

Writing an Educational Autobiography as a Way to Become a Reflective Teacher

by

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in the
Curriculum Theory and Implementation Program
Faculty of Education

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Spring 2015

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Abstract

This dissertation presents my educational autobiography, the result of my reflection on experiences during my school life, my teaching life, and my life as a mother to reveal who I am personally and professionally in my journey to become a reflective teacher, a teacher who takes her students' wellbeing into her mind in the everyday life of classrooms and schools. In order to write my stories, I searched incidences that related to my experiences with learning and teaching and making sense of them. Through the process of framing and reframing my experiences, I gained a better understanding of my journey as an educator and became capable of articulating my experiences along this journey. My broad goal in this thesis is to improve the quality of teacher education at Universitas Terbuka (UT) through broadening the notion of reflection in its curriculum. As writing autobiography is one of the pathways to becoming a reflective teacher, I would like to experience the process of writing autobiography before I introduce the idea to student teachers. I would like to experience the dark, the disoriented, the dreadful feeling and the brightness of writing autobiography narratively.

Writing my autobiography not only helped me to excavate my old lives and make meaning out of them, revealing my self, but also to realise the importance of learning from my experience. Professionally, writing my autobiography helped to overcome my fear of writing. The process of making meaning of incidents was strengthened by my understanding of concepts and theories that could be used to illuminate them. I gained new knowledge because writing my autobiography encouraged me to search for related literatures that helped me understand my experiences.

From my experience of writing my autobiography and synthesizing theories and practices of reflection in teacher education, I propose ideas to improve UT's teacher education by strengthening the notion of reflection in its curriculum.

Keywords: Autobiography; reflection; teacher education; story-telling

Dedication

*To my mother and my father who gave me strong roots
to stand on and strong wings to fly*

*To my half soul - my husband - Aminudin Zuhairi and
my two kids, Fawzi and Annisa Zuhairi*

Acknowledgements

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful. Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

This dissertation would not have materialized without support, assistance, and guidance from various parties, starting from the planning of the agreement between Universitas Terbuka (UT) and Simon Fraser University (SFU) which provided me the opportunity to pursue my doctoral program at SFU. I am indebted and would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation.

My gratitude and appreciation go to Prof. Dr. H. M. Atwi Suparman, M. Sc., former rector UT; through his policy UT has been provided scholarships for UT staff to study abroad and Prof. Tian Belawati, Ph. D., current rector UT, who continues her predecessor for always supporting UT staff to pursue further education. I would not have been studying at SFU without thoughtful support from Dr. Ian Andrews, former Director of the Office of International Education at the Faculty of Education, SFU. He opened up the possibilities for 6 UT staff to study as a cohort at the Faculty of Education.

My deepest thanks and gratitude go to my supervisory committee. First of all, my senior supervisor, Dr. Allan MacKinnon who availed himself to accept me even before I arrived at SFU. He is my role model teacher; he let me experience trial and error learning, he articulated my unspoken thought and patiently reassured my capabilities, and he made me feel I was in a good hands when I was desperate—he will always be there for me. My study would not be finished without endless support and encouragement from my supervisor, Dr. David Kaufman. He always sees everything from the bright side's lenses and with his capacities he always finds ways out; academically and non-academically. My thanks also go to my supervisor Dr. Charles Scott, who inspired and motivated me since I started my journey at SFU. His comments and suggestions on my writings helped me improve my skills.

My thanks and appreciation go to the examiners. Dr. Jerome Allender as the external examiner who provided encouragement to further my work. Dr. Kanthi Jayasundera, the internal/external examiner, gave me knots to strengthen my thought.

My great thanks go to the Dean and former Dean of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences Universitas Terbuka, Dr. Udan Kusmawan and Drs. Rustam. M. Pd, and staff for allowing and supporting my study at SFU.

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the Centre of Human Resources Development (PPSDM) UT; Dr. Lina Warlina and Endang Indrawati, M. Sc. and staff for endless support during my study at SFU. Without their sincere support I would not have survived.

