

2-2-2015

The Emotions of Professionalization in a Master's of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) Program

Dana Poole

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THE EMOTIONS OF PROFESSIONALIZATION IN A MASTER'S OF TEACHING
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (TESOL) PROGRAM

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Dana Poole

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

December 2014

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This dissertation utilizes Narrative Inquiry to examine emotions as part of the re-socialization of five international graduate students in a Master's in TESOL program. This work uses theories of emotion, narrative, socialization and multiculturalism to create a picture of the complex nature of re-socialization in a MA TESOL program. Through the narratives of these five graduate students, this dissertation explores the role of emotions in experience, the forces that are impactful during sojourning, and the transformations that the students undergo as they find agency in their new context. Based on this research, I present five unique ways of sojourning which, when read, offer food for thought to policy makers working with Master's in TESOL students.

This dissertation is presented in six chapters. Chapter One introduces the background and purpose of the study as well as researcher positionality and research questions. Chapter Two reviews literature, including theories in emotions and socialization, Narrative Inquiry, and multiculturalism. Chapter Three presents the theoretical framework of Narrative Inquiry, context of the study, researcher positionality, and a detailed description of the methodology, data collection, and the tools used in analysis. Within Chapter Three, I address ethical concerns and give a detailed description of considerations. Chapter Four shares the narratives produced from the stories told by the participants. Chapter Five analyzes those narratives through the

Lens of the purpose of the study and the research questions. The Chapter Six presents reflection and analysis.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Wendy Bishop coined the term “Calling on the World” as an approach to writing that acknowledges the process as social and filled with life, living, and the people that inspire and motivate us to keep working. This project and its completion would not have been possible without the family, friends and colleagues who answered my many calls with patience and support. I would like to begin by thanking the Poole-Smiths: Amanda, Gerald, Isadora, and Griffin and acknowledge their constant energy and support. I want to thank my parents, Lee and Jeannie Poole, whose “never say quit” approach to my education brought me much farther than my poor K-12 report cards suggested I would have gotten. I want thank my sister Kelly who knows that “My puppy” is the best poem ever written. And finally my lovely Aunt Sharon, who is a gift of kindness to the world.

I want to thank my advisor, Dr. Lynne Alvine, who reminded me sagely that writing a dissertation is about a journey of learning. In turn, I want to acknowledge the support of Dr. Rita Drapkin who helped me develop the tools and skills to be able to have patience for and while on the journey of learning. I want to thank Sonia Adams, Toni D'onofrio, Judith Britt McNeeley, and Amy Crompton for their constant kindness. I want to thank Jessica Showalter, whose voice will ever be in my head guiding me to dig into ideas, use outlines and patiently wait for good writing to emerge. Thank you Jessica, for teaching me to write and helping me find my voice! And finally I want to thank Matthew Horrell, to whom I promise that, with this done, we will sleep late and get a dog.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation presents an investigation of the experiences and perceived emotions and emotional norms which are part of the re-socialization journey of five international graduate students studying in a Master's in TESOL program in the United States. In this chapter, I lay the foundation for this study by exploring my motivation for undertaking the project, outlining key terminology, sharing the research questions, and positioning this study within the significance and purpose it will play in the field of teaching English as a second language and specifically in the education of Master's in TESOL international students. Throughout this chapter, I share my positionality and elaborate on how it impacts my ontological approach to the project. At the end, I offer a summary of what is to come in the following five chapters. The small sample size of my study means that the findings are not generalizable, but it is my hope that reading this work will generate a spark for educators and administrators who work with international Master's degree students. I also hope that this project will serve as a starting point for researchers who may find an idea that becomes the catalyst for future studies.

As an introduction to this project and point of initial motivation, I begin with my own experiences of re-socialization and finding footing in new places. I also share how my experiences have impacted my US graduate education. I have collected experiences of re-socialization: as a young adult growing up in central New Jersey; as a college student in Roanoke, Virginia; as a Master's degree student at The School for International Training in Vermont; and as a teacher abroad in China, Korea, Poland, Costa Rica and most recently for three years in northern Israel. Seven total years of being a language teacher abroad brought with it culture shock, language learning, cultural learning, and the joy of exploration. The experiences

I had living abroad constantly rose to the surface as I worked on this project, as central to the storied identity I used to negotiate American academia.

In western Pennsylvania, where I completed my course work and now live, I sometimes take out my 'self' in Israeli culture and try on that version of me again. In Israel, I learned to look longer and more holistically while in new situations, to assess my new surroundings in deeper interpersonal and contextual ways, to pull a scarf from my bag to cover up a little more in a conservative neighborhood, and to consider a crowd of people and think about safety. In Israel, I adopted a conscious way of being - a mixture of fear and curiosity- that my American friends define as "intense" when they glimpse it. Yet I am sure few Israelis would use that label.

When I reflected on how the emotions I experienced in Israel inform the ways I navigate academia, I began to wonder how emotions play a role in the positionality for international students who also find themselves navigating an unfamiliar terrain. My own experience holding up lived moments as lenses to try to negotiate a situation in a new way has made me passionate about understanding the reality and motivation of others who are experiencing a period of sojourning. When I look around a classroom of international students studying toward degrees in TESOL, I wonder whether they are cloaking emotions like the "intensity" that I learned to privilege while in Israel. I have, in many ways, both consciously and unconsciously, learned to shelve that emotion in the States and adopt different emotional constructs which form and garner greater degrees of social acceptance. I wonder about the degree to which international students do the same.

What to Tell

My project is narrative in nature and utilizes a Narrative Inquiry frame and methodology. Gough (1999) writes that the "purpose of [narrative] inquiry is not to dispel the difficulties, risks, and ambiguities of life but to live and speak from within them" (p. 414). In this spirit, my

work does not shy away from the discomfort of sharing the tribulations of life's journey. Note that there are two types of discomfort: the discomfort of the moment and the discomfort of sharing. Carspecken (1996) reminds the researcher that sharing privileged knowledge is a brave and generous act. Carspecken (1996) wrote that, central to qualitative research is deliberate interaction with the personal privileged knowledge that participants share. Throughout this project, I have tread purposefully when I interacted with my participants and heeded Palmer's (1998) warning that if participants holds so deeply their beliefs, they "risk losing more than the debate: [they] risk losing our sense of self" (p. 39) when they are challenged. Palmer suggested that sharing during re-socialization can have strong implications that should be respected. Narratives about re-socialization can be a constant threatening process of losing oneself. Though I rarely felt that level of emotion with my participants, I still remained alert to the possibility.

When I began this project, I knew that the nature of emotional research meant that I would have to be as brave as I asked my participants to be. The narrative presented here, "Little Changes," is part of the shaping of my own professional identity as I began my journey of teaching in northern Israel. I was privileged to know Heba, a veteran teacher and mentor in an after school English teaching program I worked with. She was ever present as I learned to navigate Israel. "Little Changes" shows the forces and emotions present during a period of great learning for me while living in Israel. I chose to insert this narrative break in my traditional academic language here in order to portray a moment of re-socialization in a new context. As I share my story of learning, I am acutely aware that readers will reinterpret and make claims on a story I find to be very personal. Making public stories that privately impact my 'self' as a professional is something I have learned to do along with my participants.

Little Changes

Heba and I left the meeting just as twilight hit. Heba, eyes bloodshot, looked exhausted. I offered to drive, but of course she would not let me. We had driven to more than 20 teachers' meetings together all over the north of Israel, and she had never let me drive. I wondered sometimes whether it was the Arab politeness she claimed or if she was honestly nervous about driving with a foreigner who couldn't really read the road signs. Either way I didn't take offense or impose. I had been driving in Israel for more than two years at that point, and I still couldn't seem to remember not to turn right on red. Like Heba, I had also taught all day and had sat through the same meeting. I was tired. I gazed out the window at the eucalypti trees that lined the road. They were tall and swayed a little in the evening breeze. Their leaves reflected the last bits of orange and red of sunset. These trees don't belong here either, I thought to myself. The trees represented little changes to the landscape, little claims on the identity of this land. They were purposely brought here by the Jews. I wondered how Heba saw them, how she saw me.

The Emotions of Self Identification

In the teachers' meeting, Tom, our zealous new State Department liaison, had come to greet the Access¹ teachers (the after school program funded by his department that Heba and I taught for). I had seen four people come and go in his position, each time hoping that the next one would be better. The teachers, God love them, patiently waited for him to finish speaking. As I sat there I thought- if I had seen four people come and go in three years, how many have the teachers who worked in the Access program much longer seen? I hoped they were not listening to what Tom was actually saying. I tuned in about halfway through to find that he was explaining that the goal of such programs, including the grant that had brought me to Israel, was

¹ The English Access micro-scholarship program is a US Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, U.S. State Department funded after school program.

meant to “help” people to see that America is not all bad. Little changes. He pointed to me and asked, “Isn’t she nice. You like her right?” They nodded. The combination of his condescending tone coupled with his inference that I was no more than a living, breathing piece of propaganda made me slide lower in my chair. I wondered if Heba and the other teachers saw me that way. I looked around the room, but the teachers revealed nothing through their smiles.

The Emotions of Politics

As I was thinking about that moment, Heba and I left the valley of eucalypti trees behind and started up into the hills. We still had a distance to go. We drove through some Jewish towns modeled after Bavarian villages. The Jewish towns broke up the darkness of the road because they always had traffic lights where they entered the highway while the Arab villages did not. I was curious to see which way Heba would choose to go. I had a running bet with a friend about whether the “shortcut” I knew was actually shorter. To my slight disappointment Heba choose my friend’s route.

Heba and I hadn’t really spoken since I had returned to Israel for my third year. This was only our second teachers’ meeting, and the last one was in my town. Heba turned and asked me how the year was going. “Not so good,” I admitted. “You remember now I’m going to all these new schools? I miss my village life, Heba,” I said sadly. “I know what you mean about village life,” she said with a smile, “It’s better to have neighbors who look out for you.”

Heba was from Ramah, an ancient village mentioned in the Bible as the hometown of Samuel, a leading rabbinical leader. Jesus preached under an olive tree that still stands at the entrance to the village. Heba, a Christian, counted herself as a descendent of that long religious history. I had been to her village many times and rarely left without someone giving me some freshly pickled olives or oil. People were generous.

“Maybe it was a mistake to move to Akka. It's so unfriendly. I also miss being sheltered. In the village I never had to deal with so much racism,” I said.

She nodded.

The Emotions of Academia

I was flooded by a moment I had experienced the week before. At the request of their teacher, I was working with a group of Jewish girls who needed to speak online in English with American high school students. They had watched a movie about the desegregation of a U.S. high school football team in the 1950s for an online project they were doing with a school in America. They were nervous. I started by asking them what they understood from the movie. Hen, a clear leader in the group, said, “Yes, it's like before I moved to Israel. But in Israel we are so kind to each other. We don't have these problems.” “What do you mean?” I asked. “All the fighting because they are black or white. I am dark and she is light, but we don't act like this,” she said.

Hen was right: half of the Jewish high school in Akko were new Russian immigrants, and half were Yemenis and Moroccan Jews. In my short experience, I noticed that everyone did seem to get along. Though I heard a lot of complaining from the English teachers, who were all Russian Jews, they never attributed any problems to race. This was a stark contrast to how they spoke about Arabs, to whom every problem seemed to be attributed to race.

Hen's response was not the reaction nor the relationship that I initially thought of when I asked my question. I couldn't help it; I told them that I currently lived in an Arab neighborhood and also work at the Arab school in Akko². “Oh, well that is different,” Hen said. “Why?” I asked. “They aren't Jewish” she said as-matter-of-factly. “But isn't it still segregation?” I asked with

² Akka (in Arabic), Akko (in Hebrew) and Acre (in Antiquity) is a one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the region. Acre is currently the site of a tenuous peace between its mixed Arab and Jewish populations.

genuine confusion. At that, all the girls defensively shook their heads no. “They can come to our school, but they choose not to,” Hen said. A moment passed and I asked, “Is that true? Would they be safe here?”

Hen replied, “Maybe not,” and continued, “But! They can’t understand Hebrew. They want to learn in their own language. Not Hebrew.” “What about you? You speak Russian at home. Don’t you want to learn in Russian?” I asked. “I’m not trying to be mean, I’m just trying to understand,” I hedged. “Hebrew is my language. I am Jewish,” she said, and all the girls nodded. I felt bad for skewing the conversation, so I asked them which parts of the movie reflected the racism they had experienced from the countries they came from. “Hen, what did you mean by ‘before you lived in Israel?’” I asked. But it was too late.

Ignoring my question, one of the quieter girls sat up and said: “When I was small, I had an Arab neighbor. I wanted to play with her but my mother. My mother. Her mother always invited me for tea but my parents don’t allow. They don’t allow me to play by her home, where Arabs play. I was am always accompanied outside the neighborhood to play with Jewish kids.” “Always accompanied? Even now?” I asked in disbelief. “Always. My mother or father or brother accompany me,” she said. “Does she still live next to you?” I asked. She shrugged. At this, another girl piped up, “Not all Arabs are bad. I met some who are nice!”

The girls had done a conflict resolution program³ with some Arab girls in Akko. As we talked, it was a conversation I had dreamed of having. We all seemed to be learning and thinking about racism. Suddenly, their English teacher, Noa, who was sitting nearby came over. Noa said abruptly, “This is not a good conversation because it’s not the same, black and whites, Arabs and Jews. Arabs want to kill us all the time, it’s true!” She looked at the girls then at me, “I’m

³ Because of the racially charged riots in 2008 and Akko’s position squarely in Israel, not bordering the West Bank, many organizations come to Akko to do programs in intercultural conflict resolution.

married to an American so I know how things are. You don't understand.” She glared at us and finished, “Remember they may act nice but they want us to die.”

The Emotions of Violence

“How do you live with the blind hatred?” I asked Heba, returning to the car and our conversation.

Heba began by telling me that she wasn't so tired because of teaching that day but because she wasn't sleeping. “You know the school where you visited?” she asked. “Of course!” I said with a smile. Heba had invited me to come and do a series of workshops at the Christian Academy where she taught English part-time in addition to her regular teaching. Leading workshops there was always the highlight of my week. Fun creative students. Hours of engaging conversation. It was like eating candy. “The school only goes to grade eight and my daughter is moving to grade nine. She will have to go to public school or I will have to send her to Nazareth,” Heba said. I knew that Nazareth was more than forty-five minutes by bus, on a good day.

Heba told me that she had been working tirelessly to lobby the ministry of education to permit the school to add grade nine. “One more year,” she said sadly. “How is the public school?” I asked. “A Druzian⁴ kid stabbed a Christian boy last week at the public school. I can't let my kids go there,” she continued, “The boy who was stabbed was a nice boy. I know his family.”

Though the Druzian village of Sojur had been next to Ramah for more than a century, the influx of people after the state of Israel was established merged the two villages. Now in Ramah there are Druze, Christians and Muslims living in a tenuous peace. I thought of Heba's cousin Nadine, who told me her nephew, who was thirteen then, has slept with a plastic gun under his bed from the age of five after he saw two armed gunmen walk down the main street of

⁴ The Druze are an Arabic speaking religious minority whose men serve in the Israeli military

Ramah, faces covered, robbing people. He was a sweet boy whom I saw cry when his parents would not allow him to go to his grandparents' for a week as punishment for pushing his sister. I couldn't imagine that trauma for my own nephew.

After some silence I said, "Heba, you work at a Druzian school." Heba worked in the village of Mughar, with Druzian students as her fulltime teaching position. "I know, and I love my students. Even they sometimes say things about Christians. I believe in education." "What does that even mean?" I asked her.

"I believe that these kids, this place will be better because of me," She said calmly. "But, but," I was so confused, "So they do well, they are still joining the Army and fighting against Christians. No?" I thought of my own Jewish girls earlier in the week. They will all join the Army. By teaching them English I'm giving them access to power, which they may use to oppress the other groups in Israel or continue the status quo.

"But this is beside the point," she told me, "Education will heal here. We have to believe this." "Heba! Two weeks ago I asked my fourth grade class to write fairytales, and one of the boys made the main character of his an Arab dog. His classmates loved it. That is a level of racism. Institutional racism. I don't even know how to deal with that," I said emphatically. "We have to love that child even more," she responded earnestly. "All the people here have problems, Israel is a difficult place. We have to think about everyone as struggling." "You are right about that," I conceded, "though it feels like the weight of the world. How do you do it?" I asked honestly. "We need to teach with love," she said with a smile.

I realized when I continued my teaching that I needed to figure out what that meant.

The Meaning for Me

Even though my interaction with Heba and the rest of my experiences in Israel have ceased, present in how I shape my work are versions of what I believe Heba's "love" means. At the root of my experience with Heba was a deep, guttural mixture of love, anxiety and loss- feelings that these three words cannot fully explain. As Wierzbicka (1995) suggested, emotional words are cultural artifacts, meaningful for me in my American world, but not descriptive enough to encompass the emotions I felt. Wierzbicka (1995) wrote, "To pigeonhole a feeling is usually an arbitrary decision" (p. 143). From the many layers active in my conversation with Heba, my heart hurt in a way wholly unique to that experience. The action stemming from my interpretation of Heba's version of love is a critical perspective on education which I have found shapes much of my graduate work. I gravitate toward bell hooks (2010), Carl Rogers (1969), Chris Argyris (1957; 1976) and Argyris and Schon (1974) who all advocate for different types of transformative education. My stay in that part of the world has instilled in me a greater insight into cultural ways of constructing reality and the importance of emotions of experience to re-socialization in new communities. From this background and positionality come my research questions.

Research Questions

The research questions presented are designed to construct a picture of participants' perceptions of implicit and explicit elements in their academic, social and professional socialization. The questions below were designed to privilege the experiences that participants bring to their programs as well as to explore how their past, present, and future expectations come together to support their sense making. This study recognizes a bi-directional theory of socialization (Stein & Weidman, 1998a; Weidman, Twale & Stein, 2001; Weidman & Stein, 2003) and acknowledges that research must include a contextualization of participant

experience in a specific university context. I do not presume that the experience of these participants can be applied to all students in Master's in TESOL programs, or that every Master's in TESOL program parallels another. It is more hopeful that through the examinations of these participants' experiences, common themes will emerge that offer insight which will support greater degrees of mutuality in the re-socialization of others. Also, the use of transformation in my research questions and this project does not assume a positive or negative change, rather it serves to show that change has happened. The following research questions drive this study:

- What emotions do participants privilege in their experience as they re-socialize into their new context?
- What forces do participants recognize as impactful on the construction of their emotional self in their new context?
- What transformations do the participants experience while studying in the States?

The questions posed will attempt to uncover a vivid reality of the experiences of the participants and the academic community that they have joined, with a lens that serves to inform by highlighting successes as well as challenges.

Significance and Purpose of the Study

This study began with my own interest in agency-building for students through the development of a roadmap to support their socialization in their new academic context. That ambition was born from my own experience of fumbling and finding level ground in my professionalization as a teacher abroad. To be fair, I imagined the map as a collection of poorly plotted dirt roads rather than GPS and super highways. Yet, ambitiously, I dreamt of offering the bricks which would serve to build better roads to foster greater levels of successful re-socialization. The significance and purpose of this study, outlined below, represent my ambition

to expand knowledge of re-socialization in a Master's in TESOL program and then to reflect that knowledge back onto a program with the purpose of greater learning and potential evolution of the functional elements of that program.

Knowledge

The building of the road I dream of begins with the problematizing of the emotions and emotional constructs that are part of a student's re-socialization in a Master's degree program. That process begins with a critical examination of how students are realizing the many new systems and communities they must negotiate as part of their experience in U.S. higher education. The voices of students in a re-socialization process are essential to knowledge building because they open a door to viewing how greater issues relevant in TESOL will be realized in localized teaching contexts in the future, how a Master's program functions to meet student and organizational needs, and how inter-cultural values are realized in a university community.

A Master's degree in TESOL is situated in the field as the site of legitimatizing professionals. The identity and power dynamics of international students in teaching programs in TESOL has been a developing course of study (Bailey, 1996; Ilieva, 2010; Nunan, 1996; Ramanathan, 2002; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005). As that literature moves forward, however, Hassan (2011) has suggested that the multiculturalism in TESOL programs is suggestive of the girth of contexts to which English is being taught both in the States and abroad. The diversity of concepts in the professional context impacts what students are taking from their programs. Hassan's (2011) observation has made it clear that research on how students are developing professional identities and applying it to the theory and practice they are learning as Master's student needs constant research to understand how they will then carry what they are learning with them into the field. As I begin to discover in my research how

construction of emotional ways of being are negotiated over the course of re-socialization, I will shed light on the connections between how professional identity is constructed from the socializing forces in a program and how it is experienced by the participants of that program.

This study also connects the field of TESOL to the actual, everyday experience of Master's degree students at an American university. Hofested, Neurijen, Ohayva and Sanders (1990) wrote of the importance of everyday experience. They argued that "shared perceptions of daily practices [are] the core of an organization's culture" (p. 311). This focus on daily practice contrasts with educational policies that focus on traditional hierarchy in university structures, in which high-power stakeholders including professors, alumni, and staff make up the core constituency that sets norms and carries on traditions (Clark, 1998). Recent literature in TESOL also shows that the field is critiquing power, cultural identity and dominant ideologies of English by questioning paradigms such as native speakerism (Norton, 1997; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008; Radwanska-Williams, 2008;). Yet academic socialization literature paints a picture of the traditional role of minorities in education as that of being in disempowered positions (Blommaert, Collins, & Slembrouck, 2005). Aquirre (2000) wrote that minorities in higher education are funneled into specific roles, where women and minorities "are channeled into performing service activities in academia, such as advising women and/or minorities" (p. 83). Thus, there is a disconnect between what students learn as they become TESOL professionals and what they are experiencing in professionalization– which brings into question what students are really taking from their Master's degree experience versus the ideal within their field of study.

Practical and Policy

This study also suggests practical policy change in terms of approaching and situating TESOL within broader conversations about diversity on campus. As literature of minority

students aptly shows, “today, institutions of higher education are coming to the realization that they are inadequately prepared to understand the learning and developmental needs of racial, cultural, and linguistic minorities” (Watson, Terrel & White, 2002, p. 2). On these same lines, Ellis (1992) and Thomas and Hollenshead (2001) have called for greater inquiry into diversity within the designation of minority. In this context, my research highlights international students as unique in the designation of minorities in the university system. I draw from the work of Hofstede et al. (1990) who wrote that “Statements about national culture or national character smell of superficiality and false generalization” (p. 77). In Hofstede et al.’s critique, they argued that foundational research in multicultural organizations needs to extend the general corpus in step with the research being done. Hofstede et al.’s argument extends to the action of deepening ways of interacting with concepts of inter-culturalism, an argument that I view as intricately woven with emotions and emotional construction.

Without more research on emotional diversity as an element of multicultural and TESOL studies, the field will neglect the essential role of emotions in programming. White (1993) warned that, “as long as basic (Western) modes of conceptualizing persons and emotions are taken for granted, the goal of comparative research remains largely a matter of mapping taken for granted surface diversity” (p. 30). White (1993) also warned that “one of the significant methodological liabilities of a naturalized conception of emotions is the tendency to minimize problems of interpretation and translation in coming to terms with emotional meaning” (p. 33). The realization of White’s suggestions into action is developing new knowledge of Master’s in TESOL student experience. That focus creates a larger point of reference for discourse on multicultural experience in US higher education, a policy shift which opens the door for greater epistemological diversity.

Re-socialization and Key Terms

I have chosen to use the word “re-socialization” as my key term in this work instead of “socialization” because of the difference in projected meaning for me in my study. While the term “socialization” refers to development of social understanding, for me, it also infers that someone is starting anew, rather than carrying their past life-experience with them. I view using the term re-socialization as a choice that reminds the reader that the participants in my study are not beginning anew, rather they are bringing with them a wide range of approaches to their sojourning experience in their Master’s degree program in the States. I view re-socialization as a messy, individual, intimate and complex process of past, present and future. I view the word socialization as more squarely focused on the complexity of the present and future. It is my ambition in using the term re-socialization that the reader be constantly reminded of the role of the past, expectations and approaches to reality as complex elements in the re-socialization experience.

Re-socialization is conceptualized in this study as not a unidirectional assimilation by novices to a dominant culture, but rather a bi-directional co-construction, in which novices interpret and impact their own experience (Stein & Weidman, 1989b). Indeed, the five participants are individuals each traveling through their specific program uniquely interpreting people, projects, norms and expectations as they encounter and interact with them. Keeping in mind Stein and Weidman, I view the participants as active agents rather than passive participants.

Re-socialization is a long-term and personal process of identity formation. Brim (1966) offered a general definition of socialization as “the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that make them more or less effective members of their society” (p. 3). Though many examples of the knowledge and skills Brim has suggested can be

explicitly defined by institutional normative elements (i.e. literature, curriculum, prescribed schedules, traditions and artifacts), disposition is a more ambiguous and shifting term. Brim suggests that once re-socialized a person will enact a new way of being guided by his or her perception of what it means to be a member of a new community. The role he or she plays is drawn from interaction and integration in that community (Weidman, Twale & Stein, 2001). This work will examine the emotions which the participants privilege while forming their professional dispositions and their new professional community.

In this work, I use the word “institution” to represent the communities the participants are working to gain access to. I view the setting of professional re-socialization as placed in the formal and informal experience of participants. It is located in the different group memberships that exist for them. Linde (2009), suggests using the word “institutions” and defines it as “any social group which has a continued existence over time, whatever its degree of formal status may be” (p. 7). What Linde suggested is that “institutions” are the many collectives that make up a participant’s experience within a setting. I prefer this term because it legitimizes both the professional and social experiences of participants as sites of valuable development.

Background of Study

When I began my Ph.D. study in Composition and TESOL, my professional knowledge was driven heavily by my background in the pedagogy of experiential learning, a field epitomized in this quote from Confucius dated about 450 B.C.: “Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand.”

I was first introduced to experiential learning as a Master’s student at The School of International Training (SIT) in Vermont. At that time David Klob’s (1984) version of the Experiential learning cycle was widely employed by many of my professors in my course work. I understood from my own experience as a student taken through the steps of experiential

learning that, as Byram and Feng (2005) asserted, “the more contextual clues learners can identify, the more likely their learning becomes meaningful” (p. 912). Initially, I then defined my own experiential learning pedagogy as making sense of the stage of noticing. I placed emphasis in my practice on offering students exposure to new things.

As I grew as a teacher, I learned that experience and awareness are only small parts of a larger process in the development of personal knowledge. Argyris (1957) asserted: “if Joe and Bob experience the same error, and they come out differently, then it isn’t experience that teaches Joe or Bob, it is what Joe and Bob do with (or how they view) their experiences that counts” (p. 14). Reflection is a task that does not end at what happened to us but must encompass how we as participants created or developed that event, shifting from what we see to how we are experiencing that thing and the larger structures which play a part in our experience. Reading the work of Argyris (1957; 1976) and Argyris and Schon (1974), I began to shift toward a more critical perspective in my teaching. They wrote that, as social beings, essential to our development are learned rules of interaction. Argyris (1957) wrote:

Theory building is reality building not only because our theories-in-use help to determine what we perceive of the behavioral world but because our theories-in-use determine our actions, which in turn help to determine the characteristics of the behavioral world, which in turn feed into our theory-in-use. (p. 18)

They advocated that as teachers we “develop interventions that produce rare events” (Argyris & Schon, 1974, p. xi). This is now taken a step further for me through positioning events in a larger social context. Argyris and Schon (1974) elaborated in their definition to describe theories-in-use as “the means for getting what we want” (p. 15) in any situation we find ourselves. This definition implies that theory-building is a negotiation of self and power. I have found the concept of theories-in-use deeply impactful on my academic practices. This theory portrays the

student as constantly learning and changing. Theories-in-use have been deeply impactful on my work because they acknowledge the multiple and subtle ways a person is learning as he or she has experiences. It is a concept that challenged me to attempt to understand experiences at a deeper level. That path of inquiry led me to identify emotions as a research topic.

Emotional Roles

When I began to privilege the emotional aspects of theory building, I was influenced by Palmer (1998), and his work became essential to my development as a researcher. Palmer (1998) argued that though there can be chaos in the process of learning, it is the teacher's skill to "draw a straight line by connecting comments ... revealing a trajectory of inquiry that can both confirm what we know and take us somewhere new" (p. 135). As opposed to a constant recursive minimal addition and subtraction of norms, which I initially understood from Argyris and Schon (1974), Palmer implied that in the moments of intervention, great change can happen when students and teachers alike are more or less successful at making sense of chaos. Palmer also suggested that others can be essential to that growth. Through Palmer's work, I began to put emotions at the forefront of my conscious pedagogy and became careful in how hard I pushed students to accept things they did not understand while also focusing on community building as essential to the learning process. As I grow as a researcher into my present day study, my identity as a teacher positioned within experiential learning and my deep belief in emotions as driving forces toward change have served to shape what I study and how.

In this project, I record normative emotions as the participants interpreted them, as well as the individual emotional experiences the participants share in their new context. Simply put, as Hochschild (1979) wrote, in any given situation, "We feel. We try to feel. We want to try to feel" (p. 563). Hochschild's (1979) theory, elaborated on in Chapter Two, depicts a person who uses his or her understanding of context to attempt to successfully interact using perceived

feeling rules, or “guidelines for the assessment of fits and misfits between feeling and situation” (p. 566). Like my own experience shifting and reforming in my new American academic context, the changes participants make and their formation of their emotional selves may offer great insight into epistemological diversity.

A Feminist Paradigm- Growing into the Now

Another element to my positionality and choice of study is a strong disposition toward a multicultural feminist paradigm. The work of multiracial/multicultural feminists makes raw the reality of the world and creates theories which are openly impacted by emotions. Yee (1993) wrote that to empower, we need to “expose the truth as we live it” (p. 31). In her work she highlighted the multiple truths and realities deeply embedded in systems of power. As a construct, “Feminism has allowed us to begin to understand how the designation of some things as public and others as private has shielded power used against women and prevented us from exerting our own power elsewhere” (Dent, 1995, p. 74). This key concept empowered me when I began this study to hold on to emotions as a cornerstone of this project. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2007) wrote that a driving force in Feminism is to “[get] at the subjugated knowledge of the diversity of women’s realities that often lie hidden and unarticulated” (p. 113). There are parallels in the values I internalized from my experiential learning background (those of mutuality, individual empowerment and the importance of practice and practical knowledge), but within experiential learning I observed that emotions, though acknowledged, were sterilized by the process of contextualization.

Like a call to arms, Bloch (2002) wrote about her experience sharing her interest in the study of emotions. Bloch (2002) wrote of her colleagues’ laughter at her interest in emotional research: “laughter is an emotional response to an apparently cultural incompatibility between Academia and emotions” (p. 113). Yet Bloch followed up strongly by asserting that emotions are

raw and central to decision-making and reality-building. According to Bloch (2002), they “[pervade] every aspect of our social lives” (p. 113). Within Feminist work, I have found there is not an initial question of the inclusion of emotions but rather a quest to take emotional studies in new directions.

A final element drawn from feminist thought that I consistently have circled back to is Brooks’ (2007) concept of “cultural acumen.” Brooks argued that women are gifted with acumen and subversive observation which, due to masculine domination of research, has not been fully incorporated into research. Brooks (2007) defined acumen as the “unique, intuitive ability to read and interpret pain and hidden emotions and understand the genesis of those emotions – as one such unique set of expertise” (p. 59). This, for me, highlights the importance of keeping central to research the identity work which is at play amongst participants and community members during fluctuated times of heightened emotions, such as a period of re-socialization. The concept of cultural acumen suggests that greater sharing of emotions as genesis to action can make a new picture by finding new ways of sharing the hidden emotions of experience, something I keep central throughout this project.

Chapter Organization

In this chapter, I offered an overview of the study, my positionality, a brief introduction to Narrative Inquiry as the theory and methodology as well as an introduction to the research on emotion planned for this project. I also presented a multicultural Feminist paradigm that informs my research. Throughout this work, my own experience and positionality has weighed heavily on the research choices that I have made – therefore a narrative of the relationship of this work to my own experience is woven into every chapter. In the coming two chapters, I ground my study in foundational literature in emotion theory, narrative theory and socialization and multiculturalism. I provide the framework and methodology which I undertook in order to find

meaningful fulfillment in addressing my research questions. Chapter Two is a literature review and functions to situate my study and ground it in theory. Chapter Three presents the methodology and research design of my study. In Chapter Three I also offer the context, participants, research design and researcher positionality. Following Chapter Three are Chapters Four, Five and Six, which present the data collected in narrative form, analysis of data and future implications of this work. Throughout this work I readdress and keep central the research questions which focus on emotions and re-socialization.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examines emotions as a part of re-socialization for five graduate students in a Master's in TESOL program. The literature presented in this chapter foundationally drove the development of my methodology, analysis and process of interpretation and offered a grounding presence in my decision making throughout the development of my work. In this chapter, I define how emotions are understood in this work. I then explore Narrative Inquiry as a field of study to show how it offers a platform to research the emotional experiences of others. Finally, I consider how emotions function as a driving force in re-socialization. Different fields of study informed my work, including organizational theory and theories of multiculturalism in higher education. In this chapter I provide an overview of theories of re-socialization in these fields as they served to ultimately broaden my ability to develop my project and to glean meaning from the stories of my participants.

Field of Study of Emotions

Emotion as the focal point of this study has presented unique challenges in terms of writing a cohesive review of literature. Indeed, though emotions can drive some people to heroic action and others to stifled silence, the extremity of importance of emotions to how we interact with and interpret the world around us does not mean that we have developed a language to truly articulate what emotions are and how they function. Looking at the broad range of fields which tackle emotions as a subject matter, Tonkin (2005), a social anthropologist, wrote that though there can be cross-disciplinary commonalities, emotion “is not a scientific term” (p. 58). Indeed, when I began down the rabbit hole to find a meaningful definition of emotion, I felt the Cheshire cat's laughing gaze at each turn. Gibson (1997) wisely asserted that “there is growing emotion research [in organizational theory], but the sheer amount should not be construed as

indicating a coherent picture of emotions” (p. 226). I found Gibson’s assertion to be comforting as I began to discover the many different approaches and structures that theorists define as part of emotion theory and the study of emotions. Perhaps my favorite assertion about the summarization of the field of emotion theory came from De Sousa (2004) in the edited foundational book, *Thinking About Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotion*, when he answers the question “What I know” with the tongue and cheek answer, “On second thought, there’s nothing I’m that sure of” (p. 61).

The study of emotions is interdisciplinary, and I will draw from sociology, psychology, organizational studies, anthropology, psycho-evolutionary theory and from theorists who focus their work on the development of emotions as a field of study wholly its own. Much of the work presented spans great periods of time and a wide variety of topics guided by each scholar’s interests and the periods of flurried scholarship that emerged, specifically from the 1970 and 80s, a period which I view as representing much of the foundational work in the field. In this review, I follow De Sousa’s (2004) approach to outlining emotion theory, which orders the presentation structure as: biological reactions, social interactions and individual interpretations of emotions. To situate my project in this broad field, I give a history of emotions as a field of study, describe central debates, and review current research trends in the field.

A Brief History of Emotions

No review of emotions begins without suggesting its neglected position far behind the research of reason and order. Solomon (1993) suggested that the longstanding detrimental exclusion of emotions in organizational and socialization theory stems from Descartes, who laid the foundation for much of the study of emotions by depicting emotions as passions which “in general are distinguished from ‘clear cognition’ and rendered judgment ‘confused and obscured” (as cited in Solomon, 1993, p. 6). Moving forward into the development of a negative view of

emotions transformed into practice, Weber (1947) went so far as to assert that for organizations to be successful, emotions had to be removed from the bureaucratic system, suggesting instead that rules and rationality could function as a structure for everyday interaction. A more recent literature review written in organizational theory began by suggesting the foundational view of emotions and individuals as the “ugly duckling” to the Western privileging of reason and order (Eide, 2005, p. 11). Historically, many people marginalized the study of emotions, and in the cases in which they did study them, emotions were viewed as uncontrollable, inconsistent, and detrimental to a person or organization’s success.

Through time, however, a central debate that has emerged in the study of emotions is the question of the degree to which emotions are biological rather than influenced by societal and social constructs. On the side of emotions as biological, De Sousa (2004) wrote of the physical response of emotions: “Thus if I am moved by your performance, this has something to do with the tears welling in my own eyes” (p. 4). De Sousa focused on what happens to the body during an emotional response, an approach that is inherently biological. Yet De Sousa acknowledged the context of a social performance as the trigger and backdrop. In turn, Kemper (1981) asserted that a person's emotional reaction is impacted by both situational structures as well as biological mechanisms and physiological processes. Before tackling social constructs and emotion, White (1993) wrote that “theories of emotions are informed by more basic assumptions about minds, bodies, and persons” (p. 31). These three scholars all show that though biological and social research have forged paths that at times feel divided, they still strongly acknowledge the important contributions of both sides of the debate.

A Background in Biology

While the debate isn’t necessarily a split, most of the scholars with scientific backgrounds I read have focused more on what happens to the body and mind in a situation

than on the social and interpersonal elements of emotions. Focusing on the body allows a researcher to have something tangible, something to measure or a jumping off point to begin a greater discussion. A foundational theory in how emotions impact and are impacted by our bodies came from Cannon (1927), who worked along with his graduate student Bard to develop a three-part model of emotion called the Cannon-Bard theory of emotions. Cannon and Bard broke down the human emotional experience into stimulant - emotion - response. Cannon and Bard based their work on James (1884), whose work was resuscitated because of the prominence of the Cannon-Bard theory. James argued that emotional responses needed a stimulant - perception - interpretation and response. James included an element of consciousness that Cannon and Bard did not. For example, if I were walking down a dark alley at night, Cannon and Bard may have viewed my quickened heart rate as an unconscious response, while James would have acknowledged my imagining a stranger attacking as actively at play in my fear and response.

Moving forward in the scientific study of emotions, Plutchik (1980) and his contemporaries began to break emotions down into variables. Plutchik believed that primary emotions evolutionarily developed with us. Plutchik theorized that all emotions are amalgamations of eight different primary emotions somewhat akin to a color wheel. In the center are eight primary emotions that individuals draw from to form emotional reactions. This theory showed emotions as units that, rather than being amorphous or chaotic emotions, were identifiable and structured parts of our internal beings. According to Plutchik, emotions lie constantly below the surface, shifting and changing in intensity. This idea is an important concept in emotion theory because Plutchik argued that emotions are always with us, an idea that has moved consistently forward in emotion theory even if Plutchik's "eight primary emotions" assertion has not.

In the 1980s, Plutchik's contemporaries expanded on the idea of charting primary emotions. Like Plutchik, Ekman (1982) used a color wheel-like model. Ekman's model used six discrete emotions to study facial expressions and emotion. Russell and Pratt (1980) drew a globe and set out to place emotion adjectives relationally on it, placing words they saw as opposites at the poles and filling in less dramatic language closer to the equator. Almost two decades later, Gibson (1997) told us that emotions take three forms of data: "Behavioral (such as facial expressions or aggressive actions), physiological (such as high pulse rate, sweaty palms), and subjective (our experiential knowledge that we 'feel happy'" (p. 214). Gibson's model paid homage to theories before, in the sense that he acknowledged measurable physiological responses while adding an element of subjectivity.

This brief review is just a sampling of the breadth of biological studies of emotion because my research falls more heavily in the area of emotions as social and individual. Unlike many of the theorists I just reviewed, I am skeptical about objective charts and non-contextualized categories. With that said, even though I do not privilege biology or use a variable-based model or an adjective-heavy color wheel, I do carry this research forward with an eye toward how our physical responses are part of our experience. One particular point I draw from in the work of Plutnick (1980) and his contemporaries is the concept that emotions are constantly with us coloring and shaping our everyday interactions. As Cowie and Schroder (2005) wrote, emotions are "part and parcel to the way people experience situations that they are in, or remembering, or anticipating" (p. 311). Emotions are an underlying but very powerful part of our actions, sense of context, and interpretations of both the here and now and our memory of a specific time.

Emotions as Social

At the same time that the hard sciences were breaking down emotions into variables, the social sciences were examining emotions as social constructs. Theorists in the fields of sociology, psychology, and organizational theory were examining controlled emotional responses and the development of “feeling rules” (Hochschild, 1979, p. 566), or the socially normed ways of showing emotion. These theories argue that emotional expressions are learned entities which we develop and appropriate through social interaction and that emotions are innate “discrete” or “basic” parts of how we begin our journey as social creatures (Barrett, Gendron, & Yang-Ming, 2009; Colombetti, 2009). As Kahlbaugh (1993) wrote, “emotions do not grow with us but between us” (p. 80). In the process of maturation, we not only learn how to act in new situations, but we learn internal emotional expressions.

A major debate in the field, as surveyed by Kemper (1981), is the difference between Goffman’s (1959) and Hochschild’s (1979) theories of inward and outward emotional development. Goffman, in his seminal work on emotional structures, began a debate on external displays of emotion. In Goffman’s argument, external displays of emotion are heavily regulated and dictated by an individual’s interpretation of his or her context, and the context rules that are at play. Emotions are another tool in interaction. Goffman (1959) wrote that during socialization, or what I am calling in this work re-socialization, we learn parts of a system and we use those parts to create a face in interaction. In an effort to interact successfully when no indexed frame of reference is directly applicable, Goffman (1959) wrote that impression management comes into play. In impression management, participants are actively using face and emotionality to manage a situation in which they may be missing a frame of reference to draw from for easy interaction. Goffman looked heavily at the external, leaving the internal as developing in tandem but not

necessarily in agreement with the external. This relationship means that in some cases, we are indeed, “faking it ‘til we make it” in terms of emotionality, with the face not matching the inside.

Research into whether individuals internalize socially-based emotional structures is also part of a professional disposition discussed in the field of organizational research (Leidner, 1993; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Van Maanen, 1998; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Leidner (1993) documented the emotional management and forced performance of fast-food workers to suggest how they make meaning of subscribed emotional ways of being. Leidner showed that external emotional ways of being can be deliberately formulaic and that people can work within the formula. But Leidner’s work also suggests that forced outward displays of emotion are inwardly interpreted and understood by the individuals enacting them. Hoschild (1979) called the effort to show appropriate emotions in the workplace “emotional work” (p. 570). But unlike Goffman, Hoschild approached the concept of emotional labor from the perspective that though the external and internal emotions may not match, people want them to.

For Hoschild (1979), social relationships form, rules are developed for interaction, and those rules then develop into patterns which impact internal emotions and emotionality (Kemper, 1981). Hoschild (1979) powerfully asserted that emotions are the “bottom side” of ideology (p. 566). In essence, people develop relationships and rules in socialization to ensure the continuation of those relationships without conflict. Hoschild (1979) wrote that “emotion work can be done by self upon the self, by the self upon others, and by others upon others” (p. 562). Hoschild (1979) wrote that we can see evidence of this work being done when people make exclamations of perceived appropriateness in “feeling reminders” (p. 564). Feeling reminders can be physical exclamations and expressions or verbal claims people make such as “You shouldn’t feel so guilty” or “You don’t have the right to feel jealous” (Hoschild, 1979, p.

564). Hoschild argued that claims on emotions go beyond face value and can actually impact the inner ability of a person to feel in a situation.

This process is fueled by a negotiation of the construction of internal emotions. Hoschild (1979) suggested that people function under two relational codification systems: “the initial more authentic codification of a situation” and then under “deliberate codification” (p. 562). For example, when encountering a stranger while walking down a dark alley at night, one may feel a sense of fight-or-flight kick in but may quell that feeling with the rationalization that no crime has happened in that neighborhood. The initial moment of fear is the authentic codification, while the deliberate codification is the narrative we tell ourselves to invoke a different emotion, or stay calm, in the moment. Hoschild theorized the degree to which we can internally change how we feel about something through our identity construction after that initial codification process. How calm can we make ourselves in what could be a frightening situation?

Hoschild (1979) defined this negotiation of internal emotions and external rules for emotion in her discussion of “feeling rules” (p. 566) and “emotional work” (p. 570). She echoed the work of Agyris (1957; 1976) and Goffman (1959) by suggesting that the goal of much of our interaction is to find appropriateness by learning social scripts and conventions. But while the other scholars focus much of their work on appropriating correct interactions, Hoschild viewed emotional development as an effort toward appropriate external representation as well as an internal effort to actually feel the correct emotions. Thus, in her work, we see how the evolution of individual feeling rules is part and parcel to the evolution of self.

In terms of social research, scholarship has moved beyond looking at the emotions of an individual to focus also on collective emotions and greater societal choices and shifts. Markus and Kityama (1994) suggested that emotions are defined by “how a group thinks about the nature of its functional relationship with the cultural environment” (p. 100). They continued in

their argument: “Many of the emotions observed in everyday life seem to depend on the dominant cultural frame in which specific social situations are constructed and, therefore, cannot be separated from culture-specific patterns of thinking, acting, and interacting” (Markus & Kityama, 1994, p. 4). This idea of the power of collective emotional responses came to the forefront in research in anthropology, business theory, and other fields that look at how society functions and how collective choices are made.

Connected to the idea of group emotional dynamics is Heatherington’s (2005) theory of social memory. Heatherington, whose research on the response of Sardinian populations to public parks, is an example of how collective emotional attachments can impact public discourse. Heatherington researched a conservation debate which took place in Sardinia, Italy, in 1998 in which international conservation organizations wanted to develop parkland out of land that was otherwise legally unclaimed, but socially claimed as community property. Heatherington (2005) wrote, “There is a romantic presumption of local agency that draws power from the historical examples of resistance against outsiders to protect the commons” (p. 152). Though a park sounds like a good idea in theory, the imposition of outsiders on local space was not welcome-the local people were outraged. The collective resistance to the development of space by outsiders was common sense for the Sardinian population, even against something as benign as a public park. Heatherington’s example shows how people can have a collective memory and subsequent collective emotional response that can impact larger social choices.

The reaction of the Sardinians to the idea of a park was powerful social agency. In the conversation about group emotions as agency, group insiders had power and resisted outsiders. Casciaro and Sousa Lobo (2008) studied the power of emotions to the development of insider status in workplace situations. Casciaro and Sousa Lobo (2008) found “on average, liked but less competent people were more likely to be sought out for task interaction than were people who

were competent but disliked” (p. 679). Their finding suggests that displays of emotion and understanding emotional social cues are important to social status. Both the example of the Sardinians’ collective response to outsider influence and the workplace description of Casciaro and Sousa Lobo suggest that emotions and emotional displays can be harnessed not just to fit in to a group but also to make powerful changes.

