

For several years, to fill classroom positions, some local school systems have made agreements with foreign countries to hire certified teachers in certain shortage areas. These teachers come to Maryland with teaching credentials from their home countries (e.g., Argentina, Columbia, Ecuador, India, Kenya, Korea, Philippines). In the 2008-2010 report, of the 7,249 new hires reported, 444 (approximately 6%) came from other countries. Of the 4,143 new hires reported in 2009-2010, 107 (approximately 2.7%) came from other countries. Out-of-country new hires teach in many certification areas, but the highest numbers are in ESOL, special education and the sciences (MSDE Staffing Report, 2010). This study particularly focused on the recruitment and hiring of teachers by the Mid-Atlantic Public School System (MAPS) in Maryland.

The next part of the study highlights ideas that led MAPS recruitment officials to recruit teachers from the Philippines: a) there was a need for highly qualified and fully certified teachers, b) there was higher demand for fully qualified teachers where students have the greatest needs, and c) the Philippines had many attributes that make it an ideal nation to recruit teachers.

Filipino teachers—ideal candidates to teach in MAPS?

Whipple (2003) argued that Filipino teachers may have a better chance of being hired in U.S. public school systems than their nonnative English speaking teacher counterparts due to the following reasons— a) history of educational exchanges between the U.S. and the Philippines, b) English as a medium of instruction in Philippine Education, c) comparison of teacher certification standards between the U.S. and the Philippines, d) cost to Filipino teachers for migrating to the U.S, e) cost to MAPS, and f) cost to the state of Maryland.

History of educational exchanges between the U.S. and the Philippines. The history of teacher exchanges mostly involved educators recruited from North America to teach and establish a formal public education system in the Philippine colony. The American educators that emigrated in the early 1900s had a significant influence on the development of a modern Philippine education system (Lardizabal, 1956; Savellano, 1999, Whipple, 2003). Teacher exchanges between the United States and the Philippines began with the 1901 voyages of the Sheridan and the US Army Transport Thomas.² The Philippine education system is closely related to the American system of formal education while other Asian countries are influenced by the English, French or Dutch system (Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

English as a medium of instruction in Philippine Education. The Philippine Department of Education (2006) emphasized the teaching of English as a subject and teaching content areas such as Math and Science with English as a medium of instruction. Bautista (1997) posited that apart from the fact that an adequate command of English is a passport to the modern sector of the Philippine economy, it also makes available the various realms of learning in the Sciences, Arts, and Letters. The motivation for Filipinos to learn English was the quest for lucrative overseas employment and access to global information. One reason educational policy makers in the Philippines preferred English as a medium of instruction was to prepare workers to participate in a global economy (Bautista, 1997; Savellano, 1999; Whipple, 2003). According to Acuna and Miranda (1994), there are two reasons why advocates favor English. First English is seen as an

² The first forty-eight American teachers came to the Philippines on the Sheridan and an additional 540 came on the Thomas (Whipple, 2003). In 1903, American teachers comprised approximately twenty percent of the total pool of teachers in the Philippines.

advantage of gaining employment, especially overseas employment. English is also seen as an advantage for those working with multinationals. Another reason English is taught in the Philippines is that it is perceived as a language of prestige and power. According to Manalang, “the strongest argument for teaching English to as many are willing to learn it and use it, is that it makes it possible for developing nations to understand those who seek to dominate them” (1996, p.29). The Filipino people’s fluency in the English language made them ideal candidates for overseas recruitment.³

Comparison of teacher certification standards between the U.S. and the Philippines.

Teacher certification standards in the Philippines and in many states, especially California and Maryland are similar (Whipple, 2003). The similarities were rooted in the U.S. colonial period between 1901 and 1935 when many of the universities, teacher education programs, and accreditation processes in the Philippines were cloned from the U.S. education system. When the Americans came to the Philippines, a system of education, embodying the ideals of universality, practicality, and democracy, was brought into the islands (Whipple, 2003; Miraflor, 1995; Monroe, 1925).⁴

Examples of similarities in the education systems between Maryland and the Philippines are evident in the undergraduate preparation program for elementary teachers (Table 2). In the University of Maryland systems, elementary teachers take Bachelor of Arts or Science in elementary education to prepare them to teach grades one through six.

³ They became ideal candidates not only as teachers but also as doctors, nurses, engineers, etc.

⁴ In 1901, the United States established the first post-secondary normal schools in the Philippines to train native teachers. In order to learn English and the new prescribed methods, there were set up at least twenty-five normal school sites throughout the Philippines besides the main Philippine Normal in Manila. American teachers also held in-service institutes locally (Whipple, 2003; Miraflor, 1995).

Teacher education programs in the UM systems have designated pre-professional courses and a specified sequence of professional courses. Before students may enroll in courses identified as part of the professional sequence, they must complete the selective admission requirements and be fully admitted to the College of Education's Teacher Education Program. An overall grade point average of 2.5 must be maintained after admission to Teacher Education. All teacher candidates are required to obtain satisfactory evaluations on the College of Education Foundational Competencies/Technical Standards and to attain qualifying scores for the State of Maryland on the Praxis I and Praxis II assessments. Praxis I is required for admission, and Praxis II is required for student teaching and graduation. Student teaching is a yearlong internship, which takes place in a Collaborating School (UM Systems Online Catalogue, 2007- 2008).

In the University of the Philippines, College of Education offers four-year bachelor's degrees on Elementary Education (BEE), which aims to prepare students for teaching in the elementary grades one to six. Not only are students in these two programs rigidly trained on pedagogy but they are also highly steeped on content owing it to the content courses they are required to take from the content-focused colleges in the UP Diliman campus. The main feature of the BEE program is student teaching--a type of apprenticeship designed to develop professional, social and academic insights and skills as the student teacher participates in the actual operation of the school in the teaching as well as the non-teaching activities of the profession. The program is so designed that the last semester of the four-year program is devoted entirely to intensive student teaching (University of the Philippines Systems Online Handbook, 2007-2008). Table 3 shows a

comparison of required teacher education courses between University of Maryland Systems and University of the Philippines Systems.

Table 2. A Comparison of Required Teacher Education Courses

Teacher Education Courses for Elementary Teachers at University of Maryland Systems	Basic Education Curriculum for Elementary Teachers at University of the Philippines System
Principles and Methods of Teaching in Elementary Schools	Principles of Teaching and Learning
Language Development and Reading Acquisition	Reading/Language Development and Current Trends in English Language Teaching
Foundations of Education	Historical Foundations of Education
Reading Instruction and Diagnosis across Content Areas	Developmental Reading for Teachers
Elementary Math Methods	The Teaching of Math
Elementary Social Science	The Teaching of Social Science
Elementary Science	The Teaching of Science
Classroom Management	Guidance and Counseling
Fundamentals for the Classroom Teacher	Human Growth, Learning and Development
Multicultural Perspectives for Teachers	Community Immersions
Student Teaching	Practicum
Teaching Art and Music in the Elementary School	Philippine Music, Materials & Methods
American Government	Philippine Government and Constitution
Computer Technology in Education	Educational Technology
Classroom Assessment	Educational Measurement and Evaluation

Note: The data in column 1 are from University of Maryland Systems Online Catalogue, 2007-2008. The data in column 2 are from University of the Philippines Systems Online Handbook, 2007-2008.

A comparison of the teacher training requirements in the Philippines and in Maryland showed slight variations in course names and descriptions. The only real variations in courses were the American Government and Classroom Management courses required in Maryland to the courses in Philippine Constitution and Guidance Counseling required in the Philippines. The transcripts from Philippine colleges must be evaluated by a county approved agency (i.e., Spantran Inc.). The Bachelor Elementary Education evidence of student teaching, units of graduate studies in education from the Philippines, and passage of PRAXIS I and II are accepted by the state of Maryland as equivalent to a preliminary Maryland teaching credential. The certified teachers then, are assigned varying certification types depending on their teaching experiences and educational attainment. The table below shows the different types of teacher certification in Maryland.

Table 3. Types of Teacher Certification in Maryland

Professional Eligibility Certificate (PEC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid for 5 years issued to an applicant who meets all requirements and • Is not currently employed in a MD local school system.
Standard Professional Certificate I(SPC I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid for 5 years issued to an applicant who meets all certification requirements and • Is employed by a Maryland local school system or an accredited nonpublic school
Standard Professional Certificate II (SPC II)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid for 5 years • Issued to an applicant who completes the SPC I • Is employed by a Maryland school system or an accredited nonpublic school • And submits the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. verification of 3 years of satisfactory professional experience; 6 semester hours of acceptable credit; and 2. A professional development plan for

	the Advanced Professional Certificate (APC)
Advanced Professional Certificate (APC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid for 5 years and • Issued to an applicant who submits the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. verification of 3 years of full time professional school-related experience; 6 semester hours of acceptable credit; and 2. A master's degree or a minimum of 36 semester hours of post-baccalaureate course work which must include at least 21 semester hours of graduate credit (The remaining 15 semester hours may include graduate or undergraduate course work and/or Maryland State Department of Education Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credits, or obtained National Board Certification and earned a minimum of 12 semester hours of approved graduate course work earned after the conferral of the bachelor's or higher degree.
Resident Teacher Certificate (RTC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid for 2 years • Issued to an applicant who has been selected by a local school system to participate in an alternative teacher preparation program.
Conditional Certificate (COND)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid for 2 years • Issued only at the request of a local school system superintendent to an applicant employed in a local school system who does not meet all certification requirements.

Source: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/certification/certification_branch/

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) issues those types of teacher certification in order to ensure, through certification standards, that each student is served by professional educational staff that possess the minimum essential knowledge and

skills needed to achieve outcomes for public education declared by the State Board of Education.

Cost to Filipino teachers for migrating to the U.S. Recruiting Filipino teachers was very costly for the teacher, had variable costs for MAPS, and was a bargain for the state (Whipple, 2003). Filipino teachers brought knowledge and expertise obtained in their own home country for which the United States did not pay. Unlike the average U.S. teachers, the Filipina teachers in this study paid for their own education. Thus, the United States reaped the benefits of the education without paying its costs, because the Filipino teachers paid for their own education (Muncada, 1995). The greatest cost to the school district was paid in salaries to the Filipino teachers who often come with many years of teaching experience and more college and even graduate units than U.S. teachers. Teachers from the Philippines went through a recruitment agency, and paid up from \$12,000 to \$15,000 for the privilege of working in the United States. All of the 80 teachers from cohort 2005 and 108 teachers of cohort 2006 paid \$12,000 to Stellar Agency to be able to work in MAPS. The agency provided airline and hotel accommodations for district personnel to go to the Philippines to interview the candidates and evaluate the candidate's ability to pass the basic skills and content area assessments.⁵ Stellar Agency provided the Filipino teachers at no cost to the district by delegating all the costs to the teachers (Whipple, 2003; Viernes & de Guzman, 2005).

⁵ Stellar Agency allowed the applicants to pay the fees on installment after they arrived in the United States. The fees included all immigration related fees, airfare, reimbursements for district related costs, social security processing, locating for living accommodations, provided a bus ride for the first few weeks, and helped the applicants get established in their new home.

Cost to the school system. The real cost to the school system is the high salary. MAPS hired alternative certification teachers at the lowest levels on the salary schedule. A beginning intern teacher in the school system makes \$36, 941 per year. A Filipino teacher with minimum qualifications cost the school system \$36,015 in annual salary in 2002. The collective bargaining agreement allowed experienced foreign-trained teachers to transfer up to twenty years service and seventy-five college units or more, which placed their salaries between \$58,000 to \$86,000 per year (Whipple 2003).

Cost to the state of Maryland. The state of Maryland saves a significant amount of money through the school system hiring Filipino teachers overseas. First, the state saves the money of supplementing the education of teachers who attended public K-12 and post-secondary education. Second, the state also saves the cost of the school system internship or the paraprofessional training program that is required for the local teachers.

In order to clearly understand the history not only of Filipina women but also Filipinos in general and their relationship with the United States, I present a brief description of the following: a) History of the Philippines, b) Filipino-American History, c) a brief overview of Philippine colonization, d) a brief history of Filipina women and their status in Philippine society, e) Relations between African Americans and Filipinos, and d) teaching from a multicultural perspective: Understanding how Filipina ESOL teachers teach diverse students.

History of the Philippines

A mixture of Indo-Malayan culture and colonization by Spain and the United States has influenced the tropical archipelago of the Philippines. The Philippines consists of over seven thousand islands and encompasses eight major languages that serve as

foundations for more than seventy spoken dialects (Understanding, 1993). This country has endured over four hundred years of colonization. Spanish colonization began in 1521 and lasted for three hundred seventy-seven years, while U.S. imperialism prevailed for forty-eight years until 1946 (Agoncillo, 1974; Cordova, 1983).

Pre-colonial Filipino culture possessed Malayan and Austronesian roots as evidenced in its language and system of writing (Agoncillo, 1974, 1990). Prior to Spanish colonization, individuals from the various islands identified themselves as natives of specific areas. Clothing, headdresses, and tattoo adornments reflected individuals' tribal membership and social status. Ornaments made of gold and both men and women commonly wore precious stones. Names were granted to individuals based on their physical appearance. For instance, if a male child looked strong and healthy, he might be named Si *Malakas* or Strong One. No surnames existed. Women were perceived as holding equal importance to men as shown through pre-colonial practices that allowed women to own, inherit, and sell property, participate in work and trade, and obtain a position as chief of her tribal community if no male heir existed. Furthermore, a husband could not sell property without the consent of his wife. Spiritual practices and beliefs during pre-colonial Philippines included the worship of the sun, moon, animals, and nature, and of deities that were symbolic of the day-to-day functions of its people. They were immortalized relatives who passed on through idols known as *larawan* or *likha*. Oral tradition, music, and dance were prevalent (Agoncillo, 1974; 1990; Umali, 2003).

Spanish rule in the Philippines took place from 1521 to 1898 and had implications for Filipino names, interracial marriage, women's status, religion, language, and education. Under the Spanish regime, Philippine natives were forced to give up their indigenous

names in exchange for their “choice” of a Spanish Christian name. To put an end to the confusion that duplicate pre-colonial first names created for the Spanish, they established a decree in 1849 that forced Filipinos to select more familiar first and last names. This provides an explanation for the commonality of Spanish names like Maria, Jose, Torres and Garcia in present Filipino culture (Agoncillo, 1974; 1990; Umali, 2003).

The status of women was negatively impacted by Spanish take-over. Prior to colonization, Filipinas possessed a position equal to that of their male counterparts. Spaniards, on the other hand, relegated Filipinas to the role of wife and child-bearer. Their rights to property were curtailed. Furthermore, they were taught to be obedient towards their husbands to the point of tolerating abuse from the hands of their spouses. They were shown how to prepare themselves for marriage through the learning of appropriate etiquette, and pushed to become dependent on their husbands.

Spaniards introduced the Catholic religion to the Philippine Islands through missionaries and friar-curates. Within a relatively short time, Filipinos “readily accepted” this religion as their new spiritual framework (Agoncillo, 1974). Millions of Filipinos continue to practice Catholicism to this day. At present, it is the main religion of the Philippines and provides a foundation of cultural values. For example, divorce is still not condoned and continues to be illegal in the Philippines.

The Spanish language infiltrated Filipino dialects, including the main language of Tagalog. Exposure to Spaniards, as opposed to formal education, served as a means for learning Spanish for Filipinos. With time, Filipinos came to incorporate Spanish terms into their own languages. They became a part of Filipina native languages. This can be

seen in tagalong where Spanish words have been integrated using Tagalog spelling: *basura* (i.e., trash), *kabayo* (i.e., horse), *sapatos* (i.e., shoes), and *kusina* (i.e., kitchen).

Prior to Spanish colonization, Filipinos had no means of formal education. Rather, they were educated in the home. Though at first the majority of Filipinos were not offered formal education by the Spaniards, toward the late 1800's primary and secondary schools were opened to them. Boarding schools for boys and girls were established to teach Spanish culture and values to Filipinos, and focused on the training of future teachers. These schools were also initially exclusive to Spanish children (Agoncillo, 1974; 1990; Umali, 2003).

After the Spanish-American War ended in 1898, the Treaty of Paris was established. One of the conditions of this treaty was that the United States pays \$20 million to compensate Spain for the "improvements" it made in the Philippines (Agoncillo, 1974, p. 156). This same year, the Philippines came under the U.S. imperialism. Colonization by the U.S. took place for forty-eight years until its end in 1946. U.S. Americans brought democracy, education, public health and welfare, trade and industry, and language influences with them (Agoncillo, 1974, 1990). First, they introduced and established a democratic government in the Philippines. This development provided a framework for the system of political parties and elections in the country. Unfortunately, both the positive and negative aspects of this form of government were imported to the islands (Agoncillo, 1974).

Of its achievements in the Philippines, the U.S.'s introduction of a public school system and its public health efforts were among its greatest (Agoncillo, 1974). Within the public school system, a focus was put on honesty, social welfare, strong work ethic,

and value of a higher education. Filipinos were taught the English language, which then qualified them for civil service exams and the opportunity to travel to the U.S. to obtain their education as *pensionados* (i.e., government-sponsored students). In addition, public health and sanitation in the Philippines was improved by U.S. occupation. In 1901, a Board of Public Health was established to “instruct the people in hygiene and sanitation and to combat the people’s ignorance and superstitions which were the greatest enemies of medicine and public health” (Agoncillo, p.225).

Free trade relations were created between the U.S. and the Philippines during this time, removing all taxation on imported products from each country. Unfortunately, this provided Filipinos and their government with a false sense of prosperity. Since they only conducted trade with the U.S. and did not establish any trade agreements with other nations. They were put in a position where the U.S. determined the value of Philippine commodities, and felt pressured to succumb to U.S. demands to ensure future trade (Agoncillo, 1974; Umali, 2003).

Residuals from the impact of the English language are still felt in the Philippines and its culture today. During U.S. imperialism, English was ordered as the language for instruction in all public schools. The incorporation of English words into Filipino languages, especially tagalog, occurred (e.g., *boksing* or boxing). *Taglish* and *Enlog*, mixtures of tagalog and English, are still used today. Furthermore, U.S. or American culture was popularized. Many Filipinos left the educational system brainwashed, so to speak, in they learned more about U.S. culture and history than they did about Filipino culture and history (Agoncillo, 1974; Umali, 2003). For instance, the achievements of American heroes such as General MacArthur were discussed and emphasized as opposed

to those of Filipino heroes like Andres Bonifacio or Jose Rizal. As a result, some Filipino students came to digest, admire, and emphasize triumphs of America, particularly of “White” Americans, while deemphasizing the accolades of Filipinos (Agoncillo, 1974; 1990; Umali, 2003).

Filipino American History

Interactions between Filipinos and the United States did not merely take place on the Philippine Islands. As Filipinos became familiarized with U.S. government and culture, we realized that many employment and educational opportunities available to them in the U.S., were less accessible in their homeland. This realization contributed to an increase of Filipino immigration to the United States (Agoncillo, 1974; 1990; Umali, 2003).

Filipino immigration to the United States dates back to the 1700’s can be understood through groups that came in four different waves (Cordova, 1983). The first wave took place between 1763 and 1906. It consisted of “seafaring exiles and working sojourners” who served as a cheap, blue collar work force (Cordova, p.10). Work in Alaskan fisheries and Hawaiian crops were typical. This group of my ancestors came with the hope of achieving the American Dream by gaining access to opportunities for a good education, economic prosperity, and adventure than was available in their homeland of the Philippines.

Second wave Filipinos arrived in the U.S. from 1906 to 1934. My ancestors in this wave also came with the desire to access education and higher income. Lured by U.S. steamship companies, their willingness to leave their homeland increased even more (Cordova, 1983). The first of this group were the Philippine government-sponsored known as pensionados. Pensionados studied law, medicine, education, engineering, and

other professions. Though *pensionados* made up a portion, laborers were the majority of this wave. They were primarily male and single, and ranged in age from sixteen to twenty-two years old (Cordova, 1983). After 1924, Filipinos began immigrating to the mainland. They initially established communities in metropolitan areas on the east coast (e.g., New York City and Chicago) and rural areas on the west coast (e.g., Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Salina valleys).

The third wave began just after World War II in 1945 and lasted for twenty years. The following group of my Filipino ancestors immigrated during the third wave: (a) descendants of White U.S. soldiers who served in the Philippines during the Spanish-American war, (b) war brides, and (c) Filipino military personnel who served in the U.S. armed forces and their dependents, students, and exchange workers. The make-up of this group influenced the Filipino population in the U.S. by increasing its number of Filipinas and Filipino families. During this time, Filipinos born in the Philippines also became eligible for U.S. Citizenship.

The Amendment to the Nationality Act in 1965 allowed a greater number of Filipinos to immigrate to the U.S. and marked the beginning of the fourth wave. Between 1965 and 1984 alone; 664,938 Filipinos relocated to the U.S. and were comprised mostly of professionals with college degrees and those with technical training and knowledge (Juan, 1992). Between 1966 and 1974, 60-70% of these immigrants were professionals (Strobel, 1996). They were pulled towards the U.S. by a perceived promise of economic prosperity, and pushed out of the Philippines by the political and economic crises under the Marcos martial law and dictatorship. Those arriving from 1965 to the late 1970's were known as *the brain drain* since they comprised the first large group of professionals

and technical workers to immigrate to the U.S. (Strobel, 1996). It is quite interesting that the notion of *brain drain* continued for the past four decades in the Philippines, where many of the country's highly skilled and highly educated professionals including teachers, nurses, doctors, and engineers leave their homeland for better opportunities in life.

The 1900's to 1950's represent a particularly difficult time for Filipinos in the United States. Anti-Filipino sentiments, a partial result of European Americans feeling threatened by the Filipino work force, lead to several congressional attempts to limit the freedoms experienced by this group. Many referred to Filipinos as *little brown monkeys*, at times, *niggers* (Buenaventura, 1997; Cordova, 1983; Umali, 2003). Limitations were placed on Filipinos' rights to own property in the U.S., immigrate to the U.S., obtain U.S. citizenship, engage in interracial relationships, and access public areas (e.g., hotels, businesses, etc.) (Cordova, 1983). Because they were only seen as U.S. nationals and not citizens, Filipinos were prohibited from owning property and the right to vote (Buenaventura, 1997; Umali, 2003).

Congress stunted immigration through the Philippine Independence or Tydings McDuffie Act of 1934. This act limited the quota of immigrating Filipinos to only fifty per year, removed U.S. national status from Philippine-born individuals establishing them as aliens, and guaranteed Philippine independence by 1944. Additional limitations were put on Filipino Americans' freedoms. During the 1930's, signs that read "Positively No Filipinos Allowed" were displayed by hotels in Stockton, California (Cordova, 1983). Many of the *Manongs* (Filipinos) were forced to live in impoverished neighborhoods where gambling houses, prostitution, and bars prevailed (Buenaventura, 1997). Though

Filipinos outnumbered Filipinas by 14 to 1 in the 1920's and 30's, anti-miscegenation laws were still commonplace. *Manongs* and White women who sought one another's companionship in taxi-dance halls, where the men paid to dance with these women, were often harassed and discriminated against (Buenaventura; Cordova; Umali). Section Sixty of the Civil Code mandated that "all marriages of White persons with Negroes, Mongolians or Mulattoes are illegal and void," dishonoring such interracial unions (Cordova, p.117). After a court rules in 1933 that Filipinos were of Malay descent, not falling within the category Mongolian, individual states amended their anti-miscegenation laws to include those of a Malay ancestry. Such a law remained in effect in California legislation up until 53 years ago in 1948 when it was found to be unconstitutional (Buenaventura, 1997).

The population of Filipinos in the United States continues to be on the rise. The Asian/Pacific Islander category has grown from 7.3 million in 1990 (1990 Census) to 10.4 million in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). In 2000, Filipino Americans in that Asian/Pacific Islander category numbered at 1,819,444; whereas their count in 1990 was at 1,406,770. In California alone, Filipino Americans increased from 731,685 in 1990 (1990 Census) to 910,651 in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). With over 170,000 Filipinos legally entering the U.S. annually (Juan, 1992), Filipinos neared their projected number of two million in the millennium. This number does not even include the number of undocumented Filipinos in the U.S. (Juan; U.S. Census Bureau). Filipino Americans make up one of the largest Asian American groups in the United States, second only to Chinese Americans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). This includes approximately 30% of Filipinos in the U.S. who are native-born (Wolf, 1997).

The Filipino Family

Both the history in the Philippines as well as that in the United States have shaped how the family structure, cultural values, and experiences of Filipinos and Filipino Americans look at present. Filipino Americans are currently one of the largest Asian groups in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001), and have been impacted by a long history in this country. The next few sections will discuss Filipino family, cultural values, and experiences in the United States. Though this information will provide a foundation for understanding the worldview and realities of Filipinos in the U.S., it is not intended to encompass all intragroup variations that exist, or to be generalizable to Filipino/Filipino Americans as a whole.

Family relations are an important component of the Filipino American experience. While in the U.S., Filipino American parents are faced with the challenge of raising their children with traditional customs and values in a society that is very different from their culture of origin. Traditional values include a tendency toward collectivism and the belief that family is the core of one's life; it is the center (Cimmarusti, 1996; Espiritu, 2001; Wolf, 1997).

Kane (1998) determined that Asian families expect a high level of honor, deference, and respect among children, while encouraging unquestioning obedience. This is parallel to the experience of Filipino American children who are socialized to perceive their parents with unconditional respect. In general, Filipino mothers and fathers expect obedience from their children and see themselves at the forefront for ensuring the family's well being (Cimmarusti, 1996). In the daily functions of the family, women and men seem to hold relatively equitable positions, the only difference being that women are

inhibited from exerting their power in public arenas (Cimmarusti, 1996). Therefore, she defers to her male partner and appears to be more submissive when in the public eye. Many times, males are perceived as the head of the family, while the female maintains the family's finances (Espiritu, 2001; Fulgado, 1992; Umali, 2003.) Though these roles entail varied responsibilities, they are both positions with power. Despite the power differentials that exist between spouses, women hold a high status that is respected within the family (Fulgado, 1992).

Though both parents work in many Filipino families, women are often still expected to fulfill the more traditionally female duties in the home such as household chores, cooking, and disciplining the children in addition to their work commitments. Many times, this may result in women losing their sense of self, experiencing high levels of stress, and feeling guilty if they choose to focus on commitments outside of the home or family (Espiritu, 2001). Espiritu found that women in these types of situations tend to define their experience through racial terms (e.g., experiences as Filipinas), not as engendered individuals (i.e., experiences as women). In other words, they saw their plight as a result of being Filipina, dismissing the fact that women from other racial and ethnic groups may encounter similar experiences.

A Brief Overview of Philippine Colonization

More than four hundred years ago, on the Philippine island of Mactan, a tribal chieftain, Lapu-Lapu, killed the European explorer Ferdinand Magellan. Filipinos at this time lived in many separate communities, linked by a well-developed system of trade and some loose political compacts, with widespread literacy. Little of the written record from

this period survives, however, for the later Spanish authorities determined to expunge all pagan writings (Agoncillo, 1974; 1990; Umali, 2003).

A few decades after Magellan's death, Spanish conquerors returned in force and colonized the Philippine archipelago, but throughout the next three centuries the new rulers had to deal with uprisings from the native population that were increasingly frequent and increasingly more large scale. Although suffused with heavy religious overtones, Filipino resistance to foreign domination was a constant theme of these years. But resistance was not universal. Some Filipinos found that they could secure privileges for themselves by cooperating with the colonizers; and the popular uprisings were often directed a much at this domestic elite as at the Spanish (Agoncillo, 1974; 1990; Umali, 2003).

At the end of the nineteenth century, Philippine resistance coalesced for the first time into a national struggle: the Revolution of 1896. Sidetracked for a while in 1897, fighting resumed a year later, but as the revolutionaries delivered the final blow to their Spanish masters, a new colonial ruler appeared: the United States. Filipinos fought valiantly for their independence, but ultimately the superior arms of the U.S. troops and the insurgents' own political weaknesses proved insurmountable for the Filipino military (Agoncillo, 1974; 1990; Umali, 2003).

The attitude toward the U.S.-Philippine War was ambivalent in both countries. In the Philippines, while many gave their lives to repel the foreign colonizer, others collaborated with the U.S. against their compatriots. Generally, these folks were the same elites who had just a short time before served the Spanish. In the United States, while much of the population applauded the possibilities of another U.S. colonial

conquest, a powerful minority spoke out for Philippine freedom (Agoncillo, 1974; 1990; Umali, 2003).

During World War II, the Japanese conquered the Philippines from the United States and once again Filipinos fought back. And also, once again, some Filipinos—by and large the same elite—collaborated with the foreign ruler. When the U.S. forces returned, the elite switched sides again (Agoncillo, 1974/1990; and Gonzales, 1999).

In 1946, the U.S. government granted the Philippines independence, keeping a long-standing promise in good part as a result of pressure from U.S. domestic economic interests. But although colonialism was thus coming to an end, Filipinos were not truly sovereign. U.S. economic and military domination of the Philippines would continue, although the country was now nominally independent. The peasantry of the Central Luzon region of the country, many of whom were veterans of the anti-Japanese struggle, opposed this “neocolonial” situation; and they opposed even more strongly the exploitation they suffered at the hands of their landlords. Resentment and repression eventually led to a new guerilla war, the Huk Rebellion. The United States stepped in to help the Philippine elites, such as politicians, educators, and businessmen defeat the Huks, thereby preserving U.S. interests and elite privilege (Agoncillo, 1974; 1990;Gonzales, 1999).

Two decades later, resistance to the status quo was revived as students, peasants, and workers pressed for an end to foreign domination and the crushing inequities of wealth and power. The government of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos responded by declaring martial law. The U.S. government, then at war in Vietnam, supported the dictatorship so as to protect its military bases and foreign investments. As Filipinos’

living standards declined, resistance resumed; and when the resistance was met with oppression, the resistance even grew stronger. Neither U.S. weapons nor cosmetic changes in the dictatorship could tame the popular upsurge. And within the United States, anti-interventionist movement pressed forward to cut off U.S. backing for Marcos (Agoncillo, 1974; 1990;Gonzales, 1999).

Finally, after the murder of his leading political opponent, Benigno Aquino Marcos became so discredited that his chief props of support—the army and the rich (internally), and the United States(externally)—ultimately abandoned him to protect themselves. A surge of people’s power ousted the dictator and Corazon Aquino, the wife of Benigno, took over the presidency. The struggle of the Filipinos for genuine independence and social justice had not ended, but it had at least reached a new level (Agoncillo, 1974; 1990;Gonzales, 1999).

From the Marcos dictatorship to the politically bankrupt regimes of Corazon Aquino, Fidel Ramos, Joseph Estrada, and Macapagal Arroyo, the majority of Filipinos suffered intolerable hardships and unconscionable deprivation of the means to satisfy basic human needs (such as food, shelter, and medical care). Countless atrocities and human rights violations perpetrated by the neocolonial state since the Marcos era are still unaccounted for, haunting us up to this day. Severe unemployment linked to the International Monetary fund(IMF)’s to World Bank (WB)’s “structural conditionalities” and government policies of privatization with deregulation seem to have contributed to driving millions of Filipinos to seek work abroad (Gonzales, 1999).

With this brief history of Philippine colonization, I hope to engage the minds of those who seek to understand the past in the present for interpreting the future of the

Philippines and Filipinos abroad. The historic and ongoing role of the United States in the Philippines, particularly the hiring of Filipino teachers to teach in American public schools is quite complex, particularly when also considering the status of Filipino women and Filipino relationships with African Americans.

Filipina Women and Their Status in Philippine Society

Gonzales (1996) posited that the construction of gender in contemporary Philippines has many pillars. The Philippines was colonized twice—by Spain from 1565 to 1898 and by the United States from 1900 to 1946—and was under Japanese military occupation from 1941-1945. For most of the years after independence in 1946, the U.S. continued to control military bases in the islands, which was often viewed by both women and men as a continuing form of neo-colonialism that called for a nationalist response (Bradstock, 2006). Thus, notions of gender, though based on indigenous models, were constantly recast through feminist and nationalist responses to these occupations as well as through notions of gender instilled by the occupiers.

Some scholars believe that Filipinas had historically enjoyed a relatively high status compared to men. Among rights, women could inherit, play important public roles, and name their children. Sons were not preferred over daughters. The Spanish colonials attempted to Catholicize and Hispanicize the islands' inhabitants and this led to greater seclusion of Filipina women and the curtailing of inheritance and marital rights they had possessed before colonization. Many Filipinas did not adopt the prescribed womanly reticence, however; *Gabriela Silang*, for instance, led a rebellion against the Spanish in the seventeenth century. Two hundred years later, in the last decade of Spanish rule, Filipina women demanded education as a means of improving the status of women, as

did their counterparts elsewhere in Asia. Women also played a significant role in the independence struggle against Spain, serving as sentries for the Katipunan, the main independence group, and even, in one known case, leading troops. The end of Spanish colonialism did not lead to independence, however, as the Americans swept in to claim the islands (Gonzales, 1999).

Even against the backdrop of continuing colonialism, Filipina women worked to establish new roles and identities for women (Bradstock, 2006). Several explicitly feminist organizations, such as the *Asociacion Feminista Filipina* (founded 1904) worked for social welfare, temperance, and public governance roles for women. In 1906, the *Asociacion Feminista Ilonga* made women's suffrage its goal. And in 1909, the women's journal *Feminista* was founded with the objective "to revindicate the rights of women. Filipina women took part in international; feminist movements as well. The struggle for the vote continued for three decades, culminating in the victorious plebiscite on May 1937, which made Filipinas the first women in Asia to gain the vote (Gonzales, 1999).

What was the meaning of the vote in the absence of full national independence, however, some feminists later downplayed the significance of women's suffrage under these conditions. Yet others have noted that women thereby joined Filipino men in the right to express themselves in public governance, even under the limitations of colonialism. Historians claimed that in the succeeding decades, during and after World War II, enfranchised women worked alongside men for national liberation (during the war) and for social improvement and community issues (in the post-war decades). Most believed that the conditions of women would improve as women and men worked for

broader national goals. Few expressly addressed gender issues during those years after women's enfranchisement (Meade and Hanks, 2006; Gonzales, 1999).

Filipinas stand out among Asian women and in many respects, among women anywhere in the world. Her uncharacteristic spheres of control and her high visibility have provoked many observers to content that she is in no need of women's liberation. She is not veiled, denied access to education because of her gender, or shunted to a narrow range of career opportunities. They do well in the professions that there are both formal and informal caps on their admittance to universities, medical schools and law schools (Bradstock, 2006). In the business world, Filipina women become corporate leaders. Since they are stereotyped as more honest and industrious than men, they often are the financial officers of big and small organizations. However, very seldom are they in the top status positions or president or vice-president (Bradstock, 2006).

Since politics is often an entrée to economic opportunity in the Philippines, many women and men have been politically ambitious for economic as well as political goals. Women have served as governors, mayors, cabinet ministers, senators, congresswoman, vice-president and even presidents of the country, though men still fill more than 90 percent of these positions (Bradstock, 2006). Evaluating the political role of women over time is complicated because of the many changes in the system of government. During the Marcos dictatorship (1965-1986), the political system was revised numerous times to meet the personal political needs of the president. In general, the women's political participation in the Philippines has been low (Gonzales, 1999; Whipple, 2003).

The Filipina woman shares with other women in other parts of the world the double bind of total responsibility for domestic tasks and childcare as well as the need to work

outside the home. Poverty and huge families, coupled with a desperate struggle for education, have only accelerated the dominant trend of rural and urban women being forced into the badly paid labor force. Their workload and their general health and living conditions crush both the spirit and body (Bradstock, 2006).

Politically, women were, and are, at the mercy of government policy largely fashioned in response to the preeminent position of the Catholic Church. Divorce is illegal and abortion is outlawed. Birth control is legal, but the Church only approves the rhythm method. Thus, one finds widespread infidelity, but no escape from loveless marriages (Bradstock, 2006). Women in government service and some other sectors do have paid maternity leave, but most women remain uncovered by such policies yet are vulnerable to state dictates about their private lives. Muslim women are prohibited from getting abortions, but they can be divorced, though typically at the instigation of their husbands. To initiate a divorce, Muslim Filipina women must have the help of their male guardian, usually their father or brother. Their husbands are also entitled to have up to four wives. Muslim Filipinas also have had much less access to education than their Christian counterparts, though this notion has changed in recent years with the advent of Arabic language primary schools and some colleges funded by Middle Eastern groups (Bradstock, 2006; Gonzales, 1999).

Crushing poverty has forced many women into prostitution to support their families. Historically, the bulk of the prostitution has been concentrated around the U.S. military bases: Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay Naval Base. A more sinister and contemporary problem is tourism prostitution, which employs hundreds of thousands in Manila alone (Schirmer, Stephen & Shalom, 2006). Women suffer not only from poverty

but also from outright economic and political discrimination. Those women who are working earn generally less than what men receive. Part of the disparity in pay reflects the facts that most women are concentrated in female-dominated occupations like teaching, nursing, secretarial work, and domestic help. As in the rest of the world, jobs considered “women’s work” are de-valued and paid far less than are men’s jobs of comparable value, effort, and skill (Schirmer, Stephen & Shalom, 2006).

The Philippine Civil Code considers women in the same category as retarded and mentally deranged (Schirmer, Stephen & Shalom, 2006). Husbands legally control and administer the entire family’s property. The husband also has a right to object to the wife’s job if he can support the family and to be involved in any court suit affecting his wife. The wife has no such parallel rights. Other provisions of the Civil Code discriminate against women in terms of mixed marriages, freedom to choose one’s residence, parental authority, legal separation, and widowhood. Title V—Rights and Obligations between Husband and Wife of the Civic Code of the Philippines states that:

Art. 112. The husband is the administrator of the conjugal property, unless there is a stipulation in the marriage settlements conferring the administration upon the wife. She may also administer the conjugal partnership in other cases specified in this Code.

Art. 114. The wife cannot, without the husband's consent acquire any property by gratuitous title, except from her ascendants, descendants, parents-in-law, and collateral relatives within the fourth degree.

Thus, while they may not have an agenda for change identical to their sisters in other nations, Filipinas like women everywhere face discrimination, political

underrepresentation, economic disadvantage, treatment as sex objects, and the double pressures of domestic responsibilities and the necessity of outside employment. Facing such pressures, one may conclude logically that recruitment to teach in the U.S. may be more of a welcomed opportunity for some Filipino women than we may have initially surmised.

Relations between African Americans and Filipinos

Relations between African Americans and Filipinos had their beginnings at the end of the 19th century. During the Filipino American war, which began in 1899, over six thousand African American soldiers were dispensed to the Philippines to assist with the spread of U.S. imperialism (Powell, 1998). African American soldiers readily developed positive relationships and rapport with Philippine natives. They often viewed Filipinos more as “cousins” rather than the “enemy” and at times experienced U.S. efforts as “an unholy war of conquest” (Powell, p.24). African American soldiers experienced dissonance as they contributed to the efforts of a government and country that had oppressed them and their ancestors through slavery and segregation. In essence, they were helping the U.S. prevent the Filipino people (i.e., another group of color) from gaining their independence (Powell, 1998). Though Filipinos looked at African Americans with fear, many came to appreciate them in the same way they embraced their “Negrito” brothers and sisters. The Negritos are an indigenous people of the Philippines whose physical appearance resembles that of many African Americans.

From tentatively fearful and ambivalent beginnings, the trend seems to encompass a combination of positive and negative relations between African Americans and Asian Americans and Asian Americans/ Filipino immigrants in the United States. The 1992

Los Angeles riots reflect the growing tensions between Asian Americans (i.e., Korean Americans) and African Americans that ensue to the present (Sonenshein, 1996; Hutchinson, 1991). To some extent, African Americans have experienced Asian Americans as a threat to resources such as well-paying jobs (Hutchinson, 1991; Guthrie & Hutchinson, 1995). Furthermore, Kohatsu, Dulay, Lam, Concepcion, Perez, Lopez, and Euler (2000) and Hughes (2003) found that Asian Americans subscribed to many of the negative stereotypes that persist in the U.S. about African American individuals; while Asian American men reported more negative experiences with African Americans. In addition, U.S. born Asian Americans interacted with and perceived African Americans more positively than did their foreign-born counterparts.

Until this point, the literature has examined the experience of Filipino in the United States within their community and the Filipino family unit. However, their exposure to diverse racial groups is another part of Filipino immigrants' experiences in the United States. It is important to not only critically look at how Filipino immigrants understand themselves and each other but how other racial groups in the U.S. perceive them as well.

Race relations in the U.S. have primarily focused on the concerns of African Americans and European Americans. Unfortunately, literature in this area has historically ignored issues between groups of color (Cummings & Lambert, 1997; Jones, 1997; Kohatsu et.al., 2000; Lee, 2000; Washington, 1990; Umali, 2003). Thus, literature examining historical race relations and attitudes of Asian Americans, as well as the connections between Filipino Americans and other peoples of color in the U.S. are few (Kohatsu, et.al.; San Buenaventura, 1998). Because of the specificity and scarcity of the

literature on this topic, documents involving Asian Americans in general will be cited, where those focusing on Filipina immigrants are not available.

Of course, Filipinos were not the first to be subjected to United States' imperialism. In fact, American Indians and African Americans experienced the removal of their rights and freedoms by the U.S. government on several levels. Many of the tactics and strategies that were implemented with American Indians and African Americans were used as justification for colonizing the Philippine Islands and its people (San Buenaventura, 1998; Umali, 2003).

Most, if not all, of the groups of color in the United States have experienced colonization and imperialism by the U.S. and/or European countries. Skin color has historically been used by White colonialists to determine one's status, such that those with lighter skin color experienced greater levels of prestige and respect (Gomez, 2000). This notion of White superiority sets the standards for what is considered beautiful and valuable with the lightest individuals at the top of the hierarchy and those with the darkest skin colors inhabiting the lowest levels (Isaacs, 1968; Sahay & Piran, 1997; Umali, 2003). Hall (1994, 1995) coined the term *bleaching syndrome* to refer to the process of African Americans, Latino Americans and Filipino Americans internalizing a white-skinned ideal, with a resulting disdain for darker skin color. In order to reach this ideal, some individuals will use marriage as a means for accessing what is believed to be a higher status (Hall, 1994/1995/1997/1998). These perceptions of skin color continue to exist in societies that have a history of colonization (Isaacs, 1968).

The role of skin color has been researched in various ethnic cultures (Gomez, 2000; Hall, 1994; Sahay & Piran, 1997; Umali, 2003). Findings indicated that African

American, Latino American, and Asian American individuals who desire assimilation to the dominant White culture hold light skin as the ideal (Gomez, 2000; Hall, 1994; Sahay & Piran, 1997; Umali, 2003). They experience a level of dissatisfaction with their own physical appearance, which is not in alignment with the lighter-skinned ideal, and may experience internal dissonance as a result of aspiring towards a goal that they are physically unable to achieve.

The roles that skin color and physical appearance play in race relations have also been a part of the history between Filipinos and African Americans. This history specifically began in 1899, during the Filipino-American war, marking the first efforts by the U.S. to colonize the Philippine Islands (Umali, 2003). Four regiments of American soldiers were assigned to the Philippines during this war (Zinn, 1995). This totaled 6,000 African American soldiers throughout the Philippines (Powell, 1998; San Buenaventura, 1998). These soldiers experienced difficulty imposing imperialist efforts on a people that were physically more similar to themselves than the soldiers themselves were to the White dominant culture of the U.S. Dominant U.S. society, and more specifically White U.S. soldiers, oftentimes referred to Filipinos as *niggers* and perceived Filipinos in a negative vein similar to how they did African Americans (Powell, 1998; San Buenaventura, 1998; Zinn, 1995).

Although Filipinos are reported as first viewing African American soldiers with “awe and fear,” apparently, they later came to accept them for the more respectful and benevolent treatment they received in comparison to that by White soldiers (Powell, 1998, p. 27). Filipinos came to refer to African American soldiers as *Negritos Americanos* (Powell, 1998). *Negritos* are indigenous people of the Philippines and in

using the term *Negritos Americanos* they displayed an acceptance of African American soldiers as very much like Filipinos, just American. Overall, African American soldiers easily developed respectful rapport with Filipinos (Powell, 1998).

When Filipinos immigrated to the United States, they quickly discovered that this camaraderie for the “little brown brother” did not exist in the U.S. mainland (Takaki, 1989, p. 324). Instead, their physical appearance limited the extent to which they were received, accepted, and treated with respect. Rather than opening the eyes of U.S. society, American imperialism resulted in an overall attitude of exclusionism in the homeland (Takaki, 1989). Immigrant Filipinos were often confronted with racial discrimination and stereotyping such that they were confused with other Asian American groups. They were labeled as primitive and savage-like, similar to labels placed on American Indians, and were bombarded with terms like *monkey* and *goo-goo* along with discriminatory stereotypes and images (Takaki, 1989).

Anti-Filipino sentiments were evident in segregation and legislature as well. Filipino immigrants were confronted with both signs that prohibited them from entering places of business and high levels of violence and hate against them in California alone (Cordova, 1983; Takaki, 1989). They were incorporated into anti-miscegenation laws and various immigration laws that either limited the influx of immigration or removed their right as American nationals (Cordova, 1983; and Takaki, 1989). The experience that Filipinos faced as they immigrated to the United States was tainted by the racism that has been so prevalent in this country’s history. Jones (1997) states:

Racism in the U.S. is as old as the country itself. We cannot think about what it means to be an American without contemplating the horrors of racism that dot our

historical landscape. Yes, racism is a real problem in the U.S. and it always has been. (p. 365).

The issue of racism is made more complicated by the fact that a racial hierarchy exists in the U.S. such that Whites are pinned against non-Whites and that which divides Blacks from non-Blacks (Lee, 2000). Although some may agree that race relations have improved, aversive racism (i.e., subtle, indirect forms of racism) is alive and strong (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1991).

The impact of colonization and racism persist today and are evident in the history and status of present race relations. Events that are part of the history of U.S. race relations involving Asian Americans include a Los Angeles riot in 1871 where 21 Chinese individuals were shot, hanged, or burned. Segregation, anti-miscegenation, and immigration laws that limited the freedoms of people of color through the middle to late part of the 20th century are also examples of the tumultuous race relations that have existed throughout U.S history. Although these events are part of our past, there continue to be signs that on a large scale present race relations are deteriorating and racial tensions are resurfacing (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1991).

As a result of the history of race relations in the U.S. and their current statuses, Asian Americans often see themselves as non-Americans, regardless of citizenship, as they can never be real Americans (Espiritu, 2001; Umali, 2003). This might be a result of the skin color bias or experiences of colonization previously discussed, where dominant White culture may be perceived as the

ideal or standard. Perhaps it is a consequence of the continued interpersonal racism that Asian Americans continue to experience in U.S. society today.

This literature is not offered as a comprehensive representation of reality, but merely the limited scope of available research. In spite of the literature provided, not all people of color see light skin as more valuable and beautiful, while not all European Americans, African Americans, and Asian Americans endorse negative stereotypes about each other. Rather, the research findings provide some insight into aspects that may impact how racial groups perceive themselves and one another, as well as an overview of the current state of race relations that exist between and within these groups.

Race relations involving Asian Americans need to be further investigated. Since literature on race relations has historically focused on issues of and between European Americans and African Americans, the dynamics and interactions involving Asian Americans and those between groups of color have long been neglected (Hein, 2000; Kohatsu, et.al., 1998). This point is evidenced by Filipino Americans and immigrants in particular. In order to enrich our understanding of how immigrant teachers interact with students of color in American setting, the next section describes the experiences of these teachers as they attempt to survive and thrive as teachers in one urban public school district.

Definition of Terms

This section of the study presents definitions of several terms used in the research studies reviewed.

Biographical Narrative. A form of narrative study in which the researcher writes and records the experiences of another person's life (Creswell, 2008).

EB-1. Aliens with Extraordinary Ability and EB-1, Outstanding Professors and Researchers; Priority workers. There are three sub-groups: 1. Foreign nationals with extraordinary ability in sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics OR 2. Foreign nationals that are outstanding professors or researchers with at least three years' experience in teaching or research and who are recognized internationally. OR 3. Foreign nationals that are managers and executives subject to international transfer to the United States. (www.uscis.gov)

EB-2. Members of Professions with Advanced degrees or Exceptional ability (*not seeking a National Interest Waiver*), and; Professionals holding advanced degrees (Ph.D., master's degree, or at least five years of progressive post-baccalaureate experience) or persons of exceptional ability in sciences, arts, or business. (www.uscis.gov)

EB-3. Professionals, EB-3 Skilled Workers and EB3, Other workers. Skilled workers, professionals, and other workers. (www.uscis.gov)

An immigrant usually has to go through a three-step process to get permanent residency. The whole process may take several years, depending on the type of immigrant category and the country of birth. An applicant (alien) in the United States can obtain two permits while the case is pending after a certain stage is passed in green card processing (filing of I-485). The first is a temporary work permit known as the

Employment Authorization Document (EAD), which allows the alien to take employment in the United States. The second is a temporary travel document, advance parole, which allows the alien to re-enter the United States. Both permits confer benefits that are independent of any existing status granted to the alien. For example, the alien might already have permission to work in the United States under an H-1B visa.

(www.uscis.gov)

Epiphany. A sudden, intuitive perception of or insight into the reality or essential meaning of something, usually initiated by some simple or commonplace occurrence or experience (Creswell, 2008).

ESOL- English for Speakers of Other Languages. Many programs, regardless of target population use the term ESOL to refer to students who are speakers of multiple languages before they come to learn English. English may be third, fourth, or even further down the list of languages they speak (Chou, 2005). In this study, this term refers to the English program that teaches English language learners four areas—Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing.

Filipino/a Teachers. Teachers from the Philippines that were recruited and hired by a Human Resource Representative to teach in MAPS, Maryland (Whipple, 2003).

Highly qualified, fully certified teacher. A highly qualified and fully certified teacher is one who has been fully licensed or certified by the state and not had any certification or licensure waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis (Whipple, 2003; Hill, 2002, p.1).⁶

⁶ A fully certified and highly qualified teacher is defined in this study as an educator who has: a) a masters degree or higher, b) passed major examinations such as PRAXIS I and PRAXIS II, and c) advanced professional teaching certificate in the state of Maryland.

H1-B Visa. A non-immigrant visa in the United States under the Immigration & Nationality Act, section 101(a)(15)(H). It allows U.S. employers to temporarily employ foreign workers in specialty occupations.⁷

Lived experiences. Individual stories from participants' personal experiences (their jobs, their homes), their culture (racial or ethnic), and their historical contexts (time and place) (Creswell, 2008).

Narrative Inquiry. Refers to stories lived and told (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000 p.20). Narrative might be the term assigned to any text or discourse, or it might be text used within the context of a mode of inquiry in qualitative research with a specific focus on stories told by individuals. It is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected. It begins with the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals. (Polkinghorne, 1995)

NCLB- is the latest federal legislation that enacts the theories of standards-based education reform, which is based on the belief that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education. The Act requires states to develop assessments in basic skills to be given to all students in certain grades, if those states are to receive federal funding for schools. The Act does not assert a national achievement standard; standards are set by each individual state. President Bush signed it into law on January 8, 2002 (Abedi, 2004).⁸

⁷ If a foreign worker in H-1B status quits or is dismissed from the sponsoring employer, the worker can find another employer, apply for a change of status to another non-immigrant status, or must leave the US (Whipple, 2003; Hill, 2002).

⁸ *NCLB* is a United States Act of Congress that was originally proposed by President George W. Bush immediately after taking office. The bill, shepherded through the Senate by Senator Ted Kennedy, one of the bill's sponsors, received overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress. The

NESTs- Native English Speaking Teachers. Teachers whose first language is English.

Crystal (2003) gives a quite simple definition of the native speaker: A term used in linguistics to refer to someone for whom a particular language is a first language or mother tongue. The implication is that this native language, having been acquired naturally during childhood, is the one about which a speaker will have the most reliable instructions, and whose judgments about the way the language is used can therefore be trusted.

NNESTs- Nonnative English Speaking Teachers. Nonnative speakers are defined as people who, at one point of their life, in addition to speaking a first language, have (consciously) learned an academically accepted form of the English language. In this review, they are teachers whose native language is not English (Mahboob, 2003).

MAPS- Mid-Atlantic Public Schools (pseudonym). A large school system in the state of Maryland and the 18th largest in the nation. With a projected enrollment of more than 134,000 students, the system is among the largest and most diverse in the nation.⁹

Teachers' Knowledge. The knowledge the teacher has about themselves, their students, their working environment, etc. (Elbaz, 1983).

TESOL- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Founded in 1966, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other languages, INC. (TESOL) is an international professional association with more than 15,000 members. TESOL also represents another 54,000

House of Representatives passed the bill on May 23, 2001, and United States Senate passed it on June 14, 2001.

⁹ The school system currently employs approximately 16,000 full-time employees, which includes approximately 10,000 teachers.

language specialists worldwide through its more than 90 affiliates. TESOL's mission is to develop the expertise of its members and others involved in teaching English to speakers of other languages to help them foster effective communication in diverse settings while respecting the language rights of individuals (www.tesol.org/def/).¹⁰

USCIS- United States Citizenship and International Service. The government agency that oversees lawful immigration to the United States. USCIS secures America's promise as a nation of immigrants by providing accurate and useful information to our customers, granting immigration and citizenship benefits, promoting an awareness and understanding of citizenship, and ensuring the integrity of our immigration system (Whipple, 2003).

This study highlights the Filipina NNES ESOL teachers' construction, conceptualization, and interrogation of our own identities in relation to our social worlds. Through our stories of identities, I searched for the meanings of our lived experiences as language learners and as ESOL teachers in relation to the (de) construction of our identities as persons and as teachers. Having the following research questions in mind, I sought to understand our cultural and linguistic backgrounds, family stories, and prior experiences in learning and teaching practices.

¹⁰ TESOL articulates and advances standards for professional preparation and employment, continuing education, and student programs; links groups worldwide to enhance communication among language specialists; produces high-quality programs, services, publication and products, and promotes advocacy to further the profession.

Research Questions

This study applied a narrative inquiry approach to explore the following central research question: How are five Filipina NNES ESOL teachers constructing our identities as surviving and thriving in the context of becoming and being teachers in MAPS? There are five related sub-questions, which include: (1) How do Filipina NNES ESOL teachers' cultural and linguistic learning experiences (at home and school) contribute to our identities? (2) How do Filipina teachers' relationships with others (families, students, and administrators) influence the way we see ourselves as NNES ESOL teachers? (3) How does the context of the teaching community in MAPS contribute to Filipina ESOL teachers' cultural, linguistic and professional identities? (4) In what particular ways do Filipina NNES ESOL teachers navigate teaching and learning (e.g., interacting with students, colleagues, parents, and administrators)? (5) How do Filipina NNES ESOL teachers envision our future career paths? In the next chapter of this study, I discuss my evolving conceptualization of (de) construction of identities in order to explore theories and concepts of identity that informed my research.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter of the study presents several related studies on teachers' lived experiences, identities, and perceptions of self, based on narrative inquiry research. Although my focus questions specifically relate to Filipina NNES ESOL teachers in MAPS, I also included studies involving other nonnative English-speaking teachers such as teachers from Taiwan, China, Korea, Canada and the U.S. Given this scenario, I included research that took place in settings that are racially and/or linguistically diverse. Since most urban areas in the United States are at least racially diverse I have not found my criteria for racial diversity a limiting factor. The research on Filipino teachers' experiences in the United States, however, is much more limited.

Literature Review: Search Criteria

I searched ERIC, DRUM, JSTOR, Psychological Abstracts, and other databases for all studies with the following descriptors: *narrative inquiry, lived experiences, Filipino teachers in the U.S., international teachers, hiring international teachers, teachers' self-perceptions, teaching successes, teaching challenges, teachers' knowledge, teacher education, teacher beliefs, teacher development, lived experiences, restorying, teacher identities, female teachers, Filipino teachers, Asian teachers, nonnative English speaking teachers, native speaking teachers*. These words were cross-searched with certain outcome words such as *teacher professional development, knowledge growth, behavioral change, cognition, perceptions, and beliefs*. I also obtained citations from other reviews and articles. In particular, every effort was made to find all studies cited in previous reviews. Relevant peer-reviewed publications on teaching research emerged from the following journals: *TESOL Quarterly, Language Testing Research, Journal of Language,*

Identity, and Education, Critical Issues in Language Studies, Linguistic & Education, Language & Education, International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, Educational Researcher and Teaching & Teacher Education.

I realized that the literature included in this review might not be exhaustive, and there might be certain relevant studies, which have been missed, in the searching process. However, the scope of the literature should be sufficient to represent the dominant views that stem from the pioneering and defensible voices of this research area. These views, voices, and my critiques of them, ultimately shape the theoretical framework and methodological perspectives of my study. Moreover, pertinent scholarship emerging from the critical review (e.g., Cummins, 1996; Norton, 2000; and Lu, 2005) tends to center the works of Dewey (1938); Clandinin & Connelly (1987); Weedon (1987); Bourdieu (1991), Foucault (1968) and Norton (2000). I am beginning to understand these scholars as the intellectual foreparents (Dixson & Dingus, 2008) of contemporary educational research in this area. Other useful scholarship builds upon the work established by these pioneers (e.g., Cummins, 1995; Lu, 2005; Park, 2006). Although these pioneering voices primarily shaped my theoretical framework my work is different from theirs in the sense that, while all of them used their outsider perspectives as they explored and investigated their participants lived experiences my role (except Lu, 2005; Park, 2006) speaks more closely to an insider/outsider perspective. My deep interest in researching Filipina NNES ESOL teachers grows out of my own experiences as a member of the same 2005-2006 cohort of Filipina teachers observed in this study. Moreover, while I recognize the need for more scholarly contributions to the body of work on male teachers' identities (see, for example, Lynn, 2002), there was no male

ESOL teacher in MAPS belonging to our cohort. Therefore, I have chosen not to review studies focused exclusively on male teachers.

Poststructuralist Perspectives

A Little History. What is poststructuralist philosophy? I must emphasize that post-structuralism is a term that is perhaps best defined via a multitude of definitions, none of which are truly accurate in any scientific sense (Grosz, 1995). Even with the tentative nature of post-structuralism, most philosophers seem to agree upon its three main tenets—(1) poststructuralism came about as a reaction to structuralist thought; (2) post-structuralism is related to deconstruction; and (3) post-structuralism is part of the postmodern movement. I will discuss each of these notions briefly by way of introducing and providing some history to post-structuralist thought.

Reaction to Structuralism. According to Gary Gutting (2001) in *French Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, post-structuralism and deconstruction both came about as two separate though related reactions to the structuralist movement. The structuralist movement was characterized by the attempt to reach knowledge of an absolute, underlying truth via a style of objective, technical, and even formal discourse about the human world. However, thinkers such as Derrida and Foucault questioned the ideal of ultimate knowledge that defined not only phenomenology and structuralism but the enterprise of philosophy.

This move against the notion of an ultimate truth is exemplified by what became known as post-structuralism. Gary Gutting, in his exploration of French Philosophy, explains that some post-structuralist thinkers, such as Derrida, focused on the deconstruction of the body of failed philosophical knowledge; whereas other thinkers

such as Foucault began to move away from this body of philosophy toward studies of genealogy and archeology (Stephenson, 2010). For some thinkers such as Catherine Keller, these post-structuralist moves are seen as complimentary, in which deconstruction is a first step on the way to a reconstruction of something new. As this is also my view, it is important to understand a little about deconstruction as a sibling of post-structuralism (and for some as part of post-structuralist thinking).

Deconstruction. Deconstruction became best known through the work of Jacques Derrida in the mid to late 1900s. Deconstruction, like post-structuralism, is, by definition, indefinable. Critics of deconstruction (and some critics of post-structuralism) complain that deconstruction is illogical at best and anarchic/relativistic at worst (Caputo, 1997). If everything can be deconstructed, then cannot deconstruction itself be deconstructed? Yes. It is a philosophy that defies definition because it can never be pinned down. As soon as you have a definition of it, as soon as you summarize it, your definition, your summary, your neat little categories, are deconstructed, broken open, overflowing the boundaries you carefully constructed. This point initially sounds illogical (Caputo, 1997). How can you have a philosophical system that deconstructs itself? However, upon further scrutiny, this move makes some plausible contributions to our sense of theory. Deconstruction does not attempt to be a system; rather it is the desire to make systems livable, open-ended, porous and structured around programs that do not program everything. It is a philosophy that, in a sense proves itself through its own deconstruction. Its form and method are in synch. The ways in which it encourages us to think about our world, our institutions, our texts, and so forth are applicable to it as well.

It is for this reason that rather than being construed as a system of critique, of destruction, Derrida insists over and over that deconstruction must be understood as a mode of affirmation. Rather, deconstruction's deconstruction ensures that it remains indefinable that it always spills out over the edges of our comprehension and our categories. Unlike methodologies that seek to explain what is, deconstruction does not fall down adoringly before what is present, for the present is precisely what demands endless analysis, criticism, and deconstruction. Rather, deconstruction seeks to confront the present with what is to come (Stephenson, 2010). This focus on the in-coming of the other, the promise of an event to come, the event of the promise of something coming makes deconstruction anti-essential and highly unconventional and highlights its usefulness for and similarity to post-structuralist thought. As I will explain in this study, post-structuralism aims to expose the constructed nature of our social norms and to illuminate the power structures on which those norms have been built. In a profound desire to affirm life, post-structuralism confronts us with the other who has been marginalized, silenced, and oppressed by our unjust social and political structures (Caputo, 1997).

Deconstruction, as a sibling of post-structuralism, has opened up avenues of thought by which philosophers could explore the margins of society, the unwritten words underlying a text, in order to expose the agenda underlying the voices that are heard, the norms that are portrayed, and the truths that are espoused (Caputo, 1997). The method of questioning everything and the sense of responsibility to the other, found in deconstruction are also important factors of post-structuralist thought and characterizes much of the postmodern worldview.

Postmodernism as an Underlying Worldview. Deconstruction and post-structuralism both had their birth in the period known as post-modernism. Post-modernism is characterized as a response crystallized as a tradition in Germany at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, to the overwhelming modernism of the age of science and technology. The postmodern world is a world of networks of exchange, without an empirical center or a predetermined goal (Caputo, 1997).

The commitment to avoiding universalization, generalization, and totalizing discourse is shared among many post-structuralist philosophers. In becoming aware of the multiplicity and variety in the world around us, we begin to realize that generalizations are often unfair attributions of certain characteristics to groups based on our limited viewpoints, beliefs, and understandings (Stephenson, 2010). The postmodern worldview, and post-structuralism in particular, seeks to expose these generalizations for what they are, to explore the impetus and implications of these generalizations, and to encourage a rethinking of the world in terms that are more open, varied, and perhaps even chaotic, much like the world as we actually experience it before we place our experience into a box with a nice neat label.

The Problem of Identity

One of the results of the concept of the fragmentary or multiple subjects is that there is no such thing as a fixed, stable, overarching identity (Stephenson, 2010). Derrida, for instance, emphasizes the instability of the notion of identity, that no so-called identity is, or should take itself to be homogeneous or self-identical, that indeed it is dangerous to let a group such as a family, a community, or a state settle back down into self-identity. Each one of us is a multitude, a variety.

In deconstruction and post-structuralism, there is no underlying essence, no unifying element that defines who we are, even though we tend to speak in terms of a stable identity (Caputo, 1997). Our desire to identify things as specific and definable leads to a situation in which we strive to attain or maintain the identity prescribed for us by our family or our society.

The post-structuralist concept of identity emphasizes the fact that we are constantly in a state of becoming. I am not the same today as I was yesterday; nor will I be the same tomorrow as I am today. Our experiences, families, societies, internal narratives, and the evidence we gain from the outside world and from our relationships are always combining and recombining in different ways, causing our identities to shift (Caputo, 1997).