I would not be at SFU without support and encouragement from my family. Most of all, my husband, Aminudin Zuhairi, who allows me to stretch my wings and accomplish my dreams. I am not capable to repay his selflessness. My children, Fawzi and Annisa Zuhairi, without your pray and understanding, I could not finish my study. I express my deep acknowledgement to my mother, who never stop praying for me, but who sadly in God's will cannot witness her daughter finish her study, to my mother in-law and my sisters and brothers who steadily pray for my success and to my nieces and nephews who inspire me. My Canadian family, Ibu Farida & Pak Nick Mawji and family, and Zuma Manji, who never let me down and felt lonely.

My UT's friends with whom we share our happiness and sorrow and support each other, pak Ojat, om Adhi, pak Toha, dik Yudhi and dik Titik, thank you very much.

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List of Acronyms

PTEP	Primary Teacher Education Program
SFU	Simon Fraser University
UT	Universitas Terbuka (Indonesia Open University)

Chapter 1.

Introduction

This thesis explores the notion of “reflective practice” through autobiographical research. The broad goal of this research is to determine how the ideals of reflective practice might take form and be integrated into teacher education programs in Indonesia. What is the place and value of reflection and reflective practice in the lives of the Indonesian people? How might public schools and universities change with more “reflective teachers” and how might we think differently about teacher education programs in Indonesia? I searched the answers to these questions through writing my life stories that related to my educational experiences.

I searched my educational experiences that stand out in my life and articulated them with the intention of analyzing how the ideals of reflective practice might apply not only to me but also to Indonesian society, generally and specifically in the context of teaching at the primary school level. I looked back and reflected on my formal and informal educational experiences from the early years. My informal education includes home and social, cultural, and political environments. I traced critical incidences of my educational experiences, in order to learn more on my assumptions about learning and teaching. I explored my personal experiences, my expectations, and my reflection on each incidence. I analysed each incidence, socially and culturally, which developed my knowledge and skills as well as shaped my disposition. How I learned? Why I learned? What made me learn something? Those are the questions that I would like to answer. I looked for beliefs and values that grew along with my educational experiences. I looked back on teachers (formal and informal) who made profound positive differences in my life as well as teachers who had a deleterious effect. I will also be mindful of the results of writing an autobiography as a connection to personal, lived experiences with the purpose of revealing a fresh understanding of one’s self and one’s place in society. By

writing my autobiography, I will share and re-share my experiences, as Connelly and Clandinin (1988) assert that, “The process of making sense and meaning of our curriculum, that is of the narrative of our experience, is both difficult and rewarding” (p. 11). I also consider the advantages of writing my autobiography, which include improving my personal and professional knowledge as a teacher educator.

I start this thesis with my story of searching for my research topic, followed by my introduction to reflective practice in teacher education, then go to using autobiography as a research method, and lastly to the significance of my study and an overview of the thesis.

1.1. Searching for a Research Topic

A dissertation in this regard is much like gardening — the profusion of ancillary ideas may kill off the main growth. Rather than letting a thousand ideas bloom, the key is to prune and weed and allow the central idea to truly blossom (Butin, 2010, p. 39).

At the end of the third semester of my program, I was the last of the six UT students to decide on a research topic. While five of my friends had articulated their research topic, I was still searching and it was agonizing. Then I thought back on the purpose for pursuing doctoral study; I was so naïve. I did not specify the purpose of my study. I remembered that when I had written my proposal I had wanted to learn the teacher education curriculum for several developed countries that could be instantly applied to my university. I imagined that I would find solutions ready to be applied in my situation. I was so eager to improve teacher education at UT, especially for the PTEP. Then I realised that the field of teacher education was gigantic and that this would not involve any simple “application” of research findings to the Indonesian context.