Emotions as Individual Interpretation

In addition to emotions being ascribed to physical responses and to social pressures or controls, theorists have also studied individual agency over emotions and their role in individual growth. Lutz and White (1986) wrote that “one of the promises of the new interest in emotion is that it can reanimate the sometimes robotic image of humans which social science has purveyed” (p. 431). Emotions aren’t just things that happen to people but are motivational, developmental and part and parcel to individual development of knowledge and understanding of the world. Inserting agency into the discussion of emotions shifts the conversation. Scholars in this vein of emotion theory use words like appraise, interpret, conscious decision making, knowledge building—a development that adds a richness of individual spirit and identity in an otherwise hegemonic conversation.

I begin with Frijda and Mesquita (1994), who theorized about emotions and cognition. Like Hoschild, Frijda and Mesquita examined emotions as they rise to the surface and are governed by social interactions but added a new dimension of cognition to the conversation. Frijda (1986) wrote, “Emotions serve something, and presumably they serve it well ... they do so by monitoring the relevance of events and by modulating or instigating action accordingly” (p. 475). Frijda (1986) infused emotion as an active agent into actions and interpretations. It is research that Frijda and Mesquita advance in their 1994 work, in which they insert emotion into a narrative of how actions occur. Frijda and Mesquita (1994) strongly asserted that, “Emotions

occur when an event is appraised by the individual as relevant to his or her concerns” (p. 52). Appraisal is a higher level of perception that sparks mental interaction that produces internal or external action. Fridja and Mesquita (1994) wrote, “They [emotions] are affective responses to what happens in the environment and cognitive representations of the event’s meaning for the individual” (p. 51). Fridja and Mesquita theorized the importance of perception and interpretation to action.

Likewise, Ellsworth (1994) examined the relationships between situations, emotions, and the choices of an individual. Ellsworth however, focuses on emotions as point of inquiry. Ellsworth (1994) wrote, “An emotion itself is also an event to be appraised, and cultures vary in their beliefs about which emotions are most significant or revealing” (p. 39). Rather than a lens focused on the emotion and action, Ellsworth theorized about which emotions are carried to the surface and how they represent individual and social knowledge. Ellsworth’s theories are important because they deconstruct the cultural norming of emotions in order to push conversation beyond assumptions and common sense interpretation.

Ellsworth’s questions carry forward in the work of Horrocks and Callahan (2006), who examined how emotions play a role in reality-building. Horrocks and Callahan (2006) wrote, “Individual experience of emotion and the choices about the expression of these emotions reflect an individual’s sense of self” (p. 70). They argued that emotional development is a conscious and unconscious shaping of identity. Horrocks and Callahan (2006) wrote that “While emotions are rooted within individual exchanges, the expression of feelings can transform and negotiate typical patterns of functioning” (p. 71). Emotional representations are transformative and impactful on agency and a sense of self.

In turn, Deigh (2004) wrote that “emotions are intentional states in the sense that they are directed at something” (p. 9). Deigh’s argument incorporates agency with the idea of

intention in the social world. Deigh added that emotions are different than moods or states. Deigh (2004) wrote, “Hope is unlike giddiness or drowsiness, states of mind can occur undirected at anything” (p. 9). Deigh suggested that emotions are more conscious than unconscious moods. Cowie, Douglas-Cowie and Cox (2005) then expanded the definition of emotions away from surfacing in a specific context of one emotion to being consistently present to different degrees and therefore having different roles. Cowie, Douglas-Cowie and Cox wrote of the distinction between episodic emotions, or times when emotions are at the forefront of conscious decision-making, and pervasive emotions, the more common experience of having situations colored by emotions. Their work implies that it is not simply identifying an emotional response but appreciating the ever-present complexity of emotions in our everyday lives. While individuals might have some control over emotions, emotions are also sometimes subconscious.

In summary of this section on emotion research, I harken back to Lutz and White (1986), who theorized on the complexity of biological, social and individual experience of emotions. Lutz and White (1986) suggested that “Emotions are treated as evaluative judgements” (p. 407). They identified emotions as powerful elements in individual interpretations of both short term decision making and interactions, as well as in long term development of knowledge, understanding and self-identification. Still, Lutz and White (1986) suggested that “evaluative judgments” (p. 407) do not end in the study of individual experience but translate to understanding society at large. Lutz and White (1986) wrote, “For many who focus on emotions as judgement, however, the ideal aspect of emotion is embedded firmly in the real by virtue of the fact that emotional judgements are seen to require social validation or negotiation for their realization, thereby linking emotion with power and social structure” (p. 407). The work of Lutz and White melded together the social, biological and individual into a complex matrix. Like the theorists before, their work acknowledged all three elements as important, while

focusing more strongly on the individual as part of the social. Yet, all of the work mentioned suggests that the three elements cannot be disengaged from each other in research of emotions.

From Emotion Theory to Narrative Inquiry

As shown in the section above, emotions are complex and woven into the individual and social experience of each person. Unpacking the emotions that are part of an experience is not a process of ripping a detail out but rather understanding the nuance and complexity of how each detail belongs, is interwoven, and is working together in context. Listening to and telling stories is one way to begin to understand. Indeed, Narrative Inquiry is the movement toward privileging the knowledge of the world that exists in narratives through a structured and deliberate approach to stories and storied lives. Narrative Inquiry, as a theory, framework and method for discovery offers many tools for understanding the complex experience of others as well as opportunities for the privileging of emotions as the highlighted point in inquiry. In this section, I survey the roots of Narrative Inquiry in the social sciences, elaborate on the theory as it will be realized in my study, and offer some discussion of theorists who are current in the field.

Narrative Inquiry began from the tradition of the social sciences rooted in the thick descriptive nature and focus on local practice of anthropological and ethnographic research practices (Geertz, 1973; 1983). Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) suggested a “narrative turn” (p. 7) in qualitative research theory that widened the spectrum of understanding of the role of narratives in human experience. Huber, Caine, Huber and Steeves (2013) credit Bruner (1986) and Polkinghorne (1988) with taking the initial leap away from narratives as reports on life experience toward legitimizing Narrative Inquiry as a research practice. Bruner and Polkinghorne wrote in support of narratives as structures laden with meaning and knowledge contextual in the real world rather than reporting on or being a product of that world. Bruner expounded on the weight of stories as a paramount element to human experience. Polkinghorne,

in scholarly conversation with Bruner, expanded the legitimacy of narratives through extensive writing on the many roles of narrative in knowledge making. Bruner and Polkinghorne's interest in stories as social acts were the root of Narrative Inquiry.

Over time, Narrative Inquiry has gained legitimacy and has been seen as a form of inquiry designed "to advance our understanding of individual development within sociohistorical contexts" (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004, p vii). The focus on the individual within the community has seen Narrative Inquiry flourish in fields that study people (Creswell, 2013). Riessman and Speedy (2007) wrote, "The 'narrative turn' has entered history, anthropology and folklore, psychology, sociology and communication studies, cultural studies, and sociology" (p. 427). Though theorists have bridged out to address narrative theory as a practice in all of the fields mentioned above, I align my approach to narrative research more wholly within the field of teacher education. Narrative Inquiry is particularly strong in teacher education, in which there is a strong tradition of research of individual experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Day & Leitch, 2001; Golombek & Johnson, 2004). Day and Leitch (2001) examined the role of emotions as they play a part in teacher development. Their research represents a bridge between emotions, narratives, and Narrative Inquiry. The expansion of Narrative Inquiry into a rich theory draws from all the field mentioned above and strongly focuses on the players involved in research.

As Narrative Inquiry became a practice and narrative moved from being a part of data collected or an account of a happening to a central part of discovery, researchers began to develop new theories to look at narratives. For instance, Fox (1995) made a distinction between researchers who study narratives "intertextually" and others who view stories as "presentations of lived experiences" (p. 1). Those who study narratives intertextually are narrative inquirers. Andrews (2007) wrote that "[We] live, breath, and survive in particular historical, social, and

political contexts” (p. 489). Andrews is suggesting that the placement of stories into context is important to meaning making. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) shot across the bow of theorists with the challenge, “Our questions now is not so much what makes a good narrative...but it is rather a question of what makes a good narrative inquiry” (p. 185). This question provoked debate and inspired reflection. To begin the conversation, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) drew from the theories of Dewey to form the cornerstone theories of Narrative Inquiry. Clandinin, Pushor and Orr (2007) describe the Deweyan approach as:

A view that acknowledges the embodiment of the person in the world and that focuses on not only on the individual’s experience but also on the social, cultural, and institutional narratives in which the individual’s experiences are constituted, shared, expressed and enacted. (p. 29)

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) cited these elements as “temporality” and reminded the researcher that stories are placed specifically to do some form of work, whether internal or external in a specific moment in time. Clandinin (2007) wrote, “This creates a more complex view of experience with space for understanding the phenomenon that narrative inquiry study as both the living of storied experience and the stories one tells of their lived experience” (p. xiv). Clandinin and Connelly’s theory of temporality offer a starting off point that marks the birth of Narrative Inquiry as a theory.

From the foundational theories of temporality, Narrative Inquiry has grown into a structured practice. Whereas foundational researchers in Narrative Inquiry focus on the context of stories, Linde (1993), and Labov (2006), both sociolinguists, inform Narrative Inquiry through the use of discourse analysis to describe the structure and function of stories. Linde, in her work on life stories, suggests that structure of stories is as important in meaning making as the content. Linde wrote that even when a story is not cohesive when it is told, it is meant to be

cohesive in the great span of a person's storied existence. Labov, (2006) in the field of sociolinguistics, examined the structural components of storytelling and looked at meaning in more than what is said but in how we, in a narrative way, code information. Labov examined how the framing of the stories of our past shape our present and the elements that most commonly make up different types of stories. Linde offered a different connection between narrative and meaning-making through her study of the functionality of narrative. Linde (2009) suggested that we study narrative to "understand ... the way an institution uses narrative to create and reproduce its identity by the creation and maintenance of an institutional memory" (p.1). Linde argued that stories can be studied through identification and research of the privileged discourse of professionals in a specific institution or through the stories that community members of that institution tell about each other to develop institutional memory. Both Linde and Labov broke down stories into patterns and structures of language as they exist in context. Labov and Linde's work can be seen in Riessman and Speedy's (2006) assertion that "analysis in narrative studies interrogates language – how and why events are storied, not simply the content to which language refers" (p. 430). These researchers approach Narrative Inquiry from a linguistic perspective. Although I did not use linguistic analysis in my research, a linguistic perspective enriched my understanding of narratives and informed the development of my interview questions and interview process.

Narrative Inquiry also studies the function of stories. Narrative Inquiry is, at its core, about "life and living" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 478). Narrative Inquirers recognize that stories are not recreational parts of human experiences, but they are essential. As Lopez (2004) poetically suggested, "sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive" (p. 60). Narratives play a central part in life and experience. Schaffsma (1994) suggested that the social

work of narratives can have longitudinal impact on individuals and institutions. Stories are powerful.

As Narrative Inquiry grew researchers have established best practices. Clandinin and Murphy (2007) used the language of “Co-construction” (p. 600) to describe the telling of narratives and the formation of a methodology and research practices that admitted participants and their stories as active and multidimensional characters on an unfolding stage. Narrative inquirers give greater weight to the evaluative selves as elements in the research project and the shifts toward the individual experiences of both researcher and researched as full of multiple layers of meaning (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). When stories were given credibility as points of inquiry, the position of the listener became part of the research. Andrews (2007) wrote retrospectively on four Narrative Inquiry projects “fundamentally, they were all conducted by me and as such were guided in some sense by the same, or at least similar, meaning-making frameworks” (p. 490). Andrews acknowledged positionality as active in research. Interactions are negotiations. Negotiations are ongoing: “Narrative inquiry carries more a sense of continual reformulation of an inquiry than it does a sense of problem, definition and solution” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 124). Narrative projects are open ended and subjective in nature, focused more on the ever-changing human experience. We can see the value of the individual in practice in the contemporary Narrative Inquiry of McClure (2011). In her inquiry of the experience of Armenian women’s literacy practices McClure wrote, “Researchers engaged in narrative inquiry believe in the value of storytelling as a way of understanding their participants, who themselves paint particular pictures of their lives that are then added to the story of human experience” (p. 60).

A central tenant present in recent approaches to Narrative Inquiry is the study of the phenomenon of the story and a driving desire to recognize newness in the world around us.

Dodge, Ospina and Foldy's (2005) work examined unfolding practices in Narrative Inquiry and focused on the evaluative nature of narratives. Golombek and Johnson (2004) wrote, "Narratives by their very nature are not meant to describe phenomena objectively, but rather to connect phenomenon and infuse them with interpretation" (p. 308). When a narrative is told, a phenomenon is chosen, created and given meaning. Andrews (2007) wrote, "I am convinced that if I can listen closely enough, there is much to learn from every story that one might gather" (p. 491). Andrews asserted that listening can unlock "the framework that lends meaning to these lives" (p. 491). Pagnucci (2004) extended the idea of three dimensional space and the search for newness by challenging the researcher to seek out new directions and be ever purposeful to travel down new paths that are challenging epistemologically. It is at the cornerstone of constant invention where my study began its journey.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote that stories are not discovered, but rather they are invented in the moment. Indeed, as a novice narrative inquirer, theories of Narrative Inquiry have challenged me to look longitudinally and holistically, drawing attention to the stories told, language used, place, space and time, sociocultural elements, and nuances of power. Schaffsma's (1994) work challenged me to continue exploring. Schaffsma adds that Narrative Inquiry focuses on the subtlety of the everyday and highlights the details that are unconscious or lie beneath the surface. Schaafsma and Linz (2011) wrote, "Narratives often reveal what has remained unsaid, what has been unspeakable" (p. 1). I take from their advice, and from Narrative Inquiry, patience and commitment to growth and invention.

Connecting Narrative and Emotion

This review of the main ideas and key theorists of Narrative Inquiry demonstrates how it is well suited to my research of emotions. Indeed, research of emotions draws attention to narratives as data sources in their research. Narrative in emotional study can be seen in Lutz's

(1988) explanation of the many elements at play when a researcher is examining emotions in context. Lutz wrote:

To understand the meaning of an emotion is to be able to envisage (and perhaps to find oneself able to participate in) a complicated scene with actors, actions, interpersonal relationships in a particular state of repair, moral points of view, facial expressions, personal and social goals, and sequence of events. (p. 10)

Lutz used the terminology of storytelling in her use of “scene,” “actors,” and “actions,” as well as an underlying concept of temporality as she explores the complex nature of emotion research. Similarly, De Sousa invoked the language of storytelling. De Sousa (2004) asserted that what makes human emotions different from animals is “the acquisition of narrative form. This adds to our experience of reality a whole new dimension – or rather a whole new set of dimensions, which both transform and attempt to usurp the function of our primitive emotions” (p.63). Like narrative inquirers, emotion theorists also acknowledge narrative as a driving force of meaning making.

Socialization and Multiculturalism as Lenses for Discovery

In addition to the connections between narrative and emotion in this research, emotions and theories of re-socialization come together to inform my study. Emotion theorists, Merton, Reader and Kendall (1957) asserted that the entire process of socialization is contingent on a participant’s motivation to join a community. Emotion is that motivation. Epstein (1993), an emotion theorist, discussed that motivation when writing, “a cognitive system, by itself, cannot impel action. It can provide a map of means-end relations, but in the absence of motivation to achieve an end no action will be taken” (p. 313). Emotions both charge the process of re-socialization and are woven into how socialization happens. Saarni (1993) described the intimacy between emotions and the choices we make when re-socializing:

The process begins with a suggestion being offered about the anticipated emotional reaction; to the degree to which the suggested emotional response appears credible to the listener, he or she is more or less likely to scan his or her subsequent emotional experience for features that match this suggestion. (p. 440)

Saarni suggested that emotions are part of the rule structures in new settings, but they are also the tools we use to make value judgments as to whether we follow new emotional rules or not. As a subtextual element, emotions are a driving force in choice-making. In this way, emotions are woven into re-socialization, which connects to my study of the emotional experiences of international students studying in the US.

I begin to explore the theories of socialization that impacted my study by presenting where successful socialization, in different fields, lies on the continuum between acquisition of majority culture and the reality of the individual. I present this because it informed my own ability to understand the participants' experience through multiple lenses rather than just offset against my own re-socialization experiences. The definitions presented are by no means absolute as I do not work to fit the participants within these frames. Rather, they are jumping off points that offer suggested positionality within larger structures – multiple perspectives that I drew from when understanding the participants' experience. The different definitions of success show how different fields invite the individual into the process of re-socialization.

I begin at the far end of the spectrum, where re-socialization is viewed as an individual essentially becoming a tool in a larger institution. Weber's (1947) germinal work in organizational theory suggested that socialization imposes social order thereby increasing worker production. In this definition, successful socialization is contingent on acting a part and learning the scripts that make up the role one is playing. The importance of individual

experience is marginalized to the larger institution or discourse community. Like Weber, Rosen and Bates (1962), defined the goal of socialization in academic literature as that of building greater pools of knowledge for the larger professional discourse community. In this sense, professionalization is a process of knowledge acquisition toward writing and publication. A novice is seen as needing to acquire foundational knowledge and to then further that knowledge to gain legitimacy. During the initial stage of re-socialization people are, both implicitly and explicitly, introduced to the accepted norms, goals, and preferred ways of doing things at their new institution (Harquail & Cox, 1994). Along these same lines, Reynolds (1992) used the word “acculturation” to describe how a novice must acquire majority norms (p. 637). In each of these definitions of successful socialization, assimilation into a professional field is paramount to success.

Within an organization, the normalizing of emotions into scripts or patterns is also part of the bureaucratic process. Kemper (1990) defined the amount we can rely on scripts which impact how we enact ourselves. He noted that scripts “organize and determine in a general way both conduct and the meaning of the conduct without which behavior, even sexual behavior, presumably would not occur” (p. 15). In a sense, within every interaction there is a foundationally agreed upon version of what and how that interaction is done. The description of normed interaction can be an additional point of inquiry into the implicit rules and structures which participants are negotiating. Gibson (1997) wrote:

Structure in organizations includes how individuals are related to one another, both formally and informally, how tasks are designed, and how tenure is determined: thus, structure includes both a framework for interaction and the process of interaction itself. (p. 216)

Though there is room for individual interpretation and change, Kemper (1990) argued that organizations are a good place of inquiry because the norms of organizations are less contingent on the quick-shifting cultural trends that can impact social groups. Emotional scripts are then part of a stabilizing force in participant experience. To be clear here, Kemper did not argue that organizations do not change, but that they rarely change rapidly. Thus, to some extent, organizational norms represent a historically based collective agreement on rational action within a specific organization. But when individuals come together within an organization identity, group membership and individual concepts of rational action are applied to that setting. At this end of the spectrum, these theorists focus on group dynamics to look at re-socialization.

At the opposite end of the spectrum is an individually-driven interpretation of success. Whereas in the previous examples success is defined by an individual's ability to function in the eyes of the group, this definition is centered on an individual's belief that he or she is functioning. Individual perception of legitimacy equals success whether or not the group feels the same way. This definition moves the study of socialization to empower the individual. Gibson (1997) suggested that success in socialization is the perception that a person is an empowered member of his or her community. Harquail, and Cox (1994) mirrored that assertion by defining success as a member's heightened feeling of security within a new group. The subjective nature of feelings of security and empowerment as success show a gap in definitions between organizational structures and individual interpretation, which Rosen and Bates (1967) noted is the "discrepancies between the 'ideal' and the 'real' [which] often reveal strains in the system" (p. 73). This assertion shows how scripts can only partially drive institutions forward, but emotions and individuals cannot be ignored. This individually-driven definition of success helped me to effectively unpack the experience of one of my participants.

Between a script-driven and an individual agency-driven definition of re-socialization there are many theories that draw from both. Although an effort may be made to teach people scripts, no matter how many times a person may recite those scripts, individual interpretation still plays a role in meaning-making. As Mehan (1996) showed, in the study of the politics of representations, institutional and individual reality in communities develop a working set of cultural norms out of moments of ambiguity. Mehan found that when information comes down from the top, it loses the weight of meaning with each step; thus the words may travel but the meaning may change. Pennycook (2010) recognized that there is a culture, a set of rules, and a perfunctory ways of doing things which permeate from a central cultural source, but the dissemination of majority norms leaves an important opening for individual and small group interpretation. According to Pennycook, local people use local knowledge to interpret majority culture. Therefore, as both Mehan and Pennycook suggested, individuals within a system play the part of agent in making a system come to life. In this sense, they are somewhere in the middle of the spectrum.

As these ideas of re-socialization combine institutional norming and individual agency, I move on to theorists that discuss the individual experience within the spectrum. Tierney and Rhoads (1993) framed the process as two simultaneous progressions of “investiture” and “divesture” (p. 29). Essentially, “investiture” occurs when a person uses positive feedback to make additions to their affective way of being. On the other hand, “divesture” is dropping of affective ways that garner negative social reactions from others. Their definition suggests that as individuals gain new ways of enacting themselves, they lose or leave behind their old ways of being. However, I see the process not as a loss and gain but rather as shifting and growing. In my work, I use Norton’s (1997) definition of the multiple layers of identity to address the changes in self. According to Norton, people enter situations from a subject position and are able

to shift and reposition using different identities throughout interaction. A person may shift many times to accommodate as he/she builds his/her interactional practice in a new situation (Norton, 1997). Norton's definition of identity as multi-dimensional is also important to work into re-socialization because of the messiness that is part and parcel to the process of negotiating re-socialization. In my project focusing on emotion, my application of Norton's definition allows me to explore different parts of the spectrum and reminds me that rather than loss and gain, there is transformation and change.

In this review of re-socialization theory, I also cite Gibson (1997), who reminded researchers that a central motivation in re-socialization is an individual's greater goal to make order out of a chaotic situation. Gibson (1997) wrote, "Individuals might be limited in their capacity to act rationally, but they intend to do so, and construct their organizations to enhance that intent" (p. 218). Whether it is a discussion of individual or group motivation, Gibson suggested that success lies in the ability for cohesion to exist in everyday interaction. This assertion shifts my review to that of the experience of a sojourning individual entering into a different set of institutions, in which life may feel more chaotic than cohesive.

As I think about sojourning as an added element in re-socialization, I am constantly brought back to the micro-tensions of living abroad and the subjective nature of success as it informs multicultural studies. Indeed, I have felt the tension between ideal and real in my individual definition of success while re-socializing in my sojourning experience in Israel. In Israel, I felt I had enough knowledge of Arabic and Hebrew and local cultures and school cultures to be a legitimate member of my community. Here I share a narrative of negotiation of trying to get directions for the first time outside of my village community, an experience that challenged my feelings of legitimacy.

The Roads Have Numbers?

On my first flight to Israel, I took out a map of the country I had downloaded a few days before. I smiled when I noticed that Israel looked like it had three highways, 2, 4 and 6, which go north and south. A woman sitting next to me on the plane laughed and told me that driving would be easy: “You go too far West you hit the Mediterranean and too far East you hit a check point where the soldiers will give you directions.” Her tone was so pleasant that I thought, “perfect!” before the idea of soldiers at check points giving me directions could really set in.

The first challenge to my knowledge about directions in Israel came during my second year in the country when I had to go Shefar’am, a large Arab city east of Haifa. It was the first time I had to travel for work, an expectation that was part of my new job. As I drove, one turn led to another and another, and soon I was lost. When I was lost during leisurely travel the year before, I might have stopped to see the birth place of a religious figure or to have a coffee by the sea. This time, I was nervous and stopped at a gas station for directions.

“Go to Yagur junction and you make a left”

“Is Yagur off of 2, 4 or 6?” I asked earnestly.

“What is this 2, 4 or 6?” the gas attendant asked confused.

“You know, the highways, up and down?” Unsure he understood my Arabic I made an up and down skiing-like motion with my right arm.

He let out a burst of air in annoyance and said, “listen, it is the next one north of Yokne’am junction.”

“Where on the map?” I said, a little frustrated at his response.

“What map?” he asked gruffly as he swiped the map away. Like me on the plane, he seemed to also think the roads in Israel were so easy no map would be warranted. “You don’t know Yagur junction, Ya-gur Junc-ti-on?” he said slowly, as if speaking slower in Arabic would

make me know it. I ticked my tongue at him to show I was annoyed. "Is it where is the new Mega Garden center, or the way to Carmiel?" I strained, knowing instantly that it was fruitless. He would not know how I drive to Carmiel and there were many ways to get there. I held up the map hopeful again.

"Maybe. Well. Mega Garden. Yes," he said in a tone of defeat, which I mirrored with "Thanks." In a gesture of goodwill he handed me a small cup of coffee and I drank it as I hopelessly looked at the map.

This trip was an effort toward independence, so I refused to call my village friends. The last thing I wanted to hear was my friend Abeer's kind voice telling me, "Next time we will send Omar with you." Omar is Abeer's seven-year-old son. I drove for a while hoping to see a sign. But finally, after I knew that I would be late if I didn't get my act together, I broke down and called my friend Manal. "Where is Shefar'am, Manal? I'm so frustrated and lost"

"Where are you?"

"Near the smokestacks on the way to Haifa from Akka"

"How did you get THERE? Okay, you know where we saw the movie that time? Go a little past there, and make the left to go toward Tel Aviv. Then drive till you see a Yellow and make a left."

"Okay!" I said with relief, "Why couldn't the guy I asked just tell me some landmarks!"

"Drive for a while like you are going to Carmiel and make a right at that intersection you don't like."

"That makes so much sense! The friggin map is useless, Manal! No one knows 2, 4 and 6!"

"What are they?" she said with a giggle.

"The roads have numbers in your country." I said dryly, not ready to joke. "Did you know that? Every road has a number!"

“Haahaa Dana, come on!” Manal said in a kidding tone, and we let the conversation go.

“Never mind, Manal. I love you!”

“I know!” she joked back.

On the day of my car trip, I was not defeated at all by the interaction with the gas attendant or the time driving around lost. Though to an onlooker the outing may have seemed framed in frustration, instead the frustration faded quickly when I made it to my destination. I was somehow fortified by that experience. That day was also an initial step in the larger acquisition process of learning a script of giving and receiving directions. From that day, I began to learn the names of junctions, major Jewish and Palestinian cities and other widely known landmarks in Hebrew and Arabic. I learned that Road 2 is called the Beach road, and 85 is the Akko – Tiberia road. In the process of socializing and learning scripts, however, I also forced into the reality of my new larger community the use of my own landmarks for giving directions, and I built an arsenal of other tools for negotiation when my version of the accepted ways failed. My voice was a combination of learned scripts and individually developed negotiation tools. Our subjective interpretation is an intricate part of how we invent our own position in the re-socialization process. This personal narrative shows how re-socialization in a multicultural setting is richly layered with individual interpretations, social norms, and individual practices.

Keeping in mind that richly layered multiculturalism, an important caveat to my discussion of individual/group re-socialization dynamics is that we can't just assume that international students are feeling marginalized. Lee and Rice (2007) found that “international students studying in the U.S. are likely of high socio-economic status in their home country and may not have been subject to such discrimination in their home countries” (p. 392). What Lee and Rice bring to a discussion of re-socialization is the strong point that individuals in the throes of re-socialization may not feel disempowered or marginalized. Along this line, Gebhard

(2010) challenged an assimilation model of re-socialization with a longitudinal study of international student's experiences. Gebhard (2010) painted a vivid multi-dimensional picture of the stages and milestone of socialization. Gebhard (2010) presents a four stage model of re-socialization, but his discussion reminds a researcher that "cultural adaptation should not be viewed as a linear progression" (p. 79). Gebhard reminds us that re-socialization is recursive and individual. To return to my own experience with directions, I'm not sure whether I would have responded in the same way and felt success had I been at a different point in my experience. Thus, there is not a definable end point in re-socialization, but rather layers of successful moments and feelings of legitimacy. This is why it is important to look at individual subjectivity and positionality in addition to institutional norms.

Positionality in a sojourning experience is also an element that is many times cast with negative language. Andrews (2007) wrote in a review of literature on sojourning that much of what is written paints the picture of being abroad as "a shared assumption that encountering 'others' is problematic" (p. 507). Andrews found that many materials suggest that coping is the best one can hope for. Andrews suggested that when abroad, much of the "self-help genre" out there for expats suggests that the home and comfort is a static cultural place. Andrews mirrored in her work my own moments of feelings of sheer joyful success when she wrote that living abroad can be just the opposite of coping and that in a new world, life can be invigorating and full of new ways of being. In research of sojourning, I am reminded to approach my participants without the presumptive nature of an assumption of struggle. Rather, they deserve the space to relish in the role of "other."

As an addendum to this literature review, I focus more specifically on multicultural theories that informed my study. As an initial definition, Nwanko and Onwumechili (1991) wrote that "intercultural communication is normally defined as communication involving

interaction between or amongst persons of different cultures in context wherein cultural factors are significant” (p. 99). This definition implies that multiculturalism is important in contexts where it is readily apparent. I take Nwanko and Onwumechili a step farther because I believe that culture is always a factor in all interaction, even when the multicultural factors are not readily apparent. I refer to Scollon and Scollon (2001), who showed the depth of multiculturalism in the nuance of interaction through the inclusion in their definition of systems of culture and power. Scollon and Scollon wrote that re-socialization is complicated by the mingling of systems. Scollon and Scollon (2001) suggested that individuals come with scripts in hand for interaction born from the systems they know, but those scripts may not garner success in a new setting. This perspective on re-socialization is powerful in my work because it suggests that a novice is not new to concepts of how systems work, but that he or she may not know the specifics of the systems and communities he or she is joining. I return to my own experience with directions. I did not enter my conversation with the gas station attendant without a concept of giving and receiving directions. I also know how to read a map, drive a car, and use navigational tools, but I did not know them in this context.

The most research done on inter-cultural interaction at the everyday functional level has been done in the field of organizational and business theory. The most comprehensive research to date was done by Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, & Sanders, (1990), who conducted a mixed-method quantitative study of the experience of employees in an international corporation. Based on answers to interview methods Hofstede et al. extrapolated cultural variables which impact how individuals from different cultures viewed the organization they work for and how those views impacted their working relationships. Hofstede et al. found that bumps in the interaction of individuals in multinational organizations stemmed from assumptive behavior and the clashing of systems. Hofstede et al. also found that rather than trying to force assimilative

behavior organizations should use a bottom-up approach to normed behavior, and educate workers in multi-culturalism. Hofstede et al. suggested an approach of awareness of different cultural ways of interacting.

While Hofstede et al. (1990) focused on speaking as interaction, Cummins reminded researchers that other ways of interacting cannot be neglected in a multicultural setting. According to Cummins (2009), many cultural groups privilege oral and interpersonal modes of expression with more power and sway than the written word. Cummins' assertion, coming from a background in applied linguistics, expanded on Hofstede et al. by suggesting an approach focused on modality. Cummins wrote that there is still much to know about a student's values and beliefs with regard to what constitutes interaction. Cummins' work suggests that multicultural research should widen its definition of interaction to include the privileging of other modalities. This broader view is particularly interesting into my research into the re-socialization of international students because it suggests a wider lens of narrative experiences.

Chapter Organization

In this chapter I have reviewed literature on emotions, narrative inquiry, re-socialization, and multiculturalism as they inform my research project. I suggest the many ways different fields view a person's emotional experience as individual or structured by social conventions and systems. This literature review shows the wide variety of fields that strive to shed light on emotions and shows how narrative inquiry is well suited for research of emotions.

In the coming chapters I will share the data in the form of narratives that represent emotional elements of the participant's experiences. I will then share my own analysis of the data and reflect on my researcher role and what I have learned. In the end I will share some suggested findings that situate what I have studied in a larger context of literature meant to inform policy and practice in the field of TESOL and the education of TESOL professionals.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This study casts light on the learned, perceived and implicit emotions of five international graduate students in a Master's in TESOL program at a mid-sized university in Pennsylvania. At the heart of this project is a hope for positive change in the experience of the participants, researcher, local community and the larger institution. Though it is premature to suggest how hope will manifest itself until the parts of this study are shared, Narrative Inquiry offers the structure and theory to open a conducive space for new knowledge of emotional negotiation of experience to emerge. To make sense of the complex process of shaping and reshaping involved in experience, this research will utilize the three-dimensional space realized in Narrative Inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Holloway & Jefferson, 2005; Linde, 1993; Pagnucci, 2004; Schaafsma & Linz, 2011;) as a theoretical frame and methodology.

I begin this chapter by presenting the research questions. I justify my qualitative approach and describe Narrative Inquiry as my theoretical frame. Next, I discuss my researcher positionality as a person who has experienced a spectrum of international educational settings. I narrow my discussion of my positionality to the specific context of the university and Master's degree program featured in this study. I offer greater description of the settings and the participants of the study. I continue by elaborating on how reciprocity was realized in this work. I then outline the data collection process and field texts I collected as well as the application of wakefulness, reflexivity and ethics I upheld in the design and application of this study. I conclude this chapter with an outline of my process for the analysis of field-texts and a chapter summary.

Research Questions

The goal of this research is not to collect biographies in a general sense but to collect narratives which make sense of the emotions which are involved in the experiences of international students in their new context. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) suggested that “Life stories can be structured by an infinite number of themes, but our research [should provide] a particular frame that [can] not be ignored” (p. 37). Narrative Inquiry seeks to understand specific relationships through storied realities (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). The following research questions functioned to guide the collection of stories to meet the needs of this research project:

- What emotions do participants privilege in their experience as they re-socialize into their new context?
- What forces do participants recognize as impactful on the construction of their emotional self in their new context?
- What transformations do the participants experience while studying in the States?

The individual nature of these question make finding answers only possible through a qualitative frame.

Qualitative Research – Making the Common Un-Common Again

This research employed a qualitative research methodology that recognized that emotions are individual, contextual and reliant on the “complex interrelationships among all that exist” (Stake, 1995, p. 37). Indeed, the complexity of relationships, contexts and perceptions which impact emotion cannot be broken down and understood with a teleological methodology employing variables and a “debilitating historicism” (May & Thrift, 2003) of emotional terminology. The word “afraid,” used by all the participants, ranges heavily in meaning. Certainly, the study of emotions in this work moves away from the study of the semantics of

terminology. This work relies rather on the ability of the researcher to be part of the “situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3) and then to use storied lives to make sense of experience.

Qualitative research methodology is essential to the nature of this project because, as Denzin (1997) suggested, there is a belief in “truth from experience” (p. 26). Van Maanen (1998) wrote, “Qualitative researchers come to know a good deal about the specific worlds they study and find it difficult if not impossible to reduce these worlds to a few representative and measurable dimensions” (p. xi). Therefore, the exploration of the development of an emotional sense of place and new experience is studied not as set of variables but rather as a rich multi-dimensional space.

The presentation of my research project also draws from Van Maanen’s (1998) assertions that “qualitative work produces narratives – non-fiction division- that link events to events in storied or dramatic forms with beginning, middles, and ends” (p. x). The challenge, according to Van Maanen (1998), is to present and include the reader rather than only offering results. In this work, I drew from participants to develop and present to the reader a “fully interpretive text [which] plunges the reader (and writer) into the interior, feeling, hearing, tasting, smelling , and touching worlds of the subjective human experience (Ong. as cited in Denzin, 1997, p. 25). This is done through the representation of research through stories.

Narrative Inquiry as a Theoretical Frame

Narrative Inquiry at its core is about making sense of our reality through the telling, retelling, and interpretation of stories. In Narrative Inquiry, the participants and researcher alike are engulfed in the “midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people’s lives” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). In this section, I expand on Narrative Inquiry, the three-dimensional space of narrative, and temporality and

conditionality in narrative. I will show how a storied consciousness has impacted how these fundamental concepts of Narrative Inquiry are realized and work together in my research.

Narrative Inquiry as a vehicle for discovery has been a research process which embraces the complex nature of reality and has pushed me to be flexible enough to promote moments of developed knowledge. Bettis and Mills (2006) wrote of theoretical frameworks that they are “not meant... to be a straitjacket into which the data is stuffed and bound” (p. 68). In this spirit, Narrative Inquiry is a design that leaves space for shifts and changes. Clandinin and Connelly (2000), foundational theorists in Narrative Inquiry, suggested that “false starts and dead ends” (p. 121) are part of the natural process of discovery. They suggested that we should not be afraid to begin anew and follow new leads as they manifest themselves. Rather than a narrow lock step toward specific answers, Pagnucci (2004) challenged narrative inquirers to embrace invention by asking the questions: “What if we tried for chaos instead of coherence? What if we left things unfinished?” (p. 140). Influenced by these theorists and others, I have made space to privilege different data sources, made deliberate changes in my process, and articulated the stories of my participants without the goal of a single correct answer. When I thought about how to do this in my process, I thought about my experience visiting a Wunderkammer, a personal collection of oddities, in the summer of 2012. As I began to understand narrative theory, that experience was ever present because it connected to the individual uniqueness of a story told, the storyteller, and the inability of quantification to explain the human experience.

The Wunderkammer

Before modern museums set out to categorize and organize the natural world through the Sciences, individuals with an eye toward pushing the boundaries of known knowledge and culture created Wunderkammers, individual eccentric collections of natural and manmade objects. Wunderkammers, or cabinets of wonder, were places where superstition and science

intersected; where objects served to tell the stories and the believed lore that represented the lives of the individuals who collected them. The British Museum in London, for instance, began from the musing collection of Sir Hans Sloan, an Irish physician living in the early eighteenth century. Sir Hans Sloan displayed unique objects brought home to his native Ireland from his many adventures to the then newly explored corners of the world. I can only imagine the tales of adventure and intrigue that he told and were then invented amongst his community as they marveled at the foreign artifacts.

In the home of Ann C. Gulley, in the small town of Elkon, North Carolina, I entered a modern day Wunderkammer for the first time. Ann Gulley's Wunderkammer, a large collection of objects in the shape of drawings, natural artifacts, early scientific collectables, and a plethora of taxidermy, playfully filled her front parlor. When I entered the room, it seemed at first like a menagerie of objects until order was unraveled through listening to Mrs. Gulley speak about the careful logic behind each placement. I found myself caught up not only in the objects and the stories they represented, but also in experiencing the seemingly effortless flow from one object to the next, experiencing the connections as I went. Mrs. Gulley told me of how she came to possess the enormous piece of fungus sitting near the fireplace, given to her by an older neighbor who was once known nationally for her use of fungi in modern floral designs. She moved on to tell the story of the Gulley's taxidermy preserved childhood hamster hung affectionately in a perfectly fitted plastic container. While listening to Mrs. Gulley, I imagined the world of Sir Hans Sloan and the stories he told as he ordered and reordered his collection. I wondered if his childhood pet dog was amongst the animals staring back at patrons at The British Museum, sadly labeled Canine Terrier - a lackluster labeling for a dog of the man who invented chocolate milk.

As I sat amongst the objects in Mrs. Gulley's Wunderkammer and allowed myself to consider the narratives that placed them there, it was an experience distinctly unlike my general museum experience. Indeed, I found that the Wunderkammer did not force a frame of reference or a prescribed assumed experience, but rather, it lent itself to constant reshaping and creation as my mind moved over and through the space. The Wunderkammer's meaning was made not only through the explicit telling of stories by Mrs. Gulley, but also while I slowly let my mind wander over the objects, making my own connections and applying my own stories.

In the Wunderkammer I found myself meeting Mrs. Gulley as she told her stories in the present moment and interjecting my own stories as we constructed our interaction. Slowly, I realized that the objects represented different realities for the two of us, and it was exciting to co-create a space in time together. When I looked at the fungus sitting near the fireplace, Mrs. Gulley's story was overshadowed by my own memory of a day of exploring I had had at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, Scotland years ago. I shared with Mrs. Gulley the joy of that day, as my friend and I were exposed to expansive formal British gardens for the first time. In the Wunderkammer, as I made connections, I thought of Clandinin and Connelly (2002) who wrote, "Narrative inquiries are always strongly autobiographical" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 121), and my experience was no different. After Mrs. Gulley and I finished talking, I sat for a long time in the Wunderkammer, reflecting on her stories, musing over the objects, and engaging in my own meaning making.

When I set out to elaborate on the methodology of my research, I thought about the distortion of Sir Hans Sloan's Wunderkammer with the once-unique objects now organized under dominant museum curating norms. Museum goers are no longer given the opportunity to find something unique amongst a menagerie of objects but rather are guided to viewing similar objects all at once. I can't help but feel that the objects have lost some of the luster of the

adventure that initiated their inclusion in the collection in the first place. Though many of the objects Ms. Gulley has in her Wunderkammer could be found in museums of natural history, I have never felt the magic in a museum that I felt in Mrs. Gulley's created space – where I felt free to invent my own order.

The Three Dimensional Space

As a metaphor for Narrative Inquiry, the Wunderkammer represents for me, in a tangible sense, the three-dimensional space of experience Clandinin and Connely describe. Clandinin and Connely (2000) wrote that “when we see an event, we think of it not as a thing happening at that moment but as an expression of something happening over time. An event, or thing, has a past, a present as it appears to us, and an implied future” (p. 29). The stories we tell are relational to our inner worlds and the outer space we inhabit in both the immediate and larger social contexts. In the theory of three dimensional space, each story is placed in its telling.

Stories are Conditional and Temporal

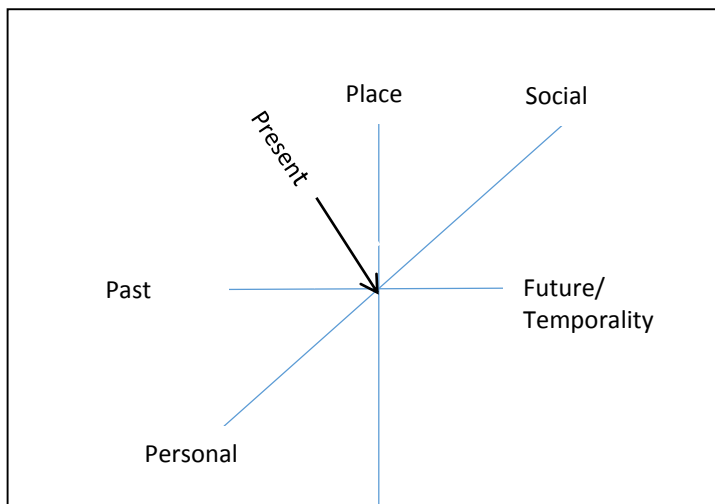


Figure 1. Visual representation of narrative space.

The emergence of stories is not only impacted by time on a continuum but also by the meeting of our social and personal selves. Dr. Gian Pagnucci, in a seminar on Narrative Inquiry (2011), drew the diagram 3.1 as a visual representation of the three-dimensional space. It shows

how, for the present to exist, narrative theory realizes that storytelling is impacted by both conditionality and temporality. When we tell a story, we share the details or aspects which carry the appropriate weight in the social situation in which we find ourselves. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote that “writing a story or recording an event in a field text is conditional. It is conditional on our interests and surrounding circumstances” (p. 179). It is conditional on who we are, the choices that we make in understanding, and how we choose to represent ourselves.

Temporality suggests that stories are not cemented in structure or meaning but are reshaped over the landscape of our lives. Stories told at different periods have different meanings in specific contexts. Indeed, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) reminded that in research, “the inquirer needs to be aware of the details of place, of the nuanced warps in time, and of the complex shifts between personal and social observations and their relations” (p. 9). When we position the telling of a story in the three dimensional space impacted by time and context, the personal and social space is then seen as in a constant flux in meaning. This was ever important in my project, as the participants retold stories over time, with new details, frames and main characters. A practical application of this theory was my practice of coming back to stories over time and leaving space in an interview for a participant to return to a story and re-elaborate on the details. The evolution of meaning in stories over time and the flux of temporality are key elements in my research because they speak to how an individual may emotionally experience an event as multi-dimensional and evolving.

Temporality Through Discontinuity and Subjectivity

Linde’s (1993) theories of discontinuity and subjectivity added a new lens for me as I realized the three dimensional space. Linde reminded researchers that the stories we collect hold meaning in that moment but are part of a larger, ever-changing collection of life stories. When a

story told does not fit in to an easy formula with the others collected, it is not an outlier but rather a moment of potential. Linde (1993) wrote:

The properties of temporal discontinuity and structural and interpretive openness means that a life story necessarily changes constantly – by the addition of stories about new events, by the loss of certain old stories, and by the reinterpretation of old stories to express new evaluations. (p. 31)

Linde suggested that narrative inquirers may find that retold stories carry appreciated newness because the meaning and purpose may have changed. In my project, a participant's retelling and my re-listening garnered great moments of learning.

Indeed, narrative inquirers work hard to understand the greater meaning of a story beyond the spoken word. Holloway and Jefferson (2005) argued that as we take in stories, we should not rely on transparency in the language but interpret the stories as a whole. Stories represent the context of an individual's life and experience. They are also a purposeful part of our lives. Linde (1993) wrote that "a proper or comfortable self is not a pointillist self, consisting of isolated moments of experience that may be remembered but do not touch or influence one another" (p. 101). Linde argued instead that the powerful role of narrative to self is to create continuity between events and to piece together our subjective reality of present day experience. In my work, I realize Linde's theory of the continuity and subjectivity by acknowledging that stories have complex purposes and functions situated within the resocialization journeys of my participants.

Who We are Impacts What We Do

A final tenant of Narrative Inquiry essential to the theoretical frame of my research of emotions is that subjectivity is an inherent part of every experience. According to Schaafsma (1997), "Every version [of a story] is constructed by individual human actors in particular

settings” (p. 197). Who we are, and the players in place are central to the meaning created from a story. Schaafsma (1997) wrote, “When you examine others’ myths you also to some extent must begin to examine your own and begin to see the mythical or constructed nature of what you believe and experience as truth” (p. 198). In Narrative Inquiry there is no final answer, no final way of putting the pieces together that is “correct.” Rather, it is in the co-creation that meaning is made. It is made in a moment, on a moment, and representative of multiple realities. Schaafsma’s theory reminds me that to make meaning of the stories I hear, I must continuously reflect on my own positionality.