Poststructuralist Perspectives on Identity

Interest in investigating ways in which relations of power affect language learning and teaching, has been gaining momentum and propulsion; a trend reflected in the number of researchers who adopt a poststructuralist approach to the field of TESOL.

Poststructuralists consider language choices in multilingual contexts as embedded in larger social, political, economic, and cultural systems (Lu, 2005). Poststructuralist thinking, in particular, Bourdieu's (1991; 1997) model of symbolic domination, addresses relations between identities and power relations. Bourdieu views linguistic practices as a form of symbolic capital, convertible into economic and social capital and distributed unequally within any given speech community. The value of a particular language variety in a symbolic market place derives from its legitimization by the dominant group and the dominant institutions, in particular, schools and the media. The official language

or standard variety becomes the language of hegemonic institutions because both the dominant and the subordinated groups misrecognize it as a superior language (Lu, 2005). In Bourdieu's terms, those who are not speakers of the official language or standard variety are subject to symbolic domination if they believe in the legitimacy of that language or variety. These beliefs are shaped in the process of misrecognition. In Lu's (2005) study, she highlighted that in Bourdieu's terms, those who are not speakers of the official language or standard variety are subject to symbolic domination if they believe in the legitimacy of that language or variety.

Cummins (1996) is interested in how different orientations to cultural and linguistic diversity are reflected in the politics and practices of schools, and particularly in the policies and practices of schools, and particularly in the process of identity negotiation between students and teachers. Noting micro-level relations of power in the broader society, he points out that teachers may be unwittingly engaged in what he calls coercive relations of power by failing to question social inequality and preparing their students to accept the status quo. Education operating on the principles of coercive relations of power is very effective in suppressing language minority students' linguistic and cultural identities because it makes students internalize the message that values and rules imposed by the dominant group are natural, normal, universal, and objective and that it is in everyone's interest to accept those rules (Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001; Lu, 2005). If language minority students do not fit, it is because there is something wrong with them, not with the school. Kanno's (2004) studies illuminate the role of schools in reproduction of social inequality. The respective descriptions of an elementary school in

Japan context are subject to unequal power relations and are often unable to achieve the “right to speak” (Bourdieu, 1991).

I have embraced poststructuralism as my theoretical orientation. I am attracted to poststructuralism mostly because theorists’ discussions of language learning have greatly expanded my understanding of my own teaching interests in and focus on language and identity. Poststructuralists’ notions of language and identity have been especially important and helpful when I am conducting a narrative auto/biographic research wherein I use narrative to gather, interrogate, and present my data.

In addition, poststructuralism is able to link language, experience, subjectivity, and social organizations. Weedon (1987/1997) describes what a poststructuralist perspective can do as follows:

At the level of the individual [poststructuralism] theory is able to offer an explanation of where our experience comes from, why it is contradictory or incoherent and why and how it can change. It offers a way of understanding the importance of subjective motivation and the illusion of full subjectivity necessary for individuals to act in the world. It can also account for the political limitations of change at the level of subjective consciousness, stressing the importance of the material relations and practices which constitute individuals as embodied subjects with particular but not inevitable forms of conscious motivations which are the effect of social institutions and processes which structure society. (p.41)

Post-structuralism is able to explicate for me the above-mentioned key issues that I had long wanted to explore. With its help, I am able to explain for myself the seemingly very complex process of how the subjectivities as well as identities of the four Filipina

NNES ESOL teachers and me are dynamically constructed and (re)constructed. In this study, I use subjectivity as a way of talking about our experiencing self, our particular modes of consciousness and unconscious thoughts, knowledge, desires, and emotions, and our ways of understanding our relation to the world (Lu, 2005; Weedon, 1987/1997). The underlying assumptions for poststructuralist theories support the belief that subjectivities are socially constructed constituted through those discourses in which the person is being positioned at any one point in time, both through her own and others' acts of speaking and writing. My subjectivities are how I understand my experiencing self within and across the multiple worlds that I inhabit (Weedon, 1987/1997).

While documenting the ways in which Filipina NNES ESOL teachers acquire a new language and new culture in specific social settings such as schools and language classrooms in the Philippines and in the U.S., this study drew from poststructuralist perspectives (Lu, 2005; Weedon, 1997) to investigate the relationship between language, culture, and identities, and power. It also sought to understand how Filipina NNES ESOL teachers see themselves in social settings. Similar to Lu, I also studied the lived experiences of Asian women, but I focused on one specific ethnic group of five Filipina teachers while Lu's participants were more diverse—Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese and Chinese. I am particularly drawn to Lu's work for two major reasons: (1) both of us are participant/researchers in our studies. We both used our insider/outsider perspectives, allowing us to explore more deeply in our participants' lived experience relating it to our own. (2) Both of our works are based on our personal journeys as English learners and as ESOL teachers, although we came from two different learning backgrounds. She learned English as a foreign language, while I learned mine as a second language. While her

research goal is to open possibilities for NNES pre-service teacher candidates in the teaching profession, my main contribution in this study is focused on professional development support and retention of in-service Filipino as well as international teachers in MAPS and other U.S. school districts.

Language

Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) points out that language is the centerpiece of post-structuralism. Language does not reflect social reality but rather produces meaning and creates social reality. Different languages and different discourses within a given language divide up the world and give it meaning in ways that are not reducible to one another. Language is how social organization and power are defined and contested and the place where one's sense of self or one's subjectivity is constructed. Understanding language as competing discourses—competing ways of giving meaning and of organizing the world—makes language a site of exploration and struggle.

For poststructuralists, language is not the result of one's individuality; rather, language constructs one's subjectivity in ways that are historically and locally specific. What something means to individuals is dependent on the discourses available to them, and because the individual is subject to multiple and competing discourses in many realms, one's subjectivity is shifting and contradictory—not stable, fixed, and rigid (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005).

For St. Pierre (2000), Foucault's theory of discourse illustrates how language gathers itself together according to socially constructed rules and regularities that allow certain statements to be made and not others. Discourse can never be just linguistic since, it

organizes a way of thinking into a way of acting in the world. We must therefore pay attention to our ways of using language and ways language uses us.

These poststructuralist theories' discussions shed different light on this study. I realize now that this narrative inquiry study, along with its intention to produce social knowledge, is also a site where I can express, explore, develop, and construct my subjectivity. I take an attentive attitude toward my language, that is, narration of this study. I have become reflexive in relation to how I use my language constantly in this study. In the next few chapters, I will reveal in detail how I explore my narratives to explicate the different norms of my subjectivities that are embedded in my language and the particular discourses available to me at different times in my life.

Discourse

Foucault's (1970) work on discourse has changed the way we think about language and how it operates in the production of the world. According to Foucault (1980, 1981), a discourse is a set of constantly changing rules, historically localized, culturally produced, that inscribe a regime of truth, which in turn, guides discursive practices. Discourses authorize who has the right to speak and who is silenced, what can and cannot be said, as well as what can and cannot be known, through the production of normative rules about how we can act and who we can be at a particular time.

According to Weedon (1987/1997), discourses "are ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledge's and the relations between them" (p.105). Scott (1988) explains that "discourse is not a language or a text but a historically, socially, and institutionally specific structure of statements, terms, categories, and belief" (p.35).

Discourses are more than abstract theory; discourses have also a reality. Discourses operate within “discursive fields”—a set of discourses that are systematically related (Foucault, 1980). As Weedon (1987, 1997) points out, “a discursive field consists of compelling ways of giving meaning to the world and organizing social institutions and processes. It offers the individuals a range of modes of subjectivity” (p.34).

While the four women and I lived and taught in the mid-Atlantic county in Maryland, we had entered into the “discursive fields” that we wouldn’t have encountered if we didn’t come to the United States. In these socially, culturally, and historically “discursive fields,” we experienced a variety of unfamiliar discourses that (re)constituted our subjectivities. How have the four women and I “changed” because of these discourses? How have we “experienced” them? How has our teacher’s identity been challenged? In the next few chapters, I employ the concept of discourse to explore and discuss our subjectivities as well as the lost and reconstructed experiences of our teachers’ identities both in the Philippines and the United States.

Subject and Subjectivity

In explaining subject and subjectivity, Weedon (1987, 1997) writes that subjectivity in poststructuralism is the “conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world” (p.32). Subjectivity is produced socially, through language in relations. Weedon further explains subjectivity and the subject as follows:

The individual is both a site for a range of possible forms of subjectivity and, at any particular moment of thought or speech, a subject, subjected to the regime of meaning of a particular discourse and enabled to act accordingly. The position of

subject, from which language is articulated and from which speech acts, thoughts or writing appear to originate, is integral to the structure of language and, by extension, to the structure of the conscious subjectivity, which it constitutes. Language and the range of subject positions, which it offers always, exist in historically specific discourses, which inhere in social institutions and practices and can be organized analytically in discursive fields. (pp. 34-35).

This description illustrates post-structuralism's double move in the construction of subjectivity: a subject that constructs itself by taking up available discourses and cultural practices and a subject that, at the same time, is subjected, forced into subjectivity by those same discourses and practice. Because subject does not exist ahead of or outside language, it is but a dynamic, unstable effect of language, discourse, and cultural practice (St. Pierre, 2000).

In this study, I use subjectivity as a way of talking about the “experiencing” self, our particular modes of conscious and unconscious thoughts, knowledge, desires, and emotions and our ways of understanding our relation to the world (Chen, 2009). The underlying assumptions of poststructuralist theories support the belief that subjectivities are socially constructed, constituted through those discourses in which the person is being positioned at any one point in time, both through her own and others' acts of speaking and writing. My subjectivities are how I understand my “experiencing self” within and across the multiple worlds that I inhabit (Weedon, 1987, 1997).

As an experiencing subject, I am shaped by multiple, intersecting discourses that are from within Southeastern and Western cultures. My multiple positioning within various discourses may produce subjectivities that I experience as contradictory. In this sense, I

may say that there is no unitary self because the subject experiences the world in terms of fragmentation, discontinuity, and contradiction through the constitutive force of discourse (Butler, 1990,1999).

Agency

The concept of agency, my ability as subject to make choices as I adopt, discard, or resist various subject positions within the discourses available to me, is central to the understanding of my identity as well as subjectivity (subjectification). For discourses “to be effective, they require activation through the agency of the individuals whom they constitute and govern in particular ways as embodied subjects” (Weedon, 1987/1997, p. 108).

Agency, like subject, is continually reconfigured and renamed as the subject itself. However, “agency seems to lie in the subject’s ability to decode and recode its identity within discursive formations and cultural practices” (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 504). Situated in and surrounded by the multiple teacher discourses in MAPS, the four women’s and my conceptions of teacher’s identity are very often challenged. For example, there were a number of subject positions that the four women and myself could have chosen to adopt—such as becoming more local—like those American teachers around us, or to stay and follow up with our memories of the Filipina teachers that we once were.

Each of these subject positions was accompanied by real or imagined effects (identifying with other American colleagues and acceptance from our students) and consequences (alienation from other colleagues and students’ rejections). I realized that in order to be viewed as an “appropriate” teacher—“a good teacher”—most of the women in this study had to give up or compromise their past old teacher tradition or

identity essentialism (authoritative and distant) and embrace new “culturally appropriate” activities in their classrooms (democratic and friendly) that were accepted by their students.

I recognize that there is politics of agency in this study. Throughout this study, the five women shuttle between cultures (American and Filipino), languages (English and Tagalog/Filipino), and positions (teacher, researcher, woman, wife, mother, friend, student). My narrative acts in the study are intended to expose the four women’s and my Filipino cultural differences and our subjectivities, and to solicit a process of exercising agency, both in telling and in withholding our language and culture heritages.

Identity Formation

Dewey (1938) posited that to understand a teacher’s identity, one must understand the teacher’s life. He saw an individual’s experience as a central lens for understanding a person and the keys to educational experience as the principles of interface and continuity. In the field of education, teachers develop their practice not only through teacher education communities, such as the internship communities, school communities, and professional organization communities, but also through the communities outside the classroom. He further believes that the quality of the interaction will be realized to the degree that people involved form a community. How a teacher experiences her job, how she interprets her position, how she comprehends what she teaches, what she knows, doesn’t know, and doesn’t try to know—all of these are neither simply choices nor simply the aftermath of belonging to the social category, *teacher*. Instead, they are negotiated in the course of doing the job and interacting with others. Lu (2005) and Wenger (1998) elaborated the point that participation is a source of identity. Identity is

constituted through relations of participation. Developing a practice requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants. Drawing on Dewey's (1938), Connelly and Clandinin's (1997), and Lu's (2005) work, I approached the issue of teacher identity from the perspective of teachers' experiences and voices. They suggested that our identities are composed and improvised as we go about living our lives embodying knowledge and engaging our contexts. Our stories and experiences are the narrative expressions of who we are in our worlds.

This study is situated within the framework that experiences can amalgamate or fortify; transform or amplify, who we are in our worlds. Many scholars altercation that teachers are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills, but they are individuals who come into teacher education programs with prior experience and personal beliefs that inform their knowledge about teaching and contour what they do in their classrooms (Lu, 2005; McDiarmid, 1990; Stuart & Thurlow, 2000). By writing about the experiences of Filipina NNES ESOL teachers at home and at school, and about our relationships with family members, friends, students, colleagues, this study attempted to investigate and analyze Filipina ESOL teachers' experiences of living, learning, and teaching practice in relation to our identities as Filipina NNES ESOL teachers.

Language and Identity

Norton (1997) posited that social life, identities and beliefs are co-constructed, negotiated, and transformed on an ongoing basis by means of language. Duff and Uchida (1997) conclude that sociocultural identities are not static, deterministic constructs, which ESOL teachers and students bring to the classroom and then take away unchanged at the

end of a lesson or course. Norton (1997) further emphasized that the discovery of self for language learners and teachers often occurs with others' recognition of who they are. From this perspective, it can be assumed that the discovery of self for Filipina NNES ESOL teachers also occurs with others' recognition of who they are. Thus, there is a need to (re)construct social life, beliefs, and their cultural and linguistic identities in relation to other people around them.

In recent years, there has been a growing body of literature focusing on the relation between language and identity. Much research has focused on identity construction of language learners who speak other languages. A number of recent articles have examined the role of learners' social and cultural identities in learning English, and have documented the belief that identities shape the ways in which people make sense of the world and influence how they perform their daily practices (Chen, 2009; Lu, 2005; Park, 2006). For example, Norton (2000), drawing upon insights from West (1992), Bourdieu (1997), Weedon (1997) and Cummins (1996), has highlighted the importance of understanding the personal, social-psychological investments of adult immigrant women in learning ESL in conceptualizing the relations between power, identity and the learning of language (Lu, 2005).

In her study of five women, Norton (2000) asked her participants to keep records of their interactions with Anglophone Canadians and to write diaries, which they would reflect on their language learning experience in the home, workplace, and community. Through the participants' journal writing, her study reflects the participants' multiple identities as immigrants, mothers, wives, workers, and learners in relation to language

learning in which Norton found a complex relation among social identity, personal investment, and language learning.

Another important study on second language learner identities is Morgan's (1997) in Norton's (2000) study, which focuses on the relationship between second language learners' identities and intonation teaching practice. As a teacher-researcher in a community-based adult ESL classroom in Toronto, Morgan's study describes a particular language lesson on intonation and suggests that "social power and identity issues seemed to facilitate greater comprehension of sentence-level stress and intonation as strategic resources for re (defining) social relationship" (p. 431).

Drawing from the studies mentioned above, it can be argued that identity can become one of the constructs in second language education research. More so, Medgyes (2000) posited that prevailing paradigms of second language research have for decades not treated questions of teachers' sociocultural identity as a central issue in the process of language teaching and in the theories of language teacher education. Finally, like Lu (2005) and Park (2006) I also recognized that there is a scarcity of research demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic relationship between teachers' linguistic and cultural identities and language teaching. Thus, there is a particular need for further investigations on Filipina NNES ESOL teachers who came from culturally and linguistically diverse background, who bring a set of prior beliefs about teaching and learning which has been molded by their experiences and observation as learners in our home country—The Philippines.

Research on NNES

The globalization of English language teaching has proclaimed an increase in the number of NNESs graduated in U.S. TESOL teacher preparation programs (Braine, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Lu, 2005). Yet, as scholars pertinently pointed out, much of the preliminary research into NNES scholarship has dichotomized NNESs and their counterparts, native English speakers (NESs), by stressing the language proficiency aspect of language teaching over equally important variables such as cross-cultural competence, teaching experiences, and expertise (Braine, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Liu, 1999; Lu, 2005). Given that over three quarters of the individuals in the global English language teaching community are NNESs (Liu, 1999), it is crucial to investigate how Filipina NNES ESOL teachers construct identity while navigating through the Western educational system, and how Filipina NNES ESOL teachers reconcile their own perspectives of who they are—their linguistic, social, and cultural values and identities—with national stereotypes of their own and others' linguistic and cultural values.

There has been substantial growth in writing and research about NNES and their experiences in school and society over the past ten years (Lu, 2005; Park, 2006; Thomas, 1999). Professionals and scholars have voiced different opinions on issues related to non-nativeness, such as perceived advantages and disadvantages of being non-native English speaker in TESOL (Medgyes, 1994; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999), NNESs' challenge to credibility (Lu, 2005; Park, 2006; Thomas, 1999), NNESs' self-perception (Liu, 1999; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999), the attitudes of students toward NNES teachers (Amin, 1997; Tang, 1997), and differences in classroom behavior between NNESs and NESs (Medgyes, 1992). Much of the research on NNES teachers' self-perceptions has been

based on quantitative research design. Kamhi-Stein (2004) notes such quantitative data may tell us most of what we know about what it means to be an NNES teacher in the U.S., but they tell far diminutive about the NNES teachers' inner strength and inner self.

Moreover, the challenges that NNESs face emanate not only from professionals in the field, but also from their ESOL students and parents. In Thomas's (1999) personal narratives as an English writing teacher in the ESL context, regardless of her effort in teaching, she was often discouraged by her ESL students who frequently expected native English teachers and questioned her credibility as an English writing teacher. This notion is also echoed in Lu's (2005) narratives of the East Asian women teachers whose credibility was challenged because of their non-nativeness. Walking through the experiences of being a Filipina NNES ESOL teacher, I understand how the experience of feeling abashment, contempt, and misconception can influence our identities as NNES Filipina ESOL teachers. Researching the experiences of Filipina teachers could accentuate the prior academic learning situations of these particular women as largely embedded in our experiences in our native contexts in order to comprehend our transformed identities within those settings. Additionally, poststructuralist perspective can be used to theorize and formulate the identities of Filipina NNES ESOL teachers as visible minorities in the field of TESOL.

Recently, there has been an increase in the number of autobiographies that chronicle the experiences of NNES professionals who work in higher education as either linguistic teachers or ESL teacher educators (Chen, 2009; Lu, 2005; and Park, 2006). Such NNES scholars and educators as Braine (2005) and Liu (2004) have documented the complexity of their own teaching lives. Part of the accounts is commonly framed through writing

about NNEs' own learning experiences and the challenges and triumphs they encounter. Much of the research just cited has focused on NNEs teachers for adult ESL classes (Amin, 1997) or college-level courses (Braine, 1999; Liu, 2004; Thomas, 1999); Although there are research or self-narrative documents NNEs K-12 practitioners' linguistic, cultural identities, and self-identities (Chen, 2009; Kamhi-Stein, et.al., 2004; Lu, 2005; and Park, 2006), there has been very little research and self-narratives of Filipina ESOL teachers in the U.S. Thus, one of the main goals of this study is to fill in this gap in TESOL literature.

Concluding Thoughts

Although my line of research suggested that it could be situated within advocacy research, I see my position as an insider/outsider in that, I myself am a Filipina NNEs ESOL teacher in MAPS. In this study, I found the research on challenges, identities, and perceptions of self of Filipino teachers in the United States very limited. Thus, the goal of my dissertation is to fill the gap in the literature about the lived experiences of Filipina teachers working in U.S. K-12 public schools, specifically in MAPS. The critical literature review of this area, albeit promising, exposes a gap in our co-constructed knowledge regarding Filipino female teachers (Lu, 2005). I hope to extend the work of my identity formation, poststructuralist, and language and identity predecessors to augment the currently limited information in educational research about Filipina NNEs ESOL teachers' experiences in the U.S. My research could be one progressive step toward filling this intellectual gap by engaging narrative inquiry to begin (a) exploring Filipina teachers' cultural, linguistic, and racial identities, and (b) exploring Filipina

teachers' professional identities as Filipina NNES ESOL teachers in relation to others (e.g., teachers, students, parents, and administrators).

Theoretical Framework

Three key theoretical perspectives emerged from the pioneering scholarship reviewed above: 1) poststructuralist perspectives on identity, (2) identity formation, and (3) the relationship between language and identity. First, poststructuralist perspectives on identity examine identity from a larger social, political, economic, and cultural point of view to address how power relations influence the construction of particular identities (Bourdieu, 1991; Foucault, 1968). Second, identity formation theory provides a framework to examine identity from a person's daily experiences and interaction with others (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000; Dewey, 1938; Wenger, 1998). Third, theories on the relationship between language and identity challenge the impact of language ideology on a person's identity (Cummins, 1996; Norton, 2000). Although these theoretical perspectives may emphasize different aspects and issues with regard to identity, they all reject the assumptions of identity as static, unitary, and discrete, and share a belief in identity as multiple, conflicting, unfixed, and evolving (Lu, 2005; Park, 2006). In sum, theories offered me a tentative map of the intellectual territory and a sense of the presumed conceptual relationships to better understand how five Filipina teachers are constructing identities that allow them to survive and thrive in a U.S. urban public school district. Ultimately, this emergent theoretical framework informed my research sub-questions, design, and methods.

Figure 1 *Illustration of the theoretical framework*

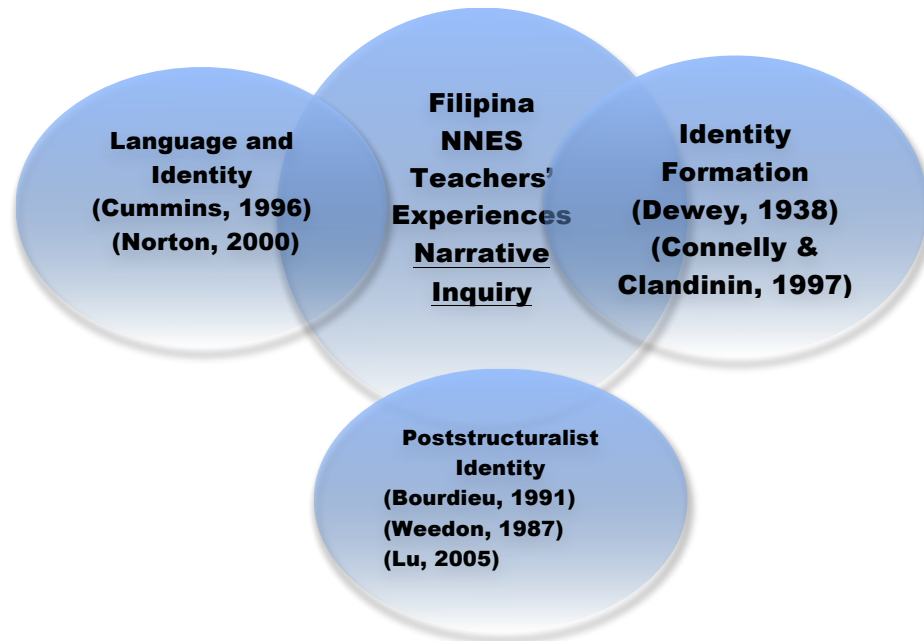


Figure 1 illustrates the three theoretical perspectives (emerging from the critical literature review) and the presumed connections between them. This framework provided an impetus to further examine the threads that both bind and separate the lives of Filipina NNES ESOL teachers' experiences at home and in school, as well as the various relationships we develop in and out of school, and our hopes and dreams for life beyond school. The framework also suggests the necessity of a research design and methods that allow me to begin critically reflecting upon my own experiences, while examining the meaning of experiences of other Filipina NNES ESOL teachers. I hope to expand understanding of the complexities of the lives of NNES ESOL teachers, and at the same time explore the particularities of how Filipina ESOL teachers are constructing identities toward surviving and thriving. The specifics of narrative inquiry methods are detailed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes: (a) justification for pursuing a qualitative research dissertation and (b) rationale for engaging a narrative inquiry methodological approach. In addition, I detailed the particularities of narrative inquiry and how it was applied through my research design to include: (1) *entry*—my sampling strategies and recruitment of participants; (2) *role*—my positionality issues connecting researcher to participants; (3) *reciprocity*—how I worked toward honoring and appreciating participants for their contributions; (4) *data collection*—how I gathered data using a three phase process; (5) *data triangulation*—how I used questionnaires, interviews, observations, audiotapes, member-checking, and my own critical reflexivity, (6) *data analysis*—how I managed, organized, and interpreted data; and (7) *pilot study data*—how details from my pilot study helped in the narrative inquiry method of this study.

Justification for Qualitative Research

According to Marshall and Rossman (1999) qualitative research has become increasingly important for the social sciences and applied fields such as education, regional planning, nursing, social work, community development, and management. While quantitative research involves the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, qualitative research seeks answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Qualitative research is important in my study because it allowed me to research each of my cases in their natural settings and allowed me to understand participant perspectives and how they contributed and influenced their respective cases (Srikantaiah, 2008). Maxwell (1996) posited that including participant perspectives in the research

study is the key characteristic of qualitative research. Finally, since I am a Filipina ESOL teacher, this paradigm gave me an opportunity to reflect and analyze most of the data based on my very own experiences.

For three major reasons, this study followed a qualitative approach. First, this study was field-focused and heavily concerned with theories related to individual identities in specific contexts (Lu, 2005; and Park, 2006). Second, as a researcher, I am not neutral about the study. My own experiences as a Filipina NNES ESOL teacher are integrated in this study because I, myself, am a Filipina NNES ESOL teacher in MAPS from the observed cohort. Thus, I am also a participant in the study. As an insider/outsider in this study, both my voice and participants' voices could be included. Third, story telling was a major character of the study in the process of data collection and data analysis. In this study, the understanding of Filipina NNES ESOL teachers' identity-related interpretations of our experiences, teaching practices, and dialogues with our pasts, presents and future journeys.

Qualitative researchers apply varying approaches, methodologies and theories to explore and recognize human experience. These approaches, theories and methodologies include ethnography (Wolcott, 1999), case study (Stake, 1995), grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), phenomenology (Moran, 1999), and narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Although they can coincide and overlap in noteworthy ways, different approaches or methodologies provide inquirers with dissimilar lenses to explore human experiences. For example, ethnography focuses on the patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language of a shared-cultural or social group (Lu, 2005; Wolcott, 1999). A grounded theory's aim is to generate a theory that elucidates a process, an action or interaction

about a substantive topic (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A case study uses in-depth data collection and multiple sources of information in context to explore a bounded system or a case (Stake, 1995). Phenomenological study is a methodology for unfolding the meaning of the lived experiences of several individuals about a phenomenon (Moran, 1999). Narrative inquiry focuses on the qualities of life and experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Rationale for Engaging Narrative Inquiry

While taking into account different methodologies in qualitative research, I realized that narrative inquiry best enabled me to explore my research interest because it allowed me as a researcher to critique the theoretical framework that emerged from my literature review. With identity at the center of the exploration, narrative inquiry seemed to be the approach most conducive to comprehending participants' experiences and the influence of the experiences, while also providing me with tools to understand and to explore the implicit postulations and assumptions of participants (Chen, 2009; Lu, 2005). I wanted to understand the meaning that Filipina NNES ESOL teachers bestow to each of our experiences and how those attributions mirror on our identities as persons and as teachers.

Therefore, this study is a narrative inquiry into how the experiences of five Filipina NNES ESOL teachers and I produce and negotiate the meanings of our identities as persons and as teachers. In past decades, narratives, especially, stories people tell about their lives have gained increasing status outside the fields of literature and have become the focus of the evolving interdisciplinary field of narrative study, which posits narrative

as the central means by which people construct identities and give their lives meaning (Bell, 2002; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Kelchtermans, 1993; Lu, 2005).

Connelly & Clandinin (1990) posited that the epistemological assumption of narrative inquiry is that we as human beings make sense of our daily experience by living in story structures. The central claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are storytelling organisms, who individually and socially, lead storied lives. In other words, we pay attention to those elements in ways that echo the stories available to us. The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world (Chen, 2009, Lu, 2005, Park, 2006).

Inquirers in narrative research focus on individuals' experiences. This focus on experiences draws on the philosophical thoughts of John Dewey (1938), who saw that an individual's experience was a central lens for understanding a person. One aspect of Dewey's thinking was to view experience as continuous, where one experience led to another. Drawing from Dewey's theory of experience, experiences in narrative inquiry are both personal—what the individual experiences—as well as social—the individual interacting with others (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Lu, 2005; Park, 2006). Within this framework, this study focused on individual Filipina NNES ESOL teachers' history or past experiences in relation to who we are and think we will be, and our present experiences as Filipina NNES ESOL teachers in relation to perceived identities as we interact with students, colleagues, students' parents, and friends in the MAPS teaching community. Next, I discuss entry, role, and reciprocity processes that worked as tools to help me pursue narrative inquiry and to help me re/consider how to engage my community thoughtfully and carefully.

ENTRY—Pooling Prospective Participants

From January to March 2010, I searched for prospective participants. Due to the nature of my study, I wanted to get acquainted with prospective participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). My professional acquaintances were my Filipino co-teachers and our cohort leaders. They served as contact persons in trying to recruit prospective participants. Through the help of two cohort leaders of 2005 and 2006, I used an e-mail message, which I sent to twenty ESOL teachers in the two cohorts, to initiate conversations with my colleagues and cohort leader in helping me identify prospective participants. By April 2010, I had six prospective participants interested in my study who fit the selection criteria. Two of the participants agreed to participate for the pilot study. Towards the end of July, two other participants withdrew from the study due to personal reasons. One of them had to move to another state to marry an American; while the other one admitted that she had to concentrate and focus on finishing her master's degree. So I was left with two participants. Fortunately, both of the participants who withdrew recommended a replacement for each of them who had similar experiences as theirs; who were from the same cohort; and who were very willing to share their experiences as well. By the end of August, I have four participants ready to be interviewed.

Sampling Techniques and Criteria for Participant Selection. The process of gaining access to participants required the use of both purposeful sampling and snowball sampling techniques in selecting the women for the study. Due to the fact that there were no male ESOL teachers in cohort 2005 and 2006, I used women as my participants. According to Bogden and Biklen (2003), purposeful sampling requires the researcher to choose his/her research participants in order to facilitate the expansion of the developing

theory. Thus, promoting a purposeful sampling led to the selection of women for the study who were being selected not only due to their willingness to volunteer but also for their desire to better understand their professional identities as Filipina NNES ESOL teachers. More specifically, I used the following criteria in selecting prospective participants: First, each woman identified herself as a Filipina non-native English speaker. Second, each woman showed interest in the study and more importantly in understanding her own identities. Third, each woman came from the cohort of teachers from the Philippines between 2005 and 2006. Finally, each woman, at the time of participant selection, was an ESOL teacher in an elementary school in MAPS.

Getting Acquainted with the Prospective Participants. I started making initial contacts with the prospective participants in March 2010 in order to get better acquainted with them and to provide them with some general ideas about my study. I also told them that I would not be ready to collect data from them until my dissertation proposal was successfully defended and approved.

Initial Meeting with Each Woman. In March 2010, I scheduled an individual meeting with each of the six women to provide them with information about the study. I told them that I would be conducting a pilot study and I would need two volunteers for the pilot study and the rest of the four women would become my participants for the actual dissertation. I informed all the six women of what would be expected of them as participants in the study and they signed off on the informed consent form.¹¹

¹¹ *Assigned Pseudonyms.* It was important for me, as the researcher, to provide pseudonyms for all participants and others involved in their stories, for privacy and confidentiality, so I asked each of the women to come up with her own pseudonym.

ROLE: My Relationship with the Participants

In narrative inquiry the relationship between the researcher and participant pervades every aspect of the research process; it determines the quality and the quantity of the information gathered (Chen, 2009; Connelly & Clandinin, 2000; Lu, 2005; Park, 2006). A very important condition for establishing an appropriate relationship is a feeling of trust towards the researcher. Only the participant who feels safe and perceives the researcher as trustworthy will be prepared to share his or her life story. To achieve this trust, I explained from the start to the participants how the research process would evolve and what I would expect from them (Chen, 2009; Park, 2006). Then I shared my own story with them—my learning and teaching journeys, as well as my struggles and challenges. The relationship of trust should ensure that teachers feel sufficiently free and relaxed to be themselves (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000; Lu, 2005; Park, 2006). In this study, I considered the process of this narrative inquiry a collaborative work between the inquirer and participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Throughout the process of research, my role as a narrative inquirer was to collaborate with the individuals who contributed their stories in research. Collaboration in narrative research means I was actively involved in the participants' stories (Chen, 2009; Lu, 2005; Park, 2006). The process of collaboration involved negotiating equal and trusting relationships between the participants and myself. I revealed a lot about my own experiences as lived, entrusting them with stories of my past, present and future journeys. As I conduct this narrative inquiry, my prior experiences that relate to the present situation in the study became naturally involved in the process of inquiry. For example, my own experiences as a Filipina NNES ESOL teacher became part of the narrative. Therefore, in the process of

narrative inquiry, I presented myself in my dual role—as one of the participants and as a researcher in the study.

RECIPROCITY: Toward Honoring and Appreciating Participants

All of our interviews were conducted in an interactive dialogic manner that required self-disclosure on the part of researcher in order to encourage reciprocity (Lather, 1991). I shared with them my own life history as lived in order to present myself as an ethical researcher embarking on a study of the lived experiences of Filipina ESOL teachers. I also hoped that by the end of the study, my participants and I would be able to form a support group among ourselves to help us cope and deal with many pressing issues not only about teaching and learning but also many other facets of our life and culture—family, friends, politics, leisure, interests, etc.¹²

One of the major concerns in narrative inquiry is to have a place for the voice of each participant; thus in the process of telling and retelling stories in the narrative inquiry, the caring and equal relationship between researchers and participants is particularly important (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Traditionally, practitioners have been used as silent objects for study in researcher-practitioner relationships; thus, practitioners may find it difficult to feel empowered to tell their stories. Narrative inquiry is a way of knowing what connects the knowledge within a close relationship between the knower

¹² In order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals who will participate in this study, I obtained the Institutional Review Board's approval and informed consent from each participant before I collect data. In the informed consent form (see Figure 2), I clearly addressed the purpose of the study, guaranteed the participants certain rights, advised of potential risks and promised to minimize and protect the participants from the risks. I emphasized that the data would be treated anonymously and confidentially. I made special efforts to guarantee that no school or individual would be identified by name in any research reports or publications.

and the known (Carter, 1993). Thus, in the process of narrative inquiry, it is particularly important for the inquirer to let the participants first tell their stories and to be aware of allowing all participants to have a voice in the research relationship (Chen, 2009; Lu, 2005). Because practitioners used to experience themselves as silent objects in the research process, the inquirer must provide time and space to allow the participants to tell their stories. During the interview process, I made sure my participants have enough time to think, share their experiences, ask questions about my own experiences, and tell their stories in their own voices. With these notions of reciprocity, I hoped to gain a rapport with my participants and to initiate the type of relationships with them that were conducive to sharing sensitive information. Ultimately, I wanted each of us to begin feeling less vulnerable and more willing to open up to the experiences of the others; in the presence of the others, in order to begin understanding our shared history as lived. My plans for data collection, data triangulation, and data analysis emerged as integral components of my goal to develop defensible research of this shared history. The text below details those integral components.

The Five Women

The following gives a brief introduction of the four Filipina teachers and myself who are participants of this study.

Joie

I was born on April 10th 1975. I was the second of four children. I lived in the Philippines all my life. I only came to Maryland last September 2006 with a cohort of one hundred eight Filipino teachers. After three months of being in the states, I immediately enrolled at the University of Maryland College Park as an Advanced Special

student; in which I enrolled Dr. Rebecca Oxford's class on Learning Styles. The next semester after that, I was accepted as a PhD student in Second Language Education and Culture (SLEC). After around 40 credit units of course works, my EDHI 700 class on Qualitative Research in Education paved the way for the initial conceptualization of this study.

Flordeluna

Flordeluna was born on July 18, 1969. She was the eighth child of nine siblings. She was the youngest girl. She came to the U.S. last 2005. She completed her Master's Degree in TESOL from McDaniel College through a scholarship granted by the school county, (MAPS). I first came in contact with Flordeluna last 2006 in one of the ESOL teachers' meeting. Although we often see each other in those meetings, we never had any chance of talking to each other. At times, we would see each other during Filipino community parties, but since we have different groups of friends, we never had an opportunity to be close to one another.

Naruto

Naruto was the eldest of three children. She was born on October 9, 1971 in Tondo, Manila. She grew up in a neighborhood where everybody knew each other because they were all blood relatives on her mother's side of the family. Naruto was one of the one hundred and seven Filipino teachers that came with me from the Philippines to Maryland last September, 2006. We even rode the same airplane. I remembered the first time I met her was during our job interview for a teaching position for a Maryland public school system. It was just a brief exchange of conversation. Although, we had a chance to meet, we never really had any chance of speaking to each other again until we came to

Maryland. Although we often saw each other in parties and in church, we never had the opportunity to talk to one another until this study. It was very interesting how both of us had pre-conceived notions of each other, both positive as well as negative, before we actually got to know one other.

Halo

Halo was born in the province of Bacolod, which is very far from Manila, the country's capital. All her life, she had stayed in her hometown. Like Naruto and I, Halo rode the same airplane coming to Maryland. Although we had seen each other in one of the job interviews in the Philippines, we never really had a chance to talk. Even though we often saw one other at ESOL chairpersons' meeting, we still did not have the opportunity to have a conversation apart from the academic and professional exchange of thoughts.

Ligaya

Ligaya was born on August 26, 1963 in Albay, Philippines. She was the eldest of ten children. In September, 2006, I first came in contact with Ligaya through a common work acquaintance. She was the roommate of my colleague. In our first meeting, she seemed to have a reserved personality. She would only speak when asked. That same year, we became more acquainted to each other since we saw each other a lot in many of our ESOL chairpersons' meeting.

Table 4 Student Demographics of the Participants

Participants	Race	Age	Grade Level	Individual Education Plan (IEP)	Gender	Free and Reduced Meal (FARM)
Joie	Hispanic	5-11 yrs. old	K-5	2	M and F	70%
Flordeluna	Hispanic	10-11 yrs. old	3 rd , 4 th	2	M and F	80%
Naruto	Hispanic	10-11 yrs. old	K, 2 nd , 3 rd	3	M and F	90%
Halo	Hispanic	5-11 yrs. old	K-5	4	M and F	70%
Ligaya	Hispanic	5-11 yrs. old	K-5	2	M and F	80%

(Source: Interviews from participants)

Table 4 shows the student demographics of the participants in this study. All the participants at the time of the study were teaching Hispanic students between 5 and 11 years old. All of the participants commented that they have more female students than males. Almost 1% of each of our students receives special education services. Majority of our students receive free and reduced meals, which means that their families are from a low socio economic status.

Data Collection

I divided data collection into three phases such that each phase informs the next one (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Phase One. The first phase was an E-mail Questionnaire (i.e., Perceptions/Attitudes toward Teaching), (See Figure 6) which I conducted from August to September 2010. The participants completed both parts of the questionnaire. In part one, they checked the lines that apply to their perceptions and attitudes toward teaching. In part two, the women responded to open-ended questions about their teaching challenges and struggles.

I collected these questionnaires via e-mail exchanges between participants and myself. This mode of collecting their accounts gave the participants more time to phrase and construct their experiential text. In addition, it gave them a less-threatening venue for documenting their journal entries since most of them became at ease with using e-mail to reflect on their teaching challenges and struggles related to being an Filipina NNES ESOL teacher (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Park, 2006).

Phase Two. The second phase involved (E-mail) Reflective Questions (i.e., Life History Narratives), (See Figure 7) which I conducted from September to October, 2010. I sent the reflective questions through email, and then after the participants responded on those questions, they sent them back to me through email. I used the questions that I adapted from McAdam's (1993) and Lu's (2005) eight key events for interviewing a person's life: peak experience, low point experience, turning point, earliest memory, an important childhood memory, an important adolescent memory, an important adult memory, and other important memories. I also included interview questions developed by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) for understanding women's ways of knowing in relation to the development of self as prompts or follow-up questions. The questions were divided into five parts—a) Part one- Life Stories and Personal Myth (i.e., I would like you to describe a memory from your childhood that describes who you were or who you are as a language learner), b) Part two- Language Learning and Becoming a Language Teacher (i.e., What was the peak experience of your language learning?), 3) Part three- Stories of Border-crossing (i.e., Describe a specific incident that describes who you were/are as a Filipina), 4) Part four- Teaching experiences in the U.S. (i.e., What impact your experiences had on you as a Filipina, non-native English speaking

ESOL teacher in a US public school), 5) Self-description and Future Career (i.e., How do you see yourself ten or fifteen years from now?). The women responded to each of the different parts of the questions in a narrative form. I collected these written life history narratives via e-mail exchanges between the participants and myself as the researcher. This mode of collecting their life history narratives gave the participants more time to phrase and construct their experiential text within a comfortable venue (Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Kamhi-Stein, 2004). Also, these guided questions gave them more structure in what aspects of their educational journeys to share, thus ensuring consistent coverage of topics across participants.

Phase Three. The third phase was the individual interviews. (See Figure 8) The women's responses to the questionnaires and the electronic (e-mail) reflective questions framed the individual interviews. I conducted two interviews between two to four hours per session with each of the women from October to December 2010. Qualitative interviewing began with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit (Park, 2006; Patton, 1990). The one-on-one interview questions were structured and unstructured and tapped into the contents of the questionnaire about their perceptions and attitudes toward teaching, as well as their life history narratives (Part one and two).

All interviews were conducted in a quiet place convenient for each woman, like a quiet corner in a public library, for example. I audio-recorded and transcribed all the interviews verbatim for the purpose of analysis. I used two audiocassettes simultaneously to produce two equal tapes so that at the completion of the study, each woman would receive a tape of the interviews. I printed out hard copies and shared all

interview transcripts with the participants for member checking. After each narrative interview, I used email interviews to follow-up on some issues or themes that emerged from the narrative interviews. By carefully reading the text, I was able to identify some themes or information gaps (Srikantaiah, 2008), such as gaps in the chronology, or unclear passages wherein there were too few details, and/or the descriptions were too vague.

Data Triangulation

To develop a meaningful perspective of an individual's experience, the data that I collected focused on participants' stories related to who we are. Clandinin and Connelly (1994) call the data that narrative inquirers and practitioners create *field texts*. Previous research suggests that triangulating confirming and disconfirming sources of field texts are better in a study than a single source of data (Bogden & Biklen, 2003). In this case, multiple sources lead to a fuller understanding of Filipina NNES ESOL teachers. Therefore, my study suggested several sources: questionnaire, email narrative life history interviews, and individual interviews to explore the research questions. Table 4 below shows the data collection sources I was able to accomplish for this study.

Table 5. An Overview of Data Collection Sources

<u>Participants</u>	<u>Phase One- Questionnaire</u>	<u>Phase Two- E-mail Life History narratives</u>	<u>Phase Three- (3) Interviews (60- 90 minutes per session)</u>
Joie	August 2010	September 2010	December 2010
Halo	August 2010	September 2010	November 2010
Ligaya	August 2010	September 2010	December 2010
Flordeluna	August 2010	October 2010	November 2010
Naruto	August 2010	October 2010	December 2010

In addition, I used member-checking and external audit techniques (Stake, 1994; Lu, 2005). When retelling the story told by the participants, for example, in the consideration of the authenticity of the story, I used e-mail interviews to follow up on stories for details. After retelling participants' stories in written form, I asked them to double check content to ensure accuracy of the data. During the final research writing stage, I asked a couple of people (e.g., classmates in my PhD program, co-teachers) outside the project to review different aspects of the research such as clarity of the language and the story lines. Furthermore, after I wrote each of the participant's narratives, I e-mailed them and sat down with each of them to discuss their narratives, still as part of member-checking technique.

Data Analysis

Like other qualitative methods, narrative inquiry relies on criteria other than validity and reliability (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). Many qualitative researchers (Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Smith & Deemer, 2001) argue that the terminology of validity and reliability in positivistic research is not congruent with, or

adequate for, qualitative work. Lincoln and Guba (1985) use alternative terms, such as *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *confirmability* to establish the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. In order to construct a meaningful and credible analysis of research texts, I engaged myself in the texts and explored the meaning and significance of the stories from the field texts. In the process of retelling the story, as a narrative inquirer, I asked questions: What is the meaning or significance of the stories? What is the connection between different events in the story? (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Lu, 2005; Park, 2006)

As I retold the participants' stories, I used their own words and analyzed them in meaningful ways by connecting key elements of the stories and providing links among events. I also adapted Clandinin and Connelly's (1990) techniques in presenting research texts by connecting stories with *place* and *time* in writing the experiential quality of narrative. According to Clandinin and Connelly, *place* is the context of the stories and consists of characters and physical environment. *Place* in this study is a cultural and social context where the Filipina NNES ESOL teachers live out our stories, such as the places we grew up, the places we were educated, and the places we taught or are teaching. *Time* in this study consisted of Filipina NNES ESOL teachers' stories in the past, present and future.

Several forms of narratives provide the inquirer with different sources to explore participants' stories and experiences. As people live out their lives, they construct stories to support their interpretations of themselves and exclude experiences or events that conflict with their identities. Many scholars (Bell, 2002; Lu, 2005; Pavlenko, 2002) have argued that narrative inquirers must not only tell the story, but must go beyond the use of

narrative as rhetorical structure and carefully examine the underlying insights and assumptions the story illustrates.

In order to reacquaint myself with participants' stories as shared in the moment, I transcribed the interview tapes myself. After data collection was completed I read through the entire data set for each participant to get a sense of each woman's narrative structure (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 1998, Lu, 2005; Park, 2006, Strauss & Corbin, 1990). During the initial writing stage, I narrated each event, story and experience that my participants had shared with me. Then, I retold the stories by connecting the place and time in a meaningful way. After retelling the stories, I analyzed their stories and arranged the complexity of the stories into themes that connected to the research questions I posed in this study. The identification of themes added depth to the insight about our understanding of each participant's experiences. To make deeper sense of what we have experienced, I tried to find patterns that emerged from our stories, and analyzed our experiences by linking them to the current scholarly discourse on language learning and teaching and identity formation. The research design as described in the first three quarters of this chapter was informed largely by a pilot study involving narrative inquiry. The remaining text illuminates the importance of this pilot study and supports the follow-up narrative inquiry that I conducted.

Pilot Study Data

I did a pilot study on the narrative inquiry of the lived experiences of three Filipina NNES ESOL teachers in my EDCI 792 class in Spring 2010. In this pilot study, I aspired to tell stories about three Filipina ESOL teachers, Cristina Garcia, Lolita Flores (pseudonyms) and myself, who speak English as a second language. Through these

stories of our language learning and teaching, teaching experiences and life histories, I wanted to capture the experience of being a Filipina NNES ESOL teacher in PGPCS from each individual teacher's perspective. Particularly, the pilot study emphasized the meanings of our experiences as language learners and as ESOL teachers in relation to our identity construction and reconstruction, and highlighted cultural, linguistic, social, personal, and interpersonal elements in our professional identity transformation.

The stories I collected, based upon in-depth life history narrative interviews with the teachers, suggest that the process of being ESOL teachers as NNESs in an urban U.S. public school system was a constant struggle because the issues of teacher identity for NNESs are both complex and challenging. Through narrating our life histories, this inquiry offered a more nuanced understanding of the struggles and challenges Filipina NNES ESOL teachers encounter in PGPCS. This pilot study presented an in-depth outlook at how Filipina NNES ESOL teachers use our own cultures and language learning experiences to develop instructional and classroom management strategies that promote success for ESOL students in our classrooms, and how we use unique ways of teaching to establish our voices and transform our professional identities. I discovered that for Cristina Garcia and Lolita Flores, being ESOL teachers with NNES identity in the United States required more commitment, perseverance, and courage than I ever could have imagined. The process of writing my autobiography has helped me embrace and understand myself in constructing knowledge of language teaching from a variety of perspectives, thereby reaching a new level of acceptance and understanding of my teaching self.

Furthermore, the pilot study helped me to identify methodological challenges in all areas of my research design including (1) data collection—observation and focus groups. I purposefully did not include focus group in my dissertation because I feared it might contribute to feelings of uncomfortability and embarrassment among the participants. Two issues that surfaced during the pilot study made me rethink this approach. First, I noticed that two of my participants were hesitant to talk critically about her classroom experiences in the U.S. They talked carefully and vaguely about issues they noted as sensitive or political. They were carefully choosing their words. The second issue I became aware of was group dynamics. I became concerned about the prospect that one or two people might dominate the focus group. A focus group environment had the potential to silence some voices. Therefore, the pilot study was instrumental in my decision to conduct individual interviews rather than focus groups and it helped me to refine my argument for using this approach. (2) Interview process—reframing the interview and reordering and revising questions in order to avoid confusion and ambiguity in meaning. Another outcome of the pilot study was the reordering of the questions on the original interview protocol. The protocol began with abstract questions about how teachers perceive their identity and then moved to more concrete questions. During the last few interviews of the pilot study, I changed the order of the interview questions and this elicited fewer abstract responses.

Based on the pilot study, the final study has taken a step towards extending our understanding of Filipina NNES ESOL teachers' lives within a social, cultural, and historical framework. I also have learned a valuable lesson about the relationship between life experiences and teacher professional development. With more developed

understandings of Filipina NNES ESOL teachers, teacher educators may be able to help language teachers embrace their identities and encourage them to cultivate their unique cultural backgrounds into teaching resources so that they may better serve culturally and linguistically diverse ESOL learners in the U.S.

Concluding Thoughts

There are a multitude of reasons why I decided to undertake this study. Most notably, it is about the passion that I have for understanding Filipina NNES ESOL teachers' lived experiences in MAPS. Inevitably, it is also about understanding myself as both an insider and an outsider in this research process. I would like to argue that any results and findings that were gathered from this research may also speak to the lives and experiences of other Filipina teachers as well as other Asian women and other international teachers in other U.S. public schools.

Chapter 4: JOIE'S STORY

Reminiscing the Past: Educational and Teaching Experiences in the Philippines

Learning English in the Philippines: Influence of Cultural and Linguistic Experiences

Ever since I was a child my parents always wanted the best for me. Even though money was sporadic and scarce, my parents did everything they could to send my sister and me to the best schools in town so we could have access to an optimum education. My parents had extremely high expectations from my sister and me. They envisioned that my sister and I were to be the best in everything-- first honors, the best orator, best declaimer, best singer, best dancer. I remember when I was in fourth grade; my mom often helped me practice for a singing competition. I practiced religiously, but when the competition came, I did not win. I realized I was the youngest. I even had competitors who were in high school. I had no chance. I could still vividly remember how my 4th grade teacher approached me, hugged me and said: "Oh Dolores, my poor girl. You always lose. I'm so sorry." I really did not realize that I was always a loser in all the contests that I joined earlier that year. Whether it was a declamation, writing contest, or singing contest, my mother just gave me a smile and said to me "It's okay you'll win next time." On our way home, I said to myself, "Next year, I will come back and I will beat them all."

That summer, our family emigrated to Calapan, Mindoro, a province in another island. I started fifth grade in a new private school. As what I had promised myself, I worked arduously and I joined every contest in my new school—singing, dancing, cheerleading, spelling, declamation, oratorical, and writing contest—and I won them all--first place. Also, I became first honors that same year even though I was a transferee. That

experience was life changing for me. I knew I would always give my best and that I would never settle for less in anything that I do from that moment on.

When it comes to family myth, it was all about winning, being first and being competitive. It was always music to my parents' ears if I were achieving and excelling in school, but it greatly affected my little sister. The family myth backfired on her. She was often compared to us—my eldest sister and myself. As a result, she became rebellious and more obstinate than a mule, to the extent that she didn't want to finish school. She lost her sense of self-confidence and just lived under the shadow of her siblings' successes.

I have always loved and revered my parents, and I would be forever grateful for all the sacrifices they endured to provide for us and to give us the best education; but there was another family myth, which I witnessed from my parents that perturbed me greatly and changed my entire perspective towards life. In order to provide and grant us the life and education they wanted us to have, they would borrow other people's money; but whenever they couldn't pay what they owed, they would just relocate. This unscrupulous act would explain our constant movement from one place to another. It was a vicious cycle. I had no intention of emulating and duplicating the life that my parents had. I made a promise to myself that I would never do what they did; so I worked arduously to be where I am now, and to veer away from perfidious acts. I espoused to live a life of honesty and integrity so I can walk with my head up high, not wallowing in shame and guilt. However, I still feel a bizarre sense of 'messianic tendency' whenever someone would come to me and ask for financial help. I couldn't say no, because it's as if I could see my own mother in someone's persona. I could imagine my own mother with nowhere

else to go, swallowing her own pride to ask for money just to provide for our education. I remember the time when I had a conversation with my sister and I said to her, “Maybe it is karma that now people owe me money but never pays me back.” My sister could not help but agree since she also had analogous thoughts. Never in my dreams would I ever wish to be in that vulnerable and perplexing situation my parents had been. My sister and I promised to each other that we would work assiduously with veracity and candor.

Time came when I had to file my college application. I applied for the veterinary medicine program in University of the Philippines Los Banos (UPLB). I got accepted but my father argued that I should not pursue it. He pessimistically and ludicrously assumed that I would just get pregnant and not finish college if I would attend the University of the Philippines, which was known for its liberated, rebellious, obstinate but intelligent students. Clearly he did not trust my judgment. My father decided to send me to the College of the Holy Spirit, an exclusive school for girls, but deep in my heart, I really would rather to go to UPLB. During my first year college, that was when I met my husband, Ron. Upon sharing with him my aspirations and ultimate goals in life, Ron encouraged me to take action and make my dream a reality. Without my parents’ permission, I transferred to the University of the Philippines in Diliman. It was a treacherous decision, but it was worth it. I did it for my own sake. I violated the trust my parents had given me, but eventually they were able to understand why I made that decision.

Madonna’s Material Girl—How Did It Influence Me? I learned English through Sesame Street. I remember watching it from a big picture tube style Zenith television. It was a big TV, which came with a big cabinet. I also remember reading *Song hits*

magazine even before reading fairy tale books. I particularly liked Madonna songs as well as original Filipino music. I would remember listening to Madonna's tape recordings as I was holding the *Song hits* in my hand. I would sing and read the lines. I would continue to do it until I memorized the lyrics. Then I would sing together with the tape and hold a fake microphone in my hand while looking at the mirror and trying to follow Madonna's antics. Second Language Acquisition theorists have theorized a number of affective variables such as learner's motivation and personality, as important indexes that determine successful language learning (Lu, 2005). It is assumed that the learner's attitudes towards the target language community determine how motivated the second language learner is. I did not realize that as I enjoyed Madonna's music and sang her songs, I was actually practicing my English—my pronunciation, enunciation, as well as my comprehension.

From Dolores to Doyet to Joie: Why I was never called Maria. My legal name is Maria Dolores Nones Austria. I was never called Maria by any of my family members. I was never called Maria in school either. It was because almost every female in my family had Maria as her first name. Even at school, more than half of my female classmates were also named Maria such as—Maria Mercedes, Maria Gracia, Maria Florida, etc. We were often called by our second names. I am Maria Dolores, so I was called Dolores in school. My family and relatives called me “Doyet” until I was in fourth grade. When I advanced to fifth grade, which was the time when my family moved to another island, far away from where I grew up, my name changed to “Joy”. There was an enthralling story behind the conceptualization of that name. I did not know anybody in my new school. Everyone was wondering who the new girl was. I remember how I

would often be ill as a child. I was allergic to everything. I had so many food allergies. One time I ate instant chicken noodle soup, then all of a sudden, my legs started to swell and red spots started to spread all over my body. I was rushed to the hospital. The doctor found out that even my intestines had red spots caused by the allergic reaction to chicken. It was a petrifying feeling. Then a nun visited me and told my mother that maybe I should be given another nickname. She explained to my mother how my name Dolores meant “sorrowful” in Spanish, so why not name me the opposite of that—which was of course, “Joy”, which then turned to “Joie” in order to delineate myself from the other four girls named “Joy” in school. The nun continued to explain that she had to change her name when she entered the convent, signifying her undertaking a new mission in life. So the nun rationalized that it would probably convert my being sorrowful due to illnesses into something more pleasant and joyful as soon as I changed my name. True enough, may it be a psychological, cosmic or astrological force; my allergies miraculously went away after I changed my nickname to Joy. I never had any other episode of allergic reaction to anything. I became a very active, confident, assertive and joyful child, just as promised by the nun.

Still relating to the story of my name changing, I had an embarrassing experience when I came to the United States. I was at the airport sitting on one of the chairs waiting to be called. Then I heard someone calling “Maria...Maria... Maria... Maria...” I was not even paying attention. I was not used to being called Maria. I just responded when I heard AUSTRIA. It was embarrassing. I did not even recognize my own first name. I had waited until I was thirty years old to be called Maria. Now, many people, especially those who became close to me, call me Joie. It is just interesting to note that during the

times that I was transitioning from changing my name consciously or unconsciously from Doyet to Dolores to Joy, to Joie and finally to Maria, I was also experiencing different chapters in my life. It was like each name had a designated chapter in my life with a totally different persona. I found a parallelism of experiences between Flordeluna and myself. We both changed our names, or it was changed for us by people and circumstances, but one thing was true for both of us. Our identities were tied to our names.

I Love Her, But I Can't Trust Her: A Lesson on Sibling Rivalry. Despite our constant fighting and love-hate relationship as siblings, I grew up very close to my sister. Since we were only one year apart, we grew up like twins. Many people thought we were twins because our parents would often dress us up with similar clothes from the time we were babies until we were probably in fifth grade. We only started to dress differently when I reached sixth grade and then she went on to high school. I remembered asking my mother why we had to wear the same clothes; she explained that by doing so, we did not have to feel envious of which dress is prettier or which color is better. At age five, that response was enough and convincing. We started questioning our mother even more as we grew older, but she would still buy us the same clothes until both my sister and I decided not to wear similar clothes anymore. This concept of being similar, and having to acquire the same things for the purpose of equity created complicated and perplexing emotions in us as children. Growing up, I had the notion that whatever my sister got, I would get too and vice versa. As children, it probably did not agitate us that much, but the dilemma began when we went to high school. The equity issue became even worse than just concerning clothes, shoes, and other material things. We both needed to be in

honors. No problem. We both were, consistently. We both needed to be presidents of each of our clubs, such as Drama or Reading or Dance. No problem. We both were. It became a predicament when each grade level in our school had to have a representative to compete with one another. Since both of us were representatives of our own grade, we couldn't help but compete with each other. We instantly became each other's fiercest competitor. I remember when there was a declamation contest in our school. My sister was the contestant for sophomore year, and I was the contestant for freshman year. The dilemma arose when we had to compete for the finalist round. The fact that we were given the same declamation piece, made it even worse. We had to practice at home. We needed to make sure we were on our own separate rooms when we practiced. I realized now how hard it would be for my mother who was training us both. However, the bottom line was that my mother would still win, since we are both her daughters. She was just really proud of the two of us. I was very careful not to give a hint as to how I planned to act out and deliver my piece. My sister was the same way. I knew she was very good, but I knew I was the best in my level too. I said to myself, "Let's just see." The day of the competition came. We were asked to draw lots. I picked my lucky number two. She picked number three, which means I would be first. I went up the stage when it was my turn and started to deliver my declamation piece. I was presumptuous that I did my best. In the end, my tears were very real. I really cried, but not because I was touched by the story of the piece. I cried out of nervousness and anxiety. Then it was my sister's turn. She was very good. In fact, her actions were even better, but I noticed something. In the end, she did not have real tears. She was just pretending to cry, just crocodile tears. I knew at that point, I would score first place. True enough, I

won first place and she won second place. I was ecstatic. She was not. She told me the only reason I won was because I cried. It didn't matter to me what she said. I knew I won and I got the trophy to prove it. My mother was the happiest. Her two children were in first and second place for the declamation contest. She was really proud of us! Little did I know, this competition was just the start of even bigger competitions, both in school and even in our adult life. If only I could turn back time. I wish I had done something to avoid this scenario. I wish our parents had given us the wisdom to grapple with our feelings regarding competing with one another. I wish we were properly coached and lectured about our behavior. It could have been a healthy competition instead of a sibling rivalry. The truth of the matter is, I love my sister very much, and I know she loves me too, but when we were competing, we just could not trust each other. Little did we know, this predicament would have a greater impact as we grew older, even up to our adulthood. She is now thirty six years old, and I am thirty five. We seldom speak to each other. Both of us built our own schools in the Philippines, in the same location. We both have the same clientele. We are both catering to the same market, offering the same academic programs. We have become competitors. Even now, I wish my parents had taught us how to solve problems involving competition among siblings. As I think I about it though, I begin to realize that maybe they had no idea how to coach us. Maybe, they taught us only the things they knew. Maybe they just raised us the best way they knew how.

Of Songs and Poetry—A Grandma's Tale. My grandmother was the most talented woman I have ever known in my family. She can sing, dance, recite poetry, stories, and she can recite hundreds and hundreds of litany or prayers. She has the most beautiful

face among all the women in my family. I admire and adore her dearly. She is a benevolent, altruistic, amiable, and congenial woman. However, she was not as this strong and confident. My grandfather died when he was thirty two and left my grandmother with six children. She raised them with the help of her in-laws. Although she only finished fourth grade, she has an astute and perceptive nature. She taught me a lot of idiomatic sayings in my language. After dinner, she would always sing ballads or recite very old poems to me in our language. Then she would explain what it meant and what the poem or the song signified. I was always looking forward for that bonding time between my grandmother and me. She was my mentor. I remembered all the sacrifices my grandmother had to make just to take care of my sister and me. She would literally carry my sister and I to school during the typhoon season, so our uniforms wouldn't get wet. She would cook us warm meals, give us a bath, and iron our uniforms. Although we had a maid, she would volunteer to do the chores, because she wanted everything to be perfect.

Hide! There's a Bomb! In every family, stories and family myths are told and retold. As children, we swallow them whole, and they become part of our unconscious map of the world (Napier, 1993). It is this family story, my parents' competitive attitudes, which challenged me to set a map for my future learning.