I was saved by Dan Butin’s book, *The education dissertation: A guide for practitioner scholars* (2010) which really showed me the way to find a research topic. Butin suggests a path to finding a research topic through the creation of what he called an “academic word bank.” The source of this academic word bank is keywords written as descriptors of articles or subjects. Within the SFU Library website, these subjects can be

found through library search – *Browse data bases by subject area*. I opened the SFU library portal, went to *Journal articles and data bases*, then chose education from *Browse data bases by subject area*, and chose *Eric (Ebsco)* as the data base. I felt that this data base was more complete compared to the others. First I typed “teacher education” and I found more than one hundred thousand articles related to this topic. Then I typed another descriptor “primary school” and the result was still more than three thousand articles that appeared under these categories. Then I typed a third category “science,” and I found less than one thousand. From this last search I refined the results and entered *Full Text* and *Peer reviewed* articles and the result was interesting — it was less than one hundred. From the “Subjects” written in each article I found three phrases that resonated with my feelings and thoughts. They were teachers’ skills, teachers’ reflections, and teachers’ empowerment.

When I read articles related to teachers’ reflections, I remembered my experience as a biology teacher and as a tutor conducting face-to-face tutorials for a *Pemantapan Kemampuan Mengajar (Strengthening Professional Competences)* course at my university. When I was a senior high school Biology teacher, I acted as a government official with the duty of transferring knowledge and culture, accomplishing the mandated national curriculum, and making sure that all students passed the exam. I drilled knowledge that was already printed in books and enacted cultural practices and routines to be preserved. In return, the context of my reflection (reflection-on-action) always referred to the achievement of the target that had been stated. Low achievement and misbehaviour were always my concern. I considered my teaching to be successful if all students gained good marks and behaved decently. When I was confronted with problems during my lessons, for the most part, I would think that the students were the source of the problem. Thus, I had suspicion towards my students; I often did not trust them. I was very sensitive toward their behaviour and I was afraid of being challenged. All those considerations in my mind resulted in a strained performance in my classroom. When I think back to those situations, I think I developed fear among the students.

The *Strengthening Professional Competences* course is a teaching practicum course, which was intended to improve teachers’ professionalism through conducting action research. Students conducted three cycles of action research in their teaching

and wrote a research report. The first step in conducting action research is reflection, or reflection-on-action according to Schön (1983, 1987). Student teachers were asked to reflect on their teaching to find any problem or unexpected occurrence. When they presented their teaching problems, I was surprised to find that their reflections focused on their students' performance, not their teaching performance. My student teachers blamed their students as the source of the problem. For example, when their students failed, they thought that their students were lazy, lacked motivation, or neglected their lessons. My student teachers did not view their students' performance in the class as a result of their teaching.

Moreover, my student teachers' reflections mostly concentrated on their students' academic achievement. They viewed their students' academic achievement as their main goal, so they concentrated on the under-achieving students and treated them as the problem. It was understandable because the teachers' perceived accountability was based on the students' academic achievement. At that time I realised *my* understanding of reflection was very limited and based simplistically on the content in the learning materials. I realised that I was far from Schön's idealism of a good teacher, helping students understand the material in their own terms. I had no patience for elaborating about reflection because of my limited understanding of reflection; I put my energy into helping students finish their assignments and writing their research reports.

These experiences triggered me to further study about reflection. I decided to focus my research on reflection in teacher education. I rushed to meet my senior supervisor and told him my decision. He then stood up and took a big red book and handed it to me. My hands were trembling, heart was beating faster, and my eyes were full of water when I read the title of his dissertation, "*Conceptualizing a "reflective practicum" in constructivist science teaching*" (MacKinnon, 1989a). I was so nervous; I could not hide my happiness. I felt safe; I would always be at the right place with the right guru along the way. I also felt relieved since I was capable of making a big decision as the springboard for my journey.