Researcher Positionality

My own experience in diverse academic settings is a stepping-off point to explore the experience of international students in the United States. Carspecken (1996) wrote that “the ideology of the researcher, including her values, is supposed to enter intrinsically and inseparably into the methods, interpretations, and epistemology” (p. 5). Rather than shying away from personal orientation in research, Marshall and Rossman (2011) advocated a reflective and recursive process which acknowledges many forms of power and politics. Razach (1993) called the inconsistencies in power structures “cracks” that “empower ourselves” (p. 95) and leave openings for co-construction to be missed or overlooked. All of these theorists highlighted the responsibility of the researcher to recursively identify and reflect on bias, orientation and the motivating factors for our research. Therefore, in this section I will share some of my own experiences which impact how I approach this research project.

At first, in order to share my positionality, I began to write about that initial period of sojourn into my new Master’s and Ph.D. contexts. I wrote about the social and academic related anxiety, the excitement at learning, the stress of a heavy workload and my relationships with professors and peers. Initially, it was easy indexically to correspond the typical developmental

moments in my Master's degree with that of the participants. However, in deep reflection on which experiences I drew from to shape this research, I realized that my re-socialization as a person conscious of the deep divide in experiences began at a different starting point. It began when I compared two parallel experiences: the first as a teenager going with my older sister to visit colleges in the US; and the later, as an adult going with my friend's daughter to visit a university in the West Bank. Both experiences resonated with me as foundational moments that grounded my initial insight into the great diversity in the higher educational experience. Here I narrate the story "The schools," in which I share these two moments as reflective points to show where I developed a great passion for the diversity of international experience and an orientation toward individual experience in higher education.

The Schools

I remember as a high school student walking in awe through the ivy-covered campus of Princeton with my older sister, who was considering applying to the school. The recruiter piled on stories of tradition- my sister would sit in the seats where diplomats and writers had sat. According to the recruiter, my sister would walk the halls that Nobel Prize winner Richard Feynman had walked, implying that at Princeton she would have a chance not only to understand quantum physics but to create and develop theories in the field which would impact all of humanity. "All of humanity!" I thought musingly as I looked up Feynman in the encyclopedia at school. I remember leaving Princeton and dreaming of walking those halls and being the student the recruiter described. Years later, when I would choose a college, the criteria I set for myself drew from that trip to Princeton. I was not the student my sister was, but I wanted the brick buildings, the steeped history, and the chance at success.

In contrast to the stories of international and financial success I heard at Princeton, years later I traveled to Birzeit University, a premier Palestinian school located in the West Bank. My

friend's daughter, Marah, who was looking at the school, invited me to go with her on her campus tour. Marah lived up to the meaning of her name, which means "joyful laughter" in Arabic, and like my sister, was the perfect addition both personally and educationally to any program.

The day started off distinctly differently from my trip with my sister. First, although it was the same distance as my home in New Jersey is to Princeton, the drive took at least 2 hours longer. On our way to Birziet, Marah and I drove through congested check points with armed soldiers. While at Birziet, the rhetoric the tour guide used was heavy with the imagery that I knew was part of the struggle of being Palestinian today. The guide told us that our long drive was not unique, that many groups of students travel hours each day. "They come," he said in a dramatic tone. As we walked, I noticed the green of Hamas⁵ that peppered the landscape. I noticed that there were no trees and little reprieve from the hot afternoon sun. I noticed that construction left a cloud of dust that lingered in the air.

In contrast to the excitement I felt at Princeton, Birziet left me with a heavy weight. I wanted for Marah the carefree life on an American campus and the American tradition of a prolonged adolescence. A tree to lie under and giggle about boys. Her only stress, an exam. I did not want for her the burden of the storied struggling identity of being Palestinian. I knew that Marah had options. I remember asking her why she would not choose some place in Europe or America. Some place easier.

⁵ Hamas, also known as The Islamic Resistance Movement, is a Palestinian Sunni Islamic political party whose supporters use the green Shahadah flag.

Later, I would realize that the contrast in Marah's and my own experience lay beyond our beliefs in education and reflected our ideological positions and ontological ways of being. Princeton offered, for me, the distinctly American upper middle class education that met my expectations of what a university experience should be. Though Marah reminded me of myself at her age, joyful and excited about life, her experiences gave her different expectations, goals and a position toward education far removed from my own.

During my three years in Israel, Marah and I sat for many hours together in the kitchen of her mother, who, over coffee, told us the many stories of how conflict impacted their lives. Though I cannot fully understand Marah's perspective, I do know that the stories we shared were one small part of her larger experience as an Arab youth living in central Israel. "We were the first to have a car; before then, we were the only family to have a donkey," Abeer, Marah's mother would tell us many times about the displacement caused by the Israeli occupation. Abeer's parents were forced to flee from their home in Jaffo, an ancient bustling city near the Mediterranean, to Tulckarem, a city decidedly farther from the water and less metropolitan. In a culture that values family and village connections, Marah has cousins whom she has never met far flung across the globe. On the wall of the kitchen hung a ring of large skeleton keys – symbolic of the old home lost. The life lost.

Loss was further emphasized through her father, Mohammed's, research in dialects and language. Unlike other youth in her village, for whom the gradual shifts in language may be unconscious, Marah was reminded of the greater layers of loss of identity. While looking at his children, Mohammed would remind us that though they spoke the dialect of many West Bank Palestinians, the vocabulary has been lost – with their language heavily peppered with Hebrew. Mohammed, when I met him, told me that because he was raised in Israel, he felt that he had no first language to give to his children – he spoke Arabic, Hebrew, German and English all at a

competent level. But he claimed that he did not feel whole in any of them. And so Marah's choice of college and excitement about Birziet made sense in many ways, given what I knew about her familial, political and cultural stance. Still, Birziet was not what I wanted for her.

Ourselves, Our Lenses, Our Experiences

I combine these two stories to shape my current reality in a number of ways which impact this research project. First, within Marah's choices there was a reality that I did not accept, and in turn I resisted and tried to pull Marah towards ordering that reality within my own belief system. Likewise, at times in my research project, it was difficult to watch my participants struggle in their decision making when I felt I knew what was best. At those times, I thought of Marah and all that I had learned by following her rather than pushing her down the path I would have chosen for her. I applied that knowledge to my relationships with my participants. This insight was particularly important to my project because my participants and I were in the same field of study, and I did not want to sway them from their natural inquiry paths.

Indeed, as I placed myself in my research project and thought about how these stories have truly challenged my ways of knowing the world, I realized that comparing Princeton and Birziet highlighted the importance of holistically viewing an experience and a place as an interpretive context. Pennycook (2010) argued that "space (place, location, and context) is not a backcloth on which events and language are projected through time. Rather language practices are activities that produce time and space" (p. 46). I interpreted Pennycook's assertion as acknowledging "noticing," and I re-defined space as an interpretive concept. For example, the green of Hamas on the Birziet campus did not impact Marah in the same way that I was struck by its presence. Also, she had no tree in her mind to dream of lying under. This disconnect made

me aware of how familiar symbols of culture are woven into the landscape but understood differently and of the importance of noticing and highlighting space in an inquiry.

Another important point that I draw from these stories is the subjective nature of prolonged engagement in a context. As I matured in my Palestinian/ Israeli context, I found myself breaking free from the narratives people told of the conflict and found myself with a more moderate position. For instance, when the tour guide reminded Marah and me of the amount of time many students took to reach the school, I quickly identified that as a typical story of occupation and part of a larger narrative of conflict. Because I had been in Palestine/ Israel for more than two years, my prolonged engagement had given me a richer understanding of the situation. Of prolonged engagement, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) said, “As we work within our three dimensional spaces as narrative inquirers, what has become clear to us [is] that as inquirers we meet ourselves in the past, the present, and the future” (p. 61). Challenging the idea of prolonged engagement was important to my research because I had to lean into the discomfort of my own bias. Often, over the course of this project, when the participants would talk about professors or courses they were taking, I had my own opinions and ideas because I had been a student at the same institution for two years. In those moments and in data analysis, I had to acknowledge my researcher positionality and be conscious not to impose my perception.

Orientation

Here I discuss some of my role as a mentor, student, and TESOL professional which served to orient my position in this research project. Orientation is a developed understanding of how our position, perspectives and history shape choices in research. Clandinin and Connelly (1998) warned that “we cannot easily anticipate how our presence, our innovations, our stories, will influence other stories” (p. 161). I chose this project because I played many roles in the

communities of my participants and I have a passion for TESOL, as evidenced by my more than ten years in the field. In the interest of transparency, I offer some details of these roles in this section.

For two years, I played a friendly mentoring role to many of the MA TESOL students in the program the participants were members of. When I began my research, I quickly found that it was a remembered role within that community and that the students I recruited for my study knew that I had the reputation of being a helpful person. Indeed, in that role, I listened to concerns, gave feedback on papers and presentations, and offered advice in student-professor interactions. I was also invited to birthday parties and some other social events. Though I had a friendly relationship established with the students, I was also the assistant to the director of their program for one year, and as such, I played a quasi-authoritative role. In an example of the complexity of being both a resource and quasi-authoritarian, students who were completing their MA in TESOL gave me the warning/advice, “Be careful what you suggest, because if you say then we do. We think YOU said it so we have to.” In this moment, I realized that I would have to tread lightly and be purposeful and deliberate in my interactions with the participants, careful not to lord over them or act as a new authoritative force in the study.

To add to my many roles in the community, I am also a Ph.D. student in the same field as the participants. As such I have been acutely aware of the need to balance my academic professional identity and levels of mutuality. Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggested that shedding aspects of the “academic armor” which a researcher has constructed over the course of interaction in academia will support greater levels of trust, intimacy and mutuality with the participants (p. 118). I deliberately shared the intimacy of my own identity as a person who has lived and studied abroad more fully than my identity as a Ph.D. student with the hope of developing a different sort of relationship with my participants than I had with their

predecessors in the program. Joining the MA TESOL community as a researcher of that community was a shift in roles for me, and, in turn, I had to find new footing.

Beyond institutionally constructed roles, Marshall and Rossman (2011) also wrote that a researcher must be conscious of differences in social identities between the researcher and participants. Marshall and Rossman wrote that “race, ethnicity, first language, gender, sexual orientation, able-bodiedness, and so on” (p. 158) are all impactful on interaction. Because of the intercultural nature of this research and my own knowledge of cultural bumps after living abroad for prolonged periods of time, I quickly realized that any number of things could be part of the ambiguous “and so on” that Marshall and Rossman alluded to. In order to understand the “and so on” I kept notes in my researcher journal on positionality and privileged that information when I reflected on interviews and the interview process. Even with that constant attention to identity and power, I knew perfect success was impossible.

The nature of narrative itself adds another element of subjectivity to my positionality. An example of the many ways that indexing can impact the shape of the stories that are told can be found in Linde’s (1993) assertion that who the interviewer is perceived to be impacts the type of narrative that will be elicited. Linde (1993) reminded us that performed narratives, or stories told with the purpose of engulfing the listener in the experience of the event, are told more readily when “the speaker and addressee share characteristics such as age, occupation, or ethnicity, or when there is a relation of friendship between the speaker and addressee” (p. 60). A more removed listener may receive a more spontaneous narrative, told with a consciousness toward negotiation of roles with the listener. The distinction between the two types of telling of stories suggests that, in my relationship to each participant, my positionality may shift with their perceptions. Despite the social work I was doing to manage how the participants saw me, they were engaged in a process of constructing who I was in layers beyond my control. I may

have always been seen as the former assistant to the director of their program, a Ph.D. student, or as a woman who is on average ten years older than they are. However, I did find that I grew closer to my participants and they shared more details in their stories. This impacted my study in the form of participant agency and shared mutuality in the construction of knowledge.

Also relevant to positionality in this study are the many ways I am connected to the TESOL community. Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggested that “the energy that comes from a researcher’s high level of personal interest (called biased in traditional research) is infectious and quite useful for gaining access” (p. 114). The choice to study participants from a MA TESOL program comes from own joy in remembering myself as an MA TESOL student, a MA TESOL professional, and a mentor to MA TESOL students both in the States and abroad. It also comes from two years of Ph.D. course work during which I was the assistant to the Director of the MA TESOL program- a role I enjoyed because it brought me into direct contact with MA TESOL students on a weekly basis. During my career, I have joyfully been part of many communities which make up part of the spectrum of what constitutes professionalization in TESOL. My strong affinity toward the field of TESOL can sometimes make my lenses rosey or darken the field when someone is critical. I kept this in mind as part of my positionality when I listened to the participants and later analyzed the data.

Participants and Place

I recruited for this study all of the cohort members who were international students in the MA TESOL program for the year 2011-2012. During the semester before the data collection began, I went to a class in which the students were all participants and spoke to them about the project. I read to them the consent form (See Appendix A), answered their questions, and asked them to mark their willingness to participate. Ultimately five students, Abdullah, Lucy, Ying,

Zhao and Ivy (pseudonyms), chose to travel down a path of discovery with me and voluntarily participate in my study.

Reflecting on my own positionality and orientation led me to do the same for these five participants. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) reminded us that though, as narrative inquirers we focus heavily on social space and interaction, those interactions happen in a physical space. It is important to give the reader a sense of space to orient their reading of the participants' experience. For the participants, some of the stories I told happened in the classrooms, at parties, in church meeting, in study rooms, during trips or in locations in their pasts before I met them. In this section, I share some of the unified spaces they inhabited and offer a broad stroke of description of the greater context that they entered. These descriptions do not include demographic information such as birth year, birthplace, or immigration status. The choice to exclude this information here was born from ethical issues (one of the participants did not want this information shared) and because I am less interested in indexing the participants based on generic information but rather in placing them in their setting. Below I do add a chart to offer the reader some guidance in which I add brief descriptions of the communities the participants are members of.

The participants in my study come from a MA TESOL program located at a large state university in western Pennsylvania. Their program is a cohort-structured two year program with an optional thesis project at the end. Within the larger community of the university, my participants are members of an intimate minority of international students. According to a recent Open Doors Report (Institute of International Education, 2013), the state of Pennsylvania ranks sixth in the nation in international student enrollment, with thirty seven thousand two hundred and eighty international students. The MA TESOL Cohort, with which I worked when I was the assistant to the director was comprised of an overwhelming majority of international

students. In the cohort of the participants, more than half were international. Four of the participants, Ivy, Zhao, Ying and Lucy, were the only four Asian students in their cohort, with Abdullah being the only Middle-Eastern man. The other international students were Middle Eastern women. To complete their cohort, there were four American women, adding up to twelve students in all. I offer this information because it shows the unique position of this group as being a multi-cultural group living in a region where that is not necessarily the norm they will experience outside their insulated group. Also, the situation of Ivy, Zhao, Ying and Lucy as the four Asian women in this group was a connection they referred to often. The participants also found value in their ethnic and religious communities outside of their cohort, and those groups served as emotional resources in their re-socialization journeys. This broad description of their setting is complemented by the rich accounts of their experiences in Chapter Four. Here is a brief chart added as a visual introduction to the participants and their settings.

Table 1

Visual Introduction to Participants and Their Settings

Name	Nationality	Communities they identify as impactful on their experience
Abdullah (pseudonym)	Saudi Arabian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohort • Saudi Arabian community • Classroom and professional community
Ying (pseudonym)	China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional community in China • Asian classmates • English language students Ying tutors • Cohort
Ivy (pseudonym)	China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home family and community in China • Second semester Ma TESOL students • Chinese community • Native English speaking cohort members • Cohort
Zhao (pseudonym)	China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese Community at American University • Church bible study group • Facebook group • Cohort • Ph.D. Students / Classmates • English language students Zhao tutors
Lucy (pseudonym)	Asia – This participant requested that her home country no be revealed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and community in Home Country • Cohort • Friend both in and out of cohort • Classmates in Korean Class

Reciprocity

I believe that the intrusion in participants' lives must be met with some reciprocal support. As stated in the design section below, I met participants and listened to them as they shared their experiences with me - I recognize this as a form of emotional support. Of university life Pagnucci (2004) wrote:

The academic world can be a cold place. Its campuses are big, its buildings are tall, and its' classes grow larger and larger. And when students come to a university, they have to leave much of what they value behind: family, friends, beliefs, literacy patterns, value systems. (p. 25)

I view the sharing that we did in the interview space, and the reflective journaling, as two avenues that warmed the university environment for the participants.

I also offered MA students, as a form of reciprocity, minimal academic support in editing. I refrained from offering advice about sources and theories in TESOL because I felt this would impact the relationship we were forming. Throughout, I heeded Rossman and Marshall's (2011) warning on the importance of creating clear boundaries and role expectations. Researching emotions can be very personal, and the development of the relationship between the researcher and participant can make blurry the line of responsibility. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), the participants need to be reminded that the research is "an ongoing process" (p. 142) whereby role maintenance needs to be upheld. Role maintenance was reinforced throughout this study with the clarifying of roles, goals and direction at the beginning and end of each meeting. The students also had the contact information of my advisor if at any time they wanted to withdraw.

What Narrative Inquirers Do - Data collection, Description of Sources and a Timeline

The tradition of Narrative Inquiry defines data sources as field texts denoting their existence as “created, neither found nor discovered” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 92). The distinction of invention rather than discovery is a powerful reminder that findings exist in a specific context rooted in a set of specific individual experiences. These are considerations when choosing field texts. Another important element in selecting the field texts is found in Linde’s (1993) warning that they need to be carefully chosen to elicit the information we want without imposing too heavily on the participants. In my study, situated within Narrative Inquiry and focused on emotions and the emotive, the following field texts were chosen as the setting where stories may have the space to emerge and shed light on the continuum in which participants were making sense of their experiences. As the participants were all Master’s degree students with heavy schedules, I was conscious of imposing on participant time. I utilized journaling, interviews, and a focus group meeting as field texts in this research. Participant and researcher journals were kept throughout the semester. Interviews with the participants took place four times during the semester, and once after the semester was completed. A focus group also took place halfway through the semester with all but one participant taking part. Below is a description of how I came to choose the field texts and a description of each field text as well as a time table for data collection.

Field Texts

During the development of this project, journaling and discussion complemented each other as avenues to expand, narrow, and reflect on the possibilities of emergent research ideas. As I was narrowing my research interests before I began this project, I wrote in a researcher journal and participated in a series of intimate discussions with a colleague working in the field of pragmatics. We met every other week and shared our emerging research ideas. Schaafsma

(1994) specifically pointed to these two types of field texts as effective data collection for research of emotions. Schaafsma (1994) wrote of the function of discussion in discovery as “help[ing] us to see the agonism at the heart of a collaborative process” (p. 200). Schaafsma found that in speaking, participant emotions were closer to the surface. Shaafsma (1994) followed this assertion with his finding that writing functioned “to cool conflict” (p. 201). Shaafsma explained that writing functioned as a reflective process that worked as a tool to develop meaning and knowledge. For Shaafsma, writing functioned in his work to contextualize emotions. In my own work, I have found a similar pattern. In speaking I am caught in the moment, not always conscious of the stories that are driving the emotions, whereas in the process of writing I reflect and make storied connections. Ultimately, I cannot tell how my participants came to understand the interviews and journals, but the combination of discussion, group discussion and journal writing offered the space for the researcher and participants to experience a creative outlet to share emotions.

When I began to form this study, I thought about how much time I would need with participants to garner stories of emotions that I was searching for. Though there is no magic number, Holloway and Jefferson (2005) wrote that in approaching the research relationship “we intend to construe both researcher and researched as anxious, defended subjects whose mental boundaries are porous where unconscious material is concerned” (p. 45). Holloway and Jefferson’s statement suggests that to scratch beneath the surface we must have time and space to grow together, to reflect as individuals in new ways, and to have stories grow and change in meaning as we let down our defenses. In my field text choices, I opened the time and space by meeting with participants periodically over a 15-week semester, and once when the semester was over, rather than intensely for a shorter period of time.

Before I outline the field text sources and schedule for collection, I mention here that this plan involved real people with real lives and responsibilities. Some participants came to the interviews ready to share and prepared to tell stories, while other did not. As I constructed the interview process, I was also conscious that the participants may come to interviews with their own agendas, stories, or ideas which they would want to carry into discussion. The field texts are structured by time and some questions, but I also left space for individual participant interpretation and researcher/participant co-construction. Here I elaborate on the specific field texts I used in this research: researcher journal, online participant journal, interviews and focus group.

Researcher Journal

Like the participants in this study, I came to the study with my own experience, knowledge, and storied existence. Linde (1993) wrote that as researchers we are not stagnant but “we change our stories as our point of view, our ideology, or our overall understanding changes and reshapes our history” (p. 31). Therefore, in this project, it was important to document and recursively visit the reformation that I experienced as I grew and learned in this research project. Because of the complex position of inquirer in research, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote that the “task of composing our own narratives of experience is central” (p. 70) to the development of a bigger picture in the analysis stage. I began writing reflectively at the onset of this project and continued to do so throughout the data collection period and beyond. I wrote for at least half an hour after each interview, and while transcribing the interview I recorded my thoughts and ideas. I recursively revisited the journaling I did throughout the interview and focus group period and continued to write, reflect and develop ideas while developing the field texts and while writing Chapters Four, Five and Six.

Online Participant Journal

Rather than using quotas or a set schedule for journal writing, I intended for this process to be amorphic. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote that in the narrative process “[participants] too have feelings and thoughts about the inquiry” (p. 88). Clandinin and Connelly remind me that though I, as a researcher, may be ready to share my emotional self, the participants may not be willing or ready for a heightened level of exploration. I asked the participants to journal about what resonated in our conversation during the interviews. I said things like “There were some very powerful points you made. Would you mind writing more about that?” or “Would you mind writing more about how you heard or experienced what we talked about today or any new stories or ideas it brought up?” I introduced the journal as an opportunity for the participants to expand on the ideas that they were having as well as to reflect on the experience of being interviewed. I asked them to answer the question, “Is there anything that resonated with you about our meeting today and would you mind writing about it?” The journals were set up as an online Google document. Each participant had a document with access shared with the researcher. Ultimately, as I will discuss in Chapter Six, the journal was too time-consuming for the participants and fell by the wayside. In total, I received two short writings, which I printed and will keep as required by Internal Review Board mandated 2 year period.

Interviews

I asked the participants to participate in an interview with me four times over the course of the fifteen week semester and once when the semester was over. I told them that the expectation was that each interview would take no more than half an hour, with the final interview being less than one hour. Though a schedule was tentatively put in place, it was contingent on participant availability and shifted and changed to meet their schedules. All

interviews took place in a private study room in the university library and were audio recorded, transcribed, and are being kept for the Internal Review Board's mandated two year period.

My research focuses on emotions within a new professional context. Therefore I tried to structure the interviews to encourage sharing of participants' past and present experiences that held important emotional meaning for them as well as expectations and goals which relate to their new university learning. Linde (1993) warned that the interview process must be thoughtfully formed "to ensure that the interview conditions do not prevent the occurrence of the very phenomenon one hopes to collect" (p. 60). In order to heed this advice, I used the mutuality in conversation suggested by Toma (2000), who wrote that the interview process needs to be a conversation rather than a monologue. To meet the participants in their experience with honesty and to create a secure environment, I shared with the participants my own stories.

The initial interview was structured, with all participants asked the same questions (See Appendix C). As I engaged in the first interview, I thought of the qualitative researchers who came before me. Whitt (1993) suggested, "The interviews should not be so structured that fruitful areas of information about which you are unaware are missed" (p. 87). Lincoln and Guba (1985) reminded us to leave space for the inclusion of information that we may not know that we are looking for. I quickly found that the inclusion of space in the the interview brought with it stories that pushed the boundaries of what constituted professional experience. Like in my own reflection on professional experience abroad, there was a strong overlap of personal and professional life. As they spoke, I listened and reinterpreted my concept of what constitutes a professional story.

During the first interview, each question was followed by a request for participants to share specific examples and stories of their feelings when possible. Holloway and Jefferson (2005) wrote that because "narrative is not structured according to conscious logic" (p. 37) we

should approach the interview aware that when we ask questions, we are inventing structure to the story as a participant is telling it. To ameliorate this, Holloway and Jefferson (2005) suggested that the researcher try to keep questions as open-ended as possible. The pressure to stay neutral in my questions and making sure to leave space for participant invention and thus be an ethical and responsible interviewer embarking on a large research project was daunting. Reflecting on the first interview, and make changes to my questions and persona made the second interview a more mutual space.

The second interview took place two weeks after the first one, at the convenience of the participants. Though I arrived prepared with questions drawn from observations in the first interview and based on participant journal writing, I began by meeting the participants where they were emotionally on that specific day. In turn, I found myself much calmer and excited to hear their stories without the pressure of newness on my shoulders. The content of the second interview was based on what resonated with the participants and interviewer as a result of the first interview.

The third interview followed the same open ended format as the second, with questions and prompts influenced by the journal writing and other interview material. However, I also shared with the participants some of the transcripts from our past conversations. A considerable part of the time in this interview was spent member checking, reflecting, revisiting roles and planning for the future. I also discussed with each participant the focus group meeting, and answered any questions.

The fourth interview time was spent reflecting backwards and looking forwards. I asked the participants to reflect back on some of the themes/stories they told throughout the semester, and I asked them if there were any topics they wanted to cover before we finished the interview period. This interview took place after the focus group, so reflection on that meeting took some

of the interview time. The fifth interview followed the same structure as the fourth but took place after the semester had ended. Before the final interview, I gave the participants copies of the transcripts and asked them to reflect on the content. It was my hope that in this final interview, with classes finished and a record of their experience in hand, that they would be reflective on their year-long experience as well as reflective toward the future. The fifth interview took no more than one hour.

I mention here as supplemental to the interview section the importance that concurrent transcription played in the interview process. Immediately after each interview I made a simple transcription of the meeting. In the days leading up to the next interview I visited both the text and recording several times. In the text, I highlighted themes and wrote questions. While re-listening to the recording I identified patterns of speech and phrasing. I also related both the transcription and recording to my researcher journal and past interview recordings, transcripts and notes. This intense process of reflection between interviews helped me to develop more thoughtful points of inquiry and to look longitudinally at the data both during the interviewing and analysis periods of this research project.

Focus group

Focus groups are unique because, as Patton (2002) suggests, they offer the participants an opportunity to move beyond their own experience and make connections with others that may foster rich data. During the focus group, I offered cues for discussion based on emergent themes from the interviews. I then left space for the participants to construct their own conversation. The focus group took place at a mid-way point in the semester. The focus group met for one hour in a study room in the library. The group session was recorded and the recording was transcribed and will be kept for the Internal Review Board's mandated two year period.

Wakefulness and Reflexivity

Before I begin discussion of the analysis of data, I address how the concepts of wakefulness (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and reflexivity (Carpsecken, 1996) were used to ensure constant reflection and crystallization of claims. I also outline the specific tools I use to support both concepts. In *Narrative Inquiry*, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested that wakefulness is a kind of ongoing reflection on the process of research, the relationships we build and our role in the community we join: “as we continue to work at the boundaries of narrative inquiry, we attempt to develop criteria that work within the three-dimensional narrative place” (p. 185). Clandinin and Connelly viewed research as a constantly expanding process of invention, in which the researcher must constantly revisit his or her role in creating reality. I realized this wakefulness through recursive reflection in my researcher journal on the criteria that I consciously and unconsciously applied to my work.

A second key element of wakefulness is the expectations placed on the stories the participants tell. Not every story was neatly packaged with a beginning, middle and end. Linde (1993) suggested that life stories are more like soap operas than neatly told tales. Linde suggested that for a story to be told, the teller must believe that it is important enough to tell. Yet those stories tend to carry a complexity which make the telling recursive and the organization messy at times. Holloway and Jefferson (2005) suggested that “tensions or conflicts in an account [are present in] contradictions, avoidances or hesitations” (p. 44). Holloway and Jefferson reminded us that tension may lie in not only what is present in the interview but also in what is absent in participant accounts. It is essential then to constantly revisit the research questions and to be reflective and recursive throughout research in order to ensure wakefulness.

As I researched, I constantly revisited roles and expectations with the participants in order to make them comfortable to share or to not share if that was the choice they made.

Pagnucci (2004) wrote:

Living the narrative life is about figuring out what counts. It's about becoming a seeker and teller of stories. The narrative life isn't for everyone. Stories can be too full of pain. Stories can bring life into too sharp of focus. Stories can hurt us. But, in the end, we all have them. Stories are what we believe in. Narratives are what form our ideology. (p. 55)

What I draw from Pagnucci's quote is the importance of wakefulness, the imperative to be conscious of the emotional weight of stories. Even if a story is important to tell, it does not mean that this is the time to tell it. As an inquirer, I did not push participants to share stories that they did not want to share, and I did not tell stories they did not want me to. While some stories were important to their experiences, I understood that it was not the time to tell them.

In tangent with the reflective process of wakefulness, I also practiced reflexivity to ensure crystallization in my work. Reflexivity is a recursive process of revisiting the choices I made as a researcher. Reflexivity serves to "expose the researchers' personal constructions of the world, their values, beliefs, strengths, and weaknesses that mold the research journey" (Hardcastle, Usher & Holmes, 2006, p. 158). Reflexivity is revisiting assumptions of power while collecting and interpreting field texts. Carspecken (1996) suggested that "as a rule of thumb... whenever considering a truth claim, examine the validity of the conditions associated with it" (p. 57). Reflexivity was realized in this project through reflection on my journal writing with an eye toward power in relationships, dialogues with peers and member checking with participants, prolonged engagement in the field and the revisiting of field texts from multiple theoretical perspectives. Outlined below are the tools of peer debriefing, member checking,

prolonged engagement and multiple lenses I employed to bolster my wakefulness and reflexivity.

Peer Debriefing

In this work I established a peer relationship with another Ph.D. candidate who is working in the field of pragmatics and specifically focusing on international student pragmatical experience. I shared notes, reflections and ideas with him.

Member Checking

Foundational to this research is the knowledge that each participant will travel through the same experiences in individual ways. They will also have different terminology and reference points as they describe their experiences. Member checking, in this work, is an essential and frequent part of the research. Throughout the study I asked participants to clarify and resolve ambiguity by sharing with them themes that emerge in the transcripts and points of confusion in my own understanding in the interviews. I shared with them drafts of the narratives at different stages of writing. I also asked for final approval when the narratives were completed.

Prolonged Engagement in the Field

Though the observation and interview period of this research was four months in total, my experience in this community spanned three years when I had finished the data collection. I asked the specific participants to continue on as advisors to my work after the heavy data collection period was over.

Multiple Theoretical Lenses

Throughout this research I was reminded of the lenses of discovery I learned as a Ph.D. student and during my own time abroad. Periodically I applied multicultural and feminist lenses to develop a more holistic perspective in my research. I also listened to the participants and analyzed experiences together with them using a lens of co-construction.

Ethics

All participants in this study were asked to sign informed consent forms before the research began which explicitly outlined the study, the duration of study and the demands on their time. Pseudonyms were used to protect the privacy of participants in all writing. All recorded documentation will be kept private for use only by the researcher and will be kept for a two-year minimum period of time. Transcripts were shared with participants as part of regular member checking. This study took a strong ethical stance as Rossman and Marshall (2011) reminded us that “What is routine in and acceptable in one setting may be harmful in another; what is volunteered in one may be withheld in another” (p. 122). Within different cultural groups, some topics may only be appropriate in single-sex settings or amongst similar age, class or community groups. It is ethically important to be careful what is shared and asked by the researcher across sexes and cultures. Throughout this project the researcher made it clear to participants that they could withdraw at any time.

Table 2

Data Collection Schedule

Week One January 28 th	Structured/semi-structured interview (half an hour)	<p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are things going? • Have you felt some success? • What are some concerns you have? • Who has been important to you so far in your experience? Personally and professionally? How do they seem to be doing? • Is there anything so far that surprised you? 	<p>Details:</p> <p>Length: half hour</p> <p>Location: A private study room in the university library</p> <p>This interview was recorded and transcribed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The online journal was introduced on this day
Week Three	Semi-structured interview (half an hour)	This interview was open-ended and reflected continuation of the interview before	<p>Details:</p> <p>Length: half hour</p> <p>Location: A private study room in the university library</p> <p>This interview was recorded and transcribed</p>
Week Five	Semi-structured interview (half an hour)	This interview was open-ended and reflected continuation of the interview before – During this interview member checking and revisiting of roles took place.	<p>Details:</p> <p>Length: half hour</p> <p>Location: A private study room in the university library</p> <p>This interview was recorded and transcribed</p>
Week Eight	Focus group (one hour)	The cues given reflected emergent themes in the analysis of field texts. The researcher left space for the	All the participants in the study were required to participate in a focus group

		participants to dialogue and cue conversation topics.	together. If there had been conflict in the group, than a participant could opt out of this part of the research. This interview was recorded and transcribed
Week Ten	Semi-structured interview (half an hour)	This interview was open ended and reflected continuation of the interview before – During this interview member checking and revisiting of roles took place.	Details: Length: half hour Location: A private study room in the university library This interview was recorded and transcribed
Week Sixteen After classes are completed	Semi-structured interview (One hour)	This interview will be open ended and reflect continuation of the interview before , and a overview of the semester as a whole.	Details: Length: one hour Location: A private study room in the university library, a local coffee shop, or Skype. This interview will be recorded and transcribed

Analytical Procedure

Like most Qualitative research studies, analysis in this research has been an ongoing recursive process. Marshall and Rosman (2011) reminded us that “Raw data have no inherent meaning; the interpretative act brings meaning to those data and displays that meaning to the reader through the written report” (p. 210). This caveat is further emphasized in the design of Narrative Inquiry, which emphasizes the autobiographical elements of research. Meaning

making, in this research, took place as themes emerged, as the collection of stories grew, as those themes were challenged through conversation with the participants, as the narratives I wrote met and intersected with the narratives I collected, and as the stories were set off with theories of emotions and the research questions. Analysis took place as I lived with the stories I had collected over time and was open to see what emerged in their reading and re-reading.

In the initial stages of field text collection, Holloway and Jefferson (2005) argued we should mark the points which are suggestive to us and that spark our curiosity, refraining from trying to make order and suggesting themes. Holloway and Jefferson (2005) warned that an endemic issue in narrative research is the tendency for researchers to take the participant accounts at face-value and to rush to purport findings before knowledge can really grow and fill the space of the research process. They called for patience and diligence. They suggested constantly revisiting the data as a whole rather than analyzing each piece in a lock step against only former findings and previously identified emergent themes. Holloway and Jefferson (2005) wrote that “most of us offer accounts of our lives which accentuate consistency and suppress contradiction, in the interest of producing a coherent, rational self” (p. 57). Therefore, in the process of making meaning from the stories collected, the researcher must view the social and personal and temporal elements of the storytelling as a whole. To place a story in context, it must be set off also against the reality made by the teller, a process made clearer when we examine what is being told and how in the larger three-dimensional space. In my work, I constantly attempted to look at my data holistically.

Another important part of analysis is the ongoing conversation between the participants and the researcher. My process of analysis strived to show insightful co-construction with participants rather than reporting about them. In analysis in this work I tried to carry through the participant’s voice as a driving creative force in how interpretation developed and was

subsequently represented in the stories and findings. Where my own reflective process of journal writing met the stories I collected was also a point of discovery. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote, “Our research interests come out of our own narratives of experience and shape our narrative inquiry plotlines” (p. 121). In conclusion to this analysis section, I add patience as key to writing honest stories from the narratives that the participants shared.

Chapter Organization

In the next chapter are the narratives that were constructed from research texts collected during a semester-long period of interviewing. Looking backwards, Chapters One, Two and Three showed the foundational theories, methods and researcher positionality that shaped this study. Moving forward, Chapters Five and Six contain analysis, transformations and suggested implications of this study on the field of education of Master’s in TESOL students. Chapter Five offers analysis through the lens of the significance of the study and the research questions. Chapter Six shows my transformation as a researcher and suggests implications drawn from this study. Within that chapter is also a reflection on the ethics upheld in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NARRATIVES

In this chapter I begin to unpack the many stories of challenge, growth, independence and transformation that my five participants shared with me over the course of a semester during their Masters' degree study in the United States. The stories I have chosen highlight the ways in which my participants have made sense of their experiences. I use the word transformation throughout this chapter to denote identifiable moments of participant change without the assumption that the change they experience is positive or negative. Throughout the narratives I keep my research questions central in the choices I make. The coming sections represent each participant in this study followed by a conclusion to the chapter.

I begin with Abdullah because his belief in himself, his community, and his program set a positive tone for this project. I then move to Ying, whose pragmatic approach to her experience serves as a contrast to Abdullah's idealism. The next section focuses on Ivy, whose narratives cover themes similar to Abdullah and Ying, but for whom her approach offers a distinctly different point of view. Then Zhao, whose powerful nature is something new in the stories being told. And finally Lucy, whose role within her cohort could be likened to the calm eye of a storm. Indeed, throughout the semester she is the only participant they all mention as being instrumental in their sense of belonging. Therefore, it is fitting to begin by telling the stories of the storm and end with where some solace was found.

Abdullah

When Abdullah arrived at the university in America where he would spend two years as a Master's in TESOL student, he knew that he was uniquely qualified to be successful. Abdullah carried this sure-footed philosophy: "This rule in life in general, if some people can do something surely I can" (Interview 2, February 19, 2013). He wore in his tool belt: an understanding of

American culture taken from a year spent in Texas, past experience as a student that showed that hard work yielded success, and a year as a university teacher, where he began to mold and develop his teaching beliefs. When Abdullah described the task of being a teacher he said, “He is someone who makes mistakes and learns from them and changes his styles and ways of teaching” (Interview 2, February 19, 2013). As he spoke, I knew that that philosophy was the transformative way Abdullah approached not only teaching but all new experiences. Many times, as he spoke I imagined him crushing lemons into sweet lemonade. Indeed, Abdullah had an unyielding propensity to squeeze every moment and experience for its transformative and useful juices.

It’s a Shock When There Is Nothing to Do

I learned, after we spoke many times, that Abdullah’s lemon squeezing approach to the world was not instinctual but was part of his evolution and maturation, and that the initial point of Abdullah’s evolution was his experience learning English in Texas. Abdullah told me the story of learning English in Texas twice over the course of our meetings. The first telling focused on the end result and was told from the perspective of Abdullah the Master’s degree student, while the second focused on the climb and told the story of Abdullah as an eighteen-year-old. When I compare the content and telling of those two stories, they demonstrate the immense transformations he has made.

When Abdullah first mentioned learning in the States, he talked confidently about how it had served as a springboard for his second American learning context. Early in our meetings, I asked Abdullah about his expectations for student life, and he said with a tone of poise, “I did my homework. I researched [The college] before I came here. It did not exceed my expectations. It was as I expected it. Because I came here. I told you before. I went to Texas” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). The collapse of Western Pennsylvania and Texas into the same cultural place

made me giggle, but I accepted his answer. Though Abdullah's assumptions simplified an American college experience, they did give him confidence that he had a better understanding of his new context than a complete novice.

As Abdullah recounted the story of his time in Texas, I could hear some of the ideas that he had learned in his Master's degree courses shine through. He used the jargon "cultural diversity" and "linguistic diversity" (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). He contrasted the prescriptive experience of learning in Saudi Arabia, his home country, with the language course he took in Texas. He told me that learning in a language school in Texas was important for his teaching career because he had never experienced a student-centered classroom before. He said with excitement, "In the English language and I was really amazed, I mean how can someone just talk with her [the teacher], with his or her teacher that way. So, I think that affected me" (Interview 2, February 19, 2013). He carried his excited tone as he elaborated to tell me how he used mutuality in his own classroom when he began teaching in Saudi Arabia. Abdullah's story sounded like a teaching beliefs statement, and I felt comfortable with the genre. It was easy to stamp the self-determined and hardworking character of Abdullah I had come to know into that situation. I imagined him in Texas like a sponge sucking up all the language and culture around him. Abdullah's teaching beliefs statement smoothed the edges of the messy reality of his life in Texas.

When we were more comfortable with each other, Abdullah confessed a different version of the story. Abdullah talked about the hardship of being away from home for the first substantial period of time in his life. Newly graduated from high school and with limited proficiency in English, Abdullah left the cradle of family and friends to begin something new. As he told this version of the story, I saw the nerves of the eighteen year old in Abdullah's eyes. He told me that in Texas, the pressure quickly got to him. He spent a lot of time at home rather than

exploring. He said, “I was lazy, I was like teenager, lazy” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Despite the hardship, Abdullah stayed for the time he committed, a year and two months. But ultimately he did not learn English, nor pass his classes, and mentally the eighteen-year-old Abdullah enveloped that time by a hazy feeling of failure. When he returned to Saudi Arabia, he felt defeated and gave up on learning English.

At this point I had to pause. I struggled to find similarities between the two main characters in the stories of his experience in Texas. The eighteen-year-old Abdullah did not seem to match the temperament or motivation level of the Abdullah I knew. For example, as we made small talk the day he told me the second version of the story, Abdullah was worried about the prospect of the end of the semester. Specifically, he worried about having too much time. He asked me questions about how I handled the time when there was no work to do. He said, “It’s like shock it’s a shock people get depressed because they don’t have something on their shoulders to do” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Abdullah needed to be busy. I compared this to the eighteen-year-old Abdullah who stayed at home and did not pass his classes and again was amazed at Abdullah’s transformation.

Abdullah continued his messy first version of the story. Back in Saudi Arabia, defeated by English, he regrouped. He fell into what he showed an aptitude for and spent what he called “an unfulfilling year” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013) as an industrial engineering major. After that year, still disheartened and uninspired, he realized it was time to take stock. He did some soul searching and, for the first time, took control, thought about the long term and decided to follow his passion. He explained, “I’m not the science guy, the math, chemistry, physics guy. I’m more into what they call the humanities” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). When he made the decision to switch back to studying English, it was like he was shot out of a cannon. He said resolutely, “I

told myself, this is my third chance, I should do something about it” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). With new vigor and direction, Abdullah flew forward.

At this point, I finally saw the Abdullah I knew emerge and begin to take shape. Here was the root of the philosophies he expressed in his teaching beliefs story. And it was exciting to hear the first time he used his philosophy of hard work and found success. Abdullah’s voice carried joyful confidence:

I remember one of my professors back in my undergrad years... he said I wasn’t the smart in my cohort. I wasn’t the smartest but I was the hard working person. So when they studied, my colleagues studied two hours a day I studied four hour... When they studied four hours I studied eight hours and I ended up top of class. (Interview 3, March 4, 2013)

Abdullah’s new philosophy of hard work paid off. He smiled, and though he attempted to stay humble, a hint of triumph shown through as he explained:

I was an excellent student. I was top class when I graduated. It’s really, I mean, interesting, it’s amazing how English was a failure. I was I was a failure because of English at one time, then a success, like five, six years after that. (Interview 3, March 4, 2013)

Abdullah parlayed his success into a teaching assistantship at a local university after graduation. The job itself filled his time with new challenges, including the caveat that he had to apply, be accepted into, and begin a Master’s degree program within a year of employment. With that, a new challenge lay before him. It was an expensive and lengthy application process but, he said, “by the time I was admitted and accepted to these schools I forgot everything about the past, why I applied, you know, I said it was nothing” (Interview 4, April 10, 2013). Abdullah may have focused his memory on the successes, but it was the climb that prepared him for the

future. The grit of Abdullah's experience in Texas was the catalyst for the growth that fueled him and made the teaching beliefs version of his story possible. Placing these two stories side by side demonstrates Abdullah's transformation.

The Becoming of a Big Man

At the end of his first semester, Abdullah was asked by a professor to make a visual representation of his experience thus far in his Master's degree program. On the paper he drew two men. The first, representing him at the beginning of the semester, was small and the line he drew for the mouth was arced neither up nor down – but was straight. He juxtaposed that man against a much larger figure, with the line drawn as the mouth filling the face with a happy arc. On the paper, words like “Critical Pedagogy,” and “Linguistics” were drawn bounding from the head of the towering figure. When he completed the picture, Abdullah shared it with his professor, cohort members and most importantly, himself. Abdullah had come far and knew it.

I saw the smile of the towering figure on Abdullah's own face as he sat before me and began to tell me a story showing how far he had come and the legitimacy he felt today, halfway through his second semester. A graduate assistant (GA) of a class Abdullah was taking caught up with him after class. He told Abdullah he recognized his hard work and professionalism and offered to write Abdullah a letter of recommendation, encouraging him to apply for a Ph.D. program. Abdullah described his feeling in that moment as “distinguished,” and he began to turn over plans and dreams for the future. He smiled as he told me how the validation fueled him: “I'm actually planning to apply for a Ph.D. at, you know, for Ph.D. in big schools, you know University of Pennsylvania, Penn State, Arizona State, New Mexico State, University of New Mexico” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). I nodded, raised my shoulders and approvingly said, “Why not.” Abdullah smiled and continued his story.

Like an athlete in the groove, Abdullah was emboldened by the exchange with the GA and entered his next class that day ready for the next game to begin. Describing his behavior in the next class Abdullah said, “I was asking my professor a lot of questions. They were not a lot but they were really good. He responded to one of my questions saying that it was a really good question” (Interview 2, February 19, 2013). Abdullah’s voice rose higher and he sat up in the chair as he continued his story: “Imagine someone telling you, ‘That’s a really good questions, that’s a really good answer!’” (Interview 2, February 19, 2013) I smiled along with him. Abdullah went on to emphasize the importance of that praise by explaining that this exchange happened in Introduction to Research, a class geared toward preparing students to write their thesis. It is a class Abdullah viewed as paramount during this semester. When he wove the fibers of his thesis story, this experience played a role in his explanation of his choices. After the class, tired but with adrenaline carrying him forward, Abdullah was not ready for the day to be over. He describes his behavior:

But after that class I was supposed to go home and sleep, but I did not, I just walked to the library and talked with anyone. Anyone I faced. If I saw friends sitting I just yeah chat with him or her, yeah it was fantastic. (Interview 2, February 19, 2013)

Abdullah contrasted the excitement of his feelings of validation and legitimacy with a description of the smaller figure in his drawing, at the beginning of the Master’s degree journey. Abdullah began that story at the point of his first day of orientation. On that day, he sat nervously in a seat in a classroom looking around at newness. A room full of new faces: his cohort members sitting next to him, some second-year students, professors and the director of the program, Dr. Mung, standing in front. When he looked around the room Abdullah found eleven new cohort members. They were all very different – different nationalities, ages and

manners. Abdullah could easily see that he was the only Arab man in the group. Yet the identifiable differences were not the focus of his story; instead, Abdullah shared his instant feelings of initial attachment to his cohort members. He said, “Well I cannot forget the first day when we had the first orientation with Dr. Mung. We were like ... we were ... really afraid. And we did not have any idea about graduate school” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Abdullah’s perception of group nerves laid the foundation for his consistent insistence that his cohort was in it together.