In March of 1986, I was in sixth grade. I was twelve years old. In the Philippines, that grade level was considered the final grade in elementary school before going on to high school. We did not have middle school. I would never forget what happened two days after the deliberation of honor students. I was the first honorable mention, which meant I ranked third among the entire graduating class in my school. I was not ecstatic at

all. I already knew how my parents would react once they learned about it. They were expecting for me to be the valedictorian, or the salutatorian at least. They were never used to me being the third honor. I knew they would never be able to accept it. I was walking home that day, when I treated myself for a soft-serve ice cream hoping it would calm me down. I was enjoying my ice cream as I walked home by myself trying to rehearse how I would break the news to my parents. I was in such a precarious and perilous situation. I knew they would never take it well, no matter how hard I would try to explain it. It was a horrendous feeling for me. My father's preposterous thoughts as well as my mother's hysterical demeanor daunted me. I was so terrified and discombobulated. The fear of the unknown clouded my thoughts. I was walking inadvertently. I could hear my heart pounding as I reached home. I came inside and I saw my mother sitting at her office table. My father was not home. Thank God! My mother knew it was the deliberation day. She just needed to see my face and my facial expression. She didn't have to ask me. When I came in, I could not control my emotions. Tears fell down my eyes. I told my mother "Mom, I was not the valedictorian." The tears would not stop falling from my eyes. I was crying so profusely that I could not even utter a word. I felt that a huge stone was blocking my throat. She did not ask me anything else. She just hugged and kissed me and let me cry on her shoulders. I heard her say, "clean yourself up and get ready for dinner." I did not hear "it is okay, or you'll be fine," but at least I did not hear screaming or shouting. When I went to the dinner table, there were only two plates, for my sister and me. My mother was not joining us for dinner. My father was out of town and would not be back until the weekend. My sister told me that my mother needed to finish her accounting business

before she would eat dinner, so she wanted us to go ahead and eat. My sister was reading a pocket book as she was eating. It was the Harlequin Romance—“The Malevolent Mansion”. She loved to read. She was a very eloquent person. She was one of the smartest people I knew. She just looked at me and asked, “Who was the valedictorian?” I said, “Sheila Leynes.” I also did not have the guts to tell her that I was not the salutatorian; that I was just the first honorable mention. I was embarrassed to tell her. I could barely eat that night. After dinner, I got ready to do my homework. Then I heard my mother’s footsteps coming towards me. I was not as anxious as I was half an hour ago; at least there was some down time. It helped that she did not join me at the dinner table. She sat down beside me at the living room sofa and asked: “So how many points did you miss over Shiela’s?” My mom knew it was Sheila who took my spot as the valedictorian, but she had no clue that there was Fairy who also took the salutatorian spot. So I told her—“Mom, I am the first honorable mention.” Then I started crying again. I do not remember anymore exactly what happened next. Maybe I just chose to bury that incident deeply in my memory because no matter how hard I tried, I still could not remember how my mother reacted or what words she uttered to me after hearing the truth. The next thing I knew, I was back in school the next day and my teachers were running back and forth towards the stairs. They were trying to be calm, but I could feel a sense of distress and vexation in their eyes. We were all asked to line up and go to church, (only a few steps away from school) which we would usually do on a first Friday mass or a special occasion. It was nothing new to us—lining up to go to church. The only thing that was odd was that it was in the middle of the day after the lunch period. We never scheduled a mass or church gathering after lunch. The priests would be resting

by that time. We all just lined up. No one seemed to be anxious about the situation. Many of my classmates were actually elated that we were missing our Filipino class. They all wanted to be outside the classrooms, except for Michael, the boy who I would consider my first childhood crush. He probably saw the perturbed look in my eyes. He approached me and said, “This is weird don’t you think?” He held my hand and asked me if I was okay. He told me I was getting pale. I was temporarily relieved. I was glad that I was not the only one who was having a peculiar feeling about the whole scenario. Michael and I decided to leave the line and went to Mrs. Avelino, our homeroom teacher. I asked her, “Ma’am, what’s going on? Is everything alright?” She looked at me strangely and told me, “You tell me!” I was taken aback by that response. There was contempt and annoyance in her voice. My heart beat intensely. That statement was completely impetuous. I felt even more perplexed, but something was telling me that I would be in great trouble. Michael and I went back to the line before going inside the church. We prayed three decades of the rosary. We never knew what went on outside the church. All I remember was we stayed inside the church for more than an hour. Then the nun, Sr. Francisca, our religion teacher announced that we were all ready for dismissal. I do not remember what happened after that. The next thing I know, I was sitting at the principal’s office with Sr. Francisca. She was very empathetic to me. I knew she loved me and she cared about me. I was a very good student in her class. I would always get perfect scores on her tests. She gave me the lead role in a play that she directed. I loved her dearly. All I could remember was her saying that I would be going inside the conference room with her; and that my mother was taken to the hospital, but she was fine, and that my father was taken in police custody. I cried profusely. I was

certain she was telling me the story and was explaining to me everything that happened, but I could not hear it. It was like my ears turned deaf. I only saw her benevolent eyes and lips moving as she spoke, but I could not hear any sound coming from her mouth. My eyes were welling with tears. Then I saw my sister, who was also crying imperceptibly. I hugged her and we held hands as we sat beside Sister Francisca. The rest of the people were inside the conference room, sitting around the big conference table. There I saw blurred faces. I was trying to recall as hard as I could, but I really cannot remember everyone's face. I was twelve years old then. It was twenty-three years ago. They were all conversing about the incident, but nothing made sense to me. All I heard was that my father was put in prison and that my mother was rushed to the hospital. Now that I am writing this narrative, I cannot help but cry as I relive the experience. I can't help but feel sorry not for myself, not for my mom, not for my dad, but for my sister, who was silently sitting beside me, holding my hand, passively taking in and absorbing everything that was going on around her. She did nothing wrong. I did not do anything wrong either. At that time, I felt it was my entire fault. All that pandemonium was because of me. I caused all those adverse things to befall on us. I never felt disconsolate for my sister until now; at this moment, when everything else has been said and done. She was very much perturbed by all the chaos, but she was aghast and immobilized. She had to live and witness all those afflictions and humiliations that our family had experienced. It was only after we came to the hospital that I understood what really happened. From school, we went straight to the hospital where my mother was confined. My grandmother was holding my hand. Sister Francisca explained to my mother what really happened. My father got himself drunk at a local club, called the

school office, demanded the principal, and then made a nefarious threat! He said that he had planted an explosive device in the school, and that he would bomb the entire school because he believed the nuns were not fair to his daughter when they did not elect her the valedictorian. I did not want to go back to school ever again. I was seriously humiliated by what my father did. I just wanted to stay with my mother at the hospital, but I had no choice. My mother begged me to go to school. When I arrived, I felt that all eyes were on me, judging me, despising me. My homeroom teacher called me and asked me many questions that I do not even remember anymore. All I remembered was her judging and disdain looks towards me. Even my best friend would not talk to me. I was sure her parents had convinced her not to be friends with me anymore. The only one true friend who had the courage to talk to me and approach me was Michael. He stayed beside me the whole day. He never did ask me anything about what happened. He just stayed there beside me, just being there for me. We were twelve years old. He was my only confidant. A week after graduation, my family and I left town and moved back to Tanauan, our hometown. When we left, we also left behind all the excess baggage we had—all the atrocious experiences, all the people that abhorred and despised us; maybe even the people who were sympathetic to us and felt sorry for us. I left Michael too. I did not have any chance to say goodbye to him, my only friend. I never saw him again until I was a college freshman. It was a strange feeling. He was too late. I was already engaged to be married to Ron when we saw each other again, but the friendship remained.

Stories of Being Female: My Solemn Vow. All my life, women in my family, who had exhibited a sense of proclivity and powerlessness in their lives, had always

surrounded me. Although some of them showed fortitude and will power, many of them were too clouded by their frailty to make decisions due to aversion or intimidation from the significant people around them. My mother was tenacious in some ways; but debilitated in some sense since she never had the fortitude to follow her dreams. She had always been brave and strong-willed. She would not hesitate to fight others for what she believed in, but that was about it. She did not have the courage and determination to stand up for her own dreams of finishing school and getting a job that she wanted. She had always worked for my father's business. She never had the opportunity to work anywhere else. As I grew older, I kept asking my mother why she never had a chance to finish school. Her response was that my father never allowed her to go back to school. At first, I did not question that notion, but as I matured, I kept on asking her why she did not insist. She admitted how scared she was of my father; that she could not do anything without his permission. I thought that was the most ridiculous thing I had ever heard in my life, but my mother was serious. The tears were welling down her cheeks as she was telling me her story. Still, I could not understand. She should have at least tried or sought help, or even left my dad. Her response to me was just her silence. I knew she was thinking about my words—how she didn't stand up for herself. Now all she had left was affliction. It was too late for her now, but at least, she could make herself alive again through her daughters. Our successes and achievements were good enough for her, resulted in having very high expectations of us. She always told my sister and me, "If I had given the same opportunity, I would achieve more than anything." I believed her. I still do. She definitely would have succeeded.

In the same manner, my grandmother, who could only find her strength through prayers and devotion, never had the opportunity to accomplish what she wanted to do with her life. All her decisions had to be approved by her parents, her husband, and her in-laws. When my grandfather died, she had to live with her in-laws. When her children grew a bit older, she was able to find a way to support her children by selling vegetables in the market. She had persevered. She raised six children by herself. She never re-married. She devoted her life to her children. Although my grandmother had shown courage and resilience in supporting her children, she still lacked the inner strength to stand up for herself against her judging and domineering in-laws. As I reflect on both of my mother's and grandmother's lives, I see how cultural influence of being passive towards authority figures overwhelmed both of them and shaped their identities.

My aunts on my mother's side of the family were in a similar position. They were all frail and tenuous women who couldn't fight for what they believed in, and who were never financially independent from their husbands. They never once thought of being rebellious and dissident. They took and accepted everything apathetically, without question. My aunts on my father's side were overindulged, undisciplined, and disillusioned, but never really strong willed. Although they were fortunate enough to have opportunities towards upward mobility, they were flaccid and unmotivated to succeed. They wasted their time, money and effort on worthless and despicable vices. All I saw were regrets and disdain in their eyes. Again, it was too late for them as well. Some of them grew old by themselves, without anybody to take care of them. It was such a pensive, wistful fate. All of these significant women in my life that I have seen and even grew up with, I used as clear mirrors of women that I do not ever want to be. I

made a solemn vow to myself to be the antithesis of who they were. I promised myself to try assiduously to become a resilient, intelligent and independent woman in my own right!

Fortunately, I met a few strong women in my life that influenced me to reach my highest potential. I had a teacher named Ms. Africa, my 4th grade teacher. She believed in my potential. She would was always there supporting me in many of my competitions within or outside school. Even when I lost, she never stopped encouraging me. She would always cheer for me.

In 2002, I went to Seattle, and enrolled in the University of Washington (UW) Graduate School of Education. The course I took was Reading and Literature for children. That was when I met Dr. Nancy Hanssen-Krening, my professor. She was another strong woman in my life who influenced me and encouraged me to enroll in a doctoral program. After college I didn't want to study anymore. I saw all of my classmates at UW working on their masters. My professor was a doctor. I said to myself, I wanted to be like her. When I came to the University of Maryland, I met Dr. Rebecca Oxford who became my mentor. She validated my belief that anything is possible as long as I have strong determination and the courage to fight and withstand all the obstacles along the way.

Gender is a part of our social identity, which indicates where we stand in relation to others (Lu, 2005). Weber (2001) sees race, class, gender, and sexuality as four fundamental sources of our identity formation, and these four fundamental sources are not just “ranking of socially valued resources—that have more income or prestige. They are power relationships—who exerts power and control over whom—how the privilege

of some results from the exploitation of others” (p.88). Weber further explains that the power relationships change because oppressed groups struggle to gain rights, opportunities, and resources—to gain greater control over their lives. As I grew up, school and education became an agent that could give me much power to succeed and to change my life. Thus, I studied very hard and fought all the obstacles that came my way in order to get to the top.

Influence of Relationships on Identity

My Mother’s Plea. “I want you to be successful in life. I never wanted you to become like me.” Those were my mother’s reminders to my sister and me. She sent us to the best schools in town to help us achieve our dreams. I knew we did not have enough money and that my parents could not afford the exorbitant tuition fee of private catholic schools, but my mother persevered. She promised my sister and I that we would get the best education that we deserved. She did not want us to end up like her—uneducated, frustrated and unfulfilled. I remembered her saying to me: “If you would marry, find someone who can fulfill your dreams, not the one who would make you give up your dreams.” I paid attention. I promised to listen to my mother’s plea. I concurred with her in that category. I married a man who inspired and continuously encouraged and supported me to fulfill my dreams. I am truly grateful for my mother.

I remember how my mother wrote declamation pieces for me. I often won first place using the pieces that she wrote. My mother did not finish high school, because she got married at fourteen. She eloped with my father. She’s a very smart person though, with many talents. Although she never went to college, she speaks fluent English. At home, she always encouraged us to speak in English. She would say it is for our own good.

She always talked to us in English and that was how I started to become fluent myself. In the second generation of families of my mother and father, no one ever finished college. No one had gotten a degree. My father only finished his sophomore year. In the third generation, however, which includes my cousins and me, everyone has finished college. I am the only one who reached this level, which is doctoral candidate. My relatives have no idea what a doctor of philosophy means; they just know it must be something important and dignified. The unfortunate and destitute experiences of my mother fueled me to achieve high and aim for a colossal dream, even though; I also got married at a very young age. I was nineteen. I wanted to prove to everyone that I could finish a degree and even achieve the highest level of education. All my life, I have tried very hard to prove many of my critics wrong. My father's side of the family looked down on my mother's side of the family since they were more affluent than my mother's family. I made a promise to myself I would never allow myself to become impoverished and uncouth. I would never be like the women in my family. I needed to change my own perspective about life because the women in my life became stagnated, immobilized and decrepit. They did not have the confidence to empower themselves and pursue their dreams. I wanted to change all that. I saw the lives of the women in my life as I was growing up. They allowed themselves to be impoverished, languished and downtrodden women with no voices. I remember the movie *Gone with the Wind*. My mother watched that movie so many times that she memorized all the lines. She told me Scarlet O'Hara was the woman she wanted to become but never had been. She said it's time for me to uplift the role of women in our family. Generations upon generations of women in our

family never had the strength to show resilience and independence. I am their only chance to change all that.

Dewey (1938) sees an individual's experience as a central lens for understanding a person. For him, experience, education and life are highly related. I was learning this most powerfully through my experiences with my mother, learning the important concepts of educated versus uneducated, and how to live through her life.

My Daughter is the Valedictorian, No Matter What! My parents had very high expectations for my siblings and me. I am the middle child. My sister had always been an honor student, thus I used to live under her shadow. Even in school, my teachers always compared me with my sister. I always struggled to prove that I am not exactly like my sister and that I have a different personality, with my own talents and idiosyncrasies. I had another sibling who was fourteen years younger than me. She had to suffer twice the comparison, that is, among my older sister, her and myself. She is a smart, affectionate and passionate young woman now, who's in her early twenties. She still lives behind her siblings' (mine and our elder sister's) shadow but she is beginning to recognize her own inner strength to be the person that she truly is—*independent, energated, and determined.*

As I have mentioned earlier on, it seemed that every part of my life always had controversies in it. I was still traumatized over the terrifying action that my father did when I was in sixth grade. Even though I had not fully recovered yet from that experience, there was a similar incident that happened when I reached my senior year in high school. I was awarded twelve medals but I was not on the honors list. As expected, my parents were furious again. They could not accept the fact that I would graduate high

school with twelve medals but I was not the valedictorian. I had a B- in math, but I needed an A- to be the valedictorian. It did not matter that the rest of my grades were all A's. To make the situation worse for my family, my teacher in math was my mother's cousin. To everyone's dismay and trepidation, my mother slapped my teacher's face right after the graduation ceremony. It was absolutely horrifying. Everybody in my school abhorred me after the incident. I was literally ostracized. It was very tumultuous, traumatic and appalling.

Four years had passed since the bomb threat incident my father had instigated when I graduated from my elementary school. I was not even resolved with the trauma it caused me. Then the next thing I know, my family and I were involved again in another horrendous and atrocious scenario, but this time, it was not my father, but my mother created and insinuated it! I felt as if heaven and earth collapsed on me. I could not imagine or explain the amalgamating emotions I had when that incident happened. It was the day of my graduation from high school. Excruciating affliction, pandemonium, animosity, humiliation, and agitation—these were the feelings I felt all in one. I was paralyzed with shame and personal agony. I could not do anything. I felt that it would be easier if I would just disappear so I could just escape. I was not ready to face all the judging faces I saw around me. I was not ready for the repercussions the irresponsible actions my mother had caused. I was not ready to be persecuted for the mistake I did not make. My mother was the villain. I blamed her for everything. I blamed myself. I wanted to end my suffering and frustration. I thought it would be easier to end my life than live in shame and agony, but my faith saved me. I anchored to my faith—to the Virgin Mary. I became a devotee of the holy rosary. It was life changing for me.

After several months of anguish and agony, I went to college. Then I met Ron, my husband, and my saving grace. My father didn't approve of him at first. I started to become obstinate. I followed my own intuition of what would be best for me. I refrained from obeying my parents' wishes. I wanted to escape my life. I wanted to be free of my parents' ill judgments and uncouth actions. The only solution for me was to get married early. At eighteen, Ron and I had a civil wedding, a secret marriage. A year after that, we got married in church. I have never regretted my decision to leave my parents' house. It was cathartic for me to do what I did.

Stone (1988) explains that family stories often play a role in giving instructions, offering blueprints and issuing warnings in our lives. Through my family's experience, I learned that I must work arduously in learning and do my best to succeed. In Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) and Lu's (2005) words, I paid attention to those elements of experiences that I selected, and I patterned those chosen elements in ways that reflected the stories in my life to make sense of my daily experience.

Why Do I Always Have to Prove Myself? Since I was a child, we moved to different places. I would just start to make friends with some children in my neighborhood but then wake up one morning and have to move yet to another place and make new friends again. It was like a constant way of proving myself over and over again every time I would meet new acquaintances. It came to a point that it was exhausting and debilitating but I was destitute and couldn't do anything because I was just a helpless child. There were many other incidents that happened but I completely consciously forgot about them. I purposefully chose to bury them deep down in my memory only because they would just bring repulsive and afflictive feelings. Then I realized, I just could not forget about them

that easily because they were my past, which helped shape and mold my present and future identity. I realized I couldn't run away from them. The more I reflect on my own life, the more I seek my own identity, and the more I begin to understand my own self worth.

My Reflection: Hiding My Past Behind. I have to admit that I am humiliated by my past. My family and my relatives continue to abash and humiliate me. I am distraught by my past in general. Some stories of my childhood I really do not want to remember, especially the painful times, embarrassing times, but the more I conceal those memories deep within me, the more I get lost finding my own self. I tried to forget the people in my past especially the ones that caused the hurt and embarrassment, but as I look deeply into myself, I realize all of those people and all of those negative feelings challenged me and motivated me to push myself to achieve my highest potential.

I was just down playing my life history because life had to go on whatever happens. Then of course, when I came to the states, another incident happened with the employment agency. The owner of the employment agency prohibited all spouses and family members of the teachers on working visa from joining us (teachers) in the states when we first came. We had to wait one year before we were allowed to bring our family to the states. It was the rule. No one was exempted. I thought it was such a ridiculous idea. Knowing my inquisitive and scrutinizing self, I would always find a way to search for the truth in order to prove what is just, fair and equitable for everyone's benefit. I consulted a lawyer, and true enough, there was no legal code prohibiting spouses and family members of employees with working visas to go to the states and live with them. So, a week after I arrived in the states, my husband followed. That was when the owner

of the agency got furious with me and asked me to leave the apartment building I was supposed to stay in even though I had already paid for my rental payment in advance. She did not allow me to stay in the same apartment building because I violated the rules. She even said I could stay in the apartment, but my husband could not stay with me. That was such a preposterous idea. So, I left the apartment, moved in to another apartment complex with my husband; and then demanded for my payment to be returned. This experience showed that I would never let my pride or my dignity become oppressed or downtrodden by anyone. I would always fight for what was right and just.

Furthermore, I realized that no matter how determined I am, I have a specific waterloo, which has always been a constant struggle for me. It has always been very difficult for me to accept defeat or failure in life because I was brought up to believe that I am confident enough to be what I want to be, but to the extent that it is difficult when I don't get what I want or what I believe I deserve. It is a continuous struggle for me even now.

Reflection: An Inspiring Song. In terms of an inspiring piece of literary work, there is one thing that I can relate the story of my life with. It is the song "Reflection" from the original soundtrack of the movie *Mulan* by Disney. I feel the lyrics of the song significantly acquiesced with emotions and feelings of my past, threading towards my present, and leading towards my future. Here are the lyrics:

Look at me, you may think you see
Who I really am, but you'll never know me.
Everyday, it's as if I play a part.
Now I see, if I wear a mask,

I can fool the world, but I cannot fool my heart.
Who is that girl I see? Staring straight, back at me.
When will my reflection show, who I am inside?
I am now, in a world, where I have to hide in my heart, and what I believe in.
But somehow, I will show the world what's inside my heart,
And be loved for who I am. Who is that girl I see,
staring straight back at me? Why is my reflection someone I don't know?
Must I pretend that I'm
someone else for all time. When will my reflection show,
who I am inside?
There's a heart that must be free
to fly.. That burns with a need to know
the reason why. Why must we all conceal
What we think...How we feel?
Must there be a secret me
I'm forced to hide. I won't pretend that I'm
someone else, for all time.
When will my reflection show
who I am inside?

I chose this song because I feel that it elucidates my inner feelings about myself—why and how I learned to wear masks to disguise my personality; until I got lost within my own self and the story of how I moved on in search of my own true self again, beneath the layers or masks.

Joie, How Do You Do It? As I mentioned earlier on, I was determined to enroll in the University of the Philippines for veterinary medicine, but my father did not allow me to do so. He did not want me to be left behind in the province because the rest of the family was moving to Manila since my parents found a new business venture. Also, my elder sister was already studying at the College of the Holy Spirit, an exclusive school for girls. So, being a minor, I did not have a choice. Even though the school had excellent programs, I was apathetic to do my best. Although I was elected the president of our class, the freshman representative, the winner of many declamation and oratorical contests, I still was not jumping with joy because my heart and my mind were in the University of the Philippines. That was my dream school. Only the best of the best could go to that school. I had the opportunity to do so, but my parents did not let me pursue it. They obstructed my plans due to nonsensical and ludicrous assumptions. I hated my parents. I despised myself for not being able to stand up for my dream, but I did not lose hope. I promised myself, I would do everything that I could to transfer, even without my parents' permission. I knew what I wanted, I knew when to get it, and most of all, and I knew what was best for me. I was very motivated even at the young age of seventeen. I stayed for another year in that exclusive school for girls, because I knew I would need a year in order to organize and prepare the documentation I needed to transfer. On my junior year in college, I was enrolled in U.P.—my dream school. I was able to make it happen.

My sister then asked me, “Joie, how do you do it? You are a person who knows what you want and knows when to get it.” I was stunned. I never thought my sister would say that to me. We were always competing but never once had she mentioned something like

that to me. She never gave me a compliment; so I was flattered. I did not exactly remember how I responded to her. I probably gave her some philosophical, rhetoric but baloney response. I just found out that it was how my sister describes me around people that she meets. She is absolutely right though I always knew what I wanted to do with my life. I always planned ahead, way ahead. When I was in high school, I had a list of what I would be doing in ten years. I had back up plans as well. I would never just plunge into the unknown without anticipating what I would need to fight the obstacles along the way. However, as tough as I may sound, I have my own downfall. I am not very good at handling and accepting failure. For me, it is just not an option. So when it comes, and oh yes, it comes plenty, I always experience an emotional struggle. How do I cope? Sometimes I need to lay low, removing myself from the spotlight. At times, I had to find a diversion—probably another project to work on. One thing is for certain though. I never gave up on my goals and dreams. I knew that with perseverance comes success. I would often times hear my mother’s voice reminding me to bounce back and fight back. I thank my mother for that.

Along Came Ron. It was 1994, my very first year in UP. At last, I was in my dream school; a new found freedom. With freedom though, comes responsibility. With responsibility, comes adversity. I was ready. I was well-equipped. I planned and contemplated for this scenario my whole life. I had a strong belief I would overcome. My parents were infuriated that I did not seek their permission to transfer to U.P. It didn’t matter much to me. I knew their anger would fade away one day. I knew that someday they would understand why I chose to follow my dreams. I was not brave enough to do it all by myself, though. I had a secret weapon—the wind beneath my

wings. It was Ron, my boyfriend at that time. He was the one who encouraged me to never stop dreaming; to never limit myself with what life presented to me. He was absolutely right. He believed in me. He believed I could make something out of myself. I will forever be grateful to him.

I got married young. My husband knew I had a colossal ambition in life. I always had a plan for everything. The first time I saw Ron, I told my sister, “That’s the guy I want to marry.” His unwavering support and love fueled me to aspire success. He taught me a lot of things that my own parents never taught me. He often told me that his world revolved around mine. I do wonder, however, if I had a more conducive environment, would I have gotten married very early in my life. I really needed to do it, though. I have no regrets. Of course, there’s no such thing as a perfect marriage. There is what you call, a seven-year itch in a relationship. At that time, Ron and I were having a lot of arguments about every little thing. We almost got separated. We were really a very young couple; we did not know what we were doing most of the time. However, I realized I got into that marriage, so I had to be the one to organize and resolve my life. My parents’ life was in disarray. They could not help me. That’s why I left in the first place. I had to be strong for my own self. No one could help me but my own self alone. I had to pull myself together. I knew what I wanted; I knew when to get it, so I did it. At that time, my in-laws perceived me as a gold digger. They didn’t like my family, so I had to prove myself. I had to put up my own business. It was only when I had established myself and built my own name that I was able to prove to my in-laws that I never wanted to be dependent on them for money. That was the only time that everything went smoothly. That’s when I earned their respect. Ron literally brought me up. He was my

catalyst. I was seventeen when we met. I was eighteen when we got married in a civil wedding, and I was nineteen when we got married in church. Although he can also be my worst critic, he has always been my biggest fan.

Becoming an English Teacher in the Philippines

Teaching English for Koreans. I started teaching English for Koreans when I was a sophomore in college. That kind of job was quite popular since at that time, there was a high influx of Koreans going to the Philippines. They would go for two reasons: 1) To enjoy our exotic beaches and 2) To learn English. I remembered teaching them at a kiosk, under a tree near the library. I taught them one-on-one. At one point I remembered having fifteen students, which I brought to Subic, a famous resort for a field trip. That was the first time I was exposed to teaching English to other cultures. Looking back, I was using many ESOL strategies but I just had no idea what they were called. What mattered to me was that my students were learning, and I was earning while I was studying.

My Dual Life—As an undergraduate and as an English Tutor. In my first year at the University of the Philippines, I enrolled with a full load of courses (15 credit units). All my classes were in the morning; so after one in the afternoon, I had nothing else to do. I went around the business centers near the campus, and there I saw a tutorial center—MSA Math Tutorial Center. I went inside and inquired if they needed an English tutor. I did not even have a resume to show them. I just told the owner that I was a second year student at the university and that my only teaching experience was tutoring English for Koreans, but I had all the time to teach in the afternoon. Fortunately, I got hired the same day. The owner, Mrs. A asked me to start the next day. That was my very first real

employment. She offered me a good full time compensation as long as I could meet the number of hours in a week, which meant that I could use my weekends to cover for my hours during the time that I would be in school. It worked out perfectly. I went to school in the morning, and went back to work after lunch until 8pm. Suddenly, I became even more alive. My mind was bursting with ideas. At that time, my boss was working on a Math book. I suggested to her why not incorporate English and Math together. She was thrilled by the idea, so we went ahead with it. My boss gave me a good break. She trusted me to become a co-author in her first book. That paved the way for me towards becoming an author.

My Sister Came on Board with Me. A few weeks after I was hired, Mrs. A and I were already writing our book together. Then I suggested to her, why not hire someone who had expertise in science concepts so we can complete the whole book—three in one. I recommended my sister who at that time was working as a medical technologist in a local hospital. I paid her a visit and finally convinced her to come and join me in my new job as a full time science tutor. She was very good in biology, organic chemistry, and many other sciences since she studied for years in a science program. It was not difficult to convince her since the salary offer was much higher than what she was receiving from the local hospital at that time. Plus, we would be working together. It was such a perfect idea. It worked for my sister, Mrs. A, and me. We were all excited and ecstatic. True enough, my sister was a science expert. I was a proud sister. Everything was going very well, the three of us were writing books together. We published three books and before we knew, it they were selling like hotcakes in the bookstores nationwide. Mrs. A was generous enough to give us extra commission if we sold them by ourselves. We had a

very good relationship with her. I continued to work and study, until my college graduation came. I graduated *cum laude* (with honors). I was blissful and jubilant. Finally, I was reaping the success of which I had dreamed. Then, Ron, my husband, surprised me with a two-month trip to the U.S. and Europe. I could not bear my excitement. There were no words to describe it. I left my job temporarily. I told my boss I would be coming back after the trip, but deep inside me, I knew I would probably not come back; It was time to move on to another stage of my life. I knew I had bigger dreams. I knew I would be willing to sacrifice my comfort zone for something bigger and greater.

Building a Tutorial School from Zilch. After my U.S. and European trip, I came back to work. I talked to Mrs. A, my boss about my interest in managing my own business so I offered to franchise her center. However, I did not have enough money, so I was asking if she would consider giving it to me at a lower price. Of course, she would not agree, so I talked to my sister. I asked her if she would want to just build our own center. We would just start with our own little savings, and probably just borrow from Ron, my husband so we could start it right away. I did not have a hard time convincing my sister of my plan. She agreed at once. We left MSA. Mrs. A was broken hearted. We felt guilty, but then again, we knew we couldn't just stay there and be employees forever. We knew there was more to life than that, so my sister and I persevered. We were absolutely determined to build our own learning center. Her boyfriend, who was a lawyer, helped us with all the paperwork and documentation. My husband Ron helped us find a location for our center. We specifically chose a location that was not in direct competition with Mrs. A. After a few months, we opened our own center—Study Time

Tutorial and Review Center. Before we knew it, it was picking up fast. We started as the only teachers, but as time went by, we needed to hire more teachers to service our new clientele.

With Success...comes adversity! The tutorial business my sister and I built was a big hit. Then all of a sudden, we needed a much bigger place to house all our students. At that time, I became engrossed and pre-occupied with the new business that I barely had time with my husband Ron. That was when we started to have problems. My married life was all of a sudden, not doing great. A once happy and exciting union became a nightmare. As expected, my relationships with other significant people in my family became sour as well. It was my emotional downfall. All of a sudden, I lost my motivation. I just wanted to give up. I did not feel passionate about teaching anymore. I did not feel passionate about succeeding. All I wanted was to fix and stabilize my own life, but of course, we just signed a new contract for our new building. My sister would never let me drag the business down with me. I also had no intention of leaving or pulling the plug, but in all honesty, I just did not have the drive anymore. I lost it. I was lonely, distressed and frustrated. Then my sister and I started to argue and fight. My husband and I fought profusely as well. It was like hell for me during that time. I could not handle fighting both of them—my sister also my business partner, and then my husband. It was just too much for me to bear. I had to make a decision. I was not willing to let go of the business I built from scratch. I figured and hoped that Ron would understand. My sister had no tolerance for Ron and vice versa. I was in a boiling hot water. My husband versus my sister; my personal life versus my career. It was the most difficult time of my life. I was twenty four years old. I still did not have the wisdom or

the experience to help me cope and so I struggled severely; and so I left Ron. I took care of the business my sister and I built. Ron, however, would not let me go just like that. He would not lose me for just that. So, after a few months, I realized I just could not let my husband suffer for my deficiency as a wife. I was his wife first, even before I started the business. He was with me when I struggled before I even started weaving my dreams. He was the wind beneath my wings. We got back together, but that meant, I would have to leave my sister, my business partner and the school that I built from nothing.

My Ultimate Sacrifice. June 1999, two years after I built Study Time with my sister, I opened my own school—Study Hall Tutorial Center. In as much as I did not want to compete with my sister, it was also the only job I knew how to do. I literally conceptualized Study Time, but in the end, I had to leave everything with her. I did not even ask for a single penny from her. All my investments were gone. I left it all to her. I had to redeem myself and put up my own school. But again, I had to make my ultimate sacrifice—the fear that my sister would never be able to forgive me for competing with her this time. As I am writing this dissertation, my tears are falling down my eyes because it has been eleven years since this happened. Things were never the same between my sister and me. We were back to square one—the time when we were in 4th and 5th grade, and were competing in a declamation contest. I was the first place winner. She was the second place. It all started there. It should've stopped there. Who is to blame? Did I make my life miserable? Did I make hers miserable? Was I the cause of all these chaos? Did I ever regret leaving her and the business I built, for my husband? Absolutely not! Do I ever miss her? Of course—everyday! She was my business

partner, but she was my sister first, and still is. I loved her and I still do. I am now thirty five years old, and she is thirty six. I have been in the U.S. since 2006. We have only spoken twice since then. I try to call her from time to time. I visited her when I went home last year. It was great seeing her. She was doing well, but there was sadness in her face. I knew she missed me too, but she now had reservations. I do hope that one day, she will learn to forgive me.

If You Can't Leave Your Business, Then It's Not A Business, You're Just Self-Employed. I had my own tutorial center. It was flourishing very well and so I built and expanded my school in three different locations. I hired more teachers to help me teach. I trained all of them for the Reading, Math and the Multiple Intelligence Program. I wrote and published my own books about multiple intelligence hands-on activities for kids. Then, with the help of my science and math teachers, I wrote and published two more reviewer books for college preparation. They were selling very well in the local bookstores. I had to open my own publishing company so I could have control over my own book publishing process. My husband handled all the logistics of delivering the books to the local bookstores, and shipping them to other branches of bookstores nationwide. He was also the one in charge of completing purchase orders and receiving collections as well. It was a tedious process, but he was very happy with the way the books were doing in the market. The time came when I had four schools in operation. My husband helped manage two schools and I managed the other two. It was not as easy as I thought. We stumbled into all sorts of problems, mostly regarding staffing. It was very difficult to hire people, train them, and assume that they would be as motivated as you wanted them to be. I guess I just had a lot of expectations. Even though I hired four

people to manage the operations, I still could not let go. I still wanted to be hands-on, which was impossible with four branches in operation. I was overwhelmed. Besides all these things, I was also finishing my masters program in education, with a major in Guidance and Counseling. After I graduated, my husband suggested that I should take some time off so I could detoxify. He knew how stressed I was. I thought it was a good idea, but then I told him that I just couldn't leave the business. I told him I do not have the luxury to go out of town for vacation. That was the time when he said to me: "If you can't leave your business, then it's not a business. You're just self-employed." He was absolutely right! He suggested that I should create a system that all the teachers and staff would follow—like a manual or an FAQ handbook, and so I did. I worked hard to write it down. I wrote down all the possible questions that the parents, students and teachers would ask. Then I wrote down the possible solutions for them. I printed out and bound them together into an organized compilation—a manual for Study Hall Tutorial and Review Center. I held a seminar/workshop with all my teachers and staff so we could discuss everything that was written in the manual. Then I went on vacation for six weeks. Every day, even when I was away, my secretary was reporting every single thing that was happening each day. Then, the teachers gave me a brief report every week. Everything worked out perfectly. If I wanted to call a meeting, we could easily do a videoconference using Skype or Yahoo Messenger, even though I was in the other side of the world. I thought the teachers and staff enjoyed it very much when I was away. They had more freedom to work and not be watched by their boss. I literally entrusted the whole Study Hall to my teachers. They appreciated the trust and freedom I gave them to do their jobs the best way they could. When I came back to work after six weeks, I had

noticed some changes—very good changes. While I was away, the teachers took the liberty of having their own professional development sessions. English teachers learned to teach Algebra, and some of the Math teachers also started to teach biology and chemistry. It was unfathomable. I realized that when I gave them my trust and held them accountable for their own tasks, the teachers became more motivated and more responsible. They even took the liberty of improving themselves and their knowledge. They took ownership of their learning and that helped them to have confidence in what they do.

However, time came when I started to realize that what I was doing was tautologous and circumlocutory. The business that I built could run on its own without me, so what was I to do next? I built a school, expanded in four locations, wrote and published three books, earned a master's degree, and taught in the university. I realized the need for something different. I have always wanted to have a PhD, so I planned on going to the states to study my doctorate. And since classes were usually at night, I found an opportunity to teach during the day. That was when I researched going to Maryland. After talking to my husband, my parents, and my in-laws, I left everything in the Philippines to my mother-in-law, my trusted teachers, and my accountant. I, together with Ron, headed to Maryland, for another exciting journey.

Contemplating on the Present: Teaching Experiences in Maryland

Professional Teacher Identity Transformation

Are You Here to Take My Job Away From Me? My first teaching job in MAPS was exasperating. There were six Filipino teachers that came to teach with me in the same school. All of us experienced culture shock and discrimination. The principal

discriminated us against the local teachers. She was disappointed that many of us could not speak Spanish. She harassed and threatened us, but we were able to endure. The Human Resources explained to us that we were greatly needed in that school, so we were all very excited to come to work and help. We were never told the real truth of the matter. We found out on our first day that there were six American teachers in that same school were losing their jobs because they were not highly qualified according to the state standards. We were sent to replace them. All of a sudden, we realized the tension and the maladroit feeling those teachers must have had upon seeing us. Their principal was acting indifferently as well because she was trying to protect them. We finally realized that we were sent to that school to take away the jobs from those six Americans. It was one of those awkward and vexatious feelings we all felt. The principal fought the board of education to retain the six American teachers. I had no idea how she did it, but they were allowed to stay during that school year. Therefore, there were two teachers in those five grade levels-- one Filipino, and one American, both experiencing power struggles. I thought it was the most absurd idea. Among the six Filipino teachers, I was the only one who did not have anybody to replace, so I did not experience the hostility that many of my colleagues had been through. I remember how my five Filipino co-teachers in my carpool at that time would always experience nausea, head aches, stomach aches, every morning, on our way to school because of the bad situation, and mistreatment that was happening at that time. They all endured ten months under that principal, teaching in the same classroom with another teacher. The mood was hostile and antagonistic. After that school year, all six of us were lucky to find another placement, where we all found peace

and harmony among our colleagues and administrators. After three years, we heard the news that our previous principal was fired due to embezzlement of funds.

My Home Away from Home. After my first year teaching ESOL, I was given a new teaching assignment at Rockledge elementary school, where I became the ESOL chair. I taught grades K-5. I started with thirty students when I established the ESOL site. After two years, I had fifty seven children. On my first year, the ESOL subgroup was scoring 67% in reading. On the 2010 MSA result, my fourth graders scored 100% in Math—the very first subgroup that has gotten a hundred percent. My principal was elated. She recognized my achievements and applauded my expertise. She called me the phenomenal extraordinaire multicultural lady. At Rockledge, I was not just the ESOL teacher. I wore many hats too. I was the Spanish, Chinese and French Translator. I was a technology expert. I was a grant-writer. I was a parent-liaison between ESOL parents and mainstream teachers. I gave presentations and held assemblies on special multicultural occasions and celebrations. I loved doing all of them. Last year, I volunteered to run and manage an after school tutorial program for my ESOL students who were in the testing grades---3rd, 4th and 5th. It was three times a week, two hours per day, for eight weeks. I was teaching them math and reading in preparation for the MSA. It worked wonderfully. Having practiced for eight weeks, my students had the confidence to write their brief constructed responses (BCR's) effectively. Once again, I validated my belief that all students can achieve no matter their background. I felt that Rockledge was my second home. Every staff member was my family. It was also at Rockledge that I found my soul sister—a self-proclaimed Southern “redneck” and a wickedly intelligent woman. I used to tease her that she’s a Filipino by default. She calls

me her sister by choice. Rockledge became my refuge. It did not feel like a workplace to me. It was my home away from home.

Playing My Dual Self Again—as a PhD student and as an ESOL teacher. I have always wanted to be a doctor, whether medical doctor or doctor of education or philosophy. Either is perfectly fine with me. The major reason why I moved to the states was because I wanted to study for my PhD. Even though I have a school in the Philippines, and have a teaching job in the university, I came to the states to become an ESOL teacher. Many of my colleagues felt shocked when I told them that I am a full time PhD student with a full time job.

After three years of teaching in MAPS, I was offered a promotion to an administrative position. I thought about it really deeply because I was not sure if I was ready for a leadership position, with more challenging tasks while I am doing my data analysis. I thought long and hard. I sought the advice of my mentors—my principal, my assistant principal, the human resource agent who hired me, and of course my husband. I decided to meet the challenge. It was a difficult decision to make but I immersed myself in it. I had to admit, there was a time I was regretting the decision I made about taking the job because of the time schedule and the amount of administrative work to be done. At the end of the day, though, it was all worth it—especially when I would get emails from teachers thanking me for the professional development workshop I gave them.

You're Our Top Pick! As I have mentioned earlier on, many positive and affirmative incidents happened to me as I was writing this dissertation. One of them was receiving a job promotion as an ESOL instructional coach. I received a call from my supervisor, she congratulated me and said: "You're our top pick." I was ecstatic. I have always admired

ESOL coaches. I wanted to be like them; although, it was undeniably difficult for me as well. It was bitter-sweet for me to take the job and leave Rockledge. From my comfort zone as an ESOL department chair in my previous elementary school, I was assigned to be the teacher coach for middle school mainstream, special education and ESOL teachers. It is a very tough job as it includes: observing and monitoring teachers, giving them constructive criticism, modeling lessons, giving professional development presentations, etc. Because I am a risk-taker though, I have to admit that I am elated and excited to start the new job. I know that there will be struggles and challenges along the way, but I know myself. I will always find a way to make things work for me in order to succeed with my goals. Another piece of exciting news was when I got nominated as Bowie Teacher of the Month. I was nominated by one of my student's parent. Unfortunately, I had to leave Rockledge in the middle of November, so I guess my nomination was void.

Being a Finalist for Principalship—A Huge Setback. It was year 2008 when I first applied to New Leaders for New Schools Leadership Program. I remember how exciting it was for me. I passed the first screening, which was written essays responding to several pertinent questions about leadership. After that, the admissions committee wanted me to come in for the first interview session. They said: "We have enjoyed reading your essays and we want to know more about your experiences in person." So I went. It was an aberrant and unusual interview session for me. It lasted for half a day. There were many activities integrated into the interview process. We were asked to go to different rooms and where I was interviewed. The first time I was interviewed by one person, the next time, five. It was the most rigorous interview session I had ever been to. At then at the end of the day, no matter how rigorous it was, I felt I aced it. I was

confident I did an excellent job. True enough, after three weeks, I received an email requesting me to attend the Finalist Interview Session—the final screening entitled: The Day in the Life of a Principal. It lasted for eight hours—literally the whole day. If I had described the first interview as rigorous, this finalist day was five times as rigorous as the first. It was stressful and nerve-racking. There were times during the waiting period, before I was sent to another room for another situational interview session, I could feel and literally hear my stomach growling due to the anxiety and tension I was experiencing. I had never experienced anything like it in my life. We were provided breakfast, lunch, snacks and early dinner, but I could not force myself to eat anything. I just drank juice and had a bite of cookie. I felt that if I ate, I would throw up any minute. I did not even feel that way when I was interviewed by my employers for my job application to the U.S. I never felt that way when I interviewed for any position I applied to anywhere in the Philippines or in the states. I never felt that way when I was interviewed by the consul at the U.S. embassy when I was getting my US visa approved. In short, I could not really compare my feelings at that time with any anxious moments I had ever experienced before in my life. The anticipation of waiting for three weeks with uncertainty was killing me. I knew I did not do a good job compared to the first interview session. I felt I was not confident enough with my answers and with the role play that I did. It was lame I thought. Three weeks had passed. Then the fourth week came. Then on the fifth week I got a phone call from my husband. He said the mail came from the admission office. I asked him to open it. He hesitated. He was even more nervous than I was. Finally, I was able to force him to open the letter. It was a brief one. I was expecting and hoping for the big word “Congratulations!” I did not hear it. After I

heard the statement, “Thank you for your interest in NLNS. We regret to inform you that we cannot offer you the position as...” I didn’t hear the next statement or the rest of the letter. I was disappointed, frustrated, and mad at myself. I was not very good at handling failure.

Revisiting My Thoughts on Reflection: Do I Still Have to Hide the Real Me? From time to time, when I would look back, I cannot help but regret my parents’ choices that made our lives miserable. Then the more I think about them, the more I become thankful that because of those mistakes and bad choices, that I was able to lift myself up, challenge my own views and motivate myself to achieve higher and to believe that anything is possible as long as there is a strong will and determination.

I have revealed so many things in this study that I would never imagine telling anybody. I am scared to be judged. I don’t feel the need to please anyone, but I don’t want to be ridiculed as either. I feel that the reason why my parents acted differently and uncouth, it was because they were uneducated. Had they been educated people, maybe they would have had a different demeanor, a broader perspective of life and so on. I realize they never had the opportunity to give us wisdom to overcome struggles, because they too, were experiencing their own obstacles. One thing is certain though; they just wanted me to achieve what they were not able to achieve. They wanted me to be the best that I can be.

My Struggles as a Temporary Worker. I came to the U.S. last 2006 with a temporary working visa, which meant that my husband had no option to work since he was my dependent. We have to wait for approval of our permanent residency documents before he will be allowed to work. It usually takes three years before anyone can have all the

documents approved. However, fate was not on our side. After waiting for three years, our application for permanent residency was denied. I felt that the world stopped spinning. Denied? What did that mean? I asked myself. I talked to our lawyer and he told us that we would just have to re-file. It was such a painful thing to accept the fact that while 80% of the Filipino teachers from the same cohort have received their green cards and permanent residency, I was one of the 20% who was waiting, anticipating and still expecting the magic card to arrive. It was frustrating. I started to think of alternatives, more like a Plan B, just in case it was denied again. I would probably go back to the Philippines, run my school and teach in the university. “That sounds good to me,” my husband said. We re-filed the documents last April but without too much hope. Then, July came. News spread that new labor certifications were approved. I went to the lawyer hoping to get my approved documents only to find out that mine was still being processed. Again, it was thwarting. I was beginning to lose my patience. I just buried myself in my work and school so I would not think or worry about it. I was exhausted worrying about things I could not control. Then, when I was not even having any thoughts of it, my lawyer emailed me. He said: “Do not scream! Your papers are here.” That was around the third week of September 2010.

At Long Last! I would become a Permanent Resident soon. As I was writing my narrative portrait, I received the receipt letters from United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). This means that the U.S. government agency has started to process my application for a green card. According to my lawyer, it will take about three to six months for approval. Three weeks later, I received another letter from USCIS requesting my husband and me for finger printing. This means that in three to five weeks,

I will be receiving my green card. On January 5, 2011, my husband and I had our fingerprinting and photos taken. The lawyer said it will take around three weeks and the green card will arrive by mail.

Hope for the Flowers: A Continuation of My Yearning to Grow. I remember one time when my elder sister gave me a book by Trina Paulus called—Hope for the Flowers. I cannot forget these lines: “You must want to fly so much that you are willing to give up being a caterpillar.” Every time I stumbled with a very challenging situation when I had to make a difficult decision, I always go back to this statement from the book: “How could I risk the only life I knew when it seemed so unlikely I could ever be a glorious winged creature?” After reading this book, I had a deeper self-awareness. I came to realize that there is always more to life than being who you are at present. No one has the right to limit what you can achieve. There has been a yearning for continuous growth deep inside me. So when I read this story, I cried. I felt that like a butterfly, there is no limit to what I can achieve.

I am an Eagle...a Philippine Eagle! I once told a very good friend of mine that my metaphor was a bird. I wanted it to be a bird because I would always want to see the big picture of everything I do, through the bird’s eye view. I always wanted a global perspective towards things. I never limit myself with just one or two perspectives. I always choose to analyze and synthesize things through several lenses. First I thought of an albatross. I had never seen an albatross before. All I knew was that it was the highest point one could get in a golf game, a score of three under par on any given hole in the sport golf. It is often considered a very rare shot, and so it was named after a very rare bird, the albatross. However, as I was reading an article about American colloquialism, I

came across the saying—“Albatross around one’s neck”, which means something that causes worry or trouble. I wouldn’t want that for my metaphor, would I? So I searched for another species of bird; one that would clearly define me. Then I thought of an eagle soaring high confidently in the sky. I learned from a very good friend of mine that our Philippine Eagle is considered to be among the rarest, largest, and most powerful birds in the world. There was also another plus factor. It is monogamous. The description in the official website for Philippine Eagle said:

The Philippine Eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) also known as the Great Philippine Eagle or Monkey-eating eagle is among the rarest, largest, and most powerful birds in the world. This bird is endemic to forests in the Philippines. Killing this critically endangered species is punishable under Philippine law by twelve years in jail and heavy fines.

Just like the butterfly and the Philippine Eagle, I am more than willing to spread my wings and soar high above the clouds. Although I know that I have to take precautions as well so my wings won’t get burnt by the sun, get soaked by the rain, or get torn by the wind.

Anticipating the Future: Thinking of What Lies Ahead in my Career

Satellite Schools: A Global Perspective

One of the goals of this dissertation is for my participants and myself to have a support group. A group for talking about our angst, and for us to achieve, expand our horizons and share our perspectives—like a reading club for example. Meeting at least twice a month, we can share our perspectives with one another about what we have read and then relate them with our own lives. Not anybody else’s life, but our own lives. The

goal is not to talk about other people, but our own selves. I am really elated to start our club. I really believe in what Ligaya was saying. Only women can truly understand how and what another woman really feels. I would like to take the opportunity to share as well as learn from other women in this study what we know, what we feel, what we believe in, what we are afraid of, what we are grateful for, what our next plans would be, and so on.

My ultimate goal is to establish and build language centers for Spanish, French, English, Filipino, and Chinese—a global school of languages. The idea is to have satellite language centers all over the world—in China, the Philippines, Japan, Spain, Italy, France, etc. I will conceptualize the whole program, create a system and then build from there. I would like to think that it was not coincidental that my participants were all language teachers. I would be glad to offer them the job as my business partners. We would start small. I already have one in the Philippines, and then we would build one or more centers in the U.S. Then, we would network with my friends who are also language teachers in other parts of the world such as Dubai, U.K. and France. The operation in each satellite will be run by a business partner, who would be overseeing the whole logistics and operation. Everything will be set up as a corporation so we would all be protected individually. So far, this is what I have in mind. When I shared it with my participants, they were all very excited and stimulated about the whole idea.

To All those Who Said I Couldn't

As I was writing this dissertation, there were three blessings that came into my life. First was the arrival and approval of my immigration documents. After more than four years of waiting, my labor certification was approved by the Labor Department. This means that because they have seen the invaluable nature of my job the U.S. government

is willing to award me a permanent residency in the states. The second blessing was that I was promoted to the ESOL teacher coach position. The only drawback was that I had to leave my previous school, which I loved. It had been my second home ever since I left my country. It all of a sudden became a dilemma for me to leave my second home. Rockledge gave me blessings: the best principal whom I admire and love, my very supportive colleagues, who respect me as a person and as an expert in my field, my co-teachers who became my personal very close friends, and of course, the proximity of the place to my house, which was about five miles. The third blessing was I got nominated for Bowie Teacher of the Month by one of my student's parents.

I remember what many people told me when I got married young. They said I would never be able to finish my studies, that I would just become a housewife, and that I would never be able to fulfill my dreams. When I look at them now, and when I look at myself in the mirror, I know I have gone far; farther than what other people would have guessed. And as long as I am breathing, my motivated spirit will continue to learn, live and long for something new to explore.

After reviewing my own successes and challenges in linguistic and academic learning and my teaching experiences from the Philippines and in the U.S., I believe that as a nonnative English speaker, we must realize our unfinished self (Freire, 1998) and our relation to the world around us. Unless nonnative English speaking teachers understand and embrace themselves as they are, they may not be effective in helping students understand their cultural and linguistic identities (Lu, 2005). Thus, with a greater understanding of who we are, where we came from, and where we are heading, we may become more effective ESOL teachers in our own way.

Chapter 5: FLORDELUNA'S STORY

Reminiscing the Past: Educational and Teaching Experiences in the Philippines

Learning English in the Philippines: Influence of Cultural and Linguistic Experiences

Flordeluna's early educational experiences in the Philippines were phenomenal due to her unwavering successes in all areas of learning both academic and leadership. Unlike many Filipina students, her source of English language learning was not confined to the walls of her classrooms. She shared that her learning of English was not tied to regurgitating the contents of textbooks to perform well on examinations. Instead, she said she was fortunate that at five, she had an opportunity to be enrolled in a class with a native English speaker as her teacher. Although she only stayed with that teacher for only two years, she said she attributed most of her early English-learning foundation to that experience. She said she also strengthened her English language usage by joining theater arts club where she was exposed to a lot of English conversations with adults in the arts and in the academe. Thus, Flordeluna shared that she was able to form a strong sense of self as a Filipina English language learner and user, as compared to her peers and colleagues in the Philippines. This experience echoed by Park's (2006) work on East Asian women's identity transformation that "NNESTs strong linguistic identities as English language learners and users were formed through comparisons of themselves to other such learners and not to native English speakers." (p. 190).

Memories of My Birthdays. When asked about family myths that she remembers, she described several significant traditions that her family values. One was about the concept of birthdays. Ever since she was four years old, Flordeluna remembered how her family would always do something special for her birthday. From the moment she woke up until

the end of the day, she said she always felt special on her birthday. There were many surprises for her. She said that this is the reason why even now, she still carries it with her—the feeling of yearning for something special that will happen on her birthday. The second was the celebration of Christmas and believing in Santa Claus. She recalled:

One morning when I woke up, I heard my parents talking. They were in a hurry. They woke up late and they needed to put something inside a Christmas stocking. I did not let them know that I was already awake. I already knew where they put the presents and the money. I remembered when I was a college freshman; we were asked to share our significant childhood experience, I shared to everyone that it was the night I discovered who Santa Claus was. That experience drew the line between what's real and what's not. It did not stop me from believing in Santa Claus. Although some people might think that the concept of Santa Claus is not real; to me, he is. He may not be wearing that red costume, but he comes, every Christmas. Even now, when it's Dec. 24th, I'm just embarrassed to hang stockings, but I still believe. Some of my children do not believe anymore, but Hope, my youngest, still does. I want her to experience that. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Don't be Rowdy...Don't be Noisy! The third family tradition that Flordeluna shared was the value of discipline and looking after the younger siblings. She remembered her parents often had business to take care of, thus, they were always away from home. It was her elder brother and elder sister who were in charge of the house. During mealtime, she remembered how they had designated spots where they were allowed to sit around the dining table. Both of her elder siblings were very strict. "Don't be rowdy. Don't be

noisy”—they would say all the time. Eventually she said she understood why her older siblings were acting that way. She said it was because when they were young, their parents were also very strict with them. She said that they had their own designated chores. For example, if their parents noticed that the floor was not properly cleaned, they would ask their children to redo the whole thing. As young children, she said they had no choice. But when it was Flordeluna’s time, since she was one of the youngest, she said her parents were not that strict anymore. That’s why her older siblings were the ones who disciplined the younger ones. Flordeluna expressed how her older siblings were really strict about school. So it was instilled in her mind that she would have to excel and follow in her older siblings’ footsteps. She described how she grew up watching her siblings received awards and recognition. She said she knew she had to be like them. She also described that her siblings often teased her that she was daddy’s girl. She admitted that she could not really identify herself with any of her siblings when she was a child. There were five girls and four boys in the family but she indicated that there was nobody she could confide in, that’s why she said she started to have a diary at such a young age. Flordeluna said that she attributed this need for a confidante as a means of entertaining herself. She recalled:

Probably that’s one of the reasons why I would talk to myself. I would play by myself. I found it difficult to share my feelings with anyone, even with my own brothers and sisters. I used to have a lot of tantrums when I was a child. I remembered when I saw a bird by my window. I really wanted to have that bird as a pet. I remembered the roof was just outside my window. I wanted that bird so badly so I just stayed there and watched the bird. No matter how my siblings

would tell me to leave the bird alone, I really didn't leave. I wanted it so badly. They called me a stubborn brat.” (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Flordeluna explained that she loved each of her siblings just the same. However, she said that her eldest sister was the one that she feared the most. Flordeluna remembered how her eldest sister took care of all of them and how her sister would take the role of their mother. “But she was very intimidating when she got mad. She scolded us and spanked us. She was really scary,” she continued. Flordeluna clearly identified several prominent memories she had as a child. First was the family's trip to the beach every summer. Second was the family gift giving every December. She said they were all excited and always anticipating simple surprises from one another. Third was hearing mass altogether every Sunday. Flordeluna clearly remembered how they would—go grocery shopping, go to the park, watch a movie, or just simply stay at home, watch TV and eat snacks. She explained how she really grew up spending the whole Sunday together with her whole family. Nobody would schedule anything for Sunday, she said. It was a family only day.

If I want something, I will do my best to get it! Flordeluna also shared how at age four, she already had self-confidence that was important to achieving her goals. She recalled an experience about her joining an after school program that had an age requirement of at least five years old. She expressed how she persevered even though she was short by just a year. She said that her exposure and experiences as a young person with perseverance, passion, motivation and confidence, prepared her for her future adult life. Since most of those attributes were nurtured when she was very young, she said she did not find it difficult to carry it over with her as she matured. She explained:

One summer, there was this church activity for youth, some kind of a daycare program or for pre-school. I have to be at least five years old to join. I was just four. I wanted to be in that program. Even though I was very young then, I already knew that I wanted to join and be in that program. There was an audition. I sang in the audition, and I did my best so that I could get in. And I did. I remembered the song that I sang: “*Your dad doesn’t like me, because my hair is long*”. It was a *Hotdog* music. My teachers asked me a lot of questions. I would respond to each of them. That experience basically created the tone—that if I want something, I will do my best to get it. I was very assertive. I guess it really set the tone; that if I wanted something, even if there are obstacles, I can still surpass them and finally will get it because of my perseverance. I can do it. I can get it—if I put my mind into it. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Flordeluna expressed that she had self-motivation even at a young age. She also expressed how she knew her strengths and weaknesses as well as her own limitations. She continued that the way she responded to the challenges she had encountered in her life at a very young age would also show that she is a person that is highly motivated. She said that has a strong character. She added that she is a person who loves to achieve and succeed in life. Although she often times questioned her self-identity, she mentioned that was still able to gear her life to the positive side, which allowed her to reap positive rewards. She recalled:

When I was a high school freshman, many good things happened to me. First, I ran for student council and I won. Second, I also won in an essay contest. The highlight was when I became the first student play director. I directed the play

“Romeo and Juliet”. I started out as a student director then the Juliet backed out so I became Juliet as well. I was fourteen years old. I joined many extra curricular activities. I knew I was geared toward the languages. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Flordeluna described her enthralling experience on how she motivated herself to achieve her goals showed her constant yearning to obtain success. She recalled:

When I was a child my sisters and I always played a game of being newscasters. We read the words from newspapers and magazines out loud and pretended to be newscasters. My sisters were into dancing too. We even had intermission numbers; then read the news again; that’s how we practiced reading aloud. When everyone was asking me what I wanted to be when I grow up, I had a hard time answering that question because there were a lot of things I wanted to be. I was not sure what I really wanted to become so I would just tell them the regular and typical response—I wanted to be a doctor or a lawyer. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Finding Myself—What Do I Really Want? With the achievements she had been receiving, Flordeluna admitted that she was still not convinced that she knew what she really wanted to become. She said she needed to continue searching for who she was, who she is, and who she will be. She explained how she moved on to college and enrolled in an exclusive school for girls. She said she was swayed by the idea that by going to that college, she would find herself more. She recalled:

I went to a Catholic school for college, so I could find myself. I was able to enroll in that expensive school because I graduated on top of my class and so I became a scholar—free tuition fee. It was different because I found peace in that particular setting. It was an exclusive school for girls. I enrolled there because I wanted to

hone my soft side. However, I realized later on that it was not for me, so I transferred to University of the Philippines—a more liberal school; the ultimate school for the best and the brightest. I experienced an identity crisis. I didn't know where to go. I kept asking myself who I really was, and what I really want to do with my life. I was still healing my heart. I was broken hearted. My sister said to me, "You are good with kids." She was also a smart person. Unfortunately she got married very young because she got pregnant at the age of eighteen. She became a mirror to me. I didn't want the same thing to happen to me. Eventually, my sister was able to finish her studies and got a degree so I saw her determination despite what had happened. She was the one who encouraged me to join FLCD (Family Life and Child Development). That was around 1988. There were only a few students taking that course during that time. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Alas! I am Found! Flordeluna described how transferring to the University of the Philippines (UP) really helped her to nurture her creative ideas even more. She explained how she harnessed her independence, how she challenged herself, and how she had a quintessence of what she really wanted to become. She explained:

When I transferred to U.P., I became very independent. It was very difficult to decide for myself. I enrolled in the College of Home Economics... yuck! At that time, I didn't like it. FLCD... what was that? I was asking myself, was this course really for me? I often stayed in the Arts and Science building. I was looking for an organization where I would belong. I joined a political party called ASA. It was an immersion for me. I was so eager to be in the organization that sometimes I would not attend my classes. When I reached my sophomore year, I had a

position. I was in a team of a negotiating panel. There were three political teams in that party who wanted to merge to fight the other party. One of the most prominent figures in our party was Francis Pangilinan, who's now a senator. Mike Defensor. David Celdran. They were confident of me to become a leader. I was assigned to be in that tripartite negotiation. Tripartite means three parties. We always had meeting with old seasoned party leaders. This was the time when I met somebody special to me. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Flordeluna admitted that her need for an emotional connection had increased as she reached college. She continued that although she appreciated and enjoyed her newfound independence, that very same independence besieged her, which eventually led her searching for more emotional attachment. She shared with me her experience when she met a special person in her life that had a great influence on how she perceived herself as a woman, a person, a colleague and a friend. Having had this experience, she continued to share that she possessed in her an altruistic notion that when she cared and loved someone, she would be willing to make sacrifices for that person. She said she was more than ready to bear the excruciating pain it would bring her, but in the end, she would accolade the success as well as the happiness of the person that she loved. She recalled:

This one I would disclose to you. I have never told anyone about him. Not even my husband. But I will tell you now. Sometimes I wondered why I couldn't share these things with my husband. Maybe he won't be able to accept. So I just kept it to myself. We had an acquaintance party and there was this guy named Mr. A. He was a very simple person. He had a 1.0 GPA, which was the highest GPA one could ever have in UP. He was everyone's crush. He had a gentle demeanor. He

became my crush. His friend was the one who had a crush on me. I was not sure if Mr. A had a crush on me. I just sometimes sensed it, but I was not sure, because there were really a lot of girls who were attracted to him. During that time, the three parties were having conflicts because each party was supporting its own candidate to run as chairman. Mr. A was one of the three candidates. Since I was the newest member and the most neutral person in the team, they gave me the responsibility to choose the right candidate. I've been hearing a lot of bad publicity about Mr. A. so it was my dilemma. Which one would I choose to decide—my mind or my heart? My heart was telling me to choose Mr. A. but my mind was telling me not to, because of that bad publicity. Finally, my heart won. I told the team I would go for someone I know, so I chose Mr. A. I held many responsibilities. I was the one who took care of the logistics. I had to be the one to find a house, manage the whole operation—the food preparation, and everything. During the campaign period, we had to stay in that house. Before the Election Day came, Mr. A and I went out. We went to watch a movie. I was naïve. I didn't think of myself. I was thinking of him. It was almost Election Day and I didn't want to jeopardize his candidacy by him getting involved with me. I didn't pursue my feelings for him. I knew things like that would affect him. He needed to be single to protect his image. I just avoided him and ignored him. That was the only way for me to control my feelings for him, for his own protection. I didn't want anybody to see us together. We stopped talking to each other. Until, the results of the election came. He lost. There were actually two losses for me. My candidate lost, as well as my friend. I was eighteen years old. After the

election, the news about our relationship got spread. Of course, my team was not happy. They thought I betrayed them. They were saying that the reason why I chose Mr. A was because I had feelings for him. Others were questioning, why me? Why would Mr. A choose me to be his girl? There was no confirmation with our relationship. It was such a low point in my life. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Flordeluna shared that her detailed experience of how she showed her altruistic gesture and intentions for a very special person in her life validated her ability to put the well-being of the significant people in her life above her own personal happiness.