1.2. Reflective Practice in Teacher Education

Ideas about reflective practice in teacher education have been extensively applied and explored with the belief that reflection improves the quality of teaching. In student-centered teaching — teaching is not only paying attention to the students' cognitive and skill achievements but also the students' welfare. Reflective teachers are able to analyze, monitor, and change their practices in their classrooms (Schön, 1983; Korthagen, 2001; Zeichner & Liston, 2013) and develop new knowledge of teaching (Schön, 1983; Kinsella, 2007). Practitioners improve their practice over time through reflection, through critiquing their own understanding of the problematic zones of practices (Schön, 1983). Through reflection, teachers will be aware of their thoughts as a subject to be criticized, structured, and restructured. Reflective thinking prevents teachers from conducting their practices as habitual and routine actions. Through reflection, teachers are aware of their actions and their consequences in helping students to learn (Korthagen, 2001). As well, reflective teachers have opportunities to pass their reflective thinking skills to their students, helping them in turn to become better students.

Grimmett, Erickson, Mackinnon, and Riecken (1990) show how the literature on reflection in teacher education can be divided into three major conceptual orientations on reflective practice, based on the differences in what is being reflected upon, the particular conception of reflection, and how the reflective process unfolds, the mode and the purpose of reflection. The first of these categories is *reflection as instrumental mediation*, in which knowledge is used to *direct* practice. The second category is *reflection as deliberating among competing views of teaching*, where theories and research results about teaching are used to inform practice. The third category is *reflection as reconstructing experience*; this means that personal experiences are reframed in a new light, which forms the basis for the practitioner to bring about a change in action.

A recent view of reflection proposed by Rose (2013) sees reflection as a contemplative synthesis of thought in quietude and meditative states in order to bring about new ideas. This notion of reflection is different from Dewey and Schön's notion of

reflection in the sense that reflection is not triggered by an immediate problem to be solved, but rather by a concern or attentiveness that incubates over time.

Reflective time is necessarily slow. Slow, of course, not in the sense that our fast-paced world tends to define it, as synonymous with laziness or stupidity, but a slowness that is associated with the increasingly rare qualities of care and attentiveness. Rare because, in general, the modern world demands hasty thought. ... reflection unfolds slowly, in its own good time, during periods of stillness seized from the bustle and busyness of everyday life. ... reflection entails a depth of understanding quite contrary to the superficial grasp of a situation or idea to which we are limited by snap decisions and split-second thinking. (Rose, 2013, p. 3)

Reflection is seen in this view to be a generative and creative process involving the synthesis of new meanings and significance from the interaction of previously unrelated thoughts or actions. Rose's (2013) conception of reflection provides an appropriate lens with which to view what I have experienced in writing this thesis; it is consistent with methodological ideas and frameworks about autobiographical writing, and it provides a compelling rationale for my study.

In Indonesia, the notion of reflective practice in teacher education has been introduced in government policy. The Ministry of Education and Culture has mandated that the teachers' ability to reflect will become one of the teaching competencies (Ministry of Education's Regulation number 16, 2007). It was stated in *Standar Kualifikasi Akademik dan Kompetensi Guru* (Academic Qualification and Competency Standards for Teachers) that teachers' reflective thinking is important. Teachers should conduct reflection on their teaching to improve their teaching practices through classroom action research. Moreover, according to this policy, teachers should be capable of making transactional decisions during their teaching. This means that teachers need to conduct reflection while conducting their teaching (reflection-in-action). This regulation indicates that teacher education should provide curriculum related to reflection. Teachers should be introduced to reflection within their teacher education program. However, Suratno (2010) feels that reflective practice in teacher education in Indonesia had not been touched systematically until the introduction of 'Lesson Study.' Within PTEP's curriculum, reflective practice has been introduced through the Classroom Action Research course (Katalog Pendas, 2011; Marsinah, 2010). Student

teachers are introduced to reflective thinking as part of classroom action research activities. In relation to the teachers' reflection, research conducted by Wardani et al. (2002) indicated that there were only a small proportion of teachers who were reflective in thinking about their teaching. Julaeha (2009) conducted a survey on PTEP students and found that there is an indication that students have conducted reflection; however, their responses indicated that they possessed low understanding about the notion of reflection.