As I listened, I could not help but notice Abdullah used the past tense not only to apply to when the story happened but also to his feelings of anxiety and fear. As he talked about orientation, he kept the expectant and optimistic tones I came to recognize as indicative of his demeanor and speaking style. Throughout our meetings it felt to me like the emotions surrounding more difficult moments were markers of those experiences rather than something he carried into his everyday choices.

A direct example of Abdullah’s affirmational interpretation of his experiences was his quick move away from the anxiety of newness, and the pensive character he drew, to a tale of burgeoning acceptance. The most vivid part of Abdullah’s description of orientation was the moment when the director of the program, Dr. Mung, came to greet them. Abdullah’s expectations crept up on him. He wondered if she would be friendly like his former English teacher in Texas or if she would be more rigid like his professors in Saudi Arabia. To his relief, she smiled. He observed, “Yeah, she was happy. She was enthusiastic” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013) She gave them information about the program, but more potently for Abdullah, she asked them enthusiastically about their academic journeys in life thus far. He explained glowingly:

Yeah, in the beginning of the semester she asked us to write our academic journeys or educational journeys in which we state everything about us during

school. Undergrad school. You know jobs, work life till the moment we came here. That was really smart because she wanted to understand us. (Interview 1, January 30, 2013)

Drawn from that moment, Abdullah felt a longitudinal sense of belonging. He completed the story by describing how the exchange with the professors became an optimistic maxim, “so day by day you know and month by month we learned that it’s so easy” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013).

The Captain

An instrumental part of Abdullah’s transformation from feelings of newness into legitimacy was the relationships he felt with his professors and especially the director of his program: “Well having such a faculty. I mean they are wonderful. They care and they do a lot of things to help their students” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). He exclaimed this with his first breath in our first meeting and consistently insisted on it each time we met. Though he had had classes with four professors at the point when our interviews began, Abdullah talked primarily about two professors: Dr. Mung and Dr. Parkin.

Because Abdullah talked so much about these two professors, I could not help but search as he spoke for some overlap between them. As I searched, I found that at face value they seemed disparately opposite. While Dr. Mung assigned a lock step semester-long series of assignments and continuously monitored each phase, Dr. Parkin asked for one final project that he would review at the end of the semester. Abdullah described the two teachers as having contrasting pedagogical styles, different expectations for student autonomy, and distinctly different personas in the classroom. While Abdullah felt comfortable joking with Dr. Mung, Dr. Parkin’s classroom was much less playful. It was only when Abdullah began to explain to me how he

prescribed his interactions with professors that I came to understand how he could see such contrasting styles of teaching as equally helpful and supportive.

Dr. Mung and Dr. Parkin played a number of roles in Abdullah's professional development. To refresh, Abdullah's first interaction with Dr. Mung was that magical moment when her smile and greeting as the director of the program put him at ease. Later, she would teach him in a class and then agree to be his advisor for his thesis. When he spoke of her, he exclaimed to me glowingly, "She is the most wonderful faculty member I ever had" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). While Abdullah had less interaction outside the classroom with Dr. Parkin, he played an equally important role because he taught the course that shaped the thesis project and was a widely respected faculty member who, in Abdullah's eyes, carried a lot of clout. The time these two professors spent with Abdullah may not have been equal, but they were both instrumental in his understanding of professionalism in TESOL.

The Project

In the first semester, Dr. Mung assigned the students to work methodically, step by step, through a semester-long project. It began with a series of readings and annotated bibliographies. For effect Abdullah exaggerated, "We had to read 400, I mean a lot of articles from a lot of journals" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). They then summarized the article and wrote a one-page description of each one. As he worked and the task mounted, Abdullah began to fill with the concern of writing his first lengthy academic paper. He explained, "Yeah, we had this paper to do. I was really nervous for that, you know, to do, to write a 12 page paper in only, for example three week" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Abdullah took initiative and, in response to his nerves, "I asked my professor to tell me or allow me to start writing my paper" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). After he asked, Abdullah described her response as a pointed, "No!" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). According to Abdullah, she told him to be patient. I must have shown shock

on my face at her response because Abdullah smiled at me and tried to quash my judgment by explaining, “she scream and shouts at the people whom she loves the most” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). I looked at him with a little confusion, and he laughed. His laughter made me feel that my misunderstanding made me an outsider.

Abdullah went on to explain that, though the work was a lot, Dr. Mung had a plan. Abdullah explained that, with Dr. Mung, “She sometimes pushes you. That is for your own good” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). I learned that Abdullah accepted her directive and waited till he completed all the tasks to begin the paper. He said, “I followed her instructions. I mean I started [to write the paper] when we finished the annotations” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Looking back over the process and writing the paper, Abdullah shook his head in a sort of disbelief and said

It’s amazing, you know, they [the professors] have this powerful that they relax you they make you feel relaxed...They understand how we feel, and they don’t really want to, you know, overload us, at the same time, they actually careful what we produce, we do something and we need to replace it or change it they tell us that. (Interview 1, January 30, 2013)

Abdullah believed that Dr. Mung knew what she was doing.

On the day before the final draft of Dr. Mung’s class paper was due, Abdullah, with his first Master’s degree paper in hand, went to the on-campus writing center. The experience itself bolstered his confidence when “I asked them to you know edit my paper. They did not do much but I had to reread it and print it out” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Beyond the positive feedback from the writing tutor Abdullah found, to his pleasant surprise, half of his classmates there busily working on the same assignment. He laughed, “Haahaaha, Doing the same thing, I think the other half came before, so it was all the same” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). With

delight he added, “So we did not say I will go to the writing center but it is all the same” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Curious, I asked Abdullah if he thought Dr. Mung also knew they would all be at the same stage and at the writing center on that day. I could not help but wonder how deep Abdullah believed Dr. Mung’s understanding of her students to be. In response he shrugged coyly and exclaimed in a matter-of-fact tone, “Dr. Mung is one of the smartest faculty member here” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). With that I nodded and moved on.

Handing the paper to Dr. Mung represented the end of Abdullah’s first project in his Master’s degree work. At the same time it was his first tangible piece of evidence that he was on a path to success. He earned an A on the paper. Abdullah then left behind the hours of work and stress of due dates to frame the experience as a whole by remembering, “The most helpful. Let’s say. Happy things was to write my first paper. My first academic that I felt it’s good” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). And again he was ready to move on to the next project. He said, “So I should work more. But at the end, you know, anyone who works a lot will get whatever he wants so” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Setting his sights forward, Abdullah wanted to take on the ultimate challenge of the thesis.

The Thesis

At the offset of Abdullah’s second semester, momentum was on his side. Abdullah had completed three classes with three A grades on his academic record and praise for his writing. He had found mentorship in Dr. Mung and camaraderie with friends and cohort members. Moving forward, Abdullah had developed a concept of what it meant to be the ultimate Master’s degree student and a hierarchy of what he needed to accomplish to attain that most distinguished professional status. On the list were a continuation of high grades and praise from professors and colleagues. But placed on top was writing a thesis. When I met with him, the

thesis was enmeshed in every story he told me. After an argument with a friend he exclaimed, “I have a lot of mixed feelings, and, well the most important thing for me now is the thesis” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). This is one example of how the thesis outranked personal connections. Rather than the completion of classes, Abdullah saw the thesis as the culmination of his Master’s degree. He said, “It’s, it’s, I’m sure I will change a lot of my perspective by the end of the, you know, thesis, by the end of this program, because it’s ahh, I think it’s a journey” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Yoked into his thesis journey was the class Introduction to Research and the professor of that class, Dr. Parkin.

As a project, the thesis is a multi-semester research paper with sections akin to a truncated version of a five-chapter dissertation. As it is not mandatory, students have the option of writing a thesis or taking two additional courses. The students make that decision over the course of their second semester while taking Introduction to Research, a class tailored to shepherd students through the initial stages of that project. At the end of the semester, students produce a short literature review and a proposal for their project which they can use to find an advisor if they decide to move forward.

The debate between writing a thesis or taking more classes was a constant theme and difficult decision for most of my participants, but Abdullah was the exception. Though Abdullah claimed that, like his classmates, he had made the decision to write the thesis over the course of the semester, he never showed the nerves surrounding that decision I saw in the others. In contrast, when Abdullah spoke about his classmates’ trepidation about the work, he said, “Well, I think many of them are hesitant to write thesis or not. They, I think the main purpose is fear they are afraid of thesis. And, I’m trying to do this [write a thesis], you know” (Interview 2, February 19, 2013). At the end, his voice carried an upswing of pride in both his capability and expectation of success. Abdullah may have felt fear about completing the project on time or

finding resources, but the project did not scare him. Abdullah's questions about the thesis were all "how" and not "if" questions. His demeanor left little doubt in me that the process of deciding was a farce and, no matter what, he would write a thesis. Not out of character, Abdullah said confidently, "I did not come to the states, incompetent to reach my goals" (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). The value Abdullah placed on the thesis and the excitement of working hard on a complex, longitudinal task that would glean praise made it a perfect benchmark for Abdullah.

Abdullah's fervor for the thesis heightened the importance of Introduction to Research and Dr. Parkin. Abdullah declared Introduction to Research as, "the most important class among the three classes I'm taking [during the second semester]" (Interview 2, February 19, 2013). He then followed up that statement by emphasizing that, "that specific professor [Dr. Parkin] in that specific class is really important" (Interview 2, February 19, 2013). Abdullah privileged this class and professor so heavily that he rarely spoke at all about his other professors during the semester. Instead I learned how, over the course of the semester, Abdullah developed as a researcher and Master's degree student.

The Class, the Man Who Made the Class

Unlike Dr. Mung, who played various roles in Abdullah's education, Dr. Parkin entered the scene in the second semester, having been lauded heavily by Dr. Mung. In the past, Abdullah had experienced Dr. Mung as an authoritative guide, and her insistence that Dr. Parkin be in charge carried great weight with Abdullah. In one telling exchange, Abdullah explained that when he felt confusion about the direction of his work and a pull between incongruent advice from the two professors, Dr. Mung told him, "Follow him [Dr. Parkin]. Your thesis would be based on that course I'm only your advisor if he tells you something then do it" (Interview 2, February 19, 2013). If Dr. Mung was for Abdullah his Captain, then Dr. Parkin's role was that of "The Man." Or, if Dr. Mung was the mentor that ferried him along through his degree work, Dr.

Parkin was the mentor to whom Abdullah molded much of his forward beliefs of what a Master's degree student should be.

The course with Dr. Parkin began much differently than his course with Dr. Mung in two major ways. Abdullah did not have that smiling moment to scaffold his introduction to Dr. Parkin as a teacher but in its place was a self-imposed expectation that he must, to be successful, impress his new professor. He said, "I was scared I was really scared I didn't know what to do or how to deal with it [the course]" (Interview 5, May 16, 2013). To make matters even tenser, Abdullah explained that "My professor had to go like two or three classes for some conferences so we did not have a lot of time in class" (Interview 5, May 16, 2013). The lack of time was important for Abdullah, who consistently felt confident in his ability to learn how to interact with others. He explained about his first semester professors and classmates:

I mean, I know what to say, and I know what to talk with them about and I know how to explain that. I know how to convince them, with my work. I know how, I know how they think and I know how to, you know, I don't want to say make them understand what I believe in and about my ideas in general. (Interview 1, January 30, 2013)

The lack of time with Dr. Parkin meant that it would take more time for Abdullah to develop a set of rules for interaction.

Introduction to Research started very differently than Abdullah's other classes. Instead of beginning with a syllabus and list of assignments, Dr. Parkin opened the floor for a debate of the name and focus of the courses. Abdullah began to glow as he explained the impact of that moment on the rest of the semester. He said:

That's funny because the class is introduction to research and the professor changed that to understanding research and it's exactly what we have been

through. Understanding research. It is not about introducing us the research, it is something different. But understanding research is something else. (Interview 5, May 16, 2013)

For Abdullah, Dr. Parkin's shift toward a more conversational classroom was empowering because it implied that the students were capable of being active learners who would learn skills of research while also participate in a co-construction of knowledge. In the previous semester, Abdullah had been given a narrow range of topics by the professor. He said, "Although the topic I did not like the topic very much. But I had to choose it" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Now, with the thesis, Abdullah was given the autonomy to develop a new project wholly based on his own interests and with the perception of support to move that research forward.

Listening to Abdullah, I knew that he did learn the nuts and bolts of research. He explained that he learned "how to pick up, you know, from the easiest things to the most difficult. How to pick up articles, how to have perfect methodology" (Interview 5, May 16, 2013). But I also learned that that knowledge was subjugated by all the new ideas being generated by Dr. Parkin's Understanding Research approach. Abdullah explained happily, "I have learned is it not only your professors that would do everything or help you with everything sometimes, in many cases actually you should depend on yourself" (Interview 5, May 16, 2013). The realization that the ideal Master's degree student is autonomous and self-starting was a huge leap in his experience in academia up to this point.

As Abdullah explained his concepts of self-direction, I learned that the final leap to the shore may have been a stretch, but the whole crossing was not one exhaustive jump but a dance across a series of smaller rocks. Initially, I marked the beginning of this story with the contrast between Dr. Mung's lockstep approach and Dr. Parkin's self-guided approach. But Abdullah

contextualized his experience by beginning earlier in his educational career, with a contrast between the rigid nature of his education in Saudi Arabia and his new experience in the States. He explained that contrast, “I mean the first semester we did not sit for any exams. We did have to do lots of other work. Projects and papers, there is nothing obligatory” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Abdullah felt a new freedom to do the work that would support his learning and followed that statement up with the assertion, “When you have choices you can do much better” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013).

In the second semester, Abdullah’s concept of self-direction leapt toward an autonomy of ideas. Abdullah said:

Well, the more important thing it’s not that they [the professors] want, the thing is that they expect your own performance, your own perspective and beliefs and the other thing is that they add more to it by, you know, explaining what people think on you know some. (Interview 2, February 19, 2013)

Abdullah began to see professors as a support team meant to challenge him.

Abdullah did not mention what grade he anticipated for his course with Dr. Parkin but swiftly moved forward to talk about a checklist Dr. Parkin gave him with suggestions to continue his research as he moved into the summer. The list suggested that Abdullah read examples of thesis and dissertations in the library, continue his search for academic sources, and reflect on his researcher self. All the activities were meant to deepen the self-study that Abdullah felt Dr. Parkin believed the student would do.

We Are All In This Together

For Abdullah, professors were the corner pieces in a larger puzzle that included friends and cohort members. Abdullah’s friends were the pieces that took more time to fit together, like the sky or sea, while his cohort members functioned more like pieces that easily formed the main

image of the puzzle. From the beginning Abdullah had an expectation for interaction with his cohort members that was professional and collegial. He was pleasantly surprised when those relationships bloomed and deepened. However, the best way to approach new friendships in a new place was significantly less exact. Regardless, interactions with members of both groups served to cloud periods of time in emotions that impacted his experiences.

I knew Abdullah to be very social and was surprised when I learned that he considered himself to have very few friends. Abdullah made a distinction between friends and acquaintances, as friendships were framed by a somewhat stringent set of criteria. That criteria emerged out of Abdullah's experience in Saudi Arabia, where friends were much more demographically homogenous to him. Up until this point in his life, Abdullah's friends had been classmates or boys of similar age and background. Abdullah approached making friends with the position: "I'm actually picky when it comes to friends... I mean my friends don't exceed five, like really friends. I know a lot of people, but real friends to me are always few" (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). He would later explain that this was the case because he believed real friendships were lifelong. He explained, "he or she would not be a friend for all the time of your life, for just specific amount of time, then he or she is not your friend" (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Abdullah followed that up with a simplistic concept of the everyday role of friends. He explained, "the real reason why, we should, everyone should have friend is to, to make us happy" (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Abdullah went on to explain a lack of codependency in his former friendships by explaining that, "real friends stand with you all the time... he doesn't need anything from me, but he's still there" (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). That criterion was one of the first challenged in his new setting.

Over the course of the semester Abdullah spoke about two close friends at length. Both of them were Saudi Arabian men, but their overlap with Abdullah seemed to end there. The first

of Abdullah's new friends is Omar (pseudonym), a Ph.D. student who has lived in the States for a long time and is ten years older than Abdullah. The second, Mahmoud (pseudonym), arrived at the same time as Abdullah. But in addition to his studies, Mahmoud had a wife and child that lived with him. A comparison of the friendships with Omar and Mahmoud show the challenges of Abdullah's changing expectations of friendships shed light on how the mixture of emotions and experiences impacted Abdullah's professional choices.

Omar fit comfortably into Abdullah's expectations for friendship. At the beginning of Abdullah's first semester, they began to meet weekly for coffee, and that practice carried through the second semester. Abdullah viewed the interaction with Omar as a positive part of his week and enjoyed the time they spent together. Abdullah bounced ideas off of Omar, including the ever-important topic of writing the thesis. Abdullah explained, "He's the first guy, the first person who told me I should do a thesis. He's the first one I took his advice and I thought I would do it you see, you see, that is a good friend" (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Abdullah treated this moment as an epiphany of true friendship. Because Omar encouraged Abdullah's ambitions without criticism and gave Abdullah's a happy period of time each week, Abdullah was able to view their friendship as long term. Omar met many of the pre-existing criteria Abdullah used to choose friends.

While Abdullah's relationship with Omar may have fit into his expectations, his relationship with Mahmoud did not. After meeting during Abdullah first semester, Mahmoud and Abdullah became very close. Abdullah and Mahmoud's lives quickly began to overlap. Abdullah explained, "he was calling me every day, he has a car and he was picking me up every day to go to the library" (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). In turn, Abdullah helped Mahmoud with his work. He explained, "more honestly I helped him last semester, he had this paper and the topic was really difficult. I even stopped my work my paper, to help him" (Interview 3, March 4,

2013). Mahmoud was pulling the resources of time and energy from Abdullah, two important elements in Abdullah's success. The codependency was a strain on Abdullah. Unlike the ease of his friendship with Omar, his friendship with Mahmoud forced him to reexamine his friendship expectations.

Another major contrast between the two friends was their reaction to Abdullah's inquiring about the thesis. While Omar gave unyielding support, Mahmoud was much more negative. Abdullah explained:

He said, last semester he said you should not do a thesis., you will end up wasting your time, you will not need that in your Ph.D. admission blah blah a lot of things.

When he came [in the second semester] back he said he was planning to do a thesis. (Interview 3, March 4, 2013)

Mahmoud tempered his feedback through his own stresses and anxiety about the project. Abdullah viewed Mahmoud's response as unsupportive and selfish.

The conflict did not end there, but after the first semester, Mahmoud distanced himself. They had made plans to study for the GRE together and Abdullah explained, "I waited for him till he came from home [Saudi Arabia], he went back home then. When he first came back I called him and he said, 'Well I'm working with another person on that, if you want to, you know join us you are welcome'" (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Mahmoud had circled up in old relationships choosing to work with a friend he knew from home. Mahmoud's decision translated to Abdullah as a decree that their friendship would not stand the test of time and that he was not a true friend to Abdullah. As a result, Abdullah explained that he would study harder for the GRE and said dramatically, "I should prove to him that, well, you missed the chance!" (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Abdullah expects friends to be lifelong sources of happiness, but instead Mahmoud became a short-term source of betrayal and pain.

Based on all the interviews and interactions with Abdullah I learned that a typical story he would tell begins with a mountain to climb and concludes with his success at making it to the top. The story of his experience with Mahmoud does not adhere to that format. Abdullah applied his work ethic, but rather than trying to continue his friendship, he applied it to proving his lost friend wrong. The whole experience meant that for many weeks, all that Abdullah did was clouded in the emotions of that lost friendship. He was not happy. And unlike his professional setbacks, he shared his feelings. He talked to friends and published on Facebook. He explained that “sometimes you just want to tell people feelings for a specific amount of time” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). It was not clear how Abdullah would approach new friendships, except that it would not be the same as it was before. The criteria Abdullah drew from his experiences with friendship in Saudi Arabia were transformed.

Cohort

The feeling of collectiveness that Abdullah had at orientation when he sat next to his new cohort members never wavered and grew more intense as his experience moved forward. Unlike the ambiguity of rules in his new friendships, his relationship with cohort members began with the structures and rules of professional relationships and expanded from them. How Abdullah felt toward and understood his cohort members transformed over time.

Initially he spoke about what he shared with them in the same vein as he did his co-workers back in Saudi Arabia. Abdullah kept up a level of privacy and an understanding that there is a professional and personal separation. He said, “Yeah, you wouldn’t discuss something very personal with your coworkers like something family, you would discuss with them maybe some work problems for example if you have some problems with your boss you can talk with them about that” (Interview 4, April 10, 2013). And when he talked about his cohort he said, “it’s, it’s well if I got a bad grade I would talk with them of course, but, but example, something

happened to a friend of mine they don't know, I might not talk with them about it" (Interview 4, April 10, 2013). As his view of his cohort transformed he told me that, "it's not only about academic life it's also about, you know, our own personal matters and lives" (Interview 4, April 10, 2013).

One instance of a transformative moment with his cohort members came when he stood on the steps of a school building for the first time with his cohort members after the final class of the semester. It was a warm November day, and the leaves were still changing on the trees. The semester was over, his papers were handed in, and Abdullah wore a smile of joyful accomplishment on his face. In the fifteen minutes or so that they stood there, they shared the exhaustion and joy of their collective journey. But they also shared more detail of their separate lives. Abdullah explained:

I even talked about going to the gym ... ahh ... started going to the gym and and some talked about what they will be doing in the summer – so it's not only about academic life it's also about, you know, our own personal matters and lives.

(Interview 4, April 10, 2013)

After that moment Abdullah explained, "my cohort, we have actually developed, I don't know, become more and more tied to each other, you know sharing everything, you know feelings" (Interview 4, April 10, 2013). Abdullah saw them less as coworkers and more as a supportive team.

About the importance of the relationships developed in graduate school Abdullah said: Maybe you remember while in Masters because I feel like the effect or the influence of the environment or the faculty members, your cohort in your masters would be much greater in your Masters than your Ph.D. level because this is the first step, the first stage of grad school. (Interview 1, January 30, 2013)

Abdullah was inferring from his experience the idea that his Master's degree cohort functions almost as a family for him while in the States. In reference to his cohort he always used "we.": "We were, really afraid" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013), "We learned that it's so easy" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). So deep was that feeling that he exclaimed once:

It's a cohort thing or a group thing. When someone not makes a mistake but when someone says something embarrassing or just made a slip of the tongue, I feel embarrassed because it's a group thing and it is something that I always feel. (Interview 5, May 16, 2013)

Just as his expectations for friendships changed from Saudi Arabia to his University life so did his idea of the role of his cohort in his experiences.

I'm Not Static

When Abdullah and I sat down after he had handed in every paper, and his first year as a Master's degree student was over, he looked elated. He explained:

I feel like I'm not static, I'm not the same one all the time and that is interesting and I can see that now. When I came here a year ago I really cannot believe that a year passed. When I came here I had not noticed that that people actually change. Even though they may not feel that. (Interview 5, May 16, 2013)

And I knew from his statement that it was Abdullah who had changed. He had used his work ethic, belief in the future and ability to make lemons out of lemonade to transform and adopt new heights to reach. He exclaimed, "well it was a new experience I mean the things that I did not expect but it all went very very good" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). At this, I smiled back at him warmly. When we parted, he was on his way to the campus Library to find sources for his thesis.

Ying

When Ying left China and arrived in the States, she held within her a pragmatic approach to what was to come. She explained with calm yet weighted conviction, “All right here I come if I can’t do anything its fine. It’s not like you are going to die or something? It’s like I know my limits and I know what I can do and I’m fine with that” (Interview 4, April 15, 2013). From the outset, Ying’s experience sounded to me like a rollercoaster of challenges: entrance into a new community in which the members were younger with less professional experience, a feeling of loss of social status at leaving her job to become a student, confusion when her preparation was not enough for her to understand the social and academic discourse around her. Ying was on a ride that may have left most breathless and hoarse from screaming, but she never panicked. When Ying got on the ride she felt confident, bundled in her successful past experiences as a professional working with Americans and a point of view that showed her the lighter side of things. She got on the ride with the knowledge that it would be part of the greater story of her life, one that she would eventually write as a comedy (not that she thought anyone would read it). Following her journey from her professional life in China to her new beginnings in the States and her emergence as a scholar shows the multiple ways that Ying constructed her Master’s degree experience.

Her Professional Life in China

When she packed her bags to move to America, Ying filled all the spare space of her suitcase with Korean face cream, makeup, and other toiletries from her home in China. According to Ying, her colleagues and friends chided, “you are going to America you are not going to North Korea, why are you buying this stuff?” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). They told her that the American brands she would find would be much better than anything she could buy in China. Ying responded with a nod, humoring their advice, while she continued to click

through the Chinese version of eBay, purchasing perishables and, in her mind, refiguring her suitcase contents to fill each nook. Ying knew that America was a country like any other where she may or may not find the resources she needed, so she would come prepared.

Beyond her suitcase full of perishables, Ying also carried with her a multilayered understanding of America and American life. Before being accepted into her Master's degree program, Ying had spent five years observing and interacting with Americans as an administrative assistant at a college in her hometown. The school had more than thirty American teachers, and Ying interacted with them both professionally and personally. Ying may not have known what she would encounter when she would move to America, but sitting side by side on the bus to school each morning in China with her American friend taught her that it would definitely be different from what she knew. As they sat on the bus together and watched the menagerie of bicycle traffic during the morning rush hour, Ying recounted her friend's awe-filled statement: "It is something you only see in China" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Ying referenced this moment in America when she experienced the world ordered in a new way.

Year after year, by watching American teachers negotiate life in China, Ying also became cognizant of the nuances of joining a new culture while living abroad. She explained that some things, such as popular culture and holiday traditions are simply "in their [the people of a community's] brains" (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). More specifically she learned that there would be some information that would not be included in orientation because it is information that is taken for granted by the local people who knew it. For instance, Ying explained that time and time again she would hear the surprise of American teachers who did not know the scope of Chinese New Year. A large percentage of China's 1.3 billion people travel over the month-long holiday. In order to travel, you must buy tickets and make plans far ahead of time. Ying explained that that knowledge is so commonplace that, if she broached the topic with an

American teacher, she worried it may sound condescending. She explained frankly, “so it’s like... I don’t know... it is just assuming you are working here you should know what kind of holidays we are having.” Her voice rose in a nervous laughter as she explained broaching the topic, “I don’t know if they [the American teachers] know or don’t know [about living in China]” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). And Ying would strain to decide what to tell them. Ying would later draw from this knowledge as she embarked on her own journey abroad and found that sometimes she would not be told culturally ingrained information.

As Ying transitioned from her Chinese professional context to a classroom in America where she was no longer a member of the majority culture, she finally began to understand the true scope of not knowing. She explained, “[when] there are too many American students, they would talk about someone wrote something like a novel or a news several years ago I have no idea what they talk about” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). She followed this up by saying glibly, “[when] that kind of thing happens I think how those American teachers deal with that sort of thing in China. That is how it goes” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). She parleyed that story into the sweeping and perhaps paradoxical statement, “so if you ask me if I have any culture shock here, I would say no because I almost know everything” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). I understood that for Ying, knowing everything meant that she also understood that there were things she would not know, and she would try to be comfortable with ambiguity.

As a Professional in China, Ying found herself empowered by her knowledge of the English language. She was constantly called on to translate between Chinese and English for her coworkers who were less confident with their spoken language ability. Ying explained, “so my office nine people in one office big office... those people don’t speak English...they understand but they don’t speak so every time they can something, [even if it is]none of my business but they come to me” (Interview 2, February 27, 2013). Ying became involved in every sort of

arrangement for the American teachers, from visa discussions to simple college business.

Though a headache at times, the experience of being relied on by her peers was empowering and fueled her confidence in her own language skills. That feeling of confidence would be the first to be challenged when she arrived in the States.

The final layer of knowledge Ying packed into her suitcase along with her observations and interactions with Americans and her confidence in her language skill was the comforting reality that she would not be living in America alone. Ying had a husband who had been living in the States for thirteen years. He had recently earned a medical degree and, while looking for a residence, he would live with her in the town where she would do her degree course work. When I asked her about his support, she answered coyly, “he helped me apply for this school. haahaa. And he helped me find house and stuff” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Perhaps even more importantly, Ying’s husband also shared her matter-of-fact sense of humor. About her over-packing of cosmetics and medical supplies he teased, with a dig at the overpopulation of her town in China, “it’s like there [in China] if someone sneeze you get it [because there are so many people] here[In America] if someone sneeze you are far away you don’t get it” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). She followed that up with a blunt delivery of her own observation: “I was never sick here [in America]” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). From our discussion about her husband’s role in her experience, I also learned that Ying had no plans to go home after graduation. Rather, she planned to stay in the States with her husband. When I learned this, I could not help but wonder what will happen when the Korean cosmetics Ying packed would run out. Would she find something new or have them sent from China? Along with the comforting knowledge that her husband would be there, her faith in her language skills and her acquired efforts at being comfortable with ambiguity, Ying carried her heavy bag full of those cosmetics and made her way to America.

Her New Beginnings in the States

It seemed that Ying's preparations before departure would serve to only partially smooth the path for her new life in America. Only after months of interviewing did I begin to see a sure-footed Ying emerge. Rather, when I first met Ying, she answered my general inquiry into how she was doing with a very cautious, "you mean the whole thing, It's getting better" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). I found that "the whole thing" was a mixture of both social and academic challenges. Ying's life both inside and outside the classroom were intertwined and, in both, Ying initially began with a feeling of falling. She explained:

In China it's like okay you are a girl you look alright and you work in a university so you it's like your level is up there... I got here I lost my job I'm not a white person, and I don't work anymore I'm a student so it's like and sometimes I'm not speaking my native language it's not that comfortable. (Interview 2, February 27, 2013)

Here, Ying expressed the loss of social, cultural and professional capital. She was no longer the master of the language and a bridge between her Chinese and American colleagues. She was no longer the person who knew when the holidays were. She would now have to carve out a new way of reinstating some of the power she had lost and find a new sense of self in a new place.

About the first few weeks, Ying rattled off a list of times that she found herself lost socially for vocabulary or when her cultural taboos were challenged. Regarding vocabulary, Ying said, "I remember the first week I came to the US I couldn't even order food. I mean the things at Subway, I don't know any of the stuff their names in English. I don't want that stupid. So it's like I'm starving and I didn't dare to go here and order things" (Interview 2, February 27, 2013). But then she added as a punch line, "I didn't know what Pepperoni lover means" (Interview 2, February 27, 2013). I found myself laughing along with her, yet later when I read the text I

realized that being hungry and unable to order food is not a funny situation. I would have imagined that when Ying told the story of her inability to meet essential food needs in those first few weeks in the States and the feelings of marginalization she expressed in the statement above, she would have become serious in her tone or shown frustration as she relived the memories. But Ying purposefully added a punch line. She looked back and laughed at herself and the situations she was in in a way that made me think that, even in her most frustrated moment, Ying found humor.

In a tone of suspense, Ying told me the story of the first challenge to her Chinese cultural taboos. She explained:

The first time I came here I freaked out. I booked my apartment online. I didn't look at the pictures. I thought they wouldn't be too bad but when I went there I really freaked out because cemetery is right there in front of it. In china near a cemetery, no people live there. It is the most horrible most terrible place to live.

(Interview 1, January 30, 2013)

At that, she let the moment linger before following it up with, "then I was like I will survive... if some ghost comes it will be speaking English I won't understand" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Ying's self-deprecation of her vocabulary poked fun at her feelings of marginalization. At the same time Ying was making a comparison similar to that of her American friend on the bus in China. She had her own "Only in America" moment. It was hard to know with the playful way that she told the story, exactly how much her home's proximity to the cemetery really troubled her.

In addition to the social aspects like vocabulary and social taboos, Ying also found herself challenged in unexpected ways in her new academic setting. But unlike the surprise of 'not knowing' that she experienced in her social settings, Ying would approach the unexpected in

her new academic world armed with her foresight that some ambiguity would occur. Like the other participants, she expressed the sentiment that for some time, the academic world she was in seemed to whirl around her like a tornado and that she and her cohort would grab at the pieces as they flew past. For example, Ying explained, “well when I first got here you know the professors talking about the TESOL words like critical thinking and critical pedagogy I was like what is that?” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Her voice rose in both a question and a statement of confusion. In the beginning, Ying looked around the classroom at her classmates, who seemed to sit tall, underline sentences and nod along with the teacher. “They look like they understand everything,” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013) she said with a lingering tone of surprise. As Ying explained their behavior, it sounded like an episode of the *Twilight Zone* in which the ordinary students working diligently in the classroom were made extraordinary in the context. In this case the context included what Ying would describe as a teacher using discipline-specific vocabulary far beyond the scope of a general English language speaker.

Ying had a moment when she broke ranks and looked around restlessly. She wondered if she was the only sane person left in Dodge, the only person willing to admit that she did not understand. She said with almost a shrill tone to her voice, “I didn’t know what they were doing [the other students]. At first I didn’t understand what the articles was about because it was really too academic so I didn’t really understand too much” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). As they were leaving the classroom, Ying reached out to her classmates to find out who they were beyond their appearance. She explained, “after class I tried to ask them, ‘did you understand what was saying?’ and they said, ‘no not really’” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Ying was relieved to know that her assumptions about the vocabulary was correct and that her classmates were indeed real people. I noticed that in this situation in which Ying felt confusion because of language in an academic setting, rather than standing alone hungry outside like she did at

Subway, she instead looked around the classroom and knew that she was not alone. Ying was also assured that in time, it would “get better” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013).

Being Asian

Initially, Ying may have known that much of her classmates’ behavior in the classroom was a farce, but she was not above some acting of her own. Ying found herself drawing on past academic experiences to structure her classroom behavior in her new setting. Ying’s classroom behavior was initially dictated by rules that she brought with her, which she titled “Being Asian.” According to Ying “Being Asian” in the classroom meant sitting silently while other non-Asian students and the professor spoke. An example of a situation that showed Ying’s “Being Asian” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013) classroom framework came when Ying described something that happened in her first semester. In a classroom, Ying watched as a male Saudi Arabian Ph.D. student engage with their professor in an adversarial way. She explained, “I remember thinking he has a question and we discuss about his question and some people said something and Dr. Darncce said something and this guy said, ‘I’m sorry Dr. Darncce but you missed my point’” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). As the Ph.D. student persisted, Dr. Darncce twice tried to end the conversation, but to no avail. The exchange continued.

As it was happening, Ying’s reaction was a mixture of shock and confusion. She explained, “a Chinese students would never do that in front of everyone. I was like WOW!” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013) She reacted by looking around the room at the faces of her Asian classmates. She shared a moment with Lucy, her friend who was Southeast Asian. Ying explained, “by the looking of her [Lucy’s] face I knew she was thinking the same” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Trying to gain the scope of the offensiveness of the Ph.D. student’s behavior, I asked, “okay, do you feel that it was more offensive to the Asian students in general?” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013) to which Ying quickly responded, “yeah, because that would never happen [in

Asia]” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Her reaction to this exchange highlighted Ying’s internal expectations of both the structure of classroom interaction and her concept of a general identity of “Being Asian” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013).

Ying went on to explain that first, conversation is very rare in a Chinese classroom, where the teacher holds the role of authority tightly in his or her grip. She went on to explain that before coming to America, she had always experienced being a student in a larger classroom. For example, the typical class in her American Master’s degree has ten to fifteen students; in China, her classes regularly had thirty or more students. This translated to a definition of “conversation” in her Chinese classroom to mean, “the teacher asks one thing and answer one thing and that’s it” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). That lack of mutuality in her Chinese classroom not only made the Ph.D. student’s interaction shocking to her but also informed in a new way what she understood interaction to be in the classroom.

Ying returned to the idea of “Being Asian,” and another example of how it impacted her initial experience began to take shape. She explained, “when I first started it kind of...it’s kind of Asian style. You don’t talk too much in class” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). She went on to tell the story of how classroom interaction took place during her first semester: “so if you see the Asians, the Asians are kinda all the same... remain quiet for a while wait for the white girls to say something then we begin to say something...it’s kind of something we have in common” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). As Ying explained, I thought back to the focus group meeting we had had a week before and the constant nodding heads of agreement that came from her Asian female cohort members when they talked about how being silent and being Asian in the classroom were synonymous. But for Ying, “Being Asian” in the classroom did not garnish her the experience that she wanted, nor did it help her reclaim the status that she had lost when she

left her professional setting in China. Ying would have to do things differently and foster new types of relationships than those in her past.

Emergence as a Scholar

Throughout her transformation in her new context, I would see the emergence of many different types of relationships in Ying's life. At this point in her second semester, no longer was Ying falling into her experiences, but she was now making sense of what had happened before and searching for and finding new footing. Ying told the stories of her Asian cohort members, professors and the students she tutored as markers of her new growth. In her description of each relationship, I could hear the emergence of how she understood the structure of her Master's degree program to be and her role within it. As she developed those stories, Ying also began to reclaim some of the status she lost, but anew. Ying would no longer exist as she did in China but would be transformed.

I'm Tired!

A focus group conversation allowed me to see Ying as a member of the Asian community that existed within her cohort. Ivy, Zhao, Lucy, Ying and I met in a quiet room in the library for our focus group meeting. Ivy, Zhao and Lucy all smiled warmly at me and shared polite greetings with each other. After the greetings had subsided, we could not help but turn our attention to Ying, who had up to this point sat leaning back in her chair with her arms crossed. "She is sleepy or something," (Focus Group, April 3, 2013) Lucy said while still turned toward me. Lucy nudged Ying a little bit with her elbow and Zhao and Ivy both smiled. Ying mouthed "what!" (Focus Group, April 3, 2013) in a playful and sarcastic tone. "I'm tired," she said (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). Ying looked at Lucy harshly and shrugged her shoulders. In response to what could have been construed as an impolite exchange, we all shared a moment of laughter to which even Ying wasn't completely immune. She smirked. It was clear with the response of everyone

present that the exchange between Lucy and Ying was not only typical but a welcome part of the group dynamics.

Ying's lack of initial interaction did not exclude her at all from the conversation. While Zhao described Ivy as a "good cook" (Focus Group, April 3, 2013) and Lucy described Zhao as "energetic" (Focus Group, April 3, 2013), they were less sterile and more candid with Ying. Lucy described her first impression of Ying with a smile and with the same sarcasm she used before: "I thought she is kind of like an ignorant person like 'I don't care' or something like that" (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). Zhao politely followed with, "Ying I know that the first impression to me is that oh this girl knows everything" (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). Lucy leapt on that comment and with a goading smile directed at Ying said, "she has lived for five more years than us" (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). Lucy extended the word "has" for sarcastic effect. The comment finally forced Ying into action. Ying explained in a glib tone, "they are all kids to me" (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). I knew they had all heard her say this before because Zhao piped in to explain to me conspiratorially, "she has been a teacher for a long time" (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). And Lucy finished that conversation by calling Ying "Ajumma" (Focus Group, April 3, 2013) and asking me if I knew what the word meant. I did know that Ajumma is a Korean term which means middle aged or older woman, and like "ma'am" in English, it is impolite when said to a younger woman.

I had met with Ying three times before this meeting, and Lucy's honorific, Ajuuma, touched on a central vein in the way Ying approached the experiences she was having in her Master's degree. In the meeting before the focus group, Ying recited her mantra, "I feel they are all small kids... they graduated and they came here but I worked for five year" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). At that time I understood that she kept aloof from her cohort members and the Chinese community at the college. Many times she told me that she did not have friends at

the college and spent most of her time at home. And while that may have been true, during the focus group it was clear that the other women present viewed her with warmth and comradery. Lucy explained that the term Ajumma, when she gave it to Ying, was both affectionate and goading in an intimate way. Lucy explained, “if you don’t know that person or aren’t close enough they will be angry but because I’m close enough I call her Ajuuma” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). And the reaction of Ying and Zhao made me realize that Ying had ties with these women beyond the stigma of age, rooted in the commonality of the cohort experience.

Though Ying was older than these other woman, they were all going through the same academic and cultural trials. But Ying did have a different perspective born from her past experiences working in a professional setting and working with Americans in China. An example of a trial they all found in common which came up again and again in conversation was a feeling of being silenced in the classroom. Though Ying was quick to agree with her Asian classmates that “Being Asian” inhibited them from adding their voices, Ying was not quick to overgeneralize that that was why no one else in the classroom prompted them to speak. Ying understood there were more factors at play in how other people perceived her. Ying astutely shook her head back and forth in the focus group when the other Asian women elaborated on how being perceived as Asian made others ignore or not value them in a conversation. She said, “I think in our classes it is not like, it’s not like we are Asian students it is because we are first year MA Students. That’s the difference” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). She emphasized this by sharing an exchange she had had with an Asian classmate who asked her, “do you think the American students [in our cohort] will understand it better?” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013) to which Ying responded, “no not really I think they just know more words than I” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). She explained that in classes populated with second-year and Ph.D. students, they were seen as the bottom rung. Ying reflected on her silence in the classroom and drew multiple

conclusions based on the many ways she saw herself and how her nationality, gender and age impacted how others saw her. Her new idea prompted the others to pause for a moment and nod in agreement with her about their first-year status. At their response Ying smiled coyly and said, “we could do a research about that” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). I learned that Ying was not only picked on but also appreciated and respected because of her role as Ajuuma. The respect of her Asian classmates banked into her emergence as a scholar.

New Rules

Over the course of the semester, Ying began to develop new rules for interaction that challenged her initial structures drawn from “Being Asian.” She explained that in America, she had learned that a level of questioning and interaction with the professor is both appropriate and valued. She acknowledged that “it is okay if you challenge the teachers but you challenge too much” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Ying had stepped out of the silent role and experienced success through finding her voice in the classroom. She began to share her sage observations outside of her Asian cohort community, with a larger audience of other students and professors. She also experienced that the appropriate level of questioning even garnished praise from her professors.

Ying found that as she found her voice in the classroom, her relationships with professors flourished, and she experienced greater levels of respect and privilege. The first time that Ying shared her pragmatic view of the world in the classroom came in Dr. Parkin’s research course. In that class the students were preparing to write a proposal for a possible Master’s degree thesis. In preparation for their inquiry, Dr. Parkin asked them to read a series of Master’s degree theses as models for their own work. Ying explained the novelty of the task: “I think it was the first time for like everyone in my cohort to read a thesis” (Interview 2, February 27, 2013). All of the students were trying something new.

Dr. Parkin asked the students to share what they had learned from the thesis examples they had read. Dr. Parkin opened the floor to general discussion and Ying looked around to see that her colleagues were silent. Ying asked the question, “why this author repeated the same thing so many times, and it was like you keep repeating the same thing everywhere and I’m tired of reading the same thing” (Interview 2, February 27, 2013). She pointed to the many times the writer repeated the research questions in each chapter. At that, her classmates followed her lead and began to ask questions about structure and repetitiveness while Dr. Parkin smiled at her warmly. Ying found her observation to be like pointing out the obvious. In a tone of annoyance she thought in her mind, and said to me when recounting the story, “Why don’t you [her classmates] people ask!” (Interview 2, February 27, 2013). After some discussion, Dr. Parkin turned and praised her for her observations. Ying paraphrased, “Dr. Parkin said that was an excellent questions” (Interview 2, February 27, 2013). And Ying was delighted with his praise. Through this experience Ying began to feel the power that she had lost in her move return in small ways.

Ying’s efforts to be part of the classroom conversation garnished her praise from other professors as well. In one of our meetings, Ying glowed in a way I had not seen her before. She had just had a class with Dr. Guller, a teacher whom Ying described as “enlightening” (Interview 4, April 15, 2013). Dr. Guller turned to Ying and Lucy, who were sitting across from her in a circle and Ying quoted her as saying, “you guys are Ph.D. material think about it” (Interview 4, April 15, 2013). Ying ended this sentence with a loud and long, “wow!” (Interview 4, April 15, 2013) and a laugh. She glowed, “I’m happy she made my day by saying that” (Interview 4, April 15, 2013). Indeed, Dr. Guller was one of the few teachers for whom Ying felt that sort of admiration. Generally Ying described her other professors in less glowing terms: “I was thinking that maybe some people are like, they know a lot of stuff, they are good at some stuff but they

are not good at teaching” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). She followed that up with a simple, “They are nice people” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Though Ying saw Dr. Guller and Dr. Parkins as playing mentor-like roles, she was also able to see beyond their roles to view her professors as people with strengths and flaws. As Ying began to renegotiate herself in the classroom, she began to gain back some of the power in the role of a student that she had lost from her transition from China. Her reclamation of power was bolstered when she entered the new role of teacher.

Role as Tutor

Ying downplayed her excitement one day when we were meeting by adding at the end of an interview: “I have been tutoring at ELI. That is good. Kind of a good feeling of helping people” (Interview 2, February 27, 2013). The English Language Institute (ELI) is an adult English language school located on the campus where Ying studies. I knew that Ying supported her cohort members, but this was the first time Ying expressed that she knew that she was in a role to support other people. In the second semester, Ying began a position as a tutor at the language institute on the campus where she studied. In that role she met with two women from Saudi Arabia once a week over the course of the semester. She described their levels of English as intermediate, with one of the women being higher in level than the other. Ying worked with them on their classroom assignments and other materials that she brought to enhance their learning. I could clearly see from her smile and the excitement in her tone when she described her experience that it did make her happy.

Suddenly, Ying had some authority. She could reach back in her memory to her working days, supporting her workmates in the office by speaking English for them. Ying told me little stories about teaching her Saudi women each time we meet. She laughed as she explained, “one time I remember she said ... she wrote down “my best friend” she wrote beast ... I said you don’t

want to write that for friend, and she asked when that mean and I said tiger or wolf” (Interview 2, February 27, 2013). When the Saudi women understood the error they all laughed together. Ying enjoyed being able to see her new students learn.