They call me—Omeng Satanasia. Flordeluna described herself as shy but assertive person, especially when she had to pursue something important. She remembered a fortunate experience when she was in kindergarten, which she described as an open-education-curriculum school—with activity centers where children could do hands-on activities inside the classroom with an American teacher. This kind of school was not very common in the Philippines at that time. She added that her parents spent a lot of money to send her to that school. She shared that if there was one thing that she was grateful for that her parents had given her; it was their persistence in enrolling her in that school. She said that the tuition fee was really expensive. She remembered her siblings were all studying in public schools but her parents enrolled her in that school so she felt privileged and special. She explained:

I remember I was shy at times, but when I had to perform, I often gave my best because I want to prove myself and I want to please people. I learned I have to build myself up. I was very grateful to my parents for letting me study in that school with an American teacher. I already have an advantage over my classmates

because I already knew how to read when I reached first grade. Whenever my teacher would give me a reading homework, I would decode it myself. Actually I remember giving my dog its name—Honeybee. But I spelled it as Hanebi. That was the very first word that I learned to write. For reading I remember *Butchoy Comics* because we had all those comics so that's how I practiced my reading. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Flordeluna also mentioned an unforgettable experience when she was five years old, which created a big impact on how she viewed herself as a child. Although she was assertive at times, she also remembered the times when she felt introverted and could not really defend herself in school. She mentioned that she suffered with identity crisis as young as five years old because of an unfortunate incident that happened to her. She added that she was trying to avoid a feeling of embarrassment, especially when her real name was mentioned. As a result, she said she became very quiet and flaccid and just accepted things as they were, based on the lens of the authority figure in her life. She recalled:

I remember when my first grade teacher asked my name. I was so shy. I didn't want to say my name. I did not want to be embarrassed. Something happened when I was five years old. My hair got burned as I was joining a procession. A child following me was holding a candle and then when I turned my back, the fire caught my hair so it got burned. I collapsed and before I knew it, I was already at the hospital. Thank God it was just my hair that got burned. From that time on, all the kids in my neighborhood were teasing me "*Omeng Satanasia*". *Omeng* came from my real name. *Satanasia* came from the word "Satan" which was

attributed to me because of the fire and burning hair. Actually "*Omeng Satanasia*" was a title of a movie, where the main character portrayed the role of Satan, and his name was also Omeng. So when I went to school I refused to tell everyone my nickname "Meng" because I didn't want them to remember that phrase. I was telling my teacher my real name. Even though, everyone who knew me called me Meng. When my teacher asked me what my short name was, I told her it was Romy. Romy is also the nickname of my father. My name is a combination of my parents' names. But I think my teacher didn't hear me right. She thought I said Remy. So from that time on everyone in school called me Remy. It lasted until high school. I was Remy from first grade to high school. At home I was Meng. But in school I was Remy. I didn't correct my teacher anymore because deep inside, I also preferred it that way. I was living a dual life. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Flordeluna expressed that she was not concerned at all if her teacher did not get her name right. She said she was even more comfortable with the name her teacher gave her, although she candidly admitted that she felt she was living a double life. She also shared how she felt that there was really a difference between the personalities that her names entailed. She described *Omeng* as the brat type while Remy was the model student—a leader, kind, responsible and a good girl. *Omeng* was the exact opposite. She mentioned she was the persona that not everyone at home liked very much. Remy, on the other hand, was doing very well in school, was liked by many and envied by some, according to her. Remy was the assistant teacher, she said. She was also a play director. She was very popular in the whole school. But Flordeluna admitted, "It was tiring too."

And Then There's M. Flordeluna explained that she did not want to be a teacher. She said it never entered her mind. She continued that she never really dreamt of becoming a teacher. She said she wanted to become a lawyer. She admitted that the image of being a lawyer inspired her. Later on, she said wanted to become a psychiatrist. Even now she expressed how she still wanted to become a psychiatrist. She continued in saying that she wanted to explore the mind and its complexities. She remembered when she was in high school; she was exposed to the company of priests because she was in the religious group—Legion of Mary. Her sister was very active in that group as well. They had spiritual directors who would guide them, talk to them and spend time with them a lot. Flordeluna shared that when she became an active member of the Legion of Mary, she became even closer to the priests and those priests were the ones who gave her the name “M”.

There was a time that I had to introduce myself. I didn't want to use Meng at all. I was also beginning to realize that I was also not very comfortable using the name Remy. Someone said that my name didn't really fit my personality. So someone suggested, why not use M? It sounds better and it also fit my personality. So, there's M. It sounded right. I became M. My family also got used to calling me M. I was around thirteen or fourteen years old when I became M. Even in my neighborhood, they started calling me M, while in school; they were still calling me Remy. So there, you could really see that there was a divide in terms of my life in school and at home. There were two separate lives—one of Remy's and the other of M's. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

In the Company of Priests. Flordeluna shared how happy and contented she was at last to be called M. She expressed that she felt more confident being herself with that new name. She continued that the entire name changing had to do with something spiritual. First she said she didn't want to be called *Meng* because she didn't want to be associated with the name Satan. Then she said she became M because the priests called her M, which again had a spiritual link. She continued to describe how her spiritual life even blossomed when she met Father Larry. Once again, she pointed out how the prominent figures in her life were actually men— first, her father; and then the priests. She said that she became even closer to Father Larry when he was ordained as a priest. She remembered that during that time, her family was already experiencing a lot of struggles, particularly financial problems. She recalled:

When I was born, everything was doing well. We had many cars. Our business was booming. My parents got married early. My father grew up working hard. My parents met when they were in college, and then they got married and didn't finish their studies. My father went to Vietnam. When he came back home, he started a business of distributing fire extinguishers. He had big clientele. His business went very well. I had a nanny at that time. However, my parents were not really very good in investing their money. I witnessed how little by little the money went away and their business slowly died down—especially during the 80's, when peso devaluation was inevitable. At that time their marriage was also breaking down. I witnessed everything. I remember when my father would come home late at night and then my parents would fight. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Despite the challenges that she and her family were experiencing, Flordeluna admitted that she found comfort in the company of her friend, spiritual director, guide, and mentor—Father Larry. She expressed how indebted she was to him for encouraging her to enrich herself and to divert her frustrations into productive things that actually helped her become successful in life. She explained:

There was always someone to catch me when I was falling. This was Father Larry. He became my confidante. Father Larry was a good writer. Good thinker. He was an activist. Every summer, he would bring me to *Radio Veritas*, a broadcast station. He trained me how to summarize articles. He took me to places where my parents could not take me. During summer, he would encourage me to join summer activities and workshops. Those activities actually became a window of opportunities for me. I joined PETA (Philippine Ensemble for Theater Association), headed by Lino Brocka, a very famous director. They were all activists, but they were all in theaters. When I joined that group, I realized there was also another side of me that was honed, which I can say that even now, I still carry with me wherever I go. PETA made me become aware and conscious of what was happening in society. It had political and social relevance. It was very significant for me because I got exposed to a lot of significant people in society and it showed me a different lens, a different perspective and outlook in life. The main output was that we came up with a production, and at that time I was in the writers' pool. We also had exposure trips. We went to a psychiatry department. I wanted to understand why it happened to them. I wanted to understand what made

them crazy. I wanted to learn how I could help them. I was in high school at that time, I was fourteen. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Flordeluna continued to share how she realized that the most significant parts of her life happened when she was four or five and when she was thirteen and fourteen. She explained how her exposure to theater arts contributed to her creativity and self-awareness; which she believed, carried with her as she matured. She recalled:

I remember when I directed my school play *Romeo and Juliet*, which was very classic, very literary. I was fourteen then. When I joined PETA, it was not just literary; the focal point was about the real world—with its social relevance and all. I was not able to become a regular member of PETA because most of the practices would end late at night, and my parents of course, restricted me because I was still in high school and I needed to be in school early the next day. My immersion was only during the summer. I was scared of my eldest sister who would always get mad at me when I would come home late. Then when I was 14, I had this dream. I think I was praying the rosary. I had this dream that I was underneath the deepest part of the ocean. I guess a book of Sydney Sheldon also triggered that dream--“Rage of Angels. I was in the ocean, going farther, deeper and deeper into the sea. I was drowning. But something saved me. It was the rosary. I woke up holding the rosary in my hand. I realized I haven’t finished praying when I fell asleep. When you’re a legionary, there is a lot of mortification, sacrifices, sharing, praying the catena, and rosary. My brothers would always tease me-- “Why are you joining Legion of Mary, when you’re a

mean person anyway.” My sister got mad and protected me. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Flordeluna shared that she found a sense of spiritual relief as she kept herself actively engaged in joining the religious organization, and being mentored by a priest. She mentioned that these two factors somehow helped her forget about the problems at home, which helped her focus on herself and her abilities, helping her be more conscious of her self-identity. Flordeluna continued to explain that being a psychology person, she interpreted her dream as some sort of calling—a deeper spiritual calling. She shared how when she would go to church; she would really listen to the priest’s sermon. She said she started to feel this way when she was fourteen. She admitted that she felt that there was a calling to be a servant of God. She remembered when a priest gave her a book about saints. She said she doesn’t remember the title but she realized how that book got her immersed in the religious and spiritual world. She admitted that fourteen was a fresh, innocent age. She started to get attracted to the opposite sex. She said she experienced a high level of confusion because she knew what she wanted to become, but at the same time, as an adolescent, she said she was falling in love. She recalled:

When I went to junior high school, I had a deep attraction to a guy a year older than me, and I felt there was a conflict. I was just waiting for that calling for me to become a nun; then all of a sudden I fell in love with a guy. I was confused. I wanted to be a saint. That was my purpose. I couldn’t understand why I had that deep attraction to this guy. But eventually, it became mutual. We became boyfriend and girlfriend in a way. I always had parameters. I knew my limitations and I was very aware of those limitations. I was scared of my sister. I was scared

of having a boyfriend. It was a secret. He was really good looking. What happened was, even though we had a mutual understanding, he eventually had another girlfriend. So, it was just okay. I realized there was no commitment, so I told him it was okay with me. When he went to college, he met other girls. He promised me that when I turned eighteen, he would come back to me. But when that day came, he didn't come back. I guess he had a girlfriend at that time. It made me wonder why he didn't do so. But then our friendship continued. At times, he would go to my house and visit. He told me stories about his life, his girlfriends, but that was it. After a year or two, we just talked about anything under the sun but never about our feelings for each other. I was just mostly a listener to him. I felt that there were apprehensions on his side too because he would always tell me that I am smart and all. I guess he was intimidated by that. I was in senior year high school. I could feel that my heart was younger than my mind. Though I yearned for it, I learned to let go. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Flordeluna shared how she struggled to search for her own identity. She expressed how she felt her life was inundated with problems and pandemonium. She said she had to endure the thought of her mother's decision to leave them. She said she knew she had to let go. She further added that she felt she needed to reach out to someone to save her from drowning. She expressed why she felt the urgent need to be emotionally attached to someone at that point in her life. She said she needed a refuge. She recalled:

When I reached college, which was when I had an identity crisis. I would go to school early so I could attend mass. That was when I anchored into my faith for me to move on. That was also when my family's problem about financial matters

had gotten worse. My mother had to leave. I remember when my father and my eldest sister fought, and then my father left for a while. My mother left for the states. We were left behind. Her family helped her out. I felt sad but I didn't question her leaving us. I just accepted it. That was the only way to deal with it. I also realized that since I didn't really deal with it, those feelings just got buried deep inside of me, because I was trying to become emotionally matured for me to understand. I was just accepting those events for me to move on with life. It was really difficult not having my mother around. I felt so sorry for my youngest sibling because no one actually looked after him other than my eldest sister. Although I would say that my father tried his best to raise us, it was still different compared to if my mother were around. I realized that was also the reason why I was looking for an outlet; that's why I was very open to find someone whom I can have an emotional attachment. I remember I wrote everyday. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Flordeluna shared that even at a very young age, she had a deep sense of self-awareness. She said she was aware of what was going on with her family life. She continued that she had no power to control what was happening. She said she learned how to let go of things and complicated situations in order to move on with her life.

Influence of Relationships on Identity

Flordeluna also talked about her relationship with her parents. In terms of her studies, she said that her mother was more supportive in helping her with homework than her father. She mentioned she would rather spend time with her father because he gave her a special sense of security. She explained that she was more attracted towards the qualities

of male than female. She continued to describe how everyone in her family would regard her as the favorite daughter. She recalled:

My father would always call me “pretty girl”. I remember if there were visitors in the house, I would sing and dance for them. I was not sure whether I was enjoying what I was doing. All I knew was I wanted to please my father and his visitors.
(Interview 1, 10/5/10)

Tell Your Father to Go Home Now! Flordeluna also mentioned a particular incident when her mother asked her to talk to her father about something important but she disobeyed because she knew that it would embarrass her father. However, she got punished for it. She recalled:

I remember when my mother wanted me to tell my father to go home. She asked me to do it thinking that I am my father’s favorite and that he would yield to my request. But my mom got so frustrated with me because I disobeyed her. I didn’t do what she wanted me to do because I was ashamed of calling my dad’s attention in front of all those people he was talking with. I didn’t want him to feel embarrassed. So my mom got furious at me. My mom said to me: “Get lost!” So my sister and I went out. We just walked around the neighborhood together. I could still remember that incident very well. I actually forgot about that already but since you’ve asked me about “closeness” that I had with my parents, all of a sudden I remembered that incident. I do not know what impact it had on me, but then I realized why I became closer to my dad than with my own mother. At that time, I defied because I believed I knew what was wrong or right. I used my own judgment. I was not even in school yet at that time. I was probably around five

years old. I sided with my dad. Even now, I am still questioning that. Why would she do that to me? I was just a little child? Why would she expose me in that situation and then blame me for it? Even now, I still couldn't get it. (Interview 1, 10/5/10)

The Joys and Pains of Being Married. Flordeluna described how her constant search for emotional attachment always gave her momentary comfort and fleeting security, but in the end caused her pain and anguish. She remembered when she was starting to establish herself teaching in the university. She shared how she had to make a big sacrifice of leaving her job as a result of the choices she made in her life—she became pregnant. She recalled:

My chairperson found out that I was pregnant and then she talked to my boyfriend encouraging him to marry me so as not to damage my reputation. A lot of my friends knew about my pregnancy already but they could not ask me directly. They were all concerned. I admitted it to my sister. I was already six months pregnant then. I was so busy with my career at that time. I was involved in many school activities. My boyfriend didn't want to marry me at that time. I gave up my university teaching position because if he were not going to marry me, I didn't like my students to find out about my pregnancy because I was afraid they would lose their respect on me. (It was a cultural thing.) So I gave it up. It was really hard. I gave up so many things. Actually my father talked to my boyfriend and asked him to salvage my reputation. But still, he didn't want to. It was the time of my life that my self-esteem was very low. I couldn't bear the humiliation and my tarnished ego. I had to sacrifice a lot of things on my end. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Flordeluna was crying profusely as she was telling me her story. She said that she lamented the fact that the man he entrusted herself to had no intentions of marrying her. Coming from a culture that values marriage as sacred and regards pre-marital sex as an abomination of one's faith, she said she could not bear the fact that she damaged her own reputation and was ostracized as a result. She also indicated that even though they did not get married, they both decided to live together under one roof. At that time, it was good enough for her. She recalled:

My husband and I were struggling because we were just starting a family. I also felt so sorry for him because his family left him behind when he decided to live-in with me. They did not support him. We lived together in my sister's house. He still didn't marry me. His parents were accusing me of forcing him to marry me because of my condition. After all that I gave up, that's what they would accuse me of. He became a branch manager of an international fast food chain in Manila. One time, I accidentally burnt his pants as I was ironing it. We needed to buy new pants for him, which means we needed to spend unnecessary expense again. He went to his brother to ask for help, but he didn't help him. My sister was the one who helped us. It was also sad that if his family were in town, we would go and visit them, even if I knew they didn't really want to see me. I was pregnant then. They would give us money but I knew they really didn't want to do it. They just didn't have any choice. I would be giving birth and we didn't have enough money for the hospital bills. To make the situation worse, my father had to undergo brain surgery. It was very tragic. At the same time, my sister went to St.

Claire monastery. She wanted to become a nun. She was also trying to find herself. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

As she was sharing her unfortunate experiences, Flordeluna admitted that she couldn't help but cry as she was trying to retrieve those painful memories from her past. She reiterated many times that she had already buried them down deep within her innermost thoughts. She emphasized how she never really wanted to share those experiences with anybody before.

Anything That Can Go Wrong Will Go Wrong. Flordeluna continued to share how her struggles never wanted to end. She said they just kept on coming her way, just like the concept of Murphy's Law—"anything that can go wrong, will go wrong." She said she lost her job as a university instructor, and then she accidentally got pregnant. She said her boyfriend did not want to marry her. She added that she was struggling financially, and her father got ill. However, being an optimistic person, she said she knew she would rise above all those dilemmas. She said these experiences allowed her to appreciate the goodness of unexpected people.

When my father was ill, I realized how he gained the respect of his friends. The doctor's bill was over a hundred thousand pesos each day. Many of his friends offered help. Even his doctor did not ask for his professional fee. When we were about to pay, his surgeon did not even ask for a penny. When we asked why, he said he learned from a lot of people how kind my father was to everyone, and upon hearing the good deeds of my father he decided not to charge him anymore, even a single penny. It was such a blessing. That was my father's legacy. His kindness—and people's respect for him. My boyfriends' parents, at last decided

that we should get married. My boyfriend wanted to get married in his hometown, but his father who was a judge at that time said that we should just get married in a simple church in Manila. Anyway, I accepted and endured it. I was telling myself, if my father died at that time, I would not marry him anymore. But then my father survived. My mother actually came back home. So anyway, we got married in church. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

How Many More Sacrifices Can I Take? Flordeluna continued to share how she had to make more sacrifices, as she journeyed along her married life. More complications and conflicts arose, especially about decision-making between her and her husband, according to her. She admitted that again, she was back in the same cycle—giving up her own goals to make her significant other happy; never mind the fact that she would have to leave everything that she had worked for behind. She expressed how she was willing to take the risk, leave, and start anew just to please the person she loved. She also expressed how she was astonished with what was waiting for her in that new place. She said she had no idea that her situation would even get worse. She emphasized how one simple decision could have tremendous ripple effects. She said:

My husband told me there was a job opening in his hometown—in a big communications company. I was in the cooperative school then. I gave up everything again just to support him. I did anyway. When we arrived in his hometown I was expecting we would have our own place to stay. But it didn't happen. We lived in his parents' house. Can you imagine? It was really difficult. At 5:30 in the morning everyday, I had to wake up because they wanted us to eat breakfast with them. Even if we were sleeping, they knocked on our door. Since

he was working, he would leave me in that house alone with his family. But he, on the other hand, enjoyed it very much because it was his hometown. All his friends were there. I was the one who felt so miserable. I was just like walking on eggshells. That kind of situation lasted for about half a year. After that, I could not take it anymore. There were already a lot of issues—especially between my sister-in-law and me. I struggled to get my husband's attention. First, I had to compete with his family, and then I had to compete with his friends, who were all very significant to him. After six months I moved out. I found my own apartment. I gave birth by myself, without any relatives. My husband was out of town and so was the rest of his family. They knew I would be giving birth anytime soon, but my husband's family decided to leave me alone in the house and they planned a trip to another town. I knew I would be in labor soon. When I called my husband, he asked me if I could wait the next day. Of course that was ridiculous; so you know what I did, I walked to the hospital by myself. I brought and carried my things with me to the hospital. My neighbor offered help but I refused. I reached the hospital but I didn't give birth at once so I had to wait for another day. And you know what my husband said to me? He told me that next time, before I would do anything or decide anything, I should think about it first because he didn't want to embarrass his family. I just kept silent. How dare him think about his family's sake more than mine, his own wife? So anyway, when we came home from the hospital, my husband had to accompany his family to a party. That was the time when I was trying to pinch myself. I was asking myself, is this happening

to me? Is this real? I was so alone. I had to find myself again. I had to find my way again. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Flordeluna shared that she was questioning her sense of purpose—as a person, as a wife, as a mother. She said she was even questioning her own reality. She also said she was pinching herself, trying to make sense of everything that was going on with her life. She shared how she could not believe that all those adverse scenarios were actually happening in her life. And if they were, she said she could not believe how she could let those things happen to her over and over. She had the awareness of what was going on; but she was unable to do anything to counter it, according to her. Flordeluna continued to share that she realized she had internalized self-defeating tendencies by allowing her pessimistic thoughts and inactivity to overwhelm her. These self-defeating actions overpowered her, she said. Eventually she admitted she was able to come back to her senses and started to pull herself together and persevere. She also said she found ways to make herself useful and to occupy her time. She mentioned she explored the option of applying to teach in a local private school. By doing so, she said she was able to find herself again. She added that she was able to prove to herself that she can lift herself up and be what she wanted to be as long as she put her heart and her mind to it. At last, she was breathing again, she recalled:

I went to University A and then I was able to speak with the Dean. She told me that she wanted to put up a pre-school. But it had to be approved by the Board of Education. At that time, my first son was attending a Montessori school. There I met some teachers and they invited me to teach in that school. I taught there for a year. Eventually, the Dean of the Ateneo called me up and told me the plan for

early childhood education was approved and she needed my help in preparing the proposal to the school's president. I was enrolled in my masters program at that time. My husband opposed the idea when I consulted him. I didn't seek his opinion anymore. I just went ahead and enrolled by myself. When my husband and my in-laws found out, they just couldn't say anything anymore. I did all the documentations for the pre-school and fortunately, they were approved. I was trained to do it in the university where I first taught. I was confident I could deliver. I was the one who set up the pre-school. I also needed to train teachers to teach in the pre-school; I opened the teaching course as well. I also opened special education courses. I was busy to worry about other personal things. I was able to build myself again. I was happy that I was building again. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Decisions, Decisions...Should I Stay or Should I Go? Flordeluna stressed that her strong sense of determination helped her to realize her own potential that she thought she lost. According to her, her motivation pushed her to the level of having the confidence to shoulder a huge responsibility of starting and building a school from nothing. I admire her assiduousness, ingenuity, astuteness and confidence. She admitted she needed to possess many strong characteristics that a leader should have in order to be able to achieve what she did. Apparently she mentioned that, other people, outside her family circle, had high constructive perceptions of her as a person and as a professional. Instead of entertaining a feeling of remorse and revenge towards the people that mistreated her, she mentioned how she was able to be generous enough to share with them her blessings. She explained:

Despite the fact that they treated me badly, I am still a very generous person. I am a pleaser. I knew what they wanted; especially my mother-in-law, so I showered her with gifts. At that time, my husband had so many trainings in Manila and he would only go home to me on weekends. There were so many things that happened but I forgot already. I moved to another house, he was not there to help me. He was consistently absent in my life. There was always somebody who would offer me help instead of him. There was a time when I already wanted to give up. I decided to write him a letter. I expressed through that letter that I didn't want to stay married with him anymore. When he read it, he said that he wouldn't give up too easily, but then he would request for a re-assignment in another town so we can have sometime to breath away from each other. There were so many signals that there was something wrong with our marriage. There were signs everywhere but I just chose not to pay attention to any of them. During the civil wedding, the pictures were all gone. During the church wedding, the bridal car didn't arrive. Then in our civil wedding, he couldn't tell his father so he forged his father's signature. It was funny that that very piece of paper that holds our marriage was forged. I was also a provider when I was in his hometown. I felt that I was slowly deteriorating and fading out. With all due respect to my husband, he worked hard but I had to work too. It would not suffice if it was just his earning. So I decided to apply to teach in the states. But then I realized-- he's not good for me. He's not good for my soul. We were always fighting before I left, then I finally decided to leave for the states. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Why Would It Be Any Different in the States?

Flordeluna explained that every time she would start to enjoy being happy and contented with what she had achieved, another dilemma would suddenly arise; as if she was being tested. After she had built the pre-school and was doing well running it—training teachers and overseeing the operations, she described how she found herself experiencing difficulty with her relationship with her husband once again. She said she had no other choice but to make a decision to leave. That was when she entertained the idea of going to the states to teach, according to her. However, being the generous person that she is, she said she still wanted to give her husband another chance. I admire her altruism and optimism in uniting her family. She said she wanted to preserve her family. She expressed the feeling that she knew how difficult it was for her to be left behind when her parents got separated. She said she did not want any of her children to feel the same way she did.

I just wanted to preserve the family; maybe also because I know the feeling of being left behind. I was also hoping that there would still be something to hold on to. But then I felt I made a mistake when I went back home to the Philippines for a visit. I realized I was not happy anymore. We (my husband and I) were not happy anymore. However, he was ready to go to the states with me. I knew it probably wouldn't work. But then at that time, there were other blessings. I was offered an ESOL position. I got accepted in a cohort of teachers who got scholarships for a master's degree, so I was very happy and busy at that time also.

(Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Flordeluna admitted that although she was hesitant in bringing her husband to the states, she still went ahead and decided to let him come along. She shared how she and her husband had a difficult and complicated relationship back home; “why would it be any different in the states,” she thought. However, she admitted that the yearning for a strong family relationship remained. She said she wanted her family to be whole—not only for her children, but for herself as well. She said she detested it when her mother left them. She mentioned she didn’t want the same thing to happen to her children. She said she would do everything to keep her family intact, no matter how much sacrifice she would have to endure. In as much as she wanted to preserve her family, things were not getting any better between her and her husband, according to her. Flordeluna shared how she and her husband were fighting profusely. Arguments were unbearable, according to her. She admitted that disdain was all that was left. She recalled:

It just started to get worse last 2009. I really felt I was suffocated. He told me I’ve changed. Actually, there was no change. It was really me. He wanted me to be like his mother who would just follow his father’s wishes. But I am definitely not like her mother. I am a different person. What’s sad now was we don’t have any more manifestations of our love. (Crying) There was no respect anymore. He has a selfish kind of love. I was really tired. There was a time when there was a thought of being unfaithful, but only in my thoughts. I couldn’t do it. I anchored my strength to prayers. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Flordeluna expressed an interesting statement when her husband told her that she had changed. She said she told him that she did not really change. She said she explained to him that, her personality was deep inside her, probably hiding, but had been there all

along. She continued that it was just only now that she was starting to affirm more of her inner self. It astonished me how one would come to that realization. It might probably be considered surreal to some, but for Flordeluna, she admitted that it seemed that it was her reality. She expressed how she came out of her shell. She said she was alive again! At last, she said she knew what she would do without anybody telling her, demanding her. She stressed she needed to trust herself and be confident with her capabilities in order to dismiss any self-defeating thoughts. Again, she said she persevered. I also admire her patience and strength to avoid temptations. She was no ordinary woman. She inspires me a lot.

Becoming an English Teacher in the Philippines

Flordeluna shared her teaching experiences in many diverse settings—regular school, pre-school, special education school, cooperative school, and university setting. She was offered a teaching position even before she graduated from college. Her professor recommended her to teach in a school for the hearing impaired. However, she did not last in that school for very long.

After a year, my colleagues and I put up our own cooperative. We came from a break away group. It was a foundation--Special education, FLCD, speech pathology. With some parents, we put up the school. Mrs. B led the team. She built the school in memory of her daughter. I helped her for it to materialize. I created a student and parent handbook. I became very close to her. Mr. B said she was disappointed with me when we broke away from their school. They thought I would stay but I didn't; instead I left with the rest. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Flordeluna explained that the reason why she left was that there were many injustices. She suggested that they should put up a cooperative that would engage in education. She said she wanted it to become a cooperative instead of a foundation because she believed that a foundation offers fewer benefits to its employees. After Flordeluna helped set up the cooperative, she said she realized there was an opening in the university. She said she did not hesitate to seize that opportunity. She said she had to leave the cooperative school. She explained:

I suggested to my colleagues that parents must be strongly involved because they have to be the advocates of their own children. A friend of mine called me at one point and told me that FLCDC in U.P. needed a teacher. So I realized not all of us could be compensated by the cooperative since it was very new. I took the teaching job in the university, but I did not leave them blindly. I still helped them out and supported them. I started to teach in UP. I volunteered a lot. I was engaged in a lot of student organizations in the College of Home Economics. I taught a home management course. That course required me to stay in residence at the home management house. I was assigned there with students who would live there for three weeks to a month. There was a real baby that we really had to take care of. I was facilitating the whole thing. I lived with them in that house.
(Interview 2, 10/20/10)

I am a Builder! Being a person with a great deal of integrity and a sense of responsibility, Flordeluna shared that she could not just leave the school she helped build. She said she would often times come back and support them. As she went deeply into teaching in the university, she shared how she found herself engaged with a lot of

organizations in her department. She mentioned she even took the responsibility of being the lead facilitator in a practicum program. As she continued to have a hectic schedule in her own career, she shared how she felt the connection between her and her family suffered. She admitted that she felt that the communication as well as the once close relationship between her family members was severed abruptly. Flordeluna admitted that she lamented this scenario, but she said she learned to move on as well. She explained:

I would only go home on weekends. We were busy with on our own lives. A lot of my siblings were married, managing their own lives, so I didn't really see the point of spending time with my family anymore. I just stayed in that house in the university. Even though I have friends who were rich, I didn't see myself having self-pity because I have a high level of self-esteem. I am a very practical person. When I was teaching in U.P., I met my boyfriend; who eventually, became my husband. He was my student. He was from U.P. Manila. He was very promising. However, he got a girl pregnant even before we met, and that changed his life. It was traumatic for him. He transferred to U.P. Diliman. He didn't have any direction in life at that time. His grades were really bad that he had to transfer to college of Home Economics. There, we met. I was his teacher. I didn't really like him at first because he was arrogant. He was a member of a fraternity, which was an elite group. I really didn't like him. I was also at the prime of my life. I was twenty-one. He was twenty. I was also very active. I organized a political party. We won full slate. So I said to myself, 'This is where I belong and where I should stay.' There was always this longing for me to build an organization, to support

people and to mentor. I encouraged my students to continue the legacy of building and creating a solid political party. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

I wondered if the experiences she shared above contributed to her astounding confidence, optimism, and inner strength. It was astonishing how Flordeluna had a complete self-awareness of what she was capable of doing. She was a builder—an abstract builder of ideas, concepts and knowledge. I see a lot of myself in Flordeluna. It seemed that we were both fueled by our tremendous motivation to succeed and the resilience to fight all the odds; no matter how many sacrifices we had to make. Like me, it seemed that Flordeluna's waterloo was emotional attachment. She said that bright, strong women like us are always challenged by our emotional dilemmas. Flordeluna explained:

I was longing for some kind of attachment. My boyfriend was asking me what I was afraid of. It was the mind that fell in love with him. It was a challenge for me. He was different than the two—Mr. J and Mr. A. With those two, it was more of romance; with my husband, it was really the mind. So it was a different level of physical intimacy. It was like the one in the book little prince—*The Taming of the Rose*. Many of my friends didn't like him. They were asking me why him? They thought I was more matured for him. Eventually, they were able to accept him and became his friends too. It was actually just a short courtship before we actually committed ourselves with each other. I started my master's degree and then I went back to theater. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Before long, Flordeluna explained how her relationship with her boyfriend started to turn sour. She said he needed to go back to his hometown for vacation. Flordeluna

revealed that she felt that everything was changed when her boyfriend came back. He had changed, according to her. She said he became cold and apathetic. She said she knew something was wrong. Flordeluna shared how her boyfriend told her that he had gotten back with his previous girlfriend from his hometown and he needed to end his relationship with Flordeluna. She expressed how devastated, confused and enraged she was. She recalled:

What he did was unfaithfulness. He had a relationship with me and yet he got involved with another girl. I told him to go ahead and think about it first. I told him to go but it was so hurtful. My pride and my ego were hurt as well. It was so unfair. Eventually, we got back together, and then I got pregnant. I was hesitant. I told myself to completely give in. I was trying to hide my pregnancy with everyone. Then at that time, he wanted to go to a Marine Academy. I let him go back to school and I sacrificed my masters program. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Flordeluna shared how she never gave up too easily, without a fight. She continued that she would not let her ego be stepped on just like that. She said she was determined to fight for him. She added that it didn't matter whether she truly loved him or not. She said it was all about her pride, her ego, her reputation. She then decided she would not give him up, no matter what.

I Gave Birth Three Times in the Philippines. Flordeluna emphasized that she gave birth three times in the Philippines—first to her second child, second to a child learning center, and third, to her only girl. During our conversation, she expressed how she her life was monotonous and dreary. She said she was looking for something that would

occupy her time. So she went back to school, started her masters program and also set up the learning center. She explained:

That was when the dean called and asked me to help her set up the school. We submitted a proposal and it was a 'yes.' The board of regents approved it. However, the approval came around March, which was towards the end of the school year. I had to open the center by June. So my construction days were only forty-five days. It was hard for me to put up a school of my own in that specific town because the learning center that I first built was my idea. It was my baby. So why would I put up another one? Why put up something that would compete to what I first built right? Prior to that, a friend of mine, one of my colleagues in Family Life and Child Development (FLCD), invited me to Wizard Academy, in which they wanted to revolutionize the concept of pre-school. It was more like a franchise. So I attended, then they offered me to manage their Davao branch or the Paranaque branch. However, I refused those offers because my family just recently got settled in another town. I was almost tempted to accept it because I really wanted to go back to the mainstream. Finally, I realized my second child was still a baby and so I just didn't take the chance to pursue that business opportunity. I let it go. I attended the training and I learned a lot, though. At that time, were already using the Multiple Intelligences framework. The challenge was how I would incorporate the multiple intelligence frameworks in an integrated curriculum. I also attended one summer workshop about early childhood education to update myself. I decided I would make a curriculum that would anchor on MI framework coupled with child developmental approach. It was

something new. But the problem was who would be the teachers? And also, I didn't have a building yet. I had to work with engineers to set up the new building. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Flordeluna expressed how her experiences contributed to her being a conscientious leader who initiates action. She admitted she is a passionate human being who constantly yearns for new experiences and challenges both in her career as well as her personal life. She said she is often willing to take risks in order to break the languor life presented her. She explained:

I really loved to start a school. I am a builder. That defined me. I also built the school cooperative. I am a builder of ideas, of things. What really motivated me was that I knew I had the opportunity to try something new. It's not just for material satisfaction. My satisfaction...I really derive it from seeing my own vision. With the cooperative school, it was really something new. It was a cooperative between parent and teacher, so they really had no idea how it would operate. There were international companies for the hearing impaired who went to the Philippines and observed in that school. The representatives from those companies were amazed that the program was at par with the programs in other countries. They were surprised. With the cooperative, I had to network with other schools, for mainstreaming because the thrust is to mainstream the students.

Finally, Flordeluna talked about her giving birth for the third time. She said that was when her daughter was born. A year after that, she said she had to make a difficult decision of leaving her one-year-old daughter so she could come to the states and teach. She said she had to do something to give her children better opportunities in life. She had

to make those sacrifices for her children and herself as well, she continued. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Contemplating on the Present: Teaching Experiences in Maryland

Professional Teacher Identity Transformation

Help, Help! My Boat is Sinking. Flordeluna admitted that she had a challenging time transitioning from her teaching experiences in the Philippines to her teaching job in the U.S. She shared that she had no idea what to expect when she got to her new school. She said she was trained in early childhood. She was a manager. She said she was not really a practicing elementary school teacher. She said her amorphous lessons were something new for her principal. She explained that she was used to progressive and open curriculum. When she came to the states, the curriculum was very structured, according to her. Fortunately, she mentioned that her reading specialist defended her all the time. Flordeluna remembered when one parent talked to her and said appalling words to her because according to the parent, she couldn't understand what Flordeluna was teaching her child. The parent shouted at Flordeluna and humiliated her in front of her students. The parent was questioning Flordeluna's ability to teach. She said that it was frustrating for her. However, towards the end of the school year, Flordeluna mentioned that she was able to adjust and many of her parents learned to appreciate her contributions to their children's learning. She recalled:

In terms of my teaching journey, I had a difficult time during my first year. My background was a builder, a developer, and then I was trained to do and teach pre-school. When I came to the states, I had to teach kindergarten. It was really

challenging. The second year was a lot easier for me. I started the ESOL summer school in my school. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

When asked about what she thought and felt when she saw that majority of her students were Black, she responded that she did not think about that notion too much. She said she had no high or low expectations of them; and that she looks at them the way she looks at other children who are Asian or Caucasian. She emphasized that since she is an early childhood educator, she looks at all children as children; no matter what race or color of skin. She added that she would always look at the similarities more than the differences for she is a positive thinker. During our conversation, she also emphasized how being a woman, and that femininity had never been a disability for her. She said, “I am a very strong woman. Wherever I go, I would always celebrate my potentials of being a woman whether at home, in school and at work.”

Discrimination—I Should Have Seen It Coming! Flordeluna expressed her aggravation when her principal did not support her for the Outstanding Educator’s Award. Instead, she even asked Flordeluna if she could just nominate somebody else. That was akin to a slap in the face, she said. But as the saying goes, “In humility, there is strength!” –a saying that she really embodied. She acknowledged the fact that her principal did not support her. She said she became receptive to her colleague whom the principal wanted to nominate. She said she knew her time would come when she would be given accolades for her own merits.

Being “Ulirang Guro” (Outstanding Teacher Awardee). Flordeluna described how proud she is as a Filipina teacher. She said she had been blessed with many wonderful opportunities for the year 2009. First she graduated from her second master’s degree

from a reputable college. It was a scholarship awarded to her by the county. Then, she won the title of *Ulirang Guro* (Outstanding Teacher Awardee). She was awarded in New York in front of many other Filipino delegates and candidates from all over the nation.

When asked about how confident she feels in handling her class everyday, Flordeluna shared how she struggled before she was able to establish the routines.

During the first few weeks of classes, I am not usually as confident. I am usually overwhelmed with my classes because I usually do plug-in wherein I have to stay inside the classroom and work collaboratively with the mainstream teacher. So it takes a lot of planning and collaboration, which of course takes time and adjustment both on my part and with that of the classroom teacher as well. I don't really have enough time; especially I am working with two mainstream teachers, in two grade levels. The difficulty lies more on what would be my role inside the classroom, but once, it was established, everything will just be sailing smoothly. That way, I would know more specifically where I would come in and I can plan a more structured instruction with my students. But in terms of actually providing instruction; I am confident that I am able to deliver the lesson very well.

(Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Flordeluna continued to share how her classes went last school year. The expectations from her principal were that she would co-teach 2nd and 3rd grade. She said she was able to plug-in during the reading block and worked collaboratively with the mainstream teacher. She said her mainstream teacher would usually do the whole group instruction, wherein she also gave Flordeluna opportunities to teach the whole class especially during the skill block. Flordeluna said she was able to meet the language needs of her students.

She added that she stayed in that room and helped other at risk kids as well. She continued that they adhered to the Reader's Workshop Framework and that they worked with their groups simultaneously. First, Flordeluna said that she and the mainstream teacher would meet with their lower level readers while the more advanced kids were reading independently. Then they would rotate. Flordeluna said that her administrators recognized the obscurity of working with a lot of teachers per grade level, so her principal decided to place the ESOL students into only two classes per grade level, which made it more manageable and constructive both on the students as well as the teachers' perspectives.

Flordeluna also shared how she viewed collaborative planning as a very important component to make teaching and learning effective in an ESOL classroom. She explained:

It was very crucial for me to plan collaboratively. I worked with classroom teachers daily, so we really planned together. When we were doing the author's study for example, instead of merely just presenting the lives of the authors; we made it interesting and interactive with the children. We had a role-play. The mainstream teacher took the role of the author. Then the students came up with several questions they wanted to ask the author about their works. Then we did an interview with the author portion where the students asked questions they've prepared and the teacher responded to them. It was really interesting and the children loved it. Writing, speaking and listening were enhanced for ELLs. I usually jumped in because I was very comfortable working with my mainstream teacher. I also enjoyed the part when there was a new lesson or new concept to be

taught. I would often do the activity on activating prior knowledge with the students. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Flordeluna admitted that she is very aware of her identity as a teacher. She said she knows when she has to assume the role of a lead teacher as well as a support teacher. She also said she knows her capabilities as well as her own limitations. She asserted that she knows that she has a passion in combining theater arts and reading so she capitalizes on that strength. She continued to say that she provides positive student engagement in both the mainstream and ESOL class under a co-teaching model. She added that she knows how to provide certain accommodations to her students in the classroom daily. She continued to describe in detail her classroom setting and how she learned to work collaboratively with her mainstream teacher more effectively.

Sometimes my mainstream teacher would give directions directly and orally, without further explanation. I would often go to the board to write down the directions so my ELLs and other at risk kids could see and read what the teacher said. It actually helped them a lot. That was a part of giving accommodations to the students who needed extra help. I would also jump in anytime. We were open to each other. It was really important to have a very good relationship with the mainstream teacher. When you walk in our room, there's an open space, students sit on a rug for the whole group instruction. Desks are arranged in groups for skill blocks and for independent work and center work. If there were anything I would like to change, I would change the part of the curriculum in terms of making it more organized, because the lessons were quite scattered. The pace was too fast.

The teachers were usually pressured. The kids were not ready but due to time constraint, teachers were often forced to move on. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

During one of our conversations about teaching styles and how she matches her teaching style with that of the mainstream teacher's, she explained that during the first week of classes, she would usually observe the teaching style of her mainstream teacher. Once she had a good sense of how she teaches, Flordeluna said that she would then adjust her own style of teaching to complement the mainstream teacher's style.

We really work and plan collaboratively. We really have to have trust and be confident with each other's capabilities to make it work. Sometimes, there are some teachers who do not want to collaborate. I adjust with that kind of teacher. But I usually give suggestions; write them on paper so we can see our suggestions to each other. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Flordeluna explained how she recognized the fact that trust and confidence with each other's capabilities are two of the major components towards co-teaching success. She further described her view on what good teaching is. She explained:

I am working with 4th graders this year. It's my first year to teach that grade level. There were so many children that struggle with many concepts. The mainstream teacher would usually whine and complain on how those children do not know anything that they should've known by now. Instead of giving these kids worksheets that really do not help, why not start modeling the concepts that would help students to understand the concepts better, I thought. Good teaching means the teacher would be able to reach the students where they are...so they can get a better understanding for them to acquire the skills that they need to

master in 4th grade. There should be movement—where they are right now and where they should be. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

She continued to describe the characteristics of a good teacher. She said:

For me a lot of it would depend on a good preparation. A good teacher plans her lessons well. A good teacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of her students so she can plan accordingly based on them. It includes coming up with strategies that are suited for the students. A good teacher should be able to provide differentiated learning. She should be flexible. She should have a good grasp of what she teaches. Only when you have a wide understanding of your content, that's the only way, you can extend differentiation. There are many ways of presenting the lesson. (Interview 2, 10/20/09)

I Teach Science Too. Flordeluna continued to describe when she was satisfied with her teaching performance. She said that as a teacher, she needed to unearth resources and *realia* in order to teach the abstract concepts that her students were learning in science.

I plugged-in during science class. We were studying water cycle. As a teacher, you're also a researcher. You always have to find ways on how to engage your class. We came up with a science experiment. As a good teacher, I felt I needed to find ways and means to make the lesson more meaningful. I came up with a simple experiment on water and cotton. One cup of water, a cotton ball... the cotton is the cloud. Dip the cotton in the water, when the water gets absorbed, that's evaporation. Then slowly squeeze the cotton and then water started to drip, and that's precipitation. It becomes heavier because of the water... condensation... water cycle... The kids were able to see... that's what you need to show your

students. I was happy about the turn out. I was able to reach out to my students. I was able to reach out to my students and then I had to study again the concepts I had to teach. It dawned on me that I actually needed to review these concepts, no matter how complex they were, I was able to teach it to my students and my students were able to get it. I sat down. I did some research, then I planned for it—that's the process of rediscovering different ways of teaching.

(Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Flordeluna shared her strategies on classroom management wherein she had to manage two types of classes—her own ESOL class for pullout, and the mainstream teacher's class for plug-in sessions.

Since I was working with 2nd and 3rd graders, I usually would concentrate on dealing with teaching my kids how to focus. I also use my background in theater. I use some gestures—Concentrate! Focusing! Center! (pointing her finger to her head) either whole or small groups. (Center! –everybody's eyes on me.) how do we know we're listening? Eyes on me...Two rules—agreement. First I have a job to do---that is to teach you. Let me do my job. Second, your job is to learn and listen. It worked. I also came up with games such as tic-tac-toe games. It required some planning to do that. I needed to be structured so as not to waste time. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Flordeluna shared how she collaboratively worked with the mainstream teacher in implementing classroom management strategies.

The mainstream teacher counts: 3-2-1! It's important to train the students at the beginning of the school year. We have difficult kids that would distract the class.

I usually would sit down with the difficult kids as the teacher was doing whole group. Focus, focus...focus, but some of them would not even listen. Well... the teacher would then attend with the majority. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Teaching Kids to Become Authors. Flordeluna shared how vital it is for her staff members and administrator to respect and value her views. She described how that contributed to her self-esteem and confidence as a teacher.

Three years ago when America's Choice Reading program was first introduced, there was a lot of resistance from many teachers. It's just anchoring on the reader's/writer's workshop, but it is structured because the program provides you with the materials and resources—what books to read, to make things easier for the teacher. But eventually it's not that rigid that it actually brings out your own creativity too as a teacher. It is a teaching framework. That is where I think the misconception or misunderstanding. It's a how to—process. It is how to teach reading and writing in a workshop way. Some teachers were saying they're not teaching skills there... but it's embedded. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

She continued to explain that the foremost reason teachers were reluctant to utilize the program was because it entailed a lot of planning and assessment especially when it comes to the writing aspect of the program. She described how the assessment was made. Teachers would have to confer with their students because all the assessments depend on students' work and evidence of their writing. So teachers found it time consuming.

The teachers need to teach students the routine. Eventually, students learn to get where the readers folders are for example, because it is expected that after reading

a book, they have a book bag that they can have a freedom to choose what they need to read next but of course depending on their reading levels. Thus, one of the requirements for the teachers is to build a library in his/her own classroom, which of course will take time to really sort out. All the books are provided, but teachers have to set them up. Students need to internalize the routine. They know right away that in every story or article they read; they need to write a response. That has to be automatic. The students are given thirty days to learn that routine. In reality, the teacher is just doing the introduction, then it's free-wheeling, the students already know what to do, because we've already trained them.

(Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Flordeluna shared how she believes that the program is excellent for their ESOL students. Writing requires practice, she said. The more they write, the more they progress. She also emphasized that the program is very much paralleled with the Reading and Language Arts (RELA) curriculum framework for the county. It is embedded in the readers' and writers' workshop. She continued:

There was this particular example, we would just be dealing on author's life; which means that the students would learn the biography of each of the authors of the stories they read— his writing style, etc. Then we encouraged students how to begin writing a personal narrative. It was really trying to encourage students to become authors themselves. However, I realized that writing was taken for granted. Thus, I emailed my principal and suggested to her the concept of readers' writers' workshop. I discussed the merits of each component. Fortunately, I was invited to join the leadership team. Those teachers who were negative and

adamant about the framework were the teachers who really were not using the program effectively. Even if it was something new to me, all I have to do is learn it, so I could share it with my students. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Flordeluna shared that when she first arrived in her school, she admitted she felt she was not supported. She said she even had to request for a mentor teacher because it was really a struggle for her.

It was when she taught Kindergarten on her first year of teaching in MAPS.

I was trained for pre-k, and then all of a sudden, I had to teach Kindergarten, so I needed to study the curriculum on my own. I was placed in an extra room, so I didn't have the furniture that I needed, so I really felt I was left on my own; for the whole year. I had to really take the initiative to find workshops that I needed to attend so I could update myself with the know-how and strategies of improving my craft. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

I Finally Came Out of My Shell. Eventually, she said that the ESOL chair became her mentor. She explained how she was really supportive in terms of planning Flordeluna's lessons. Flordeluna described how her colleagues actually saw her transformation from that meek and subservient type to a very assertive and knowledgeable expert.

My principal was very happy about the class where I was co-teaching. During the learning walks, she invited the teachers to come and observe my class. Many teachers came to me and they appreciated how I provided support for the mainstream teacher. Most of my colleagues were saying that I was not like the other specialists who would come to their classrooms demanding to do their own tasks, afraid of being judged and were labeled as assistant teachers. I never felt

that way. I always would find ways on how I could help the students and provide support in the classroom. I kept on telling my 4th grade teacher—“Do what you have to do, I am invisible. I am just focusing on my students. I am not looking at you, or trying to criticize what you’re doing. I am here to service my students and we share the same goals.” In terms of meeting the standards, I feel the same way. At the end of the day, it’s our class. It’s all about our students. The focus is on the students. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Wow! I Got Invited to the Leadership Team. Flordeluna shared how thrilled she was when her principal invited her to be in the leadership team. It is the body that oversees the America’s Choice Reading program, which usually includes departmental chairs. Although she was not the department chair, she used to coordinate the after school program. Flordeluna continued to share that her principal felt that her ideas would help improve the framework and the program that they do in school. As motivated and sanguine as she is, Flordeluna never really felt unsupported with her ideas as an ESOL teacher, according to her. Even if she was not supported at times, she said she did not choose to dwell on that notion because she just wanted to focus on how she could improve herself more. She explained:

I guess I don’t feel that way because I always brought the focus on how I could improve myself and what I do, so instead of wallowing in the idea of not being supported, I always try to find ways on how I could reach out if I need help. I admit that I sometimes get overwhelmed. So what I do is sit down, reflect and seek help from people, read books, and study. I know that these confusions and

anxieties are present because I really didn't have enough understanding of certain things. In order to overcome them, I should be able to find my own ways.

(Interview 2, 10/20/10)

I was flabbergasted with what I heard from Flordeluna. I marveled at her optimism. While some teachers were wallowing themselves in pity saying that “why I don't get any support.” In her case, when she would feel beleaguered, she admitted that she would sit down; reflect and tell herself that she needs to explore her options and seek help; especially if there were uncertainties. This concept seemed very inspiring to me. These shared stories will be very motivating for others. Many Filipino teachers that I have talked with would seem to whimper and complain that they lack support, but Flordeluna on the other hand, expressed that she would often take responsibility to reflect on herself and find ways and means to lift herself up. Sometimes I wonder when I would ever talk to somebody who would feel and think the same way that I do. I am so delighted I met Flordeluna. I am glad I have found a woman with a similar wavelength with mine. She continued:

I remember when the rest of my co-teachers were whining about America's Choice; I was on my computer learning it— looking for actual samples. I provided them with copies. That's how I deal with all aspects of my life as well. I believe that whenever there is a confusion and uncertainty, it means that there is a lack of something. So I have to fill it in. And you cannot just keep on blaming other people for your shortcomings. So like during my kindergarten year, I befriended all my specialists because I knew they were my resources—the custodians, they come to me and ask me whatever I need. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

When asked about her principal's perception of her as a teacher and as a person, Flordeluna explained that during her evaluation, her principal would always say that she is an excellent teacher but she was not clear what her principal specifically meant by the word excellent. She shared how her principal envisions her as a person who would instigate and extend herself to be able to deliver her task. She said that her principal knows that she is a steadfast person.

Sometimes, my principal would let me do something for her. For example, the principal's book of the month, I went to the different grade level teachers, organized, prepared the presentation and presented it to the whole staff at the beginning of the school year. I became more comfortable and more open. I always provided her with my feedback. For example-- teachers' assignments; we've come to that relationship. But mine are just merely suggestions, of course it would still boil down to her decision. She knew I was doing a lot of activities even outside school. She was surprised that I do a lot of volunteer work. For example, I volunteered in the certification week at Sasscer building, and then I volunteered at the ESOL office during the summer. The other members of the leadership team assumed that I was the ESOL chair since I was the one who was attending all the meetings. (Interview 2, 10/20/10)

Flordeluna shared how she loved to volunteer work in her school because she had always wanted to share her expertise. Despite all that, she mentioned she was still not given the position as a department chair. She said there was somebody else her principal favored to be the chair. However, she said she respected her principal's prerogative.

There is Pride in Humility. It seemed that Flordeluna perceives herself as a manager and a leader. She shared a story about a confusing scenario between her and her principal. To her disenchantment, she said she became a victim of discrimination—and all she could do was accept the fact and give in to the wishes of her superior. She recalled:

In 2009, I went to my principal to ask for her support for my nomination to the Outstanding Educator’s Award. She was excited about it. However, I felt that she also wanted this other teacher to be nominated. She even asked me if I could also help and support that teacher. I guess she didn’t really understand what I was asking her. I talked to her because I believed that the most ideal person to nominate me was my principal and I was hoping she would. But she refused. She said somebody should nominate me instead of her. The insulting thing was, I ended up being the nominator of this other teacher that my principal was supporting. After that meeting I felt that something wrong happened there. For the first time, I felt I was a victim of racial discrimination. (Interview 3, 11/12/10)

Flordeluna shared her frustration about this occurrence. She said she realized that she came up with this idea, and then she ended up with nothing. Her reading specialist told her that she could do the paperwork for her but Flordeluna had to come up with her own portfolio. Then she realized it was a perfect idea because she was just awarded for *Ulirang Guro* (Outstanding Teacher) so she had a portfolio ready. She then sought the help of a Filipino mentor, who was not much of help, who even said: “I have seen the other portfolios, and those were the teachers that really have accomplished and experienced a lot.” Flordeluna admitted she did not feel the support she was hoping to

get—not at all. Flordeluna said she knew in her heart that she would have had a very good chance of winning the award. She said she saw a different perspective. She is an international teacher, and it was not the length of time that she was teaching in the county; but the impact that she had that was more important, she thought. Flordeluna explained that she was thwarted by her Filipino mentor. She said: “She did not really support me; she just left me hanging.” Flordeluna mentioned she was relentless in saying that she would not venture into something that she felt she was not sure of. However, she revealed she continuously felt a lack of support from her mentor and her administrator:

When I was talking to my principal she made me feel somehow that I was being conceited—that I have too much belief in myself. But then again so what, right? I asked people and I do things that she’s not aware of. I did not share it with anyone. I felt devastated. When my former literacy coach came, I shared it with her, and then she empathized with me. I felt it was clearly discrimination. That was a clear manipulation and a slap on my face. There was a harassment that happened there. She was my superior. I was her subordinate. We were in her office. Of course, I would say yes to her. Even if I was not completely agreeing to what she was saying. I felt her tension. So I just agreed. The worse thing was after a few nights of reflecting on it, because it really bothered me. I was devastated because I knew I became a victim of discrimination.

(Interview 3, 11/12/10)

Flordeluna came up with a letter for everyone in school. She said she encouraged everyone in her school to celebrate the idea that good things are starting to happen in their school and it would be better to just have one candidate for the award. So, no

matter how much she wanted to be nominated, she said she decided to give it up. She shared that to make things even worse, she ended up nominating the other person. She wrote— “Being her nominator, I ask that you give her the support, because it is also for our school.” After sending that letter, Flordeluna described that many people came to her, emailed her and expressed how much they admired her humility.

I was not doing it only for myself but for my school. I was doing it for the international teachers as well. I ended up helping that teacher complete her portfolio. I asked the students and the parents to come up with letters. There was a limit to the number of support letters so I collated the students’ letters to one. However, I could really feel the conflict of interest. I felt that’s what the principal wanted and that was how my other mentor made me feel too. I remember I was on sick leave. My principal knew I was working on my portfolio for my masters program. I was on sick leave but my principal called me to help her. So I actually did it for her—the recommendation letter from the principal, which was part of the nomination. That was such an awful feeling. (Interview 3, 11/12/10)

Flordeluna shared how she plans to get her nomination for the Outstanding Educator’s Award. She said her Filipino mentor advised her to wait.

I felt that she was thinking I was not yet ready. But my point is, I would not even think about it if I felt I am not ready. I know myself. That was sad. But anyway, the teacher didn’t make it. She did not win. On a parallel note, I actually helped somebody to nominate me; I already assessed myself looking at those criteria. My Filipino mentor wanted to nominate people that were doing something only for themselves, but not really giving something back to their community. My

thought was, we need to find nominees who would like to extend something and reach out to others. These people that my mentor wanted to nominate, they didn't want to share their skills. They did not want to share what they know in order to help other Filipino teachers succeed. (Interview 3, 11/12/10)

Flordeluna admitted that she felt very disappointed and perturbed with her Filipino mentor. She said her mentor should have at least showed a bit of support and encouragement for a fellow Filipino educator.

As my Filipino mentor, she should have been the one to boost me as an international teacher. So I also decided not to push through anymore because when she said my principal did not support me, I should not go for it.

(Interview 3, 11/12/10)

Flordeluna revealed how she felt strange that her principal had the audacity to ask for help over the summer to write the School Improvement Plan.

When my principal asked me what I will do for the summer, so I could help with school improvement plan, I told her I would be volunteering at the ESOL office. I just wanted her to feel that there were a lot of things that she didn't know about me. I also wanted to say that I uplift my own self. I just pacified her. I acted more as a leader, as an administrator compared to her as a principal. I felt that I was really fired up last year. I didn't just think about it for winning. I also thought about the international teachers. We're talking about the impact. I felt it's really good for the county. That's one learned lesson for me. My principal really didn't support me. (Interview 3, 11/12/10)

Flordeluna explained a different circumstance wherein there was another miscommunication between her and her principal. She said it was about the after school program which she coordinated last school year. Flordeluna shared that she came to her principal to tell her that she would want to volunteer again as the coordinator but she would have to leave earlier than the designated time because she had to attend a class. Flordeluna said she was hoping her principal would support her and actually be the one to initiate the offer of letting her coordinate the after school program, and allowing her to leave early. She was waiting for that to happen; but instead, Flordeluna admitted she felt thwarted because her principal asked her to just delegate the job to somebody else. I began to wonder that there seemed to be an obvious miscommunication problem that happened between Flordeluna and the principal. I wondered if the whole story would have changed, had she told her principal directly what she wanted to do, and what she wanted her principal to comprehend. I wondered if there was a cultural barrier that happened in that scenario. When I asked her why she did not tell her principal directly about her concerns, she said:

I was hoping she would initiate to tell me that it's okay for me to leave early and still hold the coordinator's position. I just really felt that she didn't support me. I didn't want to say anything because I was hoping she would understand my predicament—that I was just being honest but that doesn't mean I can't do the job. I just really needed her support. My reading specialist mentioned to me that my principal was a little wary about me because I am knowledgeable not only in my teaching but also in managing people and in doing administrative work. I remember when I was suggesting something about the curriculum, she said

something like: “Oh, it seems to me that Ms. P doesn’t like the way I manage things.” So I guess that’s why my reading specialist said that to me; because she heard it too. I provided support. I mentored many teachers. The new ESOL teachers come to me instead of asking help from the chair. But sometimes I wonder, doesn’t she see that? Why doesn’t she want me to become the official chair? She sees what I do and how I do things. She knows I am a leader and I really do take the lead. But why doesn’t she want me to be the chair? Maybe because she wants the other teacher to be the chair because she’s been in the building much longer than I have—so it’s probably mainly about seniority. But now we have framework for teachers and maybe she thinks that everything is just fine with me since I will do the job anyway. Actually it doesn’t have to be me. It’s not just really about winning. It is more like the exposure of international teachers, having a voice in the field. (Interview 3, 11/12/10)

When asked about her students’ perception of her she explained that her students see her as a fun and nurturing teacher. Furthermore, she continued to clarify about her parents’ perception of her as a teacher, she said:

It’s difficult to get the parents’ perceptions if you don’t have your own advisory class; because somehow your contact with the parents is somehow limited. It’s different when you’re a mainstream teacher. If you’re a specialist, sometimes they don’t even know you exist. But I tried to be active during conferences. I usually contact parents if need be. (Interview 3, 11/12/10)

Flordeluna shared her high point of teaching in the Philippines.

When I was in the Philippines, I've learned a lot through collaboration among educators. Everybody felt that each one was a big part of a noble profession and that they have something to share. I mentored Teacher L in the pre-school that I built. She's now here in the U.S. also. I saw her potential then I molded her to be the teacher that she is now. I just remembered the extremities because I was teaching kids in the morning and then I was teaching educators at night. I miss the job of building, and networking and teaching adults. (Interview 3, 11/12/10)

She also shared the lowest point of her teaching in the U.S.

The lowest point of my teaching experience in the U.S. was during my first year of teaching as a kindergarten teacher. I got used to being an administrator and teaching adults that I had some difficulty teaching little kids; from administration to classroom teaching. I questioned my ability as a competent teacher, but I realized it's really within me so I anchored on it and built on my strength. That's what I did to overcome my challenges. (Interview 3, 11/12/10)

She continued to elucidate that her educational experiences in the Philippines have contributed a lot to her teaching success in the U.S.

I definitely believe that my educational experiences in the Philippines helped a lot. It really prepared me for my job here in the states. Recently, I got reconnected with my U.P. friends and colleagues at the learning center. They've all reminded me of who I really was because I also learned a lot from them.

(Interview 3, 11/12/10)

She also pointed out that her continuous professional development training provided by the school county has contributed even more to her teaching success.

Is It the Money? Unlike many others, Flordeluna expressed that financial reason was not the only motivating factor for her to teach in the US, although she wouldn't deny it either. Flordeluna explained that the major motivating factors for her in coming to the states were more exploring and learning; experiencing a different culture and in time, doing a service to her country since she also shares her Filipino culture in so many ways. She admitted that the money just comes with the perks.

I don't want to limit myself in just the financial aspect. Sure I earn dollars here; but my expenses are in dollars too so it's just the same. I value more the notion of experiencing a different culture as well. I am citizen of the world first. I am not just Filipino in the Philippines. I would like to believe I have served my country.

I always told people who asked me: I will go out so I can bring something back to share later on. (Interview 3, 11/12/10)

When asked is there's anything she would like to suggest to her school, her response was: "In terms of decision-making and programs, the focus is just really on testing, but then again that's one area that if only Filipino people can intervene, that would bring help and enlightenment to improve more for this county."

Anticipating the Future: Thinking What Lies Ahead in my Career

A Harvard Education is Not Too Late

Flordeluna emphasized that she is not giving up her reverie that one day she will be walking the streets of Harvard for her PhD in education. Even though she's already 40 years old, she said she knows she is just beginning the second chapter of her life. She admitted she never wants to stop learning and yearning for professional and personal growth. She added that, now that she had an identity transformation from a meek,

humble, and gentle person to a confident, matured, and assertive individual who knows what she wants to do in life, she is all set to search for more opportunities to grow.

A Psychiatrist or a Counselor?

Flordeluna said she always wanted to become a psychiatrist or a counselor. She has masters in Guidance and Counseling. She asserted that her enthrallment and enthusiasm in understanding the human mind, and exploring behaviors and characteristics of different people often geared her towards pursuing a second career in psychiatry or counseling. That might be the next trail she would be willing to take, she said.

My Romantic Self

Flordeluna describes herself as a romantic woman, who is never egocentric when it comes to love. She said she has this utmost longing to wake up in the arms of the one she loves. She said, “I am forty years old now. When I turn fifty, I want to see myself with someone that I really love; walking hand-in-hand on the beach. I always had that dream. I am such a romantic person.”

I Never Would Want To Stop Learning

Flordeluna explained how she would like to see herself doing tacit but meaningful things such as—writing a book, reading and enjoying life! She said she loves to do a lot of volunteer work so she can help others. She continues to convey how much she wants to nurture herself. In the near future, she said she envisions herself teaching college students so she can share with them her experiences as an educator.

Chapter 6: NARUTO'S STORY

Reminiscing the Past: Educational and Teaching Experiences in the Philippines

Learning English in the Philippines: Influence of Cultural and Linguistic Experiences

Naruto's identity as an English language learner was strong during her early educational experiences in the Philippines due to her stellar performance on examinations and other assessments of English language abilities. However, like many Filipino students in the public school setting, the strength of her English language identity was confined to the wall of her classroom, since she had less exposure to authentic English language communication outside school. She had very limited exposure to native English speakers with whom she practiced her English communication skills.

The reality she faced in the United States in relation to English language usage was different from what she had envisioned for herself in this context and what she had experienced in the Philippines. Although English is used as a second language in her country, she was exposed to using “*Taglish*” (a combination of *Tagalog* and English) with her colleagues. It was evident that her linguistic identity was transformed once she came to the United States due to the conflicts she experienced with her co-teachers who are native English speakers. This experience is echoed in Park's (2006) work on East Asian women's transformation of identities saying that “an NNEST's linguistic identity was transformed once she came to the U.S. due to a host of problems related to how the English language is perceived in the worldwide context and who is seen as legitimate owners and users of the English language.” (p. 169).