As a teacher educator, an administrator, a mother, and a lifelong learner, I am aiming to become a reflective person capable of articulating the experiences that have shaped my understanding of education. One way to articulate my experiences is through writing my autobiography. Brookfield (1995) views writing an autobiography as an important lens to becoming a critically reflective person. Through writing an autobiography, which focuses on personal reflection on experiences as a learner and a teacher, someone "become[s] aware of paradigmatic assumptions and instinctive reasonings that frame how we work" (pp. 29-30).

1.3. Autobiography as Research

One assignment for the first course I took during my graduate program was to reflect on my literacy journey from my early years to graduate studies. It was a challenging task to search out my literacy roots from my past. But at the moment I started to think back, lots of incidences flashed out in my mind and I narrated my past lived experience. Through this assignment I have more understanding of myself:

I had the opportunity to reflect on myself who am I. There were a lot of questions that came out in my mind (e.g., what kind of literature I encountered that made me become less (have no) voice, ordered thinker, inferior, afraid of making mistakes). So that I thought I was the person who accepts (without critical thinking) all information in order to accomplish the requirement. Based on Canagarajah (2004), I am probably Avoidance.

According to Canagarajah (2004) multi lingual students who strive for voice in academic writing by accommodating the dominant discourses without negotiation with other

discourses is called avoidance strategy. Besides finding my literacy roots, this assignment triggered me to wonder more about myself. How I became the person I am. I was not a brilliant student; I was an easygoing person who enjoys outdoor activities. A person who was not interested in becoming a teacher but who enjoyed working with students and children as a teacher. This thought led me to write my autobiography.

A second experience that triggered me to write my autobiography was a writing assignment involving objects available around the classroom. It was a blessing to be admitted to the Curriculum Theory and Implementation doctoral program at Simon Fraser University. I never imagined having the luxury of time to improve my competencies under a government scholarship in my 50 years of life. When I walk around the Burnaby campus, I often pass by a sturdy-egg shaped, dull grey statue. From a distance this statue is very small compared to the surrounding buildings and looks like a dull grey cocoon. I never paid much attention to this statue until one sunny summer day; my lecturer assigned students to find an object outside of the class to use as the basis for writing. This is Carlos Basanta's statue, *The Oval Reflection*, which stands in the middle of a large, central building and concourse called the "Academic Quadrangle." This statue was the Millennium Project for the Academic Quadrangle winner in 2000 (<http://www.carlosbasanta.com/basanta-sfu-text.html>). This statue resembles a cocoon that has been split in two and there is a small space between them. I went in the space in the middle of the statue and faced the mirror and saw clearly the marks on my face, the pores and wrinkles on my forehead and cheeks. Once it flashed out in my mind, what am I doing here? I had left my dear husband, son, fragile mom, and family far away. I sat in the cocoon and stared into the mirror. As if in a cocoon myself, I contemplated and indulged the nourishing surroundings with hopes of becoming a butterfly, in meaningful connections with other, living and non-living things. This is the place I often visit physically whenever I passed by on the way to catch the bus, or even imaginatively, drawing it in my mind, whenever I felt despair.

My experience with this assignment is engraved in my mind and my heart deeply and will not easily be erased. Sitting in the middle of the statue encouraged me to search more about the artist as well as the meanings and reasons behind the making of the statue. To fulfil my curiosity, first I searched through the available electronic media but

the result did not satisfy my curiosity. Then, with my bravery, I sent an e-mail to the artist, Carlos Basanta. I didn't know what to expect, but he promptly replied and sent me a written explication of his philosophy in producing the statue as well as his description of the statue:

I have chosen the egg as a theme to celebrate the Millennium Walkway of Simon Fraser University. The egg is the most basic and perfect organic shape. It is the symbol of beginning, fertility, and wholeness. It is full of hope, mystery, and potential. It thus reflects the mission of higher education in the cultivation of individuals. (Personal correspondence)

I was so honoured to receive an e-mail from a prominent artist. He spent time answering questions from someone he didn't know. From this assignment, I also learned from both my experience searching for resources related to the statue and from my experience communicating with a prominent artist.

