

(RE) TELLING: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO PRE-SERVICE TESOL
TEACHERS' STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCES

By

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ABSTRACT

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Learning to teach ESL entails not only knowledge of linguistics, pedagogy, and curriculum, but it also entails negotiating challenges to identity, cultural sensibilities, and emotional relations. In order to make sense of these challenges, I inquire into the experiences of pre-service TESOL teachers teaching and learning experiences in a study abroad context in Malaysia.

Drawing on field texts, I created stories to illustrate students' experiences as shown through their stories, their bodies and their tears. My study focuses on learning-to-teach stories in three contexts: the Malaysian-context field, the students' local school placements, and the language assessment undergraduate course in which they were enrolled during this study-abroad program.

This study offers narrative inquiry as an alternative to psychology as a framework for negotiating the challenges to identity, cultural sensibilities, and emotional relations in an ethical and humane way. Using Dori Laub's and Shoshana Felman's framework of bearing witness to make sense of the crises, listening, witnessing and testimony, the stories give possibility to a new way of knowing and responding to students.

In an effort to prepare teachers for the emotional work of teaching, a bearing witness narrative approach creates the possibility for teacher educators

to model ethical responses for pre-service TESOL teachers. This approach departs from previous definitions of professionalism that tended to censor or banish expressions of emotion from the processes of learning to teach. Since I believe that teaching entails the establishment of human relationships, my study articulates and models how teachers and teacher educators can manage emotional relationships in a humane and ethical way, rather than censoring emotional relationships from professional development processes.

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FOR

Heather W. Hackman, who knew my heart's crisis before I did, who walked alongside me in the journey and listened as she held me through my own becoming, and then released me toward blooming; who told me:

Never give up. Never stop trying. Never. You may not change one damn thing in the space you're in, but maybe that's not the reason you need to keep fighting. Maybe we are here fighting for change to show others that there is something to fight. Maybe we are here to show that voice and power and belief in something greater than ourselves are important. Or, sometimes I think I am just here doing this to try and save my own silly soul from participating in the all-too-often soulless acts of this society...Also, do not forget to find funny things in the world and to laugh. It's God's music and so do it as often and as loudly as you can.

and

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I know you're proud, Grams--you were proud before I started.

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There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside of you.

--Maya Angelou

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Chapter 1: Crisis, Listening, Witnessing, and Testimony

Introduction

This is a narrative inquiry study about learning to teach English to speakers of other languages in a study abroad summer program in Malaysia. I initiated a study abroad program which culminated in a six week program in Malaysia. My program which included five pre-service teachers minoring in TESOL, partnered with another program which included three Master's Degree seeking teachers. I taught a required course on language assessment. The class met for two hours, Monday through Thursday over five weeks. The course focused on types of formative and summative assessments for reading, writing, speaking and listening. The students stayed with host families, with whom they stayed during the week. Typically, we traveled to various destinations on Friday, Saturday and Sunday as a group.

The students were assigned to a mentor with whom they worked during the school day. The students observed their mentor teachers, other teachers, and each other in classroom settings. They also had "down time" at the school where they were able to plan lessons, meet with me before and after observations and talk with each other. The students were not all in the same school, but there were at least two students from the overall program in each school. They co-taught classes at least four times with their mentor teacher, although many jumped in and were very involved in the classes from the beginning. The students also planned and carried out a minimum of two lessons completely on their own, though again, most did several solo lessons or unit plans.

When I started this study, I set out to study what the pre-service teachers, my students, said about their teaching and learning experiences in a study abroad context. I was focusing on both what they said, and their actions. I talked with them extensively about their experiences and documented my observations of them in the schools, with their host families and with each other on the weekends. I was initially interested in their experience overall, but as I compiled my field texts, and began creating stories, I became much more interested in the emotional experiences of the students in the study abroad context. As a result, this project focuses on the emotional sensibilities of learning to teach English to speakers of other languages.

In the context of language acquisition and pedagogy, what does it mean to learn to teach? Specifically, what does it mean to teach pre-service TESOL teachers? When immersed in a new culture and language, learning to teach takes on a new dimension--the challenge of a cross-cultural context and of expectations for relations and experience in those contexts. TESOL teacher educators are beginning to recognize the importance of both personal and professional teacher identity development. However, most of the literature relevant to this audience focuses on language skill knowledge, rather than a holistic approach to learning to teach ESOL, and tends to focus on pre-service teacher tasks and pedagogy rather than on their experiences learning to teach. My project offers a possible lens to help fill the current gap in our understanding of pre-service TESOL teachers' experiences in an international immersion experience. In my narrative study, I am interested in the emotional and bodily aspects of learning to teach ESL in a study-abroad context. As I reflected on, studied, analyzed my experience with

pre-service TESOL teachers in Malaysia, certain stories rose to the surface for me as ways of making sense of experience. These stories have become the focus of this dissertation. As I worked to make sense through these stories, I found the work of Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, whose work tends to center around the Holocaust, to be particularly helpful. Their frames of crisis, bearing witness, listening and testimony have shed light on my understanding of what it means for teacher educators to respond to students in moments of crisis, and how that can create spaces for compassion and humane interaction in a professional teaching context.

The first chapter looks conceptually into Laub and Felman's work on crisis, witnessing, testimony and listening. I clarify the difference between the term crisis and trauma, which Laub and Felman use. I discuss the ways that bearing witness, listening, crisis and testimony allow us an opportunity to understand experience in a way that is not typically engaged in the context of TESOL teacher preparation. The second chapter describes the narrative aspect of this project, in particular the aspects of narrative as I use them in my project. I discuss the ways in which narrative can be a way of knowing. Finally, I describe the project itself--where we went, who went, and what we did there.

Chapters three, four, and five are what I consider to be the core of my project--stories that have risen to the top of my experience working with pre-service TESOL teachers in Malaysia. Based on my journals, observations, interviews and conversations in class, I have written narratives. These narratives represent vulnerable moments--moments

where crisis is bursting through my own perspectives of teaching and learning, and through the world-views of my students. Chapter three engages the telling of a story, particularly the testimony students have given regarding crisis. In chapter four, I specifically engage the body--how they give testimony to crisis in an international immersion experience. Finally, chapter five describes the crying we experienced. The crying and the tears give testimony to the experiences to which the students were bearing witness in Malaysia as they were learning to become language teachers. Throughout, I respond to the stories and question my role as a teacher educator in ethically responding to students' crisis.

The final chapter describes the scholarly conversations I am entering as I share the stories of experience, of testimony, listening, crisis, and bearing witness. As I continue in my work as a TESOL teacher educator, I recognize that the work is important for my peers--other TESOL teacher educators. These stories of crisis, testimony, listening and bearing witness come into direct conversation with teacher identity development and can be helpful as we work to broaden our understanding of what this means not only for language teachers, but teachers more broadly. Finally, I consider how narrative inquiry as a way of gathering stories can lend itself to a way of knowing in education that is not often taken up.

Crisis

When I set out at the beginning of this project, I assumed I would struggle to make sense of the academic aspects my students' experiences learning to teach English in the context of Malaysia. As I worked to make sense of my experiences working with

pre-service TESOL teachers in Malaysia, I found that it wasn't the traditional academic aspects of the experience that stood out. It was stories of the affective, or emotional and visceral aspects of experience that rose to the top. I read a range of educational research in an effort to make sense of these experiences from my perspective as a teacher educator. I was initially drawn to the concept of borders, it seemed, at first to offer several possibilities: cross-cultural border crossing, borders between teacher and student identities in learning to teach. And while this line of thinking could help us understand more about the intricate spaces at which we work to negotiate border crossings, it did not help me make sense of the affective factors in stories of experience.

Nel Noddings work on caring in education was helpful in allowing me to lean into the emotional work of teaching. Emotion is complicated and often engages the work of psychology. Noddings work, however, allows me to recognize the emotional aspects of teaching with out prescribing the complexities of emotion, particularly caring. Again, however, Noddings work did not help me make sense of the particular stories centered around the affective aspects of experience.

As I was looking into the concept of witnessing, as I found myself a witness to my students' experiences, the work of Dori Laub stood out as a framework for making sense, not only of the role I played in my students' experience, but also of the experiences they shared, and that I observed.

Dori Laub wrote in the context of the Holocaust, using terms such as victim and trauma.

¹ I am not writing in the context of the Holocaust, but I do believe his theories of witnessing and testimony can help shed light on the experiences in other contexts. I will not be using the term “trauma”, but rather “crisis.” Particularly, I am referring to a crisis in learning where, as Britzman writes, “the knowledge offered provokes a crisis within the self and when the knowledge is felt as interference or as a critique of the self’s coherence or view of itself in the world.”² Laub’s research partner, Shoshana Felman asserted that education only happens through crisis, that in order to go beyond the transmission of fact, to have truly taught, teaching must “hit upon some sort of crisis”...in order to “encounter either the vulnerability or the explosiveness of a (explicit or implicit) critical and unpredictable dimension.”³

This critical dimension can also be considered in that, as Houwer writes, “humans experience crisis when our normative ‘frames of recognition’ are disrupted.”⁴ At this point, one has a choice to ignore the crisis and return to the hegemonic norms of experience, or face the crisis and gain a new perspective. As its etymology indicates, *krisis* is a “turning point in a disease”, a “judgment of a trial, selection”, to “separate,

¹ Dori Laub, “Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening,” in *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 57-74.

² Dori Laub and Shoshana Felman, “An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony, and Survival,” in *In Felman, S. And Laub, D. (1992). Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 53.

³ Dori Laub, “Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening,” in *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 53.

⁴ Rebecca Houwer, “Learning Freedom: The Pedagogical Potential of Crisis,” *Journal for Activism in Science & Technology Education* 3, no. 1 (2011): 110.

decide, judge.”⁵ It is the moment of crisis that can be pedagogical in that it “provokes deconstruction by providing access to non-normative perspectives that call into question the frame, the integrative hermeneutic that makes our lives intelligible; crises provoke instability and uncertainty.”⁶ Typically, especially in the United States, when students in schools are presented with a moment of crisis, they are encouraged to “return to normal” as quickly as possible.⁷ This return to “normalcy” or to the conventional way of being, is a way schools “[manage] private micro-crises such that their excesses are seamlessly folded back into the normative public frame” Crisis could be an invitation “to reconsider normalcy.”⁸ given the opportunity. The concept of crisis in education resonated with me in the sense that the stories I was trying to make sense of were, in a sense, a crisis. At the time, I called these moments “drama” or “breakdowns”, and in the future, I may move away from the term “crisis”, but for now this helps me make sense of the experiences in Malaysia.

I found myself, as a teacher, playing a vital role in determining the direction of the turn that happens in a moment of crisis. Considering crisis in education, I believe my is “on the one hand, how to access, how not to foreclose the crisis, and, on the other hand,

⁵ “Crisis,” *Online Etymology Dictionary*, n.d.,
<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=crisis>.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁷ Rebecca Houwer, “Learning Freedom: The Pedagogical Potential of Crisis,” *Journal for Activism in Science & Technology Education* 3, no. 1 (2011): 109-117.

⁸ *Ibid.*

how to contain it” so it is not more than can be sustained.⁹ Students need my support in order “reintegrate the crisis in a transformed frame of meaning.”¹⁰ This is in a sense, the same task asked of Laub’s listener, discussed later. While feelings may be a “symptom or outcome of a crisis”¹¹ it is not feelings alone that are the evidence. The crises to which I bear witness and give testimony to represent a fissure, a disconnect, and an opportunity to become aware of what is included and excluded in my students’ current frame, and how the crisis “opens the possibility of expanding, complicating, and changing the frame.”¹² Educational crisis “reveals our situatedness and relationality”¹³ and while often uncomfortable, and at times tragic, it does not need to be debilitating--we can all respond to crisis and learn.

While Laub and Felman refer to crisis around the Holocaust, to the trauma and tragedy of victims and genocide, crisis can happen on multiple levels in all arenas of life. I am not comparing the crises as discussed in this paper to the crisis of the Holocaust. I am drawing on Laub’s work around bearing witness that allows us to make sense of those moments when we experience a fissure in our world view. Laub notes that we do not need to be a trained psychologist to bear witness to crisis, and I find his work helpful in understanding what happens in educational contexts. Laub speaks directly of the

⁹ Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, “Camus’ The Plague, or A Monument to Witnessing,” in *Testimony: Crisis of witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, 1992, 54.

¹⁰ Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, “Camus’ The Plague, or A Monument to Witnessing,” in *Testimony: Crisis of witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, 1992, 54.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹² *Ibid.*, 115.

¹³ Laub, “Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening,” 57.

“victim” of trauma. I will not be using the term victim, though some critical educators might consider students to be victims of education. I will use terminology interchangeably: the one experiencing crisis as the speaker, the crisis witness, and the one experiencing crisis.

Listening, Witnessing, Testimony

It is important to understand several components of Laub and Felman’s work in order to understand their theories of witnessing and testimony. First, I will discuss the role of the listener, how the listener becomes intricately linked in the process of witnessing. Second, I will discuss the three levels of witnessing. The concept of testimony is interspersed in the text as it is intricately linked to both listening and witnessing.

Listening. Dori Laub considers bearing witness a way of knowing. He names the witness of traumatic experiences as the listener. The listener, or witness, is a vital part of a testimony. He writes:

The emergence of the narrative which is being listened to--and heard--is, therefore, the process and the place wherein the cognizance, the “knowing” of the event is given birth to. The listener, therefore, is a party to the creation of knowledge de novo. The testimony of the trauma thus includes its hearer, who is, so to speak, the blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time¹⁴

Felman & Laub's definition of bearing witness as a way of knowing has profound implications for epistemological questions in teacher education. In the case of my study,

¹⁴ Ibid., 58.

bearing witness is highlighted as pivotal in the construction of knowledge for teachers and teacher educators.

The role of the listener is vital in understanding the process of witnessing. The listener becomes a participant and co-owner of the event--they may experience a partial trauma in their own self as a result of knowing the story. As the listener partakes in the struggle of the one experiencing crisis, the listener is not exempt from memories or “residues of his or her traumatic past.”¹⁵ The level to which the listener participates in another’s crisis requires that the listener feel the triumphs and struggles of the one sharing her crisis; it requires the listener to feel the “silences, know them from within, so that [she] can assume the form of testimony.”¹⁶ It is more than just knowing that there are triumphs and defeats; the listener is drawn into them.

While the listener becomes a participant in another’s crisis, she also maintains her own place, keeping her own position and perspective. She does not meld into the one who is experiencing crisis, thus becoming one who is a witness to the one experiencing crisis, and herself at the same time. This dynamic is commonly known as keeping professional boundaries. This simultaneous awareness of the “continuous flow of those inner hazards both in the witness of crisis and [her]self”¹⁷ allows the listener to become the “enabler of the testimony”. The listener is the one who invites and then keeps guard

¹⁵ Dori Laub, “Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening,” in *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 57-74.

¹⁶ Laub, “Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening.”

¹⁷ Ibid.

of the process and momentum of witnessing. The listener becomes, in a sense, the beginning of a story. The role of the listener is important in my dissertation because I see my role as a teacher parallel to that of the listener--and as a witness to the stories of my students, Laub's framework helps me understand how it is that I participate in those stories.

The role of the listener is very important to Laub. He continues to describe the responsibility of the listener by noting that the listener needs to know herself well enough to know where it is she is likely to fail, or hide. The listener needs to be well informed in order to hear the story being told, to pick up cues beyond what the speaker knows or sees. The two sides of the story--the listener and speaker--are vital, as "without an external witness, we cannot develop or sustain the internal witness necessary for the ability to interpret and represent our experience, which is necessary for subjectivity and more essentially for both individual and social transformation"¹⁸ It is a delicate balance however, as the listener should not "hinder or obstruct the listening with foregone conclusions and preconceived dismissals, should not be an obstacle or a foreclosure to new, diverging unexpected information."¹⁹

The listener needs to know and understand the way the speaker tends to shrink away from knowledge of the crisis that she or he may close up at an moment when faced with it. The listener needs to know that the deep knowledge of the crisis "dissolves all

¹⁸ Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, "Camus' The Plague, or A monument to Witnessing," in *Testimony: Crisis of witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, 1992, 88.

¹⁹ Laub, "Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening," 61.

barriers, breaks all boundaries of time and place, of self and subjectivity.”²⁰ She also needs to know that the speaker of crisis may prefer to be silent in order to protect themselves from the discomfort, the fear of having a listener, of listening to their own story. The silence can function as a place of entrapment, but it can also be comforting, like home, a destination they are bound to after the experience of crisis. And, Laub notes, it is the exception for the speaker to leave this place, to return from the silence.

The relationship between silence and listening is important in my dissertation because it is often in these silent spaces where learning can take place. It is a space between knowing and not knowing.²¹ The weight of bearing the silence falls on both the speaker and the listener. Silence is not merely a “simple absence of an act of speech, but a positive avoidance--and erasure--of one’s hearing, the positive assertion of a deafness, in the refusal not merely to know but to acknowledge--and henceforth respond or answer to--what is being heard or witnessed.”²² Once the speaker begins the testimony, the listener has the option of censor--of voiding out the hearing of the story as such. As Laub notes, silence can serve the speaker and the listener in different ways. And as my students give witness to, and as I witness their experiences, this silence is a space of waiting, of expectation. I have a responsibility to listen, to know, not to void, the stories that come through the silence.

²⁰ Ibid., 58.

²¹ Felman and Laub, “Camus’ The Plague, or A monument to Witnessing,” 184.

²² Ibid., 183.

Laub insists that the listener must know all of this--that the listener must “listen to and hear the silence” through listening, and through speech. The listener must “recognize, acknowledge and address that silence, even if this simply means respect--and knowing how to wait.”²³ It is the responsibility of listening, that allows the listener to be “a guide and an explorer, a companion in a journey onto an uncharted land, a journey the [speaker] cannot traverse or return from alone.”²⁴ though it is not without risk for the listener. As the listener comes to know the speaker, she comes to know herself. Often, the story given by the speaker calls into question issues of an existential nature, abstract, and yet so present in our daily lives. It is difficult for the listener to give credence to the speaker’s story, to engage with the questions, and to maintain her own place. It may be that the listener will feel defensive in order to protect herself. The risks of listening are important in my study because in my stories, the teacher is the listener, and as the listener, the teacher may, as Laub suggests, become defensive as she witnesses her students experience. For example, it may be that a teacher witnesses her student’s story, and thinks that a student should have behaved or said something other than what they did, or, the teacher may be tempted to respond to a student in a way that she has seen teachers respond to students in the past. It may even be that the teacher will completely withdraw, or take on a different role completely than that of listener. It could be too, that as a witness to a student’s story, the teacher is reminded of her own experiences as a student, and could project on to the student her own responses and life choices. It is a fine balance to remain wholly in the role of listener,

²³ Laub, “Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening,” 58.

²⁴ Ibid., 59.

and to maintain one's own position. From the perspective of teacher as listener, the capacity to maintain this fine balance is a pedagogical skill.

A particular example Laub gives of his own experience as a listener involves these complex responsibilities and behaviors. He describes an interview with a survivor of Auschwitz whom he described as "slight, self-effacing, almost talking in whispers."²⁵ She was telling her story as an eye-witness to a revolt in Auschwitz when she came alive and Laub says a "sudden intensity, passion and color were infused into the narrative as she described four chimneys going up in flames and exploding. She described people running, the sounds, the chaos of those moments in great detail. After this brief story, she returned to her quiet manner, and she seemed to disappear again. My study encountered similar moments in that there were times in which students behaved or exhibited behaviors that seemed out of the ordinary, that broke from their typical disposition or demeanor, such as when a student with a positive disposition lashes out in anger at another student during a game, or a typically quiet, thoughtful student begins to talk, or chatter, incessantly about trivial daily activities.

Laub showed the woman's testimony at a conference some time later, resulting in a great debate. Historically, only one chimney at Auschwitz caught fire during the uprising. Immediately, many wanted to discredit the woman's entire testimony because of the historical inaccuracy in the story. As the listener, the one bearing witness to the speaker's story, Laub responded:

²⁵ Ibid.

The woman was testifying...not to the number of the chimneys blown up, but to something else, more radical, more crucial: the reality of an unimaginable occurrence. One chimney blown up in Auschwitz was as incredible as four. The number mattered less than the fact of the occurrence. The event itself was almost inconceivable. The woman testified to an event that broke the all compelling frame of Auschwitz, where Jewish armed revolts just did not happen, and had no place. She testified to the breakage of a framework. That was historical truth.²⁶

In addition to her memory of the chimneys, the woman also shared that her work in Auschwitz had been to sort the personal belongings of those who had been gassed. What she told about the story was her ability to bring items--shoes, clothes--to those in need at the end of every day. She saw herself as saving lives of her fellow inmates--she kept them from walking without shoes and from the cold and damp. Laub knew those in this line of work were known as the "Canada Commando", but that term meant nothing to the woman. He also knew where those items came from. But for the woman, they had no origin--that was not part of her story. Laub's role as a listener was to "respect--not to upset, not to trespass--the subtle balance between what the woman knew and what she did not, or could not, know."²⁷ As a listener, Laub respected the constraints and boundaries of silence, of what was and wasn't told, and what was and wasn't known by the speaker. Those critical of her historical accuracy did not know, as the listener knew, that her testimony was valid, despite this, because she was bearing witness to something beyond the number of chimneys, or the origins of her daily goods.

²⁶ Ibid., 60.

²⁷ Ibid., 61.

She was giving testimony to the “very secret of survival and of resistance to extermination.”²⁸

I understand my role as teacher to be similar to Laub's because as a teacher, I expect myself to “respect--not to upset, not to trespass--the subtle balance between what [my students know] and what [they do] not, or [can] not, know”²⁹ is someone with years of experience as a teacher in a classroom, I recognize facets of the teaching and learning process that my students may not have yet experienced, or of which they are not aware. I may know things they do not know. I may see more of a picture or “facts” that they may not, because they could not, know. But my role, like Laub, is to listen to the testimony, to witness their process of witnessing, to give life to their story.

Laub knew of the uprising in which this woman partook--that it was put down quickly and many died. He knew of the Canadian commando and what happened to the people whose goods this woman separated each day. As a listener, he knew this, and if he was not in a place in which he could open himself to her story, he may have had a pre-conceived agenda of what story he wanted to glean from the woman--testimony supporting what he knew. But this process of giving testimony to trauma, or crisis, is a “discovery of knowledge--its evolution, and its very happening.”³⁰ Knowledge in a testimony, Laub notes, is not about the reproducing information already known.

Testimony is a “genuine advent, an event in its own right”, and it is vital that the listener

²⁸ Ibid., 62.

²⁹ Ibid., 61.

³⁰ Ibid., 62.

be careful to not let what he or she knows overshadow or obstruct what the speaker is there to tell. This speaker was not there to tell about the knowledge she had in her possession. The very process of her bearing witness to the trauma she had survived helped her to come to a place where she could now know that event. And in the listening, Laub was able to come to know and understand “not merely her subjective truth, but the very historicity of the event, in an entirely new dimension.”³¹ Her story, as a way of knowing, helped shed new light on an event about which many claim to know. This approach to witnessing stories has shaped my dissertation.