During one of our conversations, Naruto shared how her second grade teacher helped her to learn to love English. Ms. B encouraged her to read a lot of books, and to visit the

library everyday after school. She remembered how her teacher always asked her to share and summarize a story in front of the whole class. Naruto studied in a public school from elementary until high school. Aside from her elementary teacher, she also saw how her high school teacher Ms. N, influenced her to love and appreciate learning not only the English language, but also its literature. She recalled:

I studied in a public high school. I remember we had elective subjects. I had Greek Mythology in junior year. Ms. N was my Greek Mythology teacher. She was very helpful because even though the subject was hard she made it interesting and enjoyable to us. She made us do some dramatization for some story parts. We wrote some poems and even dressed up to look like one of the gods and goddesses. Maybe that's why even now I vividly remember all the Greek gods and goddesses. (Interview 1, 10/8/10)

Naruto continued to share about another teacher that greatly influenced her learning of becoming a teacher. She talked about Mr. G who was her college professor in Children's Literature. She said she would never forget this teacher because he taught them to love what they were teaching and convinced them that they needed to create their own theatrical world in order to be an effective teacher. She recalled:

I will never forget how he taught to love what we are teaching. He told us that as teachers, we have to be good actors. We need to satisfy our viewers so they will remember what we taught them. We danced, sang and played like children in his class. I realized that to be a teacher I must enjoy life so that I have something positive to share with my students that they will learn and remember for the rest of their lives. (Interview 1, 10/8/10)

Raising My Own Self. Naruto expresses herself as an independent person. She shared with me how she practically raised herself. She was the eldest of three children. They all studied in public school. At the tender age of ten, she was already aware that she needed to take care of herself even though her mom and dad were present on her side. She recalled:

It all started when I was in fourth grade. I had two siblings-- a third grader and a first grader. There was a parent-teacher meeting before the school opens. My mom went to the teachers of my two younger siblings but didn't have time to go to mine because the conferences happened simultaneously. My dad was working abroad at that time. I was the eldest, so I was the one that my mother did not prioritize. Since it was a public school, if your parent didn't attend the PTA meeting, then you won't be given any books. It was a first come first serve kind of thing. I was in the star section. Everyone whose parents attended the meeting each got his or her own books. Then the rest of those like me whose parents didn't attend, needed to wait if there were extra books left. I ended up sharing books with another classmate since there were not enough left. I really felt so bad. I envied my siblings who got whole complete sets of books. So from that time on, I realized I had to be independent---on my own. My mom had to wake up early to sell fish in the market. She barely had the time to help us. I just realized that if ever I wanted things done, I had to do it by myself and not rely on my mother or anyone else. (Interview 1, 10/8/10)

According to Naruto this experience pushed her to reinterpret her life as one where she needed to depend on herself in order to get what she wanted. She credits the

experience for teaching her to become more self-reliant, an attitude that she describes as staying with her even up to now. She constructs an identity of one who cannot expect to lean on anyone else but herself.

At present, she says she considers herself an orphan. Her parents are both deceased. Her mom passed away October 8, 2003. Naruto's birthday is October 9th. Her dad passed away last January 30, 2004. Her mom was diabetic. It runs in the family. Naruto and her daughter are both diabetics. Her blood sugar is normal now. Her brother is now living with her, and her sister is in Australia. As the eldest, she is still the one who tends to help her siblings when they need something. She recalled:

I remember when I wanted to join in school clubs. I realized I had to take care of myself. I had to build my own name. I joined many after-school clubs. I made my own decisions without asking my mother's opinion. I did not think about my siblings at that time because I knew my parents will be there for them. So even now, that's the main difference between my siblings and me. Both of them grew up dependent with my parents, compared to me who really brought myself up.

(Interview 1, 10/8/10)

The Painful Separation

Naruto shared that when they were growing up, they lived in a duplex. She lived in that place since she was a child until college. She grew up in the same neighborhood all her life. During one of our conversations, she shared with me the excruciating process of her parents' separation. But first, she described both her parents. Naruto described her mother as a typical assiduous person. Her mother had eight siblings. Among those siblings, Naruto described her mother as the most financially challenged for marrying an

underprivileged man, her father. She continued to say that most of her aunts chose to marry affluent men, who were all professionals. She described how some of her uncles really had high paying jobs. She remembered that whenever there were family parties, her grandmother would bring her along. She shared that she had a good relationship with her grandma; and that compared to her mother's relatives, her father's side of the family was underprivileged. She continued to say that most of her father's relatives adored her because she was the first granddaughter. She described how they really gave her all the care and attention. Naruto continued to describe the difficult scenario her family had faced which changed her life.

When I was in second year high school, my parents got separated. Although I was very close to my father, (we even looked alike, and all), but I was wise to choose my mother instead of my father. Deep inside me, I knew, had I stayed with my father, I would have not finished college. I would probably not have a good future. I knew that if I would stay with my mom, I would finish school and get a decent job. I could buy whatever I want. So I stayed with her and my siblings.

Naruto was broken-hearted though. (Interview 1, 10/8/10)

Naruto shared how much she loved her father. She described how close she was to him compared to her mother. However, she expressed how she had to sacrifice her love for her father; that no matter how much agony it caused her to witness her father leaving, she decided to stay with her mother in order to have a better future. She continued:

When they separated, my feelings was overpowered by my mind—that is, my decision to stay with my mom so I can finish school; even though I loved my

father very much more than my mother. But I knew I would have less of a better future. (Interview 1, 10/8/10)

Naruto continued to explain how she would really find ways and means to be with her father. She described how when she was in high school, she would go to Cavite, her father's hometown; travel two hours by bus, by herself just to visit her father and spend time with him. She admitted that although she wanted to visit her dad often, she did not wish to live with him because she knew she wouldn't have a bright future with her father.

I really wanted to see him; but to live with him, NO. I didn't want to experience hunger. I knew I wouldn't be where I am right now had I stayed with my father. So it was a right decision for me. I was really very close to my dad. It was very painful for me. It was not normal. I asked why would this kind of thing happen to us. Why to our family? But then it was their decision. It was quite a while before I could accept it. I remember that I was really affected by my parents' separation because my school performance declined. It was really difficult for me. Eventually I learned to accept it. (Interview 1, 10/8/10)

Naruto expressed how her parents' separation had a negative influence on her life, which seemed to greatly affect not only her emotional but also her psychological well being, which she realized had manifested on her academic performance in school.

Self-motivation is the key! Naruto shared with me how she admired her second grade math teacher. She said that she believed that this teacher was the one who influenced her to teach. Naruto expressed how she wanted to be like her teacher. Naruto described how she decided to pursue engineering only to find out that Math was not really her cup of tea.

However, she also shared how her mother had a major influence on her career decisions.

She recalled:

I also wanted to go to law school at some point, but my mother insisted to give me only two options: It's either I become a nurse or a teacher. I didn't want to be a nurse. I chose to become a teacher. I wanted to be like my second grade teacher. Now, I know I am not a very detailed teacher or something but I can bring myself down to the lowest, slowest mind. I can definitely teach all types of children.

Naruto continued to explain that when she went to college; she realized she had to respect her mom's wishes. But most importantly, she seemed more concerned about "What would happen to me if I won't obey my mother's wishes?" She shared how she had to convince herself into thinking that she would be better off doing something, and then she would do it.

Motivation is the real key for me. If I knew the decision that I had to make would be good for me in the long run, then I would be motivated to do it. When you see me, I have a strong and tough personality. But if you knew me very well, you will realize I am a different person from what you would expect on the outer surface.

(Interview 1, 10/8/10)

When asked about her family myth, Naruto explained how she made a promise to herself that she would never let her own daughter experience the painful and spiteful feelings she experienced in her own life. She said:

I am trying my best so my child will not experience any of those hurtful feelings that I had. I want her to break the pattern. For example, I was so bad in Math, but my daughter is so good in Math. So, I enrolled her in Kumon Math—a Japanese

way of math. I am convinced that Math means numbers, which you don't need talent in order to be good at it. All you need is practice, practice, practice. Another is that—I have no talent in singing. But my daughter is such a good singer. I enrolled her in a center for pop music. She had concerts in Manila Hotel. I knew I couldn't do it, so I said to myself, “why not my daughter?” I believe everything as in everything, can be studied, practiced, and then mastered. The Lord didn't just hand your talent to you that way... you need to nurture it, and study it in order to be good at it. (Interview 1, 10/8/10)

Naruto always tried to compensate her own limitations by providing and presenting her daughter with opportunities in life that she never had. She said she believes that almost every dream can be attained and achieved if one works hard for it. She emphasized that one has to be motivated in order to make things happen.

Furthermore, Naruto described her unfortunate memory on how she experienced discrimination from her own relatives. She recalled:

My mom's siblings live affluent lives. When they had parties, my grandma would always bring me to those gatherings. I often heard my relatives talking about my mother. They said: “Oh, poor lady, she (my mother) married a pauper”. I felt so bad. I just said to myself, “My mother fell in love with my father. What do they care?” Of course, he's poor but he's not a bad person. He was a typical person. He liked living in the present life. He was popular among his friends. He was handsome. He liked to hang out and drink with friends. He didn't want to worry about the future. He lived in the present moment. He didn't actually have big dreams of his own, but that didn't mean he's a bad person. (Interview 1, 10/8/10)

Naruto said she tried to keep the pain in her heart. She described herself as too young to say something back to her relatives at the time, who were mocking her parents.

However, she has not forgotten the painful feelings of those incidents. She continued to speak of how she struggled to have a strong fighting spirit. She explained:

The effect on me was that I didn't care what other people say. Whatever I believed is right and true, then that's where I stood. I really didn't care if people would talk about me. Although my relatives had a point when they were talking about my mother. It was true that my mother married someone who's poor. But what I didn't appreciate was the fact that it sounded that being poor was such a bad thing. My mother was a lot older than my father. Their age gap was nine years. Both of my parents made that decision to get married. They never bothered anybody. I didn't care whatever my relatives said about my parents. I just did not mind anymore. My mother was very kind. You could actually build/make a statue named after her. She never confronted or fought with anyone. Even if her relatives ridiculed her, she still did not confront them. That's why when I got a little bit older, I became confrontational. My aunts told me I was rebellious and over confident of myself. That was when I was in high school. They did not like my assertive and confrontational attitude. (Interview 1, 10/8/10)

Naruto shared that she was a candid person. She stressed that she would say whatever was on her mind without hesitation or reservation. She admitted that her enemies often cried when she spoke to them because she could really be capable of saying hurtful things. When I asked her why she chose to be this way with her relatives, she said:

It was because I could see that my aunts were acting the same way. I just picked up after them. Everything they blamed onto my mother. So when I grew much older, I answered back at them: “Why? How much does my mother owe you?” I asked them out right. They were so mad at me. Even when I went to the states, my aunts were furious because they wanted me to ask approval from them. They couldn’t accept the fact that I was able to do it on my own without asking help from them. My mother already passed when I left for the states. I was already an orphan at that time when I left. But they were really mad at me, but I didn’t really care about them. Why? I don’t owe them anything right? I didn’t have to ask for their permission or approval. (Interview 1, 10/8/10)

As she was sharing her story, Naruto expressed an intense feeling of hurt and anger towards her aunts. She expressed how she waited for this time to come when she could look back and defend herself and her family.

Influence of Relationships on Identity

I am My Father’s Carbon Copy

I am a carbon copy of my father. When people looked at him, then they looked at me, they really saw the strong resemblance. We really looked alike. We really resembled one another. (Interview 1, 10/8/10)

Naruto shared how she always felt quite popular and well loved on her father’s side of the family. She described the love for her father as so deep that she could feel the love extend to bring a certain feeling of closeness between her and her father’s relatives. They were not described as judgmental and discriminating in her narratives compared to her stories about her mother’s relatives. She offered these details:

They all love me. Even now, I am providing financial help to my father's side even though he already passed away. They really appreciate me there. As for my mother's side, they were furious at me because they knew they couldn't control me. They wanted me to ask for their permission and approval before I leave for the states. But why should I? Like what I said, I don't owe them anything. The respect they were asking from me, "Did you give that respect to my mom, when she was alive?" I asked them. Nope. So why should I respect you now, right?

(Interview 1, 10/8/10)

Naruto shared her frustrations about her mother's relatives who she described as counting every single detail of how they helped her mother when she became ill. She described how her aunts' characters in her narratives were portrayed as overemphasizing any help they provided to her mother when she needed it. Naruto expressed bitterness and anguish. She said:

I just let them do whatever they want. I did not personally take care of my mother because I was in Cavite at that time. It was my younger sister who took care of my mother since she was the one who was living in the same house with my mom. She was the one who knew everything, like where the money came from... but then again, my thought was, if ever they helped financially, my mother did not beg for that money. Besides, she was their sister too. When my mom was still earning, she helped them too. So, it was just right for them to help my mother when she needed it. (Interview 1, 10/8/10)

Naruto continued to say that she was the total opposite of her mother especially in terms of lending people money. She emphasized that her mother's altruistic nature was

abused by many of her relatives. She admitted that she never wanted to experience what her mother experienced.

I am not like my mother who was very lenient on lending people money. I know how to save my own money. I worked hard for it and I didn't go to the states just to lie down on the carpet. I came here so I can experience the good life. I was really different from my mother. I am definitely not like her. She was too generous to the extent that people abuse her kindness. I am not kind in lending money to other people. I had to be different. I had to break the pattern. I experienced how my mom would also owe people money and I didn't like that feeling. I had to change my life. I never would want to experience that. I would never let that thing happen to me. I told my siblings even now that we have our own families that we should be responsible towards our own family since there is nobody to lean on. No one can help us but ourselves. (Interview 1, 10/8/10)

Despite the fact that Naruto didn't agree with her mother's impulse of trusting people in terms of money, she shared that she's also generous like her mother in a way, but not too generous that people would take advantage of her. She described how she's also open with friends who are in need of help.

I guess it's how generous my mother was. I was able to inherit that attitude. Like my house right now in Bowie, everyone hangs out in my house. When my mother was alive, our house in the Philippines was like a city hall. A lot of people come and go. Similarly, when I invite people for dinner in my house, I feed everyone and still give them food to go. That's how my mother was too. That's just fine... that's just food. I am very welcome and open to anyone. Also, my mother could

easily adjust herself to any situation. She could definitely relate with all types of people, rich or poor. I am the same way. I can deal with anyone, no matter who you are, or what your status in life is. I can shift to whatever situation. With my father, like him I am also charming with others. I am not as confident and boastful as my father, though. (Interview 1, 10/8/10)

Sometimes Water is Thicker than Blood. Naruto explained that when she became a mother, she had to admit that she was strict with her own child. She expressed how she wanted to provide all the things that she never had when she was growing up.

I am strict. My thought is, “I give everything to you for your own sake so you can’t blame me if I am strict. I just want the best for you.” That’s what I always tell my daughter. She understands. There was a time, she had a singing rehearsal, and then only the student and the voice trainer could enter the building, so I was just waiting outside for hours, literally like a stage mom. I actually didn’t work for two years at one point, so I could personally take care of her needs. I always explained to her that I was giving her everything so she had to be responsible for herself. My daughter has only been in the states for a year, and I feel that there are a lot of things that she’s missing from back home.

(Interview 2, 11/6/10)

Naruto continued to share that when she left for the states, a very good friend from high school took care of her daughter. She shared how she would rather leave her child with a high school friend than entrust her only child to her blood relatives from her mother’s side. According to Naruto the idiomatic expression “Blood is thicker than

water” does not work for her. She said, “Water is thicker than blood” is more appropriate in her situation.

A friend of mine took care of her. My friend was single so it was easy for her to take care of my daughter and then I just provided everything financially. I sent money home. At least now, my daughter is now in America with me. However, I have nothing more to offer her. My daughter never got used to ask what she wanted. She’s always given what she needed. So, she’s not asking for extra activities here such as piano lesson, voice lesson, etc. But I know she misses having those activities. When she was in the Philippines, she was always provided. She’s not the type of child who would have tantrums if you don’t buy what she wants. Even though when she was a small child, if we were in a store, she would hold and play with toys inside the store, but would return them when we leave. Even now, she’s in middle school; it was only recently that she got her own iPod. She never asked for it. She never complains. She just goes to the library and reserves books, sometimes borrows a movie. That’s good enough for her. Actually my brother bought her the iPod. The only thing was, I noticed that she became very timid and shy. When she was in the Philippines, she was very active with school activities. She would always join a lot of those in school. But here, in the U.S., she became very shy. (Interview 2, 11/6/10)

Naruto said that she feels guilty that she cannot provide her daughter with extra curricular activities that she used to have in the Philippines. She explained that Kumon Math, as well as voice lessons in the states, are services that are very expensive. She

explained that they have a one-income family at this time and that it would be impossible to spare the amount after paying the mortgage and other bills.

Stories of Being Female. Naruto shared her views on how women are perceived in Philippine society. She said that in Philippine culture, the traditional notion was that the wife has to be submissive to the husband and has to stay home and take care of the children. According to Naruto, she neither believes nor practices that notion.

I believe if my husband can do it, I can do it too. I was never dependent to any male, father, and husband. I was never dependent to any male at all. I had no strong male figure in my family ever since. The same thing happened with my daughter. She was surrounded by women ever since she was a small child. She grew up with an absentee father, since my husband was working in Australia. When I left for the states, my girlfriend looked her after. So there was also no male figure in her life until now that my husband is with us.

(Interview 2, 11/6/10)

Integrity...A Strong Value My Mother Taught Me. Naruto shared her experiences as she was growing up. She described how she saw her mother struggle to live the life that she chose—to be married to her father, which caused her mother to be ostracized by her own family.

Since my mother married my dad, everyone looked down on my family especially that my mom was the only one working. They were wondering if my mom could send us to private schools. My mom's relatives were mocking us because my sisters and I studied in public schools. When I came to the states on my own, without asking help from any of my relatives, they were asking me; "How did you

do it? How were you able to go to the states and work there, when you're just a teacher?" They really belittled me, but they were all shocked. My cousins came to the states through petitions by their parents. I really worked hard to get here on my own. A lot of them were also saying that I was lucky I have a decent job here, which is teaching. At least I didn't have to be a domestic helper of some sort. When we first came, we lived in a fully furnished apartment in a decent apartment building. They were comparing their experiences with mine and they said that they experienced sleeping on a carpet for a while.

(Interview 2, 11/6/10)

There was a sense of relief in Naruto's voice as she was telling her story. She was confident as an independent woman. She expressed how she felt proud that she was able to achieve the good life without depending on anybody else but herself. Naruto continued to compare her life growing up with that of her cousins. She described how she did everything to make her parents proud and not to dishearten them in any way.

When my parents asked me to study hard, I really did, and that's why I'm here. I never disobeyed my parents. I was always serious with my studies. My cousins studied in the best and the most expensive universities in the Philippines, compared to mine, which was just an average school. All of them were driving their own cars to school. That's how affluent they were. I could never be in the same level. However, they really didn't study well. Some of them took many years before they could finish school. Two of them came to the states because they got petitioned but were never able to finish school or get a degree. They were the ones who had the money. I was telling my brother and sister that it was just a

shame our mother did not live long enough to see us being successful as we are now. But then we realized, wherever she is, she must be very happy, and smiling down on us for what we have become. All of us are in good position right now. I stand proud of myself because I never bothered anyone or owed anybody a favor especially from my mother's side. (Interview 2, 11/6/10)

In the end, Naruto realized that she was more fortunate than her cousins because she studied and worked very hard to achieve her goals on her own without being a burden to any of her relatives. She was confident that her parents would have been proud if they were alive.

Naruto shared that she could not think of any female mentor in particular, but she described how her mother talked to her about keeping her integrity strong and untainted.

I never really thought of a female mentor. I was not very close with my mom, but she was very kind and considerate of others. With my mom, everyone is basically good. She always looked at the brighter side of life. Even though people ridiculed and mocked her, she would always say: "I just lift everything to the Lord. When you helped others, other people will return the favor."

(Interview 2, 11/6/10)

Becoming an English Teacher in the Philippines

Naruto studied in a public school. She explained that English was used as the medium of instruction in her school. She described how she was often called to read aloud in class or to tell a story, "So that's how it started—my loving the English language. It was an eye opener for me".

My grandma had a restaurant where a lot of teachers eat during the day, so I get to see them and interact with most of them. It was my dad's friend who tutored me. I often went to my cousins who tutored me in Math or English. I knew whom to ask for help. (Interview 2, 11/6/10)

Naruto explained that she really didn't like Math when she was a student, so she never did really dream of being a math teacher. She added that she also didn't like to study Filipino or social studies, or science. She stated there was no career in any of those areas. She shared that she also didn't teach after graduation and that she immediately worked in an office.

Naruto admitted that she was the type of person who would always try to anticipate the future. She realized that if she would take English as her major, she could be more flexible with any job and she would not have difficulty finding employment.

Why Do You Hate Me? Naruto shared that her worst experience was her first year of teaching in the Philippines, in a Catholic school. After that year, she realized she did not want to teach anymore.

I was hired to teach in a Catholic school. After that year, I didn't want to go back to teaching. The head of the high school then was an old maid. She didn't like me at all. I was a newly grad, pretty, smart, with a strong personality. I was famous. 'Ms. P. I love you' a lot of kids would write that in the bathroom walls. A lot of my kids loved me. I was not sure why she hated me so much. I was giving all my best in teaching my class but it seemed that my supervisor didn't see that. She wanted more from me. I could not satisfy her. No matter how hard I tried to teach my class very well, but she would still find something wrong during her

observation and evaluation. As a result, I became frustrated and decided not to go back the next school year. I quit my teaching job and decided to apply to an office. (Interview 2, 11/6/10)

Naruto learned from her experience that it was not only about her teaching that mattered. She realized that she also had to go with the flow, dance with the music, and do a bit of politicking too. After that first year, she said she did not go back to teaching for two years; but then she decided to study for her masters. She continued that eventually, she went back to teaching so she could finish her masters' thesis. She then applied and got hired at a science high school—a school for the talented and the gifted. She emphasized that it was a very good school, but since it's a public school, she didn't receive her compensation until after a year. She said:

That's how it was in public school. Since I was a new teacher and I was still not in the payroll, I had to wait for a long time until they had updated the system. It was really strange. I also hated that experience. At that time, I was getting my allowance from my mom. So can you imagine, I was already working but I was still asking money from my mother? (Interview 2, 11/6/10)

Naruto continued to explain the tedious and highly competitive application process in the Philippine public school system. She said:

For us teachers wanting to teach in the public school, we all needed and required to take a state test, apart from the teacher licensure exam. For example, there were two hundred teachers who wanted to teach in Manila public schools, so all of us took the test and then we were ranked. The top five were the ones placed in the good schools. I was ranked second to the top so I was placed in Manila Science.

It's a school for intelligent kids. It was a public school but many of the children came from a rich family. But I couldn't bear it; eight months without salary? So I went back to work in an office. The bottom line is, I was glad I took English as my major because I can be flexible anywhere. Another thing was, my Masters was in Guidance and Counseling, and so when I worked in an office as HR personnel, I was also able to use my theoretical knowledge of what I've learned in my Masters. So it's language still. That was great for me to become English major. (Interview 2, 11/6/10)

Naruto validated her decision to take English as her major in college. She realized that it gave her the advantage of flexibility when it came to employment opportunity. She shared that she never experienced difficulty in looking for jobs. Furthermore, Naruto realized why her mother wanted her to become a teacher. It seemed that her mother knew from the start that she would be good at it. She added that she knew her mother only wanted what was best for her. Naruto said: "I didn't fail her. Although she passed away and can't see me now, I know that she is very happy for what I have become."

Naruto continued to share her high point in teaching in the Philippines. She expressed that she was at the prime of her life and she felt that she could do anything that she wanted. She shared how she was very motivated.

My high point was when I was able to balance my very busy schedule: I was teaching high school students, I was a guidance counselor at the same time, I was teaching college at night, and I was studying for my master's degree program every weekend. I felt I could do anything I wanted to. Then all of a sudden, I got pregnant. I was twenty-six. That was the time I was teaching for five or six years,

which was very ideal. That was my high point---being able to balance my life with all the activities that I was involved in. (Interview 2, 11/6/10)

Naruto shared that she took guidance and counseling for her Master's program because she was fascinated in understanding human nature. She said that she could learn a lot from dealing with all types of people. She became a guidance counselor for a year, and then she went to Australia, where she gave birth to a baby girl. She recalled:

I got pregnant. My husband's family was in Australia so we moved there. I stayed there for a year. When I came back to the Philippines that was when I taught pre-school/elementary in Cavite, a suburb of Manila. That was good for me, I also had volunteer work. (Interview 2, 11/6/10)

When I asked why she did not stay in Australia with her husband after she gave birth, she just smiled. She said many of her friends asked her the same thing. She shared that she was aware it was a good opportunity but she candidly said that she couldn't live around her in-laws that were so closely knitted together. She expressed how she knew she would get suffocated. Instead, she came back to the Philippines with her daughter, moved out of the city, settled in a suburb and taught in a small school. Naruto emphasized how she chose a simple life without her husband for many years. She revealed that now is the first time that her daughter and her husband were given an opportunity to live together and that it was the first time her family became whole again. "They were just getting to know each other," She said, referring to her daughter and her husband. I wondered why it took such a long time. I wondered why she waited until her daughter reached middle school before she decided to make her family whole again. I wondered what was going on in her daughter's mind. I wondered what her husband felt. I

wondered why her husband let that happen to them. It seemed that he didn't have any opinion on how his daughter should be raised? I wondered why Naruto did not give him a chance to be a father. I wondered what Naruto felt. I wondered if she were truly happy now that her family is whole again. Does she ever miss her independence? It seemed that she was practically single for a long time raising her child without asking any help from her husband. I wondered if this is the life she really wanted.

Naruto views her identity as a simple and straightforward person with an optimistic outlook in life. She said:

I have always been a simple person. I've always looked at the positive side. For example, I bought a pair of shoes. I won't look at any other shoes so I won't feel bad if I found another one that was more worth it. In life, I am the same way, I am satisfied with the simple things that I have, that way, I won't look for more.

(Interview 2, 11/6/10)

Oh My Gosh! I Need \$18,000 for me to teach in the US. Naruto explained how she never planned on leaving the Philippines to work abroad. She shared that she never had any thoughts of teaching in the states. She continued to explain that when the opportunity presented itself, she took it.

I didn't dream of riding in a plane, seeing snow. I didn't ask for it. It just came. It was just by chance. My friend asked and encouraged me to apply to an agency. Then everything just fell into place. When I went to the agency, they told me I was ready to leave. Then it went along well. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto explained that when she went to the agency, there were no jobs for ESOL teachers at that time. She shared that she also considered this experience as a low point in her career as a teacher wanting to seek employment in the U.S. She explained:

At that time, there was no ESOL hiring. So our agency suggested we needed to take another course. They said we should study elementary education. So we had to study another course...a crash course for a year. We spent around three hundred thousand pesos (\$6,000). As a result, I wasn't able to finish my Masters. Financially and emotionally, this was a low point experience, because I knew for a fact that I had to finish my thesis and I couldn't because I had to take another course. There were eight of us, when we were about to depart. We knew there was no more hiring for ESOL. We were told that we would be teaching elementary education. Then we saw you, Joie. You told us you would be teaching ESOL, so we got confused. How in the world did that happen? (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto shared her frustrations and struggles in trying to complete the necessary teaching requirements for placement. She also explained that although she was almost done with her masters, she had to abandon her thesis writing just to take a crash course on elementary education as prescribed by the agency. She continued that the crash course included a year of completing thirty course credits in elementary education. She said that it was like a second undergraduate degree and that it was very costly too. Naruto explained how stressful the whole situation was for her.

Furthermore, Naruto also shared how she was taken aback when she learned about my situation as her co-applicant. She and her friends found out that I was hired to teach ESOL without going through the same process that she went through. She admitted that

she and her friends felt it was unfair for them. I remembered when Naruto and her other friend came to me and asked me how I got hired for ESOL when they were told there was no hiring. I told Naruto and her friend that after looking at my credentials, the agency people just asked me to take the ESOL Praxis Test. When the agency people saw that I passed the exam with flying colors, they immediately gave me a placement for ESOL. I told Naruto that I had no idea what was going on with the rest of our cohort at that time. When we arrived to the states, the human resources eventually announced that Naruto and twelve other people would be teaching ESOL anyway. Naruto explained how it was such a bittersweet experience. She said she would love to teach ESOL but it was such a waste to throw away all the investments she had in preparing to teach elementary education.

Contemplating on the Present: Teaching Experiences in Maryland

Professional Teacher Identity Transformation

Why Do You Look at Me Like that? Naruto arrived in the U.S. on September 26, 2006 together with a cohort of 108 Filipino teachers. After attending all the workshops and seminars, she described how she was able to report to her assigned school on October 9, 2006, which was her birthday. She expressed that her first day was definitely not a good day. She recalled:

That was like a death day. I was wearing a suit and then I just cleaned the room all day on my first day. Then, the transportation was a problem. The mentor teacher was okay, but was not really helpful. She gave me two weeks to arrange my room. She didn't really teach me how to do things. She just gave me the handbook and the curriculum guide and asked me to read everything on my own

and be expected to teach the class in two weeks. I remember that all of the ESOL teachers in my school were in just one hallway. There were three White ESOL teachers; very young, newly grads; they were single. I came in as a new person. I was the *new* teacher, with a different color of skin and a different accent. I really couldn't ask help from anyone, even from Filipino teachers. It's because we were all busy minding our own issues in life. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

As was apparent in her narrative, it seemed that Naruto's professional identity was challenged by her colleagues. She continued to share that she felt she had to prove her English language abilities and knowledge to her native English speaking (NES) colleagues. Naruto further emphasized that although her confidence was high as a nonnative English speaker (NNES) and as a bilingual, her confidence as a teacher on the other hand, was affected by how her colleagues treated her. She admitted that at some point, she felt that her level of English proficiency was not ideal enough to be an excellent language teacher.

Naruto shared that on her third year of teaching, she was already comfortable. She said:

During my first year, I felt discriminated against my other co-teachers who are White. I overheard one White teacher asking my student after she came out of my room. She asked, "What did Ms. P teach you today? What was she teaching you?" Then when we had meetings, I was like a fly on the wall. I was never recognized. I was invisible. I never felt valued at that time. I felt I wanted to give up, but I would always bear in my mind that I should never quit, no matter how hard it was to be left alone and unsupported in a new environment. Then on my second year,

most of those teachers left the building. On my third year, I was the only one who stayed. Now on my fourth year, everyone is new. Now they ask me a lot of questions since I am considered the pioneer teacher. It feels really good to be respected and be regarded that way. My principal had offered me the ESOL chairperson's job, but I refused so many times because I am not ready for that kind of responsibility. I am just a simple person. I am quite happy of just being a simple ESOL teacher. I'm glad I had a personality that's strong, that never quits. Had I been soft and weak, then I would have not lasted a year. I would've transferred school or probably left the states. But I persevered. I never wanted to quit. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

With this experience, Naruto shared with me a little prayer/poem that kept her going during times of trials and tribulations.

Don't Quit
(Anonymous)

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.
Life is queer with its twists and its turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about
When they might have won, had they stuck it out.

Don't give up though the pace seems slow,
You may succeed with another blow.
Often the goal is nearer than,
It seems to a faint and faltering man,
Often the struggler has given up
When he might have captured the victor's cup;
And he learned too late when the night came down,
How close he was to the golden crown.
Success is failure turned inside out
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit,
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit!

Naruto shared that she is a woman who has a strong faith in God. She continued that in times of trouble, when she could not discern what to do, she would always hold on to her faith and recite her secret prayer; which became her source of motivation to overcome her struggle.

I would always turn to St. Jude and recite the poem—Don't Quit. These poems/prayers became my motivating factor. I was able to internalize it when we were here on our first year. That's one side of me. Although I have a husband, and I have friends there are things that I can say only to God. I really convinced myself that I have to depend on myself alone. I learned how to live a simple life

so that I didn't have to be dependent on anyone else for my needs. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto also shared that although she is married, she never depended on her husband for financial matters. She emphasized that she had her own stable job and that she raised her child alone, as her husband was in Australia. She explained that she invited her husband to come to the states with her and her daughter so they could start together again as a family. She admitted that she never would want to stay in Australia. She said:

I couldn't stay in Australia. I knew I would not have a life there. My husband knew it so he was the one who came to the states and lived with me. All his family was in Australia--siblings, distant relatives. I was not close to his mother. But that's all right. I can deal with her. In my thoughts, I said to my husband, "you're the one who moved here, and then you must adjust." If I were the one who moved to their territory, then I would learn how to adjust. That's how it should work. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto continued to articulate that the main reason she wanted her husband to live with them in the states was because of her daughter who basically grew up not being with him, not really knowing him. She shared that she wanted to give both her daughter and her husband a chance to be together. She said:

I am just thinking of my daughter. All of these are for my child. I became very strong and independent. But I am trying to build a family now for my daughter. If I didn't get a house, I would have gone to Australia. But I have to admit I couldn't bear the life where everyone is so attached with each family member, as in, going to church altogether- all three cars. I couldn't stand it. But my husband is really

trying to adjust himself here. It's just a different life here and there. We've been here four years. I only had four close friends but when we all had to separate ways, I realized, I never really had one true friend. My life revolved around those four friends. I didn't have to be a people pleaser. I was not hurting anyone anyway. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

You Can Trust Me. Naruto also shared how she became very close with one of her colleagues in school named Ms M who is a woman from Haiti. She described how they became each other's confidante.

I became close to Ms M, but during my first year, I never told her anything about my life because I was still not sure whether I could trust her or not. On my second year we became closer. Even now, we are very close. Just last weekend, she was in my house. But then again, because of her, I was in trouble. My principal talked to me and asked me how she was working. Although I knew what she was doing, I could not and will never betray her as my friend. So I told my principal, "I am not in the position to answer your questions for her." I didn't tell Ms. M anymore. She wanted to transfer schools, but I was convincing her not to. I also don't want to lose her. She understands me in everything. She understands my accent. She understands my culture, and where I am coming from. She knows I am an intelligent person. When there was a tragedy in Haiti, since she's from Haiti, our school had a fund drive, and I really helped her out. She's really a very good friend to me, as I am to her. Whenever she has observation and she would ask for my help, I would always help her out. We are really very close. There were six Filipino teachers in my school, but I never had any of them as my friends. You

know, I can talk to Ms. M about many things of my personal life, my husband, my daughter, myself. That's why I never wanted her to transfer to another school. I really didn't want to lose her. There were times when I couldn't decide whether I should bring my family to the states or not, but then, she helped me realize. She is always there for me as I am for her. I have learned a lot from her. She is my confidante and I am hers. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto shared how grateful and fortunate she was having a confidante like Ms. M. Being both immigrants, Naruto continued that they have parallel experiences that they share with one another. Naruto expressed that although she is Asian and Ms. M is Haitian, they are both nonnative English-speaking teachers. They each became the inevitable support of the other as they both journeyed in American society as visible minorities in an English-speaking world of American public education.

My Brown Skin and Me. Naruto continued to explain how she had a difficult time trying to fit in her own department in school. She described how her teammates who were all newly graduates, middle class White teachers were never welcoming. Naruto described how her co-teachers would treat her as if she were invisible. She recalled:

“Was it because I am brown skinned that you won't speak to me?” I thought to myself. There was a time when I told my supervisor, do I have to show and post of all my certifications just to show everyone that I am a good teacher. Of course I was hurt. What do I have to do to prove myself? I endured ten months feeling that way—one whole school year. I studied very hard. At one point, I felt really bad, because there was a meeting and nobody even told me so I was left alone in my room upstairs while everyone was attending the meeting downstairs. Nobody

even looked for me. I felt really bad. I said to myself before, I am old enough to be their teacher because they were so young. I am smart, intelligent, and then they would mistreat me. They were just new to the teaching job. That's the downside of being a Filipino--a minority. No matter how highly educated you are, you will still feel discriminated by your co-teachers who are native. That's why Joie, I am waiting for you to be up there in the central office, so we can say that there's a Filipino teacher, who became one of them in the higher ups, emailing everybody and signing important papers, etc. There must be someone in the position. When Lito S. became the teacher of the month, it was great. But it was just for a month. But if a Filipino teacher would be in a high position then, it means different. It would really mean a lot. I will be waiting for you Joie to be up there. Your success is the success of all Filipino teachers. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto expressed her frustrations with her experiences as a first year teacher in a U.S. public school. Being visible minorities, we, Filipina teachers, were marginalized in the school system. Furthermore, Naruto challenged me to become an administrator in the near future. She admitted that having a Filipino representative in the administration would help raise the bar for many Filipino teachers.

Naruto also mentioned that she had double teaching certification--one in ESOL and the other in elementary education. She shared that her principal requested for her to become a mentor teacher but she refused. She said she did not want big responsibilities. She explained that she was thinking of taking another master's and so she wanted to concentrate with it. She said that she didn't like too much stress in her life. She then continued describing her personal identity. She said:

I have a very strong personality. I have a masculine build. I have strong physical features. It was an advantage for me though. It means people cannot just intimidate me. But deep inside me, I am just a simple person. I don't demand, I don't ask. I am just contented with what's given to me. Although sometimes, at the back of my mind, I ask myself: Why is it like this? Why is it like that? But I just keep quiet and keep it to myself. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto explained that she is comfortable with her own language. She shared that she is not intimidated to talk to anyone with native-like accent. She explained that she doesn't see her language as a barrier in her communication with people from different cultures. In fact, she described how she became very close with an African colleague; even closer than many of her Filipino friends. She said:

I am comfortable with my own language, but then again, it all depends on whom you are talking to. It's not the language that matters. It's your relationship with the person you are talking and sharing yourself with that matters the most. Like in my school, my best friend Ms. M is not Filipino, she is from another culture, but just like what I've said earlier on, I can tell her what's on my mind without hesitations, that I cannot even imagine telling my co-Filipino teachers.

(Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Yes! I am an ESOL Teacher. When asked about her confidence in teaching she said that she is very confident teaching ESOL children. She described in detail how she evaluates her students' learning.

By the end of the day I would evaluate how I taught that day. I followed what I've been doing in the Philippines. I always start with warm-up. I always end with

evaluation. After thirty minutes of doing the assigned task, if they finished their work early, they can go back to their classroom, which means that I always have an output from my students at the end of the day. So I know that there's always learning that's happening in my class everyday. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

She continued to express that she is an effective teacher. She explained how her ESOL team operates in her school. She is proud of her ESOL team.

With the curriculum, we are not merely just ESOL. We are the support for reading language arts curriculum. The main goal of ESOL in our school is pre-teaching, which is not hard for me because I have been a reading and language arts teacher in the Philippines. So it's easy for me. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto explained how she and her team pre-teach the lessons to the ESOL children before the mainstream teachers teach the concept.

The mainstream teacher is using the anthology book Houghton and Mifflin, if it is her day one today. That means I should have already taught day one lesson with my ESOL students two days ahead—that's pre-teaching. I teach it two days before the mainstream classroom would teach it in class. So my style is I am three days on the anthology, then a day in writing, or support strategy or skill, or phonics. That's my cycle. It was really the culture of our school. It has been like that ever since I came. It was really pre-teaching. It was really difficult. But as we say, if we give the students a double dose or triple dose, it won't hurt them. The good thing with that strategy is that since most of the ESOL students have limited background knowledge, they feel more confident and secure when they go back to

their classrooms because they already have learned the topic, content and strategy even before the mainstream teacher introduce it to the rest of the class.

(Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto explained how the ESOL teachers in her school never deviate from the Reading Language Arts curriculum. She described how they act as support for lessons taught in the mainstream class.

We really follow the curriculum. For example, when I ask the teacher what day we are doing tomorrow, if she says day three, then that would mean I should be in day six. As long as I know the anthology today, the theme, the concept, I will be the one to look for resources to reinforce the lesson. But I don't usually follow the scripted lesson. The most challenging thing is that since we are a toolkit school, we always do nonfiction. We focus on that. Toolkit is like America's choice program. We focus on non-fiction text. We follow the skills. For example we have activate and connect lessons, non-fiction texts, mostly articles from social studies, Time for kids, or National Geographic. My only concern was on the fourth day. I should have another article as a support that has the same content and same skills. So I really have to find them. For example this Wednesday, they will be studying lizards and tigers, so I also need to find support articles on those topics, usually from the Internet. The main goal for these ESOL kids is for them to participate actively in the mainstream class.

(Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto shared that although she believes that their strategies are working, she still emphasized the main problem that she experiences as a teacher.

The main problem is that sometimes I waste so much time looking for and researching for those support materials. That's why during the ESOL meeting, we would always suggest giving us links, resources or a data bank where we could access these materials. Then we also challenged the ESOL elementary instructional specialist to do a teaching demo of teaching skills using non-fictional text for low-level ESOL students. She actually didn't give it to us. Our school was really one of the pioneers of the Toolkit program. Our reading specialist is really very close with the author of the Toolkit program. So we're always ahead with others in terms of workshops. But it's difficult for specialists like ESOL and Special Ed people because the levels of our students are most of the time lower than the mainstream. I often ran out of resources to use because the mainstream classroom teachers themselves use most of the materials that go with the program, so we have to find our own materials. The other day my supervisor emailed me and asked me how many bilingual dictionaries I need. I told her I really don't need bilingual dictionaries because my students have no use for them. I have students who are from Nigeria or Asia not just Hispanic. But the bilingual dictionaries are just Spanish-English, so what would be the use of that for my class? I told my chair that I need more books, materials I can use for non-fictional text lessons. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto expressed frustration as she was describing her challenges in searching for resources and materials that her ESOL students need. The problem she was experiencing was a dilemma across the board, not only in elementary schools but also in middle schools. I agreed with Naruto when she said that the ESOL teachers constantly needed to

search for their own materials to use in their classrooms to reinforce their students' learning. She added that although there were a lot of reading materials for English Language Learners provided in school, most of them were old and outdated.

Another concern that she mentioned was the need for an upgraded technology pieces in her classroom in order for her to plan lessons that would be more comprehensible with her second language learners and that would cater to their learning styles. She said:

My laptop was almost dying. I have a visualizer. I really need one especially if I am teaching non-fiction texts. I use National Geographic videos for kids. I use that because it has video clips and facts. I used to have more use of technology when I was in the big room because I had a SmartBoard then. Now, since I am in a small room, I lost my SmartBoard. Most of the topics are either animal, natural phenomena like thunderstorms, climate, etc. I really need a computer that works better than what I have now. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto has a lot of motivation and energy to teach her students. She expressed how she wants to provide them with up-to-date non-fictional information so they can participate in their mainstream classrooms as well. However, she admitted that she is currently experiencing challenges due to the lack of technology resources that she needs to use to give effective lessons to her students.

When I asked her to describe what good teaching is, Naruto described how good teaching starts with a good teacher. According to her, a good teacher is someone who values a good student output. She continued that the teacher's effectiveness in teaching all depends and is reflected on the student's output. More so, she expressed that good

teaching means the teacher follows the curriculum and does not really deviate from it, unless it is necessary to adjust for the needs of the students. She said:

I think first, it's more on following your curriculum and not deviating from it. You teach what you are expected to teach. Second is adding up additional information that is related to the theme or concept being taught, then thirdly, is making the lesson interesting and engaging for students. It must be fun and light, not too much pressure. It should cater to differentiating instruction.

(Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto explained that when January comes in their school, they don't teach social studies and science anymore. She explained that they focus on reading and math in preparation for the Maryland State Assessment (MSA). She also explained how she does a lot of testing as an ESOL teacher, providing many accommodations for second language learners. She also shared how proud she was of her team because they support each other and they understand each other's work load.

Naruto shared that she is content with her teaching performance. She said:

I can say I am satisfied with my teaching performance. For the past four years, my third grade students have always been getting high scores in the MSA, except for this year. Our school didn't make Academic Yearly Progress (AYP); as in the whole school. It's always the final product. I have kindergarten and third graders.

I am the only third grade teacher, but my kids are doing very well. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto described her classroom management strategy, which worked for her kindergarten and third grade students specifically.

For me giving treats work. Every Friday—airheads, never ending airheads for third graders; they know that Friday is treats day. Then I give stickers to my kindergarten students. All my stickers come from the Philippines. It's cheaper there. I have it mailed. I have classroom rules. We have color. Green means good, warning is yellow, and red is the worst. Mom and dad will be contacted. So my students know these rules. We also have a discipline partner. If for example I got mad with one child, I would tell him to go to Ms. So and So, stay there for fifteen minutes. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Finally, They Now See Me as an Expert! Naruto shared her teaching experience in the U.S. public school system in terms of her low points. As mentioned earlier on, her low point was her first year teaching experience in October 2006. She shared that she felt discriminated against her White local teachers. She also shared that she felt everyone in her school was looking at her indifferently. She described how she had very minimal support from her colleagues and administrators. But after three years, she explained that she finally experienced her high point. That was when she believed she had proven herself. According to her, they now see and trust her expertise as an ESOL teacher.

She also shared how she thinks her educational experience contributed to her teaching success in the U.S.

My four-year course plus my masters in guidance and counseling prepared me to be an expert here in the U.S. I really value education so much. So I really admire you Joie, in what you are doing, so when you asked me if I wanted to be one of your participants, I said yes right away. I cannot do what you're doing, so I might

as well contribute, help, and support somebody who can do it. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto shared with me how proud she is every time there is a Filipino teacher who exerts his or her effort to achieve. She expressed how excited she was to become a participant in this study because she wanted to give her support to her fellow Filipino teacher. She added that she hopes this study can be an eye-opener not only to Filipino teachers but also to other international teachers in the states.

Furthermore, Naruto described how her colleagues perceive her as a teacher and as a person. She expressed that although she did not feel or see these positive perceptions during her first year, at least now, she has proven herself; thus, their perceptions of her changed from negative to positive.

I can now express my opinion with my team. I am from another country and I have different values. So when I make suggestions, they really think about it. At the end of the day they really see it's effective. For example, I taught my colleagues the technique on checking fractions using cross multiplication. They were asking me if it was correct because they never learned that strategy and it's also not in their books. I told them that was how I learned it in the Philippines so I told them to get the calculator to check and true enough I was correct. They were amazed. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto expressed how supportive she was with her colleagues. She continued that in order for them to support her, she would also have to show her support to them.

I actually am supportive of my colleagues; like the Haiti project, where I helped my co-teacher to raise funds for the victims. Then the sixth grade teacher asked

for my help with the bulletin board so I helped her. They know that they can depend on me so they also support me if I need their help. For example, if I have an observation and I need to ask for some advise, I can easily ask them and they are always glad to provide their support to me. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto also shared her principal's perception of her as a teacher. She expressed how proud she was that her principal sees her now as a very responsible and knowledgeable teacher. She shared that how elated she was when her principal offered her the chairperson position, which means that her principal believes in her capacity and ability to do the job.

She knows that I am responsible. During my observation, I always get outstanding. The fact that she was offering me the chairperson position, it means she trusts that I can deliver. She knows I am aligned with I am doing. As a person, they know that I am a shy type. They know that I won't say anything unless they ask for my opinion. If they ask me to do things, I would do it with a helping hand. But to initiate, no, I am not like that. But they can also make me get involved for example; we had an MSA kick-off. They asked me to dance so I did. Many of them got surprised because they know I don't talk much but then they saw me dance. They know I am generous in helping out and that I can collaborate with my colleagues in school. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto continued to share her colleagues' perception of her. She said:

My colleagues know that I won't initiate the conversation. If I see them in the hallway, I will say hi, but I will not go to the teacher's lounge and start a

conversation with people there. But if it's about work, they know I will be there to help. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

She also shared her students' perception of her, she said:

At first they would see that I am strict. I have a big voice. But once they get to know me, they see my motherly nurturing. I can see the needs of my child in the needs of my students. So I am more understanding. I really love to teach kindergarten students. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

In terms of parents' perceptions of her, she described her one particular experience:

What I cannot forget was about my experience with Josh (pseudonym). When he was in second grade, he was being referred to special education. I told the committee I believed it was really about the language issue, because at home only dad speaks in English. I asked them to give him time to be more comfortable with the English language. So they respected my opinion. When the child reached third grade, he was still with me, and was also given an opportunity with a good teacher, so the child really showed a huge improvement. So the father talked to me thanking me for supporting his son. Now the child is in fifth grade, the dad was still thanking me up to now. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto shared with me how she described herself as a female teacher.

I am very resourceful. I am motherly. I can see the difference between male and female. I feel that male teachers have a strong demeanor compared to female teachers, who are more nurturing. I can be strong today, but tomorrow I can be as sweet and as kind as their mother. I always tell my students, I can be your best

friend, but I can also be your worst enemy. This is my room. You go by my rules. Whatever you give to me, I will give back too. I am like that as a person.

(Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto continued to explain that as a person, she is generous, helpful and flexible. She highlighted that she can deal with all types of people—rich or poor, educated or not. She added that she can easily join the club and adjust herself. She also admitted that she is not a people pleaser and she has a strong fighting spirit to overcome many obstacles in life.

Naruto shared that her main motivation in teaching in the states is her daughter. She expressed that her daughter would have better opportunities in the states than in the Philippines, but she said she was wrong.

I did it for my daughter. I thought there's a greener pasture here in the states. I thought education here is better. I was frustrated. But maybe because we are in a public school system that's why it's different compared with private school.

(Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto shared how she wants her daughter to go back to the Philippines when she reaches college. Apart from the fact that college tuition fee is less expensive there, she continued that college education in the Philippines is at par with the college education in the states. She added that her daughter could just go back to the states to work later on.

It's Your Problem, Not Mine! Naruto also shared both the strength and weaknesses of her school. She also pointed out her frustration in the lack of support her administration has for the teachers in her school. She said:

My school's strength is that whatever you need in terms of resources such as books, they will give it to you. The weak point is that, the principal believes that when you have a problem with a parent, you have to deal it on your own.

(Interview 3, 12/4/10)

She explained how she experienced the lack of support from her principal when she had a parent complaint one time. She recalled:

It happened to me. My principal was scared of the union. She said even if she heard complaints about any of us, she will not put it in our permanent record but she would let us solve our problems by ourselves; on our own. So I called my parent. I listened. Then I talked. We understood each other. After that I just had to inform my principal that everything was fine. My principal was so scared of parents going to the union. She was so unsupportive. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto continued to explain that if the parents complained to the union, it would still be the teacher and the parents who would resolve the issue together, not the principal. She explained that her principal was a guidance counselor before she became a principal and has been working at our school for the past eighteen years. "That school was her only life, but the ironic part is, she is in the avoidance mode whenever conflicts come because she wants to cover her behind." Naruto said.

Naruto continued to explain that her school really needs to have a vice principal who's a people person. She said that last year they had one; but their vice principal left and moved to another school. She explained that their assistant principal was forced to resign because she also felt that the principal did not support her either. Naruto said:

We have a new one now. She's not really friendly. She is not a people person at all. I think it would have a good impact on the teachers. We should have an administrator in our school that is a listener. Sometimes thoughts enter my mind on whether I should move to another school but then I realized, I would have to start from scratch again, but at least in this school, I already know what to avoid and who to avoid. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto shared that she continued to do her job and what her students, parents and administrators expect of her. She said: "It's all about scores. Whenever I can, I will help to reach those expectations." She also shared that since their school did not make the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), there has been tension in the building.

It's actually frightening at times. This year, she announced on the PA system. "We didn't make AYP because of the following: ESOL, Special Ed, FARMS, etc." She was mad. We were passing for three consecutive years; it's only now that we didn't make AYP. She was really frustrated with us. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto also shared how there's not much camaraderie in her school among her colleagues. She said:

I am a member of the social committee but we never even celebrate anyone's birthdays. We have a lot of teachers who have completed the National Board for teachers, but there was not even a single congratulations poster in the hallway or at least an announcement about their achievements. Our efforts are never really recognized. I feel that I just have to stay in my little corner so I don't have to be picked on. We never feel a community of caring. At 3:15, people will just leave

even if there's a staff meeting. Some people become disrespectful and just leave.

(Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Naruto expressed disappointment as she was describing this incident. She shared that having stayed in the same school for almost five years, she was aware of both the strengths and weaknesses of the school—from administrators, to staff, to students. She continued that she also knew what had to be done. However, she also mentioned that she didn't want to take the initiative of starting a conversation with her colleagues. I wonder if Naruto would ever consider changing her views on this issue. I wonder if she would stand up, suggest and say something starting with her ESOL team first. I wonder if she would be a risk-taker to take a leap of reaching out to other people to improve and alleviate certain tensions in her school. I wonder if I should support and challenge her to do so.

Waiting for Permanent Residency. Just like the rest of the ninety-two Filipino teachers from our cohort, Naruto described how she battled with permanent residency status. She mentioned that after waiting for three years applying for a green card, her application was denied. She continued that it was only last July 2010 that she was able to get her labor certification approved by the department of labor and employment. This is the first major step towards permanent residency. Naruto shared that since she did not complete her master's degree, she was not put in the priority category, the one with advanced degrees. This would mean that she would have to wait between four to seven years before her application would be processed due to a number of people competing for the slots. After I spoke to her and shared with her that she could have a better chance if she would consider taking another master's degree so she can change her category to

advanced degree. This action would help her expedite her process of application to only three to six months of waiting for the green card approval. Naruto shared that she was very happy to hear such information. After a few weeks, I bumped into her at a store, and she said to me: “Joie, I enrolled in an online master’s program. Thanks for your advice.”

It’s Not Really the Land of Milk and Honey! Naruto shared that although she was glad that she has an established teaching position, a decent house to live in, a car that she can drive around, she expressed how she is still not satisfied with what she and her family have for now. She said that her life in the states was not really a big improvement from her life in the Philippines. She continued that even though she earns dollars, she also spends in dollars. She said it was a lot different when her family was in the Philippines. She described how she would send them money from the states, which would go a long way in the Philippines. She said that there were many things that her daughter gave up when she came to live with her. Naruto continued to explain that in Manila, her daughter was enrolled in many extra-curricular activities such as voice lessons, piano lessons, Kumon math and reading tutorial, etc. She continued that her daughter was always busy with many activities other than school. But when her daughter came to the states, she shared she could not afford to enroll her in anything since all those activities were very expensive. She shared that she realized that the U.S. is not really the land of milk and honey.

I don’t see myself dying in this place. I’m only here because of my daughter. I was already trying to convince her to take her college courses and finish it in the Philippines, and then just come back to the U.S. for her masters. It is very

important to earn a masters degree in the U.S. I told her I will buy her a condo, then she will just walk to her university. My daughter is like a robot. She will just follow whatever I say for now. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

There was a sense of disappointment in Naruto's voice as she was describing her views about her life in the states. She wanted to give her child the best opportunity to learn and hone her talents. However, she admitted that those activities would entail money. Naruto emphasized that she is the only source of income in her family for now, just like many other Filipino families who are still waiting for their green cards. I wonder if her feelings would change the moment she becomes a permanent resident, which means her husband could finally find a job and help with the bills. I wonder if this situation can be life changing for her.

Water and Grass. Naruto chose two metaphors for her life. One is a grass, and the other, flowing water. She said:

I am like grass. If the wind blows or if it rains, the grass will just go with the flow. But then again, the grass is firm. It cannot be easily uprooted. Whether it rains or shines, or whatever the weather would be, it will just go with the flow and adjust to its surroundings. Just like me, I will just go with the flow, but I also cannot be uprooted easily. I know what I want to do and I am well aware of my purpose in life. I cannot easily be influenced or dictated or dominated upon. I am also like water. Remember water is a liquid that takes the shape of its container. Like the water, my life is very flexible; I follow and go with the flow. I adjust if I need to. When I have to struggle, I just accept it. But I am aware that at some point, I will have to move on. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Anticipating the Future: Thinking What Lies Ahead in my Career

More Professional Development Please!

Naruto shared how professional development (PD) workshops helped her in learning new teaching strategies for second language learners. She emphasized how much she appreciated the fact that there were two things that motivated her to attend more PD workshops: First was the new learning and second was the pay.

Those PD workshops really helped a lot. They have a different style of teaching here in the states, so attending these workshops helped me learn the strategies I need to make my class a success. I learn a lot with hands-on workshop. What I like here is that these workshops are free for educators, plus, they even pay you just to attend. I enjoyed special education workshops where there were a lot of hands-on activities. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Seeing My Hometown Once Again. Naruto shared that she really wanted to go back to her hometown because that's where all her friends are. She continued in saying that even now, the people who took care and looked after her daughter were her good friends, who are even more trustworthy than her own relatives. She mentioned that the one who really worked hard taking care of her daughter was her high school friend. She shared that all her friends are still in the Philippines and that is why she would love to go back and retire there.

Naruto shared what she felt about advancing on her career. She was not really prioritizing her career advancement anymore. She said she just wanted to focus her effort on her daughter's future. However, it seemed that she changed her perspective when I

shared with her how completing a master's program can speed up the process of her permanent residency status. She said:

In terms of career, I am not thinking about it anymore. I stopped dreaming and planning about advancing my career. Everything now is just focused on my daughter's future. But, I've been thinking because just like what you said, I need to finish my masters so I can speed up my permanent residency status for the sake of my daughter's future. Now I am thinking of going back to school and start a new masters program. I will do this for my daughter. Not for me. Like what you said, there were a lot of opportunities that many of us cannot get because of status. Thank you for enlightening me Joie. I never thought of going back to school. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Furthermore, Naruto shared how she sees herself ten years from now. She expressed how she imagines herself still be in the states teaching in the same county. She continued to imagine herself having enough savings, though. But later on, she also sees herself go back home and retiring in the Philippines. "There is no other place like the Philippines, Joie."

Chapter 7: HALO'S STORY

Reminiscing the Past: Educational and Teaching Experiences in the Philippines

Halo shared how she grew up knowing everyone in her neighborhood. She mentioned that most of her classmates were relatives, if not distant relatives at some point. She went to a small school where there was only one class in each grade level. For eight years, she had the same classmates ever since she started school, from kindergarten until senior high school. She shared that she was blissful and contented in her own hometown that she felt frustrated and distressed when she had to leave her comfort zone to study in the university in Manila. She recalled:

All my life I lived in my hometown knowing everybody. That's why I felt frustrated and lonely when I had to leave my friends and family to study in our nation's capital, where I didn't know anybody. Among the graduating class, there were only two of us who left—our valedictorian and myself. It was very hard for me to leave because I was leaving my friends from elementary to high school.

(Interview 1, 09/7/10)

Learning English in the Philippines: Influence of Cultural and Linguistic Experiences

Since she was in pre-school, Halo explained that was learning English in juxtaposition with her native language *Ilonggo*, also known as *Hiligaynon*. She said that she only learned our country's most popular language, *Tagalog*, when she went to college. It seemed that she specifically did not choose to learn *Tagalog* because of her unfortunate experience with people who spoke that language. She explained:

I didn't learn *Tagalog* until I went to college because I had friends who were from *Batangas*, a place where *Tagalog* is widely spoken. I honestly didn't want to learn

it because I despised the people speaking that language when I was a child. I saw them coming to our town. They were very arrogant. They made us feel inferior just because they speak the language of our country's capital. They felt superior over us. (Interview 1, 09/7/10)

Halo clearly explained how she went to college in Manila, not knowing anybody. On top of that, she shared how she could not speak the popular language *Tagalog*. She explained that her family never did have any exposure to learning that language. She recalled:

My family never liked *Tagalog* television shows or movies. We didn't have any magazines in this language, so the *Tagalog* I knew was really the academic *Tagalog*, which was useless when one was trying to make new friends in college. (Interview 1, 09/7/10)

Halo shared how she experienced marginalization from her peers in her own country, mainly because of the language issue. She expressed how she felt inferior towards other people her age that spoke the popular language—*Tagalog*. She explained that she spoke the language of her local region—*Hiligaynon*, which was considered by many as an inferior language. It seemed that this unfortunate experience contributed to how Halo shaped her identity as a learner.

Am I an honor student? Who Cares? Halo expressed that although she had always been a consistent honor student since first grade, it seemed that she still felt inferior due to her gendered experiences in her academic settings. She remembered the days when she was in elementary school run by nuns. She explained how the nuns would show their fondness with males than with females in terms of ranking the honor students. She

shared how she thought it was peculiar that she was always ranked as second honors. She mentioned that she knew she got perfect in many of her examinations and projects. She continued that she just accepted the way things were because she felt immobilized to say anything to her parents. She recalled:

I remembered when I was in third grade. I tried very hard to get the highest honor. I really studied very hard. But no matter how hard I tried; the first honor was always reserved for male students. It was weird but true. I could not do anything. I just accepted it. I was always the second honor. Later on I realized I lost my motivation to even be in the honor roll. That was the reason why I became lazy and unmotivated. I felt I didn't care anymore. (Interview 1, 09/7/10)

Halo shared that knowing that her parents were not really cognizant or apprehensive about her being in the honor roll or not, she did not choose to tell them what was happening. She continued to explain that they were not the kind of parents who would distinguish their child's success in a huge way. It seemed that it was not a big deal for them. When asked about her peak experience in language learning, she didn't think there had ever been a peak. For her, language learning was almost an unconscious process.

I don't think my English teacher taught me English. Reading books, comic books, watching TV, watching movies, all helped me acquire English, and helped me develop an ear for the language. I only became very aware of the grammar rules when I was about to go to college. There weren't any stand out *hooray* moments. I don't think my happiness was ever linked to language learning. I didn't decide to become an English teacher; somebody else did it for me. I actually think that Math is a more interesting subject to teach. (Interview 1, 09/7/10)

Halo attributed her low point experience in language learning to her leaving her hometown and going to Manila to study in the university. She recalled:

What made me overcome this experience wasn't learning the language. It was meeting people who were accepting of me, which encouraged me to take more risks, just be myself and in the process, I became more comfortable using *Tagalog/Filipino* daily. This experience didn't have anything to do with me becoming a teacher. It just helped me become a more sympathetic ESOL teacher later on. (Interview 1, 09/7/10)

During our discussions on turning point for becoming a language teacher, she said that she did not really choose to be an English teacher. It seemed that approval from someone in authority was very vital for Halo. She valued the perceptions of her superiors even when it comes to her own future. She explained:

I didn't consciously choose to be an English teacher. I am qualified to teach any subject in the elementary level, though. The school that hired me happened to be looking for somebody who could teach Reading, English, and Filipino and this is the position that I had. After three years, however, my superiors decided to let me focus on teaching English. (Interview 1, 09/7/10)

No Birthday Celebrations...and Christmas Too? During my conversation with Halo, she explained how she was raised in an atypical and very simple Filipino family.

Growing up in a province far away from the nation's capital, she admitted that she was able to live an austere but comfortable life. Unlike many families from western culture, who celebrates many holidays and fun traditions, she said her family never did have that kind of practice. She recalled:

My mother tried to pass on some traditions and customs to me and my siblings, but my father, I guess, was the stronger influence. He never believed in practices that didn't make any sense. We didn't celebrate the Day of the Dead or other religious fiestas, which were big celebrations for many Filipino families. Sunday wasn't a going-to-church day. Christmas, we liked, but I only remember one Christmas when we had a Christmas tree, which was a very small one. We didn't have Christmas lanterns or Last Supper painting or sculpture in our dining room, which was popular in many Filipino houses. Birthdays weren't special days. Apart from a quick Happy Birthday greeting, we didn't do anything out of the ordinary. (Interview 1, 09/7/10)

Halo shared the impact and influence this experience had on her. She explained how she was not able to maintain a relationship with her relatives. She continued to explain even now that she has her own family; she also did not see the need of celebrating holidays and birthdays. I wonder if she somehow influenced her children. Halo said that her children also do not see the need for big celebrations. Although she mentioned that sometimes they have a very simple family celebration of birthdays—such as buying a cake and a card. “Sometimes, I try to do something different with my family just to make them feel that we are celebrating something,” she said.