The statue not only triggered me to accomplish my assignment in the form of a piece of writing, it also prompted me to search more about it until I realised its meanings, leading me to become more attentive to and appreciative of the piece of art. There is a vigorous philosophy behind the piece of art that I never thought about before. More importantly, when I see my reflection in that mirror it gives me an assurance that this university supports and facilitates me in pursuing my study and there is a hope that I will be a better person/teacher in the future when the time comes for me to "hatch".

The most important effect of conducting this assignment was the opportunity to look back on my teaching. I asked myself how often I assigned students and facilitated them to learn through experience as defined by Dewey (1938), triggering and leading students to learn. Through hands-on activities, experience through observing, touching, smelling, and/or tasting, learning will take place meaningfully (Boud, Cohen, & Walker, 1993; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). There is a cycle of knowledge acquisition through experience, which can be thought of in terms of grasping and connecting empirical events with abstract conceptualisations, reflective observations, and thought experimentation and conjecture. However, it was unlikely I gave my students the chances to go through these cycles. Students sat in rows on stiff wooden benches with their hands on the table, with open eyes and ears as though they were sponges ready to absorb each of my

utterances and my writing on the blackboard. Friere (1970/2000) called this the “banking notion” of education.

It was not easy for me starting to write my autobiography. I had thought that an autobiography was a literature work belonging to lofty people or people who had some historical importance. These were not to be written by ordinary people like me; there was nothing special about my personal and professional lives. There were also controversies of thought and feeling in writing my autobiography because in my personal view it was unacceptable culturally. Writing an autobiography means revealing my private social, cultural, and personal dimensions I had been trained not to expose myself, especially my personal life. I thought that by writing my autobiography I would become a pedantic person, while I had been born into a family in which modesty was the way of life. Moreover, pride of self is considered as an impolite attitude. Another very important hesitation about writing my autobiography had to do with my writing skills; I was not trained to articulate my experiences in writing.

Hesitation also arose because of my limited understanding of the meaning of autobiography. I used to understand that an autobiography was a piece of literary work and unscientific writing, since autobiography does not follow scientific writing, which is clearly defined and has rigidly imposed conventions. However, I was reassured by Coffey (2004) and Svensson and Randall (2003), with their view that autobiography in research can be seen as data as well as a means to researching life. Freeman asserts that autobiography “is among the most important and valuable vehicles for exploring the human realm in all of its depth, and richness” (Freeman, DOI: 10.4135/9781412963909.n28, p. 26). From this point I started to gain confidence in employing this approach, allowing me to search into my experiences and reflect on them in order to become more understanding of myself in order to improve my personal and professional lives.

Moreover, I also had been haunted by my own thought, “Will readers gain any value from reading my story?” It is only a story of an ordinary kid, ordinary student, ordinary teacher, and ordinary mother. There was no monumental achievement in my life except in my family and in terms of the common Indonesian village standard of life, I

had accomplished my full life. I was educated, I have a tenured job and I have a family with children. I do feel grateful for what I have achieved, including the ups and downs of being human. When we read an autobiography or listen to one's life story we try to mirror our life to the story and we resonate with the lived experiences.

In writing my autobiography I explored experiences that related to my educational experiences both formally and informally starting from my early years as well as my educational experiences while I was a teacher and a mother with guided questions adopted from Liu (2009) as follows:

1. How my parents, family, and society educated me when I was a child?
2. How my teachers taught me when I used to be a student?
3. How I taught my students during my professional life and my relation to my children as a mother?

Writing an autobiography means telling about my past and I start by briefly telling my life story as the context of the study.