Laub explained the juxtaposition of the woman’s testimony with the historical perspective of the critics:

The historians could not hear... the way in which her silence was itself part of her testimony, an essential part of the historical truth she was precisely bearing witness to. She saw four chimneys blowing up in Auschwitz: she saw, in other words, the unimaginable taking place right in front of her own eyes. And she came to testify to the unbelievability, precisely, of what she had eye witnessed--this bursting open of the very frame of Auschwitz. The historians’ testifying to the fact that only one chimney was blown up in Auschwitz...does not break the frame. The woman’s testimony, on the other hand, is breaking the frame of the concentration camp by and through her very testimony: she is breaking out of Auschwitz even by her very talking.³²

This, according to Laub, is a testimony not to empirical knowledge, but to “resistance, to the affirmation of survival.”³³ She is not testifying to the framework of death, but to life: to her memory of helping others survive, rescuing lives, to resistance. It is not just her

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

story, but the “boundaries of silence which surround it”³⁴ which speak to resistance-- today and in years long past. Despite not knowing what the historians knew, she knew more: she knew “about the breakage of the frame, that her very testimony was now reenacting.”³⁵ As a listener, Laub was pulled into the subtle dialectic of knowing and not knowing of another’s experience. The subtle dialectic between knowing and not knowing another’s experience shapes my research by asking me, the listener, to look at testimony as a way of knowing something more than what is being said or shown. I know that even as my students say specific words, and show certain behaviors, they are often bearing witness to something beyond the words or the behaviors I hear and see, much like Laub’s witness was speaking to the braking of a frame which was, beyond her words and her memory, a very important story.

The role of the listener is vital in the process of witnessing, in a testimony. The listener must be knowledgeable, but be open to unexpected knowledge. She must be willing to engage, to respect, to know how to negotiate silence.

Witnessing. Lori Amy draws on Felman and Laub when situating the concept of witnessing within pedagogy. Her framework is helpful in understanding witnessing in a classroom context. I will draw on her work as well in developing the ideas of witnessing here as well as the work of sociologist Kelly Oliver.

Laub recognizes three main categories of witnessing:

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 63.

- being a witness to oneself,
- bearing witness to another
- bearing witness to the process of witnessing itself

Our autobiographical memories, the stories we tell ourselves about who we are and what we've experienced constitute the way we narrate those stories for others. It is our memory of our experience, and we choose how that story is told. At times, it is not just the memory of our experience that testifies to our witness. Our bodies too, give testimony to experience. The way my body responds as a result of an experience demonstrates, gives witness to, the experience. In my study, body responses became a major focus of my analysis as it is often the body that actually bears witness to a story much greater than just the body. The body experiences function as breadth and depth of knowledge.³⁶ Felman and Laub give credit to the role of the body in bearing witness, recognizing that a testimony is not bound by language. A body can give witness to a story beyond--to something even the speaker can not know, but the listener can see and know. The expression of words, the way a body moves in relation to a telling, a body's physical reactions to the silence, memory, or telling of an experience--the "performance of testimony,"³⁷ says more than is known. Tears, sleeping/not sleeping, eating/not eating, increased blood pressure and heartbeat, sweating or chills--these may be evidence of a body's reaction to an experience. As the listener, or witness, I

³⁶ JeongAe You, "Freeing the Body to Build the Creative Mind," in *Cultivating Curious and Creative Minds*, ed. C. Craig and L. Deretchin (Toronto: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2010), 195-217.

³⁷ Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 86.

could see and observe the ways these experiences in my students told a story beyond their experience--it was testimony of a story they did not yet know, of a crisis.

Secondly, bearing witness of another is to participate in a way, not in the event itself, but in the account of how it's told to the listener. To bear witness to another is to function "As a companion on the eerie journey of the testimony."³⁸ It is in this journey that the companion helps the participant live and relive her experience of an event. She becomes "part of the struggle to go beyond the vent and not be submerged and lost in it"³⁹ his witnessing happens through language as it is through the language that events are "remembered, organized, narrated, made sense of."⁴⁰

I see my role as a researcher in terms of participating as a witness. For me, this means that I am the companion in my students' journeys. As they put their experiences into words, I become a key to their experience beyond silence, to giving life to a story that they are just now making sense of, organizing in the schema of their lives. As a teacher educator, classroom teacher, and a field observer, my presence as witness offers students an opportunity to make an attempt to reconcile the tensions in their experienced crisis.

³⁸ Dori Laub and Shoshana Felman, "An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony, and Survival," in *In Felman, S. And Laub, D. (1992). Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 76.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Lori Amy, "A Pedagogy of Witness: Encounter, crisis and transformation in Women's Studies Classes," *Transformations* (2006): 64.

Finally, Laub notes that the final way to bear witness is the bearing witness to the process of witnessing itself. This process is complex in that “the narrator, and...listener, alternate between moving closer and then retreating from the experience--with the sense that there is a truth that we are both trying to reach, and this sense serves as a beacon we both try to follow.”⁴¹ Amy writes, “Unlike other forms of bearing witness, bearing witness to the process of witnessing involves a retreat from language. This retreat from language, the necessity of moving away from word-containers for the experience making its way into consciousness, is part of the spiral-like movement towards integrating traumatic experiences into everyday life.”⁴²

This aspect of witnessing pertains to my dissertation study because I see my role as teacher/listener/witness as one in which I must respect this process of bearing witness. I know that words are not always an appropriate response, that sometimes, the silence, the waiting, gives birth to a much more authentic story. In recognizing, as Laub does, I must be open to the ebb and flow of the silence, of the story, of the speaker’s place, and of my place. There are times when, in my own person, I want to respond to students: maybe with a sarcastic comment, a look of disgust, or even just ignoring them. But as a listener, I recognize that my role isn’t about responding with my own story, as much as it is being present for my story, in relation to the speaker’s story, to emerge.

As we come into contact with, or witness, the experience and life contexts that we and our students bring into learning experiences, we are forced to bear witness, as Amy

⁴¹ Laub and Felman, “An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony, and Survival,” 76.

⁴² Ibid., 65.

writes, “not just to the “facts” to which they testify, but to the processes by which we speak, hear, open up, or close off the possibilities for encountering what is “other” to our own experience.”⁴³ Felman suggests there is a difference between the narration of historical facts by just anyone and the narration of history by those who lived through it.”

⁴⁴ As one who has been through an experience, there is more than the experience itself to which she gives testimony. In recognizing the story beyond the story to which one bears witness, Oliver notes that “witnessing means testifying to both something you have seen with your own eyes and something that you cannot see. We have both the juridical sense of bearing witness to what you know from experience as an eyewitness and the religious sense of bearing witness to what you believe through blind faith.” ⁴⁵

In encountering each other, we are able to testify and to listen to testimony, leaving us an obligation to witness beyond recognition, though this process of witnessing has multiple players--two parties--a speaker and a listener. The listener is vital in this process. Dori Laub writes “The absence of an addressable other, an other who can hear the anguish of one’s memories and thus affirm and recognize their realness, annihilates the story.”⁴⁶ He continues, noting that it is the “ultimate annihilation of a narrative” that leaves us with a story that cannot be witnessed, and that this is a “mortal blow.” In other words, it takes two. There must be one to be addressed by the witness. Oliver notes that “response-ability is never solitary.” ⁴⁷ This response-ability, an ethical

⁴³ Ibid., 63.

⁴⁴ Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*, 85.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Laub and Felman, “An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony, and Survival,” 86.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 91.

responsibility to respond to the experience of what has been witnessed, must account for the humane.

Oliver's commitment to response-ability resonates with my own commitments to genuinely and humanely respond to the experiences of my students--their crises, their testimony, their process of bearing witness because my role as a listener allows them the opportunity to listen to themselves,⁴⁸ in their process of become teachers, of being students, of being human. My own experience as a student, of becoming a teacher, of teaching in a culture/country other than my own, reminds me that the power of a listener's response to my experience, my crises, helps me learn and move forward in a way that I could not do on my own.

⁴⁸ Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*.

Chapter 2: Bearing Witness/Testimony

Who I am in this study

In my experience as a teacher, I see clearly the multiple and complex ways in which I have played the role of a listener in the process of witnessing and the ways in which teachers have played that role in my experience as a learner. As a result of my work with pre-service TESOL teachers in Malaysia, I have come to see the ways in which those learning to teach--as students and teachers--give testimony to the process of learning, and how, as a teacher and teacher educator, I witness this becoming.

As a teacher, I am a listener, an observer, though I didn't necessarily recognize the extent to which I witness the stories of crisis my students experience until this experience. Just as a classroom anywhere, the context of a study abroad in a new country and culture offers opportunity to "encounter either the vulnerability or the explosiveness of a (explicit or implicit) critical and unpredictable dimension."⁴⁹ Because students bring with them a range of stories, they experience each learning opportunity in different ways. As their stories are brought into contact with a crisis, with a moment in which "the knowledge offered provokes a crisis within the self and when the knowledge is felt as interference or as a critique of the self's coherence or view of itself

⁴⁹ Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, "Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching," in *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 53.

in the world”⁵⁰ they each bear witness to a unique experience. My response to them, as a teacher, is different based on how they give testimony and who I am at the moment.

As students and teachers interact, there is an ebb and flow, a give and take. Much like Laub’s listener, a teacher is party to the creation of new knowledge. This knowledge, much in the same way as the new knowledge for one of Laub’s speakers, is new both to the teacher and student--what knowledge is created is dependent on what each brings to the moment--what stories the speaker brings, as well as what history, what memories, what crises the teacher herself brings to that interaction. All teachers have been in the role of their students--they have gone through elementary and secondary schooling, they have passed through a certification program. The teacher knows that the process of learning and the process of learning to be a teacher is full of crisis, of triumphs and defeat. And even as she witnesses the speaker’s story and becomes a part of it, she maintains a position that is distant--a position that allows her to be simultaneously aware of the “continuous flow of those inner hazards both in the witness of crisis and [her]self”⁵¹ which in turn enables the process of witnessing. I can witness a student’s crisis and engage in her experience. But I can also hold the perspective that allows me to know she will come through this, that her understanding of the crisis will change, that she will change because of it, even if I can not determine how that will be, I know--I’ve been through this process, though my experience was unique.

⁵⁰ Laub and Felman, “An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony, and Survival,” 118.

⁵¹ Laub, “Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening,” 58.

The study: What I am interested in?

I am interested in what we do and what we say about experience as teachers and learners in specific contexts. In particular, I am interested in looking at pre-service teachers' experiences as both students and teachers in a study abroad context. I worked with pre-service teachers minoring in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in Malaysia for six weeks during the summer of 2010. The pre-service teachers took a class in Language Assessment and completed a field practicum in which they taught English to students in Malaysian schools. I was the instructor of the class and the supervisor for the field experiences during this summer study abroad. For my research, I observed students in the assessment course, in their placements, and during their weekend excursions in Malaysia. I interviewed students before, during and after the program. I kept detailed field notes and a reflective journal throughout.

What we did

In a nutshell. I co-lead a study abroad trip to Malaysia. Students were enrolled in TE 494, a Field Practicum for TESOL certification, a course that focuses on language assessment and includes a practicum component in local schools. I taught this course and observed students in their placements where they worked in Malaysian schools teaching English. The students were undergraduate students at Michigan State University seeking a TESOL endorsement to go along with their teacher certification in a school subject. I collected field texts (the term used in narrative inquiry) which is equivalent to data in social science research. I had taught TE494 one previous time in the online context, and had taught many students in other courses who had taken a

version of the course. I knew most of the participants from courses I had taught in the teacher education program. I organized, planned and designed this study-abroad experience myself.

The process

I conducted and recorded conversations with the students before we left for Malaysia. The purposes of this pre-program conversations were to help me learn about the students both for my teaching and for my research. These conversations had several purposes: 1) learn background information about the students, including their experiences abroad, 2) discuss their expectations for their experience in Malaysia, and 3) discuss their perspectives on teaching and learning in a study abroad context, teaching ESL, and the purposes of English as a Second Language. I met with students three times as a group before meeting and talking with them one on one. I was able to get to know the students before we left for Malaysia.

When we returned from Malaysia, I met with students and had continued conversations with the participants, again asking them to discuss their perspectives on teaching and learning in a study abroad context, teaching ESL, and the purposes of English. I recorded our follow up meeting as well, where students were able to share what life in the US has been like for them since the trip to Malaysia, share pictures and memories, etc.

In Malaysia, I spent time with students during the orientation week. I recorded conversations we had about education in Malaysia during orientation, TE 494 class sessions, and discussions about their placements in the schools. During the third week of their placement in the schools, I recorded additional conversations with the students where we discussed their perspectives on teaching and learning in a study abroad context, teaching ESL, and the purposes of English. I also asked them questions that prompted discussion of how they were feeling about their own learning experiences in this context. I collected all assignments for the course, which included some reflective writing.

I collected additional field texts in Malaysia, which included my personal reflective journal, and the notes I took while observing students. I journaled about the overall experience every day. The journaling was not only essential for me as a narrative researcher in being able to make note of details; it has also become part of the final narrative. In addition to journaling, I recorded in writing my observations of students during their placements. These observations provided additional perspective on the events at the school sites. While filtered through my own experience, the field texts became essential in creating a narrative about the experience both for myself and the participants.

After highlighting a number of stories that stood out to me around the emotional sensibilities of experience, I read them in light of various frames, (i.e. borders, caring, holistic education, etc.). After reading them through one frame, I would return to the

stories, and typically see others to include in my collection. Then I'd read through a frame, and revisit the stories. After several rounds of reading and theory, I created a matrix of concepts to organize the stories I found in my field texts. One aspect that seemed to come up over and over was that the stories that were holding my attention were not bound to one specific context. For example, the stories where there were tears took place in the field, in the placements and in my class. This was true also for bodies, and for the telling of stories that seemed complicated. All of these circumstances happened in all of the contexts, which was why they became the focus of this project. I had noted some stories that did not fit into the matrix either because it wasn't relevant to context, or, it was a story that was not connected to other stories at all, and in the end did not include them.

The matrix itself went through several iterations before it became focused on telling, bodies, and crying. I noted all of the stories that fit into these categories, and organized them according to the geographical spaces, or contexts of field, placement and class. What surprised me were the many stories I had already collected that fit into the matrix. The stories that I noted, collected, and included in the matrix were stories that had some sort of crisis, though I had been calling it "drama" or "breakdowns". The stories centered around a crisis that either me or my students experienced and stories that seemed similar in nature. For example, one story may be about Anna's tears, but there is a similar story with Kelly, JuHee and Sarah. These stories stood out and became part of the matrix.

Once I had collected a minimum of four, but often more stories for each slot on my matrix, I took a much closer look at the stories in view of Laub's frame of bearing witness. I chose stories in a way that would balance several things. For example, I felt it was important to use stories that were representative of each matrix section. I also chose stories that were illustrative of bearing witness and testimony, stories that were evocative of human compassion, and stories that were simple, and did not include so many people the story became complicated. Once the stories were chosen, I crafted a narrative based on multiple research texts which were compiled from my field texts. The stories are constructed as narratives for the purposes of storying experience. With a few exceptions, the stories are not directly quoted, or transcribed, but created from the various resources I had available. I only included stories for which I had other sources to support the event, such as journals, observation notes, recorded conversations, etc., not just stories from my memory, though I do remember all of them.

What did I look at?

I looked specifically at what students said about their experiences as both teachers and learners in a study abroad context. Specifically, I looked at what they said about their perspectives on teaching and learning in a study abroad context, teaching ESL, and the purposes of English. I did not set out to look at their cross-cultural interactions, their understanding of Malaysian culture or education, or their experiences with their host families. Examples of what I set out to look at included the way they talk about their mentor teacher's pedagogy in the TESOL classes, or how students learning English in Malaysia is different from the students who learn English in the US.

Examples of things I saw but did not include as part of my field texts are my students' interactions with their students, my students' interactions with the other leaders, my students' interactions with each other, at least not to a great degree.

Through what lens did I look?

I used a narrative inquiry lens, drawn primarily from Connelly and Clandinin.⁵² The genre of my dissertation is a narrative. I use storied narratives within the text, and include the narrative of my experience as a teacher educator around the situated stories.

I filtered through the field texts and created research texts, according to the process for narrative inquiry outlined by Clandinin and Connelly. The shift from field texts to research texts happened as I looked at the field texts and asked questions of meaning, social significance and purpose. I wrote memos to compile themes and common experiences that support the final narrative and shared these with my dissertation director. This shift to writing research texts led to the creation of stories. While the original intent was to collect stories of what participants experienced about teaching and learning, teaching ESL and the purposes of English, they have become much more about their experience with crisis in teaching and learning.

⁵² F. Michael Connelly and D. Jean Clandin, "Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry," *Educational Researcher* 19, no. 5 (1990): 2-14.

I then re-storied, a term used by narrative researchers to describe the narrative research process, the stories within the context of teacher education, and TESOL teacher preparation. This means that I worked with field texts not to seek the true or best interpretation, but rather to render the texts effective as stories. Effective stories are those that evoke particular responses in readers. In my case, I am interested in evoking compassion, empathy, intimacy, and vulnerability. Toward that end, I converted field texts into stories that would produce the desired effects. Because my research aim is to communicate in a literary way with stories, my project is clearly more closely aligned with humanities-oriented approaches to research than with social science approaches to research.

In order to better understand narrative inquiry, I have included here the development of essential elements. Historically, narrative has been used to refer to any body of text that is prosaic discourse in qualitative research. Narrative is different from short answer and numerical texts, and different from poetic discourse. A narrative approach to research is not unique to teacher education. Particularly, Polkinghorne⁵³ draws on psychological knowing in relation to experience; we find a thread of the temporal--experience from the past towards a probable future--in the work of historians^{54 55} ethical

⁵³ Donald E. Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences* (Albany: State University of New York Press. 1988).

⁵⁴ David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

⁵⁵ Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," in *On Narrative*, ed. William J. Thomas Mitchell (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 1-24.

implications for narrative as therapy--storytelling as healing--is raised by Josselson,⁵⁶ and others still draw on case studies to demonstrate how stories are built, and how language is used to express experience.⁵⁷ Within the education field, narrative inquiry tends to look at teacher education. Bell⁵⁸ and Jalongo & Isenberg⁵⁹ touch on how reflective practice, teacher research, and listening to student and teacher voices is strengthened by stories of experience in education.

Education researchers Connelly and Clandinin⁶⁰ have narrowed the definition of narrative as a particular type of discourse—the story—not just prosaic discourse, supported by French philosopher Paul Ricoeur, who notes that stories are especially fit as the language by which human experience can be expressed.⁶¹ A story provides a place for events and action to be drawn together—into a whole—by means of a plot. The subject of stories—used here in a general sense to refer to a combination of successive incidents into a unified episode—is human action. The stories are expressions of the phenomenon of individual protagonists engaged in an ordered

⁵⁶ Ruthellen Josselson, ed, *Ethics and Process in the Narrative Study of Lives* (Newbury Park, CA: Notre Dame Press, 1996).

⁵⁷ Ruthellen Josselson, ed., *Ethics and Process in the Narrative Study of Lives* (Newbury Park, CA: Notre Dame Press, 1996); Shirley Brice Heath, *Ways with words: Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classrooms* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁵⁸ Jill Sinclair Bell, "Teacher Research in Second and Foreign Language Education [Special issue]," *Canadian Modern Language Review* 54, no. 1 (1997).

⁵⁹ Mary Renck Jalongo and Joan P. Isenberg, *Teachers' Stories: From Personal Narrative to Professional Insight* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995).

⁶⁰ Connelly and Clandin, "Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry."

⁶¹ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative (Temps et Récit)*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

transformation from an initial situation to a terminal situation. There is, according to narrative researchers, a beginning, middle and end to every life experience.

American psychologist Bruner suggests that people do not deal with the world event by event, nor do people deal with text sentence by sentence noting that they “frame events and sentences in larger structures.”⁶² We use plot as the narrative structure to help us understand and describe the relationships among the events and choices of our lives. Plot provides for the temporal connections, and also provides possible causal links between choice and action causing a subsequent outcome. Polkinghorne suggests this is different from Scottish philosopher Hume’s idea of causality in that Hume seems to work under a determinate model of causality. Narrative according to Polkinghorne is different because it takes into account motive, retrospection and “the effect of choices and planned actions on future consequences.”⁶³ While causality is difficult to determine, narrative offers possibility of making connections or correlations in seemingly causal relationships. In this way, narrative is a useful approach for my holistic study of experiences in learning to teach.

A strong validation for narrative comes from the idea that story is knowledge.

Polkinghorne writes, “stories express a kind of knowledge that uniquely describes human experience in which actions and happenings contribute positively and negatively

⁶² Jerome Bruner, *Acts of meaning* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Press, 1990), 64.

⁶³ Donald E. Polkinghorne, “Narrative Configuration in Qualitative Analysis,” *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 8, no. 1 (1995): 5-23.

to attaining goals and fulfilling purposes.”⁶⁴ This knowledge is different than what is proposed by traditional Western science. Narrative knowledge is more than just an emotional expression, it is a “legitimate form of reasoned knowing.”⁶⁵ Narrative reasoning “operates by noticing the differences and diversity of people’s behavior,” attending to both the temporal context and the complex interactions that make a situation interesting, nuanced, and rich.

I set out to look at what my students said about teaching and learning in their study abroad experience. However, the other stories that rose to the top became central in my own learning experience as a teacher educator. The stories of crisis, bearing witness and testimony have become the focus of this narrative dissertation, with the aim of narrating experience in a way that resonates with readers and evokes emotions of compassion, intimacy, and vulnerability.

What are the elements of a narrative inquiry project?

In separating narrative inquiry from formalistic social science research, this humanities oriented project has come into its own vocabulary and understanding of research components needed for rigor and valid research texts. The primary pieces are *inquiry space*, *research puzzle*, *field and research texts*, and *re-storying*, taken from Clandinin and Connelly.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Inquiry space. The primary terms describing the work of a narrative researcher are based on Dewey's view of experience: situation, continuity, and interaction. The research framework is a *three-dimensional narrative inquiry space* which allows the inquiries to travel *inward, outward, backward, forward, and situated within a place*. The multi-dimensional inquiry space allows a researcher to story and re-story experience by drawing on past experiences, related experience, possible (not yet conceived) experiences, and current experiences.

For example, I can share a little about my experiences in learning to understand the purposes of teaching English. When I was a very young child, a missionary shared with me the need to teach English to people in Africa so they can learn to read the Bible--which, at that point in my life was stressed as vital for a salvation I feared and craved. From that point on, I was very attuned to learning about different languages and cultures--wanting to help immigrant classmates, planning to be a Bible translator, and eventually teaching English through a colonialistic lens. While this part of my story is a backward move, I can shift to an inward experience of revelation. My experience as an English teacher in the Philippines within a region that had bitter memories of Spanish colonization and fond memories of American salvation was brought into full contact with the tension of poverty as a result of American companies stripping the region of all its natural resources. At some point, I would learn the language of colonization, hegemony, and my own socialization--a forward move in my experience--though in that place, I had to come to terms with the fact that teaching English was not just spreading

a tool so people could read the Bible. Americans teaching English to people all over the world was a colonizing process.