At the end of the semester the two women gave Ying a card to express their gratitude for her working with them during the semester. Ying told me with a smile, “yeah yeah and at the end my two students gave me something together with a card and in the card they wrote ‘Thank you for education us,’ education us! I was like wow, look at the word you used. Haahaa educating them” (Interview 4, April 15, 2013). As opposed to the Ying sitting almost asleep in the focus group, this Ying was dynamic when she told this story. Working with the Saudi women was an opportunity for Ying to throw off the role of student for a few hours and play a new role, one in which she was an authoritative and essential player. It was a role in which she felt some of the privilege she had lost when she left her professional job return to her.

Conclusion

At the end of the second semester, I heard Ying talk about her academic interests with a level of authority similar to how she spoke about teaching her Saudi students. I also began to hear her straightforward sensibility for which she was valued in her professional and social life find its place in her academic world. She explained that in the research class she was taking with Dr. Parkin she had chosen a topic in linguistics for her thesis. She explained, “only one thing like in Dr. Parkin’s class everyone is supposed to write a I mean thesis proposal and every ones is about teaching, mine is about linguistics” (Interview 4, April 15, 2013). She explained that her choice of topic would project her on a path different from her cohort members. And like her departure from China for America many months before, Ying had added new knowledge to her suitcase and now felt prepared to forge her own path. At this point, Ying seemed ready for

the future. She said in a deadpan tone, “Am I going to survive” (Interview 4, April 15, 2013) and then laughed heartily at the idea that there was no other option.

Ivy

Ivy imagined the most successful day she could have as she worked toward her Master’s degree. She explained, “if I can do presentation in front of our American classmates than I think I will be successful” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Her answer did not surprise me. I asked this same question to all the participants. And while both Abdullah and Ying quickly answered that their most successful day had been the day they learned they had earned top grades on their first writing assignments, Ivy did not have the same focus on grades; a day she would call her most successful day had not passed, but was yet to come. Indeed, Ivy’s narratives were different. Instead of academic success, Ivy wanted to stand in the front of the room, confident that she could hold the attention of her American classmates, make no errors in her speech, and, in the end, be understood and valued for what she was saying. Ivy subjugated grades or the praise of a teacher to her ambition of acceptance and respect from a group she titled, “native English speakers” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013).

Two themes ever present in our conversation were Ivy’s dream of growing as a language speaker while in the States and the benchmark she used to measure her language growth as that of being confident when speaking to Native English speakers. They were also important to how Ivy constructed herself in her Master’s degree because they served as a catalyst for the direction of her effort and her concept of how she is maturing and transforming. Ivy brings to her Master’s degree: a track record of past successful academic experiences as an undergraduate, her ambition, for which she is not afraid to swim against a tide of social convention, and finally her desire to be an independent adult. But at the infancy of Ivy’s time in her Master’s degree

program, standing between Ivy and speaking in front of native speakers was a stifling fear of the inadequacy of her spoken English and her unpreparedness academically for graduate level work.

Over the course of her first year, Ivy threw off much of the fear of her own inadequacy and felt the warmth of her cloak of accomplishment. She developed greater written and oral language, and acquired the study skills she needs to begin to feel academic adulthood. Ivy moved beyond her initial requirements for what success is to find new ways of counting moments to be proud of. The transformation was not easy. And looking back, after being in the States for some time, Ivy did not sugar coat the journey she was on but exclaimed wisely, “this is very hard, to grow up” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013).

Leaving It All Behind

During Ivy’s first few months in the States, she was like a passenger on a ship that she was desperately trying to captain. Ivy stamped her expectation of independence squarely on top of the frame she would use to approach her new academic life, so much so that it would be impossible for her to sit patiently as a passenger and watch the scenery go by. Instead, Ivy felt that she must be her own captain. Ivy explained, “yeah I think I should act different from undergraduate students, I should be more adult not just a child” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Ivy had expectations of what becoming an adult would be which stemmed from her past experiences and expectations. Without too much effort, Ivy had been a treasured member of both her personal and academic community in China, and she anticipated she would also hold such value in America. She expected to be an active participant in her academic community, engaged in conversation with her peers in the classroom. She expected to be independent which she described as making decisions on her own without others. As the months wore on, I would learn that in much of the first year of Ivy’s Master’s degree program, her expectations and past experiences would stand in her way rather than help her.

The Advice

Before Ivy left for the States, Ivy's parents called a family friend who was Chinese and had lived in California for a long time, to offer Ivy some advice. Ivy paraphrased his sage advice: "in the beginning it will be very hard but when the time pass by it will be easy" (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). When Ivy shared his advice, I thought about the difficulties I encountered living in different countries, and I wondered how she would understand the measurement of "very hard time." Would acclimation take days, weeks, months or years? Ivy was developing the expectation that things would be difficult, but I knew that Ivy did not have the context of living abroad to compare it to. I wondered how Ivy understood the advice of her family friend.

In addition to saying that there would be a difficult period, her family friend also instilled the idea that she would have to figure that time out on her own. As she continued sharing his advice, she tried to capture his blunt encouragement in her tone: "in the United States everyone should be independent, you cannot rely on somebody else. You have to rely on yourself" (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). Ivy reenacted the nod she used as he spoke showing that she had carefully listened to each word. The phone call ended, and Ivy internalized what he said. I would hear from Ivy the concept that adulthood meant independence from others many times in our meetings. She repeated the mantra, "yeah, here [in America] I have to be independent" (Interview 2, February 25, 2013) time and again. Ivy understood that the choices she made in America would fall wholly on her shoulders. That level of autonomy was a contrast for Ivy from how she had made decisions in the past.

Though Ivy had lived at school during her undergraduate program, she was never farther than a phone call or short train ride away from her parents, who were a constant source of support and advice. Ivy also had a strong network of friends who shared experiences with her and could serve as advisors and confidants. She explained, "Because in China if I meet some

problem I have a lot of friends or my parents or someone can help me but in the United States I have to help myself” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). In the States, Ivy would feel disconnected from that network and believe that she should rely on only her internal sense of how she should meet challenges. Ivy felt both excited and nervous to make decisions in that way.

Even though Ivy was not wholly confident to make decisions in the US, Ivy was no pushover in China. In one example, Ivy explained to me how she used a combination of her own conviction and the advice and support of her parents to swim upstream against a powerful cultural current. Ivy’s extended family did not approve of her choice to continue her education, and poked at her about her decision. When they felt they had the ear of Ivy or her parents they would say, “Why girls are always want to study to get the higher degree?” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). They were implying not so subtly that a Bachelor’s degree is a terminal degree for women. Ivy should not be in America studying but in China finding a husband and making a home. Ivy explained with a glint in her eye, “I try to ignore, because they are not my parents they do not understand me” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). With the support of her parents, Ivy ignored the whispers of relatives. With her own conviction, Ivy chose the path she wanted and began to work her way down it. But now her parents would be farther away from her both physically and in the amount of support she expected from them. And Ivy would only have her own conviction when making decisions in the US.

Ivy applied the same philosophy of self-reliance when integrating into her new academic setting. She explained, “I think it is my duty to umm... to to adapt in this new culture so I it’s not how others responsibilities” (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). Ivy felt that her new Master’s degree community did not have to change to accommodate her but that assimilation was her duty alone. Still, in this aspect of her new life, Ivy had a plan. Before Ivy left for the States, she had years of successful academic experience that made her feel that in America she would work

hard and be fine. In her eyes, assimilation to academic culture did not feel like it would be such a burden.

In China, Ivy was a successful student, and when she spoke, others would listen. She explained, “I’m a good students [In China] yeah... I have the higher score than others so so when speak something they will they will listen to me, yeah” (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). Ivy had the credentials to help her feel distinguished in her community. She explains of herself in the classroom in China, “for example if I am in the classroom and the teacher want me to explain something very difficult I feel like very powerful” (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). Ivy was a force, able to shape her own destiny and be respected by her peers. Ivy expected to be able to generate that level of presence in the classroom in America.

Perhaps the most pressing expectation on Ivy’s experience both inside and outside of the classroom was her mental image of herself engaged in daily conversations with native English speakers in America. A huge part of Ivy’s expectation for coming to the States was to advance her oral English. She explained, “I want to practice my English first and I think that because I’m an English major I think to come to the United States would be a good experience for my study” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Ivy imagined that she would use English to facilitate her leap toward independence. Ultimately English would work for her as the tool she needed it to be, but initially it would stifle her journey.

Three things became clear to me as Ivy shared her initial expectations about how she should and would be in America. The first was that Ivy would try as hard as she could to steer her ship, especially in the classroom. Secondly, Ivy would be her own toughest critic, using only the criteria she had set to measure success. Ivy blamed herself for any and all difficulties, rather than accepting that graduate school is demanding on everyone or that academic skill building is part of a Master’s degree program for many people. It was also clear to me that I had not seen the

confident Ivy that got on the plane from China. I wondered how Ivy would be when she pushed past her initial fear and anxiety and unwrapped herself from the harsh expectations generated from her past experiences. Over the semester I would watch as the path Ivy imagined filled in with brush and prickets and she forged a new path and applied her ambition and diligence to making that path what she wanted it to be.

Reality Check

Ivy might have imagined that her ship would sail through some turbulent waters when she reached America, but the wind was taken from her sails before she hit the shore. When Ivy opened the acceptance letter, she was elated to see that she was accepted into a Master's degree in America but was disappointed by the admittance date on the paper. Ivy explained, "I applied for my Masters' degree in [the university] but in 2010. I should come here and do my Masters' degree in 2011, but they just send me an admission letter tell me I was admitted in 2012" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Her face fell and showed her initial disappointment at being able to begin the year she had applied. This was the first time that Ivy had not excelled in school and it left her feeling uneasy. Ivy would not have had a problem being admitted for graduate study at a Chinese university, but waiting a year made her nervous about what would come. This was the first of several reality checks that would leave Ivy feeling like her ship had hit a rocky coastline.

Orientation

Another reality check happened when she was picked up at the airport. She got off the plane and smiled thankfully through her exhaustion at Margaret, her new cohort member, who had so kindly picked her up at the airport after her long flight from China. Instantly, Ivy knew Margaret would be a supportive friend to her. But Margaret was a native speaker, and Ivy was nervous she would sound silly or say something wrong in front of her. Though they spoke to each other, it was fragmented. Ivy spoke through her nerves and was constantly self-conscious.

In her next few days, it was clear to Ivy that the English she had learned from books as an English major had not prepared her pragmatically for everyday interaction. So far things had been rocky. She explained with frustration:

In my high school I learned when you meet somebody you can say 'how do you do' or 'how are you' but when I actually came to the United States people just say 'how are you today' or something at first I do not know how to answer those questions. (Interview 1, January 30, 2013)

The everyday culture bumps startled Ivy, and she did not feel prepared to speak with native English speakers.

These feelings of slowly losing her voice intensified when she went to her Master's degree orientation. Ivy looked around the room nervously. She waved at Margaret, found a chair, and sat quietly taking in the scene around her. Ivy felt comforted when she saw Lucy, Zhao and Ying, the other three Asian women in her cohort. Ivy was also ecstatic when Dr. Mung walked into the room and was introduced as the director of the program. Ivy saw that Dr. Mung was also Asian. Speaking about Dr. Mung, Ivy exclaimed to me later, "I think she is very successful, to be a non-native speaker yeah, I want to be like her" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). After days of feeling the frustration of disorientation, she was comforted to see four Asian women. But as the day advanced, that comfort was quickly usurped by disorientation again.

Tomo

As Ivy sat there, Tomo, a second-year student got up and began to talk about his experience in the program thus far. Tomo explained the overwhelming course load, the thesis, and the lack of sleep he has gotten used to since he began the program. Ivy could not help but notice that Tomo did not mention the improvement of his English or even learning English. Rather he spoke of critical pedagogy and other key words in the TESOL profession. Ivy began to

realize that her focus on language learning was not the focus of the program she had joined. As he spoke, Ivy found herself feeling like she was steeping in a kettle that was slowly warming. Ivy sat there with a soft smile on her face, trying to look calm and together. She thought about her friends back in China who believed that she was now at the beginning of a two year vacation to the States rather than a graduate university program. She explained, “my Chinese friends in China think I’m very freedom now and I just enjoy my life” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). Their assumptions could not be further from the picture that Tomo was painting, and she could not help but wonder what she had gotten herself into.

Ivy found that the feelings of being on a ship she could not control went beyond orientation and that her new Master’s degree program classroom experience was shrouded in norms that she did not know. In China, she explained, “the students in the class will not put their hands to ask questions or ask the professor something about but in the United States too many students can put their hands up and ask questions” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Startled by this difference in classroom culture, Ivy found herself unable to be the powerful student she was in China. She explained, “yeah I want to [put my hand up] because sometimes when the professor asks some questions I think a lot I want to express myself but when I get ready to express the questions just pass by” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Ivy was frustrated by her inability to find a moment to raise her hand. Even more salient, Ivy was frustrated that if she did raise her hand, she would not be confident enough to speak. She explained, “China maybe I, I, I’m more confidence because I can speak my mother language yeah with my classmates and teachers. But here I have to speak English so sometimes I do not have some confidence. Yeah, because I always afraid aaa in aaa in the communication we could have some misunderstanding or something” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). She was no longer the Ivy who was called on to explain difficult concepts in her Chinese classroom. When I asked her if she would raise her

hand to speak in her American context, she answered with an emphatic “NOOO!” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). But she did follow that up with the acknowledgment that maybe she would when she was ready.

In small groups Ivy felt the same inability to understand conversational cues and insert herself into a discussion. She explained, “yeah because in some discussion I do not I cannot find a, a, a good moment a good time to enter” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Too often, the conversation went on around her while she struggled to keep up. Her feelings in these moments were intensified by the responsibility Ivy felt to participate. Ivy explained her expectation of her role in an academic discussion: “I think I have contribute some ideas and like other things. I can say something useful, yeah” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Not only did Ivy struggle to participate, she also criticized herself and felt like her lack of interaction was her own fault. Ivy felt that she did not meet the criteria for being an academic adult. Not only did Ivy feel underprepared to meet cultural norms of interaction but Ivy also experienced a reality check in the expectations of work and workload at the Master’s degree level.

The Workload

Ivy was shocked by both the workload and the expectation of independent inquiry that were norms in her Master’s degree program. She explained of her past experience with an academic workload: “In China my undergraduate study I do not need read too much books” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Much of Ivy’s past academic experience were courses designed in a lock-step manner, in which each day she would be assigned homework that she would studiously accomplish for the next class. She found that she could be an exceptional student by just following her classes from week to week.

In her Master’s degree program she would find her professors’ expectations both different and more rigorous than in her undergraduate courses. Ivy explained, “in America I

should read more book more book articles, journals than I can” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). She would have class-to-class assignments but also a semester-long project for which it was expected that she would read beyond what was assigned in the classroom. When Ivy spoke, I knew that it was without exaggeration. In second semester she explained, “this semester I think I have to write three papers, and every day I have to write at least a three pages response” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). Ivy explained the workload of the first semester was not as heavy, but the newness of her Master’s degree program made the work seem like a lot. Ivy never experienced so many academic expectations nor had she ever had the feeling that she was behind and may never get ahead in an academic setting. For the first time, school was challenging in a way that made her feel like she was sinking.

The reality checks were not just in the classroom but in her social life, too. At the point when her American academic life made her feel like a mouse on a wheel Ivy may have begun to search out new friendships and distractions. But even in this effort she would be forced outside of her comfort zone. In China Ivy’s relationships with friends were defined by a mutuality born from demographic similarities. Ivy and her friends were all college students of the same age. When Ivy looked for easy friendships within her American university community, she could not find them. She explained, “but here [In America] my friends sometimes will be older than me so in in the next days I just like a child they will take care more about me” (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). Ivy went from being viewed as an equal or even possessing more wisdom than friends younger than her in China, to feeling like her new friends viewed her as a child or someone to look after. Their view of Ivy did not support her ambition of growing as an adult and, in her initial months in the States, Ivy felt stagnant.

Ivy thought back to her family friend’s advice: “in the beginning it will be very hard but when the time pass by it will be easy” (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). From the point of

waiting a year through the first few weeks and into the first semester, things had been shaky. Ivy felt silenced and ineffectual toward her classmates. Ivy began to wonder when it would be easy, or what easy meant. But Ivy would not stand by and wait for change. She would captain her ship. Ivy began to make changes in her actions and expectations.

Moving Forward

As difficult as it had been to assert herself in her new community, Ivy would not be without mounting successes. The question was whether Ivy would realize that fact or not. By the end of the semester Ivy had only told me one story of success. She had played a leadership role in sorting out an issue with her landlord. It was a story that painted Ivy as powerful, a side of Ivy I had rarely seen in our meetings. After the semester was over, in our final meeting, Ivy told more stories of success. She told me about speaking in the classroom. She explained that my project was a clear example of how far she had come with her oral English skill. Finally, she told me that she had spoken candidly with a native English speaking classmate. Those stories of success opened a door for me to see Ivy in a new light. I began to realize that when Ivy told me about the transition of her expectation from being a good speaker to a good listener, that was part of her transition. She had pulled power back by reinventing her definition of success. When Ivy told me that story, I imagined her taking her flag of independence and thrusting it with all of her might into the ground in America. I imagined a dramatic scene in which the wind was blowing and the rain was pelting down on her. Ivy's new narratives dripped of her evolution. I'm not sure that Ivy felt the weight of responsibility ever lift from her shoulders, but as the second semester ended I could see that she had learned to carry it better.

The Apartment

A problem with the water they explained glibly. You will have to move they said with authority. Their tone coupled with Ivy's lack of time filled her with a drive that pushed her to

stand up against their demands. Unlike in her classes in which Ivy sat silently trying her best to look reserved, this time Ivy would have to be strong and speak. She explained to me, “we have already signed an agreement with the office but they want us to move... it’s not reasonable” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Ivy went to the leasing office. Using the lease as a tool, Ivy would not let her nerves about her spoken language stand in her way. Rather, she would argue for her right to remain in the only home she knew in America. The leasing office relented on their blanked eviction and made a deal with Ivy that met her demands. Ivy left the office ecstatic. She felt a tentative hopefulness after many weeks of feeling down in her capacity to assert herself in the new world around her. She explained cautiously, “I think I can do at least one thing in the United States by myself” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). That exchange would serve as a spark of independence in her personal life, and Ivy would hold onto that moment when she began to try to make changes in even more daunting aspects of her American life.

The Art of Being a Good Listener

Functioning like a strong current, Ivy’s expectations of developing greater competence as a speaker of English pulled her backwards no matter how hard she swam. In the beginning of the second semester, I knew that Ivy had not had a great moment of speaking and being heard since she had arrived in her academic community. Rather, Ivy had fallen into almost complete silence as her Master’s degree program moved forward. In the middle of the second semester when Ivy pouted as she explained, “I think my oral English hasn’t been improved as my expect,” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013), I knew that it meant more than just saying words. The benchmark for being a good cohort member was participating by speaking, according to Ivy. She had not met that benchmark yet.

The Focus Group

In the focus group, Ivy was silent, smiling and peppering the conversation with a “yeah” or “mmmm.” Early in the focus group, while the others had each interjected or directed the conversation, Ivy hadn’t spoken. I turned attention toward her by asking Ying, Zhao and Lucy their impressions of Ivy as a cohort member. Lucy spoke first: “I don’t know it’s like she doesn’t show it in her face, I’m a cool thinking. She wasn’t to say I think, she wants to say a lot, but she thinks I don’t want to talk” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). She eyed up Ivy and her tone rose in a way that was both asking a question and building suspense: “I know it but I don’t” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). Ivy answered with a smile, nod and explanation: “because when a lot of people get together I see other peoples can talk a lot so I just don’t talk” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). I noticed during the rest of the meeting that though Ivy was not speaking, she was constantly showing engagement with what was going on through her hedging and body language. Unlike Ying, who leaned back in her chair looking sleepy, Ivy sat up and made eye contact with whoever had the floor. Ivy was practicing a role that I would later know to be called “being a good listener” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013).

Throughout the interview process Ivy explained time and again that she was becoming a good listener. At the end of our first meeting Ivy said, “right now I am a good listener but I want to be a good speaker” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). At that time, I thought being a good listener was a consolation for her lack of a feeling of development as an English speaker. But I noticed in the focus group Ivy was ever-present in the conversation without speaking. Through watching her enact “being a good listener” in the focus group, I saw Ivy as close to center stage rather than fading into the woodwork of the interview room.

Ivy added a few very well-placed comments throughout the focus group, and her role-playing was effective. Lucy’s comment suggested that Ivy was a person holding knowledge and

choosing when to share it. In a past interview, Ivy had explained, “my role, now I think that I am the learner and the listener.... sometimes I can contribute some ideas to the group discussion or something but I learned more than I gave in this, yeah” (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). After seeing Ivy in the focus group, I now understood that Ivy was offering almost a definition for how she enacts herself in group discussion. She listened, showed interest and sometimes added commentary. Even though Ivy had not become the powerful speaker of English she had dreamt to be just yet, she was able to garnish respect from her classmates in a different way. In a sense, Ivy was the captain of her own ship, but the ship had changed the course it would take to the destination.

Just Read

In addition to becoming a good listener I saw Ivy’s transformation as a student. As I mentioned previously Ivy experienced a series of reality checks in the first semester that left her feeling silenced and like a noncontributing cohort member. In the beginning of the second semester Ivy exclaimed that she felt “frustrated” (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). She explained, “because last semester ahhh, I also have three class but do not have too many things to do. But this semester we have to do to read more and writing more” (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). But unlike last semester, Ivy’s feet were not wet, and she had developed a series of working habits and strategies to move forward.

I asked Ivy how she was handling the workload, and she said, “week to week just try hard, I don’t want me to, aa, too far away from others even though they are native speakers. I want to catch up with them so I work hard” (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). Her response was more hopeful than she had been in the past. Unlike her feeling that the success she felt with her apartment was singular, Ivy sounded like she knew she could catch up and be successful in many things. She explained that “working hard” meant that she would read things several times

in order to catch meaning (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). She described her process: “I reading at first I could not understand what the author want to talk about but I have to read for the second time and the third time and generally I can understand it” (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). When she told me this information, her frustration showed, and I remember nodding sympathetically. Later I thought back to my own graduate work load and the time it took to read each article one time. Instead, Ivy was reading a book *three* times! I compared this to the Ivy that came to America, who had read very few books for classes. Ivy drove her ability to understand texts by explaining, “I think that the only problem with me now is my oral English because I can understand others I can understand the books but just express myself something output” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). Speaking would still push against her, but the study skills were falling into place.

In tandem with Ivy’s newfound approach toward her school work, Ivy was also beginning to realize that she was not facing challenges alone. As the second semester course load mounted, Ivy began to meet with her cohort members after classes to discuss the readings. In a tone liken to an epiphany she explained, “I thought the native speakers will feel easy to read that book, but actually no” (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). Ivy began to realize that language skill may not be the crux in understanding the texts but that her cohort members shared similar blocks in understanding. Ivy’s confidence began to grow when she began to listen to her cohort members negotiate understanding of the texts and realize that she had insight to share. Ivy was finally beginning to feel like she was contributing to her peer group.

Speaking in Class

During discussions about the readings, Ivy began to participate by speaking in the classroom conversations. Ivy explained enthusiastically, “yeah, yeah, at first maybe I just listen when I want to speak the questions just [pass by]. But now when I want to speak I just

interrupt” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). She sounded like a teenager trying on independence, flipping the car keys between her fingers and pretending that she had been driving forever rather than a few weeks. Ivy continued: “I feel I’m afraid to be so rude to interrupt but I thought it’s okay because everyone did the same” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). Ivy explained her process of piping in: “for example when the people express herself with a pause during his speech I will interrupt” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). Ivy surprised me when she explained without a note of trepidation: “I, ahh, I like to speak to the native speakers but sometimes I’m afraid to make mistakes but after one semester last year I thought I in the class I can just express myself and ignore the mistakes or something” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). This was a stark contrast to the Ivy that emphatically said no when I asked her if she spoke in class. Ivy was changing. This was a new type of narrative from Ivy, and I pressed her with a tone of rapture to give me an example.

Ivy described a small group discussion in one of her classes. The content of the conversation surrounded how babies learn language. Ivy summarized the argument she presented to her classmates: “I thought the babies are born with the language but not the certain language because a Chinese baby will speak English well if the baby is born or living in the United States” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). Ivy was arguing that babies are born with an innate skill to know and understand the language that is spoken around them. As she talked, Ivy began to notice her classmates sitting up straighter and looking for moments to interject. She understood their mannerisms as argumentative and explained, “maybe my group members have misunderstanding my idea” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). Instead of stopping her argument and receding into silence, Ivy continued by rephrasing: “in that theory babies are equipment with the ability to speak language but the animals do not have” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). Ivy clarified her position by adding a component of human innateness toward language contrasted with that of animals’ lack of language developmental ability. It worked to refine Ivy’s position.

When Ivy was done speaking, she was surprised that some of her group members did not agree with her but that they had all seemed to understand her position. She explained, “at first I think everyone share the same opinion as me but discuss and someone just disagree with me” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). Ivy may have been surprised by her group members’ ideas, but I was taken aback by the change in Ivy. Not once in her narrative did she emphasize her language skill as the point of confusion or draw reference to how much better her argument would have been in Chinese. Instead, Ivy focused on the ideas being argued and how she felt about her classmates’ responses to her position.

Like a flood door opening, telling the story of speaking in the small group led to more explanations of outcomes from Ivy’s efforts to speak in the classroom. Some of the moments were positive and others negative. These stories had come with only two weeks left in the semester, and I could not help but be amazed at the contrast from the beginning of the semester. Ivy explained, “when other people agree with my idea I feel very very good yeah... but after I speak they just have no response I feel awwww oh my god... I’m speaking yeah” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). In either case, Ivy did not recede into silence but continued to interject her voice. The most contrasting moment was when Ivy experienced disagreement. Ivy explained, “yeah when someone disagree with me I feel not that confident with my own opinion. I always thought, ‘am I wrong?’” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). While before Ivy may have contended that she was wrong, this time Ivy exclaimed, “but I do not think it is a right or wrong questions” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). At this, it felt as if Ivy had turned a corner, stood her ground, and believed that her voice should be heard. Confidence flooded into Ivy. She said, “when I speak, when I speak some ideas and people just a thought ‘oh you are great, yeah you can, you can thought from this way or that way. I feel, yeah I also can do it. Something smart” (Interview 3,

March 15, 2013). Ivy had leapt forward toward her ultimate goal of being a valued speaking member of her community.

Speaking with Allison

Ivy would also keep the momentum moving forward and tackle one more major theme before the semester was over. Native English speakers had been a constant part of Ivy's Master's degree experience. Ivy's fear of speaking in front of them had forced her into a silent role in the classroom. She used their classroom participation and work as a standard she would strive for. With all of Ivy's progress, reinventing how she saw native speakers was still an obstacle Ivy needed to clear. Ivy glowed as she explained how she took her first step on a new path in relation to native speakers.

Ivy told me the story of a recent conversation she had had with Allison, an American cohort member and friend. In a moment of candor, Allison and Ivy sat down to talk about their roles in the classroom. Ivy explained:

Last two weeks maybe. Yeah and she [Allison] told me she do not want to be a lead in a group discussion because of she is a native speaker. She do not want other students to assume she will present or do more or contribute more in the group discussion just because she is a native speaker. (Interview 4, May 16, 2013)

Up to this point Ivy had held the assumption that Allison should take the lead. She explained bluntly, "yeah because we are non-native speakers and she is a native speaker" (Interview 4, May 16, 2013). Throughout the year, Ivy saw leadership as the duty of the native speaker.

However, this role assignment did not match up with Ivy's philosophies of autonomy and responsibility. The conversation with Allison pushed Ivy to reconsider her defined role of the native speaker. Based on her new consideration, Ivy asserted, "it is not her duty. It is our work in the group. We cannot expect others to do what we should do" (Interview 4, May 16,

2013). Rather than seeing Allison as a leader, Ivy began to see her as a colleague. Ivy continued by clarifying the selflessness of Allison's new position: "she [Allison] is very kind. She also want other people to have their opportunities to present their ideas" (Interview 4, May 16, 2013). Ivy was excited about the change in the classroom dynamic and also the conspiratorial nature of the conversation she had had with Allison. It was a feeling of mutuality with a native speaker that she had not felt before but had set as an ultimate piece of a successful Master's degree experience.

This Project - Success

Ivy's enthusiasm carried forward into our final meeting after the semester was over, and she seemed to glow. I had given her a copy of all of the transcriptions of the meetings we had had so far, which she pulled from her bag when we sat down at the table. She smiled and said, "I see my improvement through this project... I see I can speak more and more" (Interview 4, May 16, 2013). She pointed out that the length of the sentences she used grew significantly from our first meeting to the last. "Longer and longer!" (Interview 4, May 16, 2013) she said of her monologues and added, "yeah I have told you in last three interviews I have changed a lot. At the very beginning I even could not speak what I want to speak" (Interview 4, May 16, 2013). At that, I pointed out that in the beginning she constantly asked for clarification, but there were no examples of that in our last meeting. She said "yeah" (Interview 4, May 16, 2013) and smiled at me. Ivy carried on this conversation with an overall reflection on her work: "Yeah I improve a lot I think about maybe my writing language and also my speaking language" (Interview 4, May 16, 2013). Our conversation bounded beyond the transcription and Ivy explained, "yeah because at first I could not write ahh write a paper that makes but now I can write a formal paper" (Interview 4, May 16, 2013). There was a palpable feeling of triumph as Ivy and I worked together to highlight how far she knew she had come.

During that last meeting Ivy said with a smile, “sometimes I look in the mirror and I think ‘This is me!’” (Interview 4, May 16, 2013). She continued: “yeah yeah before I never ask any questions to my professor but now if I have some questions really I want to ask I will ask them directly” (Interview 4, May 16, 2013). In turn I counted off on my fingers each of her success: “dealing with a huge workload, writing papers, living independently, making her own choices and finally being successful at overcoming confidence issues in the classroom” (Interview 4, May 16, 2013). Ivy nodded enthusiastically, and I commented that on the academic side, “it’s like you are becoming an academic adult!” (Interview 4, May 16, 2013). She smiled warmly. She continued on to explain without an ounce of trepidation that in the next semester, she would have to be even more independent. She explained, “[independent] from my cohort because our papers do not the same. Even though we have the same class but we have other works to do, yeah. So when we may not have too many time slot hang out with each other” (Interview 4, May 16, 2013). But Ivy looked ready for this change. She explained that “I want to get this Master’s degree and maybe my Ph.D. degree so the goal and the destination is there so I have to keep moving” (Interview 4, May 16, 2013) I asked, “do you feel confident you will make it?” and she responded with a big smile, “yeah I think I can” (Interview 4, May 16, 2013).

Zhao

I met Zhao in the hallway on the way to our final meeting. Standing on the precipice of summer break, she radiated with the calm of classes over and all her projects finished. A woman in her early twenties, Zhao paired youth with baby pink rimmed glasses and a wide pink headband with black polka-dots. The combination would have made her seem childlike if I had not already known how hard she had worked to throw off the cloak of adolescence since she had come to America. Zhao’s look did not define her. In that moment, though I felt like it was my job as the researcher to make her feel comfortable, she quickly beat me to the punch. She hugged me

warmly, and as we walked into the room together, she asked me about transportation to New York for an upcoming trip she was planning. I smiled and appreciated that she remembered that I was from that area of the country. The moment was so comfortable and the summer sun so lovely shining through the window that I caught myself feeling how far we had come together and how nice it was to be part of Zhao's experience in the States.

When we sat down, Zhao pulled from her bag a copy of the transcription of our meetings, fully marked and highlighted with moments of importance that made up her Master's degree study thus far. Looking across the table, I quickly realized that Zhao was more prepared for our meeting than I was! I thanked her for her efforts and she smiled proudly. She said, "I think I go through a lot throughout the semester... I'm proud of myself for living independently" (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). Zhao mentioned striving toward independence at least once in every meeting we had had, so I was glad she felt that she could see that accomplishment in the transcripts. When Zhao continued, she did not speak generally like most of my other participants had in our final meetings but pointed to specific places in the transcript where she saw moments of clear academic and social transformations. "I proud of myself of getting over those difficulties and the second section 72-80," (Interview 5, May 10, 2013) she explained at one point. As she went on in her reflection, it felt like Zhao had ordered the moments in the transcript into her own coming of age story. Zhao had forged out from the comforts of her familial home in China, braved the start of her new life in America and, in turn, had grown both socially and academically. The two semesters that had passed saw Zhao endeavor to develop intercultural communication skills that would expand her social circle from an ethnically homogenous group into a multicultural community. All the while Zhao was working tirelessly to find her footing in a new country and a strenuous Masters' degree program. As we read together, Zhao pointed out that there were challenges and triumphs on her journey, and I

noticed that Zhao leaned into both with tenacity to experience personal change. Zhao was impressive, and as we looked at the transcriptions together, we both knew it. When Zhao finished her commentary, she said with a smile, “you remind me a lot of happy experiences” (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). I knew that was not the whole truth, but in that moment, I believed it.

A Coming of Age

Zhao began our first meeting by pointing out that at the beginning of the second semester, I had met her mid-journey and that she had a lot to be proud of for so far. Zhao began her story of her life in America by musing on her life in China. Zhao had lived and attended college in a small city comfortably under her parents’ gaze, and close to her boyfriend who served as a confidant. She explained, “I rely a lot on my parents when I was in China and I rely a lot on my boyfriend and when I meet some problems I just talk with them” (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). In China, Zhao’s choices felt like an amalgamation of expectations, commitments and the worries of her parents. She explained, “sometimes when I go back to home they really, they are really annoying because they always making they are always making about my daily affairs” (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). No decision was too trivial for her parents’ involvement. Though the words Zhao choose carried the impression of a rebellious youth, her tone was not that of an annoyed teenager but rather like an adult affectionately musing back on a period of time in the past. The overbearing nature of the relationship she had with her parents would serve as the backdrop to her triumphant discovery of self in America. It was much like Rapunzel or Cinderella trapped and unaware of the world and adventure that lay before them.

Zhao thickened the plot when she went on to explain the magnitude of her move to the United States by elaborating on her parents’ propensity to misjudge her and worry. She explained, “they [her parents] think that I am immature. I don’t know how to get along with

people I don't know how to communicate. I may meet some people really bad. They may cheat me. I may lose my camera lose everything" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). There were so many things to worry about that Zhao had only been allowed to travel once by herself before she left for the States, and even then, she pointed out, she was part of an organized tour group. "They let you go to America?" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013) I asked, slightly baffled by the inconsistency. Zhao answered, with a proud tone that sounded like she had said it before, "I'm going to get an education" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Zhao's parents may have sheltered her during her youth, but they did not make her wait for a prince to save her. Rather, when the time was right, they allowed her to forge out on her own in order to advance her education, be the heroine in her story, and save herself. "Do you think you are immature?" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013) I followed up, wondering if she was up for the challenge that lay before her. Zhao answered quickly, "Not really" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013) and laughed with confidence.

Zhao left China and her parents behind to set out on her own journey to both America and independence. Zhao described her first few days in America. She explained:

The first time I came here I moved into my dorm and there was almost nothing there. All I had was two luggages and some cloth. I don't have everything. I don't have.... I don't have teeth brushes. I thought I might be able to buy them very conveniently. So I brought almost nothing just some quilts and matches...little matches. (Interview 1, January 30, 2013)

I giggled when Zhao told me this. I thought of Ying filling the crevices of her suitcase with Korean face cream or my own experience packing antibiotics for a trip to Iowa. Did Zhao think that America was a wilderness with a pharmacy nearby?

Zhao radiated as she concluded the story of her initial journey, and I knew that it would be the lore that she would tell years from now when she talked about the triumph of making it in America. She explained with a gleam in her eye:

When I came here I found there was nothing here. The people here, the population here is so small. I barely had no one to talk to the first few days. And I was thinking what was the purpose I came here...to get an education to speak English. but there were no people to talk to...what do I do then when the semester started I thought wow! people are coming here. Actually there were many people on campus when the semester starts. I thought this is what school is like in America. (Interview 1, January 30, 2013)

It sounded like Shangri-La: a world of magical newness had appeared. Zhao bustled along with her new university community and began to throw herself into her new life.

At the end of the semester, Zhao showed the fruit of her effort to know the new place where she was living when she recounted some of the knowledge she had acquired over the course of her two semesters. She explained:

So in my personal life I basically know the whole campus if I have a problem. My computer break down I can go to the IT center. if I need to borrow a book I can go to the library or the inter library loan. If I want to go swimming I can go to the swimming pool. I know how to find the schedule to the FINT pool. If I want to work out I know where there is the gym I think I can handle the campus much more effectively than the first semester. (Interview 5, May 10, 2013)

Zhao had learned the nuts and bolts of living in a new place, and her reflection made me remember being a novice at my graduate university and the exhaustion I felt wandering about campus or searching for materials in the library. Zhao went on with her story to explain that she

also had to master not only the college campus and community but the many little idiosyncrasies that exist between her Chinese and American worlds. For instance, she explained, “I can use the baking machine. In China we don’t bake in our home” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Zhao would consider using the oven as one of her first triumphs in America. For Zhao the possession of a greater knowledge of the place that she was living not only offered her initial feelings of success but also momentum moving forward. Zhao was able to hay together her personal victories whether big or small to propel herself forward.

The Importance of a Network

When people arrived on campus and University life began to bustle around her, Zhao prioritized making a support system that could advise her and act as confidants. She knew that to find the answers to her new everyday life questions, she would have to find the people who knew those answers. She explained, “in China I don’t really worry about things because it is my home I know pretty much everything so I don’t reach out to people a lot ... but in America , when I am here now, I know almost nothing and I have to talk to people a lot” (Interview 2, February 22, 2013). Zhao pushed herself to go to dinner parties and social gatherings that she may not have attended in China. At the point at which I met Zhao, she explained, “I’m kind of feel now that friends are so important compared with family members” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Zhao had made a transition.

Chinese Friends and Church Community

Very early in the first semester, Zhao joined the Chinese Student Association and a Bible study group in which many of the participants are Chinese. These two groups are very strongly rooted communities with large memberships that easily accepted Zhao. Within these two groups Zhao would find friends to travel and spend holidays with, advisors to ground her experience, and activities to keep her busy and help her feel like she belonged. With this new

support system Zhao could be like a trapeze artist, able to jump without caution and reach for new bars to swing on because she knew that there was the net of two Chinese communities to catch her.

When talking about the friends she had met in the Chinese Student Association, Zhao exclaimed, “sometimes I go to gym, I go swimming, I do a lot of things together with them so they are important to me” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). At the beginning of the semester, Zhao spent her free time with her new Chinese friends and bolstered her commitment to this group. Of her commitment to this group Zhao said, “I was a volunteer in the Chinese Lunar New Years on that day and I did a lot of work... so it was more meaningful to me” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Being an active participant was an important element in Zhao’s group membership; Zhao found support in the group but also gave support to the group.

Zhao not only found friends but also a sense of authority. Just like when we met for our final meeting and Zhao asked me about travel to New York, she had collected information about traveling in the United States from many people that she met. Indeed, Zhao became a facilitator of travel knowledge. Zhao would offer and exchange information about booking flights, travel locations, and hotels. She explained, “I think is something about culture but I think it is also about personality I would like to share more about whatever I know or the resources I have I would like to share more, that is my way” (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). Zhao’s relationships born from the Chinese Student Association gave her an opportunity not only to fly through the air but also to feel her feet on the ground and a sense of authority and usefulness.

When Zhao moved to the States, she also joined a Bible study group. She explained, “I meet them every week for about half a day we go to church together ... we had Bible study class together for two hours so maybe we can discuss some topics in the Bible study class” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). Though Zhao did not meet with this group outside of the prescribed time,

they did function in a familial way for her. Acting almost like a parental figure, there was a woman from Hong Kong who led the group, answered questions, and facilitated discussion. During the meeting times, the group read allegories and Biblical quotes and related them to their lives in a reflective way. For Zhao, her time at church was a time of reflection, calm from her week of study, and an opportunity to hear the advice of her elders.

Zhao found the net that she was looking for within her Chinese communities as she forged out to find independence in America, but she also found vibrancy and diversity within that same community. This diversity surprised Zhao. The Chinese Student Association and church exposed Zhao to people from different regions of China as well as Taiwan and Hong Kong. Zhao narrated:

Yeah also about Chinese Lunar New Year ... several Chinese students, students from Taiwan we get together and celebrate. We cook some dishes those especially those hot spicy dishes, really spicy dishes which is special which is the favorite dishes of the Sichuan students and it is really memorable (Interview 3, March 15, 2013).

Zhao reflected on the fact that there was a significant amount of diversity within her Chinese community. This diversity in a seemingly homogenous group, would serve as an inkling as Zhao expanded her social circle to include non-Chinese people.

As Zhao continued to transform and expand her network of friends, the Chinese community would be an ever-present net that she could fall into. Toward the end of the second semester, Zhao explains, “because for the past two weeks I was really busy and I didn’t really participate in a lot of events in Chinese students’ community” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). Her comments did not represent a distancing from that community, but rather the strength she felt within it meant that it would be there for her when she had time to return.

Facebook Group

Another fast found community that would support Zhao both academically and socially was a Facebook group made up of current and former Master's in TESOL students from her program. The Facebook group would be instrumental as Zhao began to intermingle within her academic community and begin her course work. Zhao explained, "people from second cohort will share their resources like a book they have the PDF version or articles or the advice for a specific assignment. They will tell us how to finish that because they have taken the class before" (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). The Facebook group functioned as a one-stop shop for clarification and suggestions for how to tackle assignments. Zhao relied on it heavily as a guiding tool.

In turn, Zhao's cohort members would also use the Facebook group as a sounding board and setting to share information. Zhao explained:

We share resources. We share articles. And when I don't know how to write thesis how to start I ask questions in Facebook they are very supportive. They give me examples and show me how to do it. We ask each other questions and discuss certain topics discuss the requirements of professors. (Interview 5, May 10, 2013)

Like in her Chinese community, Zhao was active, posting and replying to posts. In this way, the Facebook group also was a first step toward a connection with Zhao's cohort members. She explained, "cohort, we really we really after class we talk a lot and we chat online on Facebook ... we leave messages there and communicate there with each others" (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). The online community created by the Facebook group would slowly become face to face in her daily life.

Cohort

Although her connection with her cohort members became important, it was slow to mature. At the beginning of the second semester, when I asked Zhao who was important to her in America, she mentioned her professors and Chinese friends, with no mention of her cohort. This omission stuck out to me because most of my other participants mentioned their cohorts as part of their social structure early on. In that same meeting I asked Zhao directly about her cohort and she explained, “barriers, I think there must be because we have like different religions and educational background there must be some barriers” (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). The word barriers characterized her early interactions with her cohort members, and as I listened to Zhao at the beginning of the semester, I knew that there were many.

Saudi Student

An example of the barriers that may have separated Zhao from her classmates can be found in this story of her interaction with a Saudi student she tutored at the Language Institute on campus. Zhao began to explain a moment that stood out to her; a question she finally asked. Since the beginning of the semester one of the two Saudi students she had been tutoring at the language institute on campus looked different. She explained, “he looks so different from the standard Saudi Arabian student” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). Before I could ask, she explained, “his color his skin color is light and his eyes are different shape from other Saudi Arabian students” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). Zhao was fascinated. She could not help but wonder about him as she tried to concentrate on teaching him English language skills. “I thought maybe he maybe from somewhere in Europe,” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013) Zhao said with a sparkle of intrigue and a laugh.

When Zhao finally asked him why he looked so different, she summarizes his answer as: “he introduce to me that his grandfather is from Egypt and his mother is from Turkey and finally

he was born in Saudi Arabia and grew up in Saudi Arabia and now he is here in America” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). At this revelation the pot in my own brain started to brew, and I wondered about his life experiences, cultural heritage and traditions. “Did you ask him any other questions?” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013) I asked Zhao, excited to hear the answer. “I asked something about about how why he looks so different but I didn’t ask any other questions,” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013) she said. I left a moment of silence, waiting for more information, and Zhao, eager to please, explained, “yeah because most of my students are just standard they have a normal background of their country he is special ... he has so many relatives from different countries ...this looks special to me” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). At this point I could see that Zhao viewed his looks as paramount to what was different about him rather than inquiring into his cultural and familial heritage. There was a barrier in how Zhao viewed him, and she focused on the superficial as representing diversity and asked about nothing more.

Then it happened

As the semester moved forward, Zhao’s river of interest in the world around her broke through the barriers that had been in place. Two things happened: first, Zhao began to interact with her cohort members in more meaningful ways than before, and second, she began to learn the tools of interacting in a multicultural world through her course work in intercultural communication. Regarding her expanded relationship with her cohort members, Zhao explained, “this part of my class really surprises me because in my class people are from Saudi Arabia from America from Indonesia like me from China. But as a cohort they are really friendly and so nice” (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). During our second meeting I learned that Zhao had been active within her cohort the whole time, even though she omitted it in our initial meeting. I attribute this omission to the barriers she set between herself and her cohort.

I was surprised when I learned that Zhao's Chinese friends had scattered across the country for the winter break and Margo, an American friend from her cohort, had invited Zhao to celebrate the holidays with her family. "She even took me to go bowling. To go to bowling with her family for New Year's Eve!" (Interview 4, April 20, 2013) Zhao said with a big smile. Zhao explained that she would have been alone if not for the invitation, and I wondered how such a joyful episode could not have come up when I asked Zhao in the first meeting about important people. At this point Zhao was beginning to expand her circle and become closer to her cohort member, making the stories of her interaction with them come to the surface.

A river of vignettes filled with affection began to flow. Margo and Allison, two American classmates, extended to Zhao a standing offer of help and advice. Zhao said, "they are really really nice to me to everyone in our class since they are American and they know everything here" (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). Perhaps even more poignant, Lucy, her classmate, invited her to eat together, a tradition they would observe throughout the semester that would break up the loneliness Zhao felt when eating alone. It was special for Zhao, and she explained, "I was really happy. She cooked some [food from her home country] dishes for me and we had a great time" (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). The dinner was so impactful that Zhao declared with joy, "this is this is. I really like her and I belong to this group" (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). The culmination of all of these moments with these specific cohort members peaked into Zhao declaring, "I feel I'm a part of... I'm more of an insider than an outsider" (Interview 4, April 20, 2013).