A Roommate Who's Always Sleeping. Halo expressed that having no knowledge of speaking in *Tagalog* language contributed to her apprehension of being in a place where she did not want to be. She shared that she felt wretched and powerless. She said she wanted to go back to her hometown but she could also not defy her parents' wishes to get her education at the University of the Philippines, a university that was known for

accepting only the best and the brightest graduates. She remembered that she did not seem to care about all that prestige. She explained:

For six months, I was miserable. I found others who could speak my native language Hiligaynon, but other than sharing the language, we didn't really have anything in common. My roommate was a decent person, but I didn't dare speak for fear that she would laugh at my accent and diction in the Filipino language. Most of the time, I pretended I was asleep or I would stay in the library. I begged my parents to let me go home. I just realized later on that they really did know what was best for me. But at that time, I could not see it. (Interview 1, 09/7/10)

From what Halo explained, she was not struggling to learn or speak in English. She shared that she struggled more on learning the country's national language, which is *Tagalog*. She continued to explain that she never hesitated and faltered to speak in English since she knew she had the ability to deliver. However, she admitted she was more anxious in speaking *Tagalog* for fear of being ridiculed by fellow Filipinos. During our conversation, she never did emphasize on worrying about her English communication or written skills. In fact, she expressed she was confident about her English. Halo said learning English was never a challenge for her. She said she was more challenged and conscious in speaking *Tagalog*. She expressed that she avoided the feeling of humiliation by pretending to be asleep just to shun away from having any tête-à-tête with her roommate. She shared that she chose silence as a defense mechanism to shield herself from embarrassment. This experience was echoed in Rogers's (1993) study which indicates that women often use silence as a means of self-protection, to avoid threats to relationships that could result from the voicing of deplorable thoughts and emotions. In

Halo's case, she expressed how her silence affected her internal voice. She continued to share that despite the struggles and frustration she faced, her obedience to her parents created a new learning identity, which made it possible for her to survive college. She described how she was able to muddle through and welcomed the idea that she needed to accept changes and transformation in order for her to succeed in life as a college student. Drawing upon these experiences, Halo related her feelings towards her students, being an ESOL teacher. She explained:

Eventually, the dormitory became my second home. I met seven amazing women who became very good friends to me. Whenever we have a newcomer or two, I am able to draw from my past experiences and sincerely empathize with my students as I remember how difficult it was to be without any friends; to be quiet and never say anything every single day. I also realized that making friends doesn't come easily to me. I never needed to learn this skill when I was younger.

(Interview 1, 09/7/10)

Stories of Being Female. When asked to depict her experiences of being female, Halo shared how in her academic life since childhood, males were always prioritized over females; thus, she and other female friends were usually treated as second best. She recalled:

In elementary school, males were always given the top positions just because they were males. Females became secretaries or vice presidents in organizational clubs and classes. Even the top academic honors had to be given to males. We had Catholic mass at school every Monday, and the 1st liturgical reading was always

given to male students. The second reader was often given to females. (Interview 1, 09/7/10)

Halo shared that when she reached senior high school, this practice of favoring males over females persisted. She remembered when she had to undergo some form of military training in school. She said she was very excited and convinced that it was going to be a challenging but an amusing experience to be trained as an officer. She continued to explain that towards the end of the training, Halo and her classmates were asked to choose the position that they wanted to have. So she chose the Alpha Company, which she believed to be the highest rank of all the companies. But to her disillusionment, it was never awarded to her. They chose her male counterpart to lead the highest-ranking team. Halo admitted that although she felt disappointed, she just accepted the painfully throbbing reality about this kind of discrimination. She explained:

Despite my performance and hard work during the training, I was assigned to something lower. I was explicitly told that because of my gender, they were giving me that position. There was no misinterpretation about this. The top position was given to a male. I wasn't heartbroken or devastated. I have two brothers and a sister but I never felt like we were treated as males and females. We are my parent's children. There weren't any distinctions between sons and daughters in my family. (Interview 1, 09/7/10)

Halo continued to explain that because of her upbringing, and knowing early on that people had certain biases was something that did not really affect her. She expressed that she just accepted things as they were presented to her. She admitted that she never really reacted negatively about any of those biases and stereotypes. She expressed how she was

convinced that those people were the ones who had issues to deal with, and not she. Halo continued to share that reflecting on her experience; she tried to relate her feelings with those of her students. “My students are students, not female and male students—I expect the same things from everybody,” she said.

When asked about a novel or story that she can relate her experiences with, she mentioned several books by Filipino authors that talked about striking heroines. However, she did not explicitly say how those have had an impact on her identity as a Filipina. She also mentioned the book *Noli Me Tangere* (Touch Me Not), a book written by our national hero, *Jose Rizal*. It was a book about integrity and longing for freedom, which although was influential for her as a person, it never really affected her perception on her role as a woman. She candidly admitted that what was making it difficult to relate herself in any of those stories was because she had no comprehensible picture of where she would fit as a Filipina; which she attributed to her lack of strong cultural background such as religious practices and family traditions. She explained:

After college, my former high school friends were strangers to me, I didn't feel like somebody who belonged in my hometown anymore. Manila wasn't my home either so I was kind of in between. A lot of books have moved me as a person, but not specifically as a Filipina woman. I have known several inspiring characters or great men and women, but they weren't inspiring because of their gender. They were inspiring because of their intelligence, ethics, and determination.

(Interview 1, 09/7/10)

She also emphasized that she never felt she had to affirm and assert herself as a Filipina because her parents made it clear that each individual is a person, and that her

gender does not define her. Halo explained that she also believed that females or males should be treated with respect not because of the differences in their chromosomes, but because they are people.

Influence of Relationships on Identity

My Mother's Ultimate Dream. Halo continued to share that her mother never wanted her to be a teacher. Her mother's dream was for her to become a medical doctor. However, Halo admitted that she knew she would never strive to become a doctor just because it was her mother's choice and not hers. Halo continued to admit that she felt a bit rebellious about her mother during her adolescent years that she just wanted to negate everything that she was saying to her, especially about her future career.

I Could Never Say No. Halo shared how she never had any other relationship with the opposite sex other than her husband. He was her first boyfriend, the first man he had ever met and became intimate with. Halo admitted she never knew anyone else. She continued to explain that her school secretary, who was the sister of her husband, introduced them. She became very close to her husband's family since she did not have any other family member in Manila. She recalled:

I was always invited by our school secretary in their house, and that was how I met my husband who was a seaman at that time. He was a lot older than me. I just graduated from college. He asked me if I wanted him to be my boyfriend, and I was ashamed and embarrassed to say no, since he was very kind to me, and his family really liked me as well, so I said "yes." I could never say no. His whole family was very nice to me. (Interview 2, 09/30/10)

A few months after, he proposed to her. Halo shared that he was the only man she ever had a relationship with. She was very young. She graduated from college and was just working for a year when they first met. Halo continued to express that she knew she did not have to hurry up to obligate and commit herself to marriage. However, she was young, immature and easily influenced—so she said “yes”. She admitted that she could never really say no.

Becoming an English Teacher in the Philippines

No more Little Kids for Me! When asked to describe her teaching experiences in the Philippines, both high and low points, she remembered an incident with a very young child, which literally changed her disposition in life. She recalled:

I was teaching pre-school students before. The child accidentally tripped on the cement floor, under my watch. He was bleeding so he was rushed to the hospital. After that incident, I didn't want to teach small children anymore. I was traumatized. (Interview 2, 09/30/10)

After this unfortunate experience, she shared how she never wanted to teach very young children anymore. Furthermore, Halo shared her experiences with her second job in the Philippines where she experienced her high point. This was when her students got engaged with their learning. She was able to teach a child and she saw the progress he made. Halo continued that she realized that there was a learning that happened. She admitted that she sometimes regrets being a teacher because there were always a lot of things to do and so little money. She remembered that her mother wanted her to become a doctor, but she disobeyed. Now she said she sometimes think about it. What would have happened to her life had she been a doctor? She told me she wished she had a job

like the one with Samantha Brown in Travel channel. She said she likes that kind of job, enjoying while earning. Furthermore, she continued to share about her second job. She recalled:

My second job was in a non-government agency (NGO). I taught street children in a mixed level setting. This was in my hometown. The salary was close to nothing. The challenge was it's a reach out program for very poor communities. I did it for eight months. I taught street children ages eight and nine. I just wore jeans, shirt, and slippers to work. I couldn't dress up because the street children would be intimidated. I wore simple clothes as much as possible. Those children were very clingy. They seldom bathe so they smelled; and that smell stuck to my clothes too. (Interview 2, 09/30/10)

She continued to explain that she got into that job because she wanted to go home to her hometown and stay with her family before she got married. She explained that this experience showed how significant people in her life influenced her identity, which in this specific case, was her husband.

Before I got married I told my husband I wanted to be with my family first. When he left for the ship, as a seaman, I went home and taught in that organization. I worked there for eight months until my husband came. It was run by a priest, who was just a figurehead. It was run operationally with a very rude, insensitive woman. I resigned because she was so unprofessional, had no respect for teachers and subordinates. A lot of the teachers left also. (Interview 2, 09/30/10)

Halo shared that she was very patient and serene enough to stay with that company for almost a year. She explained how she often focused on the positive thoughts to get through the day even though there was pessimism all around her.

A Question of Faith. Halo also shared her high point experiences in teaching when she was in the Philippines, which involved a challenging experience with a child. This was her third job, which was back in Manila. She stayed in a Catholic private school for seven years. She recalled:

After seven years in a Catholic private school, there was one child who was so notorious that no one wanted to help him. When he became my student, I was in the chapel all day. I was praying for him I was saying, “Lord, please give me strength to handle Amado.” I have never been a woman of faith. I was actually not praying for him. I was praying for myself, so that I may be able to deal with Amado. I had forty-five students then. He was my biggest worry. Everyday, he was in trouble. He said he was bored. Everyday, we talked, and so we began to get close to each other. It was a private catholic school. Each year, he was in the principal’s list for expulsion. The high point was I made a difference to him. He changed his attitude and behavior. He started to pay attention. The only sad thing was that his mom could not afford the tuition fee anymore so he moved to a public school. (Interview 2, 09/30/10)

In this experience, Halo implies an identity transformation from being a non-practicing Catholic to a fervent woman of prayer, which seemed to be connected to a longing to help what may have been one of her most challenging situations with a student.

Ironically, in one of our conversations, Halo talked about how she was not really practicing any religion. Halo admitted that although she was fully aware that she needed to somehow have a belief into a higher being or force, she could not find the motivation and sincerity in her heart to attend any kind of religious services. She said:

I've never been a strong believer. I know I am very distant. I do not feel guilty if I don't go church. The only thing I worry about is my children. They are becoming like me. A friend of mine said I couldn't wait for that feeling that I want to go to church. It's an obligation. I just don't feel like going to church. First, it's very boring and repetitive. I cannot get anything out of it. I feel that in the province, people who go to church were all self-righteous and full of hypocrisy. I do not want to transfer to any religion either. (Interview 2, 09/30/10)

Halo asserted that many people she knew would never believe that she's not a practicing Catholic. She said they formulated those assumptions based on her gentle and kind demeanor. She continued that although she never really paid much attention to what people around her say, she was quite worried about how much she and her husband had been influencing their children in the spiritual facet of life.

Halo admitted that she is very interested in scientific phenomenon. She admitted that she believes in concepts that have concrete evidence more than the abstract. She said:

Last week, there was this disabled physicist who won the Nobel price. He said, there was no creator at all and that the Big Bang Theory is true. I guess agree with that. I realized I am really now very distant from my own faith.

(Interview 2, 09/30/10)

Halo continued to share that although she was not very convinced with the spiritual faith, ironically, she also did not discharge the fact that there is a strong force of being that makes things happen. She said:

I think I want to go to a retreat house. I like to do whatever the Catholics said except for going to church. Another thing I want to share with you is that, even though I am not a practicing Catholic, I would still not go and convert to other religion, because somehow, I feel that God is there to help me out in times of need. For example now, our labor certification has not arrived yet. Many of us already received theirs except us right? But then again somehow, he would send me another blessing. It will come, although sometimes it comes during the last minute. The blessing still comes, no matter how late it is. (Interview 2, 09/30/10)

Halo also remembered when she was in college. She recalled when she had no money to buy food on weekends. She shared several instances how she would have angels sent to her, which were friends from high school who would come and give her some food.

It was my exam week. I was just studying, but not eating. I had no money. Then my friend gave me a sandwich. At one point I only had ten cents in my pocket. A friend of mine would come and let me go to their house. They were also poor but they still gave me food. I was very thankful. At another time, I lived in a boarding house that had no windows. It was really creepy. I had nothing to eat, but some of my friends came and gave me a bag of groceries. They remembered me. They knew I had no money. They were my friends from high school. I believed the Lord sent them to me. They were my angels. He continuously sends angels to me even now. (Interview 2, 09/30/10)

Halo continued to share that she felt a deep sense of appreciation to her friends who, in one way or another helped her. She expressed that even though she never asked for any help, it seemed that there have always been people who were willing to voluntarily lend her a hand.

Contemplating on the Present: Teaching Experiences in Maryland

Professional Teacher Identity Transformation

Halo asserted that she attributed her motivation in coming to the U.S. to two major reasons. First was her longing to be reunited with her parents and siblings who were already living in the U.S. many years before she came to the states; and second, for financial reasons. She recalled:

My parents and siblings already live in the U.S. and I wanted to be closer to them. My father had been sick and if he goes home to the Philippines, we would not be able to afford the treatment that he needs. My husband and I have talked about going to the U.S. for financial reasons. I was on the fence about this for some time, but when my father left for the states, I knew that if I didn't go, I may not see him again. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Elementary Education or ESOL—Which is Which? Halo was pregnant when the recruiting officer from the U.S. interviewed her. She remembered how everything went well during the interview. However, a few weeks after that, she had received an unfortunate news about hiring and placement of teachers. She recalled:

Everything went so well with the interview that the recruiting officer even got up to leave the interview area to meet my husband who was outside waiting for me. I thought everything was fine until three weeks later. We were told that the county

wasn't hiring ESOL teachers anymore so if we still wanted to go, we had to show that we were qualified to teach other areas, which is what we did, only it took more time and money than we expected. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo remembered how she and the rest of the teachers from her batch had no other choice but to take a fast-track course on elementary education from a local university. She said it was a struggle for most of them, especially because of the financial encumbers it entailed. Each of them paid almost six thousand dollars to complete the course. Interestingly, it seemed that Halo had a similar experience with Naruto. They became classmates in that fast track course on elementary education.

When asked about her current teaching experience, Halo shared how challenging it is for her since she is not only dealing with second language learners, but also with students with special needs. However, regardless of the challenges, Halo described how she felt indebted for having supportive colleagues in her school. She explained:

My students are everywhere and being the only teacher in the building, it was no mean feat to come up with a schedule that met everyone's needs. The children were grouped according to their grade level and teacher, so Mrs. N's kids form one group, Mr. R's kids, another. This is a very challenging year because six of my students are in special education. Some of them have no trouble interacting with me. Some of them keep to themselves, not because of language, but because of behavioral issues. The teachers at my school understand that I have a job to do. They have been very accommodating. We often have informal conferences about our students. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Where Did I Go Wrong? When asked about her low point experience as an ESOL teacher in a U.S. public school, Halo shared with me how her life as the only ESOL teacher in the building was such a challenging task. Like me, it seemed that she also needed to do a multiple task of doing teaching and administrative work. However, Halo admitted that she felt better when I told her I was teaching fifty-seven children compared to her thirty two. Halo explained:

English is a core or major subject in the Philippines, but here, I'm considered a specialist, no homeroom. I have to work around everyone's schedule. I have very little time with the students. The framework is too open to individual interpretation, in my opinion, but given the various circumstances of each child, the preferences of teachers and administrators, I understand the rationale behind this curriculum design. It just makes things very challenging especially when one is the only ESOL teacher in the building. Testing also prevents me from seeing my students as often as I'd like to. The lowest point, therefore, would be shifting paradigms, coming out of a job that I could do with my eyes closed.

(Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo continued to admit that she was aggravated with the unstructured curriculum she was using for ESOL. She said she was also frustrated with the short amount of time in a day to teach her ESOL students. Like me, she mentioned that she was the only ESOL teacher in her building servicing thirty-two children from Kindergarten through Fifth. Halo shared that she wished she could have more time to plan and execute her lessons to make her teaching more effective and productive for her children. She said that her only regret was, she was not challenged with what she was doing. She said that there was no

intellectual or professional challenge anymore. She emphasized that it was more of frustration and dissatisfaction towards a dysfunctional system of education. Halo admitted that she had an identity transformation from being a shy introvert teacher in the Philippines, who according to her would find solace in her own classroom, not worried of being bothered by anyone else; to an extrovert specialist who would have to collaborate with classroom teachers from Kindergarten through Fifth. However, Halo emphasized that whenever she can, she still tries not to engage in unnecessary conversation between her and her administrators. “Whenever I see my principal walking in the hallway, I would intentionally go inside one of the rooms, so I could avoid him.” She explained that if she needed to ask or inform him of important ESOL matters, she would normally email her principal and she would often get an immediate response from him. Thus, Halo shared she did not feel the necessity to have personal conversations with her principal.

A Long Wait for Labor Certification. Just like Naruto, Ligaya and I, Halo shared how she struggled and waited a long time for her labor certification approval. She agreed that it was frustrating for all of us. She said that it was even more disappointing for her because unlike me, she has children to look after, so she needed to make sure that her children got established and had permanent status in the states. Otherwise, they would all have to go back to the Philippines. In one of our conversations, she mentioned how distraught she was when she first learned about the denied decision. She continued that her anxiety was doubled when news started to spread that our school county would not be sponsoring any more green card petitions for international teachers. A few weeks after our second interview for this study, Halo received the news that a second wave of approved labor certification had arrived. She said she was excited to see the lawyer and

ask for her documents. Unfortunately, she found out that her labor certification was still in process.

As I am writing this dissertation, I learned that Halo's husband had a stroke after his bypass surgery and was confined in a hospital. She could not drive yet and so she needed to find a carpool that would bring her to school and then at home. She learned how to drive herself from home to work but she needed to ride a cab going to the hospital since it is farther away from home. She said she was not confident enough to drive to far places for now. She said she needed to find someone to take care and watch over her under aged children as she went to school and later to the hospital after school to visit her husband. Halo expressed how challenging it was for her. I called her and asked her what I could do to help. She said she appreciated my gesture. My husband Ron drove her to the hospital one time. She shared that she was just exhausted and overwhelmed. She had an ill husband; her own children to feed and take care of, and students to teach. It seemed that this recent experience of hers showed another example of identity transformation—from a submissive and receptive wife in the Philippines to an independent woman who's the bread winner of the family. In the Philippines, it was easy to find support from family relatives or to even hire help for such an inexpensive amount. But in the United States, Halo explained how she does all the work herself: goes to work all day to provide for the family, do household chores, feed the children, and go back and forth from the hospital to take care of her husband who's sick. Apart from all these, she explained how she needs to prepare lesson plans, attend meetings, and collaborate with teachers everyday. She said her life is in the U.S. now, but she surely missed her life back home.

How Confident Am I in My Teaching? When asked whether she feels confident in handling her class everyday, Halo responded most of the time, but not always. She explained that she had eight groups. She is the only ESOL teacher in her school. She had thirty-two students who are multilevel from K-5. She explained to me her daily routine as well as the aggravation that she feels of not being able to teach her students the way she would want to due to time constraints. She said:

I start at 7:40am everyday. Sometimes the advanced group, I really can't do a lot of things with them. Even though I planned for the day, when I pick them up, it's already time, ten minutes is left, so how do I teach in 10 minutes? But since I am the only ESOL teacher, I am always out of time. So that's the factor that makes me feel sometimes I am not confident that I am really teaching them well. You and I are both the only ESOL teachers so it's really difficult to teach and divide my time for thirty-two kids of all levels. I also have to really be very patient.

(Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Oh Wait, I Think I Have to Study Again! Halo continued to share that another major challenge she had been experiencing was the fact that many of her ESOL students also qualified for special education program.

I have a lot of ESOL students with special needs. I have to deal with them too. I also have to attend a lot of Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings that take me away from my kids. But with my regular kids, I am really very confident that I am teaching them very well because they are scoring high in their tests. One time, I had to pull out one child for eight times for LAS LINKS (ESOL test). He would sit under the table; then he would only do five items a day. He was very defiant.

He scored very low. He never would want to participate. Imagine I had to test thirty-one kids still, and then I had to buy iron man and spider man toys. That's the only motivating factor so he would go with me. Last year, he never really wanted to go with me to ESOL class. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo said she recognized the magnitude of exploring ways on how to stimulate her challenging students to learn in her class. She shared how rewarding the students for their advancement was an excellent implement for her in motivating her students to succeed. She particularly talked about one child whom she had difficulties teaching. She explained:

He cannot exit out of ESOL due to special education because he's still capable—behind but capable. In SRI, he's scoring basic, not at risk. If he's in the mood, he can perform. But if he doesn't need to work, then he would be defiant. He's really not profound in terms of disability. He's 1A level in everything. I know that he will never test out in ESOL because of his ability, but I sometimes feel that I cannot help him. Now he would want to come with me for four days Out of five. The thing is, I cannot let him join other kids because the other kids will suffer. I put him in a class where there are only two of them. The other one is receptive but still has a lot of processing to do. So it's just fine that they stay together in one class. So in general, I am okay when there's just the language issue involved, but I feel I need more exposure and workshops on special education so I can be confident in dealing with my kids who have special needs. I always reach out and ask for help from my colleagues and the ESOL office. They are supportive of me.

Sometimes I buy books on special education and ELLs so I can learn strategies in helping them. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo continued to share her frustration, as well as her powerlessness to teach her students well because according to her, she is not equipped with special education theory and practice. Her students have processing and learning deficiency. She described herself as an enduring teacher and that she would often go out of her way to find strategies that would help her kids, however, she expressed she needs help too.

Halo continued to explain her struggle as a teacher in the states.

They have supportive parents, thank God. This child is in fourth grade. He's really failing. Some of my kids really have behavioral issues and are often defiant. Although I am well prepared, with objectives, lesson plans and strategies ready, but how can I teach them? They are not willing to learn because of their learning deficiencies. Sometimes I feel I am just wasting my time because they are also not getting anything from me because it's not a language issue anymore. Plan B is that I just really have to have a lot of patience. My school really is a special education school. I had no experience with special education kids, so I am really struggling. Although I took some courses on special education, I feel it's not enough. I really admire the classroom teachers who can actually deal with them in their classrooms the whole day. Imagine, these kids only stay with me for an hour a day. But with the mainstream teachers, they stay the whole day. With at least eight other classmates who have disabilities as well. But I guess, those teachers were really trained to deal with those kinds of children. I really admire those teachers. Even if they have paraprofessionals, at (least two adults) I still admire

them. We actually have a supportive principal. The head of special education is also very supportive of me. She never gets tired of responding to my questions. Also, I feel bad for the kids, not only do they not have fluency in English, but also they have special needs issues to deal with.

(Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo emphasized her eagerness to take courses on special education that would help her learn strategies that she could use in a practical classroom setting. She said she wanted to attend those classes that specifically deal with ESOL and special education children. Halo expressed that she is happy and satisfied with her classroom setting. She said:

I am happy with my room even though it's small. It's an office space. But I like it though. I have to be kind and appreciative because I would always pull-out kids. Since I work with children with ESOL and special needs, my main goal is to make them come to me willingly. Then instruction is next. I just know that I am more patient and more lenient here with my students compared to when I was teaching in the Philippines because in our country, I am stricter and I have very high expectations with my children. I really pushed them to their limits and they excel. But of course, I have never really taught children with special needs back home. In MAPS, I will take what I can. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

From this experience, she continued to show an illustration of professional identity transformation from a very structured and stringent English teacher in the Philippines to a more lenient, friendly educator for ESOL and special education children. "It was always

a challenging but satisfying experience.” When I asked her what she thinks about the ESOL curriculum, she said:

Later on, Joie, when you will have the chance to design the curriculum again, I will request that the ESOL framework must be embedded in the RELA framework. For example, it must be put explicitly in there for example: Regular Teacher A: this is what you can do, and then B. ESOL teacher; this is what you can do. Then Special Ed teacher (C) this is what you can do. Something like that, but I know that it is difficult to do, but at least, it’s written in black and white and it is very clear with all the teachers involved what each one needs to expect from each other. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo also suggested a supplement curriculum for math for ELLs analogous with Math curriculum. Halo explains that there is a parallelism between the strategies used in special education and the strategies used in ESOL. She said:

Most of our strategies are also the same for special needs children. They say whatever is good for ESOL kids would be good for everyone, but my principal wanted to see if there are specific strategies that are for ESOL only. So I asked that with the training workshop we had. The experts said that there are same strategies but there must be a language objective, and use. But how should I tell my mainstream teacher? Sometimes it’s embarrassing to say to talk to them.

(Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo continued to share how she loves collaborating with strong teachers who are knowledgeable and erudite in their field, and are passionate about teaching children. She said:

I like my co-teacher Ms. A who always acknowledged my presence in her room and asked for my help when I am inside. I like it that way. She is a good teacher, she doesn't waste anytime. Her kids love her so much. She was teaching third grade. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Hearing My Father's Voice. For Halo, a good teacher knows a lot of strategies and that this teacher knows what type of strategies to use to all types of learners that he/she encounters. He/She can differentiate instruction. "If you cannot change your methods or ways depending on your kids, then you're not a good teacher."

When asked how confident she is with her teaching performance, she said:

I believe I am confident in my teaching performance but I admit I also need to take some classes on special education so I can provide a better support for my students who are both ESOL and special education. I know my kid's strengths and weaknesses very well. I really have to reach the objectives. I remember what my father would always tell me, "make sure that when a child leaves your room, and make it a point that she or he was happy with what he or she learned that day in your room." I also see teachers that do not go around the room. (Proximity with children is usually a problem.) Also, the very slow feedback, and sometimes when the teacher gives worksheet, they do not even explore or explain. The students need to know why they made mistakes and how to correct those mistakes. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo also shared her classroom management strategy. She said:

I use behavior charts. I buy them from the dollar store. I give them pencils or stickers on Friday. We don't have character education or community of caring, but I reward my students for their good behavior. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

She also explained that they have a crisis person in their school. His job is to deal with those difficult cases, especially with students who have special needs. Then he goes inside the classrooms to teach behavior management.

One time I was walking in the hallway, and then I saw a VHS tape flew across the hallway towards me. It almost hit me; it missed by an inch. A special child threw the tape that day. This is the reason why we need our crisis guy.

(Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo shared that she believes in the importance of staff members/administrators to revere and respect her opinion. Although she admitted that during her first year, she said she had a challenging time proving herself and making her voice heard. She recalled:

The principal who hired me said she doesn't want pull-out. It's impossible to do. But anyway, she left, got promoted and then retired. They really include me in the placement of kids every year. They call me and ask for my output every time we do placements. One thing that I would like to do that I haven't done is to tell them and suggest to the team, who could be a good classroom teacher for ESOL kids. Sometimes, they are being given to teachers who are not really very patient with second language learners. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo asserted that she sees collaboration with the mainstream teacher as really the key to success in co-teaching. She continued to assert that since she would only be inside the

mainstream classroom for a short period of time, she let's her mainstream teacher handle the classroom management. "I'm just there to follow the rules that what set earlier in the classroom before I even came."

When I asked her if there was any time when her co-teachers and administration support or did not support you her, she said:

I will discuss the one when they did not support me because that was only a few instances. When it was my first time in my first school in the U.S, there was a teacher who didn't want me to pull out my kids. Their team leader had to intervene. Then when I went to my second school, there's another teacher who also wouldn't let my kids be pulled out. Then when I picked my ESOL kids up, she was questioning me, and she was trying to push the worksheets to me. But when she retired, she gave me her SPIRE documents. It's for special education. She used her own money to buy it. She gave them to me. It was very expensive. She really follows the child's IEP, however she also has a temper, not with kids but with her colleagues. Sometimes, they ask me, can you finish them in their room or you have something else to do? Then I said I have something else to do. There are some teachers who really do not know how to handle ESOL kids.

(Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo admitted that she never would want to host any celebration in school like Hispanic Heritage Month for example. She said: "No, I don't want to hold that; I never would want to be responsible with any of those; I wouldn't want to take the lead."

When asked what the perceptions are of her principal and colleagues with her as a teacher and as a person, she said:

Since I am a Filipino, I do not really complain, if I have questions I ask them nicely. I guess my principal appreciates that fact that I am a doer and not a complainer. He receives a hundred and one complaints a day. I should spare him for that. There are one hundred plus staff in our school, can you imagine if I would be with the complainers? I know he appreciates that. My students have high scores, so he knows I am doing my job. I really didn't want to speak with authorities, as much as possible. If I saw admin people in the hallway coming towards me, I would literally avoid them. I would try to go inside a classroom instead of talking to them in the hallway. Sometimes I worry that they would feel I am cold, but that's just me. They are very nice to me but I just really do not want to engage in conversations with them unless it is necessary. I just write emails if I need anything. I don't want to take their time anymore. As a person, I have no other experience dealing with him outside the professional level. So I really do not know how he thinks of me personally. But I really love my principal also. There is this distance; only on the professional level. You have a gift for interpersonal, Joie, but I don't. I am more intrapersonal. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Although Halo admitted that she is very intrapersonal at work, she also shared that she had established good relationships with a few friends.

I met an American teacher who was very kind to me. She was my roommate before. She drove me to my exam when I took the ESOL test. She became a dear friend to me. She's fifty years old. Then, I had a friend for a long time since high school, since we were thirteen years old, until after college. She became the godmother of one of my children. We were really very close. But what I don't

like is that she would always want to be the one to take the lead on everything. Everything must be her way, in her own terms. So I put up with her for a long time until I realized, I have nothing more to give to her, and that my patience has run out. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo expressed that she was a bit pensive about the possibility of losing her full time position next school year due to the dwindling population of ESOL students in her school.

I feel that this is the last time I will be full time because every year, my ESOL kids dwindle in number. Now I only have thirty two. Next year, I don't know. I might be going to two different schools half time for each. I appreciate the fact that I am a part of a team, everyone knows me. If I was absent they look for me. So I was thinking if I will be half time, with another school, then I will have to do politicking again, starting again to a new place. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo shared a specific time when her colleagues respected her views. She recalled:

There's this one teacher who is a good friend of mine. She tells the principal that he doesn't have to give me any more lunch duty because I am already swamped. We talk to each other a lot even outside the school work. I have another colleague from my previous school, she also became very close to me. I didn't realize that with my age, I can still meet a dear friend and co-worker, who are from another culture. Her openness about her family is great. She treats me as part of her family. And I share myself with her too. She's always ready to help me. They know I am not lazy, and that I am trustworthy. I am their confidant. They tell me

that all the time. It's only my fourth year, but they said they feel that I have been there forever. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo also shared what her students' parents' perceptions of her. She said:

I think they think of me as a push over. Sometimes they also do not want to be pulled out anymore especially if they have interesting things going on in their classroom. I sometimes find it difficult to pull-them out. However, I feel that the older they get, the more they feel they don't need me. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

She also shared about her parents' perceptions of her as a teacher. She said:

They do not usually go to conferences. There was a parent who refused ESOL because they had a bad experience with the older sibling who would fail because of ESOL. Some parents feel that there's a stigma of being in the ESOL program. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo continued to share about an incident when a parent harassed her. She recalled:

I also had a problem about a parent who sort of harassed me. She said, "Just because I have a different skin color, you want my child to be in ESOL." She was so mad and she was pulling the race card towards me. Then she was literally pointing her fingers to me. But when my principal heard about it, he talked with the parent and he defended me, and he supported me. That felt great!

(Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo also shared that her school does not really have a good parent involvement.

Although for the past year, many parents attended back to school night more than before.

When asked how she describes herself as a female teacher, she said:

Everyone who goes to the teaching profession has both the intention and values that are nurturing. So I don't see the difference between the two, whether male or female. I don't think nurturing is exclusive to females. The only thing is that if students are females, I think students have different perceptions of their teachers. I think female students depending on the age, if younger kids, they do not look at the gender but for older kids, they look at the gender already, for example I hear some students call their male teachers cool. But I never hear them call female teachers cool. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

When asked if she thinks her educational experience contributed to her teaching success in the states, she said:

I felt that I was not prepared for politicking and socializing with co-workers and dealing with administrators such as principals. I was not an education student. I was a psychology major. I didn't study the principles of education. The children are better in the Philippines. I mean our educational system in the Philippines is better at least with the private school. The good thing is that they have a holistic approach. Not just academic. I feel that American students complain a lot. In the Philippines, even if they complain, they still do it. What helped me were really my experiences not the theoretical learning. Ethics is also important.

(Interview 3, 11/19/10)

When asked whether she thinks her professional development courses helped her to teach in the states, she said:

Some of them were good, because I learned something from them. But some are not. I am very sincere that I like to learn something. I empty my cup when I attend

workshops. I like online courses. The reading professor was really good. She gave us readings then there were questions. I learned a lot, but that's because I am what I am. I am an introspective person and I love to work independently that's why I liked it. The one I don't like is what the ESOL workshops have where we would have to stand up and move to participate. You're so tired in the afternoon, then they will let you perform and participate. It's so tiring. It is interactive but for some people like me, it doesn't work. I went to one workshop—*Powering up with technology*. She just read her PowerPoint nothing more. It was really very unproductive. It was a Saturday, then that's what you'd get. But I remembered the workshop on *Anansi the Spider*, the workshop that you gave. I used it with my ESOL kids and with my own child. It was Reading and theater arts together; I am not kinesthetic but I enjoyed it. It was very practical.

(Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo shared what motivated her to teach in the states, she said:

Of course financial, especially my husband got sick. It was a lot bigger here in terms of salary but then, your expenses are also in dollars. It would be better if I would send my children back to manila for college. I am laid back, I am not that driven. My father lives in Boston and in California during the winter. My mother is also in Boston, she's working, but we are not close. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

When asked what her perceptions were about her current school, she said:

We never passed the Maryland state assessment (MSA) ever. We are a special education school, so that explains why we never pass AYP. I feel so sorry for my school. Three out of five students are special children. But the teachers are really

doing their jobs. But assessments must be modified with those populations. There is modified MSA but not that much change in it. Another weakness is that we have a huge staff population. The bigger the staff numbers, the more complicated. Testing is a big problem. Assessments must really be modified. We have a lot of technology, we have resources, and we have dedicated teachers. I guess it's just really about the teaching load. I guess co-teaching concept must be given priority for teacher collaboration. Another thing I don't like is that there are so many things they want teachers to do. Then since assessments were so many, there's no more time for reflection and analysis of data. Everything is just superficial. For example 92% passed. What happened with 8%? There's no more time to reflect on the data. There are a lot of buffet programs. (Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Anticipating the Future: Thinking What Lies Ahead in my Career

I Think I Love Maryland

Since both her parents are in the states, Halo said that she does not see the need for her to go back and live in the Philippines in the future. She continued that her main motivation in coming to the states is her children. She also admitted that as they grow older, they would be more acclimatized and exposed to American way of life that they are likely to settle down in the states as well. She shared that Maryland is her home now and she loves it. More so, she said she would like to accomplish some important things for herself and her career. She said:

I would like to learn at least five languages represented in this county. There's a prediction that in 2012, majority of the residents in America won't be English speakers. I don't know what's going to happen to the ESOL program then. Future

plans: I'd like to teach for as long as I can, but I'd also like to be a part of a group that designs instructional materials, which are not limited to textbooks.

(Interview 3, 11/19/10)

Halo continued to share that she sees herself in the future as still a teacher, but for adult learners. She said she also wished to have a healthier lifestyle.

Master's Program, Here I Come!

Halo expressed her desire to take a master's degree on special education. She said she wants to learn more strategies in teaching students with special needs. She added that her passion to help these children motivates her to seek for resources and knowledge that would equip her in teaching those children. "I want to take special education courses. Maybe an online class would be good for me so I didn't have to drive after work. I am excited to learn how to handle children with special needs who are ESOL at the same time. I want to be more equipped."

Chapter 8: LIGAYA'S STORY

Reminiscing the Past: Educational and Teaching Experiences in the Philippines

Learning English in the Philippines: Influence of Cultural and Linguistic Experiences

During one of my conversations with Ligaya about her English learning experiences as a student, she shared with me how she found a deep inner peace, some sort of vengeance in her Filipino language learning when she was in senior high school. She was assigned to write an editorial on the spot during the whole class period of sixty minutes. She recalled:

I had been getting really low quiz scores in my Filipino subject and my teacher was concerned about my status as an honor student. I had to make up for those quizzes. I was having a difficult time composing my essay in Filipino, so I first wrote it in English. When I was done, I took out my English-Filipino dictionary and started translating my work into Filipino. I finished just in the nick of time. The following meeting, guess what? My Filipino teacher read my work in class as an exemplary editorial. (hehehehe...sweet revenge!). This just reinforced my confidence in my abilities. I could do it if I wanted to. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya shared her difficulty of writing a composition in the Filipino language because she was not exposed to speaking or writing *Tagalog*, the national language. She admitted that this is also because her first language is *Bicolano*, which is one of the eighty languages indigenous to the Philippines.

Ligaya shared that she realized the impact her experience had on her being a teacher. She admitted that as she was contemplating about her own learning experience, she

became aware how training students in using learning strategies and tools should form an essential part of second language teaching/assessment.

Several strategies such as allowing students to write/record their ideas in the language they are most comfortable in, giving them a dictionary, and then having them translate their work into English can definitely help students learn the language effectively. Also, the key was motivation. I had a strong need to prove that just because I failed my quizzes, did not mean I was a “bad” student. I simply did not see any need to excel in Filipino. My need in this one instance was to restore my reputation as a “good” student. As a teacher, it is a constant challenge to find that motivation that would make my students persevere in language learning tasks – as if their whole life depended on it.

(Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya admitted that although she did not really see the need for learning the Filipino language (Tagalog), she described how she motivated herself in learning *Tagalog* so she could maintain her reputation as a consistent honor student.

I Had No Desire to Stand Out. When asked about the extreme low points in her English language learning experiences, Ligaya said that she does not remember any intense low points in her English language learning experiences. In fact, she confidently admitted that she had always excelled in this area. However, it is very interesting how she shared her struggle in learning Filipino, the other official language of the Philippines, which is in most part, *Tagalog*. Since she was excelling in English, Ligaya candidly admitted that she was not bothered by the fact that she was struggling in learning the

Tagalog language. She said that what was important for her was she could communicate fluently in English.

I have always excelled in English as a school subject. If anything, I got very good grades in my English classes. But my grades in Filipino were the opposite. Filipino, which is a Tagalog-based language is second language to most Filipinos. My home language was Bikolano, but we were not required to be literate in it. The *Balarila ng Wikang Tagalog (Grammar of Filipino Language)* was infuriating. Inflecting verbs in Filipino was confusing. Reading Filipino was a chore, so was writing. I got turned off by the long words and by the limited literature, which were mainly, if not all, adult-themed. I am basically a very motivated student. I love to read and write, but nothing that my Filipino teachers or my parents did, ever motivated me to read or write my Filipino homework. I think I failed every single check-up quiz. The worse part of it I guess was I was not being disturbed by this fact. It was matter-of-fact. Therefore, that does not count as a negative experience. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

As a young elementary school student, Ligaya admitted that she was more diligent in doing her English assignments than her Filipino homework. She said that she was not trying to master the language, and that it was not the goal for her. She expressed that she just really loved to read, and that she knew she was also a writer. For Ligaya, there was not a lot of effort involved learning English; unlike in learning Filipino, which she admitted, was a struggle to pass it. She described how the long and complicated Filipino words, as well as the lack of age-appropriate reading resources for children discouraged her to motivate herself to learn her national language.

Ligaya also shared how her parents were never the type that would push or nag their children about their grades or school work. Thus she did not think about succeeding or excelling in something important. Ligaya shared that although she has motivation to do things that she thought were necessary, she did not see herself as motivated as some of her classmates who seemed to know what they wanted to do in life, even at a young age. She recalled:

I was laid back, and still am! When I was a child, I would just follow whatever my classmates were saying. Whatever was interesting, I would just go with the flow and say the same thing. I never really had the desire to pursue one particular path. I was not sure if I was normal then. If you asked me what your favorite thing is, I would say I am not sure or I don't know. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya explained how her parents raised them in a very simple way. She described her mother as a teacher and her father as a government employee. Their life was very mundane according to her. She said she never felt that her parents intentionally pushed or nagged them to achieve in school. She also shared how her other friends were also the same way. She explained that because she and her friends were high performing students, their parents had no need to nag them or push them anymore. She continued that as a parochial community, they were expected to live all of their lives in their hometown—get married, have jobs, not far from home. When asked why she did not have big dreams, she explained:

Maybe because we were all raised in a simple life in the province that we really didn't have big ambitions in life. The only thing I remember was my friend who wanted to become a nun, and she did become one. After being a certified public

accountant, she became a nun. We all went on our separate ways. I worked soon after graduating from college. I didn't attend the graduation march although I was also cum laude (with honors) when I graduated. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya continued to share that she attributed her lack of motivation on achieving higher goals to her family's notion of a simple life. She admitted that she equated having a simple, laid back life to acquiring and expecting a simple goal in life as well. When I asked her why she did not attend her graduation, she said:

I am by nature, laid back. This was compounded by life in the province, which was slow moving; and also by my parents' laid-back parenting. They did not push me to do anything. If there were contests where I was recommended to join, they would ask me whether I would like to join or not. And if I chose to join, they gave me their 100% moral support. In my juvenile mind, I did not think it was such a big deal. I should have gone though! (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

I Do It Because I Have To. According to Ligaya, to be the top student in her class was never a motivation for her. She explained that ever since she was a child, she practically did the things she had to do because it was a necessity. She said that she did things because she had to. She remembered when she was a small child many people would ask her what she wanted to be when she grew up. She said she would have no idea what to say. Then one day she learned the word ORTHODONTIST. She realized an orthodontist was a dentist, but specialized in straightening teeth. It had a fancy ring to it, she said. She admitted she had no idea what it meant, but she used a good strategy. She looked up a dictionary to find out what it meant. She learned that it's like being a dentist, but it

sounded better. So from that time on, whenever people asked her what she wanted to be when she grew up, she would say, “I want to be an orthodontist.” She recalled:

When I was in elementary school, my mom gave me a book, *Word Power Made Easy*. One of the words there was ORTHODONTIST. So I thought it was fun to impress people that I wanted to become an orthodontist someday (with so much laughing). But then again, my ambition really was leaning towards the languages because that’s where I knew I was good. When I reached high school, I realized that I was good in writing, only because my teachers told me so. My teachers always praised my work so I decided when people ask me, I would say, I wanted to become a journalist someday. I just said that only because I loved to write, and I thought that’s what journalists do. When I was choosing my courses during my application to the University of the Philippines, I chose linguistics as my first choice only because it is the closest to languages. I never thought it was about language analysis. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya explained that even though she knew what she wanted to be, she did not have a strong self-awareness of her own competence. She continued to share that she knew she could write, but she never made a big deal about it until her teacher pointed out her talent. She admitted she needed an authority figure to tell her what she could do before she could convince herself that she had potentials of being a writer.

When I asked her about her childhood memory, she explained:

I was really scared of dogs. I mastered my fear to do what I am supposed to do. Even now if I was not sure of what is the best thing to do, I would still do it, if I have to. Even if I don’t want it... I would still do it. I have been telling my

children the same thing. For example they tell me. I don't want to clean. I tell them, who wants to clean? But you still have to do it. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

She shared how she was telling her children that when she was a student, her main aspiration was to get a 100 % in every test she took. If she ever fell short, she said at least she knew she had worked hard and studied. She continued to say that she was not really happy with her children's study habits. She admitted she has high expectations of her children.

It's disappointing to see how my kids study when they're at home. They would watch TV and study at the same time; then they would study for only half an hour. When the report cards come, their grades are not that high. Especially my daughter, she doesn't want to read. My kids are smart but they just don't give their best. My expectations of them are high. My parents never did have to ask me to study. I really studied for myself. My kids want me to think that everything was just okay. They never asked for my help. I tell them that I am always here to help, but they never do so when the grades come, it's frustrating to see a C. They always tell me that they do study hard. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya expressed frustration in her voice as she was sharing her experiences with me. She only wants what's best for her children. She continued that she knows her kids are smart; and she wants them to do extremely well and have high expectations of themselves, so they can achieve and reach their goals. She said she also wants them to have the motivation to succeed—one thing that she admitted her parents never imposed on her.

They Said I Was Rebellious. Like many smart students, Ligaya said she wanted to study at the University of the Philippines (UP). Her parents would not let her to go to U.P. because according to her, they believed she had a tendency to be rebellious and defiant. Ligaya admitted she considered her parents' decision as one of the many disenchantments of her juvenile life. She recalled:

They called me rebellious because sometimes I would not do my parents' requests and wishes, but that didn't mean I was rebellious. So, I wasn't allowed to go to UP. My parents' impression was that if I were to go to UP, the more I would become rebellious. My parents believed that if I went to UP, I could easily be swayed to join student activism against the Marcos government. I think they mostly feared for my life. I could get rounded up by the police in student rally and be accused of treason and subversion. I went to college in 1980. It was a time a great political unrest. So I just studied in a local university. I started studying in a catholic school when I was in grade school but I had to transfer to a public school because our family was getting bigger and it was difficult for my parents to send all of us in catholic private schools. So since grade school, high school, college and even earlier part of my graduate school, I studied in our local school.

It seemed interesting to see the parallelism between our parents' (Ligaya's parents and my parents') perception and feeling about the University of the Philippines, as well as the lack of trust that those two sets of parents had on their children. Ligaya's parents, according to her, thought she would become a student activist and be tortured for subversion; while my parents thought I would get pregnant and not finish college. It seemed that the main difference though, in these two scenarios, was how Ligaya and I

reacted and acted upon our parents' dominating decisions. While I decided to find a way to achieve my goal of transferring to UP, Ligaya admitted she decided to stay and obey her parents' wishes. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Becoming an English Teacher in the Philippines

Ligaya shared how the teaching profession was thrust upon her. She said her mother advised her time and again that pursuing a bachelor's degree in education could be a spring board to any major that she desired. She continued that she knew it would be like an excellent underpinning towards any career or job she would like to pursue in the future. She described how her father wanted her to be a lawyer but she never saw herself being one. She said it did not have an appeal to her. At that time, she said she wanted to be a broadcast journalist. Ligaya continued to impart how she was leaning towards the languages. She explained her love-hate relationship with *Tagalog*—the most widely known language in the Philippines. She also shared in detail how she came to love the English language. She recalled:

Tagalog was not my first language. I studied in a private school so English was the first language in school. I just learned how to speak in *Tagalog* when I went in school where everyone had to take up Filipino courses from first grade until we graduated from high school. My language of preference was English. My mother had a huge influence on my language learning because she was an English teacher. We did not have a television when I was growing up so I never really had the chance of being exposed to shows or movies in English until later on. My English exposure was mostly to books that my mother would check out from her school library. My mother was a literary teacher. We had books on tape at that

time. I really enjoyed them very much. I was thankful that my mom was a teacher. Being a teacher gave me an advantage as a mother teaching my kids.

(Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya explained how early exposure to reading English books, listening to books on tapes contributed to her experiences as a language learner. She further explained that she only started to appreciate the Filipino language when she became a language teacher.

I did not begin to appreciate Filipino until I started teaching. I started to appreciate the cadence and intonation of the *Tagalog* language. I felt then that there is nothing like your own native language. It is the language of your soul. You can convey the same thoughts and feeling in English – but the way the sounds come together makes a world of difference. That’s when I began to appreciate the rhythm, cadence of the language. It goes with your soul. But when I’m praying, I use English and *Taglish*—a combination of *Tagalog* and English.

(Interview 1, 09/21/10)

When asked about her turning point in language teaching, she explained how her career decision was greatly influenced by her mother’s opinion. She recalled:

I do not remember a turning point. It was more like being resigned to my mother’s wishes borne of our family’s limited resources. What I really wanted to be was a dentist or a journalist or both. In short, I followed my mother’s advice and enrolled at a local university, which was much closer to home, meaning less expense. My choice of major was teaching English in high school. This was a natural choice: I have always excelled in English in school. My mother was first

an English teacher before she became a music teacher. Even as I was studying to become a teacher, I never really imagined myself pursuing teaching as a career.

(Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya described how her mother influenced her to become an English teacher. She expressed she had no qualms admitting that she submitted to her mother's wishes. She said she clearly understood her family's circumstances at that time. She had nine other siblings that needed to go to school too. Thus, in order to alleviate the financial worries, she agreed to enroll in a university that was closer to home.

The Journalist in Me. Ligaya explained that although her mom wanted her to become a teacher, she still did not pursue teaching after graduation. Teaching was the last thing on her mind, she said. She described how she pursued her dream of becoming a journalist. She said she figured she wanted to do something that she was good at. She explained:

My first job was not even teaching. I wanted to become a journalist and went to work for the Navy as a journalist for their community outreach. My professors, who thought that I was wasting my talents doing "nothing" at the Navy, tipped me about a recently vacated post at the University's laboratory high school.

(Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Although she said she was enjoying her job as a journalist, Ligaya admitted she did not appreciate the fact that she was not receiving a decent salary. She said she needed to find a better paying job so she applied to teach in the university and was fortunate enough to get a teaching position. She shared how she saw her potential of being a good teacher. In fact, she said she saw herself not only as a good teacher, but the best, brightest and the

most vigorous teacher among her colleagues. She said she realized she had found her niche. She recalled:

The pay at the Navy was poor. The University job promised much more; plus opportunities for further education at less or no cost. I applied and was immediately offered the job. So, I found myself working with my former high school teachers and for some reason, I felt I was the best, the brightest, as well as the most energetic teacher among jaded teachers who I felt would rather do something else but be in a room full of hormonal teenagers.(Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya continued to share how inspired and confident she was in her new profession that she was more motivated to accept bigger responsibilities in her school. Although she was a very young teacher, she shared how she took the challenge of the new profession she never thought she would learn to love. She also described how she felt when her students loved and appreciated her class. She expressed that the positive perceptions of her students towards her teaching knowledge and abilities contributed a lot in her motivation to excel and be successful in her field.

I was twenty and I was given the job of being the moderator of the school paper and the journalism load. I was like the proverbial beached fish being thrown back to the ocean. Then I lobbied to increase the publication fees to improve the quality of the school paper. But I think I had the freshest teaching ideas as far as my students were concerned. They loved me. It also helped that my principal was my English teacher in second year high school and was my Psychology 1 professor in college. He was very supportive, so I was able to do things that might not have

been possible if I wasn't a "favorite" student. I think it was the willingness of my students to learn with me; their adulation, and their creative spirits that made me choose to pursue teaching. I was a reluctant teacher at first, but I grew to love being a teacher. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya continued to describe how her students' perceptions of her fueled her to become a caring and loving teacher. She expressed how her students became her inspiration to become a successful teacher.

How Come You Know So Much? Ligaya remembered when she was teaching at a science high school. It is a school for the talented and the gifted. As their Language Arts and Writing teacher, she expressed how she had to work hard to prepare lessons that would challenge the minds of her young geniuses. She expressed that being a very motivated reader worked to her advantage. She said she had always been fascinated by science, especially theoretical physics. She said her students were drawn to writing about topics that had to do with science and research. She continued that she was able to respond to their writing and help them better as they wrote because she knew what they were talking about. She remembered when a student of hers approached her and said, "How come you know so much, Mrs. O?" She described how that comment became music to her ears. She shared that the comment inspired her to read more and share her new learning with her smart kids. She said she made a self-realization— smart kids challenge their smart teachers. She recalled: "I saw how my students performed. I valued their adulation to me as a teacher. They inspired me to become an effective teacher."

I've Always Felt Fulfilled as a Teacher. Ligaya also described her teaching experiences in the Philippines, including both high and low points. She taught high performing high school students who belonged to the talented and gifted category.

I've always felt fulfilled as a teacher because my students were really bright and motivated. I was very proud and happy that I was their teacher because somehow I feel I contributed to their learning. They appreciated everything that I did for them. They competed with themselves as well as each other. I was also aware that I probably excelled as a teacher because my students were very self-motivated and intelligent students. It would probably have been a different experience for me if I had struggling students. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya described the highest point of her teaching was when she saw her students grew as writers. She did whole language approach. She mentioned she searched for ways to engage and challenge her students' critical thinking. She said that her students liked to be challenged and responded positively to assignments that had room for them to create and initiate. She wrote her own curriculum during that time. She said her principal did not object since the students were doing very well in class. She continued to explain that in the Philippines, teachers generally write their own curriculum guide; and that public school teachers are given a scope and sequence and the minimum learning competencies that students are expected to master at the end of the school year. It is up to them to flesh out those objectives. Ligaya also shared that in that high school, the teachers come together by department to decide what their students need to know and be able to do at the end of their stay in school. It is this context that Ligaya wrote a curriculum for her grade level. This was a requirement by the principal – to write the curriculum. They

called it plantilla of lessons. Furthermore, she said she focused on reading and writing workshop. She continued that she taught her students to do drafting, editing and proofreading. She said she was convinced that journal writing is the key to becoming a good writer. She recalled:

Write at least one page a day. That was my requirement. After a while, my students were excited to read my comments and responses. The hardest part was giving my comments. They had to respond to something that they had read. Sometimes I bought second hand books just so my students would have access to young adult literature which were lacking in the school library. Some of them were voracious readers, others were reluctant. But since they were talented and gifted students, they would generally do what you asked them to do, or else risk losing their status. (You know how this is embarrassing to Filipino families – to have their child go for free in a very prestigious school and have to be sent home because they could not handle the academic load.) The point is because of that motivation (to keep their scholarship status), they had to force themselves to write. This is how I know that reading and journal writing together is an effective strategy in becoming fluent in English. The high point of that was when I saw the transition of my students as writers. I really saw the improvement and the difference from the first entry to the last entry. Through their journal writing, I have seen how my students have grown not only as writers but also as human beings—through their experiences. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya shared her belief that creative and talented minds need to be nurtured and developed in order for them to be successful. She said she did everything she could to

make her class interesting. She shared how she created and developed her own reading and writing curriculum that would fit her students' needs. She said that the only thing she regretted was that Filipino teachers were not "portfolio people" in the Philippines, so she was not able to keep or save a copy of any of those journals as artifacts.

The Need to Take a Stand: My Reasons for Leaving. Ligaya shared how she conceived the idea of going to the U.S. to teach. She described how her colleagues from the high school where she taught encouraged her to apply for a teaching position in the U.S. She candidly expressed that the main motivation for her border crossing was due to financial reasons. She said she decided to move to the U.S. because of her family situation. For a long period of time, Ligaya said she had been a stay-home mom. She shared that her religion encourages mothers with young children to be full time mothers, especially if their spouses are able to support the family financially. So she chose to be a stay-home mother. She said she wanted to put up a pre-school at some point but her husband never supported her plans. She said she was convinced that her husband did not have the confidence in her abilities. She continued to share that he only believed in her ability in the kitchen because he would always praise her cooking, but that was all about it.

I knew I couldn't rely on my husband anymore. I knew I could not put up with his ridiculous decisions any longer. So I needed to find a way to better my situation and that of my children's. I avoided confrontations and arguments. My parents and siblings supported me so that I can take a stand. They knew I didn't have money. My sisters sent me money so I can take the examination requirements. Then I went to Manila and stayed with my sister. My friend was the one who

encouraged me to go and apply, so my sister and I did. We both passed the interviews and all the tests, so we were offered teaching positions. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya shared how she was worried about her children that she left behind in the Philippines. She said she left for the states so her children could have a better opportunity in life. She shared that she left her children with her parents because she knew her husband would not be able to take care of them well. She said that in time, when she had accumulated enough money, she would let them come to the states and live with her. However, Ligaya said she never knew that her children, including her husband would come to the states sooner than she thought. She recalled:

I knew my husband was not good in taking care of my children, so as much as possible I really wanted to have them with me in the U.S. My husband took my children from my parents' house and I told my husband that they should come to the U.S. in December. His objection was that his visa will not allow him gainful employment. I told him that my brother in law who's an American has his own shop and he can work there so he can earn money when he goes to the states. My husband agreed, but then again, my husband didn't have the patience for the job. So it didn't really work. My brother-in-law said that my husband was lazy.

(Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya admitted that she could not hide her frustrations with her husband. She explained that due to her love towards him, at times, she was blinded with his incapacities and effortlessness. She said she tried very hard to keep her family together for the sake of her children. She continued to share that she gave her husband a chance to

prove himself when he came to the states hoping that he would rise to the challenge and fill his role as father, first of all.

Influence of Relationships on Identity

My Mother is My Role Model. Ligaya's mother was also an English teacher. She described how she was already speaking in English at home even before she went to school. If ever there was a teacher who had the most influence in her learning English, she said that it would be her mother. She recalled:

I think my mother has the biggest influence on me. When I was a child, I used to say that my dad is kinder than my mom because he was more tolerant while my mother nagged me all the time. Mother was always around her children so I think that's why. But when I became a teenager, it was my mom really who had an influence on me because we talked a lot. She told me stories about herself and her life that I appreciated. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya said she was also fascinated by her mother's faith and how her mother got converted from a non-believer to a strong believer of catholic faith. She remembered how religious her mother was. She said she often went to church and always prayed the rosary. However, even with this kind of exposure, Ligaya admitted she was not convinced. She said she was not converted. She recalled:

When I was in fifth grade, my mom read a prophecy purportedly from Mary, the mother of Christ. She would often tell us that it became her conversion. It was her turning point from a casual Catholic to a devout one. We always prayed the rosary. My mother started to join legion of Mary. She brought us with her. When my mom was converted, she often went to church then we just went with her. It's

just something that I needed to do, so I just did it. If you ask me if I believed in what my mom believed, I would not be able to tell. I just knew it was the right thing for children to do at that time, so I did what my mom did. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

I am the Eldest of Ten Children, Now What? Ligaya shared that she is the eldest of ten children. She also shared that her youngest sibling was born when she was already in high school. When I asked her if she helped take care of her younger siblings she told me that she did not, because she was not the caring or the nurturing type. She explained:

My mom used to tell me that I was self-absorbed. After school, I would go to my room and start reading instead of helping around the house. I often read books instead of help around the house. If I was in the middle of a really intense moment in a book I was reading, I would turn deaf to her orders. She would get all riled up. I would do her bidding just to shut her up and also because she had successfully guilted me into doing them. I took care of my siblings out of initiative, or because I was a nurturing type, but because I had no choice since I was the eldest. It was out of duty. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya candidly explained that until now, she believes she is still the same way. She said she would do things because she has to do them, not because she wants to, or that she chooses to do them. She said it has always been out of necessity or duty. She emphasized how difficult it was for her to pinpoint anything that she was passionate about.

Being Married is Complicated. Ligaya shared that she and her husband met at Zen University. She explained that he was overseeing his family's properties in the province

while he was in school. She said it was a short courtship period; eventually, they got married. Ligaya remembered how her husband decided that they needed to move to a city farther away from her hometown. To show her support towards her husband, Ligaya said she went with him, without hesitation. She recalled:

When I got married, our apartment was close to my parents' house. When my husband graduated, he left us to find work in the city, but he didn't find a job that he wanted. He decided to try his luck in the city where he was raised. I guess his family had an apartment there and the tenant was leaving anyway, so we over the place. At that time, our first child had turned two already. Actually my plan was, after college, I would take my masters, and not get married at once. But when the baby came, I gave up graduate school to spend more time with my child. At that time, my husband hadn't graduated from college yet. He was still a student. When he graduated, our first child was already around one year old. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

I wonder if Ligaya falls into the category of women who exhibit passivity and submission towards their husbands. Like many Filipino women, it seemed that she had to make sacrifices as a wife and as a mother, as she described how she followed her husband's decision without hesitation. As a wife, although she did not fully support her husband's decision to relocate, she said she felt she had no choice but to support his decision. As a mother, she said she had to stop pursuing her master's degree so she could take care of her baby. She continued:

I was fully supportive of my husband because I naively believed that it was the right and noble thing for every wife to follow her husband's lead. I also believed

it was the right and noble thing for every mother to drop everything and take care of her children. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

I Knew Something Was Wrong! Ligaya mentioned that although her parents did not voice out their expectations of her and her siblings, she said she set standards for herself. She admitted she never wanted to be downtrodden or demoralized in any way, so she said she tried to live a decent life. She explained:

I do not want people to think that I had made a stupid mistake in choosing to marry this man that I married. Let me tell you this dark secret of mine about my husband. There are ups and downs in any marriage. He was generally a good person. He just didn't measure up to my expectations. I accepted the situation and lived it as best as I possibly can. It was I who chose to marry this person and I did not want my siblings or any of my family thinking that I had brought reproach upon myself for going against my parents' wishes. They were against him, especially my dad. He came from a broken family. My dad was convinced that if you married someone from a broken family, you would end up with a broken family as well. But of course, I dismissed it as being a myth. I did what I believed a good wife should do which is not to hang her family's dirty linens for everybody to see. I did not tell my family, or anybody else for that matter, of his unfaithfulness. I kept it to myself. When I finally told my eldest son about it, he said, "I knew something was wrong." He explained that he had always heard it said that a marriage was not normal if there were no fights or arguments involved. I have never fought with him, so my children never really witnessed us fighting. My siblings suspected that there was something going on. They rebuked me for

not telling them. I kept it to myself not because I was protecting him, but I was actually protecting my children and the reputation that I was trying to build for myself – that I was beyond reproach. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

As Ligaya continued to share her struggles in her married life, I could not help but discern a sense of melancholic regret for what had happened between her and her husband. I could not help but notice from her pensive facial expression that there was a feeling of relief but nostalgia in her voice as she recalled her anguished experiences. She was almost teary-eyed as she was telling me her story. She continued:

We were together for twenty years. He was gone for the most part. He was always working abroad. Things started to go wrong when we began spending time together for longer time. He was restless. He went from one business to another. He didn't want to be told what to do. Whenever he would consult me about a business venture, I would play the devil's advocate because I wanted him to look at all the angles before he plunged into something. I cannot just tell him all positive. Then he would tell me that I do not support him at all. This was about the only argument that we would have. That and how we raised our children. We did not see eye-to-eye about child rearing. But even though I never told any of my family what was going on between the two of us, I told his family. I told his family everything. My family never really confronted me. They also never asked me. Not even with my younger sister, that I became very close to, I never really told her anything. You know, if he did not do anything really damaging, I could have made it work. I would have been able to live it out. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Looking at her melancholic face, I could not help but sense a deep feeling of lament and regret in the way she was telling her story. But just like what she said, she did what she had to do, for the interest of her own sanity. However, I also wondered if there was still a feeling of love and yearning towards her husband. I also wondered if she was trying to fight it. Whatever the feeling was, I felt that she was not ready to fully disclose the story of what really happened. I began to wonder what really had happened. She explained:

I really feel that there's nothing between us anymore. He did not want to come to the states on the pretext that he would not have anything to do here; that he was better off where he was, especially because he was starting a new business with a friend. I have learned not to trust him and berating him over the phone was easier than saying it to his face: "I have always followed you. But where has it led me? For once, let me take the lead. This is what I think it good for us. If you do not want to go the road I am traveling, we might as well part ways. What is the point of staying together if we cannot be united toward the same goal?" At that time, I was uncertain of my feelings for him. I was not sure whether I still loved him or whether I was just trying to save our marriage. I know that I can be capable of loving and forgiving a person who has done me wrong. I had forgiven him of this infidelity earlier in our marriage and had accepted him back. I was trying to save our marriage. Not only for my kids but also for my reputation. I knew that it was also good to have a stable family with a mother and a father for the interest of my three children. Fortunately, my children didn't have a hard time adjusting when my husband left us because they never really bonded with their father. They do

not miss him. Actually, I think they are better off without their father. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

Ligaya expressed an unfathomable sense of exhaustion and fatigue from the recurring mistakes her husband did to her and her family. As she was sharing her story, Ligaya expressed that her feelings were validated as she enumerated the psychological, emotional and financial incapacities her husband possessed. She continued:

My husband was an escapist. He was always separated from his family—from us. He went to many places---Thailand, Yemen, and Singapore. He’s a musician. My husband said if he would go home to be with us, then we won’t have money. His priority was making money. We were second fiddle. He was never good with our children. He was negligent. He did it to himself. He decided to leave us. I could have made it work. Here in the states, he had no work because he was not allowed to work as my dependent. But then who could argue with that? Again, it was just a matter of role reversal – I am the breadwinner now, he could certainly be the “house dad” until he can be gainfully employed. I was really annoyed because he was being lazy here. But then, as I want to do to keep bad feelings at bay, I would rationalize: his feeling of worthlessness comes from his frustration at being jobless; not really lazy, only immobilized by depression. He always wanted to have a big income. I often tried rationalizing and finding excuses for him. But I had no regrets that he left. For me, his leaving was the best thing--because of what he did. I was really furious. At first, I was so mad that I would kick the kitchen cabinets in the house. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

As I tried to ask Ligaya of what her husband did that put a halt to their relationship, I sensed a feeling of distress and forestalling. It seemed that she was not disposed to reveal it or trust me with the whole story. She said she wanted to keep it confidential. I certainly understood and respected that. That was during our second interview. After several weeks, Ligaya and I met at a party, and then we had a chance to talk to each other and with another common friend of ours. We talked, laughed, and shared our funny as well as tearful stories. That was the time when she revealed the secret that she was holding deeply in her heart. She had shared it with me with a deep sense of trust and conviction that I would never betray her or her children. I promised her I would never tell a soul. I would also keep it tightly sealed in my heart; and I am definitely going to keep it that way.