As I draw on my experiences, memories and learning, I see the ways in which all of these experiences have built on each other to this point--my interest in and understanding of why and how colleges of education are preparing TESOL teachers is directly related to my own story of discovery. These elements--the multiple dimensions--contribute to a more complete story regarding my understanding of the purposes of teaching English: a story that now recognizes the role of teaching English in colonization regimes.

Puzzle. Current narrative inquiry practice begins with the *research puzzle*--an autobiographically oriented narrative. Social science researchers may refer to this as the research problem or research question. Given that the narrative researcher is working in a multi-dimensional inquiry space, the puzzle continually becomes re-established. A research puzzle differs from a research problem or question in that it allows us to inquire various aspects and dimensions of the issue at hand. It allows for a phenomenological development of the study--as the researcher, what I choose to story arises from my engagement in the experiences at which I look.

Field texts. In social science projects, a researcher typically collects data. In narrative inquiry, we talk about field texts rather than about "data" in order to separate our work from truth-seeking projects of social science. Field texts include, but are not limited to

interviews, photos, audio and video recording, observation notes, participant notes, letters, conversation. In creating the field texts, it is important for the researcher to “be aware of where they and their participants are placed at any particular moment--temporally, spatially, and in terms of the personal and social.”⁶⁶ The multi-dimensional inquiry space requires multi-faceted texts in order to complement the various aspects of the experience. Field texts do not pretend to be objective, or to record “what is there.” Rather, field texts explicitly incorporate the researcher’s perspective, feelings, and responses to observations.

As mentioned above, my field texts included my personal reflective journal, students’ written work, and pre-, during, and post- trip interviews. The interviews, one of the field texts collected for this study, offered an opportunity to hear the students’ background experiences regarding study abroad, interacting with people from other cultures, teaching and learning, and TESOL. The interviews before, during, and after the study abroad experience offered insight into the ways students perceived the experience.

Research texts. Once field texts are collected, the researcher begins to turn these collected texts into research texts--a process of re-storying the stories of experience. As the researcher makes this transition, she considers questions of meaning, social significance and purpose.

⁶⁶ Connelly and Clandin, “Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry,” 95.

A common critique of the humanities-oriented research line is the non-formalistic place of theory in narrative inquiry. It is common in social science work to have a specific chapter or section related solely to theoretical literature, and to frame the puzzle in such. In narrative inquiry, on the other hand, literature is woven throughout the dissertation “from beginning to end in an attempt to create a seamless link between the theory and the practice embodied in the inquiry.”⁶⁷ A tension then exists between literature as a structured framework and literature as a conversation between “theory and life or, at least, between theory and the stories of life contained in the inquiry.”⁶⁸

Storying and re-storying. Finally, the outcome of traditional social science research is, typically, to add to the conversation in a particular field through literature and the development of theoretical work and to reproduce and apply a theory to the issue being researched. While work in narrative inquiry can add to the conversation of education and experience, it is rarely used to replicate and apply theory. The contribution of narrative research is “the creation of a new sense of meaning and significance with the respect to the research,”⁶⁹ rather than to create a knowledge set and claims. The narrative researcher does not delegate general applications of the outcomes of an inquiry, but creates texts which allows “readers a place to imagine their own uses and applications.”⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Ibid., 41.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 42.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

This being said, an “analysis” of sorts still takes place. I reviewed the research texts and created a story with particular literary aims in mind. I drew specifically from these texts to create a story regarding what students experienced in Malaysia in a way that the resulting stories would have a particular effect on readers. I believe that teaching and learning to teach entails the establishment of emotional relationships with students. Emotional relationships need to be managed ethically and professionally, rather than avoided or censored. Therefore, my research produces stories that serve to model ethical and professional emotional relationships between teachers and students.

What conversations have I entered?

I am entering three conversations through this project: preparing TESOL teachers, the development of teacher identity, and the use of narrative as research in education. My study speaks to each of these professional communities, particularly in the ways life stories contribute to our understanding of teaching and learning.

TESOL teacher preparation. It is almost a cliché to mention the ever increasing need for teachers who are prepared to work with English Language Learners, or ELLs⁷¹ Despite the cliché, the need is real. The addition of K-12 TESOL certification to teacher education programs requires a new and focused look at how we are preparing those planning to teach ELLs, specifically. Current TESOL teacher preparation practice

⁷¹ S. Watson, T. L. Miller, and J. Driver, “English Language Learner Representation in Teacher Education Textbooks: A Null Curriculum?,” *Education* 126, no. 1 (2005): 148-57; Lily Wong Fillmore and Catherine E. Snow, “What Teachers Need to Know About Language,” in *What Teachers Need to Know About Language*, ed. C.T. Adger, C.E. Snow, and D. Christian (Washington DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, 2002), 7-54.

typically includes a heavy concentration on the transmission of second language acquisition, pedagogical grammar, phonemic and linguistic awareness.⁷² While there is often a field experience in K-12 TESOL certification programs, we don't often learn the stories about this experience from pre-service teachers. Narrative researcher Jill Bell (2002) advocates the use of narrative in TESOL teacher preparation noting that stories help us see the underlying assumptions of a culture. She notes,

The shape of our stories, the range of roles available, the chains of causation, and the sense of what constitutes a climax or an ending are all shaped by the stories with which we were raised. A key way of coming to understand the assumptions held by learners from other cultures is to examine their stories and become aware of the underlying assumptions that they embody.⁷³

Narrative is also helpful in coming to understand teachers. We know that international field experiences tend to be beneficial for pre-service teachers,⁷⁴ though we don't necessarily know the way pre-service teachers themselves talk of these experiences. Manka Varghese (2005) argues "in order to understand language teaching and learning we need to understand teachers; and in order to understand teachers, we need to have a clearer sense of who they are: the professional, cultural, political, and individual

⁷² J. Smith, "Modeling the Social Construction of Knowledge in ELT Teacher Education," *ELT Journal* 55, no. 3 (2001): 221-227.

⁷³ Jill Sinclair Bell, "Narrative Inquiry: More Than Just Telling Stories," *TESOL Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (2002): 207.

⁷⁴ H.M. Pence and Ian K. Macgillivray, "The Impact of an International Field Experience on Preservice Teachers," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 24 (2006): 14-25.

identities which they claim or which are assigned to them.”⁷⁵ Teacher identity development is closely related to the work of TESOL teacher educators.

Teacher identity development. Educational research has collected an ever growing body of research regarding teacher identity, including research on teachers’ practice⁷⁶ both teachers’ personal and professional lives⁷⁷ and emotion in education⁷⁸ Teacher identity has also been considered as a conceptual tool in education, emphasized in teacher education courses. Often based on social and cultural theories, teaching is framed as the development of a teacher identity, “where identity references individuals’ knowledge and naming of themselves, as well as others’ recognition of them as a particular sort of person.”⁷⁹

Lortie writes about the apprenticeship of observation of new teachers noting that it is not enough for pre-service teachers to observe teaching, or to be formally prepared for the

⁷⁵ Manka Varghese et al. “Theorizing Language Teacher Identity: Three Perspectives and Beyond,” *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* 4, no. 1 (2005): 22.

⁷⁶ Deborah Britzman, *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1991); Deborah Britzman, “Is There a Problem With Knowing Thyself? Towards a Poststructuralist View of Teacher Identity,” in *Teachers thinking, teachers knowing: Reflections on Literacy and Language Education*, ed. Timothy Shanahan (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1994), 53-75; Peter Hoffman-Kipp, Alfredo J. Artiles, and Laura Lopez-Torres, “Beyond Reflection: Teacher Learning as Praxis,” *Theory Into Practice* 42, no. 3 (2003); Susan Florio-Ruane, *Teacher Education and the Cultural Imagination: Autobiography, Conversation, and Narrative* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2001).

⁷⁷ Robert G. Jr. Bullough, “The Writing of Teachers’ Lives-- Where Personal Troubles and Social Issues Meet,” *Teacher Education Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (2008): 7-26.

⁷⁸ Megan Boler, *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

⁷⁹ Matthew Clarke, “The Ethico-politics of Teacher Identity,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 41, no. 2 (2009): 186.

“inner world of teaching”. This inner world of teaching is not just the ins and outs of daily teaching, but the identity--the beliefs, knowledge, and reflection--that goes along with the tasks of teaching.

Deborah Britzman notes that “learning to teach--like teaching itself--is always the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become.”⁸⁰ Sfard and Prusak define identity as “collections of stories about persons or, more specifically, as those narratives about individuals that are reifying, endorsable, and significant.”⁸¹ The role of teacher identity is a vital element of understanding how pedagogy and relationships are carried out in classrooms and narrative is a tool for understanding such identities.

The continuity of narrative inquiry allows for the stories of formation and transformation, the “process of becoming” for the pre-service TESOL teachers in this study. The meaning we find in how they describe and connect their experiences can help us understand how they are developing into their teaching selves.

Narrative inquiry in education. As scholars attempt to understand education, experience becomes a vital tool. Few lines of inquiry count experience in the Deweyian sense, a genuine form of knowing. With narrative inquiry, the researcher is able to collect data as storied experience from the participants (characters), the context

⁸⁰ Britzman, *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach*, 8.

⁸¹ Anna Sfard and Anna Prusak, “Telling Identities: In Search of an Analytic Tool for Investigating Learning as a Culturally Shaped Activity,” *Educational Researcher* 34, no. 4 (2005): 14-22.

(landscape), and the researcher herself. The outcome of traditional social science research is, typically, to add to the conversation in a particular field through literature and the development of theoretical work and to reproduce and apply a theory to the issue being researched. While work in narrative inquiry can add to the conversation of education and experience, it is rarely used to replicate and apply theory. The contribution of narrative research is “the creation of a new sense of meaning and significance with the respect to the research”⁸² rather than to create a knowledge set and claims. The narrative researcher does not delegate general applications of the outcomes of an inquiry, but creates texts which allows “readers a place to imagine their own uses and applications.”⁸³ This sort of meaning-making work in education may prompt the imaginations of educators and education researchers in understanding experience in education. It may provide another kind of backdrop and another kind of understanding of experience.

Why is this a field of interest?

As we see the rise of global communities, the movement of people, technology, languages and culture, we need to continue asking about what this means for teachers of English. Preparing pre-service TESOL teachers in US universities allows us to give them experiences in the schools where they will be teaching. It allows us to see the assumptions about what these pre-service teachers know about US public schools, standardized testing, goals of graduation. TESOL teacher preparation as it stands, is

⁸² Connelly and Clandin, “Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry,” 42.

⁸³ Ibid.

limited in preparing teachers to understand where their students are coming from in that we do not know the experience of pre-service teachers' experiences in their education courses. As teacher education programs see an increase in TESOL certification at large US universities, as well as decreasing budgets, it is important for teacher education programs to be creative in inter-disciplinary efforts to offer comprehensive TESOL certification.

My narrative approach to this research is poised to illuminate an aspect of TESOL teacher preparation, and to tell the stories in terms that speak to the lives of teachers and teacher educators. Incorporating stories of experience into our understanding of how pre-service teachers talk about their experience may give insight into the elements to which they are giving attention in their learning process. The more we are able to understand their experience, the better equipped we are to prepare them for teaching English to speakers of other languages.

Chapter 3--Telling: Crisis, listening, witness, testimony

Throughout our six weeks in Malaysia, I had many opportunities to bear witness to my students' experiences. At times, their bodies and their tears testified to an experiential crisis--other times, it was their words. As we interacted and engaged in conversations around various crises, I found their words gave testimony.

These conversations between the students and me were set in very specific contexts. While I've had many conversations with students experiencing crisis before, this experience in a study-abroad context in Malaysia was very different from my previous experiences. As I witnessed their stories, I was drawn into the story as a listener with my own experience, my own memories, and my own expectations. In this case, the students' experiences seemed to resonate with mine in an unexpected way. While I could often respond to students in previous conversations based on my experience, I was not conscious of how their experiences resonated with mine, though I seemed much more aware of it in the study abroad setting.

This chapter is organized geographically. The first section focuses on Malaysia, the second is about our TE494 course, and the third section relates experiences from the schools where students were placed for their practicum teaching experiences. Each of these locations provides a dimension of the experiences that I witness and re-tell.

Telling in the Field

In this section, I retell stories about the students' experiences in Malaysia, including their lives with host families, our class field trips, and general experiences in the host culture. As always, these experiences from the field share some characteristics with cross-cultural experiences in general. Other aspects of the experiences are unique to Malaysia, and specific to the circumstances of our program in TESOL teacher preparation. One particular aspect of Malaysia that makes it conducive to preparing TESOL teachers for diverse schools in the United States is that it is very heterogeneous.

Malaysia is host to three primary people groups, languages, religions and cultures. One large section of the Asian Malay population identifies as Muslim. This population has a particular history as rulers of the country. Ethnically they are the descendants of the indigenous people and make up about 50% of the population. This portion of the population is Muslim, and have been since the 15th century. All ethnic Malays are considered Muslim according the constitution. The Muslim Malays are most influential in politics and leadership in the country. Malays who have maintained their indigenous ways of living make up about 11% of the population, and while considered Muslim by law, do not necessarily ascribe to the customs of the religion.

Due to the active ports in Malaysia, other peoples settled in the country. About 23% of the population is Chinese Malays--and they typically identify as Buddhist, often visiting the large temples and holding to the Chinese calendar holidays. They have been

known to be the primary owners of the palm oil industry and are known for their business ventures. They speak a dialect of Chinese as well as standard Bahasa Malay.

The ethnically Indian population tends to be Hindu or Christian. They speak a range of languages including Hindi, Tamil and Punjabi. They comprise about 7% of the population and have a history of working the tin mines and being teachers. In social class terms, the ethnically Indian population is often discriminated against by ethnic Malays and the Chinese in job tenure and promotion, particularly if they are very dark skinned Indian people. The other major tension is with the Chinese as they tend to own about 75% of the wealth in Malaysia even though they only make up about 1/3 of the population.

Interspersed amongst these three major ethnic groups are indigenous tribal people and immigrants from many nations of the world. In fact, several of the students had “international students”, immigrants and refugees from countries such as Tanzania, Vietnam, Australia, Bangladesh, and China. This bricolage of cultures, languages, people, and histories create a beautiful tapestry on which stories can be told and re-told.

Across all these ethnic groups, everyone usually speaks the common language of Bahasa Malay for political, business and educational purposes. In the streets you can also hear a wide range of languages even within the ethnic groups depending on the region from which their ancestors came, inside of or outside of Malaysia. It is common for ethnic groups to code switch between Bahasa Malay, their home language, or

“mother-tongue” as they call it and English. The English favored is the British variety of English, rather than the American or Australian dialects. This is the linguistic environment for our study abroad program.

Students lived with their host families for four weeks. All of the host families had one family member working in a local school, though they were not the host teachers of the students at the school. In theory, all families included at least one speaker of English, though at times the English competency was quite minimal. Other families had lived abroad and had near native English speaking proficiency. Some families were relatively wealthy; some had young children in the home, and some had extended family members living in the home. The families were not required to provide internet access for the students, although the families were expected to provide transportation, a private bedroom and at least two meals a day. The host families were representative of the three major ethnicities/religions in the country.

The students had various levels of experience living and traveling abroad. Several students had traveled outside of the United States in either a study abroad or tourist context. When interviewed, students did not consider visits to Canada or resorts in Mexico to be considered “traveling abroad”. With those exceptions, two of the students had not traveled abroad. One of the students had studied in Japan for one semester in high school, and had visited for about six weeks during a summer in college. Another spent six weeks in Italy and had done some tourist traveling in Australia and resorts in the Caribbean. Another student was a Korean student who had attended boarding

school in China and the United States, and who was very well traveled in North and South America, and Asia.

In interviews before our departure to Malaysia, all of the students considered themselves very culturally sensitive and adept in interacting with people from other countries and cultures. They all told stories of working with people from other countries, cultures and languages, and they noted that they were adding their TESOL endorsement because they knew it would give them an opportunity to help students whose first language was not English. The students' majors included: Elementary Education, English/Language Arts, and Japanese. Although they all had a major that would allow them to work in that field, they all professed a desire to become full time TESOL teachers.

At various times during our experience in Malaysia, students gave testimony to their experience outside of the classroom, outside of their placement--in their daily lives. They spoke during class, they emailed each other, they met with me, and they talked with their host families. Through all of these encounters, students were processing their experiences by putting them into words—they were giving testimony. Giving testimony is one way to create and share an experience, to make sense of and come to understand how the experience fits into their frames of teaching and learning. While their words told one story, there were other stories to which they were bearing witness.

The setting in Malaysia made a difference to how testimonies were shaped and shared. Food was one of the major issues for the participants in our program. The people of Malaysia--regardless their cultural or ethnic make-up--were very hospitable to us. And as such, much of the culture revolves around food. Our hosts were constantly worried that we had not had enough to eat, that we hadn't eaten recently enough, whether or not we liked the variety provided.

While it may not seem to be a traumatic crisis, the experience Kelly had with food created a deep tension with her host family. Kelly in particular was well traveled in Asian countries, and for the first part of the trip she seemed quite content with the food. She was often the first of the group to try new dishes. Despite her experience, and my expectation that food would not be an issue for her, food became a site that bore witness to Kelly's struggle. Kelly gave testimony to more than one crisis. First, she was having experiences she didn't understand. Second, as she voiced her one crisis to a responsible other, other crises emerged. A larger crisis was revealed once she had spoken of the experience.

The food Story. Kelly's host mom flagged me down as I was walking through the schoolyard. She asked me if I knew why Kelly wasn't eating. Her brow was furrowed and she seemed genuinely concerned.

She said, "I ask her if she wants this or that and she makes a choice but then when I make it for her, she doesn't eat it. She just moves it around on her plate. I feel so terrible. I am trying to make her happy. Do you have any ideas for me on how I can make her more happy?"

While chatting with Kelly that afternoon, I asked her if the food in Malaysia was like the food she had eaten in Japan on a previous study abroad experience. We stayed on this topic for some time. And then, it came through.

"I just, every time we sit down to eat I think about my family and how we eat family dinners together a lot and even at college my sister and I eat together every day. So I just think about that and I eat but maybe not as much as usual." "Sure," I said, before pausing. "It can be hard when you miss your family." "Oh, I don't think I really miss them that much. Actually, I just think the food is weird."

I'm instantly confused by Kelly's two comments, one about missing her family and the other about thinking the food is "weird". Kelly had spent a lot of time in Japan, and is one of the least picky eaters on the trip, so this seems contradictory. I asked for clarification.

"So when you eat dinner here you miss your family?"

"Yeah, I guess," she responded.

"And what do you think of the food?"

"Well," she said, "It's okay."

"Kelly," I responded, "You just said you thought it was weird, but I've seen you eating it. And you seem to try things others aren't willing to try. What's going on?"

"Well, it *is* weird".

"What does that mean," I asked. "Is it that you don't like it? That it's different than other things you've eaten?"

"It's just that, well..." she hesitated. "It's just that sometimes it causes digestive problems."

"Ah--so it's not that you don't like it, it's just that it affects you differently than food you eat at home," I asked.

"Yes. I feel so strange sometimes. It's not that my stomach hurts, it just feels weird and sometimes I have other problems. Bathroom problems. And if I'm having those kinds of problems it's hard to eat more or to eat something similar that caused me problems before."

We sat in silence for a moment. She added, "And I do miss my family. More than I expected."

My Response to the Food Story. Kelly is telling one story with her words, and, as always, there are other stories present. To me, this story is about much more than food. To Kelly's host mother, it was significant. As a first-time host for the study abroad program, she did not want to others to know that Kelly was unsatisfied with her meal options. The host families were very concerned about their reputation as hosts--something about which all Malaysian cultures pride themselves. Kelly's host mother's first concern was that she was not providing well, not meeting the needs of Kelly. She noticed Kelly's sudden lack of appetite, her moving food around on her plate, not eating.

Her first concern was that Kelly would be unhappy, that she would think her host mother was not being a good host. Her second concern was whether something was wrong with Kelly, and finally, if there was anything she could do differently to make Kelly happy.

A cultural expectation in Malaysia is that you respond to others' efforts to feed you in order to show gratitude, in order to show that you respect them, so that they have an opportunity to give to you. The students often struggled with how to respond to the cultural expectation to not refuse food. Particularly, after eating an entire meal, a member of the host family would still put more food on their plates. And even after saying, "no thank you", they would still say, "please, go ahead, just a little." So in some ways, that Kelly was not even eating a sufficient first round of a meal was something that could easily be considered rude. As experienced as she was with cultures of South East Asia, I don't believe Kelly intended to be rude; her food experience was indicative of other crises.

While the story centers around food, I heard two crises with which Kelly struggled. First of all, meal times reminded Kelly of eating dinner with her family, particularly her sister with whom she ate regularly. I responded with a certain kind of sympathy, validating her longing for home. In the initial moments in talking with Kelly, I reminded myself that, indeed, this is part of cultural adjustment, that she was working through the stages of adjusting to a new place, people and expectations.

But the longer I sat with Kelly, I feel myself drawn into this longing for family. I recognize that as people are immersed in new cultures, their longing for that which is familiar can increase, even if, when they experience the familiar daily, it may not seem significant. However, the distance and time away from the familiar can be accentuated by the new place, new surroundings, and new culture. Based on her initial interview before leaving for Malaysia, I knew that Kelly hadn't experienced this kind of longing for home--my guess is her expectation for how she would feel about her family was not met--she really longed for home in a way she hadn't before.

Felman notes that one aspect of educational crisis is that of a "disconnect" after crisis--that there may be a sense of panic in the moment where it's difficult to make sense. She writes that the panic may consist of "an emotional and intellectual disorientation, loss of direction" ⁸⁴ It seems that the crises Kelly was experiencing suspended what she knew about cross-cultural travel, suspended her expectation, and left her feeling confused and without enough language to express and analyze the crisis. Her testimony, ⁸⁵ as confusing at it seemed in the moment, was an opportunity to come to terms with what it was she was experience, to make sense of the complexities.

I listened to Kelly's stories through my own experiences with food as a student in the Philippines. As someone who has always appreciated flavorful food, I was thrilled about the food in the Philippines where I lived and worked for six months during 1998. Kelly's talk about the emotional aspects of food reminds me of my own experiences in the

⁸⁴ Felman and Laub, "Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching," 49.

⁸⁵ Felman and Laub, "Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching."

Philippines. I grew up in a very mid-western, working class family, so we ate a lot of canned foods, casseroles, and often, the same meals on the same days (Thursdays was almost always liver, onions, and au gratin potatoes--suffice it to say, I ate at my friend Robin's house almost every Thursday). After all that canned food in the Midwestern United States, I was in awe of the markets in my little Filipino town--fruits, vegetables and other edibles that I'd never seen before. I loved the combinations of spices and seafood, noodles and rice. The street food was a favorite, and though I had been advised against eating it, I ate it nearly every day.