I could also hear in Zhao's descriptions a change in how she spoke about people outside of her Chinese community from that of how she had spoken about the Saudi student. She explained of her cohort, "some of them have several jobs only one or two students don't have job...Most of the students in my cohort they need to work and kind of struggle to get through their financial difficulties" (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). As Zhao explained the financial

situations of her classmates she showed a greater level of intimacy and a move beyond viewing them from a wholly superficial position. Zhao was describing her cohort members as real people in a real world.

Cross Cultural Communication

Zhao was now enveloped in a new multicultural world and, as her social life began to change, so did her academic interests and academic life. She explained of her academic transformation:

I think the main transformation lies in my research. In cross cultural communication I really went through a lot this class if really practice I learned a lot from other cultures like the writings in Saudi Arabia and the writings in Indonesia and something about Canada and America and I also learned something about students in Spanish and England, in Britain. And this kind of thing I can never learn from other classes. Yeah, I have grown I have gained a more global perspective I think. (Interview 5, May 10, 2013)

Previously Zhao was talking about hanging out with cohort members, and now she is reading about culturally different writing. The two avenues of learning folded into each other and accelerated Zhao's development as a culturally aware individual.

Zhao herself noted the intersections of her academic and personal avenues when she explained:

I feel joy when I hang out with the girls [from my cohort] as a group we talk about different issues around us like controversial issues... share our opinions and ideologies from other cultures. That is something I learned from textbooks before I never talked about... I know the real life except from the text books. (Focus Group, April 3, 2013)

Zhao realized that book learning on its own was not enough but that she also needed to discuss and learn from her cohort in order to build knowledge.

During the focus group Zhao offered the example of learning about Islam: “Before I came I knew about the Muslim, I knew the pork is taboo in their culture but I didn’t really know how they behave. Lucy told me how the restaurants behave during the two months of Ramadan” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). “One month” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013) Lucy corrected her with a smile. “One month of Ramadan. In China we don’t have too many Muslims in my place so I don’t know what kind of life they are living but I just know they don’t eat pork that is all” Zhao said (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). I noticed that when Lucy corrected Zhao, Zhao immediately repeated the note. Lucy’s non-judgmental tone showed a knowledge that Zhao was learning and that she knew she was part of Zhao’s process. In turn, Zhao did not shy away when she was corrected but rather corrected herself and finished her explanation.

Zhao was not only learning about other cultures, communities and countries, but also turned her new avenues of knowledge building back onto her own culture. She explained:

And another thing another thing is I know how people think about our country sometimes the political system in our country is confusing I don’t really understand my country a lot but after talking with them I can see my country more clearly like the Taiwan issue like our country block the Facebook and Twitter or something and I know my country better and clearly from another perspective. (Focus Group, April 3, 2013)

Zhao was referring to China’s policy of not acknowledging the independence of Taiwan and the pervasive censorship of social media in mainland China. Though it was unclear how much Zhao knew about these things before she came to America, it was clear that retrofitting her new perspective to her old environment recast international politics in a new light.

A Role Model

As Zhao's cohort members began to become her friends, she found a role model in Allison. With elation in her voice Zhao described Allison: "she is super busy in the writing center but she is so good at writing every time she speaks in class it is very logical and she plans everything and she makes more sense than the professor to me I think" (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). I knew that awarding Allison these traits was the highest praise. Using Allison's busy-ness as a model, many times during the semester Zhao would claim new degrees of independence born from her own ability to juggle her many tasks and obligations better. Zhao radiated triumph when she told me the adage, "The best way to handle pressure is to experience the pressure by yourself and then you know how to arrange your time and do your homework and everything" (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). Zhao believed in jumping in head first. Zhao's ultimate goal would be to have the qualities she saw in Allison: able to balance all of her commitments with grace and joy. Zhao took her description of Allison to the next level explaining that:

She [Allison] do research does research into the readings...whatever reading we do she does research beforehand. And every time she speaks in class it is not like us not like the others she speaks very academic words show her professional profession-ality. (Focus Group, April 3, 2013)

For Zhao it was not just accuracy but academic language that marked Allison as the definitive Master's degree student. To be like Allison, Zhao would work hard academically, read more articles and feel ambitious to be over-prepared and well-spoken.

Zhao completed her description of Allison with a smile bestowing the uppermost social honor: "Yeah she is super friendly and she is willing to offers help to you" (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). As I learned when Zhao spoke about her Chinese community, being friendly and a

resource to others would also be an ultimate quality and a cornerstone to how Zhao imagined her independent life in America. Indeed, Zhao's description of Allison sounded less like a person and more like Zhao's dream for herself, but it also sounded like a dream Zhao would work tirelessly to accomplish. Zhao's admiration for Allison showed that she could look outside of her Chinese community for mentorship and transcend barriers when she saw herself as having the competency to become the masterful Master's degree student she viewed Allison as being.

Allison's Party

Zhao's excitement about her cohort also gave way to other types of stories that made me realize that Zhao's effort to become part of her cohort may have sometimes felt more like swinging and jumping from bar to bar feeling the perilous ground underfoot rather than the safety net that would have caught her fall in her Chinese community. As she expanded the stories of her cohort, it felt like she was swinging out farther each time and challenging herself to learn new ways of flying. It sounded exhilarating. But swinging is a challenge that takes practice, and during the practice sometimes Zhao would fall, get up, prepare and swing again. It was during a party that Zhao attended in the middle of the second semester where Zhao would experience one of these moments of uncertainty.

When Zhao began this story she gushed. She elaborated on the paper invitations and the guests who had come. The party had served as a catalyst to her declaration, "I think things are going great I think my relationship with my TESOL cohort has become closer" (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). Zhao reminded me that she felt a closeness with Lucy, Allison and Margo, and that this was a social opportunity to narrow the distance she felt with the others members of her cohort. At this point, there were still topics they did not discuss and personal information they did not share. Zhao explained, "like personal relationships boyfriends and girlfriends they don't like to talk about and they don't want to share information about their family with you because

they don't think you are close enough" (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). Zhao recognized the distance and was excited to shorten it. As she spoke I smiled at her, anticipating the description of heartfelt conversations and shared food, maybe dancing.

The evening began as Zhao had hoped, with camaraderie and laughter. It was going brilliantly until Zhao caught sight of Mike walking through the front door. Mike was a Chinese man in the cohort above Zhao, and they had had some unpleasant moments in the past. She did not expect him to come. "All of us received an invitation paper, a brochure from Allison with a map and details of the party and she [Allison] said she didn't give Mike," (Interview 4, April 20, 2013) Zhao explained. Zhao tried to hide her disappointment at his arrival and resolved to not make him part of her evening.

Unlike the other cohort members, Mike and Zhao had had a relationship separate from their Master's program. Zhao explained:

We used to have a lot of dinners, or like he is a good guy when I arrive here offered help to me he introduces me to a church and in the church I know a lot of friends from China because there is a large Chinese community, at first I felt thankful for him" (Interview 4, April 20, 2013).

Mike was part of Zhao's Chinese communities as well as a member of the cohort above her, and her description reminded me of Abdullah's mismatched friendship with Mahmoud and my own make-it-work relationships living abroad. Like the examples of Abdullah and myself, the differences between Mike and Zhao were over-powering, and she had moved on from that friendship. At this point, Zhao explained that she considered her interaction with him professionally polite, but had begun to socially avoid him.

It seemed from Zhao's description that Mike did not get the informal polite distance memo, and at the party he did not socially avoid Zhao. His imposition on her time at the party

escalated into what Zhao described as harassment. “I have a conversation with my friend he just jumps in and he just tries to alienate me by speaking to that other person. Every time I change my partner he jumps in and he alienates me... he just try to follow me,” (Interview 4, April 20, 2013) she explained with a poignant rise in her voice. As the party progressed, so did Zhao’s perception of escalation.

Then a moment of fever pitch happened. Zhao took a picture with her friends and, after it was taken, decided a second was necessary. She said, “I don’t think the photo is pretty so I ask another student to take the photo again” (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). Zhao explained that instead of the student she had asked, Mike grabbed the camera from her. Mike looked at the picture and declared it was fine, no need for a second one. Zhao was furious, and I mirrored her frustration when I asked in a pointed tone, “Who gives him the right to say?” (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). Zhao explained where she felt his authority came:

he is much older than me he’s like four years older than me I think this is kind of a cultural thing like because older people feel like they are everything is right and they believe even if ...yeah sometimes even if he is wrong older people don’t like to apologize to younger people. (Interview 4, April 20, 2013)

Their mutual cultural background dictated that Zhao should defer to Mike and accept his opinion, but this was not the Chinese group they had formally socialized in together, and that cultural rule did not necessarily apply here. Zhao filled with anger and frustration. She grabbed the camera back from him and prepared for another picture to be taken.

But Mike would not let the moment go. Instead Mike stepped close to Zhao, and, as Zhao narrated, “the situation becomes worse because he throw bad words on me, dirty words on me in Chinese” (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). Mike spoke in a language not understood by the other party guests who were standing there. Then there was an eruption. Mike hit her. “He beat

me, and I beat him back, and Allison asked him to leave the party,” (Interview 4, April 20, 2013) Zhao explained. Wait. What? I expected that the word beat meant something different, but Zhao clarified by lifting her arm and making a hitting motion. My face filled with shock as Zhao continued her story. She explained that she kicked him back and shouted, “if you touch me again I will call the police I’m not the one who started the fight you started and if you touch me again I will call the police” (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). When the story was done, I told Zhao she was brave in an effort to comfort her but she didn’t seem to need my comforting words. Zhao explained, “I’m the kind of person who respects people but if you say something to me I will fight back” (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). It sounded like Zhao had a much higher level of street cred than I had ever given her credit for.

Though the physical fight came and went in the story for Zhao, who quickly moved forward to talk at length about her cohort members’ responses, it stuck with me and I lingered on that moment. I knew Mike outside this story, and I knew him to be a hardworking motivated student who was, in every interaction I had with him, deferential and enthusiastic. Now I viewed him as a man who could stand close and curse at a woman before hitting her. I knew Zhao as sweet and in her own coming of age story, and I wondered how she had reacted so quickly and knew what to shout back at him while caught up in the moment. I also wondered if it would have gone differently if they were at an event within their Chinese community.

After Zhao narrated the moment of the fight, I imagined that next would come a moment of intense awkwardness. Instead, Zhao moved on quickly and reminded me that she was telling me this story because it was a moment of unification with her cohort. She explained, “They support me a lot and they don’t blame me and I even feel close to them after this event” (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). Zhao moved on in her narrative: “after I fight with Mike I feel the support of my friends. They really supportive and really there for me so I feel they are really

important to me my friends it's a great transformation" (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). Zhao's cohort members and friends came over to comfort her and support her. Allison assured Zhao that she did not invite Mike, and Zhao saw that the others nodded in agreement that he should not have been invited. She felt that after the fight, her status would not diminish but Mike's would be even less than before. In the end the feeling of closeness Zhao had hoped would emerge from the party happened for her, though not in an anticipatable way.

Many Roles

Zhao expressed intense self-awareness of the multiple roles she was playing in all of her new communities. She explained:

When I socialize with different types of people I have different identities. When I socialize in my Chinese community I'm the students because we have a teacher from Hong Kong. She is teacher of Bible study but then I'm a student when I socialize in the [Language Institute] I am a tutor. So I have to behave like a teacher because I am a tutor I teach Saudi Arabian students so I have to pay attention to my speech to everything and when I was in the classroom. When I'm together with my international friends from other countries I am just part of the community and I'm sort of a facilitator of the conversation and of everything so I have different identities in different kinds of communities. (Interview 3, March 15, 2013)

Zhao had internalized multiplicity, realizing that she didn't have to play one role all the time but rather could garnish what she needed from each group, by playing many roles. At the end of the semester, Zhao also seemed ready to utilize her roles to expand her social circle farther.

At the end of the semester, Zhao would share one more defining moment. She stood with some of her cohort members at a Christmas celebration on the campus where she was studying.

A choir was singing, and Zhao looked back and forth with affection at the cohort members that she was with. Only a few months ago they had been strangers to her, people with whom she felt there would be an ever-standing cultural barrier. If Zhao had been stagnant in her friend making, standing next to her right now may have been members of her Chinese community. She described with a smile, “there is Korean, Indonesian, America, Chinese I really had fun” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). Zhao then looked beyond her cohort members and felt hugged by the sense of community she felt as she looked at the university members around her who she did not know, but might someday: “wow it’s great I really like here I like everyone” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013) she declared and exclaimed, “[it] Feels like home” (Interview 3, March 15, 2013).

Academic Maturity

Zhao’s move from family to Chinese community to cohort was accompanied by a professional development that saw her beginning as an overwhelmed novice and eventually finding a greater sense of ownership and identity as a researcher and scholar. And like in her personal life, Zhao swung out ready to reach for the next bar. In every meeting Zhao spoke about her experience in a class heavily populated by doctoral-level students, and I would come to measure her academic maturity through those narratives. Zhao had to deal with frustration born from reading difficult texts, being in a doctoral-led classroom, and her expectation of respectful teacher-student dynamics.

In our first meeting, when I asked Zhao how the semester was going, she had expressed frustration about a class she was taking. Zhao explained:

Because, you know this semester I took several classes with almost all my classes with doctoral level students the professors give us more reading assignments and the assignments are more difficult than last semester so I feel really a little nervous and depressed. (Interview 2, February 22, 2013)

This was not the self-assured Zhao that had left her cocooned existence in China to forge a new American life and revel in her efforts. Zhao's tone slowly changed as she went on with the story and she seemed genuinely nervous.

To kick off the semester, Dr. Steven, a professor Zhao had not had before, started with a heavy foundational text. Zhao explained, "I only understand a small section of what he [the author] is talking about it is really abstract" (Interview 2, February 22, 2013) and followed up with a nervous giggle. I asked Zhao how she was handling her confusion and she said:

I just try my best. Just for example. Dr. Steven give us homework. He let us read a book and just respond. But the book is so intense I can't really understand but after reading several pages I can understand that there is something I can understand but there is something I can't. I just for the part I cannot understand. For the part I do not understand I will ask questions in class and let him explain for me. (Interview 2, February 22, 2013)

I noticed that Zhao kept repeating her confusion. Zhao expected that in the class, Dr. Steven would explain the readings and offer explanations that she could then write down in her notebook and think about later. I compared her approach to Ying and Ivy at this point in the semester, who both shook their heads with emphatic "no's" when I suggested they ask questions of their professor. I was impressed that Zhao was not stifled in the same manner. Still, questioning the professor did not garnish the definitive answers that Zhao wanted.

Zhao explained that the professor was deferential to student conversation, and rather than offering an explanation, he opened the floor to student-led discussion. As a result, a majority of the time was dominated by Ph.D. students rather than the teacher. Zhao explained with frustration, "several students try to answer it and each answer is different from the other and I will I have no idea who is talking whose talking is right, to the point of the author"

(Interview 2, February 22, 2013). Zhao was frustrated by the lack of consensus and clarity offered by her classmates. The discussion part was a confused free-for-all. Zhao explained, “each students give a different version of interpretation of the book and I was really confused because I didn’t know who is right. And when Dr. Steven is interpreting for us and I don’t really understand what he is talking about” (Interview 2, February 22, 2013). Zhao explained that when reading and questioning did not work, she resorted to zoning out. She explained, “sometimes I try to understand what they are talking about and sometimes I fall asleep because it’s too difficult and I don’t really understand. So I so tired and I unconsciously fall asleep” (Interview 2, February 22, 2013). At this I thought back to my own course work and the circular nature of many of the discussions, none of which would lend themselves to a definite answer.

I felt Zhao’s frustration and offered her some advice. I said, “so each of those people are reading for what they are interested in, so they are all right but they are also all probably wrong” (Interview 2, February 22, 2013). Zhao smiled at me and said, “oh I see” (Interview 2, February 22, 2013) and took a moment to take in what I had suggested. She re-formed her stance: “Yeah! that is exactly right, I don’t need to care as much about the right answers just take part in the discussion and listen to what other people think about the reading” (Interview 2, February 22, 2013). She went on to pose the possible root of her belief:

Maybe it is a cultural aspect from China. As a Chinese student we are good at always good at test taking. I was also expecting a right answer from the professor but Dr. Steven never give us the right answer. Never give us the exact answer. He just try to make to let us discuss in groups. (Interview 2, February 22, 2013)

I was amazed at how quickly Zhao had taken what I had said, reflected on what she had believed from her past educational experience, and her willingness to try on a new concept. I

was excited to see how it would all pan out and what she would learn now that she was breaking away from her search for one answer.

The search for one answer was not the theme of our next conversation when we met a month into the semester. Rather, Zhao's tone changed from frustration to annoyance, as she expounded more on her experience in the classroom. Zhao explained, "in Dr. Steven's class it is still very difficult ...yeah... but it makes more sense to me because as the book goes along there are more examples and research and I can read and understand" (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). Zhao was overcoming the workload, but the class itself had not become easier. She explained:

Being the classroom I'm still really nervous because most of the students are doctoral students and sometimes when they say something I don't dare to challenge them even though I don't really agree with them and sometimes when we discuss in discussion groups they say something that is different from my point of view and I don't dare to contradict. (Interview 3, March 15, 2013)

I noticed that this was different from the confused Zhao that began the semester, so I said encouragingly, "but it is kind of neat because last time I think you sounded like you were overwhelmed by what they are saying, but this time it sounds like you are agreeing or disagreeing" (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). I hoped Zhao would reinforce my comment by recognizing that this improvement could be compiled into the many points of success she felt in her personal life, but instead she answered with a lukewarm tone, "yeah yeah kind of improvement" (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). I carried on in a goading tone, "I hope next time we meet you will be arguing with them" (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). At this the mood lightened and Zhao followed it up with a hopeful, "yeah it is a change I'm happy about it I hope that the time goes by I can understand more and I can really participation the discussion with them" (Interview 3, March 15, 2013). I could see improvement in Zhao's academic competency but

more importantly a shift in how she participated in the classroom, from completely lost to engaged listening.

In the middle of the semester, when I asked Zhao about Dr. Steven's class again, her description took on a startling new tone. She explained, "I'm frustrated in Dr. Steven's class because those class are taken over by doctoral students and what they talk about are beyond my understanding" (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). Zhao was now angry that she was not learning in the classroom because the classroom discussion was geared toward Ph.D. students who shared a different knowledge base. Zhao felt that her time was being wasted. To show her frustration Zhao sat there frozen in the classroom. She explained bluntly, "I don't participate a lot that means I'm frustrated" (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). Then, unlike in the past when her zoning out came from self-preservation because she did not understand what was going on around her, this time it came from frustration at the conversation that was going on and what felt like neglect of her needs as a student.

Zhao had a very powerful point, but I wondered if she was getting it across by sitting silently in the classroom. I gently asked Zhao if sitting silently could not be interpreted as something akin to what Ying described as an Asian style of being in the classroom. I thought about Ying and Ivy, who both sat silently in the classrooms weighed down with stifling feelings of marginalization. To my question, Zhao assertively responded, "no I don't think so I think Chinese education style make students don't talk. Sometimes we prefer to think we think a lot but something we don't talk" (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). Essentially Zhao believed that silence was a choice rather than an imposition. I interpreted Zhao's explanation to mean that the professor and students in the class should not see Asian students as culturally constrained to silence in the classroom but rather the choice to be silent might be individual. In the case of Zhao, silence meant frustration.

The semester carried close to the end and Zhao carried on with her feelings of frustration. A conversation about an email exchange between a student and a professor erupted in the classroom. Zhao explained the content of the classroom discussion:

Last time they discuss about meaning and word there is a discussion about the relationship between meaning and word and one student said the other day he sent an email to his professor or somebody and the professor misunderstood him and he thought he expressed himself clearly in the email but the professor thought he had other intentions. (Interview 4, April 20, 2013)

Zhao explained that the classroom conversation dwelled on the semantics of the email and broke down into a word-level content analysis that did not relate to the readings she had prepared for the class period. Unlike before when Zhao zoned out because she did not understand, this time Zhao internally rolled her eyes and consciously zoned-out out of boredom. Zhao explained, “I don’t think this is meaningful and I don’t want to spend my time talking about a specific topic yeah and I think it’s yeah there is no need to discuss it” (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). She then repeated for effect, “it’s obvious, it’s obvious” (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). I asked Zhao if she mentioned her disapproval of the conversation topic while still in the classroom and she said, “I don’t want to irritate them I will listen but I don’t want to discuss it” (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). The other students may have seen Zhao sitting stoically silent and listening, but in reality she was sitting silently while boiling with hostility inside.

Call me Dr. Mung

At one point during the semester Zhao also received an email that was strongly worded from a professor, but her way of dealing with it was pointedly different than the Ph.D. students in Dr. Steven’s class. She explained of the electronic social hiccup:

When I came here I don't know I need to call the professors like Dr. Mung or Dr. Parkin because in my text book I know American people like to be called by first names and the first time I came here I called my professor by her first name and she was like obviously not happy and I didn't call her face to face I emailed her. I say "Dear Marge" and Dr. Mung emailed me back and said I don't have my students call my first name please call me Dr. Mung. (Interview 5, May 10, 2013)

Unlike the Ph.D. student who aired out the incident in a classroom setting and seemed to dwell on it, Zhao handled the hiccup individually and moved on to changed her behavior.

Zhao's response showed her general perception of the dynamic between herself and her professors. She explained, "my professors, I think all I can do is adapt myself to my professors because I can't expect them to make changes since they are so old" (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). Zhao had the expectation that age meant that they would be set in their ways. For Zhao, part of graduate school was learning how to please these professors: "I think that after it take several classes with them I know their teaching style and I know basically what kind of assignments they will give it to you I will do the basic reading and I will do whatever they want us to do" (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). Zhao explained that she showed respect to her professors by learning their spoken and unspoken rules. She included in this list: engaging in teacher-initiated classroom discussion, finishing assignments on time, not joking with them, and greeting them warmly. When Zhao went through her list, I was sure that airing out an issue of a strongly worded email exchange in a classroom would not be something she would define as interacting with respect. Furthermore, according to Zhao, the onus of smoothing over any issue with a professor would fall on the student, therefore discussion of the professor's behavior would be moot. Zhao's concept of teacher-student relationship was part of the reason for her hostility when the Ph.D. students belabored the email conversation.

By the end of the semester, Zhao would make a complete about-face in terms of the workload and how she ranked herself against the Ph.D. students. In the beginning, overwhelmed by the material and intimidated by doctoral students, Zhao felt that they were more advanced than she. Now she explained, “yeah so they have more experiences in teaching and writing papers than us and they the cohort of Ph.D. students they kind of feel closer to themselves because they experience a lot of things by themselves” (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). Zhao understood that they may not know more, just different things. She also began to see them as a group with their own traditions and norms that were not more or less but different than the groups to which Zhao belonged. She explained, “in the class they stick together and sit together” (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). Zhao did not have access to this group, but it was fine with her. Zhao’s progress throughout the semester and these realizations demonstrate her developing academic maturity.

Conclusion

Though Zhao used the transcript I gave her from our meetings to recount the many ways she had grown over the course of two semesters she had been in America, she did not rest on those laurels at the end of our last meeting. Zhao came to America ready to forge out and develop as an independent adult person. Over the course of the year she learned to look for friendship beyond an ethnically homogenous group and to expand her social circle to include a multicultural spectrum of people. Zhao developed her cross cultural communication skills as well as academic skills, and these skills will help as she approaches her second year of study. Zhao shared some of her expectations for the second year:

Yeah expectations I have expectations for myself. I hope I can um. Find a like
handle time more scientifically handle my personal time scientifically and have a

healthy schedule of sleeping and studying. And a sense of pride: I really feel proud of myself and I can be better! (Interview 5, May 10, 2013)

Zhao's commitment to personal growth and learning was a hallmark of her coming of age experience abroad. And I knew it was a story still being written.

Lucy

Before I begin these stories I note Lucy's choice to have the name of her home country kept out of the narratives below. I have substituted Home Country or HC in the place of the name of her home country.

Lucy described her general feeling in academia as happy, and followed it up with a playful, "can I say happy?" (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). A coy smile crossed her face. We both knew that her answer was unique at this, the beginning of the second semester, when tension and anxiety filled every nook of the university. She continued, "actually I like going to school...that's the reason I applied scholarship and I want to have Masters – because I like going to school actually I like going to school" (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Lucy kept her joy of learning central to her Master's degree program experience and ground a kernel of learning out of every reading, classroom interaction and encounter with classmate and friends. She continued, "just give me readings and we discuss it in the class and no homework. That is good. But if there is a homework then worry and anxiety comes." (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). Lucy showed that she was not immune to the stress all around her, but she would not allow stress to be the prevailing emotion in her journey: rather, she would consistently push joy to the front.

Lucy's journey from studying in Asia to her new life in America as a Master's degree student was told like a gardener trimming a hedge, thoughtfully shaping and reshaping its edges while carefully minding the integrity at the middle of the living structure. Lucy knew that the hedge would take many shapes as she trimmed, but without the trunk and the roots, the leaves

would not grow. And thus, even under the largest pile of homework Lucy had ever seen in her academic career, she would not step onto a wheel of anxiety, sleeplessness or poor health choices but rather she would organize, keep her health and well-being central through routines, and continue to stay focused on the choices that had helped make her a successful student in the past. Lucy drew on her relationships as important personal and academic resources, and parlayed her excitement for learning into a consistently positive search for knowledge.

The Importance of a Routine

Lucy expressed a mixture of emotions that are part of living abroad:

Because when the first time I came here I thought what I gonna do. I don't know because I used to live with my parents everyday, everything especially the living things and here I have to manage for myself. And then about the education part, I was so stressful at the first time because I thought I couldn't make this.

(Interview 1, February 8, 2013)

Lucy was able to imprint aspects of her Asian routine in the States to give her life structure. Lucy approached each day, week and semester with a plan that balanced her time between school work and self-care. Her focus on a schedule was emphasized when, unlike Zhao or Ivy who sought out academic role models, Lucy pursued a role model in planning and hard work.

She found one in Gina, another Asian Master's degree student from the same home country (HC) as Lucy, who was a year above her in study. In Lucy's eyes, Gina was making it all work. Lucy explained,

She is very good for me. I mean, not as a student but as a, what as a student as her second identity but as how she survive here that is the way I look at her. Because she has her husband and two kids and as a student and she is writing a thesis...so

in that condition she can write a thesis why can't I do that. (Focus Group, April 3, 2013)

Lucy identified the roles of student and family as separate and parallel in importance. She saw success as not allowing the pressures of one to outmatch the other in demands of time and resources. Lucy looked up to Gina, whom she saw as successfully balancing the two roles. Gina had a schedule and met all of her commitments while also looking calm and healthy, a set of prevailing goals for Lucy during her degree work. Gina's presence in Lucy's Master's degree program experience gave her inspiration and a yearning for the same kind of success that she saw Gina achieving.

I saw Lucy's emulation of Gina in full force at the beginning of the second semester. Lucy had a plan. She explained, "because I start since I felt like my first semester, my first semester was like chaos. I didn't organize anything well. So starting from the second semester I make my own daily schedule" (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Her new schedule included the addition of more gym time and more sleep and the subtraction of time wasters such as movies and television shows. Lucy knew that these new priorities would work as a calming force amidst the assignment and obligations. Late in the semester, Lucy shared the fruits of her time management efforts when she explained with confidence, "there is nothing that makes me a real hectic person but because I know how to manage it" (Interview 2, February 22, 2014). Lucy's methodical approach to time management allowed her to step outside the hamster wheel that can be the experience of many in a graduate program and to periodically re-approach her work centered in the knowledge that good work comes from a healthy person.

A constant part of Lucy's weekly routine was a trip to the gym on campus. Lucy felt at home in the gym. She explained, "it's like I think I feel comfortable over there and then I like, because I like running and then I like all of the equipment over there, it is like my life, yeah I like

exercising since I was a child” (Interview 2, February 22, 2014). Lucy had been a competitive badminton player in her home country and developed a lifelong love affair with exercise. The gym represented a constant in Lucy’s life in her home country that she was then able to bring into her life in the States. In this manner Lucy used her gym time not only to exercise but to feel the comfort of home, re-center and refocus amidst the stress of an overwhelming workload.

It’s Not Good for Your Brain – Staying up Late

Lucy also knew that sleep was her greatest ally against the daily pressures she would meet. Still, Lucy’s acknowledgement of the value of sleep was challenged by her workload and obligations. In every meeting, the theme of too much homework would rise to be the sticking point in Lucy’s otherwise joyful experience. “How are you handling it” I asked each time it came up (Interview 2, February 22, 2014; Interview 3, March 9, 2014). Lucy explained that she got more work done by “lessening my sleeping time. Usually I have eight hours, now I have six hours or something” (Interview 2, February 22, 2014). Lucy’s deliberate decision to sleep less was suffixed with her assertion that, even with less sleep, she would still value the regulation of her sleeping habits. Unlike her companions who may pull all-nighters, Lucy would go to bed at what she saw as a reasonable time and get up early. Lucy explained that staying up late, “It’s not good for your brain” (Interview 2, February 22, 2014). And so, though Lucy had to compromise her sleep time, she would not compromise the patterns of sleep she knew to be healthy. Lucy understood that part of being prepared to meet the challenges of academic life was not only doing the readings for class but also being present and awake when participating in a class time.

I noticed that the importance of routine didn’t just apply to the gym and sleep; routine also prescribed the lens through which she viewed the new place where she lived. In our first meeting, Lucy described her move to America like it was nothing more than a shift in the weather. She described her new town, “It’s like my my my.city [in HC] actually, not city, my

town” (Interview 1, February 8th 2013). Lucy suggested that her homes in HC and in America were more similar than different. I said, “Really?” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013) with surprise, and Lucy expanded, “so there are not many things here like maybe like entertainment and like malls or shopping or something but it’s exactly like where I live in HC” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Lucy declared, “I feel good, yeah!” I told you it’s like my own place!” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Lucy gave a thumbs-up, and I got the feeling that the world around her felt like a comfortable living room space. I pushed her to share any disconnects: “has anything been really shocking to you?” to which she easily asserted, “noo” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). If Lucy did feel surprise she held it very close to her chest, insisting on sameness and comfort. Lucy made quick sense of her new context by focusing not on differences but on what was similar to life in her home country. Lucy’s search for sameness connected to her stamping of her home country routine in America because they both offered her the comfort of continuity.

Lucy’s routines offered her a stability that tempered the pressures of academic life. Throughout the semester, when Lucy described being anxious or overwhelmed by course work, the scale of her emotional turmoil sounded like a tremor rather than an earthquake. She explained, “I’m kind of an easy going person...so I take things so easily” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). When I thought about all that I had learned about Lucy’s rigid adherence to routine and constant self-enforced regulations, it did not sound like the easy-going person she claimed to be. Later, I began to understand that Lucy was able to feel ease because of her foundational routines. Lucy could not control the amount of work that needed attention, but she could regulate her approach to completing the tasks. Lucy’s routines gave her structure and greater perspective while also connecting her life in her home country with her life in America in a way that gave her a sense of normalcy in a new place.

Communal World

Alongside her routines, Lucy counted her relationships as cherished resources during her Master's degree program. Over the course of the semester, Lucy revealed a spectrum of people she confided in and engaged with to create what I have called Lucy's "communal world." Lucy shared the intimacy of academic life with her cohort, the intimacy of culture with her fellow home country students studying abroad in the United States, and the intimacy of a feeling of solitude with a close Korean friend. These relationships were resources for Lucy that offered her stability, academic support, and community in her new environment.

Intimacy of Academic Life with her Cohort

Lucy's relationship with her cohort first began at orientation. Like her classmates, when Lucy arrived at orientation, she sat nervously taking in the scene around her. Retrospectively, Lucy described the purpose of the day:

to get our package from Dr. Mung and to get the subject that we are going to take for the first semester and to introduce ourselves and to meet the second year and they scare us about what is the TESOL program. (Focus Group, April 3, 2013)

The purpose according to Lucy was a perfunctory information exchange coupled with a dose of intimidation. She went on: "they [the second year Master's students] told us about the hard life of being a MA TESOL here" (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). Lucy explained jokingly that she was dutifully overwhelmed by their descriptions, but they would not be the thing she took from that day or the coming weeks. Rather, she would emerge from the initial mayhem with a feeling of connectedness with her cohort.

Lucy began to develop a feeling of academic intimacy with her cohort from their first interactions. And I noticed in our conversations, that Lucy placed a greater amount emphasis in

her description of the collective feeling of being overwhelmed than on her own individual feelings. Lucy went on to describe:

I think all of us felt the same like ‘What am I going to do this, how should I do that’ most of us. Most of the feeling that we have the same feeling that we have is basically in the classroom. (Focus Group, April 3, 2013)

Lucy felt that the distress of a heavy workload meant a greater intimacy with the group she shared that work with. Rather than focusing on being stressed, Lucy focused on making friends and starting new relationships.

As time moved forward, Lucy learned to utilize her cohort members. She explained, “by asking them when I don’t understand about the reading, by asking them ‘Do you understand?’” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). Lucy used her relationships to gain a better understanding of the readings as well as camaraderie and kinship in the learning process. The function of Lucy’s cohort as both informational and affirmational allowed Lucy a communal space where she would feel comfortable examining her beliefs and ideas. Indeed, as a resource, her cohort evolved into a safe community where Lucy could challenge herself.

An example of Lucy’s cohort community serving as a constructive space of learning came when Lucy confronted a feeling of what she described as intolerance toward people who eat pork. Lucy began the story with a reflective adage, “the more I learn the less I know” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Lucy explained:

Okay for example I am a Muslim, so when I saw Chinese people eating pork I’m sorry but I thought that is not good and then I show it in my face. I didn’t say that but I found in my face but now I’m okay. I felt like that, I more appreciate people. (Interview 1, February 8, 2013)

After the initial shock and judgment at facing a collision of cultural norms, Lucy began to make an internal effort to allow for diversity. She explained her new position: “when I see another people I am, that’s bad that’s bad for me not for them so I try to understand them” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). At this point Lucy began to search for the word to describe her new stance; I offered the word “tolerance.” Lucy quickly grabbed the word and repeated it: “tolerant, tolerant that is the one” (Interview 1, February 8th 2013). Lucy was working to expand her ability to understand others while also transforming her feelings toward moments when her culture collides with another. Lucy’s cohort functioned as a resource in her transformational process.

Lucy was not only learning about other cultures in her cohort relationship, but she was also giving back. In a small interaction with Zhao during the focus group, I could see the non-judgmental way these two women had constructed to support their mutual learning. Zhao shared her understanding of Ramadan, an Islamic holy month. Zhao said the holiday was two months instead of one, and Lucy gently corrected her and the conversation did not dwell in Zhao’s misstep. Lucy did not take that opportunity to commandeer the conversation or to be the authority on the holiday; rather, she listened to Zhao and seemed to relish the experience of listening to Zhao share her new knowledge. The moment reflected both their mutual learning and the relationship that these two women had formed. As I watched them interact, the dynamic nature of Lucy’s relationship with Zhao radiated. I could also easily see an equal quality to the friendships that Lucy had fostered with Ivy and Ying, who were both also present in the focus group.

The Focus Group

In the focus group, surrounded by three members of her supportive cohort, Lucy showed a side of herself I had not met in the two meetings we had had so far. She was like a ring leader. She goaded Ying into talking, supported Zhao when she spoke, and smiled warmly at Ivy

constantly acknowledging her presence. In the beginning of the meeting, when Lucy nudged Ying out of hibernation with her elbow and asserted that she was, “kind of like an ignorant person” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013) the room filled with jovial laughter. As Lucy spoke, it was easy to see the affection that Zhao, Ying and Ivy felt for her and the community these four women had developed. In turn, Lucy thrived in the group setting, playing the role of catalyst in almost every discussion we had.

In the group discussion, when it was time to describe Lucy, there was a surprising twist in the conversation. Ivy said, “yeah the first time I, I thought Lucy was very energetic but once you came to my apartment and she told me I’m a shy person” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). Ivy’s sentence fell on the group like a joke with a punch line and they quickly erupted with mocking looks of shock and laughter. “What!” Ying said in almost a shout. Lucy sat up and said in defense:

Sometimes I don’t know how to say what I want like whenever I talk to my dad
so if I want to ask something from him I will be like started crying I don’t know
why ... maybe I feel do I deserve asking this? am I good enough to ask this?
something like that I’m shy in front of my dad. (Focus Group, April 3, 2013)

In this situation the group saw Lucy as an outgoing leader, while Lucy saw herself as shy and insecure in some situations. Even though there was a disconnect, it did not seem to take away from the honesty or fellowship in the room. Lucy shared a great amount of growth and learning with these women that solidified their sense of community. The cooperative and generous nature of these women from her cohort toward each other was clearly a resource for Lucy both personally and professionally.

Intimacy with Home County in America

Lucy felt another type of kinship in the commonality of culture toward home country people (HCP) that she met while in America. She explained of her dependence on the HCP community, “The [HCPs] here they make me feel like I’m not in a strange place without anyone that I know from my home country. And they the first make me feel like I’m accepted here” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Lucy explained this in our first meeting, and I imagined that she, like Zhao, had sought out and joined an ethnic community at the expense of starting friendships outside of her home culture. Lucy didn’t limit herself to this group; she made friends far and wide. But there was something special about her HC friends who were sojourning in America, with whom Lucy felt a cultural affinity.

Lucy’s HC community in America reached outside of her university, stemming from a conference that she had gone to on Southeast Asian scholarship: “I met good [HCPs],” she explained, raising her mouth into a broad smile with each word (Interview 2, February 22, 2014). The scholars she met influenced Lucy. She explained, “they make me feel like home and also then they encourage me to write something. They encourage me to be a better students” (Interview 2, February 22, 2014). Lucy’s new HC community filled her with ideas for new scholarship, encouragement to expand her work, and served as confidants in her journey. Lucy would also draw from her HCP friends to make a decision about writing a thesis. She explained, “I’ve been talking about it with my [HCP] friends...and then they say, ‘Lucy thinking about the thesis right now is too much see your homeworks’” (Interview 2, February 22th 2014). The thesis carried less weight for them based on what they knew of Lucy’s goals. While Lucy’s cohort members were influenced by department politics, Lucy HC friends who were also academics, could give her a different perspective. Lucy’s HC friends in America served as a resource to support her learning and decision making.

Emotional Intimacy

Beyond academic support Lucy also searched out relationships in America that mirrored the intimate friendships she had in HC. Lucy smiled broadly as she explained the magnitude of the intimacy she felt for one of her new friends, a Korean woman who was also a graduate student at the university. She explained:

Yeah yeah. In [HC] I have best friends. Here I found one or two best friends. So now I start to do the things I did in [HC] like when they are sick I visit them. I make them a porridge or make them a food, make them comfortable. (Interview 2, February 22th 2014)

Lucy found a level of emotional intimacy with a friend in America that allowed her to enact her friendship practices and emotions while in America. As we discussed her intimacy with friends, I was surprised when I learned that her most intimate friendship was with a Korean woman because of her initial insistence that her friends in her new setting were other people from her home country. Yet with her Korean friend Lucy was able to combat feelings of loneliness and find intimacy that she had lost in when she left HC. I learned that while Zhao and Ivy saw solitude as an aspect of life in America, Lucy saw it as a sad byproduct and yearned to develop new close relationships.

As the work of the semester mounted, Lucy found herself yearning for the comforts of home. She explained, “like a week ago I think, I don’t know the specific time but sometimes I feel I need to talk to someone” (Interview 3, March 9, 2014). She quickly pointed out that her need for the intimacy of home did not mean that she wanted to leave America but that there were things she missed. She explained, “I’m not homesick, I wanna, because in [HC] I used to sleep with my dad or my mom and here I sleep alone. So here, just stay here I just I want to sleep like that” (Interview 3, March 9, 2014). Lucy was craving platonic physical intimacy, so she

spent two evenings sleeping in the same bed as her Korean friend. I understood exactly what Lucy meant from my own experience living abroad, feeling alone, and being void of physical intimacy. It can be isolating. After spending two days with her friend, Lucy explained the change in her mood: “talking a lot and sharing our thoughts and feelings here, and then yeah, feel happy” (Interview 3, March 9, 2014). Lucy left reenergized. The emotional intimacy Lucy experienced with her Korean friend was a resource that gave her newfound energy to move forward.

Though Lucy had a rich foundation of people to draw from, it was also clear to me that they represented chosen relationships. As Lucy elaborated on her many relationships, I began to understand the distance I experienced with her. Lucy explained:

I know my limit not my limit you can say my limit tell people and not tell people.

The things I tell them are the general things when I think my feelings are the same as them like the homeworks and like the life in [university town] and another person but when I have like this is something I cannot tell ... this is too private I will not tell. (Focus Group, April 3, 2013)

Lucy used the overlap in experiences to shape the content of relationships, and our lack of overlap may have been the root cause of our disconnect. Lucy seemed reserved in our one-on-one meetings, and the first two lasted less than twenty minutes each. Additionally, the conversation felt stunted in content. For instance, I learned that Lucy had been in the States in the past, but unlike Abdullah, who elaborated at length about his former experience, Lucy shared nothing more than the date and duration of her visit. I was a stranger, so Lucy did not share more with me.

At the time, when I transcribed the interviews I knew that I was not experiencing the fullness of Lucy’s character. I thought of Zhao’s monologue: “I cooked together with Lucy and I

was really happy. I really like her and I belong to this group. Because I usually eat or cook alone” (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). Lucy had made Zhao feel more at home by including her in a tradition of communal eating, something they both missed from their lives at home. Ying spoke of sharing readings and working together with Lucy; Lucy helped ease the strain of a heavy workload. It was only when I met Lucy in the focus group, and she interacted with her peers that I began to see the fullness of her character. Setting the one-on-one transcripts beside the focus group, it was not hard to see that Lucy spoke nearly the same amount in the one focus group as she had in both of our private meetings. And, in turn, prompted by her cohort members, she shared extensive details that she had left out of our private meetings. What I would take from the contrast in how I experienced Lucy one-on-one and seeing her engagement in her communal world, was a deeper understanding of the importance of specific relationships with her cohort, HC friends and Korean friend.

The American Classroom

Lucy’s routines and relationships served as two roots that would keep her grounded in the midst of a chaotic graduate program, while her joy of learning helped the trunk of her tree to continue to grow and bear leaves. Overall, Lucy’s experience was characterized through what she observed and understood in the American classroom. Like a curator making a note of each element of a historical scene, Lucy attempted to take in the details of the world around her as it was happening. She explained:

When you take the class and you finish the class sometimes people forget what they learned right. I want to remember that class, I don’t want it to be a waste I want to take everything, I spent four months to just forget it” (Interview 2, February 22, 2014).

After her statement she exclaimed loudly, “no way!” Lucy would point out everything from the syllabus and classroom structure, turn-taking and responsibility in the classroom, to the use of the blackboard (Interview 2, February 22, 2014). She explained, “like I’m attending the class and seeing how people write on the black board. I, so yeah, I remember everything I kind of good at memorizing” (Interview 2, February 22, 2014). Lucy cataloged the world around her, compared her new classroom setting to her HC setting, analyzed the different roles of students in the US classroom and applied what she learned to a Korean class she was taking. All the while, in the back of her mind, she had a purposeful approach to her collection - to discover useful knowledge to take back with her to her HC world.

At first, Lucy defined the difference between American and HC academia through a simple story of quirky difference. Lucy described a moment when, Mark Kutz (pseudonym), a candidate for a tenured faculty position in the English department where Lucy’s Masters in TESOL program is housed, stood in the front of the room having finished his scholarly presentation. Lucy explained in a jovial tone, “someone like that our director just introduce him., he’s the laalaa, came yesterday blah blah. When he was finished talking we clap” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). This cultural norm seemed strange to Lucy. “Why we clap?” she asked rhetorically and followed up, “I’m don’t know, it maybe that is culture” (Interview 1, February 8th 2013). Lucy smiled. She learned that in the American setting, clapping functions not only to suggest a performance, but also to finalize a situation. The people clapped to solidify that the presentation over. At the end of the story, I laughed along with Lucy but also wondered if this was the largest cultural bump she experienced. Her surprise at clapping was the first of several differences, but she would wait to share the rest until the semester moved forward.

Subjectivity – The Professor in Home Country is Like a God

Another difference Lucy noticed was something she called “subjectivity” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). The educational system that Lucy described in her home country was filled with ambiguity and what she entitled “subjectivity,” or the arbitrary assigning of papers and bestowing of grades. She explained:

In [HC] we don’t have kind of such a very strict rule because there is some subjectivity. Professor can give you good score if you are what, best friends with him or best friend with her. They do that, something like that (Interview 1, February 8, 2013).

Lucy’s past experience in academia told her to privilege interpersonal skills over the content of a course, something she found a frustrating distraction from learning. When in the first few minutes of her first course, a syllabus with clearly outlined assignments and grades entered Lucy’s academic life, she was ecstatic. She explained with amazement, “so I know what I should do ...and then...so to get A for examples I have to do this” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Even though there were many assignments and tasks on the syllabi she received, Lucy felt more comfortable because she was able to plan her time and plot her course of action. The syllabus offered Lucy an opportunity to experience a new type of education, where she saw interpersonal skills subjugated to her experience navigating content in a systematic way versus the arbitrariness of HC education.

As the semester carried on, Lucy glowed inside as she experienced a different type of pedagogy from what she had known in her home country. She explained:

It’s different right! You know here I think the teaching philosophy that they have is really different from [HC]. I think because the professor is somehow like the god [In HC], like we have to follow him. But here it’s like, what was your idea,

teachers keep asking us about our ideas and everything. (Interview 1, February 8, 2013)

Lucy had never been asked her opinion in a classroom before, and the novelty never wore off. Lucy was pushed to show her critical thinking skills in the student-centered American classroom of her Master's degree program, and she was enamored with the challenge the teachers set before her. She explained, "I really like it because it's communicative learning so I didn't have that in HC it's like spoon feeding" (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Being a good student in HC was likened to regurgitation, while what she experienced in America felt more like engagement. Lucy felt valued by her professors and like an asset in the classroom.