1.4. The Context of the Study

This thesis is comprised of stories about me, a short brown village girl in search of becoming a better person. Born as the fourth out of seven children of a farmer family, I dreamed of flying around the world, feeling the touch of cold smooth white snow on my face; it must be really cold outside as I sit in a warm comfy room while enjoying the white pine trees through a big glass window. Those pictures of used calendars hanging on my living room walls are prominent in my mind and deep in my soul. The calendar photographs depicted places which I never had seen. There were two pictures which were engraved in my brain, a picture of mountainous scenes with snow on top of them combined with a blue sky and a picture of colourful trees that were yellow, red, and green. When I learned about sub-tropic seasons in an English lesson, I rearranged those pictures according to the season cycle. I really had no idea about my father's purposes for creating those wall decorations out of used calendars. Were they intended for educational purposes? I was not so sure since he was only an elementary school graduate and was not allowed to continue school by the colonies because of his family's

social status. Yet I think he had progressive views when he allowed me, as a village woman at that time, to leave the village to study at university in a big city.

I spent my school life in the same village where my father was born with my family before I moved to the capital city to pursue my postsecondary education. My village is on Java Island, located on the slope of Sumbing Mountain, and it is about 472 metres above sea level, covers 133 hectare, and in 2011 there were 4,742 citizens (<http://www.temanggungkab.go.id/profil.php?mnid=149>). In my early childhood, electricity was only available in the homes which were situated beside the main road, while my house was located 500 m from it.

I was disappointed that my height did not allow me to be a flight attendant. I thought being a flight attendant was the only way to fulfil my dream of going abroad and flight attendant school being free was the most important reason to pursue attending. Then I followed my friends entering university and I sat for two university entrance tests, a Biology program at a prominent university and Biology Education at *Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Jakarta* (Institute of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences), one of the six institutes of teacher trainings in Indonesia. I failed to enter the Biology program but was accepted for the Biology Education program even though it was not my main goal. Considering my family economic circumstances, I studied hard to achieve the minimum requirement for receiving government scholarships, which I received for three consecutive years. I also received a government bank loan during the final year to finish my studies. I was so lucky to receive these bursaries and I completed my study in a timely way. I could not imagine how I would have been capable of finishing university without those scholarships and bursaries.

I started to teach before I finished my studies for economical and professional reasons. I was capable of living on my own as well as with the hope that soon I graduated and I had a post to go to. I taught at three different schools with different historical, social, and economic circumstances. Two schools were new at the time I started teaching. One was a public school located on the northern outskirts of Jakarta in the middle of a rice field; the second one was a private school located in at East Jakarta. These two schools had similarities based on the students' characteristics. In general,

students were somewhat low achievers and came from low-income families. I often smelled alcohol among the students and once even found a drunken student in the classroom. The third school I taught at had opposite characteristics from the other two schools in terms of historical, social, and economic points of view. This school was located in South Jakarta in a rich and noble family environment and it was one of the renowned public schools in the city. The students were the children of businessmen, government officials, musicians, and actors. I started teaching in my final year of teacher training college; I had not received any licence to teach at that time. These facts indicate that the senior high schools of Indonesia faced a crisis in their shortage of teachers, as I taught at several schools without a degree. I was tempted to teach because I learned from the seniors in college who were also hired before finishing their degrees and who kept up-to-date information about which schools needed a Biology teacher.

I continued teaching at those Senior High Schools for several years before I moved to university. My wishful thinking of beautiful scenes of fall and winter seasons was always in my mind. It was impossible for me to travel abroad on my own economically and the only way to go was by finding a scholarship. I applied for a lecturer position as a way to fulfil my dream of visiting those beautiful places. A high school teacher was unlikely to receive government scholarships to study abroad; while for lectures the opportunity was widely open. Finally, I was accepted as a lecturer at Universitas Terbuka (UT), which is The Indonesian Open University. I worked at UT for more than 20 years as a Biology and primary teacher/educator in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences before pursuing my doctoral studies in Canada.