About two months into my stay in the Philippines, I experienced a short period of time where everything just felt "off". I couldn't sleep; I was antsy and anxious. I couldn't concentrate or sit still for long periods of time. And I couldn't really eat. I would eat a little something in the morning, skip lunch and try to down a bowl of warm rice for dinner. Nothing seemed appealing. I was experiencing a crisis of sorts, but I did not tell my story to a responsible other--while my body was giving testimony to my discomfort, my words were not--I was silent.

What I see now, when looking back at my journals from that time, is that I was experiencing a crisis in that I wasn't sure of my place--I hadn't started teaching, I was not precisely a daughter, a sister, a wife, a student or a guest, so I didn't have any institutional place that I recognized. I was still adjusting to the time and culture. Despite my excitement for the change in cuisine, I was missing my mom's homemade chicken cheesy casserole. I was missing my mom. I wasn't able to put into language, "I miss my

mom.” Instead, my body was coping to this crisis by responding or not responding to food. In fact, I would often say, “I must be allergic to something,” and “I wonder if I’ve picked up some kind of bug or infection.” And I would say this amidst tears of loneliness and longing. I wasn’t able to make sense, on my own, of this experience--the intellectual and emotional disconnect as a result of the crisis left me silent.

It’s entirely possible that Kelly’s reaction to the food in her host family’s home was related to her missing her mom or family meals, or it could have been based entirely on her digestive reaction to different foods. It could even be that Kelly was uncertain about how to mediate her blood sugar with the types of foods she was presented. I’ve even considered the possibility that it could be Kelly’s expectations for what it would be like to be part of a host family in Malaysia were not met. It’s important to me as a teacher to recognize a wide range of possible explanations for why Kelly might not feel like eating. I also recognized, given my own experiences around food, that maybe, Kelly could not make sense of this experience on her own.

It is typical for people immersed in another culture to experience culture shock or a cultural adjustment period. This time of transition, while definitions by scholars vary, tend to include an initial honeymoon phase where the traveler is entranced with the exotic nature of the new place, there is a sense of euphoria and joy.⁸⁶ As this euphoria fades, it makes way for a time of dis-integration, where the traveler steps back and

⁸⁶ Mara B. Adelman, “Cross-cultural Adjustment,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 12 (1988): 183-204; Britzman, *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach*.

experiences frustration, annoyance and isolation, where they may lash out at the people in the country, long for home, and discount the culture differences. After this phase passes, the traveler may move into a re-integration stage where they become much more confident in the new culture and begin to have a balanced sense of accepting the differences they experience.⁸⁷ Culture shock happens also on the way back. Upon returning to her home country, the traveler may find that she experiences another type of culture shock--one in which she is frustrated about her own country, where she no longer feels comfortable in her own home, and at the same time develops a profound appreciation for her host country.⁸⁸ While people experience cultural adjustment in a variety of ways, and some cycle through a few of the stages several times before developing a helpful level of understanding and respect. This understanding of the various responses to crisis as culture shock is an important feature in the repertoire of teachers who are working in global contexts. Without the capacity to hear culture shock in terms of crisis, a teacher is less able to communicate effectively with aspiring ESL teachers.

Culture shock is, in a sense, a crisis. The experience of being immersed in a new country/culture brings one's normalized frame of reference into direct contact with something new, different, unfamiliar. Given her prior experience in an Asian country, Kelly may have had a frame of what is considered "normal" for a study abroad experience. She may or may not have experienced culture shock to the same degree in her previous experiences. She did mention in one of her interviews that life in Japan

⁸⁷ Adelman, "Cross-cultural Adjustment."

⁸⁸ Adelman, "Cross-cultural Adjustment."

and in her experience in Europe, she was very comfortable, and that she loved Japanese and Korean food. When asked how this would affect her experience in Malaysia, she said it was “a different Asian nation” where there would be some differences but similarities in the schools and food. If this was Kelly’s frame of reference, then her experience with the food, whether in flavor or her body’s reaction to it was coming into direct contact with her expectation creating tension. If there was a disconnect at that point, this can cause a crisis--where new knowledge is “felt as an interference or as a critique of the self’s coherence or view of itself in the world.”⁸⁹

When TESOL teachers learn about cultural adjustment, it is presented as the norm for the experience of refugees and immigrants. We learn one or two versions of a similar set of stages and move forward with the assumption that all of our students will go through all of these phases. What we need to recognize is that while there are some consistent patterns, these crises are individual crises--one student’s experience with the disintegration stage--where they experience a disconnect from the culture--is not the same as others. Based on previous experience, and disposition, they will experience this differently than others. If, as a teacher, I am able to see these different possible stages of cultural adjustment as a crisis, and if I am able to be present as a witness, my response as a listener can allow for learning in that moment.

Towards the end of our conversation, Kelly added, “And I do miss my family. More than I expected.” What is interesting to me here about Kelly’s testimony is that it brings up

⁸⁹ You, “Freeing the Body to Build the Creative Mind,” 198.

multiple crises that she doesn't seem to know until she says them. First, eating reminds her of her family. Then, the food is "weird". And then, "bathroom" issues. Rather than let her host mom, or me, the teacher know that she was struggling, her story came through in a lack of appetite. The telling of her story, to a listener, allowed the multiple tensions to come through in Kelly's bearing witness. When she had a witness, an addressable other, she was able to tell her story, to come to know the multiple faces of crisis she was experiencing.

As a teacher educator, I recognize that the process of teaching and learning is complex. This particular experience was different for Kelly than the experiences she had in other Asian countries. It is possible she was attempting to place the tensions she felt on a framework of past experience. In whatever way she was attempting to make sense of these multiple tensions, she didn't seem to know the tensions until she spoke them to one who would respond as a listener.

Telling in TE 494

This study-abroad program was centered on one undergraduate teacher preparation course, TE494 which is the practicum requirement for the ESL endorsement in Michigan. This is a five-credit course focused on language assessment and including a field-based component. We held class in a conference room at the university with whom we had partnered. The room had a long conference table with a screen at one end on which I displayed my PowerPoint presentations each class period. Fortunately, the room was an air-conditioned room, though the temperature was often set at about

eighty degrees Fahrenheit, which was cooler than the corridor or the outside temperature. The students sat around the table, and for the most part sat in the same positions each class period, though they would always end up moving as I asked them to work with different partners each day.

Our language assessment course met for two hours several days a week for five weeks. After the first week, arrivals became relatively consistent--who arrived when, expectations had been determined, and while there were variables from day to day, we had a routine. Typically our routine consisted of students arriving over a thirty minute period. I was in the room already, and while I tried to chat with students when they arrived, I quickly learned that they were not so interested in talking, and much more interested in being on the Internet. Even though it was two o'clock in the afternoon, and two o'clock in the morning in Michigan, the students still had friends and family awake, and willing to chat with them on Facebook. I usually gave the students a ten minute notice before starting class, and sometimes, a five minute notice as well. I always asked them to close their computers initially, though we often used them during class. To begin class, I'd ask, "How are you today?" While I usually only this conversation to last 5-10 minutes, it usually lasted longer. And then I'd have the students do some kind of quick write, reflection or task. We'd engage the text, and activities centered around the concepts and then at the end of class, I'd always ask, "What's something from today's class you will try to take with you into your teaching?"

While establishing a routine can be helpful in regards to helping students feel comfortable, I must admit that there were days when I was performing the routine, rather than authentically paying attention to the students. I wasn't always tuned into their demeanors, their attitudes, what they talked about when they arrived in our classroom. However, one particular day, stands out, as I was stunned out of the routine into heightened attention.

Lindsay was, overall, a very optimistic student. She had had experience with study abroad and as a tourist in Italy, Australia, Canada and resorts in Mexico. I had had her in my classes before coming to Malaysia, and knew her relatively well. She talked often, and loudly, and expressed herself in a very articulate manner. She was confident and had no trouble asking for help when she needed it. When she was frustrated, she would be usually somewhat sarcastic but remain calm. One particular day was out of the ordinary. Lindsay used words to tell of her frustration, her crisis.

The Loneliness Story. Lindsay entered the classroom and shut the door with exceptional force, causing the windows to vibrate. She dropped her bag on to the table and without greeting the rest of us in the room pulled her computer from the bag and set it forcefully on the table.

"Hi Lindsay," a few of us say to her silent response. We leave her be in quiet for a few minutes.

"This is not fair," she said loudly, tension in her voice. "They said they had Internet and they clearly do not. Everyday they've told me it would be fixed by the next day and it's not. And I get here and this Internet is so [expletive] slow! How do they expect us to communicate with our families? Can you tell me that? What are they trying to do, isolate us?"

This particular day, we were studying language objective writing. I asked the students to do some practice writing objectives first, and then later, we would determine how the objectives were going to be assessed. I walked around the room and knelt down next

to Lindsay. I asked her to explain her objective to me and then I asked, "How might you know if a student has met this objective?"

Lindsay bursts out, "you didn't say objectives had to be assessed!" Everyone looks at her and a couple nod. Sarah whispered to Lindsay, "It states it right in the book," and Ju Hee nods, adding, "She told us a couple of times."

As I walked around helping the students narrow down specific objectives Lindsay was getting more and more frustrated. I asked them questions about what the objectives meant, and if they would that assess what they thought they had taught, etc. I asked Lindsay again a question about the objective she wrote, and she erased the whole thing and started over. I told her that her statement wasn't wrong, I was just asking for clarification. She said, "Whatever, I just want to be left alone." I still checked on her assignment, but I didn't spend a lot of time. I asked to talk to her after class.

I told her that it seemed she had an abrupt change in demeanor today, and I was wondering if she was okay. She had seemed relatively optimistic when I saw her in her school placement earlier in the day. She said, "yup". I asked how, as a teacher, she thought I should respond to a student who comes to class the way she came into class. "I don't know." I asked her how her behavior should be perceived from a professional standpoint, and she responded with "I don't really care right now."

I say, "Well, as someone who is helping you become a professional in the field of education, I have some concerns. I don't know what happened today, if it was something at school or at home. But, I am thinking we need to have a conversation about this when you're in a better place".

Lindsay became quite teary eyed and kept backing away from me. I said, "Hey Lindsay, what's going on?"

She stuck her lower lip out and said, "Nothing".

I said, "I don't believe it's nothing. Is there something I can help with? Is this about things going on with your host family? It's okay to cry." She said, "I just want to go."

I reminded her that we want her to have a good experience and if she doesn't let us know what she is struggling with, we can't really help her. Without a word, she turned and left.

The next day, Lindsay asked to speak to me. She told me that I'm a good teacher, she knows that I care for her and that I want her to learn from this experience. She told me that she was sorry for her behavior.

"I'm exhausted, I'm missing my mom and my boyfriend. And I am so frustrated with the Internet because I don't have it at home and I can't communicate with them. And they said we would have it. And I just need to be in communication with the people I'm closest to because there is a lot going on at home and I need to talk to them. I need to know that they are okay all the time. I *need* to know that." Tears well up in her eyes.

"You know, Lindsay," I said quietly, "it's okay to cry."

"Nope," she said with a shake of her head. She then covered her eyes with her hands. "Nope, it's not gonna happen. I'm going to keep it in."

I told her that I know she knows this, but that teaching and learning are emotional work, especially in a new context. And that it's healthy to find an outlet for the emotions that build up. I tell her that looks different for different people, but it's good to know what

that is for yourself, and also to learn to recognize how your students respond to the emotional work of being a learner.

“I challenge you to cry, just once before you leave for home--in the dark, when you’re alone, that’s fine. But I’m going to challenge you to just let those tears in your eyes out.” We stand quietly for a moment. Lindsay sniffles and wipes her nose with the back of her hand.

“Well, I might,” she says, “but I probably won’t tell you.” We both chuckle.

My Response to Loneliness Story. While at times, Lindsay is quite articulate, using words to say what she is frustrated about, there are times when her words do not seem to express what she is experiencing. Given my impressions of Lindsay, her outburst in class seemed very uncharacteristic. She was experiencing some kind of trouble and the tone of her voice, her outburst indicated it as such. While this could be indicative of many possible crises, Lindsay gives reason to this by explaining that she is frustrated about the Internet, tired, and missing home. I didn’t necessarily understand at that moment that this was a crisis in terms of Laub’s crisis in story, but I recognized the tension.

When I talked to Lindsay after class, she said that there was “nothing going on”, in relation to her outburst in class, her tears. As a teacher with experience, and having had similar experiences in my life, I was convinced there was an emotional component to Lindsay’s story, even though Lindsay said there was nothing wrong. Using Laub and Felman’s work on testimony, I have come to understand that Lindsay may not have known what was going on. She also may have been fully aware of her crisis but not wanted me to know. Or, maybe she knew how she was feeling but didn’t know why, or didn’t know how to put it into words.

Lindsay's outburst in class, on the surface, was about assessing language objectives. I know Lindsay well enough to know that if she is confused or has a question about it, she will ask. She is quite articulate and typically has no trouble asking for clarification. That today involved an outburst unlike I'd ever witnessed with Lindsay, indicated to me that there was a crisis. However, the crisis wasn't about language objectives. Even when I talked to Lindsay later, she insisted she was not having a problem. It's possible that Lindsay was trying to convince herself that she didn't have a problem, or even that she didn't know why she had behaved that way in class. If her outburst was related to a crisis she couldn't understand, it's possible that afterward, she also felt embarrassed or uncertain, or just downright badly given the unusual behavior. But her emotion had to where to go because she couldn't make sense of it--there was a disconnect.

When Lindsay asked to talk to me, to offer explanation for her behavior, she seemed to struggle with the types of thing that are typical for students going through a cultural stage of disintegration where they pull back from the culture, become frustrated, long for home. While this is typical for students, it seems to me that maybe Lindsay was struggling with something beyond this. Given Lindsay's travel experience, I would guess that she had in mind a clear set of expectations for her experience in Malaysia. When her expectations were not met, it created a crisis of sorts.

What Lindsay expressed as her crisis in class did not match up with what Lindsay told me later to explain her behavior. It seems that Lindsay was bearing witness to a new experience in study abroad that broke through her frame of expectation, what she

imagined would happen. It also seems that Lindsay was surprised--she wasn't expecting to cry, to even need that as an outlet. This left me wondering about whether the crisis had anything to do with her expectations, but maybe with the emotional task of learning to teach while immersed in a place she did not call home.

Telling in the School Placement

Each student had a school placement where they observed ESL teaching, served as teacher assistants, and practiced their ESL teaching. The students were placed at either one of two secondary schools, or the elementary school depending on their area of certification. All of the students were placed with English language teachers, so their lessons focused primarily on English. They followed their cooperating teachers' schedules, so they moved from class to class through out the day. The students spent about twenty-four hours each week at the school, though they were only in their classes for about four hours each day. The other time was spent meeting with their mentor teachers and planning lessons, observing content area courses, observing each other teach and having tea or lunch with the teachers in their building. Each day I was at one of the schools, sometimes two, meeting with students, observing them teach, observing classes, talking to mentor teachers and inevitably consulting about English lesson ideas with teachers who would stop be in the corridors.

The students all lived with a teacher from their school, though it wasn't their mentor teacher. They would ride to and from the school with their host teacher. The first week of classes was particularly challenging as it seemed the mentor teachers were

overcome with a sense of insecurity--many did not want their visiting teachers, my students, to attend their classes. They were nervous about their own English abilities when coming face to face with my students. I spent a lot of time talking with the teachers, reminding them that our students are not there to critique their English, they were there to learn from them about teaching English to students for whom English was not a first language. The first few days, many of the students attended class with their host family teacher, rather than their mentor teacher until the mentors warmed up to the students.

Often, the English lessons consisted of the teacher saying words, and students repeating her words, phrases and sentences. Typically, after a recital, they would copy words sentences and phrases off the board or out of a book. Sometimes, the teacher would point to pictures and have students respond to the question, "What is this?" with "This is a car, tree, etc.". Rarely were students expected to produce their own speech. Often they would ask questions in Malay and the teacher would respond in the same language. The students seemed anxious to engage in conversation with the American students, often congregating around us in the corridors asking if we know Lady Gaga and Jennifer Aniston or the Jonas Brothers. Overall, my students were successful in engaging students in conversational English in their classes. Most of my students had not had experience leading full classes--though most had done mini-lessons of sorts with whole classes of students. All of them, regardless of their confidence, experienced feelings of being overwhelmed or being nervous before they taught their first full class.

The Helplessness Story. When I arrived at the school, I asked in several places if anyone had seen Kelly. I found her in a small alcove that two teachers used as an office on the third floor of the building. I was planning to observe her that day, but when I asked her what the plan was she says she didn't know, but that she is pretty sure she wasn't going to be able to teach that day. I suggested we go find her mentor teacher.

When we found her teacher, Kelly introduced us. "She wants to talk to you because I don't know what's going on. I have no idea what I'm supposed to be doing. I don't know what's going on today or when I'm going to be teaching or what I'm supposed to teach," she said.

The teacher apologized to me for changing the schedule. She said the trial exam was not complete, and the students needed another day, so Kelly was not going to be able to do her lesson.

"Kelly, do you know what you'll teach next time we have class," the teacher asked.

"I don't know. I don't know anything," Kelly responded. "I don't know what I'm supposed to do. I don't have a clue. What do you want me to do?"

"You don't have an idea about what we discussed the other day," the teacher asked, looking at me, seemingly concerned. Kelly sighed deeply.

"Nope, I have no idea."

"Kelly," I added, "I would recommend you set up a time to go over your lesson and plan for your next teaching day." She and her teacher set up a time.

Kelly and I went to the teachers' lounge. I asked her to describe for me how people think she is perceived as a professional.

"I don't know. I really don't know," she said, shaking her head from side to side and shrugging her shoulders.

"What's this about, Kelly," I asked in a soft voice, putting my hand on her shoulder. "Is this about confidence? Is it that you really don't know? What's going on?"

"I don't know."

"What kind of perception do you think teachers might have when you respond to questions with 'I don't know, I don't know anything,'" I asked.

"Well, I probably don't seem very competent."

"What do you think the teacher thinks about handing her class to you?"

"Well, she probably doesn't want to."

"So," I asked, "What's going on? Is this a confidence factor?"

"I'm just really nervous. I've never had to do anything alone in front of a class, like in terms of teaching."

"Okay, I understand how that can make you nervous," I said, "What can we do to work on that right now? If you don't believe in your ability, few others will. So, how can we start helping you feel confident about the lessons you'll be doing in the next couple weeks? I've found that a lot of that fear goes away with preparation. What are you going to be teaching?"

She then pulled out a piece of paper that her teacher had typed up for her--it was an outline of the next two weeks events. *What? The teacher had given her, IN WRITING, the plan, and she was still saying she didn't know. What in the world is going on?*

I've known Kelly for several years, and I feel comfortable letting her know that she needs to step it up in terms of her professional interactions--that she is an adult, and is expected to advocate for herself. I was thinking about my own teaching and responsibilities here. *How do I speak to Kelly without lowering expectations, without patronizing, without matronizing, and without exacerbating the bad feelings?* I realized that she hadn't been alone in front of a class before, but she had been in classrooms, developing lesson plans, and working with large groups of students. We had prepared for this experience. It also seemed that Kelly was not taking initiative to prepare for teaching. *Did she forget that she and the teacher had already discussed a two week plan? Why did she claim to know nothing when she clearly had a print out? No wonder why her teacher looked at me the way she did.* I was definitely a little stunned. I knew I couldn't sit there in silence; I had to continue the conversation.

"What do you do if you don't know where you are supposed to be," I asked.

"I should ask someone."

"How do you do that? What do you say?" She looked at me sideways, maybe wondering if I'm seriously asking her what to say. I looked back at her.

"Excuse me Nugarya, Do you know where Suganthi is? I need to find her for my next class." I nodded. *Now what? Do I ask her to role play every situation where she might need to ask a question? Do I just sit here? Do I ask her to talk through how she could have interacted with her teacher this morning?*

After a long pause, she said, "I just feel really dumb because I don't always know what's going on around here. They change the schedule all the time. It's confusing, and sometimes I'm supposed to be in two places at the same time and I get the places and times mixed up."

"Kelly," I said, "it's not dumb to ask. You have a responsibility to be where you are supposed to, obviously that's tricky if you don't know where you are supposed to be."

She laughed a little and said, "Yea, I'll work on it."

Then, I asked what we needed to do to prepare her for the lectures she would be helping with that week. We talked about outlines and how they can help with writing, extended reading and speech writing. We worked through the lesson plan template the the 494 students created together last week Thursday. She did an excellent job talking through all of it--the objectives, the assessment, the activity. In terms of planning, she was quite confident.

My Response to the Helplessness Story. I saw this situation as a particular challenge because I couldn't quite make sense of my role and responsibility as a teacher educator. There were moments when I was annoyed about Kelly's behavior, moments when I knew my response to her would determine the general attitude we both walked away from this situation with, and it could determine whether or not this moment would be a moment in which we would both learn.

When I look at this experience through the lens of crisis and witnessing I see some other things happening, things that help me make sense of this experience. First of all, Kelly was clearly in crisis. It could be that her ideas about what teaching was and what it would be when she stepped into that role did not match up with how it was happening--it could have caused an intellectual and emotional disconnect for her.⁹⁰ It could be that Kelly's crisis stemmed from fear and the unknown. She did not know where to situate the upcoming event in her own frame of what it means to be a teacher. She may not have even realized what she didn't know--she retreated into a silence protected by "I don't know anything." It wasn't until she was able to say to an addressable other, "I don't know," that the feedback came back to her, that she had an opportunity to be confronted with what it meant for her to say "I don't know", and to be pushed out of that cycle of not knowing into a space where she clearly did know.

While I was listening to Kelly, I did not see myself here as a listener in the sense that Laub discusses for a witness--I was not listening beyond the words coming out of Kelly's mouth; had I been, I may have heard a much greater struggle--one of knowledge and identity. Who is she as a teacher? What does it look like for her to be a teacher? The pressure was great, and her survival mechanism seemed to be one of retreat, to cope by telling the truth--she didn't know.

⁹⁰ Felman and Laub, "Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching."

As a high school teacher, one of the phrases I greatly disliked hearing from students was “I dunno,” or “I don’t know.” This seemed to be a catch phrase--maybe for apathy, or genuine not knowing, or fear of not knowing what it was expected they know. While I tried to create environments in which students were engaged in genuine inquiry, where I didn’t expect them to know one answer or another--where we were creating possibilities together---they had caught on to the trick---if they claimed they didn’t know, they weren’t held accountable. Where is your book?--I dunno. Why were you absent yesterday?--I dunno. Why did you just throw your calculator at Juan?--I dunno.

When I think about this now, through the lens of crisis, I recognize that this phrase can represent a range of crises. It can be testimony to an inner struggle for knowledge, or it may be a defensive statement--protecting a certain silence, maybe a fear of uttering what will then become known.

Whether Kelly’s testimony of “not knowing” was about not knowing, or whether it was about fear, or about an emotional and intellectual disconnect or identity, her testimony was evidence of a crisis. As a listener, engaging Kelly’s story, I may have heard the fracture in her voice, the uncertainty, the fear. I may have remembered my own very first whole class experience. I may have heard that the issue wasn’t about her not knowing the plan for class, or where to find her teacher--the issue was that she did not know how to move forward, beyond her own knowing. This very intelligent young woman was immobile--stuck--until she had a witness. I do wish in this case that I would have been a better listener--that I could have heard more than what Kelly was telling

me, as I was able to see at other times. She needed a witness to her story--she needed an other who would respond humanely, so that she could move forward.