With the new value Lucy felt, she also had to shift her rules in academia to match. She explained:

The first time I was kind of feel uncomfortable because the professor seems to really care about us because I never had that, I was like 'Why is she so nice to me did I do something wrong so she give a lot of attention to me' but that is the way it is here right I was like umm.... Because in [HC] I never had that. (Interview 1, February 8, 2013)

At first, Lucy was thrown off by the amount of attention she received and questioned the earnestness of her professors. Later, Lucy developed a new concept of a relationship with a professor. She went on, "mmmhmmm here I think, professor is very like if you have a problem you can ask her or him via email or everything but in HC like no. For example I have some difficulties what I think and I don't know how to meet the professors expectation and then I email her or him and then she says 'Just do it like you do and if you have any problem just come to see me'" (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Lucy observed that the professors in the States valued her interpretation of tasks and appreciated the work she produced. This was different from her

experience in HC, where the professor was both aloof and specific in assignment guidelines.

Lucy cataloged her experience with professors to understand that good teaching both engages and values the student.

The Role of Different People in the Classroom

In addition to the shift in clarity of classroom assignments and student-centered pedagogy, over the two semesters, Lucy also found herself for the first time in a classroom that was culturally and academically diverse, with students not only from different countries but also second-year Master's degree and Doctoral level students. In the first semester, in a course wholly populated by Master's students, Lucy broke down the responsibilities of different student groups in the classroom as she understood them. First, Lucy noticed the burden on the American students to speak and be leaders in the classroom discussion. She explained, "there are like four or five Americans they don't and then, the first time I was kind of feel sorry for them because they have to start the conversation in the classroom because they are the native speaker so they have to start it" (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). According to Lucy, the responsibility to initiate and facilitate conversation fell mainly on the shoulders of the American students, whom the others students held responsible. Lucy's observation about the role of the American students mirrored what I had heard from my other participants. However, while the other participants went along with it or felt frustrated by it, Lucy did not see this as a fair distribution and made an effort to lessen the burden and speak in the classroom. When she could think of nothing to add to a conversation, Lucy described her feeling by saying, "[when I have] nothing to say about that so I feel sorry for that" (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Lucy felt that she should not force her American classmates into roles they did not choose.

Lucy went on to describe the roles of other student groups present in the classroom. She explained, "and the Chinese as usual we know they are shy. Most Asians we all feel shy and for

the Arabic we have Arabic people and they are kind of good” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Lucy meant that the Arab students in the classroom participated and chimed into the conversation at times, while the Asian students generally remained silent. For her own choice to be silent in the classroom Lucy explained, “I think I’m play the same role. In HC same as here. I don’t talk much in the class if I don’t understand so I just listen and listen and being an active listener so if I understand and I know what I want to know from that thing I just talk” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Lucy was silent as she grappled with the class content. I noticed that unlike my other participants who were also tackling language issues, Lucy did not mention English language skills as the reason she did not understand. Instead, she recognized that she was learning a new field of study. All the while, Lucy was also actively listening and cataloging all that she was learning. Lucy saw her active listening as part of her role as a student.

Ph.D. Students

In the second semester of her degree work, Lucy’s classes included yet another group: Ph.D. students. Lucy was in a class in which she was one of two Master’s degree students amongst six Ph.D. students. She explained, “somehow I feel like a little bit intimidated because yeah we are I am the minority” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Lucy looked around and, like in a comic, a thinking cloud appeared above her head which said, “What are we going to do here?” But that cloud did not remain long but quickly dissipated. Lucy employed her classroom norms to make sense of her role in this new classroom. She explained, “yesterday when I came to the class I decided I just want to be an active listener today, because the content yesterday was kinda like tons of content, so I was like ‘What does it mean?’” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Though the other members of the class encouraged Lucy to participate, she told them that she would listen. Lucy found their encouragement comforting and explained, “all of them are friendly friendly” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). I thought back to Zhao’s description of what

she saw as arrogance and hierarchal behavior amongst the Ph.D. students in the class she took with them. Lucy told a different story of the Ph.D. student describing them as adding value to her educational experience. She explained, “yeah, yeah because it [class with Ph.D. students] will enrich the content” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Though Lucy saw the new content as an asset she would struggle to understand the new content. She explained, “So Master’s level is below that a little bit, it’s not like that much and I’m trying” (Interview 2, February 22, 2013). Lucy also found a balance in her feeling about what she knew and did not know that calmed any frustrations. She explained, “so I’m like 50 percent is okay, not all Lucy” (Interview 2, February 22, 2013). Lucy was comfortable with the ambiguity she felt in the classroom and still strove to learn as much as she could from this new population she was now in contact with.

Korean Class

Lucy carried her developed understanding of roles in the American classroom and her passion to learn as much as possible to a Korean language class she was taking. Lucy had an opportunity to explicitly experience cultural diversity in a low-stakes setting when she took a Korean language class that was not part of her degree work. I was surprised that she was able to fit this in with her routine and course work! She explained, “I’m taking Korean class so I meet a lot of new people. It’s not like three more but it is a lot for me. I learn about their culture and how they like, ahhh, understand something differently than me” (Interview 2, February 22, 2013). The class took Lucy outside of the English department in which her Master’s degree was housed and into contact with students across the university who were interested in culture. Though Korean was not new for Lucy, learning the language in a multicultural group setting was a new experience. She explained her background with Korean culture: “I think because I have been watching Korean drama since I was in middle school I know a lot. Even the Koreans here surprised about my knowledge of Korean” (Interview 2, February 22, 2013). Lucy’s

background knowledge may have helped her to communicate more fully with the teacher but was only partially helpful with her new classmates, with whom she would be negotiating the language.

Lucy explained that learning Korean became an exciting effort at understanding epistemological diversity. She explained, “so it’s like, when our teacher explains about Korean words, so I assume it’s like X and they [American students] assume it’s like Y, why is that? ... Maybe because of different backgrounds or different cultures” (Interview 2, February 22, 2013). Lucy was beginning to find cultural diversity in the negotiation of the semantics of Korean words while expanding and acquiring new skills to make meaning cross-culturally. Korean class was an opportunity for Lucy to reshape all that she was learning in her Masters’ degree program and to make that information tangible and malleable.

Lucy’s story of her Korean class exuded a calm joy and appreciation for all that she was learning in her Master’s degree program. In this class Lucy expanded the circle of people she knew, applied what she was learning in her Master’s degree program, shared culture in new and challenging ways, and found another avenue of learning, all the while taking in new ideas to use when she returned to her home context.

Gazing Back toward Home

Lucy’s focus on incorporating what she was learning in America into her HC world emphasized the underlying role of HC as the trunk of the tree of her experience in America. From afar, Lucy maintained her life there, kept it healthy, and planned for future possibilities upon return. Lucy’s HC life served as a context for the information she was learning. Yet I noticed that it also served to challenge Lucy’s easygoing approach to life. Indeed, she had a lot going on in her home country. Lucy had her parents’ expectations, employment concerns and

her own self-imposed ambition to apply what she was learning when she returned home. Unlike her life in America, her life in HC was very high-stakes and challenging.

Regarding her future, Lucy had a lot to worry about. She explained, “I will have another worries. It’s like I have no job now so when I get back to [HC] I have a worry that I will get a job or not” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). Previously I imagined Lucy as carefree, joyfully taking in the experiences that were before her, but her new admission changed my perception and recast her as a person with legitimate concerns about the future. She went on in her explanation: “and then I have that kind of that kind of like my mom actually doesn’t want me to go out from my island to work so I have to stay” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). Up until now I had only learned that Lucy, like Zhao and Ivy, was experiencing independence from her parents for the first time. Now I understood that Lucy’s independence was not the same as Zhao’s or Ivy’s but that her parents continued to play an active role in her choices. Lucy would try to meet her mother’s expectation that she find a job on the island where they live when she returns.

Lucy continued her story and broke down the situation even further. She explained, “there is only one good university in that place so my intention is I want to teach there” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). I knew from Lucy’s extended explanation that the politics of getting a job were something she had put a lot of thought into. She explained, “but it is kind of a big competition because this year another Fulbright will go back to that place and when I get back there are like five are four Australian graduates as well so we all the alumni from that university so I know maybe they will put me at the first because I’m a Fulbright but then that four students now in Australia” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). Lucy weighed the competition. This comment contradicted her initial assertion that her application for a Fulbright was purely born from her love of learning. Though that may have been part of the story, Lucy strategized that the prestige of the Fulbright would give her a leg up in the competition. She went on: “I’m taking TESOL and

then I don't know this is my own perception that most of the professors over there think that TESOL is not something as prestigious. It's not like linguistics where they study syntax and those complicated things so I have a worry" (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). Though the Fullbright would weigh in her favor, her choice of study, she believed, may work against her. Lucy's shared narrative showed the mixture of parental expectation and professional ambitions as part of her field of sight as she made plans.

This mixture of professional and parental influence played out in other decisions Lucy was making during her study. When choosing a thesis topic, Lucy explained:

Ask my dad, so he is ahh, a principle of the middle school and then I want to ask him what kind of problems do the English teacher has and then. Do the teachers have and then yeah, I'm still talking to him, what problem what problem what problem, so I can apply it [my thesis] directly. (Interview 2, February 22, 2014).

Lucy's father suggested that Lucy consider teacher-to-student feedback as a good topic for her thesis. Lucy's father suggested that the topic would be useful both in the context and as a topic written into her credentials. Whether or not Lucy ultimately chose that topic for her thesis, asking her father showed deference to her ambition to choose a subject to study that would be relevant to her future.

Lucy also saw relationships as part of the credentials that would help her when she moved back to HC. Over the course of the semester, Lucy would consistently make time to maintain her relationships at home. Lucy spent one evening a week talking and corresponding with her network in HC. She was experiencing a lack of sleep because of both homework and the time zone difference between America and HC. Lucy explained, "but I have my family, my best friends, then my colleague then my workplace in [HC] then I have to keep in touch with them so when I go back to [HC] I can still contact them" (Interview 3, March 9, 2014). When

she offered the list I exclaimed, “wow, so you have a lot of obligations!” (Interview 3, March 9, 2014). I said this with a slow shake of my head to show bewilderment at the amount of effort she must make. Lucy laughed to show that my concern was unwarranted. It had never crossed her mind to ignore her HC obligations in favor of her life in the moment in America. Though in America Lucy was never far from her HC world, she consistently made strides to stay in step and look toward the future.

Conclusion

In America, Lucy challenged herself to maintain her commitment to self-care, to tackle her feelings of intolerance and to develop new ways of coping and learning about the culture of others. She also learned pedagogical strategies to share what she had learned. In the end, Lucy would approach the future with the same type of calm insight that helped to make her experience in America full of joy. She explained of her outlook on change, in a monologue about life when she returns to HC:

I don't think I can make such a big change because I'm such a small Lucy here and there is a big system here [in HC]. So I make a small change. I try to make a group who has, has the same mind and point of view as me and we try to change that big system a little bit, not much.

Lucy's hope lay in realistic changes and community. She will leave America when her program is finished and return home to the high-stakes world of finding a job, finding avenues to share all that she had learned, and bolstering her relationships after some time away. Lucy carried with her all that she had learned during her Master's degree program.

Chapter Organization

In this chapter I shared narratives of my participants' experiences. In Chapter Five I will offer analysis of the narrative through the lens of the purpose of the study and the research

questions. This will be followed by Chapter Six, in which I will conclude this work with reflection on the research process, wakefulness, reflexivity and ethics. Chapter Six will also show my transformation as a researcher, writer and narrative inquirer. I finish Chapter Six with implications for a Masters' degree program.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS

The stories highlighted in Chapter Four catch light in different and unique ways each time they are told. Indeed, hearing them told, listening to the recordings, reading them in the raw form of the transcriptions, and then re-reading many times in pieces during the analysis process, reordering them, and finally reshaping them made my mind swell with the possibility of interpretation. In this chapter, I will look inward at the narratives I shared in Chapter Four and offer some interpretive meaning, guided by the tenets of narrative and emotion theory I reviewed in Chapter Two. I will do so with a lens focused through the research questions and purpose of the study, concluding this chapter with a reflection on the findings.

As I work through this chapter, central to my approach is the understanding that there are many avenues of interpretation in the stories I experienced from the participants. My interpretations are contextual in the place and time of my research, and therefore I avoid generalization. My approach is informed by the work of narrative theorists Clandinin and Connelly (2007), Andrews (2007) and Linde (1993). These narrative theorists suggest throughout their work that strong transformations and questions should be a central focus in a Narrative study. Clandinin and Connelly (2007) wrote that answers are not the purpose of Narrative Inquiry; rather, the development of new questions should be a large part of the goal. Their concepts inspired me to allow room for discovery in my project. Clandinin and Connelly (2007) also introduced Temporality, a concept that suggests that stories are not cemented in structure or meaning but reshaped over the landscape of our lives.

The concept of Temporality also makes salient in research the liquidity of a narrative in the movement of time. I am aware that if I had scooped the narratives in Chapter Four out of the flowing streams that are the lives of the participants at a different time, or in a different state,

they would have looked and felt different in my gaze. Indeed, telling the stories of others and making sense through narrative analysis has filled me with the tension of “partial knowledge” (Andrews, p. 509, 2007). Andrews (2007) discusses this feeling and contrasts the experience of “opening up oneself to listen” (p. 509) with the acceptance that what we learn will be “mediated through our own interpretive lens” (p. 509). For instance, I share what I have learned from the participants, and in the process, I omitted stories or markers of character and reordered what the participants told me to meet the demands of my narratives. That process, in Chapter Four, also shaped my analysis in this chapter.

In addition to the narratives and the participants moving with the flow of time, I, as the researcher, teller of the stories, and analyst, am also in a raft floating down the metaphorical stream. Linde (1993) wrote, “What is true for the participant in a social situation is equally true for the investigator studying a text now abstracted from its original social context” (p. 96). I wrote the stories of Chapter Four over a long hot summer and while watching the snow fall during one of the coldest Pennsylvania winters in recent memory. My writing was informed by that heavy snowfall, my memories, the sound of the participants’ voices in the recordings, and the meaning I made looking back through my researcher journal. Thus, in this chapter, I keep close Linde’s (1993) theory that interpretation cannot be thought of as being of the original context or situation of the stories but rather of the narratives told after the study. These narrative theorists prompt my reflective process in my presentation of analysis of the narratives in Chapter Four.

My analysis of the narratives was also informed by emotion theorists who depict emotions as social, individual and evaluative. When I approached the story of the stoic face of Ivy at Orientation, I could not help but think of the debate between inward and outward individual emotional presentation theorized in the work of Hoschild (1979) and Goffman (1959).

Hoschild and Goffman approach emotion through theories of face and purposeful identity construction. Integral to my analysis was attention to this sort of impression management. In turn, to glean meaning from moments when participants expressed shared or similar emotional responses, I utilized Heatherington's (2005) concept of the social nature of emotional interpretation. Heatherington's study of Sardinian local reaction to the proposal of a public park showed how collective emotional responses can be bonding. I applied this to my own study. Through these theories of emotions I gave greater weight to the inward response, outward response, social and interpretive responses of the participants in my analysis.

The Purpose and Research Questions

This project is rooted in my ambition to develop knowledge with the hope for positive change in the experience of international Master's in TESOL students during their re-socialization into their programs and profession. In the initial stage, this project focused on the participants, researcher, local community and the larger institution. I planned to make an effort to understand how emotions are felt and interpreted by the participants in relation to all the different elements that I had identified as possibly impactful on an international student's experience. Originally I intended to look from the top-down, interviewing professors and the director of the program and observing classes, while also looking from the bottom-up at the experience of the participants in the program I was researching. My project was meant to identify the space where the participant's experience met the program's goals, objectives and formula for experience. During the initial stages of this project, however, I quickly began to realize that the participants would privilege their individual concepts of context and relationships. As this project shifted toward a more participant-centered focus, the purpose changed from a general look at the academic experience of a Master's degree seeking student to that of the specific participants in their specific settings. I began to understand that a case study

of the Master's program would not meet the overarching goal of my study – greater understanding of the individual experience of a Master's degree student. Rather than focusing on every element of a program, I shifted to meet the participants and focus on the elements they identified as meaningful.

One way to gauge the evolution of the purpose of my study is to show the difference in my research questions from the beginning of the project until now. As I learned to be amorphous in my research, the rigid language of my research questions also evolved. Originally my overarching question was: What emotions and emotional constructs do participants privilege from their experience as they re-socialize into their new context? To answer this question, I began by imagining myself as a detective writing character analyses and trying to pinpoint the feelings caught in each moment the participants shared. I was focused on not what the participants said, but the linking of emotion words and context. I focused on tying a set of emotion words to a specific incident in order to construct a sense of each person in each place. I quickly began to realize that narrowing my researcher lens in the search for a character in context took away from my ability to listen and discover what the participants truly privileged in their experience.

I began to realize that emotions were more metaphorically realized as a fabric that is woven with other elements to make the participants' experiences. To discover what I wanted, I would have to shift my questions, share ownership of my project, and value the participants' choices. Because of this revelation, my overarching question evolved into: How are emotions felt and understood and how are roles built for international graduate students in their American context? I included ancillary questions that privileged participant experience, the forces on their experience, and their sense of change as they navigated their new system. My new questions were a leap forward, but there was still farther to travel in my journey.

Ultimately I chose three questions to focus my research on emotions, impactful experiences and transformation while also privileging what the participants said rather than inferring meaning in their stories. The first question was: What emotions do participants privilege in their experience as they re-socialize into their new context? This question shifted my role from that of a detective attempting to infer a reality to that of a researcher more open to listening and being guided by the participants' concepts of emotion. The second question was: What forces do participants recognize as impactful on the construction of their emotional self in their new context? It was difficult, as a researcher, not to ask the participants about the forces that the other participants privileged. For instance, when Abdullah told me about his lost friendship, that moment stayed with me, and it was difficult not to carry it into my other interviews and to ask Ivy and Ying about friendship. Though overlap occurred, I knew that each participant should make his or her own choice of what stories should be told. The final question was: What transformations do the participants experience while studying in the States? This question acknowledged that the participants were going through a period of change, and emotions were part of the fabric of that experience. After reconsidering my purpose and three research questions, I present analysis through the frame of my revised research questions because they are shaped to emphasize emotion in the narratives.

Analysis through Research Questions

What emotions do participants privilege in their experience as they re-socialize into their new context?

As I approached this question, I quickly realized the challenge: narrowing down dozens of experiences in hundreds of pages of transcripts into themes and patterns of emotions while also making sure I wasn't appropriating or imposing my assumptions about how emotions

function in certain situations or contexts. In order to deal with this challenge, I found that Bridges' (2004) book "Transitions: Making sense of life's changes" was a helpful structure for me. Bridges (2004) suggests that, "All transitions are composed of 1) an ending, 2) a neutral zone, and 3) a new beginning" (p. 4). We depart from our home, family and social structures, travel through a period of chaos, change and newness, and emerge with a sense of stability in the knowledge of new social structures and community. That process is filled with both predictable and surprising emotions as we come across the situations we expect and those that we do not. I'm not following Bridges (2004) structure for experience rigidly, as it does not fit perfectly for all the participants, but it has given me a way to begin to answer my challenging research question. In this section, I will use Bridges' frame to touch on some of the connected emotional moments and experiences of the participants as they re-socialized into their new context.

In the initial period of what Bridges calls "ending" (p. 107), I found the participants focused on the acknowledgment that they were entering into a period of transformation. The period of ending is demarcated by departure from the comfort and norms of the habits of life. We leave not only family and friends, but the ease of knowing how to pay bills, where food is on store shelves, and how to get from one place to another. We leave the comfort of the streets we know. The participants all experienced this period of ending before I met them, and the archive of that experience that I had access to was their construction of the narratives of that time. Though I did not witness the period of ending first hand, my participants did share the emotions that they attached to their experiences at that time. Abdullah's coming of age narratives showed excitement in the ending period, while Ying's packing of Korean face cream revealed a more cautious wait-and-see approach. In the same turn, Lucy, Ivy and Zhao, who all reached back to narratives of family and friends from home, expressed mixtures of nervousness and excitement.

Although I saw remnants of the emotions in the retrospective narratives about ending, they were all constructed and told to me during what I recognized as the neutral zone. The narrative construction of Abdullah and Zhao offered vivid pictures of themselves in the past in order to show just how far they have come to be where they were when I met them. Abdullah emerged in his story from what he described as a “lazy” self. He picked himself up from the ashes of failure, transformed and ready for an international fight for success. Abdullah’s stories of emergence served as backdrop to the time that I knew him.

While Abdullah’s stories of the ending were like a man shot from a rocket, Ivy’s stories of the “ending” painted a less cohesive picture. I focus on Abdullah and Ivy here because their choices of narratives are filled with strong evidence of forward momentum but constructed and utilized in different ways. Ivy flashes backwards to share stories that imprinted emotions in her current contexts. The first story Ivy told me of her past was that of her parents’ friend warning her that living in America would not be easy initially. That story linked her feelings of fear and nerves to a narrative of prospects – she knew the initial period would end. Though Ivy’s present was filled with reality checks and feelings related to marginalization, her narratives of home created a different image of her. Her stories of herself in “the ending” period allowed me to see that Ivy favored an emotional path that moved her academically and socially forward. While Abdullah was emerging from a youth of what he called “lazy,” Ivy was a woman who had never let the tough stuff get her down. She may not have been rocketing forward, but she was privileging emotions and stories from her past that moved her in that direction. In general, Abdullah used his past to make himself look great now, while Ivy used her narratives to bolster herself during moments of time when she did not feel great. These two contrasting uses of narrative were not unique to these participants; I could see similarities amongst the other participants, but these were the clearest examples for me.

I quickly began to learn the “the ending” functioned, as Linde (1993) suggests’ as the fluid matching of memories to moments, eventually told to me as a narrative. The stories of “the ending” happened in a context I did not know with a cast of characters all new to me, but that was not the case as I listened to their present-day tales. Because of the time period and context when I knew my participants, I will focus more on the period I felt they were in, which Bridges (2004) defines as the “neutral zone” (p. 133).

The Neutral Zone

The “neutral zone” that Bridges describes is nothing close to the muted connotation of the word neutral. Rather, it is a dynamic time, a renegotiation of heightened emotion and, sometimes, of chaos. Some emotional triggers that marked the neutral zone in the participants’ journeys came in the first couple days of their stay, during Orientation, while being in the classroom, and during social gatherings and with new friends. In this section I am going to highlight the emotions that they felt during the moments they privilege while in the “neutral zone.”

The First Couple of Days

The first few days the participants spent in the United States felt for some like a walk toward a glowing summer horizon but for others like crushing marginalization or even like a mixture of the two. During the first few days of their stay in the United States, none of the participants stagnantly stayed in their dorms or apartments, quietly waiting for classes to begin. With confidence, Ying stepped out to order food only to feel what she described as “stupid” by her inability to make her English work in the restaurant. Ivy also experienced a feeling of nervousness and lack of preparedness when she struggled to make conversation with Margaret, her new classmate. During the first few days, Lucy and Ivy both struggled with the feeling that one of their feet was trying to run forward in independence while the other was deeply

entrenched in the warm mud of home. What is seen in their experiences is conflicting emotions tying two worlds together.

Perhaps Zhao's approach to her new life in America is the most telling of the paradox of being both confident and nervous. Zhao asserted that she had "no worry" in China and set out to develop the same feeling in the States. When Zhao talked about the first days, she did not use emotion words. She listed the things she learned, people she met and places she discovered. The first few days for Zhao were a time of foundation building. She anticipated the emotions related to not knowing and newness and set out to trump them with emotions of triumph. Zhao was out in the world, finding footing and establishing normalcy. Though Zhao was full blown in the "neutral zone," surrounded by newness, her approach was that of a confident person with the knowledge that she would eventually have "no worry" again.

While Zhao approached the States with a novice's eye on learning, three of the other participants imagined that they were both prepared and knowledgeable about what they would find. Abdullah and Lucy had been in the States before, and Ying had a lot of experience working with Americans at her position at a university. They did not expect to go through a "neutral zone." Ying believed that she had a greater knowledge that would make her experience smoother. When I asked about culture shock, Ying said, "So if you ask me if I have any culture shock here I would say no because I almost know everything" (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Abdullah and Lucy both had similar responses. This is what they thought, but Ying's first interaction outside of her home made her feel "stupid," implying that she was not immune to the experience of the "neutral zone." Abdullah and Lucy also felt similar pains in the first few days of learning a new place.

Orientation

Orientation was the first physical step the participants took into the space of their Master's degree program and the point the participants referenced as the trigger for their initial emotions in their degree study. Orientation was an exciting time in the "neutral zone" when the prevailing emotion was fear and a foundational stone of the community was placed. Lucy epitomized the view of the participants in general. She described the purpose of the day: "to get our package from Dr. Mung and to get the subject that we are going to take for the first semester and to introduce ourselves and to meet the second year and they scare us about what is the TESOL program" (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). When she said this in the focus group meeting, all of the participants present nodded with vigor in agreement. Ying, Zhao and Ivy all admitted feeling "afraid." While Lucy acknowledged that she was supposed to be afraid, she did not use the word afraid to describe her emotions. Even Abdullah could not help but start the day with a little trepidation. When each participant spoke about Orientation, I imagined the nervous sparks of emotions flying chaotically around the room while outwardly each participant tried not to acknowledge their presence. I thought about Ivy, sitting there trying to keep a soft smile and look of composure on her face.

The feeling of "afraid" may have overtly engulfed Orientation, but the fear was not viewed by the participants as negative. Here I cite Heatherington (2005), whose work on collective emotional responses shifted my analysis from viewing "afraid" as negative, to understanding the emotion as possibly unifying. The feeling of fear served as a first testament of the community the cohort would build together. In her description of Orientation Lucy suggested that all the students had similar feelings. That sentiment was restated by most of the participants. During Orientation they were collectively trying to look outwardly calm while all were filled with nervousness and fear, but making sense of those feelings was their first shared

emotion in their program. The assumption of a collective emotion of fear played a role in their feelings toward each other as they moved into their classes.

Classes

When I met the participants, they were beginning their second semester of study. Their description of classes was two-fold: they mused backwards toward their initial classroom experiences in their first semester, and they shared new experiences in the present day of my data collection period. I will begin with the stories they told me about their first semester and move chronologically. One emotion engulfed all the narratives they told me about the beginning of their first semester: “Nerves”, “Nervous”, and “I felt nervous for that.” Lucy and Abdullah cited the workload as a source of nerves, while Ivy and Ying struggled with the reality check of new language and vocabulary.

Despite the nervousness, they all got through the first semester. At the beginning of the second semester, Lucy said of her Master’s degree experience that she felt “Happy” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). Zhao described herself as “proud” (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). Abdullah gleefully drew a picture of himself with a large smile and the new vocabulary flying from his head. Even Ying could not be swayed from the feelings of progress and legitimacy when she declared in a pensive tone, “It’s getting better” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). At this point, the beginning of the second semester, my participants may have felt like they were in what Bridges defines as stage three of transitioning: “a new beginning.”

But even with the glee of completing a successful semester in their Master’s degree program the participants were not out of the “neutral zone” but rather beginning a new cycle in the second semester. Ivy declared that in the beginning of her second semester she still felt “afraid” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013) but that her fear stemmed from still being misunderstood and not making progress in her speaking skills. Ivy also felt “frustrated” (Interview 2, February

25, 2013) because she had developed the skills to meet the workload of last semester, only to find the next semester with a larger amount of work to do. Zhao expressed similar fears stemming from advanced work in classes with Ph.D. students. She identified her feelings: “I feel really a little nervous and depressed” (Interview 2, February 22, 2013). Both Ivy and Zhao met the challenges of last semester but found themselves overwhelmed again in new situations.

On the other side of the coin, Ying and Abdullah felt for the first time a peer-like respect from one of their professors. On the first day of class when Dr. Parkin opened the floor to a discussion about the nature of the course, they both felt empowered. Abdullah described the moment with a tone of authority: “It is not about introducing us the research. It is something different. But understanding research is something else” (Interview 5, May 16, 2013). Though they both had a significant amount of added work, that feeling of legitimacy was a central motivator as they continued to navigate the “neutral zone.”

Social Gatherings, Friendship and Community

The emotions surrounding the relationships the participants made in America represented a wide spectrum, ranging from happy and home-like to anger and confusion. The stories the participants told me ranged in narrative from an intimate relationship of co-sleeping to a physical altercation. Abdullah and Zhao both made quick friendships that ended poorly, and those experiences emotionally clouded periods of time for both of them during the “neutral zone.” Abdullah explained, “Sometimes you just want to tell people feelings for a specific amount of time” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Abdullah spoke for more than an hour on two occasions about his lost friendship, how it clouded his experience and its ultimate role for him as a driving force for his decision making. He said, “I should prove to him that, well, you missed the chance” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013).” Abdullah then outlined his plan to work on the Thesis as an example of how he would use his time without his friend. His loss of friendship and

feelings of confusion and sadness played an active role in his re-socialization in the States. Zhao's physical altercation with Mike meant a break from her Chinese community and a push towards her cohort. In both of these cases, the emotions caused by the break of a relationship changed the course of re-socialization by redefining the relationships that were meaningful and that they would privilege moving forward.

At the other end of the spectrum is Lucy, whose new friendship stuck with her and served as a re-creation of lost intimacy from home and a calming force amidst the chaos of the "neutral zone." She described this role of her friend in her experience: "I'm not homesick, I wanna, because in [HC] I used to sleep with my dad or my mom and here I sleep alone, so here, just stay here I just I want to sleep like that" (Interview 3, March 9, 2014). Lucy was able to enact an interaction from home with her new friend. Lucy not only found solace in her friendships, but they helped to foster a similar feeling with her classmates. After an evening eating with Lucy, Zhao felt "really happy" (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). These feelings of home and happiness are hints of participants moving beyond the neutral zone toward new beginnings.

New Beginnings

Greater intimacy in social interactions is one marker of the period called "new beginning." Bridges (2004) describes "new beginning" as a period of felt legitimacy and familiarity in the feeling that a place is less new. Bridges is pointed in reminding us that the space between the "neutral zone" and "new beginning" is ambiguous and not linear, keeping that in mind, it is hard to pinpoint when they are into "a new beginning." For instance, at the beginning of the second semester, many of the participants expressed the emotions of a "new beginning," but they found themselves still deeply entrenched in the "neutral zone." These two phases often overlap. Here I highlight clear markers of academic milestones that created moments of legitimacy. These include grades and professors' praise and a greater knowledge of

the physical world around them. I choose these because they represented the beginning of normalcy and “new beginnings.”

Traditional academic milestones functioned as easily discernable steps toward “new beginnings.” For Abdullah and Lucy it was an A on a paper, whereas for Ying the first piece of praise she experienced carried a lightness and joy into our interview. Ying glowed as she exclaimed, “I’m happy. He made my day by saying that” (Interview 4, April 15, 2013) in response to a professor’s praise of a statement Ying made in a class. Abdullah shared the feeling of “happy” when he described a graduate assistant’s offer to write him a letter of recommendation. Those pieces of praise stamped a feeling of legitimacy on their future interactions.

Ivy felt a similar sensation. At the end of the second semester, she was able to see the improvement she wanted in her speaking in the transcripts that I showed her. She exclaimed with excitement, “I have changed a lot” (Interview 4, May 16, 2013). Ivy was emboldened to speak in the classroom, something that, became a common occurrence by the end of the second semester. Ivy had emerged into “new beginnings”, meeting her goal of active participation.

Another element that the participants expressed as impactful on their emotions in re-socialization was their developed ability to understand the habits and expectations of professors. Zhao explained, “I think that after I take several classes with them I know their teaching style and I know basically what kind of assignments they will give” (Interview 5, May 10, 2013). Her feeling of greater understanding of professor expectations gave her the ability to try to meet something tangible rather than ambiguous. That familiarity enabled legitimacy. The emotions they privileged changed depending on what phase they were in and the context they were in, but clearly emotions were active shaping forces in their journey of transition.

Evidence of emotions in experience was drawn not only from moments but also from longitudinal changes and repositioning. Initially Zhao, Lucy and Ying all shared feelings

associated with marginalization as forces in their academic development. They collectively used the term “nervous.” Ying highlighted their diminished status within their new academic community: “I think in our classes it is not like it’s not like we are Asian students, it is because we are first year MA Students” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). However, I saw a distinct moment of “new beginning” when the participants began to expand their communities and garnish positions of power and knowledge. Ying spoke about tutoring multilingual learners. She explained, “I have been tutoring at ELI. That is good, kind of a good feeling of helping people” (Interview 2, February 27, 2013). For Ying it was an opportunity to be powerful. Zhao found a similar role through developing knowledge of travel in the U.S. Ivy also felt a sense of power when she negotiated her lease with her landlord and was able to stay in her apartment. In these three instances, the participants told stories that cast them as qualified individuals. My sharing these stories also acknowledges their right to choose how to present themselves. What forces do participants recognize as impactful on the construction of their emotional self in their new context?

Over the course of the semester in which I interviewed the five participants, their experiences did not occur in isolation, but were impacted by the many people and responsibilities in their Master’s degree program. I have grouped the impactful forces into the two main themes of social and academic forces. These forces were selected from the data because the participants acknowledged these forces in two ways: they asserted their importance or mentioned them several times.

Social forces began before the participants arrived, in the form of the influence of forces from home on their new experience. Lucy, Ivy and Zhao all referenced parents as impactful forces on how they socialized into their academic American culture. Ivy and Zhao both seemed to be pushing forward away from the comfort and constriction they felt from their parents’ ever-

present gaze in what they called gaining “independence.” Zhao said, “I’m kind of feel now that friends are so important compared with family members” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Zhao had made a transition. Both acknowledged their parents as supportive forces, while at the same time their description reminded me of their leap from the nest. In turn, Lucy seemed to have a similar parental experience but her drive came from a need to return home rather than forge a new path far away. Lucy kept central her future job prospects that would lead her to the university on her home island. She choose topics of study that would make her a stronger candidate and dedicated time to maintaining professional relationships from home. Whether they were pushing away or moving toward the goal of being together again, their parents were a social force in the construction of their emotional self in their new context.

Another interesting social force that three of the participants consistently spoke about were the people from their home country they knew at the American university. For instance, Zhao spoke about her church group and Chinese club, which both included other fellow Chinese students. Abdullah’s home group is even more specific, with his friends being not only Muslim but male and Saudi. Lucy also sought out other students from her home country and said, “they make me feel like home” (Interview 2, February 22, 2014). These groups impacted each of the participants’ sense of community as they shared their experiences and feelings and languages. For Zhao and Lucy, their home country communities generally gave them a safe place for reflection and an anchoring sense of culture. Zhao described the calming effect of communing with her Bible study group and sharing the trials of each week in that comfortable community. For Abdullah, his group at first gave him the stability of routine in the sense that his closest Saudi friend drove him places and studied with him but later shifted into a negative force that clouded his academic and social experience. In terms of their friendships in America in general, their home country friendships served to be the most intense and emotional, with Zhao

having a physical altercation with a former Chinese friend, and Abdullah holding on to the hurt of his lost friendship with his Saudi friend to the point that it enveloped a period of time in sadness. Abdullah exclaimed, “I have a lot of mixed feelings [about his friend], and, well the most important thing for me now is the thesis” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Abdullah rejected making further effort in his friendships.

Another social force that bridges toward an academic force is the relationship each participant felt toward his or her cohort and cohort members. Abdullah and Zhao both began by viewing their cohort as coworkers, a description that regulated the type of information all the participants felt was appropriate to share with cohort members. For example, I asked Zhao directly about her cohort and she explained, “Barriers, I think there must be because we have like different religions and educational background. There must be some barriers” (Interview 4, April 20, 2013). Abdullah seconded that sentiment when he explained, “Yeah you wouldn’t discuss something very personal with your coworkers. Like something family... You would discuss with them maybe some work problems for example if you have some problems with your boss you can talk with them about that” (Interview 4, April 10, 2013). Slowly, however each participant developed a greater bond to his or her cohort. Abdullah, though he hung out with them less, got what he needed from them while standing on the steps of the building where they took classes and talking about the gym and summer plans. He got a feeling that “so it’s not only about academic life it’s also about, you know, our own personal matters and lives” (Interview 4, April 10, 2013). Abdullah experienced a developed intimacy that served as a support system for him.

Lucy, Ivy, Ying and Zhao all spent more time together, having dinners and organizing outings. The four of them developed the same sense of community and camaraderie with their cohort. Even Zhao, who had formerly used the word “barriers” to describe her relationship with

her cohort members, said later in the semester, “I feel joy when I hang out with the girls [from my cohort] as a group we talk about different issues around us like controversial issues... share our opinions and ideologies from other cultures... that is something I learned from textbooks before I never talked about... I know the real life except from the textbooks” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). All four of the participants felt a sense of intimacy with their cohort that gave them stability even though their interaction varied in depth and duration of time.

Academic Forces

Beyond their social relationships with their cohort, the participants spoke about professors, native speaking classmates, and Ph.D. students as other people who impacted their experience. My participants said a lot about their professors. Abdullah’s belief that the professors were constantly thinking about him and the welfare of his cohort members verged on deity-like status. Another type of admiration felt toward a professor was Ivy’s expression that Dr. Mung served as a role model to her because English was not Dr. Mung’s first language. Ivy exclaimed, “I think she is very successful, to be a non-native speaker. Yeah, I want to be like her” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Both looked up to their professors. On the other hand, Ying said in a glib tone, “I was thinking that maybe some people are like, they know a lot of stuff, they are good at some stuff but they are not good at teaching. They are nice people” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Ying suggested a different, less omnipotent like gaze from their professors.

Even with their varied perspectives, both Abdullah and Ying valued their professors’ opinions and praise as influential forces, and all of the participants valued their interactions with their professors as markers of their professional development. Who can forget Ying’s exclamation: “Wow, I’m happy she made my day by saying that” (Interview 4, April 15, 2013). Beyond viewing their professors as role models and leaders, the participants also viewed them as gatekeepers that had to be managed. Zhao showed her general approach to her professors when

she explained, “My professors, I think all I can do is adapt myself to my professors because I can’t expect them to make changes since they are so old” (Interview 5, May 10, 2013).

Additionally, Abdullah and Lucy both expressed a similar sentiment when they both explained that part of the ease they felt in classes stemmed from knowledge of their professors’ working styles and personalities. Abdullah said, “I mean, I know what to say, and I know what to talk with them about and I know how to explain that.” (To clarify, this quotation refers to both professors and cohort members, but I am using this quotation here to show Abdullah’s feeling of advanced understanding of his professor). Beyond knowing how to act toward professors, Abdullah also developed a working understanding of how professors act toward him explaining at one point Dr. Mung’s affection toward him by stating, “she scream and shouts at the people whom she loves the most” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Though screaming and shouting from a professor could be interpreted in many less favorable ways, Abdullah viewed her behavior through his rose-colored glasses and came to a conclusion very different from the one others may have. These kinds of praise and interaction with professors served as academic forces on the participants’ experience.

Another part of the participants’ everyday academic interactions in and outside of the classroom were with English-speaking classmates. Though Lucy spoke about the responsibility of native speaking students in the classroom to lead and foster conversation, it was Ivy’s transformation in terms of her relationship with native speakers that showed the greatest impact on her emotional self. Ivy used the word “afraid” several times when talking about speaking in front of native speakers. Ivy began her experience in America being picked up at the airport by Margaret. Though she was grateful, she was nervous to speak in front of her. In class, she was nervous to interrupt native speakers or make mistakes in front of them. Ivy’s feeling of

inferiority went beyond language skill. She felt that not only would she speak wrong but that her interpretation of the material would be incorrect.

Ivy, like Ying, carried the idea that language is power as a theme through all of our meetings. They both explained that if they were to be able to speak in their native language, they would be more powerful. Ying, in her speech about her loss of power in America, exclaimed, “I’m not a white person, and I don’t work anymore. I’m a student, so it’s like, and sometimes I’m not speaking my native language. It’s not that comfortable” (Interview 2, February 27, 2013). Ivy explained that “China maybe I, I, I’m more confidence because I can speak my mother language yeah with my classmates and teachers. But here I have to speak English, so sometimes I do not have some confidence” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). However, I saw a transformation for Ivy when there was a moment, toward the end of the semester when she shared an epiphany: “I thought the native speakers will feel easy to read that book. but actually no” (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). Ivy showed that she was beginning to gain confidence and acknowledge the native speakers as being closer to peers.

Part of Ivy’s evolution developed through her friendship with Allison. Allison was a force for both Ivy and Zhao in their Master’s degree experience, and both spoke at length about her. Zhao looked up to Allison as the ultimate Master’s degree student. Zhao exclaimed, “she [Allison] speaks very academic words show her professional profession-ality” (Focus Group, April 3, 2013). For Ivy, there was a powerful moment when she shared Allison’s stance on classroom norms: “She [Allison] told me she do not want to be a lead in a group discussion because of she is a native speaker. She do not want other students to assume she will present or do more or contribute more in the group discussion just because she is a native speaker” (Interview 4, May 16, 2013). Ivy expressed this like it was a call to action and she would have to step up in the classroom and play a leadership role. For both Ivy and Zhao their native speaker

classmates served as a source of fear and anxiety as well as leaders, role models, and supportive friends on their journey.

Whereas their relationships with native speaking classmates went from other to friend, their relationships with Ph.D. students were more tenuous and fraught. Though the participants had multiple interactions with Ph.D. students, none expressed friendship-like relationships; rather, they viewed them more as advanced students and people with higher status. Lucy explained very clearly that “yeah, yeah because it [class with Ph.D. students] will enrich the content” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Lucy was a minority amongst my participants with her positive position. More common was Zhao’s assertion that she felt “frustrated” (Interview 2, February 22, 2013). Initially, the class content was too difficult, leading her to think that she had to catch up to the Ph.D. students. Ultimately she realized that their corpus of study was different from her own. Zhao, like Ying, realized that she was not inferior to them but that their knowledge was different. The Ph.D. students began as sources of intimidation, evolved into a source of frustration, and eventually presented a group to push against.

Ultimately at the end of our conversations together, the participants stopped fearing the Ph.D. students and began to acknowledge that they would soon be them. Abdullah, Ivy and Zhao all saw the Ph.D. as their next step. Additionally, the professors whom my participants esteemed also used the Ph.D. as a directional marker. Ying explained that Dr. Guller said as the highest praise to her and Lucy, “you guys are Ph.D. material. Think about it” (Interview 4, April 15, 2013). After telling me this, Ying said happily, “I’m happy she made my day by saying that” (Interview 4, April 15, 2013). The status of Ph.D. student was elevated to an impactful force through the presence of Ph.D. students in the classroom and also the heightened cachet of the position of “Ph.D. student”.

Like the status of being a Ph.D. student, some of the forces were abstract things, not just people. Two forces that the participants recognized heavily in our meetings were workload and thesis. In our first meeting Abdullah exaggerated, “we had to read 400... I mean a lot of articles from a lot of journals” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Though Abdullah was exaggerating the amount of homework, he was touching honestly on the effort needed to accomplish the work set in front of the students. They had to write longer papers in shorter periods of time with more sources while also juggling class-to-class assignments that included readings and reading responses. I realized when they spoke that to look at a list of homework assignments did not mean that I understood the workload. Ivy described her studying process: “I reading at first I could not understand what the author want to talk about but I have to read for the second time and the third time and generally I can understand it” (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). There was a strong common theme in workload. The homework not only impacted their sleep habits and time management but also the choices they made. Lucy shared “thinking about the thesis right now is too much see your homeworks” (Interview 2, February 22th 2014). Lucy included in her decision making the amount of homework she had to do.

The decision of whether to write a thesis was a common theme throughout the interview period with the participants and impacted and was impacted by the many forces that were part of their study. In the end, “Thesis” was the most common noun used by the participants in this study, though Abdullah may have skewed that statistic. They were introduced to the idea when Tomo, a second year student spoke about it at Orientation. At the time Ivy, concentrating on her composure, may have only heard Tomo say the word Thesis, while Abdullah confidently indexed it as a task to be completed. However, it became part of their conscious experience, the thesis was a focal point, source of rich data, and a thing they all privileged but experienced very differently. Because of its importance as a force, I will talk about their varied approaches to the

decision to write a thesis, their development of understanding, and the varied levels of status they assigned to it.

While there was no question that when Abdullah learned of the thesis, he saw it as the end of his “Journey” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013) and would write one, the other participants approach the decision with less certainty. Zhao called on second-year students for support, using the Facebook page to elicit samples and suggestions. Lucy asked her home country friends for their opinions. Ivy and Ying did not talk much about their decision-making, but both spoke about the process of learning about the thesis.

The impact of the thesis decision really became apparent when they started to choose topics. At the end of the semester, I knew all their topics because they had all spoken at length about the thesis statements they were developing and theorists they were considering. I noticed that their choice of topics became a representation of their developing professional identities. Ying chose a path different from her classmates. She explained, “Everyone’s is about teaching, mine is about linguistics” (Interview 4, April 15, 2013). This did not surprise me, given her disposition toward setting herself apart. In turn, Lucy, who focused on future job aspirations and family, asked her father about a topic. Ivy’s topic, though I do not explore it in Chapter Four, focused on the identity of Chinese students studying in America, a topic that found her reflecting heavily on her own experience. Abdullah’s focus was on family literacy and the impact of home language in English language learning in Saudi Arabia. Though it was not a topic touching on his past, it was a subject with very little previous scholarship, challenging Abdullah to employ his work ethic in an effort to do groundbreaking research. Zhao’s topic involved social media and first and second language usage, a topic that focused on how people use language. Her focus on friends and community-building made this topic

a natural fit. Not only did the choice of thesis topics allow the students to develop as researchers, it also gave them a breadth of knowledge that set them apart from their cohort. Indeed, in their newfound research, they were the experts. Whether they chose to write a thesis or take more classes, the decision-making process was a force in their professional development.

What transformations do the participants experience while studying in the States?