Stories of Being Female. In one of our conversations, Ligaya emphasized that although the history of women all over the world showed women as marginalized, she said she did not feel the marginalization in any way.

My mom was always a strong woman. She did everything that she wanted to do.

There are seven women in my family. All of them are strong. I do not feel marginalized in any way. I have always been with strong women. It had been engrained in me that you are human, whether you are male or female. (Interview 1, 09/21/10)

During one of our conversations, Ligaya shared that she had never felt mediocre just because she was a female. She explained how Filipino culture respects women. She added that in the pre-Hispanic times, women were held as equals with men. They had important roles in the tribes. If the chief were a male, the wife would sit in council with

the leaders. She was absolutely right. It was only during the Spanish colonization that the role of women changed to being inferior to and subservient to men.

When asked about a literary work, song or movie that had a profound impact on her, she said she needed some time to think about it. She said it was difficult for her to pinpoint one that had inspired her or that she could relate with. She said she attributed this challenge to her predilection to reading fantasy stories and her ‘not being a reflective reader.’ She explicated:

Try as I may, I do not have any recollection of a literary work or song having had a profound impact on me. It could be because my choice of genre is fantasy and children’s fiction and because I am not a reflective reader. I read for the sheer joy and satisfaction of reading that it brings at the moment I am reading. I read for the rhythm and sound, the way phrases and sentences are crafted, the images conjured by those words. Except for the “plot was gripping but the craft was poor,” I have not passed any critical judgment on any literary work that I was properly engaged in. (Interview 2, 11/3/10)

As she continued to share, Ligaya explained how she would read stories that have women main characters in them. She explained:

The last one that I read was *The Secret Life of Bees*, which I had to buy for my son for his advanced literature class as a reading for women’s literature. I had watched the movie, which was a very faithful rendition of it. It was a story of a fourteen year old, Lily, who left her neglectful father to find her mom’s identity and to understand her mother’s death. She traveled with their black maid/housekeeper. The setting was in South Carolina, I think. It talked about

black emancipation/suffrage rights during the 1960's. It seems like women draw from an inner wellspring of strength. Those who do seem to know that they are beings complete in themselves and seem to recognize the same spirit in others, and affirm it, or otherwise lead other women into finding that wellspring in themselves. (Interview 2, 11/3/10)

Reflecting on the two books/movies that Ligaya shared, she expressed that she was able to generate her own positive perceptions of being a woman. She explained how she thought only women could whole-heartedly relate to the experiences of other women.

She mentioned:

You could say that women are kindred spirits. Only women will truly celebrate or mourn with women. I do not have deep emotions about what I read. They just reaffirm what I already know about women or what I think women can be if they turn to themselves, instead of outside for answers. Even if you have very deep emotions, if you tell them to men, they cannot relate. But if you talk to women, they can relate and they can offer words of comfort. (Interview 2, 11/3/10)

Ligaya explained to me how she maintains an affirmative stance in life despite the many struggles and excruciating pain she has experienced. She said:

I never dwell in sadness. That's why I never think of ways to cope. I usually stay away from conflict, negative feelings and problems. I also feel loneliness, I sometimes question why this happened to my life, but it's only momentarily. I am not disposed to introspection. I rationalize to find the logic behind things. It's by grace, by nature that I am like that. This is the way I find sense in what happened.

Somehow, it makes it easier to accept the things that happen that way. (Interview 2, 11/3/10)

Although I admired Ligaya's positive thinking of not wallowing herself to sadness and desolation, I also could not help but wonder whether it was also her way of escaping reality. I was concerned when she said that she just wanted to rationalize instead of introspect on her experiences. I wonder if it would create a different feeling or perspective, had she began to reflect on not only why things happened the way they did, but also how she will move on from those experiences.

Contemplating on the Present: Teaching Experiences in Maryland

Professional Teacher Identity Transformation

During one of our conversations about her motivation to teach in Maryland, she shared that those decisions that she made as a wife and as a mother put her and her family in jeopardy financially. She also explained how she was married to someone who did not have faith in her abilities and reluctantly supported her in her career goals and aspirations. She was actually teaching at a local high school known for its outstanding academic programs for the best and the brightest students in the Philippines. Although she said she loved her job teaching her young geniuses, she explained that the salary she was receiving was not enough for the growing needs of her children. She said she realized that in order to support her family financially; she had to find another employment that would alleviate her financial quandary. At that point in her life, she said she knew that if she would leave the science high school, there was no where else to do but leave town, or the country per se. For her, that was the only way. She started to search for employment in the U.S. She said it was her own decision. She admitted she

did not confer with her husband about it thinking that he would just contradict with her plans. She recalled:

Although I told my husband of my plans, I did not ask for his opinion. I wanted to be more in control of my financial affairs. I wanted to be able to give my children stability. I had friends in the science high school that had gone to Texas to teach. It was possible. So, I interviewed with three different employment agencies. In each instance, a human resource representative from the recruiting districts interviewed applicants. I was promised a job in South Carolina in two years. This was from the agency that placed my friends in Texas. With this one, I didn't have to worry about the financial obligations necessary to get placement. I was okay with the two-year wait because I was working on my Masters and that would be just perfect timing. But then, a friend invited me to join her at a job orientation seminar at another agency. I went. She didn't. At the orientation, we were told up front what the process was and what the schedule of fees was like. It was exorbitant – around half a million pesos total, (around \$12,000). There was a preliminary interview by a representative of the Philippine agency, mostly to gauge how well we spoke English. We were called back to interview with either the HR officer or two others from MAPS. After that, we were placed on priority listing, which were to leave that year. But this was dependent on passing Praxis 1 and Praxis 2, the two examination requirements. This meant that even if you were on the 2005 list but if you did not pass the Praxis exams, you could lose your spot to someone on the 2006 list who passed both exams. One exam cost about half of one month's salary in pesos. I used my Christmas bonus to pay for these exams.

The rest of the money that were due Arrowhead agency I had to loan from family (interest-free) and from the agency itself with interest. (Interview 2, 11/3/10)

Ligaya expressed that owning up to her own decision of migrating to the U.S. was a perilous but an astute decision to upgrade her family's financial state of affairs. She also expressed that her deep yearning to support her children and endow them with a better opportunity of life motivated her to leave a place or work that was very dear to her and moved to a place she had never been before.

Ligaya shared that her experience as she applied for a job in the U.S. was a challenging feat. She described how she endured the rigorous interview process, challenging examinations and most importantly, the arduous task of borrowing money to cover the placement fee. She said she was fortunate that she had family members who were willing to help and lend her the amount she needed to accomplish her goal of working in the U.S. This gesture would show how 'close-knit' Filipino families would reach out and help one another, which was one of the many values passed on from one generation to the next.

Ligaya shared that she is a well-read woman. Having taught Black Literature in the Philippines, she admitted that she had a wide exposure to reading and synthesizing literary genres written by Black poets and writers. She expressed that this experience had conjured and invoked a positive perspective about Blacks in general. However, other than her academic literary exposure, she said she had no personal exposure with Black people in the Philippines, so she still regarded her knowledge of them as crude and limited. She explained:

Since we never had encounters of Blacks, I didn't know anything about them. Although I've been hearing from my uncle who was living in California said that Blacks get into trouble because they also have negative attitudes. But then, I have a sister who had a Black suitor. I only hear good things about him. Also, the HR who hired us, explained to us that the county where we would be teaching, is the most affluent Black community in the U.S. When I came here, I observed these children to be lacking in manners. They were in 7th grade. I was their Reading Language and Arts teacher. They were unmotivated. I came from a school for the talented and gifted, the brain school, and then I came here. Can you just imagine? It was a huge drop. I taught Black Literature in the Philippines. For me, in any culture, there are some people are lazy, racist, etc. The new generations of Black now have attitudes. I've read some articles that some Blacks are discriminatory against others. In the Philippines, racism was unheard of. What we have is interracial discrimination. But there's this notion that being fair-skinned is better, more beautiful. Thus, the proliferation of skin-whitening products! Meztizas (white-complexion) are better. That's the thinking. (Interview 2, 11/3/10)

Ligaya admitted that her notion and perception of Black people were influenced by two things— her own experiences as a teacher of Black Literature, and as a teacher of Black students, in which she had two different lenses. As a teacher of Black Literature, she explained that she perceived Black writers and poets as intelligent human beings writing about their marginalized culture but passionate about their roots. Using the lens of an English teacher of seventh grade Black students, she expressed her frustration on how her students view learning. She admitted she perceived them as 'unmotivated and

uncouth' compared to her students in the Philippines who were unrealistically motivated and urbane.

Unwelcomed Reception: Whatever Happened to Teacher Support? Ligaya admitted that her first year in the U.S. was the greatest challenge, not because she missed her children but because she had to adjust to an entirely new school system without support from administration. She described how they never had a welcoming reception. She continued that some of the teachers from the same cohort were welcomed, but she and other Filipino teachers assigned to the same school were never really welcomed. She said they arrived in their assigned schools two weeks before the end of the first quarter, so she thought it was mockery. She said she had to make grades although she was placed just before the end of the first quarter. She said her colleagues were somehow sympathetic but her administrators were not supportive at all. She said she stayed in that school for a year then she moved to another school as an ESOL teacher.

I reported at my assignment toward the end the first quarter (October), clueless about everything, except that we had to have reading group rotations and that the kids needed love, gentleness, kindness, etc. I was determined to make this right because my own children's future depended on my success here in America. That was my greatest challenge – searching ways, trying different things to engage my unmotivated 7th grade students, who were very ill prepared for the curriculum that I had to follow. One day, I thought I blew my chances, when I crumpled and tossed a belligerent student's Math homework paper at him. As was the practice in the Philippines, I first informed the principal about this sticky situation, for

advice and to be assured of his support. Instead he told me I could lose my job.

Fortunately, the child's dad understood the whole situation. (Interview 2, 11/3/10)

Finally, I became an ESOL Teacher! Ligaya admitted that after a challenging year as a middle school reading and language arts teacher, she was fortunate to be assigned to a new position—as an ESOL teacher. She continued to share that her journey towards the best thing that she loved, an unfamiliar feeling of excitement and bewilderment with English language teaching came about. She explained her daily routine:

A typical day begins with reviewing my objectives/activities for my different groups, prepare materials, check with my students' homeroom teachers about their learning activities for the day, and inform them about my plan. In the morning, I would be in the cafeteria for fifteen minutes to monitor children eat their breakfast. I pull out three K group of 5-6 students in a group (16 total), 2 first grade groups (11 students total), one 4th grade group (9 students), and one 5th grade group (seven students). In the primary, I group my students according to proficiency levels. I only have one group in each grade level in the intermediate grades and they are of mixed proficiency levels. All of my students, except for a 4th grader and a 5th grader, are always eager to come to ESOL. At the beginning of the year, we tried to build our schedules around grade-level collaboration time; however, as newcomers came and we had to create classes for them, we had to adapt. We started planning over the phone, or emailing them with my plan for the day. I stopped asking what the class would be doing next week when a couple of teachers told me not to ask them to plan that way ahead. There is only one teacher in my building who is not open to team planning, nor to alternative ways of

teaching science concepts to ESOL students who are struggling with complex science texts. All the rest are easy to work with and welcome and even seek suggestions. (Interview 2, 11/3/10)

Compared to her previous job as a middle school language arts teacher, Ligaya said she was happier and more contented of being an elementary ESOL teacher.

My Peak Teaching Experience. Ligaya also shared her peak experience in English language teaching in Maryland. It happened during the school year 2008-2009 when she was working on her final requirement for her masters program. She chose instructional material development. She said she wanted to create instructional materials that integrated science content and English language learning that a mainstream classroom teacher could use as well. The project required her to field-test the materials that she would make. She shared her plan with her fifth grade ESOL students' science teacher. She was willing to try them out in her class. Ligaya said she made the note-taking guides based on the science curriculum. She said her co-teacher did not like the materials. The teacher suggested that the method Ligaya used would be more effective in the reading language arts classroom. The science teacher said she might reconsider if Ligaya could accompany the worksheets with something akin to reading and language art's *Bringing Words to Life*, a vocabulary learning strategy that boosts the children's understanding of unfamiliar words. Ligaya said she was challenged by this request and so she persevered. She said she learned how to make PowerPoint presentations and tried to fuse worksheet and PowerPoint to make a multi-sensory instructional material. Both the science teacher and she worked together over the span of three quarters. Ligaya said she built her materials to suit both their teaching styles. She said the science teacher had a well-

established classroom system, which the students respected. She said she was aware of the fact that the success of the instructional materials depended on well-established classroom routine in an environment that encouraged risk-taking. Ligaya said that teacher was every ESOL teacher's ideal mainstream co-teacher. She said they ended with an instructional sequence that recognized the reciprocity of science content and language learning, and that respected the essential components of a science lesson: guided inquiry and introducing science vocabulary. They used content for oral language practice and, writing practice homework. By doing so, she said they were reinforcing important science concepts, which were essentially the science vocabulary. Ligaya described how their partnership was great and productive. She said she science teacher was constantly aware of her ESOL students and would report their successes with her and what she had done for them. In the end, Ligaya explained that her beginning level student won the science fair project for her grade level. Ligaya said she also got invited by her science curriculum writing team as a resource person for differentiating instruction where both she and the science teacher had the opportunity to present their instructional sequence and materials. She said it was the first time they had seen anything like it for science and ESOL. Ligaya expressed how she felt fulfilled and respected as a teacher. She said she was more ecstatic when the science teacher told her that the fifth grade science MSA scores showed an increase of thirty percent from the benchmark scores. She attributed it to their collaboration and their instructional sequence and materials. Ligaya continued to share that it was the same year that she had a student who literally sought her help, was willing to come an hour before school to work on projects. She said she grew in confidence and language proficiency. She expressed how those positive

experiences that she shared with me fueled her confidence and perception of herself as a good teacher. She also highlighted how teacher collaboration had worked effectively to achieve the goal of teaching students to the highest level. She said:

This experience gave me confidence to introduce ways to integrate content and language learning in the mainstream classroom, (e.g. co-teaching). Although this turned out not very feasible when you're handling multiple grades, it gave me the opportunity to get to know my co-teachers, their styles, and actually become friends with them. This positive experience was compounded when our ESOL district leaders thought that the ESOL quarterly assessments, which we were doing in Seabrook, would help other ESOL teachers in the county, and so invited my colleague and myself to present it in one of the ESOL chairperson's meeting.

(Interview 2, 11/3/10)

A Battle for Permanent Residency. Like Naruto, Halo and I, Ligaya admitted that she experienced struggle and apprehension as she battled for her permanent residency. It had been five years, and still, she has not received her labor certification document, a major requirement for filing of application for green card processing. Two years ago, she explained that her documents were audited by the U.S. Department of Labor. She explained that it was not her fault and that there was nothing she could do. It was not the fault of her employer either, she said. It was just that US immigration office would do random auditing every year to check if the employers abide by the rules and regulations required by law. It just so happened that her documents were randomly chosen. She admitted it was such a pain. She said that the lawyer told her that once her paper is in audit, no one can touch it until the next year of filing date. Ligaya said that one of the

major dilemmas was at that time; her eldest son was almost twenty one. Under the immigration law, when the child reaches twenty one years of age, he would lose his dependency status, which means that he has to find his own legal status in the U.S. The only status available for her son was the student-visa status. The bigger problem was that, under that status, the child would have to pay full tuition fee instead of in-state rate. Ligaya shared that she knew she could not afford it and so she had no other alternative but to send her son back to the Philippines. However, there was also a huge drawback. Once her son leaves the states, he could never go back, unless through a tourist visa.

I Found My Niche! Ligaya said she did not realize her emotions were ever extreme. It was even humorous when she joked that maybe her emotional quotient was not that great that she does not recognize the varying levels of emotions that she might be feeling. She mentioned that she had her extreme low moment in her teaching career on her first year of teaching in the U.S. when she taught regular reading language arts in middle school. After that year, she said she believed everything seemed to just go uphill for her. She said she knew she had found her niche! However, she remembered that she did have an episode with her principal who was a rookie principal at that time, over something mundane like reconfiguring ESOL grouping. She said she had gotten used to her previous principal who would accommodate requests like that without much ado. Ligaya continued to explain that her new principal thought that she had been neglectful in configuring her grouping before students were placed in their homerooms. The principal told her that she could read Ligaya's thoughts through her body language and it was saying 'this principal does not care about our concerns.' But according to Ligaya, what she was thinking was 'when am I going to get a straight answer?' So Ligaya told her

principal that she was not thinking those thoughts but the principal insisted that she was. It was then that Ligaya said she got the feeling that her principal did not like her or the ESOL program at all. She said she couldn't tell the difference. Ligaya shared how her principal would say things like, "How did that happen? I thought you said you were an advocate for these ESOL students?" And when Ligaya would start to explain, she'd say, "Uh-uh. It's done." Ligaya said she got the message. Ligaya shared that she felt that her principal wanted to tell her, although not directly: "You put me in this mess...transferring a kid from one homeroom to another, risking an irate parent." Ligaya said she knew this experience was a low point because she could still feel tears of frustration welling in her eyes. But even then she considered this as just a normal experience and not extreme. She further explained that her experience affirmed her self-image that she can stand up for what is right and true. She said she was not intimidated by her principal. She explained:

I took what she said about me with a grain of salt and persisted. We did not get all the transfers we needed to maximize instructional time. We had to make concessions: I pick my battles. I ask myself, "Can I live with my conscience with this arrangement?" "Will this decision matter in five years?" If I can honestly answer with a "yes" to the first question and a "no" to the second question, I raise my little white flag and retreat. Otherwise, I come back with a different plan. The thing is to keep yourself in the principal's good graces, build up your emotional bank account with her, and be guided by your job description. Make her feel she is in-charge. And keep your students' parents happy. (Interview 2, 11/3/10)

Upon finding her niche, Ligaya shared how she learned to dance with the music and to pick her battles. Although she learned some politicking issues in the school system the hard way, at least, she said she was able to pull herself together with integrity. Moreover, Ligaya continued to assert that she believes that she also learned to love her life in the states. She said she felt she was able to accomplish many things ever since she came to the U.S. She said:

I feel I have a niche here. In five years time, I have done and accomplished a lot. I finished my masters. I finished my national board. I taught a lot of students. I bought a house. (Interview 2, 11/3/10)

A Brook Steadily Flowing through the Rocks. Ligaya compares herself with a river constantly flowing, serving its purpose to flow naturally amidst all obstacles. She explained:

My life is like a river unrelenting in its journey toward the ocean. When the flow is blocked, it still tries to stay the course, but when the going gets tough, the river just carves a new course. As long as the river doesn't dry up, it will find the ocean. As long as I am alive, I will find a way around obstacles. (Interview 2, 11/3/10)

When asked whether she feels confident on how she handles her class everyday, she answered yes. She said she feels confident because she can see how her students are engaged in her class. She said she likes the way they participate in her class— how they are engaged and perform their tasks even though sometimes it's a bit challenging for some of them. She continued to explain in detail how she experienced challenges on her first year of teaching as an ESOL teacher.

During my first year, I was a bit overwhelmed. But that was because I was new. Later on I was able to adjust. In the Philippines, we didn't have students who didn't know how to speak English. At first I didn't know how to handle different levels, fix the documents, etc. It was really overwhelming. I requested my principal if I could shadow an ESOL teacher from another school. I observed an ESOL teacher for half a day. He helped me out a lot. I learned a lot on how to pull out students and do the scheduling. I was the only ESOL teacher at that time. Rasheeda, my mentor, helped me out to schedule my ESOL students on my first year. She helped me with many things. She was very encouraging. I love Rasheeda. (Interview 2, 11/3/10)

Ligaya continued to share how she was very pleased with the teaching materials she has in her classroom. She continued that unlike in the Philippines where she had to buy used books from her own pocket to give to her students, the public school system in the states provides everything that the students need, from books to computers and other resources that enhance learning.

I have a laptop, a visualizer, and a projector. I have a beautiful classroom with a bathroom and a sink. I have a lot of books. I had a video cam because I was in the STEP technology team. It stayed with me for the whole year. (Interview 2, 11/3/10)

Furthermore, Ligaya gave a comparison and contrast of her teaching style in the states and in the Philippines. At the beginning of the school year, she said she had established routines. She called it the ESOL class pledge. She said she knew how important it was for classroom management in her class in the United States. She added that in the

Philippines, classroom management was never an issue. She said it was probably cultural because it was almost absolutely expected that Filipino children give high respect to authority, particularly their teachers. Ligaya shared that she learned about classroom management issues when she attended a workshop at an international school in the Philippines, which was a school for the rich and famous, according to her. She said they have had students who were difficult to manage. She admitted that was the only time she learned about classroom management. She said it was not really a problem for our students in the Philippines. She explained:

I know how important classroom management is in the states so at the beginning of the school year, I really tried to establish it. It was my first time to teach elementary levels because I was exposed to teaching high school students in the Philippines. I learned how to be explicit in my lessons and a lot of modeling several times to my younger kids. I was surprised that I had a lot of patience with little kids. They're so cute. If they make mistakes, I can easily forgive. (Interview 2, 11/3/10)

When asked about her perception on good teaching. She said:

Good teaching is when students are engaged. You plan the activity and then the students get engaged. Then they turn in work that exceeds your expectations. You were able to draw that out. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

She continued to describe how she does a pullout and plug-in session with her students; and how she groups them for differentiated instruction. She explained that in the past, she based her groups and schedules only on her students' scores. Later on in the year, she said she makes adjustments in grouping. She said she usually waits until first

quarter to change groups. She said she usually adjusts it depending on the needs of individual students. But sometimes she said she has a problem with behavior especially if they are all boys. She also asserted that she has the same expectations for everybody. She has the same objectives for everyone, but during assessment she looks at the needs of the students. She said she only spends less time with her advanced kids and focuses on students at the beginning levels of proficiency. For example, in putting a sentence together, she said she gives the same activity, the same objective, but the advanced kids get longer and more complex sentences than the beginning and intermediate level kids.

Science and Language—A Perfect Combination. Ligaya also shared a specific experience when she collaborated with a mainstream classroom teacher in a science class. She said she believed that if a teacher is confident in her own teaching, then she would have no problem collaborating with another adult in the room.

I remember plugging-in in a science class. I also needed to assert myself. For example, when the classroom teacher is confident, she is very welcoming. Then she would even ask for my suggestions and very open in accepting it. However, when the teacher is not comfortable with working with others, they just give out worksheets. It's very difficult to deal with those teachers. Honestly, I am having a problem with it. One time, when I pulled out my kids, one teacher told me that she gets distracted when I pull them out. She didn't want me to come in. I understand that sometimes I need to give support for at least an hour. I like to do pull out better when it's primary. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya continued to share that there is a problem with ESOL in her school. Every year, it's a different problem, according to her. This year, it's about compromising

between the ESOL and the mainstream teachers, she said. She explained that according to the mainstream teachers, children need to finish the worksheets required of them, so they ask ESOL teachers to finish them inside the ESOL classroom. However, the ESOL teacher also has to teach her lesson. Ligaya expressed how she really has to balance her teaching schedule especially for the testing grades.

When I have intermediate students I do less pull out and more plug-in. When we have to write Brief Constructed Response (BCR), I pull them out because there's a lot of opportunity to work with language. My project in my Master's program was collaborative teaching with my mainstream classroom science teacher. There was really a huge collaboration. I talked with my science teacher. I taught her Kinsella teaching vocabulary. After school we often always debriefed. I was always in the classroom as she was teaching her class. We focused on the concepts. We made a lot of examples. She and I made suggestions to each other. It's not only for the ESOL students but for the whole class. At first it was very difficult. She's a very hands-on type of teacher. At first she was telling me that the vocabulary worksheet I created was boring. So I asked her opinion of how else I can make it more interesting. She suggested bringing words to life. I created PowerPoint presentations. To make the vocabulary words animated and lively. I embedded video clips and animations with it. She really liked it. The kids enjoyed them. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya said that she also suggested to her mainstream teacher that students should be assessed in language so it is important to have a language objective as well as the content

objective. She mentioned that when the mainstream teacher realized that she knew what she was talking about, the teacher became very open and receptive to her suggestions.

I told her that whatever the language objective is, that should also be the language feedback. For example, if the language objective include tenses, then when they write their essays, we should check on the use of their tenses, also when they respond to the questions as they were speaking orally. It took a lot of courage. I shared it with the other ESOL people. I also had an opportunity to share it with the science department since my co-teacher writes curriculum for science. But that teacher is not with us anymore she moved to another school. My principal didn't like her that much. I feel that sometimes my principal does not like people who challenge her. She has insecurities. Our science fair was great when she was there. Then when she left, we didn't have science fair anymore. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

The Feeling of Not Being Recognized. Ligaya admitted she felt thwarted when the science teacher left. She said they were such a great team working collaboratively together. She said she knew they could have done more wonderful lessons together.

What I liked about my science teacher was she recognized my hard work and she gave credit to the project that we had on the increase of the Science MSA score. It has increased to 30%; from the benchmark to the testing itself. Then we saw each other in STEP technology training. She introduced me to her friends and co-teachers. She then asked me if the principal told me that our school received an award due to that increase in science score. Of course I was very happy, but I was

sad that my principal did not even tell me anything or did not even recognize the increase in the science score. She only celebrated the reading and math scores.

(Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya expressed how frustrated she was with her principal who did not recognize the efforts her teachers had done for the students and for the entire school. She continued in saying that she believed that the science teacher left because she felt her efforts were never valued and that the principal never recognized her hard work.

When Ligaya was describing characteristics of good teaching, she emphasized that collaboration is a very essential key to a good teaching practice. There should be openness and receptivity between and among the teachers; and each one should know each other's needs, according to her. She gave a specific example when this notion had manifested in her ESOL class.

I had a 1B child. My co-teacher worked with my ESOL kids. She strengthened my ESOL kids' work. One of my ESOL students won first place in the Science fair. She was a very diligent child. Then the mainstream teacher, this science teacher helped her out and motivated her to win. I was very proud. I always helped her out too. Her project was about pollution. She won because her project was different than the rest. Collaboration is really the key. The problem is it takes a lot of effort and dedication. Who would do it? Who would like to spend extra time doing those things? My science co-teacher was a very popular teacher because not only she's hands-on and creative. She even gave her phone number to her students and told them that when they have problems with homework, they could call her at night. Who would do that? She should actually be nominated as

teacher of the year in our county. She's really an amazing teacher. Then the following year, I asked the teacher who replaced her if she wanted to co-teach with me so we can do the same thing again this year to another set of kids. But she didn't like it. She was not excited with the idea. So anyway, I just found another teacher, the first grade teacher. So now the materials that my science teacher and I created were just not being used anymore. What a waste! I was a laid back person but I needed to be courageous and assertive in order for me to become an advocate in teaching science for ELLs. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Again, Ligaya admitted that she was frustrated that her principal never did even say any words of encouragement or recognized the success of the student and those of the teachers that helped the students succeed. She continued that that "even if you are passionate and an advocate, it's really challenging if the mainstream teacher is not in the same boat." She said:

When I gave a presentation with the science mainstream teachers, I told the teachers to ask the help of their ESOL teachers because many of us are just waiting to be asked. Then they said not all teachers are like me. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Why Are You Questioning My Advocacy? When asked how important it is for her to gain respect from her administrators and staff members, she said:

As an ESOL teacher, I know my students' needs not only intellectually but also emotionally, so it is very important that I share the same lens in dealing with these kids. There are some teachers who are not even aware of what the ELLs need. So they just wanted to let them complete worksheets all the time. That's really sad.

One time my principal questioned my advocacy with my ESOL kids. The principal forgot to call the ESOL teachers and special education people to help in determining the placement of the students. The following year, there were three students who were isolated in one classroom. I was asking her permission if I could just transfer the children so I can contain them in just one class. But she didn't like it. She questioned my advocacy. I honestly didn't remember how it actually happened, I mean how those students were placed but then it was only my principal got mad at me that I realized it was really her fault. We gave the lists to the assistant principal. I didn't know what happened during the placement. She didn't call us anyway. I emailed her. I told her that we waited for a call. But then again, I was not called. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya shared that she clearly felt her principal did not only trust her judgment, but also insulted her by questioning her advocacy as an ESOL teacher. She said her principal blamed her for something the mistake she did not make. When asked how her co-teachers view ESOL students, she told me an incident involving a fourth grade teacher who often told her that her ESOL students get low grades because they don't finish their worksheets when Ligaya pulls them out. She explained to that teacher that those students also need to be tested in ESOL that's why we also need to study their ESOL curriculum instead of just doing the worksheets. She told the mainstream teacher that whatever concepts they are having a hard time with just let her know and she will work with the children to reinforce their learning. She continued:

I told her that ESOL kids have very limited language. If you give them a lot of materials at the same time, it will overwhelm them. So whatever is the most

difficult and important concept, then that's the one we will focus on. So she understood. But she still continued with the worksheets. She doesn't differentiate her instruction in her class she would just teach in a whole group and then quiz. Without even checking whether everyone got it or not or if they have questions or anything. Another thing is with other teachers, when they see me at the door, they would tell their students "Mrs. O's class, please line up at the door." but with her, she would just look at me and won't even do or say anything. I would have to find timing when I could ask, "may I please take them now?" (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya also shared how she managed to deal with teachers who were adamant of releasing their children for ESOL pullout classes. Even though they already had an agreement since the beginning of the school year that she would pullout the ESOL kids at a certain time period, she said that the teacher would still make a big deal out of it, especially this one teacher:

She's very strict. It seems that she didn't want me to pick up my kids. I talked to her, I said in order for me not to interrupt the teacher, whenever my kids see me at the door, they will just slowly move out of the room, that way, there is minimal interruption. So it's like, in secret I would get my kids. Then before I know it, another kid would come out and hand her the worksheets that Mrs. Miller want them to finish. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya continued in saying that she just thought of showing this teacher some of students' work samples so she won't question what the students were doing in her class. She said she felt that the teacher was thinking the ESOL students were not really doing anything when they go to ESOL. She continued to share about a specific incident she

had with one of the teachers who would love to send worksheets for the ESOL kids to complete during the ESOL class. She recalled:

One time, I suggested if this teacher can just use the grade that my students did in the ESOL class, but most of the teachers don't want to do portfolio assessment. I would sometimes accept the worksheets and say "we might have sometime to work on them, so we will try our best to finish the worksheets." Then I compromised with her. I suggested for her to write a sentence frame on the board when she asks my students to formulate sentences, because that would be a good strategy to help them get started. My ESOL kids in her class were the quiet types, so they really need all the help that they could get. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Having negative experiences with several mainstream teachers about handling ESOL students, Ligaya said that she realized that the best way to deal with the problem is to compromise, and to balance her own teaching schedule.

Bucket-Filling Program: It's My Baby. Although there were unfortunate collaborative experiences in her school, Ligaya shared her experiences when her co-teachers demonstrated their support on her. She said her principal was interested with character education. Her principal asked if there was anyone who wanted to attend character education workshop, and so Ligaya volunteered. "In the Philippines, we teach values and character education and so I was inspired to do it." She continued to explain how their school got the grant for character education program.

We got a grant of \$1000 for incentives for students, but then we had to use it up in three days. In the proposal, we needed to incorporate specific details on how we will incorporate it to the school improvement plan. One week before the

beginning of the school year, I emailed my principal that we needed to start introducing the character education program, and so I would have to present it with the teachers during the in-service training. I contacted Mr. Moody, the coordinator to come to our school and help present to us. I admitted that we really didn't know how to start. He could not present but just met with us so he can take a look at our program. Four of us were in the character education program. He gave us resources, websites, books about character education. There should be a "buy-in" from the whole staff. Some would be reluctant to do it because they would think that it would just be another thing that they are required to do. But if they would understand the value of it and infuse it in the curriculum, not an isolated entity, then it would work. He suggested starting only with three or four virtues so teachers and students won't get overwhelmed. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

She continued to share that she researched about character education from different schools. Then she said they started with the *Bucket-filling Program*. She continued that the whole staff was actually familiar with the bucket-filling program because they talked about the topic at the beginning of the school year as a motivating factor for them. She said that the principal started the whole concept. She explained that her principal gave each one of them a bucket then they wrote down the positive things that their colleagues did. That way, they can always refill their buckets by doing positive things for others—using the philosophy that people can dip in your bucket by doing things that are negative, but you can always refill your bucket by doing positive things for others. She said her principal got the concept from a book that she read. Ligaya said her principal was happy because what the faculty is doing, the kids can do too. Ligaya shared that her principal

was really sold out with the idea. It was like serendipity, she said. Then, as Ligaya was researching about it, she found a book for kids by Jean McLeod— “Have You Filled a Bucket Today?” Ligaya said she used that book as another source. She said her principal was glad that they supported her bucket filling idea for the whole school. Ligaya said she presented her concept in front of the whole staff. She said everyone appreciated it. She recalled:

My principal’s weakness was seeing the presenters with the technology piece. So I did my best, I really worked hard working on a PowerPoint presentation. I was very laid back and shy. I told my co-teacher Kirsten, to present it. But then she said, “NO. It’s your baby. You should present it.” So I did. I was not very confident as a speaker. I knew I could not do it spontaneously, so the night before I really sat down, wrote down my speech and studied what I had to present. I really prepared for it. They had to “buy in” to the idea. Like in teaching, in order for students to “buy in,” they must really have an investment with the things that you’re asking them to do. If you involve them in the planning, then they invest with their task. So I edited my presentation a lot to suit the staff’s needs. I looked at a lot of PowerPoint from ESOL. I got inspired with the animations so I used them in mine as well. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya shared how successful she was with her presentation. Although there were some apprehensions about the program, she said that many of the teachers were excited about the concept. Ligaya continued to explain in detail how she managed to keep the program going with the help of her committee members.

We voted for the core virtues--moral and ethical virtues such as honesty, responsibility, caring and respect. We started October. We started with a bang so there's an impact. We bought a quilt, I pack of twenty five squares. There was an Umbrella theme: Friendship- A friend is honest, responsible, caring and respectful. So we called that quilt "Friendship Quilt". Then the children wrote what friend is to them, and then they drew something in each square. Every child contributed a square per class. Then we distributed a pack of squares per class then they made it into their art grade. Then we had a Character education kick off. We read the book "Bucket Filling", there was the board, and they had a friendship flag. After the quilt packs were distributed to every class, each class put it together, and then the whole school put it together. We hanged the huge quilt in the hallway the whole year round. Then in the opposite wall, we had the character hall of fame. Each class voted the character virtue of the month, then they voted, for example honesty, "who's the most honest in their class that month?" Then peers voted. Then I took the pictures of the winners and placed them on the character wall of fame. I did that with our guidance counselor. We did it per class. There were seventeen classes in all. We recognized them in the morning TV announcement. We gave each winner a character education certificate and a virtue bracelet. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya explained that they just started with one grade level at first, and then when it became successful, they decided to do it for the whole school. This year, she said they started the boards for every class. Ligaya was elated that her principal loved the whole

idea. Ligaya said she was very glad her principal finally gave her full support on the project. She continued:

My principal said it was impressive. My principal became very supportive. We can be officially a bucket filling school then we would hang a streamer in our school. All the teachers bought in the idea. They all agreed to do it. I told them that we were already teaching character education in literature, so it's already embedded, the main difference is that the whole school community is doing a uniform character ed. Then we have this cry: "WHO CARES? OUR SCHOOL CARES!" We had an assembly then we introduced the program, why bucket filling. Everyone was excited! I just hoped the principal would be more involved. I emailed her if she wanted to reinforce the "who cares phenomenon" on the announcements in the afternoon but when my assistant principal left, no one announces it anymore, so I think I need to remind her again. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya also shared that she wanted to start an action research, which would give her a solid data that would show the effectiveness of the character education program towards student achievement. She said she was really fired up to continue managing the program and even to spread it around the county.

My Principal's Mixed Emotions of Me. When asked what her principal's perception of her as a teacher and as a person, she said:

I don't know. Sometimes I get mixed perceptions, but I also believe that she also respects my views as a teacher and as a person. She's just trying to do her job too. Although she never really bothers me but I just felt that I needed more support

from her when I did my National Board. I requested her if I could pull out my testing grade so I can videotape them for my lesson for my national board video requirement. But she didn't allow me. She said they couldn't be disturbed and pulled out from class because they were preparing for the MSA test. I told her that my lesson is also paralleled with their review in class because I would also be doing practice in BCRs. (brief constructed response). She didn't allow me. But what bothered me was when she said: "I don't take my chances with BCR. I need those students in the computer lab and do the study island program with their teacher." (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya shared that she felt frustrated and disappointed about her principal's lack of support in what she does for her students and her school. She said:

When she wouldn't let me teach the testing grade, I turned to first grade students. I had to do my National Board. I had to be successful so with the classroom management, I did everything possible to make the kids and myself successful. I learned a lot of things in national board. It's really about becoming better at your craft. It's really reflecting on your craft as a teacher so you can teach and understand your students better, that way you become a better teacher. It's not just a job. It's about lives of children. I also believe that a teacher can be an influence for good or bad. I felt my ability and knowledge as a teacher improved a lot and even became deeper with those learning. Although I felt I pushed my kids hard too. But I knew they had a lot more to give. There's really nothing a child cannot do as long as the teachers prepare them for their tasks. So I am proud if I have a

difficult project and then they were able to do it. I really give them a popcorn party, which they really love. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya expressed how we as teachers convey an identity that says “the depth of our job is really not tantamount to our paycheck.” She said that we have an assumption that we give more than what is required of us to do. She also added that we as teachers presume that it’s never commensurate. She also said that we construct professional identities that reinforce the notion that the reward is never monetary but mostly seeing our students learning and growing. She also mentioned being frustrated by some colleagues who she interpreted as vilifying their own students and alluded to as having very poor perceptions of their own children in school.

I often heard my colleagues who referred to some kids as child from hell, child of the devil. Even in my lowest moments, I would never imagine myself referring to any child like that. In my mind, if you’re calling your kids like that, it means you have given up on them, and then it’s better not to teach anymore. So even if I really struggled, I still endured. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

My American Best Friend. When asked what her colleagues think of her as a person, she said that she never really had any close relationship among her colleagues because everything is just on the professional level, except for Ms. K, her best friend in school. She said:

Ms. K. always shares with me her angst, her opinions, and her life... I am her sounding board. Then I also share myself with her. She knows my struggles with finances as well as my worries with my children. We always share and cheer each other up. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya expressed she was glad that she could rant together with her buddy in school. She said she felt that she had gained her friend's trust. "She can trust me as a person. I am blessed because I didn't have to stay long that I am alone in ESOL. I can easily find friends. The people I work with, I can relate with; they can relate with me."

Ligaya shared that she never did have any specific experience in her school when issues about culture hindered her relationship with her co-teachers. She said:

It doesn't matter from what culture you are from. If you are my friend, whether you're Filipino or American, if I feel I would like to share my life, I would. And if I feel I don't want to, that I just want to keep it to myself, and then I will not share it with any of you. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Furthermore, Ligaya also talked about her students' perception of her as their teacher. She said:

I think my students love me. I have some reluctant learners, that no matter how hard you try it's still nothing. I think all ESOL students respect their teachers. Actually the fact that you pick them up, bring them to your classroom, they would go back to their mainstream class with stickers and all, they feel special; I feel they're always excited to go with me. So I tell them to keep whatever I give them. I tell them if your classmates see that, they will feel bad. They follow and obey. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

She continued to talk about her parents' perceptions about her. She said:

The parents trust me as an ESOL teacher. There was a time when we needed to transfer one child to another class. My principal said I should be the one to talk to the parent because when she was the one who talked with the parent, the parent

refused. I explained the advantages of moving the child from one classroom to another, and so I was able to convince the parent. I felt she really trusted my expertise. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Oh, You Can Be Fired for That. When talking about one of her low points in teaching in the states, Ligaya remembered an incident when she was a middle school teacher when she taught reading language arts. She talked about an incident with a student that almost got her fired.

One time, I got mad with a student who was deliberately doing his math homework during my lesson. I told him, “Do not do your math homework in my English class.” But he did not stop. I got so annoyed with him, so I crumpled his paper and tossed it on him. He stood up and said to me, “Hit me Mrs. O, hit me!” Oh my Gosh! I realized I should’ve not done that. I called my principal and told him what happened. And you know what he told me? “Mrs. O, you can be fired for that.” He did not support or help me. So I emailed my mentor right away. Immediately the following day, he was there to support me. He said to me: “Did you really throw the paper to your student?” because throw is with force or was it just toss? I did not even realize that. So it was a toss not throw. There’s a big difference. He really encouraged and supported me. He spoke to my principal so that incident wouldn’t get into my permanent record. I was blessed because the next day when the father of the child called and asked me what really happened. I explained to him what happened. He understood so everything was fine. He didn’t complain anymore. He said he just wanted to get the facts straight. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Although she said she once again experienced a lack of support from her direct supervisor, Ligaya said she was glad that her mentor from the county came and supported her. When I asked whether her teaching experience in the Philippines contributed to her teaching success in the U.S. her response was:

No. It didn't. I had to re-learn everything when I came to teach in the county. I taught talented and the gifted students in the Philippines the whole of my teaching career so when I came here and I have a different set of learners, I had to re-adjust and re-learn a lot of things. The curriculum was very different here. In the Philippines, as teachers, we were given the requirements and the expectations that the students will learn at the end of the year. It was up to me on how I will execute my teaching or what strategies I would use as long as I can deliver what's expected of me. Here in MAPS, it was very different. Everything is by the book to the extent that teacher creativity is lost. I got used to creating my own curriculum, tailor-made to my students. There were no standardized tests because I taught in the private school and science high school. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

An Irony between Theory and Practice. Ligaya explained that although she believed that her teaching experience in the Philippines did not really help her in preparing herself to teach in the U.S. she said she realized that her educational experience did help her somehow.

My theoretical courses really helped, especially second language acquisition theories. There were educational research from the states that we study in the Philippines thinking that in those research, intervention were successful in the US, that's why we based our curriculum in the Philippines on these research, but to

my dismay, when I came to teach in the U.S. I see none of those research and theory, being used in practice. They have all these research but I found out from my own experience that American public school system does not really use the findings of their research in the actual teaching practice. They said each child is different, that they have different needs, different learning styles, but the irony was, and there is this step-by-step curriculum that has to be followed religiously. Although they would say differentiate your instruction, it's hard to do that because the curriculum is very structured. Theory versus practice. All the while I thought teachers in the U.S. do their own action research for example. To my surprise, there were only very rare groups of teachers in practice who do. Teachers should know how to research so they can see what interventions, or whether the program would work. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya continued to share how professional development courses and workshops she attended in the U.S. contributed to her effectiveness as a teacher:

Oh yes. Kate Kinsella vocabulary program for example. I really believed in that program. The underlying thing is that the size of the students' vocabulary is the prime indicator of success in school. So the cause there is to build deep structure of vocabulary. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

When I asked what motivated her to leave her country and teach in the U.S. public school, she admitted that it was really financial.

In the Philippines, we have this notion that America is the land of opportunity, so it's not only for me but most importantly for my children. I thought if they came here they would have more options. But then it was not that easy. You still need

money to do all those things. Well of course, education is free for K-12 but since I have grown up children, they had to go to college, which is really expensive here that's how I struggled. But my kids are happy and they like it here, so I am happy. But then again one of my children, who is now twenty four years old is in the Philippines because he cannot be my dependent anymore because he's over aged, and I am not yet an immigrant. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya also described what she thinks about her current school. She said that they have a very dedicated faculty who are willing to work overtime preparing for their lessons. She added that there are a lot of things to be improved in terms of administration, especially when it comes to teacher support and recognition. According to her, the students are starting to perform well and progress consistently. They have a good guidance counselor, she said. So in general, Ligaya said she thinks her school is in the right track. However, she continued to share that there is always a room for improvement. For example, parent involvement and principal leadership. She said:

Our school must focus more on parent involvement. Of course there has to be improvement in terms of principal leadership as well. Recognizing teachers' and students' achievements are key factors. If she cannot do that, at least try not to single out anyone or say any blind item during the faculty meeting, which alienates a lot. If we work hard, we also need to be recognized. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Anticipating the Future: Thinking What Lies Ahead about my Career

Despite the many challenges and subterfuge life had presented her, Ligaya expressed that she predicts a bright future ahead of her children and herself. When asked how she sees herself in ten years, she said:

In ten years, I am nationally board certified. I am mentoring NBPTS candidates. I am pursuing a doctoral degree in education and teach/train teachers in a college or university. I would like to be able to go back to the Philippines and start or join a summer teacher-training institute to share ideas and about second language acquisition. I will start with my old high school. I will perhaps collect discarded MAPS resources and ship them to the Philippines. I think I want to train teachers because I have a lot to share. I want to go back to the Philippines and probably teach in the university, teach teachers how to become teachers. Although I am not sure if I really want to retire in the Philippines, because the last time I went home, I didn't really enjoy it because it was so humid, warm and chaotic. I felt that I really didn't want to live there anymore. However, things might change. But if I have a higher aspiration, maybe I would go back there, get involved with projects towards teacher training, impart my understanding of second language learning, grassroots. I don't know how practical that is. But right now, I don't see myself going back home. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya expressed that she was working hard to complete her national board. She loved the idea of doing reflections for her own improvement. She said she realized that the good thing with Filipino teachers is that—"We are all competent, knowledgeable and

motivated in what we do.” She continued to hope that Filipino teachers would never lose sight of why they are in the U.S. and of why did MAPS hire them in the first place.

Ligaya emphasized that her motivation are her children, and that she never really think of herself anymore. When I asked her if anything had changed about her between now and the past, she said:

Nothing really changed, except I feel I am less sharp and less smart than I used to be. I taught gifted students in the Philippines so I was always on my toes. I often read interesting things then shared it with them. I read and analyzed things a lot; but now I felt I got stagnated here in the states. I miss my friends in the Philippines. We had the free will to include interesting things in our lessons. That’s what’s lacking here. Creativity is compromised. I don’t have anything like that here. That’s why sometimes I feel I am becoming dumb. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Ligaya expressed a sense of dissatisfaction and disappointment in her voice. She said she has a new life now in the states with her children. She said this life was the one she chose. She said she did what she had to do for the sake of her children even that would mean sacrificing her own intellectual and professional satisfaction and comfort. She also admitted she was missing her bright and refined students back home. She said she was missing the part of her that was motivating the motivated ones. She added that she was also missing her friends and their intellectual conversations. She shared how she was longing for something like that in her life in the U.S. She continued:

Except for a few more grey hairs, I do not see myself changing in the future. I am the type that doesn’t look too far into the future. I imagine that what I have now

will be constantly present in my life, and the changes that I expect to happen will happen, e.g. my kids going to college and following their dreams and me single once again – free to pursue anything that would strike my fancy – something not too difficult to hurdle. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

I shared with her that one of the major goals of my dissertation is for Filipina teachers like her, the other three participants and myself to have a support group—a woman’s club, a woman’s literary club, or just a plain woman’s circle, where we can share intellectual insights, emotional upheavals, spiritual notions, personal dreams, successes and goals in life. She said she is very excited to join and participate in the support group. I explained to her that we will start with our small little group and then later on, expand it to other women in our cohorts. This idea kept both of us thinking—how many women out there in our cohort of Filipina teachers would want their voices heard, and their feelings validated? We really need to start our woman’s club soon.

CHAPTER 9: UNDERSTANDING OF WOMEN NARRATIVES

I don't know if I continue even today, always liking myself.

But what I learned to do many years ago was to forgive
myself.

It is very important for every human being to forgive
herself or himself because if you live, you will make
mistakes- it is inevitable. But once you do and you see the
mistake, then you forgive yourself and say, 'well, if I'd
known better I'd have done better, that's all.' So you say to
people who you think you may have injured, 'I'm sorry,'
and then you say to yourself, 'I'm sorry.'

If we all hold on to the mistake, we can't see our own glory
in the mirror because we have the mistake between our
faces and the mirror; we can't see what we're capable of
being.

You can ask forgiveness of others, but in the end the real
forgiveness is in one's own self. I think that young men and
women are so caught by the way they see themselves.

Now mind you. When a larger society sees them as
unattractive, as threats, as too black or too white or too
poor or too fat or too thin or too sexual or too asexual,
that's rough. But you can overcome that. The real difficulty
is to overcome how you think about yourself. If we don't

have that we never grow, we never learn, and sure as hell
we should never teach.

-- Maya Angelou

The purpose of presenting the stories of those participating in this study is to provide readers with an important context to understand the learning and teaching experiences of the five Filipina ESOL teachers surviving and thriving in a U.S. public urban school district. Through our narratives, the readers can follow the development of our identities as learners, from our very first experiences in learning English through different life and career experiences. The readers examine the factors that influenced and impacted our transition from ESL learners and teachers in the Philippines to NNES ESOL teachers in the United States.

Although all the Filipina women and myself in this study came from the same country, and share the same culture, each of us are very distinct individuals with diverse experiences and backgrounds before we started as NNES ESOL teachers in a U.S. public school system. It is important to understand how our learning processes as well as our cultural and personal factors have influenced the transition of our identities in our learning and teaching lives. The development of cultural competence including its most advanced stage of cultural proficiency involves an ongoing process that requires an ever expanding knowledge of different cultures represented within our public schools, since the number of variations within and between different cultures is boundless (Wong & Blisset, 2007; Grant & Secada, 1990; Hughes, 2010). According to Hughes (2010), “a culturally competent person is able to name and address race, class, gender, and religious bias and to appropriately center each form or combination of forms of bias as it is

relevant to the situation.” In this chapter, I use our narratives as a collective story to explore themes and issues that emerge from the narrative portraits of our lives—our pasts, presents and futures.

Revisiting the Purposes of the Study

I had several purposes in undertaking this study. The first purpose of this study was to develop and enrich our understanding of the educational and teaching journeys of four Filipina teachers and myself, who are both evident minorities and NNES teachers surviving and thriving through our teaching profession in Mid-Atlantic Public Schools. I accomplished this effort through listening to the four women’s life history narratives and making sense of their lived experiences through—a) Reminiscing the past: Educational and teaching experiences in the Philippines, b) Contemplating on the present: Teaching experiences in Maryland, and c) Anticipating the future: Thinking what lies ahead in my career.

A second purpose of this study was to comprehend the degree to which we perceive and co-construct our identities as supported and marginalized. Although the four teachers and I have stories to tell about our learning and teaching journeys, it is irrefutable that each of us has experienced marginalization in our own teaching environments in ways that seem to be linked closely to our gender, race, social class, and language.

A third purpose of this study entailed looking at the lived experiences of five Filipina teachers, as they are told to me as opposed to looking for certain aspects of their experiences as commensurate with my expectations as a researcher with a similar positionality as a Filipina NNES ESOL teacher. These expectations stemmed from my

own personal experiences thus bringing my insider/outsider perspective on teaching and learning contexts in MAPS.

The final purpose of this study was to inform and encourage district efforts to recruit, support and retain Filipino teachers in MAPS and other U.S. school districts. The data from this study may inform the growing body of theoretical knowledge in the literature on identity issues that directly influence the lived experiences of Filipina teachers, as well as other international teachers in U.S. public schools. I pursued this task by listening and interpreting carefully en route to making some practical sense of how to apply the pedagogical and practical suggestions that emerged from our narratives.

Thematic Discussions and Insights from the Narratives of Five Women

Influence of Culture on Identity

Pedagogy of Empowerment and Possibilities

Many feminists argue that much of women's learning has to do with identity and self-esteem, which refers to the positive or negative evaluations women give to their identities. Identity and self-esteem can be changed. Families, cultures, histories, and life situations can contribute to changes in self-esteem and identity. Self confidence and self-image are important elements that contribute to a teacher's efficacy in successful teaching (Chen, 2009; Flannery, 2000; Lu, 2005; Park, 2006).

The study delineated the importance of teaching experiences, as all of the women in the study were able to overcome feelings of powerlessness and marginalization in our teaching environments. I finally realized we were survivors; and not only were we survivors, but also we were thriving in an urban public school district. We seemed to share feelings of empowerment through professional development workshops,

particularly those on classroom management. All of us cited the importance of being able to incorporate much of what we learned in these workshops, which helped us designate ourselves as credible and legitimate NNES ESOL teachers. For instance, Ligaya shared how professional development courses and workshops she attended in the U.S. contributed to her effectiveness as a teacher:

Oh yes. Kate Kinsella vocabulary program for example. I really believed in that program. The underlying thing is that the size of the students' vocabulary is the prime indicator of success in school. So the cause there is to build deep structure of vocabulary. (Interview 3, 12/16/10)

Naruto also shared how professional development (PD) workshops helped her in learning new teaching strategies for second language learners. She emphasized how much she appreciated the fact that there were two things that motivated her to attend more PD workshops: First was the new learning and second was the pay.

Those PD workshops really helped a lot. They have a different style of teaching here in the states, so attending these workshops helped me learn the strategies I need to make my class a success. I learn a lot with hands-on workshop. What I like here is that these workshops are free for educators, plus, they even pay you just to attend. I enjoyed special education workshops where there were a lot of hands-on activities. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

Within the U.S. public school teaching community, the Filipina teachers in the study were socially constructed as non-native English speaking teachers, visible minorities with marginal racial backgrounds, and perpetual learners of English (Amin, 2001; Braine, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Lu, 2005; Norton, 2000; Park, 2006; Pavlenko, 2003)

Our desire to be respected as NNES ESOL teachers was equated with empowering experiences in our teaching contexts. Filipina ESOL teachers had interactions with the English language even at a young age because English is considered a second language in the Philippines. Flordeluna, Naruto and I have *Tagalog* as our first language. Halo has Hiligaynon, a variety of Filipino language. Ligaya has *Bicolano*, another variety of the Filipino language. All of us had exposure to near-native English speaking teachers in the Philippines. This experience gave us a sense of empowerment in terms of being an important part of English language learning environment.

Moreover, our experiences within the English language contexts provided us with opportunities to claim privileged-class identities (Lu, 2005). Not many Filipina teachers had enough money to pay for the expensive placement fee to an agency in order to work abroad. The four women and I paid a huge sum of money (\$12,000) in order to obtain temporary working visas in the United States. That amount equates to more than half a million pesos in Philippine money, which only the upper middle class Filipinos can afford.

Marginalizing Relations with the English Language

All the women in this study implicated one barrier to their academic progress as involving marginalizing relations with English language and native English speakers (Belcher & Connor, 2001; Liu, 1999; Lu, 2005). We constructed experiences of many problems related to how the English language was perceived in the worldwide context and who was regarded as a legitimate owner and user of the English language, as soon as we set foot in the United States to be part of the American educational system (Amin, 1997; 2001; Lu, 2005; Johnson, 2006; Widdowson, 1994). This experience was

described as painful moments of seeing ourselves as inferiors to native English speaking teachers in the areas of language fluency and communications (Lu, 2005; Park, 2006; Pasternak & Bailey, 2004). For example, Naruto explained how she had a difficult time trying to fit in her own department in school. She described how her teammates who were all newly graduates, middle class White teachers were never welcoming. Naruto described how her co-teachers would treat her as if she were invisible. She recalled:

“Was it because I am brown skinned that you won’t speak to me?” I thought to myself. There was a time when I told my supervisor, do I have to show and post of all my certifications just to show everyone that I am a good teacher. Of course I was hurt. What do I have to do to prove myself? I endured ten months feeling that way—one whole school year. (Interview 3, 12/4/10)

We expressed ourselves as perpetual learners as opposed to seeing ourselves as bilinguals and multicompetent individuals (Amin, 2001; Carroll, 2006; Cook, 1992; 1995; Kubota, Bashir-Ali, Canagarajah, kamhi-Stein, Lee, & Kim, 2005; Park, 2006; Pavlenko, 2003; Lu, 2005; Tang, 1997). During our first year of teaching, most of us, to varying degrees, discussed a time where we came to realize that we could not compete with native English speakers who are ideal language teachers in terms of conversational fluency. Most of us shared a bit of feeling insecure about our English pronunciation compared to native English-speaking teachers. However, during our second year, most of us, having learned the curriculum framework and the ins and outs of our school environment began to exhibit confidence in our content knowledge and expertise as language teachers. During that time, we constantly attended professional development

programs and workshops that helped us learn more teaching strategies as well as effective communication and classroom management skills. Before the end of our second year of teaching in the states, we convinced ourselves that we too, although nonnative English speaking teachers, are ideal teachers to teach second language students. We did not explicitly express feelings of inferiority anymore to our native English colleagues.

Our linguistic identities did indeed; appear to be transformed from low self-confidence to high levels of confidence and motivation to deliver our lessons with positive results. We seemed to have needed a year to experience our identity transformation. While other related research like Lu (2005), Park (2006) and Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnston (2005), where nonnative English speaking teachers stated feeling out of place in their school context as they interacted with native English speakers; the five women in this study did not feel the same way. Instead, we described feelings of living in a space that is more equipped with scaffolding strategies to combat problems with second language learners. We expressed a need to exhibit more affective factors towards our students, being second language learners ourselves. The data/evidence from our narratives indicates that we could more easily relate than other educators to the challenges our students were experiencing about language learning. As an example Naruto said: “I can teach all kinds of students—the brightest of the brightest or the lowest of the lowest.” She had confidence to make this claim, it seems, because she had enough evidence to begin capitalizing on her own interpretations of “success” as a competent second language learner.

Silence as a Shield

Studies indicate that an oppressed group, such as women in a male dominant society or a minority group of color in a white society, often choose silence, or deny their voice in response to the oppressive nature of social and cultural expectations from the dominant values (Lu, 2005). For example, Park's (2006) study indicates the experiences of nonnative ESL teachers, that as nonnative speakers, they often chose silence and self-isolation as strategies to protect themselves from shameful and hurtful experiences among their peers. In this study, Halo for example, described her experience in college as a silent person, pretending to be asleep, afraid of expressing her own voice, because she was anxious and fearful of being judged.

From Naruto's narratives we learned there were some explanations other than language proficiency for being silent. During Naruto's first year of teaching in the U.S., she expressed how she often sat quietly in her classroom, and even during the staff meeting, not because she felt inferior of her linguistic ability, pronunciation or accent. She said she chose to be silent because she was experiencing a psychological fear of being quickly judged because of the color of her skin. She mentioned during one of our interviews how her White American colleagues would not even look at her, and would not even acknowledge her presence, as if she were invisible. Naruto admitted that she felt that as a nonnative English speaking teacher, she was seen as unintelligent and inferior. She even said: "I wanted to show them my credentials so they would know I am very well educated." Thus, to avoid any conflict, she decided to be silent. Similar to Halo and Naruto, Ligaya also expressed her belief that instead of saying something trivial, before she spoke she would make sure her opinions were valuable. Ligaya

expressed that some of the teachers in her school liked to express themselves all the time, because they wanted to show their presence or show their power over others even though their opinions were not really beneficial. Ligaya said that it was better to keep silent and follow what the majority of teachers decided. She admitted that being silent was her strategy for surviving in the workplace as a first year teacher.

Although Flordeluna admitted that she a strong personality and high self-esteem, she expressed that she also experienced a period of silence during her first year. She admitted she felt overwhelmed with everything that had to be done, which was quite different from her educational exposure and orientation. Although I have an assertive personality like Flordeluna, I also experienced a silent period during my first year of teaching in the U.S. Being the newest person in the ESOL department in my school, I seldom spoke during staff meetings for fear of being criticized. Also, during that time, I was just beginning to learn my duties and responsibilities as an ESOL teacher, so I was not confident enough to share my own views. I felt I did not have a lot to share at that point in time.

To explain the voice of identity transformation, Hayes (2000) and Park (2006) posited that women often express their identity by developing and giving their own voice. The idea of multiple voices reflects the assumption that as individuals, we have diverse identities that are expressed differently in different situations (Hayes, 2000; Park, 2006). As Filipina NNES ESOL teachers in the U.S., it seemed that we face the challenges of linguistic and cultural identities. We present ourselves as different persons in different social groups and communities. These experiences echoed Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999), which indicates that self- image or self-confidence, as a professional may be very

context dependent. For example, in the Philippines, Halo shared that she was very quiet during her college years because she was terrified of being judged due to her poor *Tagalog* accent. However, in the United States she said that she became more active and assiduous, especially during her second year of teaching. She said she realized she must learn to be outspoken and persistent; otherwise, no one would notice her existence.

Flordeluna, on the other hand, shared that she was very successful in her workplace in the Philippines—a builder of school, a curriculum developer and a teacher leader. However she admitted that her professional identity changed during her first year of teaching in the U.S. She said she no longer had that confidence and it petrified her. She admitted that she struggled but she said she used that feeling to motivate herself to persevere and learn the American way of teaching— its culture and its politics in the workplace. Now, in her fifth year of teaching, she expressed that she is a successful teacher leader. Like Floredeluna, I was also a teacher as well as a school owner in my country. I had to transform my identity from a confident school administrator in the Philippines, who ran and managed four satellite schools to a simple elementary school teacher in the states. As Park's (2006) posited, "We have to maintain different identities in different contexts and to vary our communication styles depending on when and where we speak" (p. 73).

Influence of Relationship on Identity: Importance of Significant Others on their Decision-making

Family Expectations

Norton (2000) argues that identity is how a person understands his or her relationship with the world. She said that family is our first map in connecting with the world. The inspirations and conflicts that occurred in the environments in which we grew and

developed influenced and formed our identities first, as learners and then as teachers. Traditionally in Philippine society, the two ideal professions for young adult women are teaching and nursing (Whipple, 2003). Being a teacher enables a mother to have more time and accumulate more knowledge to educate her own children, while nurses have more resources to take care of their family's health problems. Moreover, these two professions are also considered the most popular nowadays because they are the passports to employment overseas.

Most of us in this study, discussed our parents' plans for us, as well as their expectations. As learners, it seemed that our identities were formed through our parents' visions for us to become teachers, as well as the colleges and majors we chose.

For example, both Ligaya's and Naruto's mothers wanted them to become teachers. Ligaya's mother was a teacher, whereas Naruto's mother believed that having an education degree means flexibility in employment. Although both Naruto and Ligaya expressed that they fervidly rejected this recommendation for years, apparently, they became teachers in the end. Moreover, Flordeluna, Halo and I, never really considered teaching. Ligaya expressed how she wanted to become a lawyer; Halo and I shared how we wanted to become medical doctors. Eventually, we all became teachers. Now, I am glad that I am currently navigating the path towards becoming a doctor of philosophy.