My Reflection on Telling

As I reflect on this particular set of stories, I have been considering the ways in which we tell one story in an effort to make sense of some other story. Since coming to understand testimony as Laub offers it to the reader, I have been thinking back on my teaching career and understanding things I hadn't understood before. Particularly, I can look back and remember moments when I was so frustrated with a student because the surface story they were telling me either wasn't as big a deal as they were making it out to be, or it didn't make sense with the kind of person they were.

This revelation or sorts, or concrete understanding of testimony gives way to sense-making, to understanding, has affected how I teach. I recognize the need for students to tell the stories of their experience to another. While I hadn't identified Laub as a primary source in this project yet, when I was working with teachers in their internship this past year, I spent more class time asking students to tell their stories of experience to each other in class, and then to write about the experience after class on their own time. So rather than reflecting on the experience of the story, they reflected on the experience of telling this story to a peer and receiving feedback from them. It seemed their written reflections about the process of telling the story helped them make sense of the story of experience, and in the process, they learned more about themselves. I will

continue to engage students in telling stories, and in reflecting on the process of telling those stories, as it is a way of knowing.

Lindsay's story is an example of how what she said and did were not a match for what I knew about her from previous experiences. And, I know that people don't always behave in manners consistent with how I know them, but for the most part, Lindsay seemed relatively consistent in her classroom behavior. This particular day was quite out of the ordinary. I've had other experiences where students have lashed out either at a classmate or at me with a surface story, as a way of giving testimony to a story beyond the surface. For some time, I explained these types of instances with Aesop's fable of the lion who had a thorn in his foot--he was lashing out at the person trying to remove the thorn and to help him. I assumed that maybe my student's lashed out at me because I was close to them. It makes much more sense to me now that so often, these surface behaviors are indicative of a much greater circumstance, dilemma or crisis. Lindsay's crisis was not just that she didn't know she needed to have an assessable language objective. She was struggling to make sense of her experience.

It is a relief to me, to know that we don't always know what our own crises are in a given context. While it shouldn't come as a surprise to me as I have seen many examples of students telling stories that don't make sense, I have been quite surprised at this aspect of the stories I experienced in Malaysia. Laub notes that the speaker may not know her own story until she gives a testimony, that it is this process--a testimony given to a

listener--which allows for a way of knowing, of coming into the knowledge. This story then becomes a way of making sense of experience.

Chapter 4--Body: Crisis, listening, witness, testimony

As a young teacher in Minnesota, I was surprised at how many times my high school students asked to use the restroom. How often they asked if they could go get a candy bar, how often they complained of being thirsty. I hadn't learned in my teacher preparation program that the physical bodies we inhabit affect our teaching and learning in a classroom. Once I became a full-time teacher of English to speakers of other languages, I had multiple experiences that helped me understand the role of the body in the classroom. Newly arrived students would experience the cold of Minnesota winters to the point of shivering through classes, some students would be infatuated with fast food and spend many minutes of each class period in the restroom. Others would experience fatigue, hunger, lack of hunger, cold and other body response to their new experience. Strange new clothing and oddly shaped desks also contributed to the bodily experiences of students.

Based on my experience as a teacher, my travel experiences in other countries, and my knowledge of cultural adjustment, teaching and teacher education, I expected my students to experience bodily responses to their environment. And we all experienced these things. The difference is that I now understand these body experiences as crises, and there are new ways in which I can analyze how our bodies give testimony to our experience.

In considering the term "to bear", many images come to mind in the context of teaching, and in the context of the story above. "Bearing" in and of itself allows for multiple

understandings conceptually. Carry. Support. Endure. Withstand. Posture or demeanor (as in regal bearing). Cause to be born. To move while holding up or supporting. To hold. To have within. To be pregnant with. To render or give; to bring forward—bring to bear. I appreciate the images these definitions afford. The multiple dimensions of meaning make this word a generative source for hearing and telling stories. The word allows me to invoke concepts of weight, posture, endurance, and identity.

When I think of the bearing of a teacher, it seems to encompass a wide range of these dimensions of meaning: the way we carry and support, endure, the way we hold our bodies erect in the front of a class. We withstand. We render, give, and bring forward.

In my analysis, I connect the word bearing to the idea of crisis in a couple ways. Maybe it is the crisis of learning they are bearing forward in their bodies while in those learning spaces. Maybe it is that they carry the weight of discomfort of dissonance as they learn. Often, it is the discomfort of learning identities--students learning who they are in the world, and how their various identities work in different spaces.

I recognize that our bodies are intricately linked to our experiences. In modern epistemological approaches, we've assigned attention to the study of the body in the analytical sense, but not so much the physical, which we perceive as a physical object because it is been said to be "irrelevant to human understanding or the reasoning

process.”⁹¹ The body, in relation to gender and sexuality, has received attention, especially from feminist theorists. When I think about the bodies in my story of teaching and learning, it is not in the performative/political sense of the body. It is the physical, the somatic, the corporeal. I recognize that identities are mapped on to bodies, that bodies inhabit private and public spaces⁹² but it is not only this aspect of bodies I’m considering here--it is the physical aspect of sweat, digestion, fatigue and visceral, how those aspects connect to learning, and how that connection can sometimes lead to crisis.

In her work on teacher identity discourses around helping pre-service teachers negotiate personal and professional spaces, Janet Alsup clearly describes the ways in which we separate the “messy”, as she calls it, work of teaching from the intellectual endeavor of teaching. She notes that most teachers are most comfortable in a neutral space where we do not run the risk of attending to issues--bodies and emotion--that may seem anti-intellectual. She writes, “most teachers are comfortable staying on the intellectual plane and not dealing with the “messy” emotional or bodily aspects of growth and learning, the teaching of teachers has focused on developing the intellect, the cognitive aspect of learning to teach, without recognizing that to separate the intellectual from the affective or the physical is unproductive, even impossible.”⁹³ She recognizes the need to consider bodies and emotion in teaching and learning, to “incorporate the

⁹¹ Bell Hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education As the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 90.

⁹² Alsup, *Teacher Identity Discourses: Negotiating Personal and Professional Spaces*, 26.

⁹³ Ibid., 45.

intellectual, emotional, and physical aspects of discourse and reveal a holistic identity.”

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Of course, Alsup isn't the first educational researcher to note this. Dewey was speaking to the connection of the mind and body in the early twentieth century. He recognized that the mind and body connection is the marrow of our existence. In 1928 Dewey wrote:

The division in question is so deep-seated that it has affected even our language. We have no word by which to name mind-body in a unified wholeness of operation. For if we said “human life” few would recognize that it is precisely the unity of mind and body in action to which we were referring.⁹⁵

Modern epistemologies since Descartes have assumed the separability between mind and body and afforded normative value to minds while relegating bodies to “non-intellectual” domains. In education, the separation of mind and body has left us without a theorized or articulated ability to listen and see the testimony of the body--the story bodies tell us about crisis in teaching and learning.

Teacher educator Barbara Regenspan draws on Dewey in considering the link of “personal empowerment to the body’s inextricable connections with the mind.”⁹⁶

Regenspan's study focuses on the work of an exemplary teacher who attends to mind-body connections. The exemplary teacher Regenspan works with pays particular

⁹⁴ John Dewey, “Preoccupation With the Disconnected”, 1928.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Barbara Regenspan, *Parallel practices: Social Justice-Focused Teacher Education and the Elementary School Classroom* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).

attention to the mind-body connections of her students by helping them make the mind-body connections. Regenspan writes that the teacher valued the “visceral (of the sacred place of the body, and especially the body’s association with movement, food, sex, and death in all of our lives)”. The teacher also valued an appreciation for laughter, “used most notably for its ability both to help bridge painful social contradictions and illuminate the struggles of growing up human.”⁹⁷ Regenspan recognizes that the pre-service teachers she works with, who will in turn teach younger students, have an advantage over teacher educators. She notes that pre-service teachers’ access “to their own mind-body has been short-circuited,” that they have absorbed from society the notion of themselves as “passive consumers of both conventional commodities and of knowledge as a commodity.” Regenspan recognizes that valuing the body, heart, and mind gives credibility to holistic education.

Bodies in the Field

I was surprised by the way that bodies carried so much weight in our experience. As we give testimony to the experiences of our lives, it is not just language that tells the stories. Our bodies give testimony to our experiences, too. I saw this clearly in Malaysia. There were specific contexts in which the bodies of my students communicated a particular state of being, and other contexts in which their bodies told a different story altogether--one that didn’t always match what their words communicated. While I didn’t have explicit conversations with the students about my observations, their bodies gave testimony to their experience. This became obvious to me over time when

⁹⁷ Ibid.

I started to see distinct behaviors during the week and on the weekend--more laughing than crying, more energy than apathy, enthusiasm rather than fatigue—compared to the week. It wasn't just the behaviors--obviously different contexts evoke different behaviors. It was something about the demeanors of the students--their entire energy seemed different--they seemed relieved, and maybe even joyous. The crises that they experienced, that I witnessed told a much greater story than just about bodies and energy--it gave testimony to a story beyond this, a story of crisis and the need for recognition.

Here I share the story of one particular event. There were many days or weekends for which I could tell very similar stories.

The Bodies Going Hiking Story. The school day started early for us. Most classes began at 7:10 am before the heat really settled in. Students reported that most nights were late nights--their families kept them up late for dinner, which usually began around 8:00 or 9:00 pm after the evening prayers. Often, students traveled with their hosts to visit family in outlying villages, or traveled to Kuala Lumpur to visit a special restaurant in the city. Several traveled 40 minutes or more to the school in the morning. For example, Lindsay's family lived in a neighboring city about fifteen miles from school. Lindsay's host family had only one car and, in order to take care of several people's transportation needs, they had to make several stops before arriving at the school. Lindsay's transportation routinely took a great deal of extra time.

The students seemed a little sleepy most mornings, and while I expected they would perk up as the day went on, most of the time that didn't happen, even after the effects of jet lag would have dissipated. They did not seem to become more energized as the day went on. Often I found them during their break with their heads down on a desk in the teacher's lounge. They seemed significantly more tired in the afternoon when they came to my class.

Typically, Sarah and Lindsay were the first to arrive. Every Monday through Thursday afternoon at 2:30 they burst into our air-conditioned meeting room with sighs of relief to leave the hot humid corridor. They took two seats around the conference table in the middle of the room. I was usually there, setting up the computer/LCD projector, relieved also, to be in the air-conditioned room. The heat was daunting, and even an 80-degree room offered relief. As the others entered the room, the chatter

increased and became somewhat animated as the students shared their morning stories and what happened the previous night in their homes. Then, as they opened up their computers, the room became quiet again as they sent emails, and chatted with boyfriends and siblings still awake on the other side of the world.

Juhee and Kelly typically arrived next. They barely spoke to Sarah and Lindsay as they opened their computers and got online. Typically, Anna was the last to arrive. She usually came in slowly. She would sit down with a big sigh, and slowly open her computer. The room was silent but for the clicking of keypads and an occasional snicker or sigh.

As I put the first PowerPoint slide up on the projector and took out my recorders, I would say, "We'll begin in about five minutes, so finish up." Those who finished first often put their heads down on the large conference table as they waited for the others. Typically, I had to remind Anna and Lindsay to close their computers. Typically, I had to ask more than once.

I worked hard to facilitate classroom activities that required students to be active. I did this because I believe that the more engaged the students were with the material, the more likely they would be to discover questions, and to understand the concepts. Often we wrote responses to a prompt in class before dividing into groups and applying the information in the chapter by analyzing or writing test items, listening to speech samples, or analyzing ELL student writing. Regardless of how interactive the tasks were, the students seemed to have a very "ho-hum" demeanor--sighing heavily, asking aloud if it was time for a nap. They were tired, exhausted, maybe. And it showed.

Then one Friday, this pattern changed. On Friday we met on the campus at 8:00am to leave for the weekend. The students arrived fully awake and chatting, laughing, and chasing each other with cold soda bottles, trying to "cool each other off." The bus arrived and they barely remembered to say good-bye to their host families before boarding. The bus was full of laughter and friendly banter. On this day, most of the group broke into a haphazard version of Bohemian Rhapsody. The energy was unmistakable.

We arrived at our destination, and the staff and I gave the routine directions: always stay with a partner, make good choices, meet us here at 5:00 pm, etc. The students headed off in a large group. Two students turned around and asked me to join them. "Hey, Sheila. You should come with us. C'mon!" I sensed the energy of the group and decided to join them. We moved towards a path leading up a hill.

As the day went on, it got warmer, but I was struck by the energy the students had. They were more talkative and chatty than they had been on any other day of the week in school or class. Some of us decided to hike along the side of the mountain. I was exhausted, and felt the strain on muscles that had done little more than walk for the past few weeks. But the students were a ways ahead of me, laughing, making jokes, and telling stories that would continually one-up each other. I was breathing hard, and looked up with dread as I realized we still had quite a long way to go to the top. I saw Anna jump over a bush and Lindsay run to catch up with Sarah. We hiked for about 40 minutes before stopping to rest. I was the last to reach the group and I immediately sunk to a cool rock. I watched the students as they laughed and yelled with so much enthusiasm, despite the rising temperatures and high altitudes that made it difficult to

breathe. They seemed to be having a genuinely good time in each other's company. After several photos and a look around, we all headed down the mountain. They seemed carefree. I thought to myself, "If only they had a fraction of this energy when they were teaching, or when they were in class!" And then I thought, "Why don't they? How can they have so much energy today, when yesterday they displayed lethargic and apathetic demeanors?"

My Response to The Bodies Going Hiking Story. This question of energy became a focus of inquiry for me. While we often recognize the value of the weekend in the United States as a time for rest and relaxation, I think there was more going on here than just time to play. It seems quite possible that the days spent in the schools and class were days when the students were experiencing an elevated sense of crisis. The weekend trips provided a relief from the many crises they experienced--in their placements, in the field, in class. It was almost like they didn't have to work to make sense of what they were experiencing because it fit into their frame of "normal." Weekends, in most of their lives, represented to a degree (though most had weekend jobs) the freedom to escape from the repetition of their daily lives. These mini-vacations on the weekends in Malaysia fit within that frame--an escape from the daily work. But there was more here than just the weekend break from work.

As I first hiked down that mountain, I started dwelling on the fact that I was frustrated about this "energy thing." The times the students really needed to be the most engaged, the most present, were the times when they needed to learn really important information--their future careers depended on it--and those were the times when they were so "zoned out." I didn't think it was fair that they had had so little energy during a time when they were supposed to be learning, and it was my responsibility to be sure they learned the information in the curriculum. Again, I think this was about more than

the fact that it was the weekend and weekends were meant for play--it was almost as if they didn't have to spend energy resolving their crisis. When they were not faced with the immediate task of trying to make sense of the experience, they could relax.

Toward the bottom of the hill, something reminded me of my experience in the Philippines. At that time, as I worked with students during the day in the local high schools and the local university, the hours seemed to pass so slowly. On days when I worked in the student resource library, the hours seemed to pass so slowly. When my Filipina roommate and I planned weekend trips to jungle parks and the beach, I looked forward to the event--I was excited, and it usually put an extra bounce in my step for the few days before the trip--the anticipation created energy. And while I was away for the weekend, the energy remained--I could ride a bicycle, hike, swim for hours. Even with the heat, and few amenities (such as a flushable toilet and cold water), I still felt energized at the prospect of not working, at the prospect of being free of cultural constraints, at the prospect of speaking in English.

Those Philippine weekend travels differed from my day-to-day living. My days typically involved teaching a couple of classes, tutoring students, working in the student library and occasionally traveling to outlying villages with my companion--an occupational therapist. I would dread the mornings. I would lie awake at night wondering how the day would be, how tired I would feel, if the time would pass quickly or slowly. It wasn't that I disliked what I was doing. I enjoyed interacting with students, explaining language, practicing conversation. But I was not proficient at my work--I was learning

how to communicate with speakers of another language. I was learning how to explain, illustrate, expand, question. I was facilitating activities that didn't always work. I had to solve problems. It was exhausting. And it was hot. Very, very hot.

Language acquisition is exhausting. The cognitive work of language learning combined with the emotional work of cultural adjustment lend itself to fatigue. This fatigue is carried in our bodies and comes to the surface as stories. What has struck me the most about these stories is the way that bodies give testimony to experience. In order to cope practically and ethically with these circumstances, I did not need to appeal to psychological reasoning. I needed to remember my own stories and to listen to the stories of the students.

Something happens when the students are in school. We have assigned the task of "body manager" to Physical Education teachers, but the reality is students have bodies in every class.⁹⁸ So, while I wasn't in charge of their physical state according to traditional education, I still noticed the link between their bodies and their dispositions. The dichotomy I'd been taught--separation of mind and body--did not hold up. Bodies are not separate from minds. The state of the body and the state of mind are mutually connected. There are multiple explanations of their demeanor--they are tired, they are not sleeping well, they are exhausted, they are hot, the list could continue. But something happens when they don't have the requirements of having to be engaged in

⁹⁸ You, "Freeing the Body to Build the Creative Mind," 199.

“school”--either as students or teachers. It seems being released from school is a release from that tension.

While I cannot claim to know what it is that creates this body crisis, I do know that something happens in those spaces where we have to be “on” as a teacher, where we have to be fully present. Where we are trying to make sense of how the teaching and the learning fit into our lives. I wonder if this crisis has to do with expectation, our frame of “normal” in terms of what we think it means to be a teacher and a learner.

Specifically, in the context of teaching speakers of other languages, what does it mean to teach? Was it that the students had the expectation that they would be going into their placements and teach, not learn, but in reality they are learning to teach in that context--is that the point of crisis? Learning to teach requires us to shift identities from student to teacher, and shifting identities takes emotional energy. On top of that, speaking in a non-native language requires us to shift identities from native tongue to foreign tongue, and that shifting of identities takes emotional energy, too.

What the crisis is here, I am not certain. Is it a sense-making crisis? Is it a crisis of fatigue? Of rest? I do not think the students are miserable in their daily interactions with their teachers, host families and in class with me. But their bodies tell a story that allude to a state of being that demonstrates a tension. In this particular circumstance, this body story, I still see myself as the listener, though I’m doing less listening-as-hearing. But I am still listening--to the stories the students’ bodies are telling. Maybe this kind of listening is more of a listening-as-seeing. I’m seeing that the tasks, the

environment, and the engagement affect the ways in which the students' bodies are present. Most psychological approaches would require that we know, and work to determine the source or cause of a feeling. As a teacher and teacher educator, the sources is not the relevant knowledge. Rather, recognizing the crisis, allows me to say, "here I am" and witness the crisis as an ethical response. When I respond compassionately and humanely to my students' feelings--looking at them as a crisis--I don't need knowledge of their psychological states. I don't need to figure it out. I don't need to fix them. I can respond right now.

In the history of educational research, ethical teaching has been typically associated with psychological and philosophical knowledge. However, from the perspective of witnessing, I am able to talk about ethical teaching from a framework that is not tied to psychology or philosophy; rather it is tied to narrative engagement.⁹⁹ Ethical teaching requires responsivity, and responsivity is a communication skill, a literacy skill. In the case of my dissertation study, this means witnessing and listening to the stories of crisis of my students. Witnessing is a kind of knowledge that is not based on psychology, sociology, or law. Rather, witnessing is a process by which knowledge is created in narrative between the teller of a story, and the one listening to the story. The emergence of these stories is enabled by the listener who offers to one who has experienced crisis an opportunity to bring forth her story. As she brings the story, the listener carries the momentum of the testimony forward and learns the story beyond the story of crisis. The listener is able to put the new story, the story beyond the crisis, into

⁹⁹ Laub, "Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening."

the teller's frame of reference. The listener can "recontextualize the crisis and put it back into perspective, to relate the present to the past and to the future and thus reintegrate the crisis in a transformed frame of past and to the future and thus reintegrate the crisis in a transformed frame of meaning."¹⁰⁰

As I look back at this experience I recognize the way my students' bodies, and even mine in the Philippines, were telling a story beyond a story--they were telling of a greater crisis, one that I do not necessarily know, but one to which I can now give recognition as a crisis. Rather than being impatient in moments when bodies are telling a story, I can step back and say--there is a story beyond this body crisis. And while I may not know the source of the crisis, I can respond in a human way by validating the crisis, and recognize this way of knowing.

As one who has experienced the witnessing of such a circumstance autobiographically, Laub's first level of witnessing, I carry with me the story of a body that responds differently in school and out of school. As a teacher educator, as the witness of my students' body stories from the perspective of listener, my own memories of experience are brought to the surface and I'm drawn into their experience because of the memories of my own experience. It is almost as if the crisis of learning and teaching is a heavy load to bear--as if the weight of it, holds them back.

¹⁰⁰ Felman and Laub, "Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching," 54.

Bodies in TE 494

The curriculum for the TE 494 course is important in preparing students for the state licensure exam that they take for certification. Typically offered as an online course when it is taught at MSU, it is taken during the spring semester, and includes a field practicum. The course is quite intense and includes detailed information about language assessment of core areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The elementary education majors seem to have a basic knowledge of assessment in education, though the secondary majors seem to have much less an understanding of how assessment works. This is probably because elementary students in Michigan undergo a massive battery of tests every year, and elementary teachers have to administer these tests in their respective classrooms.

While I was responsible for the transfer of this course into a study abroad context, I did not alter the curriculum from the time I had taught the course online in Michigan. I used, essentially, the same syllabus used in the online format, though I did teach the content differently. Typically, I facilitated activities around the various tasks/concepts in the text. Students were usually expected to read part of the text, and when we were in class, we typically did a brief review of the text, and then the students engaged in a task. For example, I recorded some conversations with several first year undergraduate Malaysian students. I played the recordings in class, and my students assessed their imitative, responsive, interactive, and extensive speaking skills. Then, we compared across groups and discussed how they made their decisions, what they would change after hearing from others, etc. We had many topics to work through and I felt a strong

pressure to be sure that I “covered” all the material, especially since this was a required course for a state endorsement.

I learned a long time ago that as intricately planned as a teacher’s lessons may be, they rarely go as planned in their entirety. I’ve learned to be flexible, to not hold so tightly to my own agenda that authentic learning is squelched. I have learned to see myself as a facilitator--to develop parameters in which learning can take place. And usually, holding to this perspective helps me be fully present to the learning that my students experience, as well as my own learning as a teacher. However, this particular course felt quite intensive--the students needed to have experience with all of the material--they would be held accountable for the information. Thus, like experienced teachers everywhere, I did have an agenda, and I went into each class with a specific agenda, and knowing that I would probably get sidetracked.

In the TE494 study-abroad context, students were facing two crises of identity: learning to become teachers and learning to communicate in a non-native language. Here are some examples of how narrative/stories serve (in place of psychological frameworks) to help me make sense of the processes of learning to become ESL teachers in a study-abroad context.