There are two kinds of transformations I will discuss to explore this question. The first is outward. When I initially approached this question, my method for identifying themes began with highlighting the clearly definable moments of triumph or change my participants shared. I sought out the process they made of identifying an important transformation, working toward it and accomplishing it. Many of what I call outward transformations had to do with becoming privileged members of their new communities. When I did this, I realized that some of the transformations, such as Zhao's experience with the Ph.D. students, did not fit that mold. In Zhao's narrative and others', another type of transformation was entrenched not in how they interacted physically with the world, but in how they imagined or narrated her experience. Reading Andrews (2013) theory of narrative experience helped me to analyze a second type of transformation, what I will call inward transformation. After reading Andrews (2013) I reconsidered the participants' narratives and began to pull out inward moments of transformation. In this section, I begin with the outward and move inward.

Outward Moments of Transformation

Leaving home, moving to a new place, and joining new communities are all experiences that lend themselves to outward transformations and moments of new-found legitimacy. The most striking example of an outward change comes in Ivy's evolution toward speaking in front of native speakers. Ivy's initial feeling toward speaking in front of native speakers was both fear

and excitement. She noted, “I always afraid aaa in aaa in the communication” (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). Yet Ivy acknowledged that speaking in front of native speakers meant legitimacy within her Master’s degree community. She also explained, “I think it is my duty ... to adapt in this new culture.” (Interview 2, February 25, 2013). Fear and a sense of duty were both part of her transformation. It was when she shared her interaction with Allison that I saw that transformation take root. It was followed by her glowing commentary on the transcription. She smiled and said, “I see my improvement through this project... I see I can speak more and more” (Interview 4, May 16, 2013). This clearly defined transformation showed the development of Ivy, in her eyes, into a more privileged community member.

In Zhao’s narratives, she highlighted the importance of a network of people and acknowledged their importance to her sense of legitimacy in a new place. Initially, however, Zhao began with a community heavily populated with other Chinese students. They represented her social world, the people with whom she explored her new place. Zhao then began to expand her social group. Doing so was an outward marker of the change in her community. Zhao began to socialize more widely and even shared a moment of schism in the form of a fight she had at a party, which highlighted her shift in community. In the end, Zhao filled her narratives with her expanded social networks and declared that they made her feel that her new world was “home.” It was easy to see in Zhao’s new community a transformation in how she was approaching her life in America.

Two of the other three participants also had outward transformations that were unmistakable. Ying, after feeling silenced for the initial part of her degree work, began to speak out more in the classroom. She began to share her brand of humor and savvy observational skills with a larger audience. Abdullah had a similar experience of having his observations and efforts acknowledged positively in the classroom. Both began outwardly nervous to speak in their

initial approach to course work but found their voice by the end of the interview period with them. These moments were easy to pick out. In reviewing the manuscript, I could not find any outward transformations for Lucy.

After reexamining the manuscript and reading Andrews (2013), I became aware of inward transformations in the narratives. I am defining an inward transformation as a change in perception or approach in a given situation or experience. Unlike the outward, in which Ivy's glowing smile of accomplishment could not be missed, the inward transformations were more difficult to define. To identify inward transformation, I had to look at the narratives as they evolved and as the participants re-approached experiences. Rather than focusing on events, I focused on the storytelling and framing. In narration there is the opportunity to reinvent. Gready (2013) writes that narrative "allows the narrator to relive, control, transform, (re) imagine events, to reclaim and construct chosen identities, social interactions and communities" (p. 240). In exploring inward transformations, I was heavily influenced by the work of Andrews (2013) who wrote that, "a single phenomenon may produce different stories, even from the same person" (p. 5).

Though Abdullah told me the story of transforming from a lazy person to a hardworking, accomplished one, underneath the surface of that story was his evolution into a legitimate member of his Master's degree community. The first telling of the story of his experience in Texas showed his knowledge of the vocabulary and concepts of TESOL. Abdullah's story telling was heavy with his new acculturation into theories of multiculturalism. In the second telling of the same story, Abdullah told a different tale much closer to his objective in his first telling. He conveyed his evolution toward becoming an ambitious adult. The second telling is framed not through his Master's degree identity but through a different lens marked by more expressive language. Rather than dropping vocabulary, Abdullah shared more emotion. When I compared

these two stories, I was able to see what Abdullah was trying to convey. Not only had he emerged from youth as a hardworking person, he was also a legitimate member of the TESOL community. This identity was conveyed through his use of vocabulary and theories.

Another very powerful inward transformation that emerged in this research was Ivy's re-interpretation of the time she spent silent in the classroom. In the beginning Ivy acknowledged that her silence was born from fear of speaking. She emphatically said "no" when I asked her if she would ask a questions during class. She said "I am afraid" (Interview 1, January 30, 2013). She followed up that statement with her new position that being silent meant also listening. Her concept of active listening as participation evolved into a powerful position of acknowledging her advanced listening skills. Though her story did not show a change in outward expression, her inner transformation offered her a new feeling of legitimacy. I witnessed Ivy's active listening in the focus group when she used physical language to show that she was following the conversation and inserted acknowledging language like "Yeah" or grunts to show her presence. When I learned of Ivy's inward change, I was able to see new subtlety in her interaction with the world.

Zhao's narrative of sitting silently in a classroom while Ph.D. students spoke around her told a series of stories less concerned with appearance. I noticed that Zhao constantly revisited the narrative of the class she was taking with Ph.D. students throughout our meetings. Her stories began with her feeling nervous and overwhelmed by the new vocabulary, workload, and, most importantly, presence of Ph.D. students. As the semester went on, Zhao's stories showed less anxiety and more frustration when she felt her voice was not heard. Toward the end of the semester, Zhao stopped speaking and "zoned out" in anger that the Ph.D. students would not acknowledge her as an important class member. Reinventing the emotions of that experience as she narrated them showed her inward transformation even though her outward appearance

could have just been read as consistent silence. These inward changes related to sitting silently in the classroom, show a greater theme of what Ying pragmatically called “Being Asian” in her own words, “so if you see the Asians, the Asians are kinda all the same, remain quiet” (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). Yet Zhao and Ivy both approach being silent in very different ways and individually broke out of that culturally binding assumption.

Unlike the other participants for whom there was an acknowledgement that change was bound to happen, both Ying and Lucy’s approach to their new lives resisted inward change. Ying did not change what she valued or privileged. She instead began to acquire the outward power and status she acknowledged as important. When I asked Ying about change, she consistently reminded me that she was still herself. I also found it difficult to identify inward change in her rhetoric. Like Ying, Lucy did not appear to change, and her approach also showed a grounded person moving through a new space. But the difference is that I noticed a change in how Lucy saw roles in the classroom.

When Lucy and I began meeting, she spoke of concrete roles for different groups of students in the classroom. She saw the group she called native speakers as tasked with beginning conversations, whereas she saw her own role as that of someone with the option to participate or not. At that time, Lucy saw her role as supporting and helping native speakers by speaking. As time moved forward, Lucy’s idea of roles in the classroom transformed. Initially she said, “I was kind of feel sorry for them because they have to start the conversation in the classroom” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Later Lucy redefined her role with, “if I understand and I know what I want to know from that thing, I just talk” (Interview 1, February 8, 2013). Lucy, herself, did not acknowledge this change, but as a researcher I perceived it through her descriptions of classroom interactions. Even though Lucy’s story is that nothing changed in the US I did see this transformation. Using Andrews (2013) theories to explore inward

transformations as well as the outward transformation that I first noted allowed me to fully explore the transformations the students had in the US.

Reflection on Findings - Conclusion

A reality that stood out prominently to me throughout my research was that emotions played many roles in the experiences of the participants. The participants had expectations of emotions for certain contexts or interactions. They felt what could be considered raw emotions, or emotions that were compelling to them at the moment. They also experienced emotions that shrouded their experiences and weighed heavily on the choices that they made. Yet in the end, I began to realize that the emotions they felt were only part of the equation of their experience. Each participant made sense through the interpretation of his or her emotions, how he or she indexed them, and ultimately how he or she chose to narrate the emotions as part of their experience. My research shows that emotions and individual identity are intertwined which supports the work of Horrocks and Callahan (2006) who strongly assert the role of emotions to reality-building and personal development.

A great illustration of the participants' inclusion of emotion explicitly in their experience is offered by their many narratives of Orientation. All the participants recognized that being afraid was an element of Orientation. Lucy suggested the feeling during the focus group, and all of the women present nodded vigorously in agreement. Although Lucy herself may have recognized that being afraid was appropriate and natural, she did not say that she herself felt fear. Abdullah understood fear to be the first shared experience with his cohort members. Ivy seemed to acknowledge it as the emotion that was a starting point for her journey toward independence and success. Both Abdullah and Ivy shared the expectation that "afraid" would be part of the beginning of their program, yet it seemed clear to me that for them, fear was not negative, but part and parcel to starting a new program in a new country. Here were three very

different experiences of “afraid” at the same moment. Orientation was just one of several occasions when some emotions were expected, and it was interesting for me to see how the participants privileged and narrated them.

Looking back on my research, I was surprised many times by how the participants understood emotions. Knowing all the different responsibilities that they all had, their workload, and their being away from family in a new country, I expected them to be overwhelmed. In fact, many times they would acknowledge the feelings of anxiety and nervousness I anticipated, but they repurposed those feelings as part of a context driven moment, or as past tense aspects of the journey that they had to overcome. Over the course of data collection, I began to realize that these graduate students were not passively experiencing the many academic and social challenges that were happening to them; rather, a greater finding of this study is how the participants were able to change or understand things as active narrators. In this way, my research findings support Fridja and Mesquita (1994), who imbue emotion theory with agency.

One striking example of this reinvention in action came with Ivy’s narration of her experience. Initially, in my notes, I indexed many of the emotions of Ivy’s stories as frustration or disenfranchisement. I heard reflected in Ivy’s narratives the typical frustrations told by new international students (Gebhard, 2010). Ivy struggled with language and with being heard. Yet as I grew to know Ivy, I came to understand that in China she is a powerful member of her community and she subsequently reflected that power when she approached meaning making in many situations. Ivy was not quiet nor passive in her academic life in China. When I learned this new information, I looked back into the stories that she had told me, and I could see, in America, parts of her Chinese identity informing how she responded to the hurdles in her path. Over the course of the semester, I grew to admire how she tackled adversity with self-reflective evolution

of goals and perspectives. I saw similar reinvention with the other participants. This surprising finding made me reconsider the hundreds of stories I have heard from other international students through my ten-year career in TESOL.

I had always equated silence with disenfranchisement. Now, through this project, I see that silence is not so simple. Rather, silence may include feelings of frustration that are full of possibilities for diverse interpretation. This disconnect between what is going on in the outside and what is going on in the inside connects back to Kemper's (1981) explanation of the debate between the theories of Hoschild and Goffman. Both Hoschild and Goffman present theories that examine the relationships between inward and outward emotional expression in a coherent way, making it seem like the process is less complex. Originally, using these theories, I had anticipated a level of predictability in the relationship between emotions and emotional expression. However, through my research project, I have developed greater understanding of the complexity of that relationship that is not completely cleared up by the emotional theorists that I have read. Emotions and how they are expressed do not always fit into neat categories.

Chapter Organization

In Chapter Five I looked outward to explore the progression on my research from a researcher centered and programmatically focused work, toward a co-constructive model of research dedicated to understanding the individual experience within an institution. I shared analyses through the lens of the purpose of my study and the research questions. In Chapter Six I will look inward and reflect on elements of this research project as I understood them as a novice researcher.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, I share the inward transformation, ethics and implications of this study. What I have uncovered in my research is more than I expected, and my purpose and findings have evolved to meet that transformation. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote that at the post data collection, writing of the narratives, and analysis stage, the goal is less about finding concrete answers and more about focusing on sharing suggestions or kernels of greater understanding. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote, “narrative inquiry carries more of a sense of continual reformation of an inquiry than it does a sense of a problem definition and solutions (p. 124). Clandinin and Connelly advocate for openness and reflection at the end of a Narrative Inquiry project, and in this spirit I engage in similar reflection in this chapter. My reflection on my continual transformation during this Narrative Inquiry project begins with a reflection on the research process, writing process and Narrative Inquiry as a methodology. I then reflect on wakefulness, reflexivity, and ethics; all cornerstones to a Narrative Inquiry project. I share implications and suggest some food for thought that emerged as a result of this research. I conclude the chapter with reflection on my transformation as a researcher and some implication for international programming and specifically the design of a Master’s in TESOL program.

Reflection on the Research Process

The research process and the writing process overlap, but for the sake of organization I’m going to define this section of reflection as focusing on the research process. The process of data collection was transformative for me both as a researcher and as a member of the TESOL community. Over the course of collecting and analyzing data, I could not help but put myself in the participants’ shoes and reflect on some of the defining points of my own degree work and experience living abroad. As I deeply interacted with the data, I often wondered how my

identity as a professional could have been shaped differently if I had confronted defining moments with Ying's humor, Abdullah's unbridled optimism, or Ivy's patience and aptitude for change. Through the process of listening and re-listening to the participants' stories, I have developed a greater understanding of five different ways to negotiate academia and five ways of maturing into a professional community.

As I collected data, I anticipated in each meeting a moment of nervousness. An example of the nervousness was Ivy and Zhao stepping, mis-stepping and stepping again toward active roles in the classroom. Over time I found I waited for and searched for the moments of pride, opening up avenues to hear them shared in the conversations. "What went well for you?" I asked hopefully in almost every meeting with every participant. Ying and Abdullah both experienced praise from a teacher; Lucy and Abdullah handed in work and got good grades. Perhaps the most pointed for me was Ivy, who used my research project as a source of pride in her language development. It was only when I stepped outside of the interviews, transcribed the participants' voices and began to re-listen, that I began to hear the mish-mash of tempered and contextualized emotions that they carried into their experiences.

When I thought back on my own experiences while doing my research, I thought about the words we use to define emotion. When Ivy said the word "anxious," an interaction flashed into my mind. A professor in my Ph.D. program asked in an offhanded tone, "Isn't anxiety part of the experience in a Ph.D.?" For me, anxiety meant hours of not sleeping, loss of appetite, and muscle pain. The word anxiety can mean very different things to very different people, and I had to be careful not to assume that Ivy meant what I meant in the word anxiety. Expanding upon that, just as my professor could not have known my meaning, I would spend an entire semester of data collection trying to understand Ivy.

To glean a greater understanding of Ivy and my other participants, I employed several data collection tools which I will reflect on here. I used data collection tools such as online journal reflections, interviews, a focus group meeting, and a researcher journal. Whereas the interviews, focus group and researcher journal gave me rich data and expanded understanding, the online journal did not get off the ground.

The online journal was a shared google document that I asked the participants to write in every two weeks. I encouraged their writing by writing leading questions and imagined the document as a space where they could work through ideas they shared in the interviews or add new ideas that we would then discuss. After one month, only Abdullah had written with any consistency, and rarely did he want to discuss what he wrote. Ying wrote only one time in the semester and shared that she had done so out of guilt. She had written an intensely personal reflection on her relationship with her parents that she did not feel comfortable talking about. While participant reflection on the interview seemed to show it as a highlight in their week and an audience for their journey, the online journal functioned as another homework assignment that added to their workload. Reflecting on the effectiveness of this tool, I would not incorporate the online journal into my methodology in a similar project when the participants are extremely busy.

On the other hand, the interviews and transcription garnished multilayered stories and moments of insight. After I did my first round of interviews, I found myself excited to begin the transcription process, a feeling that carried on throughout data collection. In fact, when I omitted the online journal and privileged the interviews and focus group, I realized the importance of continuous transcription to the development of my research. I developed a new process: interview, transcribe, re-listen to the recording, and reread the transcriptions, all the while pulling out themes, underlining ideas, and writing in my researcher journal. Based on

what I learned during this process, I would make new questions for the next interview.

Continuous transcription over the data collection period was instrumental in the development and richness of my project. If I had not done this, I would have had hours of monotonous transcription to do all at once at the end without the opportunity to go back and investigate what I heard through subsequent interviews.

In addition to interviews and transcription, the focus group was a great data source. One thing I learned in doing the focus group is the importance of purposeful participant selection. Abdullah did not come to the focus group. In the end it was Ivy, Lucy, Ying, and Zhao- four women with similar backgrounds who felt camaraderie with each other and spent meaningful time together. Unfortunately, I never had the chance to see Abdullah interact in a group of his cohort members, so I had to rely on his secondhand stories of those relationships. How the focus group would have gone differently had Abdullah been there, I cannot say. It is safe to say, however, that it would have been different. In terms of future research, I would arrange for more focus groups because of the richness of that conversation. I felt that the number and duration of interviews was a good balance and fit well into the participants' schedules, so I would use that as a model for future research.

The last tool in my data collection toolbox was my researcher journal. At the end of the data collection process, the content of my researcher journal was surprising to me. Initially I imagined it as a reflection tool with objective language like that of a therapist with terms like, "The subject exhibited..." Instead, I found myself writing stories that made sense of what the participants told me or stories from my past that sparked during the interviews from what my participants said. It was full of drawings, lists, and fragments of stories. Instead of being about the participants and documenting their journeys, it was about making sense of my experience. This was helpful because it was an avenue of self-reflection that I felt compelled to do and that

helped me to develop my ideas more fully. In the end, not only would I keep this element in a future research project, but I will try to use it as a tool in my everyday life. The key decisions that I made over the course of this project, then, included omitting the online journal and privileging the interviews and focus group as my two major forms of data collection.

Reflect on Writing Process

When I began to shape the data into narratives, I thought about the work of Adichie, a Nigerian storyteller and author who focuses her scholarship on a mindful approach to storytelling. Originally my summary of Adichie's (2009) work stood prominently as the introduction to Chapter Four. When I cut it, I ostentatiously made it the introduction to Chapter Five. It was a difficult decision to move it. Ultimately I moved the ideas of Adichie (2009) here to become part of a reflection on my writing process. These editorial decisions demonstrate moments in which I was rereading and coming back to her work and reflecting on the onus of the role of storyteller, which includes deciding what to tell, how to organize information, what tone to use and what context to include. Sometimes, caught up in the details of telling a story, reflecting on Adichie made me realize that I also had to consider the big picture impact of stories and not only the literary tools.

As I worked on the narratives, I heard the words of the storyteller Adichie: "Start the story at a different place and you have a different story" (2009). Adichie is acutely aware of how telling the stories of others makes new meaning in their experience and of the subjective nature of narratives and power. Which stories I have told in Chapter Four and how I chose to tell them developed out of a complex matrix of choices. Adichie (2009), said of the power of telling the stories of others that:

How they are told, who tells them, when they are told and how many stories are told are really dependent on power. Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person but to make that story the definitive story of that person.

Whereas Adichie is speaking in the broader sense of asserting identity and stereotypes over groups of people in popular culture, I felt the complexity of the power dynamic she suggests as I chose the stories I would tell of the five participants. I pulled apart a semester of interviews and reformed them over and over again, each time mindful of how the participants identified themselves to me, what stories and themes they privileged when we spoke, and how the stories I chose would feed into a holistic representation of the participants to the reader. As I portrayed a set of experiences that show one part of a participant's journey, Adichie's voice was in my mind as a constant pressure to be reflective, descriptive and honest. For example, if I started Ivy's story in a different place and ended it without sharing her Chinese identity, I would have continued to fall into the trap of defining her as meek and disempowered. Now, I still wonder what I have missed.

In addition to Adichie's perspectives, the concept of narrative smoothing informed my writing process. Perhaps a lifetime of watching Disney movies has meant that the stories in Chapter Four were told by someone who desperately wants to tie up the conclusion in a happy bow. Clandini and Connelly call my approach "narrative smoothing" (2000, p. 181) and warn that it is a common pitfall of any novice inquirer. Yet even with their warning, in my initial drafts, I struggled not to fall into the Disney ditch. Part of my writing process has been to see the narrative structures that I value and hold. It was difficult to accept that Lucy finished the semester still grappling with balancing her HC and American life or that Ying could still insist that she had only marginally changed. It was also hard to see Ivy, so happy with her progress, still knowing that there were obstacles in her path. It took me time to accept that I could not

end their stories in a moment of sheer joyful triumph. Even so, as I finished writing the stories they shared with me, I imagined their bright futures and the moments I knew would come.

I also think back to Abdullah's effort to examine the thesis before he formally decided to write it. Initially, I struggled to write this section. I could not find the quotes from Abdullah to fit how I defined his experience. I wrote Abdullah's thesis journey into my own frame of fear, but it didn't fit. Eventually, I thought about Abdullah sitting straight and confident, asserting with conviction, "I did not come to the States, incompetent to reach my goals" (Interview 3, March 4, 2013). I finally realized that Abdullah knew that he would write the thesis; I as the researcher and writer of the story had to get on board. That story became a rich example of Abdullah's approach to his academic life and a moment of great learning for me as a researcher.

Narrative smoothing is about making things fit into a narrative structure, and part of that for me was fitting the narratives into a linear format. Initially, I planned to write a section for each participant and frame each section in a chronological fashion: beginning with the stories of their past and their expectations of a Master's degree in the States through the present and into their future ambitions. I quickly found, however, that though that format worked for some participants and to tell some stories, it was not elastic enough for me to develop the multi-dimensional picture I needed to get at the heart of my inquiry. While some of my participants deeply rooted our conversations in their pasts with talk about family, home educational systems and cultural norms, others gleaned role building and informed experiences through a gaze on their understanding of today and toward expectations for the future. Indeed, Abdullah shrugged off my questions of past expectations to fill our conversations with ambitions of current academic and individual change and an eye toward what was coming next.

In addition, my initial linear format did not work for this project because the participants oriented themselves in their new contextual situations using several strains of

experiences, types of relationships, expectations, and aspects of identity. Over the course of the semester, many of the participants saw similar classroom and social situations happen again and again, but each time they used different approaches and garnished different outcomes. To try to create in the text the complexity present in my conversations with the participants, I ultimately chose to frame each participant's section by intertwining the impactful forces on their sense of professional growth with the relevant past experiences that were part of their understanding of those forces. Letting go of the linear Disney ditch structure freed me from boxing my participants in only the narrative structures I had used in the past and helped me to be a deliberate and mindful storyteller, as Adichie suggests.

Overall, thinking about my writing process in this project made me think about the impact of stories. Since I was a child, I gravitated toward storytelling and storytellers. Whether it was Mary Poppins floating down on a gust of wind or the stories my parents made up of the Jersey Devil that kept us from ever straying too far into woods— all the stories were part of how I constructed reality during my childhood. Today I invent tales of my niece and nephew as bugs voyaging through their yard, to ease them both into sleep. I imagine how the stories I create for them are part of their reality and meaning making in the world, just as those Disney tales gave me a set of narrative structures to shape my life. Now, as a narrative researcher, I see how storytelling and rigorous research fit together.

Reflection on Wakefulness, Reflexivity, and Ethics

In this section I will reflect on the tools I used in my project to ensure Reflexivity and Wakefulness. Both Reflexivity (Carspecken, 1996) and Wakefulness (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) are concepts that demand constant ongoing reflection during the research process. Reflexivity is one way of reflecting by looking inward and outward, narrowly and broadly during the research process to discover how we position our stories in our own experience and

our concept of larger context (Carspecken, 1996). In this process, Burns and Grove (2001) wrote that researchers can deepen understanding while researching if they are mindful of different possible perspectives during research. This idea is mirrored in the concept of Wakefulness, in which the research and a researcher are seen as constantly in flux (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). I used Wakefulness to be purposeful and flexible in the choices I made. Pagnucci (2004) writes of the importance of Wakefulness that “stories are what we believe in. Narratives are what form our ideology” (p. 55). Wakefulness and Reflexivity both ask a researcher to consider his or her approach to listening, interpreting, and retelling a story.

In order to ensure that I meet the ethical demands of Reflexivity and Wakefulness, I used peer debriefing, member checking, multiple theoretical lenses, and prolonged engagement in the field. Initially I had planned to share my writing with a classmate of mine who was also working on a qualitative research project about the experience of international students. And I did do that for a short time but quickly found that we were rarely on the same page. I was able to bounce ideas off him and ask about theories, but sharing actual work did not fit into our schedules. While working with a classmate who was also working on his dissertation, I felt a constant struggle with time. He was not invested in my work because he was under a strict deadline to complete his own work. His adherence to a lens focused on pragmatics also did not help me to see my data from multiple perspectives. Even though that relationship did not meet my needs, peer debriefing was still a cornerstone to my process of ensuring Wakefulness and Reflexivity. I was able to find the support I needed by hiring an experienced writing tutor trained in minimalist tutoring techniques, whom I met with weekly. My tutor listened to me as I worked through ideas, encouraged me to expand my writing, and consistently reminded me to be honest and true to the characters I was creating from my participants’ stories. Peer debriefing through extended conversation challenged me to consider multiple perspectives and take the

time to look broadly and narrowly at my data. My tutor was not an expert in Composition and TESOL but rather a peer in the sense that we were both Ph.D. ABD students, and she asked questions that made me think outside of my field. Ultimately, I realized in this work a different concept of peer debriefing in which “peer” is more loosely defined.

Whereas the peer debriefing played a more central role during the analysis and narrative writing, member checking was important throughout the project. From the first interview onward, I discussed themes, asked for clarification, talked with participants about which narratives would be included, and kept them apprised of my work as it unfolded. After the interview period was over, Abdullah and Ying were both willing to read a draft while Zhao, Lucy and Ivy did not have time to read my work until it was in its final stages.

When I shared the narratives I had written, it was exhilarating and nerve-wracking. Zhao looked with a critical eye and suggested small changes to the work. Abdullah barely read it at all and wanted more to discuss his future work and ambition to find a Ph.D. program. Lucy also suggested some minor changes and insisted that I did not use her country of origin. Ivy okay-ed the writing without meeting with me and wrote a thank you note. Though I asked for any major revisions, the ones they offered were minor.

Ying’s reaction to my writing stood out because she enthusiastically read and responded to the narrative I had written. I met Ying in the library at her university. Ying looked excited. When I handed her the pages, she held them up and asked in her classic self-deprecating tone how I had written so much about her. Her tone barely registered with me because I was overwhelmed with anxiousness awaiting her response. It had been nearly two months since she had read my work, and I had written a lot. Then she began to giggle. She read the first few pages and placed an arrow in the story about Korean face cream and added the word “cheaper.” She turned to me and smiled and said, “It is also cheaper.” I giggled. She then laughed at my

description of her in the focus group. She had not thought that I would consider her demeanor in the narratives. She then asked me to change her name from Darlene, my choice, to Ying, her choice, and handed the papers back to me. At that moment, I felt that because I had successfully included her throughout the research process through checking themes, asking her for clarification and sharing my expanding ideas, we were able to have this easy final interaction. She felt my depiction was true to her, which showed me that my effort to closely follow my processes of Wakefulness and Reflexivity had produced an honest account.

The final two elements to my Wakefulness and Reflexivity came in the form of multiple theoretical lenses and prolonged engagement in the field. I was shocked that, at the end of this work, my findings were not more grounded in critical or feminist theory. My positionality is heavily influenced by those lenses. I attribute this to learning to listen to my participants from multiple perspectives without imposing my natural disposition. I think back to Abdullah, who saw his professor's yelling as a form of affection. I had wanted to frame that moment as an abuse of power. Instead, I wrote it through my understanding of Abdullah's interpretation, as a moment of intimacy. This was a moment of true Reflectivity because I held closely to the participants' understanding rather than re-inventing the moment through my narrower natural lens. This was a moment of learning as a researcher, expanding my ability to be wakeful and reflexive. The result is deeper, more complex portraits of each participant.

Prolonged engagement in the field ended up being a double-edged knife in my study. My knowledge of the program, professors, and bureaucratic practices gave me a context for listening to the participants' stories. I was able to share intimate knowledge with the participants. Ying and I were able to laugh about professors' catch phrases, and I was able to listen with greater understanding to Zhao's story of classes with the Ph.D. students because I knew that professor's classroom practices. But I quickly found that it also impacted how I heard the stories because of

my own biases and relationships within their department. I also made more assumptions that I would later have to reinvestigate during the analysis process. Now and in the future, studying a place of which I am a part is fruitful because of my knowledge of context, but constant reflection on bias is one way to ensure Wakefulness and Reflexivity.

Ethics

I made every effort to stringently follow the outlined ethical elements of my research process. The participants signed consent forms before the research began, pseudonyms were used not only for participants but for professors and other students who were mentioned, and all recorded documentation is being kept private for use only by the researcher, and kept for a two-year minimum period of time. Some changes I made to meet the ethical demands included excluding Ying's very private journal entry from the narratives that I told. Ying was not comfortable talking about what she wrote, and I felt that sharing it was not needed to answer my research questions. Lucy worried about anonymity and did not want me to write the name of the country she was from nor specific details that would suggest to the reader her home country. In the writing of the narratives I conferred with her often to ensure that the details I shared in her stories upheld her anonymity.

In terms of ethics, Zhao's narratives were easily the most riddled with ethical questions because she was not afraid to be critical of her environment. For instance, I met with Zhao to ask her about sharing the fight as a narrative in my dissertation, aware that I would not add it if she felt sensitive. After reading the story alone and then together, Zhao shared that the story added integrity to the narrative of her experience. However, in the story about her interaction with a Saudi student, originally she had used the phrase "half-breed." Zhao understood the term as a compliment because, she explained, in China there is heightened privilege for someone whose ancestry is half Chinese and half from another ethnicity. When she read the phrase in the

context of my story she asked me to remove it because that positive connotation was lost. These are examples of my responsibility to ethically include the participants in their representation in this project.

Transforming as a Researcher, Writer and Narrative Inquirer

In the process of working on my dissertation, I have changed as an individual, writer, professional and researcher. One of the ways I have transformed is driven by Andrews (2013) who pose the question, “Are narratives shaped by the audiences to whom delivered, and if so, to what extent?” (p. 6). To consider myself as audience, I began to reflect on Pagnucci’s chart that I talked about in Chapter Three. Pagnucci’s chart situated the development of a narrative between the teller, audience, time frame, and context. Whereas before I concentrated heavily on the teller, time frame and context, in this section I will focus more on the placement of the audience as an impactful part of the telling of narratives. That concept of audience transformed the participants from people haphazardly sharing their experiences into storytellers viewing me as an active agent. Over time, I began to think of myself as the audience, interpreting and being impacted by the stories that were told to me.

I had the opportunity in this study to share in the experience of a Master’s degree program with five different, unique people. Their ontological perspectives seeped into my professional approach. I imagined trying on Ying’s strategy signified in her statement, “Alright here I come. If I can’t do anything, it’s fine. It’s not like you are going to die or something,” (Interview 4, April 15, 2013) a level of *laissez faire* decidedly different from what can be described as my anxious approach to professional situations. Ying’s approach was one of many that I learned over the course of this study.

Another very impactful way of being came from Abdullah, whose ambition and drive were palpable both when I listened to him speak and when I read through his transcripts. It was

always present. I found that there is a point in the dissertation process when colleagues ask about my future. “What will you do when the dissertation is done?” I have been asked across desks and from bar stool to bar stool. I normally respond with a sarcastic “Sit on the beach” or something that denotes newfound free time used frivolously. But recently I found myself thinking of Abdullah’s adage: “This rule in life: if someone can do something, surely I can” (Interview 2, February 19, 2013). I try on Abdullah’s ambition and respond to my colleagues boldly, “Publish my work.” I find a tone that infers that I will not miss a step. “Damn right, Abdullah!” I think in my mind, and I imagine a future filled with professional prospects.

The final ontological perspective that I was moved to try to make my own was Ivy’s resilient patience. Ivy was impressive. She may have let her program overwhelm her for a time, but she would not let that time stay with her. Rather, Ivy showed a propensity to regroup and continue forward. In turn, when I finished the first three participant sections in Chapter Four, I felt weighed down with the amount of work that still needed to be done. Rather than complain and procrastinate, I thought about a greater message I found in Ivy’s narrative, which I had just finished writing. I tried on Ivy’s approach and thought to myself that this time will pass, and piece by piece things will be done. I moved on. Through the professionalism experiences of my participants, I was able to develop multiple approaches in my own transformation as a professional.

Implications for a Master’s Degree Program

A key motivation to undertake this project was agency-building for Master’s in TESOL international students coming to the United States. Through this project I have come to understand that emotions and agency-building work together; therefore, Master’s degree programs should not ignore the element of emotions as part of the fabric of learning. I am not arguing that a program can control or monitor the emotions of its participants in a

micromanaging sense but rather that acknowledging emotions by program leaders may add to the richness of understanding the students take away from the program. I am suggesting that purposeful interaction, consistency in approach to participants, and selection of privileged elements of a program can add stability and clarity. Also, acknowledging that emotions are part and parcel to a given situation or that they are attached to a specific element of a program can shift the role of emotions in learning. It is my assertion in this section that students will be more empowered within a system with a clear rhetoric and an acknowledgement of emotions as an important part of the learning process.

Professors and program administrators should consider emotions from first contact and when developing and implementing major components of a program. An example of one way I have tried to think about emotions in program management came with my first interaction with new students in a college English for academic purposes program. Since completing my research, I have become the director of a language institute. In that role, my first thought was of the participants in this study and their shared idea that the prevailing emotion of Orientation was “afraid.” Keeping that in mind, when I sat down to write my first email to a student coming into my program, I wondered how my tone would be interpreted. What would my new students think if I used “Hey” as my introduction? Would that change their initial experience? I deliberately thought about my program goal that students find voice and agency in their new context. I considered my belief in the importance of a feeling of security as an element in student learning. Based on those thoughts and what I have learned in this research project, I chose to write something more formal than “hey” and less formal than “dear.” As I move forward in my work, I wonder what other slight changes I can make to consider emotions in my approach to interaction with students.

I am not suggesting a specific shift in language. For instance, in my study, Dr. Mung developed a more formal level of interaction by telling Zhao to refer to her by her title instead of her first name. The result of Dr. Mung's clarification to Zhao resulted in consistency for Zhao in knowing how to refer to her professors. That clarity of language set a formal tone of interaction that gave Zhao some structure for their interaction. For Zhao, after the perceived initial cultural misstep, her interaction with Dr. Mung became clear and less shrouded in ambiguity, empowering her to have one less element of her program to worry about as she moved forward. The formal term of "Doctor" relates to Dr. Mung's role as an academic director of a program, while my less formal tone in my email relates to my role as director and advisor in both academic and personal affairs.

In terms of setting a tone for a program, I still wonder whether the organizers of the participants' Orientation realized the feeling of "afraid" was a pervasive emotion of that event. I often wonder if Ivy would have had a similar experience of bonding through emotion that Abdullah felt if the feeling of "afraid" was acknowledged by anyone on that day. Deliberately looking forward at the nature and purpose of interaction with students and the tone and choices made in interacting with students can empower students, giving them one less thing to worry about.

My research has also highlighted for me the need for programs to be deliberate in acknowledging the elements of the programs they privilege and how they do so. It became apparent in my research that the thesis project played a central role for many of my participants, and they all grappled with whether to write one or not. In the program my participants were in, the thesis was highlighted in Orientation and periodically by the director and second-year Master's students, and a course was set up to build skills in qualitative research for which the final product was a proposal for the thesis. The emphasis put on the thesis made students feel

that it was an important status-laden element of their program, rather than just an optional project for which they could substitute two additional courses. The implications of this kind of emphasis on one element impacted what the students focused on in their study and their future plans and choices. Rather than treating it as a typical paper or project, they attributed different emotional states to working on a thesis ranging from guilt, anxiety, stress, and feeling overwhelmed to elation and excitement. In the end, the prospect of writing a thesis impacted the emotions of the participants. What I took away from the participants' experiences with the thesis in terms of programmatic development is that programs have power in shaping the values in learning of the participants. If a program does decided to privilege one element, I suggest they follow the model of the school in my study by offering a course that prepares students to meet the demands of the privileged element.

A less clearly defined value in the program that the participants were part of was the privileging of Ph.D. status. Often, when one of the participants did well in a class or on an assignment, the highest praise was the suggestion that he or she would make a great Ph.D. student. In turn, the participants took courses with Ph.D. students, an element of their experience riddled with complication and emotion. According to my participants, Ph.D. students took hold of the floor of discussion in the classroom and showed their greater corpus of knowledge and study. Many of my participants were effectively silenced and disempowered by their Ph.D. classmates' position in the program and classroom. At no point did any of my participants suggest collegiality with their Ph.D. classmates; rather, the relationship was one of tension.

I compare these examples with my experience as a Master's degree student at another institution, where the highest praise I remember receiving was that I would make a great teacher and educator. In the program I attended, students with more experience were also

privileged. In my program, the classes were composed of all Master's students, and only two out of sixty-four students in my cohort went on to work on a Ph.D. Many of my cohort now live abroad and teach. The comparison of my experience with the participants' experiences in differently structured programs shows that a program's spoken and unspoken values can impact a participant's future and choices. Keeping that in mind, the implication is that elements such as the makeup of a classroom, the way the classroom is managed, and seemingly offhand praise must be deliberate because they can have big influences.

If programs are going to combine Master's and Ph.D. students or students of very different levels in the same classroom, I suggest they consult Cox's (1993) Value in Diversity model. Cox (1993) suggests the term, Value in Diversity (VID) as a theory of space development where newcomers are empowered through a model of socialization less driven by assimilation to pre-existing norms and practices. This model suggests that professors be more aware that the values they stamp onto a classroom impact student experience. Valuing Ph.D. students as being more mature and knowledgeable than Master's degree students can be disempowering to them. Rather than looking at the Master's degree students as having a deficit in knowledge in comparison to the Ph.D. students, they could also be seen, as Zhao suggests in her narratives, as having a different knowledge base from which to draw from.

Beyond the classroom, one way to value the diverse knowledge bases of Master's degree students is to get them out of the classroom and involved in multiple communities. Zhao's narratives suggested that, for program coordinators, there is a need to look beyond the program to offer participants other points of engagement. Whether it is offering volunteering opportunities or providing resources that highlight clubs and communities on and around campus, expanding opportunity for students to be involved can be empowering to them. For the

participants in my study who were active in multiple communities, it was a way to counteract their feeling of not being experts in the classroom with Ph.D. students.

Another way to counteract their feelings of marginalization is to focus more deliberately on the cohort as a functional element to a Master's degree program. A big take-away from my research project were the many different ways that a cohort functions to support its members and the need for more research into how cohorts are formed, structured, valued and maintained both during a program and beyond. For my participants, the cohort gave them academic and social support and a source of information and shared experiences that strengthened their sense of community and enhanced their feelings of being valued in their program. Within their cohort, they were empowered in ways they were not in mixed classrooms.

Native Speakerism

Another example of unintentional privileging that the participants experienced was a version of Native Speakerism (Canagarajah, 1999; Holliday, 2005; Kachru 1997). Though the scope of my research did not give me the information to know how much the participants learned about the idea of Native Speakerism, they all experienced it in the classroom and in their program. And with the exception of Ivy's conversation with Allison, the assumptions they formed went almost wholly unchallenged. The participants were constantly comparing themselves to, developing different criteria for, and sharing stories that painted their Native English speaking classmates as more empowered in the classroom and community. As the project continued, I saw an alarming disconnect between scholarship, theorists, and the actually lived experiences of the participants in terms of Native Speakerism.

How the participants spoke in terms of Native Speakerism was particularly surprising to me because I vividly remember in my own coursework as a Ph.D. student in a class heavily populated with international Master's degree seeking students, reading Pennycook (2010), who

deconstructs Native Speakerism in his book, *Language as local practice*. Pennycook and other theorists have pushed for a less centralized concept of ownership of English and a detachment of the culture of English being owned by countries in which English is the first language. In hindsight I cannot help but wonder whether the participants may have been reading those theories like the cohorts before them because none of them mentioned learning theories of Native Speakerism as impactful as they engaged in the power struggles associated with the concept. In terms of policy and program practices, I recommend more qualitative research on this disconnect. This is incredibly important because how Master's in TESOL students understand Native Speakerism will be passed on to their students and colleagues when they return to their home institutions.

In addition, I have two more program suggestions. MA TESOL programs should create multiple opportunities for reflection and leadership. In my study, I found that Lucy and Zhao both scheduled opportunities for reflection, and the time they spent in reflection was an instrumental part of their experiences. Lucy went to the gym, a place where she felt at home. She took the time at the gym to reflect on her days and experiences. Zhao was a member of a Bible group, a context where she was able to think about and share in her experiences. Ivy also expressed that participating in my project and reflecting while looking at the transcripts gave her a way to visualize her experience and development. All of these participants shared in their narratives the calm and clarity they took from their reflective practices. Drawn from these participants' experiences is my suggestion that reflective practice can vary in its form from person to person, but that is a key element of sense-making in sojourning and should be a practiced element in any program.

Another element that enhanced the participants' experience was tutoring and leadership opportunities. The participants consistently felt empowered when they had moments

of legitimacy and leadership opportunities. Zhao found leadership in her Chinese community by expanding her knowledge of travel. Zhao and Ying found leadership opportunities by tutoring students in the English language program situated on their university campus. Assigning prolonged teaching or tutoring opportunities to Master's students does more than advance their pedagogical skill. In the case of the participants, it gave them a sense of empowerment and ownership in their experience.

Final Thought

Though my study was small in scope with just five participants, it is revealing of bigger structures and points of inquiry for future study. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote, "We are therefore not only concerned with life as it is experienced in the here and now but also with life as it is experienced on a continuum - people's lives, institutional lives, lives of things" (p. 19). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) pointed out the inner connection of individuals and institutions. How can a program know that its purpose or goals are being met without looking at the individuals' experience? At the end of this research journey, I still harken back to questioning what students are taking away from their Master's degree program. I still ask the question, "What are they learning?" From my research I still see the need to look more closely at the tacit and beneath-the-surface elements of a program. And I suggest research heavily laden with data collection tools that support reflective practice for participants and researcher. Qualitative research and narrative inquiry are uniquely suited to uncover even more elements of a program that are beyond the scope of my study. In the meantime, as a director of an English language program, I am developing my own leadership style that deliberately acknowledges emotions, encourages student involvement in multiple communities, and purposefully privileges elements and structures in my program.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Form (Students)



School of Graduate Studies and Research
Institutional Review Board for the Protection
of Human Subjects (IRB)
724/357-7730
Email: irb-research@iup.edu

Informed Consent Form for Students

You are invited to participate in The emotional constructs of socialization in a Masters of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) program. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask (contact information below). You are eligible to participate because you are a current first year Masters in TESOL student at IUP.

The purpose of this study is to examine the ways that participants negotiate socialization through the lens of their own experience and expectations. Over the course of the semester, I will ask you to write and be interviewed about your experience in your Master's program. I will share my observations with you and ask you to think about and reflect on your experience.

Time commitment: Participation in this study will require you to be interviewed four times over the course of the semester (for no more than thirty minutes each time), be interviewed once when the semester is over (for no more than thirty minutes), participate in a focus group with other participants in the study (one hour in length), and keep an online journal which you will share with the researcher. Before the semester begins the researcher will work with you to set up the journal. Writing in the journal will be prompted by discussion in the interviews with no page or length requirements. The interviews will be conducted in a private study room in the library.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators or IUP. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying either of the Investigators. Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence. The information obtained in the study will be published in my dissertation as part of the requirements of the PH.D. in Composition Studies and TESOL as well as published in other scholarly journals, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please check yes in the box below and sign the statement. Take the extra unsigned copy with you.

Project Director:

Dana Poole

Ph.D. in Composition and TESOL candidate

English Department

Leonard 110

Indiana, PA 15705

Phone: 724 910 1224

Email: NVQR@iup.edu

This project has been approved by the Indiana University

Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724 910 1224)

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

YES, I have read and understand the information on this subject in this study. I understand that my responses are subject to the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this Form to keep in my possession.

NO, I do not wish to participate in this study.

Name (PLEASE PRINT) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Email _____

Will you be in Indiana for a few weeks in the summer of 2013? _____

Co-investigator:

Dr. Lynne Alvine

Professor

English Department

353 Sutton Hall

Indiana, PA 15705

Office Phone 724-357-2744

E-Mail Address LALVINE@iup.edu

W

Yes

ave

Appendix B: Copy of Internal Review Board Approval



Indiana University of Pennsylvania

www.iup.edu

Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Stright Hall, Room 113
210 South Tenth Street
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705-1048

P 724-357-7730
F 724-357-2715
irb-research@iup.edu
www.iup.edu/irb

October 9, 2012

Dana Poole
103 South 5th Street
Indiana, PA 15701

Dear Ms. Poole:

Your proposed research project, "The emotional constructs of professionalization in a Masters of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) program," (Log No. 12-207) has been reviewed by the IRB and is approved as an expedited review for the period of October 8, 2012 to October 8, 2013.

It is also important for you to note that IUP adheres strictly to Federal Policy that requires you to notify the IRB promptly regarding:

1. any additions or changes in procedures you might wish for your study (additions or changes must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented),
2. any events that affect the safety or well-being of subjects, and
3. any modifications of your study or other responses that are necessitated by any events reported in (2).

Should you need to continue your research beyond October 8, 2013 you will need to file additional information for continuing review. Please contact the IRB office at (724) 357-7730 or come to Room 113, Stright Hall for further information.

Although your human subjects review process is complete, the School of Graduate Studies and Research requires submission and approval of a Research Topic Approval Form (RTAF) before you can begin your research. If you have not yet submitted your RTAF, the form can be found at <http://www.iup.edu/page.aspx?id=91683>.

This letter indicates the IRB's approval of your protocol. IRB approval does not supersede or obviate compliance with any other University policies, including, but not limited to, policies regarding program enrollment, topic approval, and conduct of university-affiliated activities.

I wish you success as you pursue this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

John A. Mills, Ph.D., ABPP
Chairperson, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Professor of Psychology

JAM:jeb

xc: Dr. Lynne Alvine, Dissertation Advisor
Ms. Brenda Boal, Secretary

Appendix C: Structured Questions for Interview One

- How are things going?
- What have been your best successes so far?
- What are some concerns you have?
- Who has been important to you so far in your experience? Personally and professionally?
Do you view them as a mentor?
- Is there anything so far that surprised you?

Appendix D: Structured Questions for Interview Three

- Is this what happened in this moment?
- Do you remember what you anticipated happening?
- How did you feel during that moment?
- Does that feeling come from a past experience of some expectations?
- Would you have done anything differently?
- Can you tell me more about the setting and context?