Their Roles as Wives

To varying degrees, it seemed that Naruto, Flordeluna, and Ligaya spoke about or alluded to choosing and/or resisting traditional gender practices as either handed down by the traditional Filipino society and/or through parental and familial influences. It seemed that their roles as spouses placed them in the position of having to put aside or alter their

career aspirations and goals to give way to their husbands' wishes. Both Ligaya and Flordeluna shared how they were pulled in the direction of having to conform to their native Philippine societal norms and how married women should act, think and behave—submissive and passive towards their husbands; which were dictated by the Philippine Civic Code. Naruto on the other hand, admitted that she did not conform to the so-called Philippine norm. Thus, she said she chose the path of a single-parent role, away from her husband. However, both Ligaya and Flordeluna's experiences as married Filipinas seemed to contradict what they wanted to experience as professional career women when they were in the Philippines. Ligaya shared how she decided to stop pursuing her master's degree so that she could take care of her children when her husband was finishing his studies. Flordeluna, on the other hand, shared how she left her established teaching position in the university in order to support her husband's decision to move to another province. Flordeluna described how she gave up her career twice for the sake of supporting her husband's wishes to move to another town. As the result of these internal conflicts and decisions to favor family over careers, Flordeluna nor Ligaya expressed how they did not have the courage to assert themselves or contradict the decisions of their husbands. Both of them seemed to be influenced by the notion of *double consciousness* in which they admitted that they had to navigate between the tensions created by their desire to obtain higher education degrees while also having to meet their spousal and other familial responsibilities. *Double consciousness*, according to Goldberger (1996) "is marked by the conflict between the old cultures' norms of receiving knowledge from sanctioned others—as in parents when single, and a husband when married; and new Western cultural norms that sanction personal authority and independent thought"

(p.349). Unlike the four women in this study, I did not have the same experience of double consciousnesses. I never had the same conflict of not being able to complete my graduate studies in order to give way to my parents' or husband's wishes. Fortunately, I have a very supportive husband who understands my passion and motivation to achieve. He left his comfortable life in the Philippines to support my decision to pursue my doctorate studies and teaching job in the states. It seemed that this unparalleled issue of family support and decision-making would show that although all of us women in this study came from the same country, with the same cultural exposure and similar family values, we evidently have varying beliefs, practices and individual experiences that shaped our identities even before we came to the United States.

This discussion raises important questions regarding contentions pointing to women's experiences as being socially constructed, thus forcing us to give up or set aside our professional goals in order to adhere to traditional gender practices of married women (Simon-Maeda, 2004). However this role changed once we moved to the states. We became the main source of income for our families. Our husbands became our dependents; which was completely antithetical to the Philippine Civic Code. Having temporary working permits for the maximum of five years, all of us had to endure the one-income-family scenario. We had to go to work everyday while our husbands stayed home, took care of the children and took over the household chores. This scenario is a clear example of thwarting the Filipino tradition of men wielding authority over women.

Professional Identity Transformation

Finding a Professional Niche

This study highlighted the fact that individuals, such as Filipina women, who experienced marginalization in educational settings or elsewhere had to exhibit resiliency and affability in terms of professional directions. We were essentially coerced to resist and traverse the pressures exerted on us by dominant influences, such as different individuals or ideologies prevalent in our environment, bent on asserting or dictating that we must follow specific pathways (Park, 2006). The four women participants and I displayed resistance and resiliency in the face of these pressures. Our resistance and resiliency culminated in us being able to follow through to successfully navigate through teaching English language learners in U.S. public schools.

Before we embarked on our teaching contexts as ESOL teachers in the U.S., four of the five women—Flordeluna, Naruto, Halo, and myself expressed that we were confident about our declarative knowledge, which constituted knowledge acquired obtained through the educational degree we had acquired in the Philippines. Flordeluna and I had completed our master's degrees even before we came to the states. Flordeluna had an opportunity to complete her second master's in the states, which was sponsored by MAPS. I was fortunate enough to enroll in a PhD program three months after I arrived in the county. Naruto and Halo had started their master's program in the Philippines but were not able to complete their coursework and thesis. Ligaya shared that she had to stop pursuing her master's because she needed to take care of her children. Only one of the women—Ligaya said that her educational experience did not really prepare her for teaching in the U.S. public school system. She said she had to re-learn everything.

Fortunately, Ligaya was able to complete her master's degree via online distance learning courses from the University of the Philippines. It seemed that the application of our declarative knowledge was "lived out" or "tested out" within teaching communities, and it was within these communities, that we also gained our procedural knowledge—our ability to teach ESOL (Freeman, 1996; Johnson, 1999; Park, 2006; Pasternak & Bailey, 2004). It was important for us to combine both declarative and procedural knowledge in the commencement of our identity constructions and negotiations as Filipina NNEST ESOL teachers in U.S. public schools. This notion was echoed in Lu's (2005) work in her interviews with five East Asian women that "we learn how the misconception of 'native speaker fallacy', which is a belief that a native speaker is an ideal language teacher, has led us to overlook some very important issues in training professional ESL teachers." (p.196). Both Lu (2005) and Pasternak and Bailey (2004) argue that without the applicable professional training and the experience of learning new languages themselves, native English speakers may have declarative knowledge of the culture and knowing and using the target language; but may lack procedural knowledge about how to utilize the language in culturally appropriate ways. On the other hand, given years of study and formal instruction, NNESTs may have much stronger declarative and procedural knowledge of the target language and how to teach the language. Researchers Lu (2005) and Pasternak and Bailey (2004) further argue professionalism is not the same thing as nativeness, and it should not be equated with language proficiency. Neither a native nor a nonnative speaker without any formal training can be said to be professionally prepared. Like language proficiency, professional preparation is a continuum in a teacher's professional development. It is possible for teachers to become

relatively less prepared if they don't keep up with new developments and research and are unable to meet students' changing needs (Lu, 2005).

The four women and I expressed how we found our niche in teaching second language learners. We all claimed that we were able to use effective pedagogies emerging from our lived experiences as language learners in different contexts. Medgyes (1999) and Park (2006) discussed the advantages of NNES teachers due to what they had gleaned from their own experiences as second language learners. Both researchers summarized the women's advantages over the NES teachers as: First, they are able to provide good learner models for imitation. Second, they are able to teach language learning strategies more effectively (Oxford, 1990). Third, they are able to supply learners with more information about the English language as in the case of forging both declarative and procedural knowledge into their teaching (Park, 2006; Pasternak & Bailey, 2004). Fourth, they are able to anticipate and prevent language difficulties better. Fifth, they are able to be more empathetic to the needs and challenges of English language learners (Brady & Park, 2004). Finally, they are able to make use of the learners' mother tongue (Kouritzin, 2000; Park, 2006; Shin, 2005).

Moreover, all five of us saw ourselves as good models for both learning and teaching English to ELLs. We utilized an ethic of caring in order to be sensitive to our students' linguistic and cultural issues, and we, more often than not, became resources for our students (Chen, 2009; Noddings, 1984; Park, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999). We all shared stories of successes and challenges with our students as a way to help us understand that language learning is a process-oriented endeavor. We also helped our students to empower themselves by infusing them with political vision to question how the English

language should be taught to them and how they should be perceived of by others in the field of English language teaching (Park, 2006; Simon, 1992).

Cultural Blindness vs. Critical Communicative Cultural Competence (C-4)

When multicultural educators talk about diversity, they must inevitably confront teachers who posit “color-blind” attitudes. Color-blindness is the belief that actively disregarding students’ race/ethnicity is a fair and desirable practice for educating children equally (Sleeter, 1993; Seungho, et. al., 2009). Some teachers believe that color-blindness is fair claim, “I don’t see colors. I only see children!”(Delpit, 1995, p.17). However, this color-blind attitude masks a teacher’s disposition toward perpetuating educational inequity through an expectation for students and parents to assimilate in the mainstream culture, the white middle-class norm (Seungho, et. al., 2009; Solomon, Levine-Rasky & Singer, 2003). Below are examples of teachers’ comments about their diverse students.

I don’t see a difference between my students in the Philippines and students in the U.S. I find children to be basically the same. I think we should treat people as equals and not highlight their differences by interjecting culture in every aspect of education.

--Halo

I see all my students as children. I do not see them as Black or White or Brown. They are all kids. I treat them equally as children.

--Flordeluna

I know how it feels like to learn a second language, and so I can relate with my ESOL students. I just wanted them to feel supported and appreciated because I knew what they were going through.

--Naruto

When I plan my lessons, I am guided by what my students should be able to do after the lesson. They are all children. However, I am aware that they come from different cultures; some more similar to my own. I need to get to know them a little better. But no matter what their culture, they are all children with the same needs—acceptance, respect, love, and care.

-Ligaya

These four excerpts above represent the range of the perspectives of the teachers in this study and how these teachers respond to concerns about their students. Teachers' color-blind attitudes were clearly indicated in their statements above and their individual interviews. Most of these women expressed the beliefs that their color-blindness is fair and desirable for their teaching practices. Two of the women commented that they never thought of their students as White, Black or Latino—"they are just children!" They said that they believed color-blindness was a desirable approach to demonstrate equal treatment for all racial groups (Seungho, et. al., 2009; Solomon, Levine-Rasky & Singer, 2003). However, teachers' color-blindness has been regarded as one of the major factors that give negative impacts on student learning. Such attitudes are problematic because the unique culture in an ethnic/racial group is ignored in teachers' best practices (Gay, 2000). According to culturally responsive pedagogy, each student's cultural background should be considered for teachers' most promising practices (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings,

1995; Seungho, et. al., 2009). This study suggests that it is urgent for teachers to change their perspectives about teaching and learning in multicultural school contexts. In order to avoid conflicts in classrooms with diverse cultural backgrounds, it is my goal to encourage teachers in this study to educate themselves in multicultural education as well as in Critical Communicative Cultural Competence (C-4). This action will create opportunities for teachers to question their own assumptions, myths, and hegemony about color-blindness attitudes.

I have to admit that I have a different notion about critical cultural competence than the rest of the four women in this study, only because I had the opportunity to take doctorate level courses that specifically deal with these concepts. These classes include: Diversity in Teacher Education, Black and Latino Education, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Methods of Teaching.

Research suggests that teachers' perspectives on students significantly shape their expectations about student learning, their treatment of students, and what the students ultimately learn (Irvin, 1990; Pajares, 1993; Pang & Sablan, 1998; Villenas & Lucas, 2002).

Delpit (1995) posited that teachers with an affirming perspective are more apt to believe that students from nondominant groups are capable learners, even when those children enter school with ways of thinking, talking, and behaving that deviate from the dominant culture's norms. On the other hand, teachers with limiting perspectives are more apt to make negative forecasts about such students' potential. Dubious about those students' ability to achieve, teachers are more likely to hold low academic expectations

for them and ultimately to treat them in ways likely to stifle their learning (Nieto, 2000; Payne, 1994).

Hughes (2005) posited, “Color blindness implemented with intentions of masking race tends to coincide with class-and gender-blind approaches that seem to perpetuate subtractive rather than transformative schooling for youth of color.” (p. 91). Neither additive nor transformative standards are useful without some assessment of the effectiveness of which they are met (Darling-Hammond, 2006). If equity/diversity standards are the desired outcomes and expectations of education, then we must incorporate ways to assess not only the final destination of preservice and inservice teachers’ journeys toward competence, but the multiple and various stages along the spectrum of critical-communicative cultural-competence (Hughes, 2010). The Filipina teachers in this study adopted a culture-blind approach by treating all students equally. When they talked about their ESOL students, they tended to focus on cultural similarities rather than cultural differences. Culture blindness not only limits teachers’ acknowledgment of student characteristics and perspectives; it also fails to acknowledge important influences on schools and society (Nieto, 2000; Payne, 1994). This failure to acknowledge the biased structures in society and schooling must necessarily be accompanied by a failure to question and disrupt those structures. Therefore, despite the possibly well-meaning intentions of the cultural blind, that mindset prevents the questioning of assumptions and thereby serves to perpetuate a status quo of inequality.

The study of teachers’ experiences suggests that teachers have the pivotal role in promoting equity in their classrooms. They are responsible for creating the climate within which students learn and for the methods of teaching and learning that promote

self-esteem and mutual respect. Teachers must learn to develop and present lessons that incorporate diversity into the curriculum. They must establish a classroom climate that values the diversity of all learners. Hopefully, this study will provide an opportunity to rethink assumptions that are embedded in color-blindness and promote multicultural education that is more culturally relevant and responsive for different ethnical/racial groups' needs.

Teacher Collaboration: Accepting and Sharing Knowledge

The Filipina teachers in this study believe that collaboration between the mainstream teachers as well as the ESOL teachers is the key to a successful teaching experience. Each of us experienced our own classroom success as we embraced teacher collaboration as a major component in providing outstanding teaching methods for ESOL students. From Halo's experiences of collaborating with her mainstream teacher in teaching difficult science concepts, as well as Flordeluna's collaboration with her reading and language arts teacher, we learned that collaboration not only benefited the ESOL students but the entire population of the mainstream classroom. Although certain conflicts between the ESOL teachers and the mainstream teachers would arise in the beginning, or even from time to time; as in the experience of Naruto, Halo and I, it was still beneficial to persevere and to continue to work in partnership with one another.

Based on the perspective of teacher educators, Lu (2005) posited that collaboration is not only desirable but even necessary. It is desirable because it can contribute to the creation of a community in which leaders learn from their differences. In such a learning community, the professional, cultural and linguistic diversity that teachers bring with them becomes ascendancy rather than a contingency. The experience of collaborative

development in the context of teacher development programs can encourage teachers to develop a collaborative teaching community in their own classrooms.

Teachers' Relationship with Administrators

Another pivotal factor that influences teachers' identities is their relationship with the administrators of the school at which they work; which either facilitates or constraints their proliferation and adherence to their teaching (Chen, 2009; Lu, 2005; Park, 2006) All of the participants talked about how the perceptions and behavior of our administrators towards us had influenced and affected our self-confidence and motivation in teaching either in the Philippines or in the United States. A supportive environment offers challenges and opportunities to try new ideas (Chen, 2009). We thought that our relationship with our administrators would help or constrict our teaching. For example, Flordeluna's experiences of harassment and racial discrimination from her principal affected her ability to assert herself to become a candidate for the Outstanding Teacher's Award. According to her, it not only affected her self-confidence, but also obstructed her path to success. In Ligaya's case, her principal's lack of recognition and support for her innovation and competence as a teacher led her to feel dismayed and disheartened, she said. These feelings were echoed in Naruto's experiences of her principal's lack of support and motivation, not only for her but also for everyone in her school. She said that she lamented the fact that no matter how many teachers from her school became successful teachers by passing the National Board; her principal never rewarded them with any form of recognition. Although, I had to admit that I also experienced discrimination from the first principal I had when I first came to the states, I was also glad to recognize the fact that my second principal's utmost belief in my competence and

ability as an expert in my field became my ammunition to become even more motivated to initiate projects that would benefit our students and our school; thus resulting in more success for the whole school and myself. For example, she supported me as I wrote technology grants for my school. She let me take my own initiative to hold a school-wide assembly on important occasions such as Hispanic Heritage Month. My continuous alacrity to take on most of the challenges and tasks as learning opportunities fueled my good relationship with my administrators.

Support Group: Unsilencing the silent voices

The stories from the participants in this study have opened up possibilities for other nonnative English speaking teachers by showing that although native speakers are privileged by linguistic power, they can also lay valid claim to full competency in language and language teaching (Park, 2005). Once NNESTs surmount their struggles in cultural and linguistic identities to establish and ascertain their confidence as language teachers, they can perceive themselves as a valuable resource for their students. They also show that good pedagogy is not the province of the native speaker, but is dependent on multiple factors, such as competency in ESL teaching pedagogy, understanding ESL learners and cultural influence on language learning.

The participants' narratives in this study revealed that the strength of being a nonnative English speaking teacher includes providing a good learning model for ESL learners, teaching language learning strategies more effectively, supplying learners with more information about the English language, anticipating and preventing language difficulties better and being more empathetic to the needs and problems of learners.

These notions become a power that can strengthen nonnative English speaking teachers' voices in constructing their teaching identity (Chen 2009; Lu, 2006; Park, 2005).

The Crucial Role of English Proficiency in the Global Community

The emergence of English as a global language has had a considerable impact on government policies and educational practices in the Philippines. Due to rapid globalization, English proficiency is considered a crucial attribute among those who wish to be players in global society (Chen, 2009). Those who cannot speak appropriate and standard English risk marginalization because of a lack of connection with the global community.

In the Philippines, students start to learn English as soon as they first attend school, which is usually at age five. Although *Tagalog* is the primary language at home, English is the primary language used in schools. All students from elementary until high school are required to learn English throughout the day except during the Filipino period.

Chen (2009) posited that the professional development of teachers is a lifelong process, which begins with the initial preparation that teachers receive and continues until retirement. Being experienced English teachers in the Philippines, four out of five of the participants did not have any difficulty teaching the content of their lessons in the states. Flordeluna, on the other hand, having been exposed to student-centered, unstructured early childhood framework; and having been exposed to the administrative job of running a school, admitted that she experienced several struggles when she came to teach in the U.S. She said she had a lot more exposure to administrative work—such as managing school operations, writing curriculum and training teachers. She said that her classroom experience mostly included unstructured, hands-on, multiple intelligence inspired

curriculum in the Philippines. Therefore, she mentioned how professional development was a critical support when she started teaching in the U.S. public school system. She identified academic literature, attending workshops and conferences as significant aids to her professional development. She said she took the initiative to find mentors in her school that she could consult with, pertinent to her classroom experience.

Ligaya on the other hand, expressed how informal teachers' group activities for professional growth such as informal classroom observations and shadowing helped to immerse herself effectively in the American educational system. She continued that observing experienced teachers' classes was a great help in developing her teaching skills. During her first year of teaching as an ESOL teacher, she remembered shadowing an experienced ESOL teacher in order to learn strategies and teaching techniques in the American setting. She admitted she also felt that being observed and evaluated by other teachers was beneficial—even if the comments were sometimes abrogating. Ligaya's experiences seemed to echo Lave and Wenger's (1991) and Chen's (2009) communities of practice, in which the process of personal learning and development emerges when people have common goals and learn from each other.

As for me, I travelled to the United States every year since 1997 to improve my language competency and to study professional development courses in different universities such as—the University of Washington and Harvard University. I purposely enrolled in courses that would enhance my professional niche—that is, English language teaching. I collected authentic materials for my teaching curriculum as well. After my certificate course in Harvard, I came back to the Philippines, opened a multiple intelligence school for kids, and then wrote and published three books on teaching

strategies. I used and maximized every bit of my professional development training to put theory into practice and to share my learning with other educators through publishing books and training teachers in the Philippines. It was when I decided to pursue my doctorate that I left for the states. When I arrived in Maryland in 2006, I decided to quickly enroll for my doctorate in TESOL. I never wanted to stop learning and was motivated to do so up to the present.

The professional development experiences of the five women was echoed in Bauer and McAdams (2004) which elaborated on the relationship between life transition and personality development, and suggested that people who emphasize acquiring new knowledge tend to be more mature in terms of social-cognitive levels. With the experience and identity of English teachers in the Philippines, (except for one participant who was a pre-school teacher), all the women expressed how we faced the transition from teachers back to learners as they attended and enrolled in the professional development programs provided by the county. We joined and attended workshops expecting to enhance our teaching competence and to become accomplished and successful educators in the field of TESOL. Flordeluna explained how she pursued another master's degree in TESOL from McDaniel College. She belonged to a cohort of twenty teachers who were awarded the scholarship by the school county. Ligaya pursued her master's degree online, which she financed herself. Both Ligaya and Flordeluna graduated from their master's program even before we started with the first interview session. During my second individual interview sessions with Naruto and Halo, both of them had completed the coursework on their master's program in the Philippines but were not able to complete their master's thesis because they needed to leave for the

states. During this research, Naruto had already sent in her application for an online master's degree on TESOL, while Halo was thinking of pursuing a master's degree in special education by next year. Halo and Naruto shared that they consistently read academic literature and attended teachers' training workshops provided by the county. I pursued my doctorate program three months after I arrived in Maryland to teach. Unlike Flordeluna, I was not lucky enough to receive a scholarship so I had to pay for my own studies. At this time of my research, I feel that it is worth every penny. I am even more motivated to complete my dissertation and do publications or write articles or even a book about my research in the near future. I am fired up to enhance my research competence and explore the research world—both in theory and practice, as I immerse myself in practical application as an ESOL teacher in a U.S. public school. Furthermore, I would like to explore the possibility of applying for an administrative job as a school principal later on.

Language Proficiency Training

Apart from some cultural misunderstandings and lack of background knowledge in the American educational system, another significant challenge seemed to be linguistic in nature. It can be referred to as the non-native speaker syndrome (Lu, 2005). During our first year, most of us described our experiences as strife, both linguistically and socially. During these times, our images of our competence in English and of ourselves as language teachers were repeatedly challenged. We were all experienced teachers in the Philippines. However, when Naruto and Halo arrived in the U.S. to teach, they expressed how both of them became silent workers with no tools for competition, and the administrators were distant figures with whom they had no personal contact. Both of

them also discussed a period during their first year of teaching where they began to sense that their colleagues perceived them as racially and linguistically different when compared to White native English speaking counterparts. Since they were new teachers with a different cultural and linguistic background, they said they felt they needed to prove themselves as knowledgeable and skilled. Although they kept silent, they said that they interpreted that silence as a symbol of power rather than weakness. Naruto said: “I chose to be silent during staff meetings and other school interactions but then I focused all my energy on producing positive results towards my students’ test scores.” This experience echoed Hurtado’s (1996) statement that “many women of color use silence with a specific goal in mind and return to their own safe communities to share what they have learned and to verify the accuracy of their observations” (p.382).

Narratives in this study also reveal that Filipina NNES ESOL teachers are often concerned with their language proficiency or accents, which are highly related to their self-confidence and professional identity as Filipina NNES ESOL teachers. Speaking a second or foreign language well can be challenging for anyone, but nonnative teachers face an additional challenge—the expectation that language teachers will have excellent speaking skills and a native speaker’s accent (Chen, 2009; Lu, 2005).

Narratives from the participants in this study tell us that speaking and listening and pronunciation are areas in which NNESTs feel their English proficiency is lacking. In particular, because of colloquialisms in different regions, learning local accents and idioms becomes a new task for NNESTs. In order for NNESTs to be effective, self-confident, and satisfied professionals, it is important for professional development

programs to include language trainings to help NNESTs enhance, if not master, their language proficiency as well as their self-confidence as qualified teachers. Naruto shared:

I really think that a good professional development program focusing on accent reduction, American idioms and colloquialisms will help enhance many of the teachers' confidence in speaking English. There are so many expressions and slang that my colleagues, as well as my students, say to me that I have no idea what they mean, so I have to learn those colloquialisms.

This finding supports Hawley and Valli's (2007) work, which claims that effective professional development ensures that all teachers are able to communicate clearly and appropriately in a language that their students understand.

Conversations with the women in this study unfolded that as NNESTs, we all worked hard to learn English and associated our language proficiency with our professional identities. However, no matter how hard we work, we all agreed that our language proficiency and accent would never reach a perfect native-like level. If it is true that NNESTs' language proficiency will never reach a native-like level, are we still qualified to teach English? Should language proficiency be the only criteria for judging an English teacher? Our concern with language proficiency reflects Medyes' (1999) argument of the impact of language proficiency on NNESTs' self-identity as professionals to elaborate the relationship between language, identity, and the ownership of English, Norton (1997) asks, "Who owns English internationally?" (p. 156). Specifically, it is a question of "whether English belongs to native speakers of English, to speakers of Standard English, to white people, or to all those who speak it" (p. 422). To legitimate the use of a language, she suggests that a language should belong to the people who speak it, whether

native or non-native. In other words teachers of English, whether ESL or EFL, should have an equal role in English teaching. If we, as Filipina NNES ESOL teachers cannot claim ownership of the language we teach, we might also begin not to consider ourselves legitimate teachers.

Chapter 10: CONCLUSION

Implications for Theory, Policy and Practice

In this study, I aspired to tell stories about four Filipina NNES ESOL teachers and myself. Through these stories of our language learning, teaching experiences and life histories, I wanted to capture the experience of becoming and being a nonnative English speaking Filipina ESOL teacher in the United States from each individual teacher's perspective. The women's participation in this study afforded them and myself the opportunity to share with, in a public academic space, what it truly means to be a Filipina NNES ESOL teacher in a U.S. public school. I am honored to have met and conversed with these four women, as we each shared our experiences and constructed the tapestries of our life histories.

Revisiting the Research Questions

This study has one central question: How are five Filipina NNES ESOL teachers constructing our identities as surviving and thriving in the context of becoming and being teachers in MAPS? There are five related sub-questions, which include: (1) How do Filipina NNES ESOL teachers' cultural and linguistic learning experiences (at home and school) contribute to our identities? (2) How do Filipina teachers' relationships with others (families, students, and administrators) influence the way we see ourselves as NNES ESOL teachers? (3) How does the context of the teaching community in MAPS contribute to Filipina ESOL teachers' cultural, linguistic and professional identities? (4) In what particular ways do Filipina NNES ESOL teachers navigate teaching and learning (e.g., interacting with students, colleagues, parents, and administrators)? (5) How do Filipina NNES ESOL teachers envision our future career paths? In relation to these research questions the following findings and implications are highlighted below.

Implications for Theory

This study hopes to add literature on issues that directly influence the lived experiences of Filipina NNES ESOL teachers, and international teachers in U.S. public schools. The findings that emerged from my study with the four Filipina NNES ESOL teachers and myself, suggest that the journey of transitioning from an English language learner to an NNES ESOL teacher is a challenging feat (Chen 2009; Lu, 2006; Park, 2005). There have been ups and downs in the processes of learning to teach; however, by uncovering my own past and understanding my present as a Filipina ESOL teacher, I have been able to witness my own developmental growth.

Implications for Policy

This study hopes to inform and encourage district efforts to recruit, support and retain Filipino teachers in Mid-Atlantic Public Schools (MAPS) as well as other school districts in the United States. This study hopes to encourage local and state policy makers and curriculum developers to design professional development plans for Filipino teachers, and to encourage researchers to do further research on the lived experiences of other K-12 international teachers such as Chinese, Taiwanese, Korean, Hispanic, Indians, Nigerians, Jamaicans, etc. through additional qualitative research designs that may include portraiture and ethnography. Specific research focus may be directed to issues of marginalization, linguistic empowerment, issues of power, race and gender.

Implications for Practice

This study hopes to pave the way to a better understanding of and a deeper inquiry into Filipina NNES ESOL teachers' unique contributions to the TESOL program and

teacher education in U.S. public schools. I particularly want to discuss the implications on teacher education and professional development.

Hughes (2008) posited there are at least two current challenges arising for urban schools—Teaching and Teacher Education. First, many urban public school teachers and urban teacher educators are challenged to explore further to “care” for students without crippling them. Second, many of these educators are challenged each year by racial/ethnic/cultural mismatches, while attempting to remain “intimately cognizant of the necessary intersection of other oppressive constructs such as class, gender and sexual orientation” (p. 73). Although the women in this study endeavor to educate and care for their students, they still fall into the trap of being culturally blind due to their lack of exposure and acquisition of knowledge and skills towards critical communicative cultural-competence (C-4). Thus, this study hopes to encourage all educators, especially international teachers to participate in programs such as teacher preparation training and professional development workshops to explore and acquire specific knowledge about multicultural diversity of education.

Teacher Preparation

To effectively prepare teachers to work with culturally different students is through formal teacher education with both preservice and inservice teachers (Hughes, 2010, Ladson-Billings, 1995). Formal preparation in teaching culturally diverse students should include carefully planned presentations and field experiences that focus on attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate language development and cultural diversity. Teachers particularly need to be sensitized to the important role language plays in maintaining cultural identity and social ties (Lu, 2005).

Teacher education programs are charged with the responsibility to prepare individuals to function effectively in the classroom. A few participants felt that their preparation was inadequate. Dissatisfaction ranged from “I had to re-learn everything that I learned about education when I came to the states” to “my training didn’t prepare me for the actual classroom experience in the U.S. public school setting.” Minimizing the theory/practice gap requires that teacher educators understand the developmental nature of teacher knowledge and pedagogy. Centering the content of teacher-education courses on student learning might better prepare us (remove) teachers to recognize and respond to our students’ competencies and needs and to equip ourselves to adapt our instruction and curriculum accordingly.

In addition, although the women in this study were very much equipped with content area knowledge in teaching, our teacher education did not prepare us to teach culturally diverse students. All of us had experiences teaching students only from one similar culture, not a racially diverse one. All the participants agreed that teacher education should provide multicultural education courses. Although we recognized our declarative and procedural knowledge and expertise in teaching content areas effectively, we all admitted that race, gender, and cultural differences and needs were not specifically included in our teacher preparation programs. Consequently, teachers lacking adequate preparation for cultural diversity are not effectively teaching students who come from culturally diverse backgrounds. The results of this study mirror Kuo’s (1996) study, finding that colleges in many Asian countries such as Taiwan, Philippines and Japan are devoid of multicultural education, even though most teachers and teacher educators agree on the importance of multicultural education. Thus, one of the goals of this study is to

encourage teacher education programs in the above-mentioned countries to include multicultural education in their teacher education curricula. Furthermore, it is also the goal of this study to encourage U.S. school districts to provide professional development to in-service teachers that will highlight and prepare teachers towards critical communicative cultural competence.

Professional Development

What kinds of professional development can help in-service teachers learn more about cultural diversity and applying that knowledge to improve classroom practice? Short-term professional development would seem inadequate to help teachers transform their deeply-held and limiting beliefs about students from diverse cultures. Teaching and learning is complex and teachers need time to learn and experiment with new concepts in the classroom, just as their students do. To be successful, professional development programs must address teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward cultural diversity and toward students from ethnic minority backgrounds. Teachers need time to reflect on the meaning of education in a multicultural society, on the relationships between teachers and learners, and on social attitudes about language and culture that affect students (Clair, 1995; Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 1997).

The results of this study also suggest that most teachers who work with Black and Latino students have not been adequately prepared to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the students' culture or to face the challenges they encounter in school. Most teachers of minority students complete their professional development courses with a limited exploration of their students' cultures. There seems to be little or no attention to the benefit of examining the institutions, cultural traits, behaviors, values, and attitudes

that minority students bring to the classroom. They appear to remain unfamiliar with strategies for incorporating information related to those minority cultures and for using the information to motivate and inspire the students to continue and expand their level of achievement (Clair, 1995; Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Researchers suggest that professional development must be contextualized in as many layers as possible—for example, in the context of the individual student, the classroom, the school, and the school district. In professional development, teachers need to problematize the context in order to uncover the relationship between their beliefs and their pedagogy. Sometimes the school system or the classroom may cause teachers to invoke one belief over another to support a school district’s goals, such as improving scores on standardized tests (Darling-Hammond, 1997). A holistic approach that examines teachers’ beliefs within their teaching context will assist administrators and teacher educators in supporting teachers as they manage the tensions and constraints that manifest in their beliefs and practices as they educate all students well, and ensure that minority students have opportunities to fulfill their potentials.

Researcher Reflections on Reflexivity:

The Evolution of Theoretical Framework (Pre and Post Data Analysis)

As I journeyed through the process of “critical self-reflection” of my own biases and “theoretical dispositions,” I realized the need to seek my own reflexivity as a researcher in order for me to critically examine the entire research process of my study (Kleinsasser, 2000, p. 156). According to Schwandt (1997), researcher reflexivity represents a methodological process of learning about self as a researcher, which, in turn, illuminates deeper, richer meanings about personal, theoretical, ethical, and epistemological aspects

of the research question. Qualitative researchers engage in reflexivity because they have reason to believe that good data result (Creswell, 2002; Kleinsasser, 2000). Having this in mind, I looked back at my previous theoretical framework diagram (pre-data analysis) and realized that I needed to develop a more appropriate diagram (post data analysis) that clearly shows the interconnections of the theoretical perspectives that evolved from my data analysis. Figure 1 and 2 below show the evolution of the representation of my study's theoretical framework pre and post data analysis.

Figure 2. Theoretical Framework (Pre-Data Analysis)

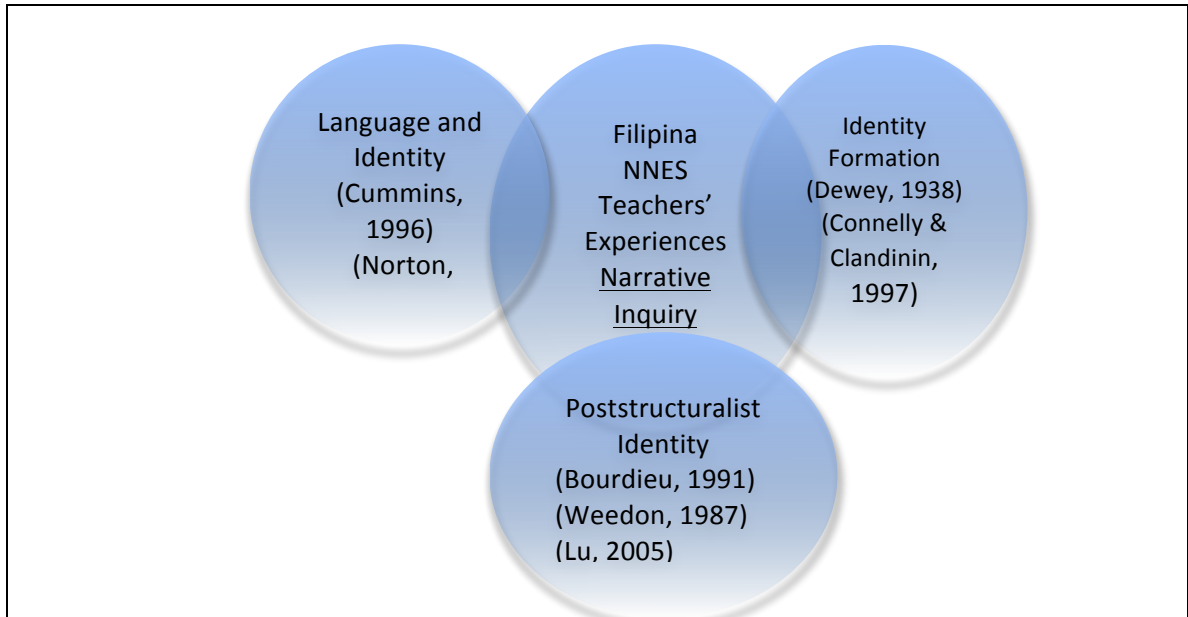
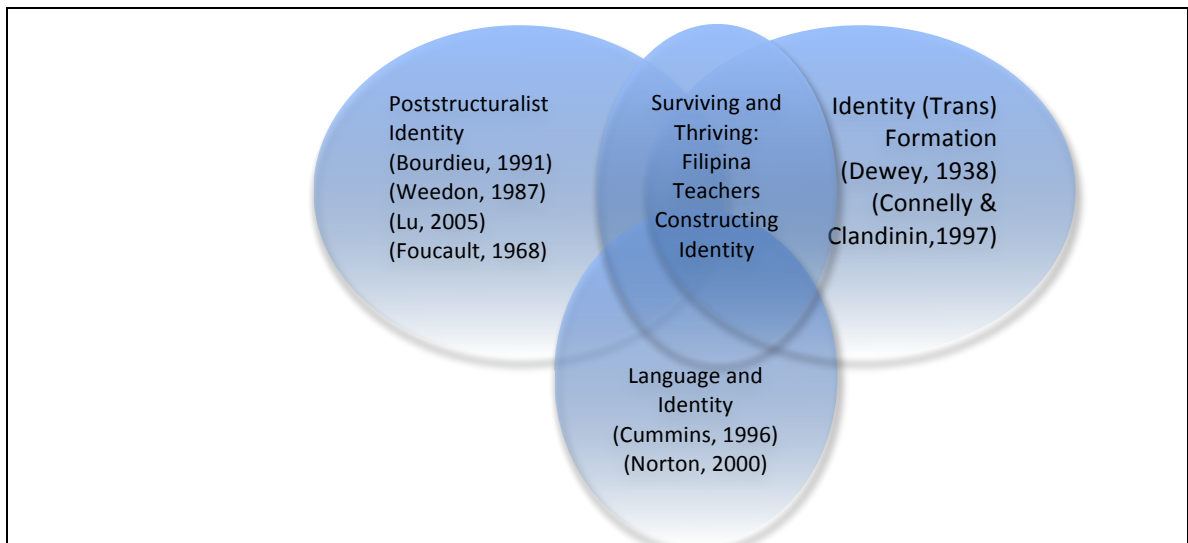


Figure 3. Theoretical Framework (Post-Data Analysis)



In the Figure 2 Theoretical Framework (Pre-Data Analysis) I attempted to illustrate the potential connection between the three theoretical perspectives—language and identity, identity formation, and poststructuralist identity (emerging from the critical literature review) to participants' lived experiences via narrative inquiry. However,

although Figure 2 showed that the three perspectives were all related to Filipina NNES ESOL teachers' experiences, it didn't show how the three theoretical perspectives were interconnected. Furthermore, as I continue to collect data from participants' interviews, in juxtaposition with data analysis and research perspectives from the review of literature, I realized that those three theoretical perspectives had significant interconnections among them, which were directly related not only to Filipina NNES ESOL teachers' experiences, but also, more importantly to those teachers' identity (trans) formation. Thus, in Figure 3 Theoretical Framework (Post-Data Analysis), I developed a triple Venn diagram to show the interconnections among the three theoretical perspectives in this study. With the revised theoretical framework diagram, I hope to make the theoretical interconnections visible and open to critical examination. This figure represents how our past and present experiences, influences of our relationships, culture, language and identity transformation, construct and continuous to re-construct and transform our surviving and thriving identity as Filipina teachers in the U.S. This reflection shows that reflexivity enables a researcher like me, to untangle personal and theoretical commitments. This reflection also reveals myself, as a "very human researcher" who is writing to "learn and unlearn" in order to show clarity and transparency of the research process (Kleinsasser, 2000, p.159).

Rewards of the Reflective Experience

According to Hung's (2008) study, reflective conversation encourages the co-construction of teacher knowledge and professional identity. After concluding three two to four hour interviews with each participant, I asked two extra questions about how they felt discussing their own teaching and learning stories; what it had meant to them, and

whether the narrative experiences had changed the way they thought about themselves. To my delight, all the participants regarded the interviews as rewarding reflective experiences. As for my own reflection, this study made me realize that even though Flordeluna, Halo, Naruto, Ligaya, and myself came from a similar cultural background, each of us have different—a) experiences in teaching and learning, b) influences from family and friends which shaped our identities, and c) professional influences such as teachers, mentors, students, parents of students, and administrators that contributed in our professional identity (trans) formation. Through this study, I began to understand my inner self—including my frustrations, passion and yearnings I never thought I would share with anyone.

Studies indicate that an oppressed group, such as women in a male dominant society or poli groups of color with legitimate authority in a white society, often choose silence, or deny their voice in response to the oppressive nature of social and cultural expectations for the dominant values (Lu, 2005). For example, a study done by Rogers (1993) indicates that women often use silence as a means of self-protection, to avoid threats to relationships that could result from the voicing of unacceptable thoughts and emotions. Ultimately, this public silence affects women's internal voices. From the four women's narratives in this study, we learn NNEs often chose silence and self-isolation as strategies to protect themselves from shameful and hurtful experiences from people around them at home, at school, and at work.

This study made a powerful impact on my life and how I perceived my own identity. There were many incidents in my life that I buried deep down within me because I was embarrassed. There were a lot of perceptions about my family and myself that I had been

hiding inside because I never wanted others to judge me based on my past. This study changed all that. I took the risk to reveal and to un-silence my voice. That was the only way for me to seek, understand and transform my identity as a daughter, a sister, a wife, a teacher, a friend, and as a person. I realized I needed to dig deeply into my thoughts and emotions so I can understand my past, contemplate on my present, anticipate and plan my future. I am especially grateful to the four women in this study who entrusted their life stories to me.

Halo, the efficient and caring teacher said:

I think I have learned a lot from this reflective experience. Although I am a hard working person, I never seriously reflected back on my own life. With this experience, I begin to clearly understand and realize who I was and who I am now, and what I want to do in the future. This has been a wonderful experience for me. It was such an astounding way of looking into my innermost self. It has helped me to recall the important events of my life—my childhood, my high school and college days, my early career days as well as my current career path and even my future plans. Recalling these times has been a journey of exploration for me; and the deeper side of me. This experience enhanced my understanding of my identity as a person—as a learner and as a teacher.

Flordeluna, on her path toward becoming a teacher leader and an outstanding educator in her field, replied:

This experience has been very cathartic to me. This experience helped me recognize and shape my identity not only as a learner, and a teacher, but also as a leader. In answering the interview questions, I had to organize my thoughts and

the stories of my distant past. I was on an emotional roller coaster as I was brought back to the time back then. I was neither hurting nor regretting, but it seemed like I was reliving those experiences again. Some were melancholy; others were happy and inspiring. It was a very enlightening experience. Now I have a greater experience of who I really am and how I became my own self. I have realized the evolution of my identity.

Ligaya, a reserved, confident and optimistic teacher said:

As I was answering the questions, I really thought about the answers very well. I organized my thoughts and tried to remember the deepest memories I could possibly dig. In order for me to answer the questions in detail, I have to get myself back piece by piece. Now I have a greater understanding of who I really was as a mother, a teacher, and a person. I also had a better realization of what impacted my learning and teaching experiences in my country and in the U.S. This study also made me think about what I would continue to do in my quest as a Filipina NNES ESOL teacher.

Naruto, a very independent person and confident teacher replied:

Although I am a very open person, I seldom share my personal experiences to others. In thinking about my past, present, and future, I saw the value of different stages of my learning and teaching experiences. I realized my inner strengths as well as my inner struggles in the past and how I overcame them to be able to be who I am now. Those experiences inevitably molded my identity as a person.

The participants' responses echoed Connelly and Clandinin's (1999) argument that teachers' stories and narrative experiences can solidify and reinforce who they are in the

world. In the process of our interview, the four Filipina ESOL teachers invited me into their lives and memories; and I did the same for them. In telling our stories, we revealed parts of ourselves, which previously we had not reflected or shared with others. Our willingness to voice our experiences is evidence of the commitment to our own personal and career growth. I will forever treasure the intimate conversations I had with them; and I will nurture the relationships that have developed during those conversations.

Future Research Directions

The findings from this study shed light on additional research opportunities in the fields of TESOL and teacher education. Further studies need to be designed for other international teachers both pre-service and in-service, particularly Asian women, who continue to be hired to teach in American public school systems in large numbers. Specific research should focus on issues of linguistic empowerment and marginalization and the intersectional relationships between these issues of power, gender, race, and social class (Matsuda, 2003; Pakir, 1999; Park, 2006; Ramanathan, 2005).

The follow-up studies to be conducted based on the current study are pertinent in continuing to honor these women's life history narratives and in monitoring, over a longer period of time, the identity reconstructions and renegotiations that occurred as a result of having taught in U.S. public schools. The findings that emerged from the study with the Filipina NNES ESOL teachers, coupled with these future directions, will continue to inform the growing body of theoretical, methodological, and practical knowledge necessary to advance the field of TESOL and general teacher education.

Future research in this area also needs to explore the following themes: First, an examination of preservice teachers' perspectives and dispositions about urban school

cultures. Second, an examination of practicing teachers' perspectives and practices for teaching students of color. Third, designing and developing programs that address issues of cultural competence of teachers and cultural diversity within schools. I hope that in the future, additional studies will continue to consider what teachers are doing in the classroom that is working for culturally diverse students. Researchers could intensify the results of their findings by increasing collaboration with teachers, as they are the individuals with a finger on the pulse of our future society and with evidence for how to not only survive, but also to thrive in an urban public school district.

Appendices

Figure 4: *Consent Form*

Page 1 of 3

Initials _____ *Date* _____

CONSENT FORM

Project Title	A Narrative Inquiry into the Lives of Filipina ESOL Teachers
Why is this research being done?	<p>This is a research project being conducted by Sherick Hughes and Maria Austria at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research because you belong to the Cohort 2006 of Filipina ESOL teachers at a Mid-Atlantic Public Schools (MAPS). (Cohort 2006 is a group of Filipino teachers who came from the Philippines and were hired by the Human Resource Representatives of the county to teach in MAPS.).</p> <p>We would like to know more about your stories and lived experiences as teachers both in the Philippines and MAPS.</p>
What will I be asked to do?	<p>First, I will explain the consent form and give you time to read it. You do not have to participate. If you choose to participate, you must sign the consent form. You may stop participating at any time even if you have signed the consent form. Please ask questions anytime. You may withdraw from the study anytime without penalty.</p> <p>In this study, you will be asked to: 1) participate in two individual audio taped interviews, 2) respond to a questionnaire.</p> <p>In the First Individual Audio taped interview, you will be responding to individual interview questions that ask about your lived experiences in teaching in the Philippines and in MAPS. Some of the sample questions are as follows: a) Describe your teaching experiences in the Philippines. b) Describe your teaching experiences in MAPS. c) Do you think your educational experience and professional development contribute to your teaching success? If yes,</p>

how so? d) What motivated you to leave your country and teach in MAPS? The interview questions that I will use would be semi-structured so you can speak freely of your views and experiences.

The total time for your participation will be 60 minutes. The research will take place at an interview location convenient to you (e.g. home, library, or agreed upon location). I will be taking notes during the discussion. After this activity, you may look over the notes and listen to the tape. You can add more information and check the accuracy of the notes and recording.

In the Second Individual Audio taped interview, you will be responding to individual interview questions that ask about your life history narratives in the Philippines and MAPs). Some of the sample questions are as follows: a) I would like you to describe a memory from your childhood that describes who you were or who you are as a language learner. b) What was the peak experience of your language learning? c) Describe a specific incident that describes who you were/are as a Filipina. d) What impact your experiences had on you as a Filipina, non-native English speaking ESOL teacher in a US public school. What do those events say about who you are as an ESOL teacher?

For the Questionnaire, you will be responding to the questions in the questionnaire that ask about: 1) your background information, 2) your teacher qualification, and 3) your perceptions and attitudes about teaching. Some of the sample items in the questionnaire are as follows: a) I am confident with the type of learning that is happening in my class. 2) I am satisfied with my teaching performance. 3) In my school, my staff members and administrators respect my views and perceptions about teaching. The total time for your participation will be 30-45 minutes. The research will take place at an interview location convenient to you (e.g. home, library, or agreed upon location). I will be taking notes during the discussion.

Please initial one of the spaces below about the audio taping:

I agree to be audiotaped during my participation in

	<p>this study.</p> <p>_____ I do not agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study.</p>
What about confidentiality?	<p>We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality: (1) your name will not be included on the collected data; (2) a code will be placed on the collected data; (3) through the use of an identification key, the researcher will be able to link your data to your identity; and (4) only the researcher will have access to the identification key.</p> <p>In order to maintain confidentiality, the participants will be behind closed doors, in a private area away from others, during the consent process and survey completion.</p> <p>If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible.</p> <p>All efforts will be made to keep personal information confidential. We will not use participants' names in the study notes or recordings. Observation notes and any recordings will be transcribed and stored digitally on a personal laptop that has a secure password. If we write a report or article using this study, participant identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible.</p> <p>After the study has been completed, digital recordings, notes, IRB consent forms, application, and other forms and study data will be deleted from the laptop and stored on a DVD in a locked safety deposit box in a bank in Bowie, Maryland. The DVD will be stored securely for at least ten years. After 10 years, all personal data will be destroyed by reformatting the DVD. The resulting reports will be used for educational purposes only.</p>
What are the risks of this research?	<p>There maybe some risk of nervousness or embarrassment during the interview. You may decline to participate at any time. Please ask questions throughout the discussion and the duration of the study. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. When we finish talking and at the end of class, you will have time to read over the notes and listen to the recording.</p>
What are the benefits of this research?	<p>Benefits to you may include becoming more aware of your self- perceptions as teachers and could be useful for your</p>

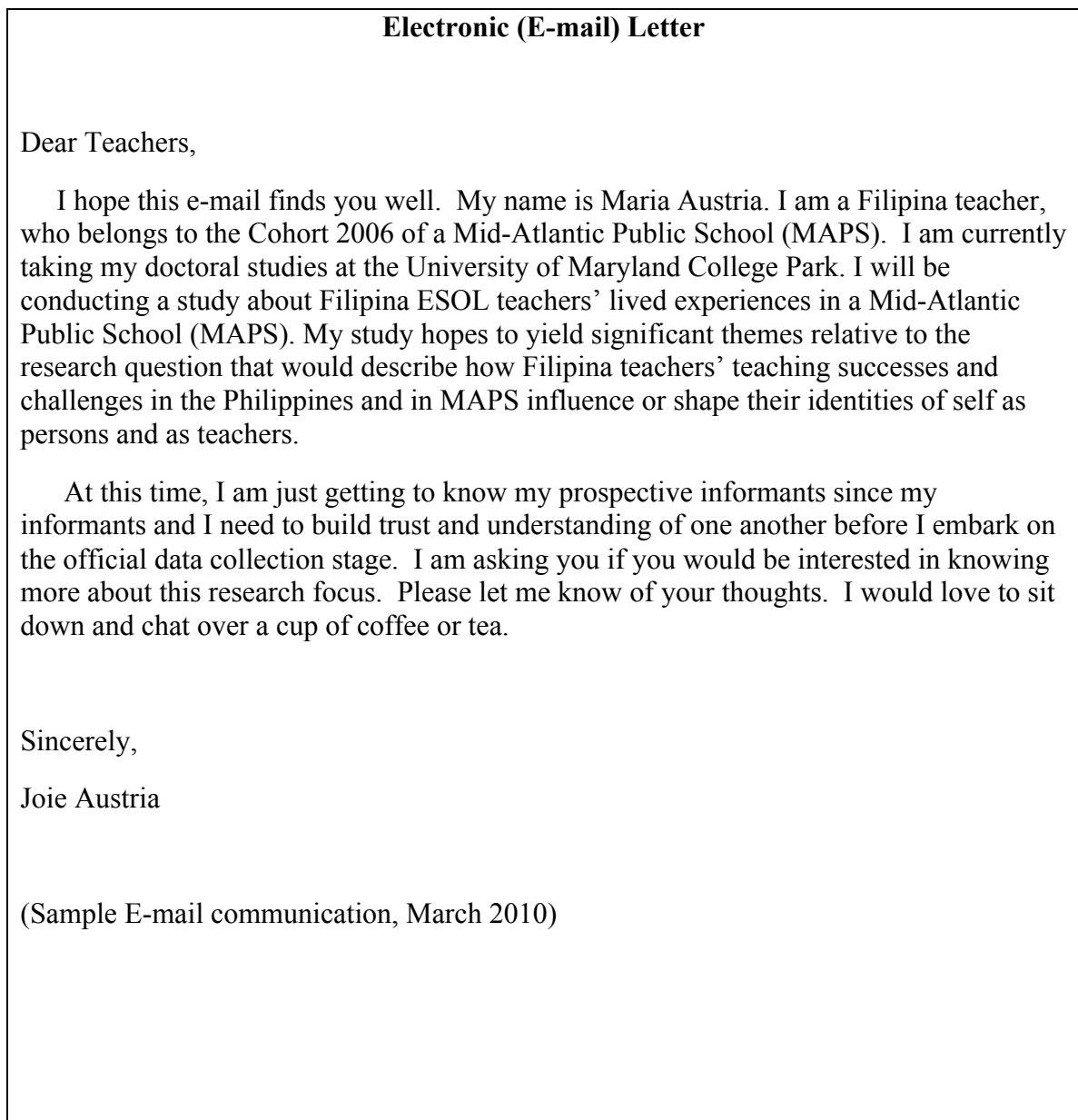
	<p>professional development. We hope that, in the future, other international teachers will benefit from this study for their professional development as well.</p>
<p>Do I have to be in this research?</p> <p>Can I stop participating at any time?</p>	<p>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. In this part of the research, you will be joining a focus group discussion where you will share key events of your teaching experiences to a group of teachers. If you decide not to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits for which you otherwise qualify.</p>
<p>Is any medical treatment available if I am injured?</p>	<p>The University of Maryland does not provide any medical, hospitalization or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the University of Maryland provide any medical treatment or compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.</p>
<p>What if I have questions?</p>	<p>This research is being conducted at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Sherick Hughes at 2311 Benjamin Building, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, with contact number- 3011-405-5783.</p> <p>or contact Maria Austria at Rockledge Elementary School 7701 Laurel-Bowie Rd 20715, 301-741-9385, email at maustria@umd.edu.</p> <p>If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742;</p> <p>(e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu; (telephone) 301-405-0678</p> <p>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</p>
<p>Statement of Age of Subject and Consent</p>	<p>Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; the research has been explained to you;</p>

	your questions have been answered; and you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.	
Project Title	A Narrative Inquiry into the Lives of Filipina ESOL Teachers: Questionnaire	
Signature and Date	NAME OF SUBJECT	
	SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT	
	DATE	

Note: From the University of Maryland College Park IRB Application Renewal

Rev. Nov.5, 2010.

Figure 5: *Electronic (E-mail) Letter*



Note: From the University of Maryland College Park IRB Application Renewal

Rev. Nov.5, 2010.

Phase One: Questionnaire

Pseudonym _____

Teaching Qualification

1. Years of teaching in the Philippines _____
2. Years of teaching in MAPS _____
3. Highest Educational Attainment: _____ Bachelor's Degree
 _____ Master's Degree
 _____ Doctorate Degree
 _____ currently taking Master's Program (_____ units taken)
 _____ currently taking Doctorate Program (_____ units taken)
4. Subject area you are teaching: _____
5. Grade level you are teaching: _____
6. Check which State Examinations you have passed: _____ PRAXIS I
 _____ PRAXIS II _____ other
7. Your Area of Certification/s: _____

Part I - Perceptions and Attitudes toward teaching

1. I am confident in managing my class.
 ___ Always ___ Most of the time ___ Neutral ___ Sometimes ___ Never
2. I am satisfied with the kind of learning that is happening in my class.
 ___ Always ___ Most of the time ___ Neutral ___ Sometimes ___ Never
3. I am satisfied with my teaching performance.
 ___ Always ___ Most of the time ___ Neutral ___ Sometimes ___ Never
4. I have established routines and effective classroom management strategies.
 ___ Always ___ Most of the time ___ Neutral ___ Sometimes ___ Never
5. In my school, my staff members and administrators recognize my teaching expertise
 ___ Always ___ Most of the time ___ Neutral ___ Sometimes ___ Never

Note: From the University of Maryland College Park IRB Application Renewal Rev. Nov.5, 2010.

6. In my school, my staff members and administrators respect my views and expertise about teaching.

Always Most of the time Neutral Sometimes Never

7. Most of my colleagues share my beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be.

Always Most of the time Neutral Sometimes Never

8. I am satisfied with the support and encouragement I receive from my administrators and staff members.

Always Most of the time Neutral Sometimes Never

9. I am confident that my students are learning in my classroom.

Always Most of the time Neutral Sometimes Never

10. My long years of teaching experience in the Philippines contribute to my success in teaching my students in Prince George's County.

Always Most of the time Neutral Sometimes Never

11. My educational experience and professional development contribute to my teaching expertise.

Always Most of the time Neutral Sometimes Never

12. I believe that attending more professional development courses and workshops will help me improve my teaching skills.

Always Most of the time Neutral Sometimes Never

Part II

1. What do you think is the most challenging teaching experience you've had in the Philippines? _____
2. What do you think is the most challenging teaching experience you've had in the U.S.? _____
3. How did you cope with those challenges in the Philippines? In the U.S.? _____

Note: From the University of Maryland College Park IRB Application Renewal Rev. Nov.5, 2010.

Figure 7: Life History Narrative Interview for Filipina NNES ESOL Teachers

Phase Two: Life History Narrative Interview for Filipina NNES ESOL Teachers

Introduction

This is an interview about your life experiences with language learning and teaching. Teachers' lives vary tremendously, and teachers make sense of their own linguistic experiences in a variety of ways. The goal of this interview is to better understand how teachers live through their language learning and teaching experiences. Therefore, this narrative interview allows you to describe who you were as a language learner and who you are as a language teacher.

Content

This interview consists of five to eight major parts that allow me to explore your life as a Filipina ESOL teacher at MAPS. The five parts of the narrative interview are: (1) Life Stories and Personal Myth, (2) Language Learning and Becoming a Language Teacher, (3) Stories of Border-crossing, (4) Teaching Experience in the U.S., (5) Self-description and Future Career.

PART ONE: Life Stories and Personal Myth

In this first part of this narrative interview, I would like you to recall several major events that stand out in your life, about who you were or who you are as a Filipina, a female, daughter, mother, wife, or any other role in society.

Event #1: Important childhood scene

I would like you to describe a memory from your childhood that describes who you were or who you are. It may be a positive or negative memory at home, at school or any other place. Please describe exactly what happened, when and where it happened, who was involved, what you did, what you were thinking and feeling in the event, what impact this experience may have had on you, and what this experience says about who you were or who you are as a person.

Event #2: Family myth

Family stories often play a role in helping us understand our relation with the world. Now, I would like you to concentrate on a specific incident in your family history that communicates something about your family and family values.

Event #3: Stories of being a female

Now, I would like you to think about what it means to be a female in your home country, how the role of a female is defined in your family or your home country's society. Then, tell me a specific incident that describes who you were/are as a Filipina. What impact has this incident had on your identity as female? What does this experience say about who you were/are.

Event #4: Novel/Short Story/Poem

I would like you to think about a novel, short story or poem that you have read. I am particularly interested in a novel/short story/poem that has had an impact on your identity

as a Filipina. Please first briefly describe the novel/short story/poem. Then tell me in what situation you read this novel/short story/poem, how it spoke to you and how it moved you, whether it made you laugh or cry, and what impact it has had on your life.

PART TWO: Language Learning and Becoming a Language Teacher

In the second part of this narrative interview, I would like you to concentrate on a few key events or significant experiences in language learning and becoming a language teacher that stand out in your life. You may consider your language learning and teaching experiences either in the Philippines or in the U.S. You might also want to compare your language learning experiences between the Philippines and the U.S.

Event #1: Peak experience in language learning

A peak experience would be a high point in your story about language learning in your life. It would be a moment or episode in the story in which you experienced extremely positive emotions like joy, excitement, great happiness, uplifting, or even deep inner peace about language learning.

Event #2: Low-point-experience in language learning

A low point experience is the opposite of a peak experience. It is a low point in your language learning experiences. Thinking back over your life, try to remember a specific experience in which you felt extreme negative emotions about language learning. You should consider this experience to represent one of the 'low points' in your language learning life history. What impact has this experience had on you as a learner? What impact has this experience had on you on becoming a teacher?

Event #3: Turning point for becoming a language teacher

In looking back on one's life, it is often possible to identify certain key 'turning points'-episodes through which a person undergoes substantial change. I am especially interested in a turning point in the understanding of language learning and teaching. Please identify a particular episode in your life-story that you now see as a turning point for becoming a language teacher.

PART THREE: Stories of Border-crossing

In the third part of this narrative interview, I would like you to recall several major events that stand out in your life as an immigrant, an international student, a non-native English speaker or a foreigner in the U.S.

Event #1: Motivation in coming to the U.S.

In the first event, I would like you to describe your initial motivation and story in coming to the U.S. what was your initial motivation to leave your home country? Why did you decide to come to the U.S.? Was there any particular event or person that most contributed to your decision in coming to the U.S.?

Event #3: Low-experience of living in the U.S.

In this event, I would like you to describe a low point of your life in the U.S. Looking

back over your life and interactions with others, please describe one greatest/significant life-challenge that you have faced in the U.S.

PART FOUR: Teaching Experience in the U.S.

In the fourth part of this narrative interview, I would like you to share your experiences and stories of becoming and being a Filipina, non-native English speaking ESOL teacher in the U.S. I would like you to recall several major events that stand out in your ESOL teaching life in the U.S. I am particularly interested in the issues of gender, ethnic, cultural and linguistic identities in relation to your teaching life in the U.S.

Event #1: Seeking a teaching position in the U.S.

Please tell me your stories when you were in the process of seeking a teaching position in the U.S. What did the interview process look like? Have you encountered any difficulty while seeking a teaching position?

Event #2: Description of Current teaching Experience

Please describe your typical day as an ESOL teacher in your current position. What does your class look like? How do you organize your class? What is your relationship with your students and colleagues at school?

Event #3: Peak experience as an ESOL teacher in the U.S.

A peak experience would be a high point in your story about language teaching in the U.S. It would be a moment or episode in the story in which you experienced extremely positive emotions like joy, excitement, great happiness, uplifting, or even deep inner peace as an ESOL teacher. What impact has this experience had on who you were/are as an ESOL teacher in the U.S.?

Event #4: Low point-experience as an ESOL teacher in MAPS.

Thinking back over your teaching life, try to remember a specific experience in which you felt extreme negative emotions as an ESOL teacher in the U.S. You should consider this experience to represent one of the 'low points' in your language-teaching life history. What impact has this experience had on you as a Filipina, non-native English speaking ESOL teacher in the U.S. What does this event say about who you are as an ESOL teacher?

PART FIVE: Self-Description and Future Career

1. Self-Description

- a. If you were to tell someone who you really are, how would you describe yourself?
- b. Do you see yourself differently when you talk with people in your native language or in English?
- c. Would you describe yourself differently when you are at home or in the workplace?
- d. Is the way you see yourself now different from the way you saw yourself in the past?
What led to the changes?
- e. If you were asked to use a metaphor to symbolize yourself, what image comes to your mind?

f. If I ask how you picture your life, what image comes to your mind? What is your life metaphor?

2. Future Career

a. You have told me about who you are. Now, I would like you to consider the future. I would like you to first imagine a future in your life. That is, please describe what you would like to happen in the future with regards to your career, including what goals and dreams you might accomplish or realize in the future.

b. How do you see yourself changing in the future? What will you and your life be like ten or fifteen years from now?

This interview protocol is adapted from: a) McAdams's (1993) eight key events for interviewing a person's life, b) Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule's (1986) interview questions for understanding women's ways of knowing, and c) Lu's (2005) interview questions for exploring the lived experiences of five East Asian Women in the U.S.

Note: From the University of Maryland College Park IRB Application Renewal

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Figure 8: Individual Interview Protocol

Phase Three: Individual Interview Protocol

The following questions will ask you about your feelings, attitudes and perceptions about teaching.

1. Are you confident on how you handle your class everyday? Why or Why not?
2. Please describe your classroom setting. Are you satisfied with how your students are learning in your class? How so? Is there something you would like to change in your class? (classroom set-up, or your style of teaching, or with the curriculum for example?)
3. What is good teaching to you? Can you say that you are satisfied with your teaching performance? How so?
4. Describe your classroom management strategies. Can you share some effective strategies that you use in your class?
5. Do you think it is important for your staff members and administrators to respect your views and perceptions about teaching? How so?
6. Did you have any experiences when your co-teachers and administrators demonstrated their support to you as their colleague? Can describe the specific situation?
7. What do you think is your principal's perception of you as a teacher? As a person?
8. What do you think are your colleagues' perception of you as a teacher? As a person?
9. What do you think are your students' perception of you as their teacher?
10. What do you think are the parents' perception of you as a teacher?
11. Does any of your administrators, students, colleagues, and parents questions your ability to speak English clearly?
12. Describe yourself as a teacher/ female/ person.
13. Describe your teaching experiences in the Philippines. Please include the high and low points of your teaching experiences.

14. Describe your teaching experiences in the U.S. Please include both the high and low points.
15. Do you think your educational experience contribute to your teaching success? If yes, how so?
16. Do you think your professional development contribute to your teaching success? If yes, how so?
17. What motivated you to leave your country and teach in the U.S? Now that you are currently teaching in MAPS, what are your perceptions about the school you are teaching now? What are the strengths/weaknesses of your school? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve your school? What can you do to contribute to your school?

Note: From the University of Maryland College Park IRB Application Renewal
Rev. Nov.5, 2010.

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