The Disruption story. As usual, the students were on their computers before class, instant messaging with friends and family still awake at 2:00 am in the United States. Occasional bursts of laughter and other sounds-- “awe...”, and “oh!” and “awesome”--entered the quiet room. As they closed computers at my request and we began class, I asked, as usual, “How are ya today?”.

“So hot,” Ju Hee responded immediately. And the conversation focused on the temperature, the humidity, whose legs are sticking together, who ran out of baby powder and so on. And then Anna spoke up.

“As if the heat isn’t bad enough, I haven’t been able to eat anything today.”

I am alarmed and tune in to her features, facial expressions.

“What’s going on,” I ask.

“I can’t eat any more. I mean, my family keeps feeding me and feeding me, and I say no thank you and I tell them I’m full, but they insist and they all stare until I eat something.”

Lindsay joined in. “I totally know what you mean. It’s like, if nothing’s coming out, I can’t put anything in, and nothing has come out for days.”

“Exactly” Anna said, and the others laugh.

“Seriously, I don’t think the people here get that we are humans with digestive systems,” another student added.

“Yes,” Sarah said with emphasis. “It’s pretty simple. What goes in must come out.”

“Oh, by the way,” a student said, “I left a big....present...in the toilet and I didn’t know what to do. The toilet didn’t flush.” The students all joined in and gave advice, speaking over each other. I quieted them and reminded them that the student in need of the advice can’t hear them all at once. So, they took turns sharing how to pour water from the shower bucket into the toilet in order to force the toilet to flush. Having stayed in dorms with flushing the first week in Malaysia, they had become accustomed to flushing toilets, and since most toilets in their host homes appeared to be flushing toilets, many assumed they were. And while some were flushing, many were not hooked up to modern plumbing.

Anna then shared how her stomach hurt and she feels bloated and how her pajamas were tight around her stomach. The others commented about how they are gaining and losing weight, how they feel right now. Another mentioned how it seems she’s had diarrhea for days even though she’s only been eating rice. Another mentioned that maybe the water was making her sick, or that maybe she should try taking a Cipro, and antibacterial medication, in case she had a bug. They shared their knowledge and resources for each of the body ailments mentioned.

After about 30 minutes, I let them know that we would have to finish this conversation another time, that we needed to get started with our lesson. I gave the students a task and they worked quietly before sharing together as a group. A large stomach growl interrupted the silence. Snickers followed.

“Who was that?” Ju Hee asked, seemingly in shock.

“Me,” Sarah responded, sheepishly.

“It was so loud” Ju Hee exclaimed. Others added in about times when their stomachs growled. One student said her stomach growled and interrupted family prayer. Another added that an elderly woman heard her stomach growl and asked if she had a demon inside of her. Then the woman lit a candle and told her to breathe in the smoke from the candle. The conversation quickly changed to burping and other bodily processes. I asked who had their task completed, and the students quickly returned to their work. After another few minutes, one of the students burst out laughing.

It started again.

I went home that day highly agitated. I happened to be very tired and not feeling well, so I reminded myself over and over to not be angry with the students, but I was definitely frustrated. I was feeling the pressure to “cover” the material for this course, even though in general, I didn’t like the approach to teaching in which we talk through the material, but don’t necessarily apply it--we just “cover” it. But, I knew the stakes were a little higher, and in that six weeks I somehow managed to trade my values as a teacher educator for my default--the way I had been taught.

My Response to the Disruption Story. The story I share was not the only occurrence of such conversations. At least two or three class periods each week, we had this conversation about body functions. And some days, I could cut it off quickly, other days, it seemed like there was nothing I could do to keep focus in the class. I knew that this was part of the process, part of the adjustment. But at some point, I really thought it was enough. I didn’t want them to talk about it any more. I wanted them to just move on, accept the fact that their bodies were not functioning exactly the same as they do at home. I could have appealed to psychological frameworks to make sense of these body functions. Those psychological frameworks may have indicated that I should see these body crises as some kind of pathology. Instead, I prefer to make sense of these stories as stories of crisis and witnessing.

I have my own stories of travels abroad, so I know that bodies do not always function like they do at home. When I was in the Philippines, I struggled with adjusting, physically, to the climate and food. I was always hungry, and found myself eating as much as I could any time I had the opportunity to eat. I also had to learn what I could and couldn’t eat. One piece of pineapple, no problem. A whole pineapple? Not such a good idea. I learned quickly that the most accessible street food was fried banana on a

stick, and usually when I met people, or stopped in at people's houses, they would send a child out to get bananas on a stick. I also learned that I could only eat a couple each day without having major digestive problems. I also knew that to refuse the offer was considered rude. When I was invited to travel with friends, I was often anxious about what I was going to be offered to eat and whether or not there would be an accessible outhouse or restroom.

Being consumed with my body and my body functions created a small crisis for me-- enough that it kept me from fully engaging in the moments I tutored, guest lectured, traveled. Some days I felt conflicted about how to respond to offers of food, of how to refuse without being rude. Of timing out the day...if I eat this now, will I be close enough to a bathroom later?

Knowing these things as I did, why did I react with such impatience to the students? It seems to me, I was falling back on the apprenticeship-of-observation. In my experiences as a teacher candidate, my teacher-educator instructors disallowed bodily functions in the professional classroom. That's the way I had been taught, and those are the practices that feel "normal" to me. It feels professional to separate mind from body in a learning-to-teach situation.

My dissertation analysis has provided me with another way of seeing this situation. The ethical framework of witnessing has allowed me to break away from apprenticeship-of-observation lessons and replace those with a different ethical approach. An ethical

approach that allows for responding such that dominant frames of knowing are challenged, and transformed as students move forward in their experience of knowing as students and teachers.¹⁰¹

As I reflect on these body crises, I recognize that our bodies indicate experiences of crises. We have routines, a sense of normal in terms of how our bodies function. When we experience situations that bring our bodies into direct contact with dysfunction, we look to assign reason, value. Bodies are the vessels that hold our experience. When we are forced to bear witness to each others' bodied experiences, we encounter what is in some ways "other" to our experience¹⁰² --we are taught not to discuss body functions openly, and yet, so familiar to our experience--we were all experiencing similar reactions to our environment. Felman describes an event in which her students experienced crises in their class. She recognized that it was important for her students to work together to make sense of the experience. My students too, felt uncertain and experienced anxiety that had to be worked through collectively.¹⁰³ I see now I was not the only one bearing witness to their bodies--they were bearing witness to each other, listening, knowing, carrying for each other the rupture in their frame of "normal" body experiences.

¹⁰¹ Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*, 15.

¹⁰² Amy, "A Pedagogy of Witness: Encounter, crisis and transformation in Women's Studies Classes.," 63.

¹⁰³ Felman and Laub, "Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching."

Bodies in the School Placement

Tanjung Malim is a small town in Perak, Malaysia with about 60,000 people in town and surrounding towns. It is about 44 miles north of the capital city, Kuala Lumpur (population 1.5 million). Tanjung Malim is host to the largest university of teacher education in the country, and its residents take great pride in the number of prospective teachers living in their town. The town has several elementary and secondary schools--some public, others associated with religious organizations such as churches or mosques. Only Muslim students attend the Muslim schools, but students of all ethnicities and religions attend the public schools and schools associated with the Roman Catholic or Methodist churches. The majority of the teachers at both the elementary and secondary school are women, though there are some men who teach at both levels. Most of the administrators whom I met were also women, which many of the Michigan students found surprising.

The schools in Tanjung Malim are significantly different from schools in the mid-western United States. The schools are open-air schools--they do not have windows, though many have slatted window panes. The rooms are open to all of the corridors--often on both sides of the room. The buildings are concrete and cavernous, and they tend to have an echo. In the elementary schools, students stay in their classrooms, much as they do in the United States, but the teachers for different subjects rotate to the different classrooms. Students don't move from class to class; teachers do. For example, the homeroom teacher, with whom students begin the day, will leave and go teach her subject area to another class when the next teacher comes to teach her class.

Secondary works the same way--instead of students moving to new classes, the students stay together in the same room, and the subject area teachers move from room to room. Classes begin as early as 7:00 in the morning and typically are finished by about 1:00 or 2:00 in the afternoon.

When describing their placement schools, the MSU students often mentioned how difficult it was to concentrate on their lessons because of the noise in the buildings. Not all students had class at the same time, so it was typical to have some students walking by the open classrooms through out the lesson while other students were inside classrooms studying. Of course, that can be distracting to students, though many seemed quite accustomed to the noise and activity. But for the visiting teachers, it was a distraction. In addition to the noise, the heat was a distraction. Some, but not all, classrooms had a large ceiling fan that moved slowly to force air movement. Some teachers closed the slatted windows to keep wanderers from looking in, throwing pencils through them, and to reduce the noise a little. The first floor classrooms were not nearly as warm as those on the top floor--it seemed the tin roofs were just enough to keep those rooms warmer than it was outside in the open air.

The Zombie story. I regularly observed each student in her placement classroom. On one occasion of observation, it was hot. It was really hot. As I sat in the back of the room observing the class and Sarah, I tried not to move. Drops of sweat dripped off my nose onto my notebook. The backs of my thighs were itchy--I can see Sarah sweating from the back of the room--her shirt taking on a darker pink hue in places where the sweat seeped through. My ears felt tight and every sound seemed distant. I scanned the ceiling for a fan, and my eyes quickly focused on the section of window with closed slats. *Why isn't that window open? We need every bit of fresh air in here.* My mind considers how cool my room in the dormitory will feel when I return. I reach into my bag and take out my water bottle. It was only tap water, but it is dripping with condensation. I take a sip--the water is tepid. I feel my heart beating quickly and I try to focus on

taking some deep breaths. I glance up at the front of the room where Sarah is facilitating her lesson. I see her shake her head and she says, "I mean....well, I'm not sure...I, let's start again." *She must be struggling. I should pay attention.* I see sparkles all around the room as a bout of nausea strikes. *I'm really hot.* I take another sip of water and a deep breath. I hear "...you think, Ms. Marquardt?". *Did I just hear my name?* I look up. Sarah is only a few feet away and the entire class has turned and looked in my direction. She wipes her face, and I see a torrent of sweat pour down her cheeks on to her neck, soaking into her shirt.

"I'm sorry," I say. "What is the question?" She asks me which season I think is the best season. "Winter," I say. "Definitely winter."

As Sarah and I walked out of her class at the end of the period, she asked if I was okay. "You look terrible," she said. I mumbled that I wasn't feeling well, that it was so hot I could hardly think.

She said, "I know what you mean. Well, you saw how terrible today was. I couldn't concentrate." *No, Sarah, I didn't see how "terrible" today was. I hardly remember a thing from that hour.* We found a place in the shade under some trees, where at least there was an occasional whisper of a breeze.

I asked my typical debriefing question, "So, how did it go today?" Sarah said that it was hot and she had trouble concentrating. The sweat on her body made it feel like she had little bugs on her skin and she kept getting distracted--checking to make sure there were not, in fact, bugs crawling on her skin. She told me that she was glad that she was required to write out the lesson plan because she just kept looking at her lesson plan for what to do next.

She asked, "Did you see that really long pause where I kept stumbling over my words? I didn't know what I was supposed to do next. All I could think was that it was so hot". I told her that I knew there might have been a moment when she was struggling, and I'm sorry I didn't jump in to help.

And then I confessed, "Actually, Sarah, I hardly remember any of your lesson. I am so sorry. I know it's my responsibility to observe so that we can learn from the experience and reflect on the lesson, but I was not engaged. And I sincerely apologize." She laughed in response. *Great. I try to be honest and she laughs.*

"Why are you laughing?" I asked. She said that it was crazy how a teacher could deliver a lesson and not be mentally present like she and I both were today.

"It's like we were zombies....kinda like how the kids are sometimes, you know? The body is there, but it's obvious that they are not actually present. I just didn't expect that to happen to me when I was teaching....I wonder if I sounded like a zombie."

Response to The Zombie Story. I happened to think that Sarah was incredibly kind that day--she struggled too. We had a shared experience. She was feeling the heat just as much as I was, but she was being held accountable by thirty pairs of eyes. Sarah had an experience in which her expectations for what teaching and learning should look like

came into direct conflict with her efforts to “get through” her lesson. We don’t often have real conversations about what it is like to be “zombie” like in a teaching and learning setting, but we know this happens--the body is present, but the mind is focused on something else. Whether it’s the physical aspect of being bodied--heat, hunger, fatigue--or the other aspects of being human--relationships, culture, identity, living--just because we are in a space physically, does not mean we are engaged in that space.

When I took teacher education courses, we were told that when we enter the classroom, we leave all of our personal baggage at the door. My one instructor said something like: “We walk into the classroom with our chin up, eyes bright and a warm smile on our face” and a classmate whispered loudly, “Doesn’t she ever get cramps?” We all chuckled and the instructor turned in a snap and said that as far as our students were concerned, we were teachers and nothing else. I knew then that I did not agree, but for many years, there was an assumption that teachers were not, nor were students, bodied learners and teachers. To me, traditional teacher education is not personal, and emotion and crying are not acceptable.

However, when I look at teacher education as witnessing, it becomes very personal. It allows for emotion, for bodies, for crying. It allows for a wholeness that is quite humane. Narrative and witnessing give me an alternative framework for making sense of bodies in crisis. In place of a psychological framework that tends to view bodies as irrelevant, inappropriate, or pathological, I can use a framework of narrative, shared stories, to make sense of the role of bodies in learning to teach.

While many more now recognize that our embodiment is an important facet of our identity and our behavior, it is still rarely openly discussed in teacher education classrooms. What is the responsibility of a teacher when she's having a bad day? When, for example, she learns that a student and her mother have been collected and deported since school let out yesterday? Or when her dog dies, or she gets sick at school and has to vomit in the middle of a class--these things happen. And just as they happen to teachers, they happen to students. And what is our responsibility?

Within the framework of traditional teacher professional responses, should I have gotten up and left Sarah's class that day? Should she have given the class a task and stepped into the corridor where it was cooler for a moment? Why did I continue with maintaining the composure of business as usual in this school setting when the reality, business is not always usual? What would have happened if we had taken a moment to testify to our experience in that moment? How much more real would this have made teaching or learning to teach? Or, how much more visible would this practice make a student to the teacher?

In Minnesota in 2002, I was teaching a group of seventh-grade beginning ESL students on a day when I should have called in sick, but I could not entrust them to a substitute teacher who knew nothing of ESL. So, I went to school. At one point, I was feeling particularly ill, and calmly gave them a task. I slowly picked up the garbage can as I walked out of the room, and once the door was shut, proceeded to vomit into the

receptacle. In my state, I hadn't realized that I did not step past the floor to ceiling, 12-inch wide window next to the door. The students all watched. Of course, they tried to hide their giggles and pretend to work when I returned to the classroom; some stared with wide eyes. I calmly sat down and somehow managed to get through the rest of the class. I did call in sick the next day, but when I returned to school, the students had made me cards. And they would come into my classroom before school, and ask, "Ms. M okay?" while giving me a thumbs up. My display of a vomiting body opened for them an opportunity to care for me in a way I hadn't expected. About two weeks after the incident, they started to ask questions: why was I sick? Why did I "throw it [up]"? They shared stories about what happens in their cultures when someone "throws it." They wanted to know if I was okay, if I was not well, I could tell them, they would teach each other. In a framework of narrative story telling, we were able to move beyond the awkwardness of the situation and respond to each other about bodies in a way that doesn't always happen when we carry on business as usual, even if it isn't.

Amy describes a time when she was not able to respond to her students' crisis in class because she refused to cry in front of people. She had learned that it is not acceptable, especially as a teacher, and as an adult, she found that a moment of crying brought back for her crises of her teen years. She could not be fully present for her students, as a witness to their experience, because of what she "knew".¹⁰⁴ Teachers who see moments of crisis as moments of opportunity to witness a story beyond that moment,

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 66.

are able to respond to their students in that moment, to be present and to carry the stories forward.

My Reflection on Bodies

As I reflect on these body experiences, I recognize the need, and the desire I have to incorporate explicitly “the body” in the context of education. The stories here are not just about my students. I was intricately involved in body experiences, too. And as frustrated as I was at times as an educator, I think these stories help me see the ways in which I can re-frame my frustration in order to find meaning that will help my future teaching and my work as a study abroad facilitator. In particular, I recognize now, how our bodies give testimony to stories beyond the stories.

I’ve known for quite some time that our bodies and our ability to learn are connected, though I didn’t have a way of making sense of this in the way until I read Laub’s frame of bearing witness. Recognizing that our bodies give testimony to a story beyond a story has helped me make sense of years of experience as a TESOL teacher. I recognize now how the stories my students have told me in the past are connected to something much larger. I remember instance when Mayra was complaining about how much her stomach hurt since she’d arrived in the United States. She said that she really missed her grandmother’s tortillas, that it was why her stomach hurt. I think if I had been a listener then, as I am now, that I may have recognized that Mayra’s body was giving testimony to a much greater story; maybe a story of loss or fear or unmet expectations, a crisis.

As a narrative inquirer, I see now how the stories students tell themselves about their embodied experiences would be of particular value in working to make sense of the broader story of bodies in education. For example, as I reflect, I wish I had had conversations with my students about the day we went hiking. I can imagine if they had told or written their own stories of the two contexts, school days and weekends, I would be able to understand in a new way the experiences that I observed. By placing my story along side the stories of my students, we could create a complex story with various layers of understanding. I hope to do this type of creation in my future work with students. I may ask them to journal about their body experiences and expectations before we travel and then ask them to write or share stories as we go about their bodily experiences, and to then connect that explicitly to the experiences others, especially their students, may have in international immersion contexts.

My body tells a story. It also gives testimony to a story beyond this in the context of learning to teach, and learning to be a teacher educator. These stories are very important in providing a connection between my ethical responsibilities as an educator and my personal experiences in learning. They are also important in helping me respond to my students in a humane manner, one that recognizes that we are embodied learners. My response is not based on psychology or philosophy, but on participation in a narrative with my students.

Chapter 5--Crying: Crisis, listening, witness, testimony

I was most surprised at how much crying I saw in my students while we were in Malaysia. I know that cross-cultural experiences can be emotional, but our study abroad program was organized with support systems. I didn't expect this much crying. I also know that learning to teach is an emotional pursuit, but I had never seen this much crying in five years of teaching or working with teacher candidates. Each semester of the past five years I've worked with at least one student, sometimes a few more who cried in my presence, but it was not something I saw often or even regularly.

I had attended some workshops for faculty leading study abroad programs, and they had mentioned that often, students express emotion of the study abroad experience through crying. Often the fatigue of travel, or being in a new place, of being away from the comforts of home can manifest itself in tears. Based on this, and my own cross-cultural experiences, I expected there would be tears. However, what I was not expecting was that there would be tears from at least one of my students nearly every single day. Literally.

As a teacher educator, the notion of crying creates multiple tensions. It automatically draws me into the role of a witness, as both an observer and typically, a listener. It requires a response. Often we do not discuss our responsibility in responding to student emotion. It's difficult--students are different, and it's hard to regard crying in a professional context. One sad student is not the same as another sad student and the way a teacher responds to sadness, for example, may be different for each student,

even if they are both expressing sadness. And tears don't always express one emotion--tears can represent anger, uncertainty, violation, or disappointment.

As a young school teacher, when I had students in tears, I would tell them to go to the rest room, stand in the hall for a few minutes, compose themselves, and that we would talk about it later--this was my standard response, to send them away, to have the crying person leave the room. It made me feel uncomfortable, and conflicted--I knew the student needed some attention, but I also had to tend to the class. I was operating under the assumption that emotions get in the way of education; my personal experiences as a student taught me that crying did not belong in schools. I had witnessed many teachers over the years send crying students out of the classroom. Never once in my memories of my schooling do I recall a teacher addressing the crying of a classmate to the whole class. I do recall wondering what was wrong with various students who had been sent out of the room. And I recall being sent out of the room when I was in tears. My default was, if someone is crying, they should leave.

With a year or two experience in this school teaching situation, I became much more adept at getting to know students and could with reliable accuracy assess the type of response each student needed. Brenda, for example, cried when she didn't meet her own expectations for success. If she didn't receive an A grade, she would cry. If she didn't get a practice problem correct, she would sit in her seat and cry. I learned with Brenda, that I didn't need to send her to the restroom every time I witnessed her tears. I would walk by, put a few tissues on her desk, and carry on. At times, I would point to a

work problem on her paper and if she nodded yes, I'd explain that particular concept to the class again, offer another practice, and more often than not, it put a smile on Brenda's face.

Johana on the other hand rarely cried, so if she did, it was usually because of a major life crisis outside of my class. Typically she would lash out at someone, at times, even me, and then end up in tears. Most often, her tears had nothing to do with her outburst. Usually, Johana was experiencing a life challenge like her family's eviction, being responsible for her siblings because her mother was in jail, or an ill sibling with no funds for a doctor--she let the issue build up, had an incident at school, cried, and then asked for help. For Johana, I knew if it came to the point of tears, she was in desperate need of help. My response to Johana's tears was different than my response to Brenda's tears.

Brenda and Johana were high school students, and while we don't prepare high school teachers well for handling student emotion, especially tears, we at least have an expectation that sometimes it will happen. In contrast, I have never participated in a discussion about what it means to have undergraduate, pre-service teachers in tears. We assume that they will deal with their problems out side of our teaching courses--they are, after all, adults.

Typically, adults who cry are perceived more negatively than adults who do not cry, though people are more likely to help a person in tears than a person who is not in

tears.¹⁰⁵ While perspectives on crying adults in the United States has changed some since September of 2001, it is still not something with which other adults are usually comfortable. Not only do tears represent emotions, which we often consider something that must be controlled, tears often raise suspicion, and cause blatant stereotyping. A prevailing cultural script around crying is that women cry in order to manipulate, another, is that men who cry in public are weak because they could not control their emotions.¹⁰⁶ This discomfort, or not knowing how to respond to another's tears, may be the basis for sending students out of the classroom when they cry. It seems teachers are most comfortable maintaining a cognitive distance to the emotional and bodily aspects of teaching.¹⁰⁷

The reality is, learning is difficult. Learning to teach is especially difficult because learning to teach requires a transformation of identity. School creates a myth of normalcy for pre-service teachers--they have clear expectations of what teaching is based on their experience as students.¹⁰⁸ However, the shift they must make to move from being students to being teachers creates tension and confusion around identity.¹⁰⁹ As pre-service teachers are in a place of student-of-teaching, they are trying to

¹⁰⁵ Michelle Hendriks, Marcel Croon, and Ad J.J.M. Vingerhoets, "Social Reactions to Adult Crying: The Help-Soliciting Function of Tears," *The Journal of Social Psychology* 148, no. 1 (2008): 22-41.

¹⁰⁶ Michelle Hendriks, Marcel Croon, and Ad J.J.M. Vingerhoets, "Social Reactions to Adult Crying: The Help-Soliciting Function of Tears," *The Journal of Social Psychology* 148, no. 1 (2008): 22-41.

¹⁰⁷ Alsup, *Teacher Identity Discourses: Negotiating Personal and Professional Spaces*, 26.

¹⁰⁸ Hendriks, Croon, and Vingerhoets, "Social Reactions to Adult Crying: The Help-Soliciting Function of Tears."

¹⁰⁹ Alsup, *Teacher Identity Discourses: Negotiating Personal and Professional Spaces*.

negotiate ways in which they can combine their core identities, their student identities, and professional identities in order to create a new professional identity.¹¹⁰ The mediating of one's identities is a becoming, in a sense, and this becoming is rarely addressed in teacher education programs--we discuss professional behaviors, but rarely a holistic approach to developing a sense of self in the process of developing a professional teaching identity.

For purposes of this dissertation, I will analyze crying in terms of crisis. We should expect that crying is an understandable response to crisis. As I witnessed my students' crying, I found that no matter the response, I am obligated, as a witness to respond humanely, and that does not mean I have to fix their problem or stop them from crying. Responding to crying requires us to make a choice between one definition of "professional" that implies disembodied rationality, and another definition of "professional" that requires compassionate human emotional response. This is a classic and fundamental tension in the definition of "professional" for teaching, a tension Britzman characterizes as "double consciousness."¹¹¹

Crying in the Field

As I observed the tears of the pre-service teachers in Malaysia, I found my own teaching identities challenged--not because I had never had experiences in which students cried, but because I recognized that these moments were moments in which

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 45.

¹¹¹ Britzman, *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach*.

my response as a teacher, could influence the experience the students had with learning to teach, and in their own future experiences of teaching students who cry. I was surprised to find that as experienced a teacher as I am, I was often at a loss for how to respond to tears in moments of crisis.

Sarah did not have experience traveling outside of the United States, but she did have a lot of experience working with people from other cultures, countries and language backgrounds. She was very articulate about what she knew in terms of cross-cultural interactions, culture, and the challenges international students experience in the United States, as she worked with many in her on-campus job. Sarah is a genuinely optimistic young woman who asks questions easily and seemed to be enjoying her time in Malaysia. One of Sarah's moments of crisis took me by surprise.

The Crying Story. Sarah seemed agitated when she came into the building. She was usually quite energetic on Tuesdays--the day we played traditional Malaysian games with the Sports Science students. Lindsay approached Sarah immediately--they were good friends. They spoke for a moment and then Lindsay gave Sarah a hug and the two walked away from the group and talked quietly. Sarah was using her hands expressively in the conversation and then I heard her say, "It's not fair!" Lindsay gave her another hug.

After initial directions, we walked toward the athletic stadium where we would be engaging in some group games. At some point, I found myself walking beside Sarah.

"Hey, Sarah. You doing okay? You seemed upset when you got to campus."

"I'm fine," she answered as she exhaled loudly.

"Yeah? Do you want to talk about anything? Anything I can help with?" I asked.

"Nope."

"Okay, well let me know," I said, as we reach our destination.

"I'll be fine," she said, but not before I notice her eyes fill with tears.

The games begin and I participated for a while before being designated the official camera person. I watched Sarah.

She seems frustrated. Usually she is such a good sport. Each time she gets tagged, she shouts, "damn it". This seems so unusual for her. She is so

optimistic. I haven't seen her laugh or smile once. Sarah's typical effervescent personality was not present--she seemed serious, and....angry?

"Get the F--- out of my way" she shouted as she tripped on another student's foot. Several of the girls told her to calm down, that it was okay.

"I quit." Sarah walked away from the group. I walked over to her. "This is stupid," she said. "Why are we playing these stupid games? It's not like we're going to play them when we go home." She continued to pace the few feet in front of me and state reasons why these games were "stupid." As her volume increased, I said her name softly a few times before she looked at me. Her face was red and tears ran down her cheeks. "What?"

"Hey--can you stop walking for a minute, and take a deep breath?" She did as I asked. "Okay, I know you've been talking about how stupid this game is, but can you tell me what is really going on with you today? I think there is more going on than just not liking this game." She looked at me blankly. We stood in silence for a while.

"It's just that..." she made a guttural sound of frustration, "David's coming over again. I hate him." My heart rate immediately spiked as this indicated a serious issue. I gently asked, "Hey, what's going on?" Of course, as an educator, I thought this was worrisome--did David hurt Sarah? Was she jealous of his ability to pick up the Malay language? Was he treating other American students poorly? She sniffled.

"He's coming over for dinner *again* and my family doesn't even talk to me when he's there. It's like 'oh David this' and 'oh David that'. It's like I'm invisible. And his family doesn't talk to me either. It's 'David did this today, he did that today'. It pisses me off. Just because he is a guy!" Her fingers squeezed into her crossed arms and tears welled in her eyes.

"Deep breath, Sarah" I said, as I sighed. "It's frustrating, isn't it?"

"Yes," she said, emphatically. "I know that it's a different system with gender here. But it makes me crazy that they are so closed-minded. It's like, they're stuck in the dark ages or something. Ugh! Men are *not* better than women, but they sure don't get it. I'm so pissed."

"What's the hardest part of this?" I ask.

"I don't know. I don't know. It's like...I don't know. It's just so frustrating. It's not fair that they don't value both genders the same way," she said as she wiped tears off her cheeks.

"What's so hard about that" I ask, again.

"It's just that...I don't know. It makes me so mad....it's like....well, I don't matter when he's around. They don't even want to know me."

"This is hard" I say, with another deep sigh.

"Yeah, it totally sucks." We stand in silence and watch the others play two or three more games. I think through several possible responses.

I don't know which direction to take. Do I talk about feminism--how some would consider this part of a patriarchal society? About culture--that this is how things are done here? About perspective--that the value system doesn't value women less, just differently? How she could respond--offer strategies for what she can do

and say in the moment? What she might want to think about--how she should consider the cultural demands and how she should respond within that?

I stand there next to her and wonder what this moment is supposed to be--what “teachable” moment is presenting itself. I felt strongly about this issue as well, and as a much younger person, had a much harder time making sense about what I perceived to be gender inequalities. I had come to frame it differently by this point in my life, but I didn’t know if she could do that yet. It almost seemed like she had to grieve the recognition that gender in Malaysia was not the same as gender in the United States. But where to go from here so that she could not leave feeling pity for the women she saw as mistreated, but respect for the value system that did respect women in other ways? I stood there thinking: *I should say something. What?*

The games are ending. As we walk over to join the others, I put my arm around her and give her shoulders a squeeze. She sniffles and says softly, “Thanks for just standing there and not getting all academic on me.”

My Response to the Crying Story. Sarah’s crisis is complicated. Part of this is epistemological, part of it is emotional. She is working to make sense of a cultural value she does not understand fully that comes into direct conflict with the way she is feeling in a particular moment. Sarah’s tears give testimony to the tension. While Sarah may have knowledge of a cultural system that tends to value men in a different way than it values women, and a system that is different than what we are taught in the United States, that knowledge is not enough to ease her tears. As I listen to her frustration, manifested in anger with her classmate, I witness this tension. And I know, it’s hard to put two seemingly contradictory value systems in place, side by side.

One of the benefits of an immersion program such as study abroad is that it allows students to be immersed in a culture about which they have academic knowledge.

Sarah *knew* there was a different value system around gender between Malaysia and the United States. She *knew* that sons were prized, that boys had a wider range of academic, athletic, and career opportunities. But what she *knew*, did not help her in this

moment when she was feeling the sting of difference. She may not have had this opportunity to experience crisis around gender had she not been immersed in a different culture. This was an opportunity to have her understanding broadened, and her perspective shifted.

When I was a young woman in the Philippines, I was expected to dress very conservatively--skirts to my ankles or long pants. Shirts were expected to have elbow-length sleeves, and have a high neck--near the throat. This seemed impossible to me, considering the average temperature was well over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The men could wear shorts and open shirts. I felt a constant resentment for the double-standard, gender-related clothing expectations. Additionally, I learned quickly that women were not allowed to play sports such as soccer or basketball, and we were not allowed to jog or run around town in the early morning for exercise. As an athlete--I played hockey and soccer regularly before arriving in the Philippines--this was highly disappointing.

As Sarah sighed and stuttered, and tried to express, through tears, her frustrations, I felt frustrated for her. I felt frustrated for me. The memory of my angst, of tears cried over a similar issue, was so present. It was like I was transported to that memory and it actually took me a few minutes before I remembered that as a teacher educator I had a responsibility to this young woman in tears. And for me, in that moment, there was a tension. What was my obligation to her? I knew I could remind her of the cultural system, the value system--but she knew that, at least on a surface level. I could have fallen into her frustration and affirmed her frustration with what she perceived to be an

oppressive system. I could have shared my story. But in that moment, listening alone was a sufficiently powerful response. In fact, any response other than listening would not have been as effective, as Sarah's comment attested. Just the listening, the witnessing, the being present in a way that allowed her to bear witness to her own crisis was a response. And according to her, it was just what she needed.

If I had been a younger educator, I think I would have responded to Sarah quite differently. When students cried, I felt like it was because something was broken, and that I must fix it. I recognize now that the tears are testimony to a tension, a crisis, and dialogue--the give and take of a listener and speaker--may allow for a bearing witness that heals, but I also recognize that my presence, my listening-as-hearing and listening-as-seeing provides a space for a response that goes beyond a response in language. My presence, as a witness, allows a story to be known in a way that it can not be known when the speaker, my student, carries it alone inside of her.

The testament to Sarah's crisis here, are tears. As I witness her struggle, I find that my assumptions about Sarah, have not left room for her crisis. I assumed that Sarah was quite culturally competent, and in some ways, I had witnessed evidence--her ability to communicate with her Malaysian teacher and host family, and her ability to facilitate ESL lessons. However, as Sarah's story unfolds, first in her unusual behavior, and then in her tears and finally her words, I was able to witness her crisis--to be a listener to a story that neither one of us knew she carried with her. Her testimony became a way of knowing an experience in a way that neither of us may have known had she not been

immersed in an experience that drew out her story. Also, the story may not have come out if her tears did not indicate that she needed a witness--she needed a listener to be a safe, responsible "other" to share in that journey with her.

Education scholars recognize the need to consider human emotion in schooling experiences.¹¹² However, given the fear so many educators have of working towards an understanding of emotion in education, it may be beneficial to work with what we have here--the act of witnessing in moments of crisis, and in turn, appropriate and ethical responses in those moments. Additionally, we do not incorporate the study of emotion in literature for pre-service teachers. According to education researcher Rosemary Sutton, "educational psychology textbooks for pre-service teachers contain chapters on learning, problem solving, assessment, and motivation, but not on emotions." ¹¹³

The concept of testimony allows teachers and teacher educators another way to understand the experience of their students. We make many assumptions about our students' experiences based on our own experience, and the experiences of some students we have taught. By treating moments of tears as a moment of crisis, and recognizing the role of the listener, teachers and teacher educators may find responding

¹¹² Janet Alsup, *Teacher Identity Discourses: Negotiating Personal and Professional Spaces* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2006); Bell Hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education As the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994); John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier Books, 1938).

¹¹³ Rosemary Sutton, "Teachers' Emotions and Classroom Effectiveness: Implications From Recent Research," *The Clearing House: The Relevance of Educational Psychology to Teacher Education* 78, no. 5 (2005): 229-234.

to students in this way opens up the possibility for an unexpected story, a story that breaks the frame of “normal”, a story that tells more than what is told through tears or words.

As Felman notes, it is a teacher’s responsibility is multifaceted. She needs to access the student crisis in order to function as a listener in the moment, and not close the crisis down, but at the same time, contain it so that it does not overwhelm. When we think in terms of testimony for teaching or teachers, it reminds us that we need to support students’ efforts to reintegrate the experience of crisis into a frame of meaning that has been changed through the process of giving testimony. As educators, we seek opportunities in which students learn, and crisis, offers this moment in that it opens up the possibility of changing one’s frame of knowing in the world. I see this as an opportunity in my own teaching--to grasp a moment when my support can help a student move from the way she “knew” the world before the crisis, and through testimony, “know” the world differently after the crisis.

Crying in TE 494

In the context of a study-abroad summer program in Malaysia, this course became very different from the typical classes we find on campuses in the mid-western United States. I have been teaching for more than ten years. I consider myself an experienced teacher, and I had taught the TE494 previously. Still, I was not prepared for the differences brought on by the Malaysian context, a combination of culture shock, close proximity, intensive scheduling, and the traumas of developing new teacher identities.

I actually wrote to a friend and mentioned that I felt like the class was half class, half therapy, and that I wished I could meet with the students more because I their experience needed to be mediated with much more time than could be allowed given the weight of the course content. Researchers offer different perspectives on cross-cultural interactions of pre-service teachers: some have found that pre-service teachers' cross-cultural experiences reinforce stereotypes, and others say that it breaks down stereotypes¹¹⁴ though there is an indication that intentional mediation of these experiences can counter negative affects. This mediation is often understood by teacher educators to be journal writing--if students write journals about their experience, it somehow becomes mediated. Other literature suggests that the role of mediated reflection plays a vital part in helping pre-service teachers make sense of their experiences.

Along with the course work that needed to be accomplished each class period, I was also quite attentive to the students' general experiences, and on most days, could focus on their demeanors and dispositions. These students were preparing to become ESL teachers. ESL teachers need to have knowledge, skills, and dispositions for working across cultures. In that way, the Malaysian experience was closely tied to the course and program curriculum goals because the pre-service teachers were putting into practice the knowledge they had learned in classes, and in the very process of putting this knowledge into practice, they were gaining valuable skills and dispositions beyond

¹¹⁴ Hendriks, Croon, and Vingerhoets, "Social Reactions to Adult Crying: The Help-Soliciting Function of Tears."

the knowledge. I did my best to help mediate that process--to allow them space to make sense of their experience, what did and did not work in their efforts to facilitate a space in which language learning occurred.

Beyond language learning and teaching, the fatigue of being immersed in a new culture and environment was exhausting. Nearly every day in our class, we had at least one person in tears. I no longer felt the need to send students out of class when they cried like I did when I was a young teacher. However, it still created a tension to which I needed to respond. At times, the momentary dilemma for me was how to respond to the young women before me in tears. Often, it wasn't a planned response.

Anna classified herself as a "tomboy." She told me that most of her friends just consider her to be a guy in a girl's body because her demeanor and behavior were like other 22-year-old guys they knew. This was Anna's description of herself, not mine, and I did not see her this way. But I did see a sort of toughness that Anna displayed in her relationships with the other students on the trip. Anna was the least traveled and had experienced the least amount of cross-cultural interaction of all the young woman in the class, but she had a lot of enthusiasm and said she has a reputation for embracing new and exciting adventures. She laughed easily and told funny stories. She seemed quite resistant to tears.

The Not Crying story. The second week in Malaysia before class, several of my students and I were sitting in the grand foyer waiting for our classroom to be available. The students appeared quite tired, and several seemed in a daze. When Anna reached the top of the stairs and turned to face us, I saw she was visibly upset. One of the

students asked how she was and she said sarcastically, "Great. I'm just great. I'm happy and really excited to be here."

A classmate asked what is wrong. She shook her head and replied, "Nothing. Absolutely nothing." I saw tears well up in her eyes as she blinked hard and looked away. The others were quiet. Finally, Lindsay said, "Well, if it helps any, I found out today that my host family just got rid of their internet. AND the toilet doesn't flush. AND the five year old comes into my room and crawls in my bed every night".

Anna replied, "Yeah, that helps a lot."

Her sarcasm was evidence that she was not comforted in any way by Lindsay's words. Anna walks to the other side of the great hall and sits on a bench, looking out the window. I watch her. A student asks me if someone should go over to her. I say, "No, let's leave her be for a bit." Anna sits there until we are able to move to the classroom. The others go on ahead as I wait for Anna. I put my hand on her arm, she winces and pulls away. "Please don't touch me," she whispers hoarsely, "I don't want to cry." I tell her that it is okay to cry and she insists it was not.

As it happens, the topic of the day's lesson was "Adjustment and Changes." We talk about adjustment and changes in our class, but the students seemed to think things were fine, except Lindsay who was experiencing "drama" as she calls it. After class, we are waiting again, in the large open foyer, this time for rides to our homes. I notice Anna's eyes are again full to the brim with tears. I go and stand beside her. "Hey," I say quietly, "it's okay to cry, Anna. It's part of this process. It's not always an easy transition. It's okay to let it go--let it out. I think it can be really helpful."

She shakes her head, "Nope. I'm not going to cry. I'm not a baby."

I stand beside her silently for a few minutes. Then I turn with my whole body, and wrap my arms around her. And at first she stiffened, almost to push me away, but I continue to hold her. In just a matter of seconds, she falls into me and cries. I cry too.

My Response to the Not Crying Story. A common cultural script in the US is that only weak people and babies cry . And, if there must be tears, there are instances more socially acceptable than others in which to shed. Death, pain, loss, joy. But fatigue? Homesickness? For a reason you can't explain? These are not typically looked upon as justifiable reasons for tears, at least in a professional context. However, I recognize the somatic inclination for our bodies to process our emotional stress through the physical.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Sutton, "Teachers' Emotions and Classroom Effectiveness: Implications From Recent Research."

Witnessing allows a response that doesn't require I send a student out of the room if they are in tears. Teaching is emotional work. Little credence is given to the work teachers do as they work to make sense of the loss and transformation of learning. Here, this is not just Anna's story, it's my story too. As a listener, I join Anna on her journey, in her crisis. Responding to Anna professionally, is responding to her through compassion. As a teacher educator, I often feel the emotional tension of watching my students experience the various aspects of becoming a teacher, and my role in those moments. My own emotions and those of my students interact with our learning. Education researcher Rosemary Sutton and others recognize the need to give credit to the role emotions play in a learning environment. She writes "pre-service teachers need to understand that their own and their students' emotions will permeate the classroom and influence their goals, motivation, problem solving, and teaching strategies".¹¹⁶

Should I have gone to Anna? Should I have sent a student to sit with her after she left the group? I watched her across the great foyer that day--sitting there, looking out the window. Maybe trying to understand her own emotion. Or, maybe trying to make sense of her experience. Maybe being angry that the others appeared to be coping just fine. Maybe just longing for home. And later--should I have hugged her? Should I have tried to talk to her? Should I have left her alone? As I watched Anna across the foyer, I was nearly overcome, myself, with emotion. My eyes brimmed with tears. I looked away, I blinked. The others didn't seem to notice. But I remember. I remember

¹¹⁶ Watson, Miller, and Driver, "English Language Learner Representation in Teacher Education Textbooks: A Null Curriculum?".

my first time in a new country. And those days when the “honeymoon” stage was wearing away. I know how it felt, being on the constant verge of tears. Not necessarily having a reason. And how the last thing I wanted and the thing I craved most was a hug--at the same time. And now, as my memories resonated with Anna’s state, I felt a heaviness. Through the class, after the class. I tried using words to tell her she could cry--giving permission, in a sense, for this response. I reached out and touched her. Again, resorting to words. And finally, an embrace and tears. And they weren’t just Anna’s tears. I cried too, holding her. My tears saying, “I’m here with you in this moment. I hurt for you. I remember my own aching.” As I reflect on this event, I think about my role as a teacher educator in this moment. I feel in some ways, I wasn’t a teacher educator in those moments. I was human. What happens if we consider our roles as teacher educators to be that of witness? Then, we can incorporate the task of responding to our students’ crises in compassionate and humane ways. Regardless, my position is that of instructor, of teacher. I see here, the humanity, the emotion, the bearing witness. As teacher educators we often bear witness to the experience of our pre-service teachers, just as they will at some point, bear witness to the experience of their future students.

For analyzing crying in the TE494 course, Laub's work on bearing witness gives us a new perspective. Laub's work helps me reconceptualize what it means to be a teacher educator. For example, Laub allows us to consider our own stories, the stories of another and the process in bearing witness. As a teacher educator, I bring to my teaching my own stories and experiences of learning to teach. Being cognizant of my

own stories, letting them resonate with the stories of my students allows me to be reminded of my own experience of this process. As I listen to the stories my students tell, both in words and body, I join them in their journey of telling a story of crisis. As the listener to their crisis, I am drawn into their story and become part of it. As a teacher, I become the witness to my students' learning, and in Laub's frame, required to respond. Finally, as I observe my students' process of bearing witness, I am able to see a story beyond the story they tell, I am able to understand the story they tell that breaks their frame of reference in a moment of crisis.

While I think bearing witness is more complex than the three levels Laub proposes, I see clearly evidence of how these levels interact. I have my own narrative of experiencing a new culture--being immersed in the day-to-day living, language, food and relationships; I've also experienced something similar to Anna's experience, which I'll explain below. I have witnessed my own story. With Anna, a student, I was bearing witness to the experience of another. It was not just that I was a witness to the stories Anna told about her experience, but as in the event described above, I was a witness to Anna's process of bearing witness. As Anna moves from being insistent on not crying to a place where she does cry, she is experiencing the "temporal movement from the now to the not-yet." We don't know what learning is taking place and what Anna had known or understood until that point could not account for her experience in that moment. And, this new knowledge she was in the process of making was just beginning to emerge. As a witness to Anna's process, I too, was experiencing a meaning making process of my own. As a teacher educator, I was bearing witness to a

student's process, and trying to make sense of how I should respond, what language I should use, if any. There was a struggle for Anna, and an emotional response from me, the witness, when "fledgling words fail, to the desire to communicate what is not fully communicable."¹¹⁷

Crying in the School Placement

This is a story about clothes. The students' placements in various Malaysian schools took approximately 20 hours Monday through Thursday during weeks two, three and four. Not only were the schools a site for learning and teaching, but Malaysian schools are also a site for socializing. The majority of the teachers at both the elementary and secondary level were women, and they formed very close social networks that included "in" groups and "out groups," social hierarchies, prestige and disregard.

I would often sit in the teachers' lounges between my observations with students, and meetings with mentors. Teachers would come and talk to me. The conversations sounded a great deal like teachers' lounge conversations in Minnesota. They liked to "let me in on" which teachers were thought kindly of, who was sarcastic, who was career driven, which people of which races could be trusted, etc. Surprisingly for me, one of the most important pieces of conversation was clothing. Without fail, teachers would comment on my clothes, just as they commented on each other's clothing. If someone wore an outfit too close in time to the last time she wore it, others would

¹¹⁷ Lori Amy, "A Pedagogy of Witness: Encounter, crisis and transformation in Women's Studies Classes," *Transformations* (2006): 64.

remind her that she had worn it recently. The teachers traded clothes; they would bring in tops and skirts and match them across friends to mix their wardrobes. What the teachers wore to school was noticed, scrutinized, and associated to their social status.

The teachers represented the three major ethnicities in Malaysia: Chinese, Malay and Indian. Their cultures were well represented in their clothing. The Chinese teachers often wore suits, and the Indian teachers often wore saris. The Malay women typically wore the baju karung and a hijab, or head covering. Regardless of what they wore most days of the week, it was a national decree that all female teachers wore the baju karung on Thursdays.

The first week in Malaysia, the students were looking forward to meeting their host families. They had been told that the host mothers would most likely take them shopping for a baju karung, the traditional Malay women's dress. A typical baju karung has two parts--a long straight skirt, and a top with a high neck and long or short sleeves. The length of the top typically went to the knees. The baju is made of a wide range of materials--from thin cottons to thicker brocades, silks, and polyester. The younger girls often had rhinestones. Many shops carried pre-made baju, in the latest colors and designs. Fabric stores and tailors were very common, even in small towns such as Tanjung Malim. It was very common for the women to browse the fabric stores for cloth and take them to their favorite tailor who would custom make their baju.

The Baju Karung story. The students looked forward to owning their own traditional Malaysian baju. They wandered through shops in town touching material, trying on various styles of the baju, excitedly anticipating the day when they'd each have their

own. They discussed what colors looked best, if theirs would have rhinestones, or beads, or be silky or cotton.

As Thursday approached, I heard students talking about their experiences being fit at a tailor for their baju--or trying them on with their host mothers and sisters. One by one they were each preparing for their baju debut.

Thursday morning, I arrived at the school. I noted the wide range of baju karung styles the teachers were wearing, though all had one thing in common--they were bright and colorful.

I walked into the teacher offices and found the students in a cluster on the far side of the room in their baju. I was looking forward to seeing their new clothing, especially after all the anticipation. As I neared, I heard the students comforting someone.

"It'll be okay," one said. "It's not as bad as you think."

"Hey, it'll be alright," another said, "It's just temporary. It's not for everyday." I peeked into their small huddle and saw Samantha and Juhee comforting Anna. Anna's big blue eyes were brimming with tears. My heart lurched at the sight. *What had happened? Was she okay?*

"What's going on," I ask, concerned. The group opens up and I step closer.

"Look at what she made me wear," Anna says, her. She pulls at the traditional baju karung she's wearing as the tears spill over onto her cheeks. "I said I didn't want to, no thank you, but she just kept saying to wear it today. It's so ugly. I told her I'd just wait until next week when I can get my own. This one's so hot and it itches and it's huge, it makes me look like a cow. I mean, do I even have a body under here?" Her pitch rose with each new phrase. "I knew this was going to happen. I knew mine wasn't going to be ready for today. But that's fine. But she forced me to wear one of hers anyway. It sucks." The tears roll down her cheeks. The students turn and look at me, waiting for me to respond.

Response The Baju Karung story. As a young teacher, I think I would have insisted all those standing around a crying student leave so that the person could be alone and I could offer some comfort and move on. When the students turned and looked at me, they were counting on me to offer a response to Anna's tears. In that moment, I didn't ask everyone to leave. It wasn't calculated, but I did recognize that I had to mediate the moment, especially because I knew there were several issues going on. First, Anna's crisis was about more than clothing and second, the others witnessed her tears.

First of all, it was very unlike Anna to cry about something like having to wear a specific type of clothing. In other instances, when the students were told they had to wear long skirts and tops with longer sleeves, Anna would just shrug her shoulders and say, “We’re in Malaysia.” I knew immediately, that for Anna, this was not about the clothes. There may have been several reasons for the crisis. Knowing what I know now about crisis--that often our words and bodies tell a story beyond the crisis itself--I recognize that the issue at hand was greater than the fact that Anna was wearing this baju karung. When I look at this through Laub’s lens of bearing witness, I recognize a story here greater than what Anna was wearing. It’s possible that the crisis had to do with other aspects of Anna’s experience here.

Anna lived with a family who had six children. The previous time there was an MSU sponsored study abroad program in Malaysia, this family had hosted a student who had a very disposition than Anna. This student, I’ll call her Mary, came from a large family with many siblings. She dove into the experience with the family, chalking everything up to part of the experience. She went over and above to learn the language, she did everything the family asked, shared a room with one of the sisters, even though it is MSU policy that each American student have their own room. She did not question the family’s “rules” and did not seem dependent on the other students in the program. Anna had a very different personality. She had a different sense of independence. Coming from a small family, Anna had a very different sense of privacy than Mary. Anna was also quite dependent on the other students in the group for conversation and talking about her experience.

Anna's tears represented a crisis. On the surface, her story was one of an article of clothing. It's possible that this was a moment that brought other crises to the surface. It could be that the other pieces of her story--the lack of independence, the "rules" which she felt were controlling, the lack of privacy--were rising to the top. Her expectations for what it would be like to be part of a family in this context were not being met. Her frame--how she sees the world--was being opened. The tension created a fissure, and as a listener, I could see that the tears were not about her clothing.

What is interesting to me about this situation is the response of her classmates. Here, they are around her, comforting her, still talking about the baju itself. As a teacher, coming into the situation, I knew, based on other experiences in teaching, that it was not just the clothing at issue. As the others were observing Anna's tears, I saw them responding in ways that I've often responded to students--the story at hand. They were comforting her around the story of the baju. Without naming it a crisis, I knew from experience that there was a story beyond this story. Being able to listen with Anna in this moment, to join her on her journey, and to know that there is another story, is as Laub says, to be a listener, a witness to a story that she may not yet know.

My Reflection on Crying

In the fall semester after the summer trip to Malaysia, I taught two courses at the university: a first year diversity course and a course for teachers in their internship year. These courses are the first and last courses of the teacher education program. More

than any of the four previous years teaching in the teacher education program, this year included more conversations with pre-service teachers about crying. Before this project, I would often mention that teaching is emotional work, or respond briefly to questions about responding to students when there are tears. But I typically would not engage crying in the class room in great depth, and like the high schoolers I worked with, I would often send college students out of the room if I saw them in tears.

Previously, before I had discovered Laub's framework, and I did not yet have the language I have now to describe crisis, I recognized that tears played a role in allowing us to make sense of our experience. I now see that tears are a way of giving testimony to a story beyond what we initially see or hear or observe. At the beginning of class one day, an intern asked what a teacher should do if they burst into tears in front of the class--her sister had had a late term miscarriage, and she burst into tears in a class shortly after she learned about the situation at lunch. I turned the question back to the class to respond. Some interns suggested giving the class a task and stepping into the hall to "compose" one's self. Others suggested giving the students book work and then going to the rest room, or asking a teacher near by to "watch" their class and go to the restroom to "get a hold of" one's self. Another asked, "what's wrong with just crying and then talking with the class about what made you cry?" I asked the class to respond to this student's question. Comments included ideas about professional expectations, or "putting too much on the students", or making a fool of yourself. When the conversation wrapped up, I mentioned that I didn't have an exact answer for this, but that I wondered what kind of people would we be, would our students be, if as professionals, we were to

model a healthy kind of crying--whether it be grieving or some other reason, what would happen if we allowed the humanity to seep into our teaching.

What surprised me about this conversation is how little we are able to make sense of the boundary between our professional and personal lives. Even as an experienced teacher, I struggled to make sense of crying in Malaysia. It seems to me that it can be helpful to consider crying as testimony to a story beyond a story--that I can move away from the fear that seems to surround the social stigmas of crying by considering the ways in which crying can help me understand the experiences my students face. Instead of working to isolate a student, or to "fix" them, I can begin to ask questions about the stories to which the tears give testimony. As I bear witness to my students' tears, and maybe to my own, I can come to know in new ways, the experiences of learning to teach.

Chapter 6--What does it mean?

Conclusion

As I reflect on this project, I see the ways my story as a teacher educator has been set beside, inside, around, and through the stories of my students learning to teach. I have come to recognize my role as a listener in the lives of my students, and as empathetic person as I've been, I see now, that the responsibilities for teacher educators are much greater than just empathy. To come alongside a student in a moment of crisis carries with it the ethical imperative of respect: for their place, their story, and their sense of self. In addition to empathy, it is also imperative that I give credence to their silence, that I come along as a companion in their efforts to bear witness. I need to give testimony of a crisis that breaks the frame of their worldview--for example, when what Sarah "knew" about gender values in Malaysia came into direct conflict with how she was feeling.

In particular, I recognize the ways in which this experience, this process of learning to bear witness to the stories of students learning to teach in a study abroad context is relevant to much broader stories. As a teacher educator, I find myself engaging these conversations at a much deeper level having done this work. In this chapter, I discuss the ways that my project comes into direct contact with the conversations of TESOL teacher preparation, teacher identity development, and narrative inquiry in education.

TESOL teacher preparation

As mentioned earlier in this paper, it is almost a cliché to mention the ever increasing need for teachers who are prepared to work with English Language Learners, or ELLs.

¹¹⁸ ¹¹⁹ As cliché as it is, the need is real. As we consider the work of K-12 TESOL educators, we work hard to be sure that they have the linguistic components complete--that they have enough preparation in the transmission of second language acquisition, pedagogical grammar, phonemic and linguistic awareness.¹²⁰ The field experience associated with TESOL certification programs is important--nothing can replace actual interaction with ELLs in a teaching and learning context. And while I do not think we learn enough about the stories of our ELLs, through this project I've come to understand how important it is that we also learn the stories of our pre-service teachers, particularly because as teacher educators, we can play a significant role in helping them reframe the moment of crisis and reinsert that into their frame, or world view.

We know that international field experiences tend to be beneficial for pre-service teachers,¹²¹ though we don't necessarily know the way pre-service teachers themselves talk of these experiences. While I don't know the answer to this on a grand scale--how pre-service teachers talk of this experience--I do know that by using a bearing witness framework, we are able to see and understand new aspects of their experience. The

¹¹⁸ Wong Fillmore and Snow, "What Teachers Need to Know About Language."

¹¹⁹ Smith, "Modeling the Social Construction of Knowledge in ELT Teacher Education."

¹²⁰ Pence and Macgillivray, "The Impact of an International Field Experience on Preservice Teachers."

¹²¹ Varghese et al. "Theorizing Language Teacher Identity: Three Perspectives and Beyond," 22.

international field experience itself is particularly unique for pre-service TESOL teachers because it allows them, in many ways, to experience the types of things their future students experience when they come to the US. They are immersed in culture much different than their own. They are surrounded by a language they do not know. They may experience confusion and frustration in trying to negotiate differences between their expectations of how things will be, and how they actually are. As the pre-service teachers experience a teacher educator who responds to them by being a listener, and one who bears witness to their experience, they are able, as Laub describes, to make sense of their experience in ways that they may not have without a listener.

Before this international immersion experience, I often felt frustrated when working with pre-service TESOL teachers because I knew that reading in a book was not enough to help them understand the types of experiences their students have when they arrive in the US. It strikes me as particularly interesting that the pre-service teachers in my class all considered themselves to be culturally competent before we went on the trip. Most had some experience working with people from different cultures, and all were making a commitment to earn certification in TESOL. They had all taken classes in teaching ESL, language acquisition, and language pedagogy. Several had traveled abroad. Despite what they “knew” cognitively, they struggled with the experience of being immersed in the culture.

One of the most helpful aspects of Laub’s work, for me, is his reference to a fissure in the frame of our world view, our “normal.” When the world as we know it, as we assume

it will remain, comes into contact with something different, it creates a crisis of sorts. The crises I witnessed my students experience were crises that created this disconnect-between what they expected and what they experienced. The fact that these crises were triggered by experience in a country which they had never visited, illuminates for me, the difficulty in learning to teach and learn and understand the process of language learning and cultural adjustment.

Manka Varghese argues that we need to know more about teachers' identities in order to understand better language learning and teaching. Varghese writes "in order to understand language teaching and learning we need to understand teachers; and in order to understand teachers, we need to have a clearer sense of who they are: the professional, cultural, political, and individual identities which they claim or which are assigned to them."¹²² As I set out to understand what my students said about their experiences in teaching and learning, I see now that their crises created an opportunity for learning. These moments, when the crisis rises to the surface in the presence of a witness, are moments in which the students' frames of reference are opened to a new perspective, a new understanding, even the simple acknowledgement that there is a crisis. And, as a listener, as one who comes beside them in this journey, I play a role in helping them take that frame and reinsert themselves into it, maybe slightly changed from the experience.

¹²² Britzman, *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach*, 8.

As I witnessed the tears of my students, the way their bodies changed in different contexts, and the stories they told, I see now that I was being allowed into very sacred parts of their journey--intimate moments of growing and learning. Post-trip interviews provided indications of ways this experience has influenced how they engage their students. One particular story stands out. When I interviewed Anna, she shared with me how her experience working with ELLs in her internship was much different than her experience in her senior level placement before Malaysia. To illustrate she told me a story about working with one of her students, a newly arrived immigrant, and how she responded.

I know it in my bones. Six year old Jose is standing by the fence on the playground. Ms. Anna invites him to join a group of students playing together by the balance beams.

“Ven aqui, Jose”¹²³, she says optimistically, waving him over. He watches her with big brown eyes for a moment before turning to look out through the chain link fence. She tells the others to continue playing, she’ll be back in a few minutes. She walks over the fence and stands a few feet away from Jose. She mimics his stance--holding on, her face leaning on the fence, looking at the forest behind the school yard. She glances sideways and sees he has a tear running down his cheek. She stands quietly for several minutes.

“Puede gritar, Jose,”¹²⁴ she says quietly. He looks at her out of the side of his eyes and subtly shakes his head no. She smiles at her own memory of a

¹²³ “Come here, Jose”.

¹²⁴ “You can cry, Jose”.

time when she resisted crying. Again, she stands quietly until she hears the bell ring.

“Es difícil vivir en este país. Tu eres valiente para venir cada día a la escuela,”¹²⁵ she adds, again, after several minutes. The playground slowly empties as the children return to the wide blue double doors. They continue to look through the fence.

“Jose, voy a ir caminando lento a la escuela. Cuando llegue a las puertas azules, tu también deberías comenzar a caminar. Yo esperaré adentro, okay?”¹²⁶ She puts her hand on his shoulder. He looks up at her and subtly nods yes.

She returns and slowly walks to the school. As she nears the steps, she turns and her eyes widen, surprised to see Jose just a few steps behind her. She puts out her hand--he approaches, takes her hand as he wipes the last tears from his cheeks. They walk into the school. She knows he needs time...and a hand.

As Anna told the story of little Jose, a newcomer to the United States, she had tears in her eyes. She told several similar stories about young immigrant children struggling to make sense of a new school system in a new culture and language they didn't understand. She said, “You know, I'm not six [years old] and I don't have the exact same life that they have. But when they stare off into space and they look toward the distance with longing...I know how that feels. I know it in my bones.”

¹²⁵ “It is difficult to live in a new country. You are brave for coming to school every day.”

¹²⁶ Jose, I'm going to walk to the school slowly. When I get to the blue doors, you should start walking. I'll wait inside. Okay?”

Anna reported that the moments of crisis she experienced in Malaysia,(she called it “drama” rather than crisis) changed her perception of her students’ experience.

Maybe, it’s because she experienced crisis there, immersed in a new culture and language, maybe because she had a teacher who was there to listen, to witness as her words, body and tears gave testimony to her learning. And, she knows in a new way, not in a way learned in books---she knows it in her bones.

As I strive to better understand the growth of the pre-service teachers with whom I work, I have no doubt that the testimony they give, through words, their bodies, and their tears, can provide additional understanding into how they are learning to teach. In this way, the work of TESOL teacher educators is closely related to the work of teacher identity development which I address in the next section.

Teacher identity development.

Learning to teach is a process. Deborah Britzman notes that “learning to teach--like teaching itself--is always the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become.”¹²⁷ The ways in which crisis works in our lives, and the process of giving testimony can contribute to this process, particularly in the work of transforming world views, or “frames” as Laub says. Sfard and Prusak define identity as “collections of stories about

¹²⁷ Alsup, *Teacher Identity Discourses: Negotiating Personal and Professional Spaces*, 41.

persons or, more specifically, as those narratives about individuals that are reifying, endorsable, and significant.”¹²⁸ The stories of experience the pre-service teachers now carry as part of their identities is significant. Particularly, if the crises they experienced serves as a moment in which the stories they had carried thus far, are opened up, put into contact with a witness, realized, understood. The role of teacher identity is a vital element of understanding how pedagogy and relationships are carried out in classrooms.

As my students engage in learning to teach, I have no doubt that facilitating an environment in which we engage the personal and professional stories¹²⁹ of their experience will contribute to their “becoming.”¹³⁰ Helping my students understand, explicitly, the process of bearing witness, listening, crisis, and testimony is one way that the pre-service teachers with whom I work can engage their own learning processes while also learning how to consider their students’ experiences.

Laub describes the way in which the process of bearing witness works at various levels. As we experience our own life, we have an autobiographical account of bearing witness to experience. As we tell others our stories, we give them an opportunity to come along side us in our journey. And finally, as we bear witness to others’ process, we are able to respond to them in humane and ethical ways as a listener. It seems to me that if our

¹²⁸ Anna Sfard and Anna Prusak, “Telling Identities: In Search of an Analytic Tool for Investigating Learning as a Culturally Shaped Activity,” *Educational Researcher* 34, no. 4 (2005): 14-22.

¹²⁹ Britzman, *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach*.

¹³⁰ Connelly and Clandin, “Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry,” 42.

pre-service teachers are engaged in this process, and consider the process of bearing witness to be part of their journey, we can create classrooms in which each person is responded to humanely, and with compassion. It seems bearing witness to each other's stories may be a helpful way of understanding. It seems narrative inquiry is a helpful way to gather the stories of teachers as they develop professional and personal identities.

Narrative inquiry in education.

A primary contribution of narrative inquiry based research is to invoke or to create a new understanding, "a new sense of meaning and significance with the respect to the research,"¹³¹ rather than to create knowledge set and claims. As the narrative researcher I do not delegate general applications of the outcomes of an inquiry, but I attempt to create texts which allow "readers a place to imagine their own uses and applications."¹³² The stories I share about working with pre-service teachers in an international immersion context may resonate with other teacher educators. And while I don't offer "solutions" for how to best facilitate pre-service TESOL teachers' learning experiences, I do offer a perspective that may be helpful in learning to deeply understand and appreciate their experiences of crisis, bearing witness and learning to teach.

I've come to appreciate the way narrative inquiry allows for a wide range of stories to be included in the search for understanding. Few lines of inquiry consider experience in

¹³¹ {Citation}

¹³² {Citation}

the Deweyian sense, a genuine form of knowing. With narrative inquiry, I was able to collect data as storied experience from the participants (characters), the context (landscape), and from my own experience. Rather than replicating theory, I found that my narrative inquiry work has contributed to the conversation of education and experience by expanding the possible perspectives we can take in our efforts to understand.

One particular aspect that I did not realize would play such an important role in this project is my own experience in international immersion contexts. I was about the same age as these students when I was in the Philippines, learning about teaching and learning in a somewhat informal context. I did not have a witness to my experience, as a teacher educator witnesses the experience of students enrolled in college classes. However, as I observed and listened to the crises that my students were giving testimony to and bearing witness to, their stories resonated with mine. And as memories of my experience surfaced, and as I laid those stories beside the stories of my students, I was able to understand things I had not understood before: the way our bodies and our tears function to give testimony to our experience, the ways that what we say or write isn't always representative of what is really going on, the crisis. Side by side, these stories have given me a deeper understanding of cultural adjustment--these are not just "stages" that a traveler experiences. These are moments of crisis in which the traveler's world view and expectation is coming into conflict with her actual experience. When I consider how teacher educators respond to students in various

stages of cultural adjustment, I see a need for more story, more narrative, to have a genuine understanding of any one student's experience.

As a result of gaining insight into the affordances of narrative inquiry, I have come to see ways that I can do things differently as I continue in this line of research. First, I will record the oral responses of my own experience. In reading through the students' stories--how they talked about experience, I found that what they said did not always represent what was really happening on an emotional and cognitive level. I wonder too, if my immediate oral response will tell me more later, about the experience. Secondly, I hope to engage students in the process of narrative inquiry also. Using "story" to frame their and their students' experience may be helpful in mediating their experiences of teaching and learning in an international immersion context. I imagine this frame will also help them come to terms with their own crisis as well. Finally, I hope to use the context of narrative inquiry to create work that allows for a dialogic component, where my students and I can write together, lay our stories of the same experience side by side. I believe multiple perspectives and stories around a common experience will shed light on teaching and learning, particularly if we are bearing witness and listening to each others' stories.

My Role as Teacher Educator: Next Steps

I've always considered myself a very perceptive and empathetic teacher in any context, whether it's summer camp with K-12 students or public school, college or adults.

Students have told me that they appreciate my sensitivity and gentleness in engaging

them in difficult learning tasks, or even, upon learning about their life circumstances outside of class.

Still, as a result of this project, I have come to recognize that what students tell me, and what I witness in their behavior is significant, and may be a sign of crisis. One particular experience from my teaching this past year stands out that I now understand differently. A young student in one of my classes had a distinct behavior change mid-semester. I noticed that suddenly her appearance changed, she started putting her feet up on the tables, coming to class late, and not turning in assignments. Occasionally, I'd see her wiping away tears. I stopped her after class one day and asked if she was okay. She said she was fine, she was just trying to get adjusted to her new medication. I reminded her that if she needed help I could help, but that she should hang in there and not get too far behind. I sent a few emails reminding her of missing assignments and upcoming deadlines, but I did not engage her again.

At the end of the semester, when I realized the student was failing, we sat down and I asked her what was going on and where she was at with school. She started crying and said that she was failing most of her classes. And I asked if it had to do with the medication issue she mentioned. She seemed confused.

“When I asked you if you were okay in the middle of the semester, you told me you were trying to adjust to your new medication,” I reminded her.

“Oh,” she said and then paused. “Yeah, I told a lot of my professors that. It was easier.”

“...than?” I asked.

“telling them I’m a failure, that I can’t do this college thing.”

As our conversation continued, I learned that this student had lost both of her parents in two separate car crashes just months ago, between her graduation and the beginning of the college semester. I walked her to the counseling center, gave her an incomplete and she made the work up over the holiday break.

I see now how this student’s crisis was about much more than adjusting to new medication. With a perspective of bearing witness, of listening and observing the testimony of her body, her tears, I may have responded to her differently, or at the least, much sooner. She was experiencing a variety of crises--not just in terms of grieving her loss, but also in terms of her expectations of what college would be like, and how she was experiencing college. While I do not consider myself qualified to respond to the depths of her psychological and emotional needs, I do consider myself responsible for responding to a student in need, and she was clearly in need. I want to clarify that I am not suggesting teachers be therapists or psychologists. However, with a bearing witness mindset, I might have given a different kind of attention to the changes and behaviors I saw in this student during the semester. It is a humane and ethical response.

With this new understanding of students in classrooms, I plan to frame much of the course around “story”. Students’ stories, my story, stories of teaching and learning and

identity. Stories of experience around a range of topics. As a teacher educator, I see this as allowing me to bear witness not just to our conversations around story, but also to my students' experiences.

Recognizing the way crisis works, the way we bear witness--through words and body and tears--has given me a tool to respond to my students in a way that I did not respond to them, as empathetic as I have been. I need to do less talking. I need to be a listener, I need to allow for the ebb and flow of silence. Understanding that bodies tell a story of their own, and that tears often represent so much more than what is said will allow me to walk alongside my students, to bear witness to their experiences as they learn. I do hope by experiencing my response to their experience, my students will become teachers who in turn, respond humanely to their students--and, while I don't claim that it will happen, and I have no way to know if it does, there is a small piece of me that hopes we all learn to join each other in our journeys as we bear witness, give testimony, and respond humanely and with compassion.

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