UT was established in 1984 as the only single mode distance education university in Indonesia; it was a government initiative to provide opportunities for high school graduates to continue their study at the post-secondary level. As well, UT was mandated to educate practicing teachers to improve their qualifications (Zuhairi, Suratinah, Andayani, & Sehar, 2010). Currently UT offers 24 undergraduate programs and 4 graduate programs within four faculties: the Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences, the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Science, the Faculty of Social Science, and the Faculty of Economics and Postgraduate Programs (Katalog UT, 2012). In order to run its organisation, UT consists of two parts, the headquarters, which

is located in Jakarta, and 37 regional offices located in major cities throughout Indonesia. The headquarters is the “think tank” of the university, while the regional offices directly communicate with students. I work at the headquarters from 8:00 a.m. until 4:15 p.m., five days a week in an office environment.

As a lecturer, my main responsibilities are similar to those of other lecturers from face-to-face universities, including teaching, conducting research, and carrying out community service. In addition to conducting face-to-face and online tutorials, I also maintain the learning materials under my responsibility when they need to be updated, and manage assessment tools and means as my teaching responsibility. At the office, my time is mostly spent on administrative and managerial matters, answering letters, consulting students either on the telephone or in person. Since the early years of my appointment at UT, I have dealt with managerial related tasks. It started when I was assigned to coordinate administrative matters for students’ graduations, which forced me for the first time to learn to type on an old-bulky computer of the administrative staff. My managerial responsibilities started from faculty level and to university level. At the faculty level, first, I was appointed as the coordinator of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences’ item test bank unit which was responsible for managing the development and preparation for students’ assessments followed by chairing the Biology program, which included managing the curriculum and teaching materials for the program as well as managing students’ welfare. At the university level, I was appointed as a coordinator at the Examination Centre, first as the coordinator for the Test and Assessment Development division, which was responsible for managing the development of the examination systems and procedures, and subsequently for the last seven years before leaving for SFU, as the coordinator of the Students’ Examination Results Processes division.

One prominent program offered by the Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences is the Primary Teacher Education Program (PTEP). The aim of this program is to improve the qualification of underqualified and unqualified primary school teachers. Historically, primary school teachers were either trained for three years at the senior high school level or in one-year crash programs for junior high school graduates designed to fill the shortage of primary school teachers (Nielson, 1998). In

2005, the government issued a new law that requires teachers to possess an S1 degree certificate. As a result of the application of this law, a large number of primary school teachers enrolled in UT. UT's programs are suited to teachers who live all over the country. The programs also benefit local teachers and government workers who work full-time and thus would not be available for daytime study in a traditional university. To encourage teachers to improve their qualifications and practices, the government provides scholarships. Currently, PTEP students are the majority of UT's student body. Based on enrolment data, UT is considered one of the ten mega universities in the world (Daniel, 1996) and in the year 2013 there were 579 students registered and 1.388.053 alumni since inception of UT (Belawati, et. al. 2014).

1.5. Significance

Through writing memories, I am making meaning of my lived experiences for my future life, which involves reflecting (Mezirow, 1991) on the reasons behind events. By writing my autobiography, I experienced the processes involved from raw materials to meaningful story, as Bateson (1994) asserts, "the process of spiralling through memory to weave connections of incidents is basic to learning, so that in this and perhaps other ways the [autobiographical] text is a demonstration of its subject matter" (p. 11). The experiences in the autobiography are lived experiences that can be shared with my students.

When remembering times as a learner, experiences as a learner — the feeling of anxiety, of being incapable, of humiliation and fear, as well as the feeling of success and confidence — will inform me as a teacher to help my students learn. I have the opportunity to 'see myself,' to examine whether my teaching was influenced by my experience as a learner, as suggested by Brookfield (1995). Writing my biography makes me feel blessed for what I have gained and fills me with gratitude for those who have supported and influenced my life. And as a prospective reflective practitioner I treat the process of writing as "self-illumination and exploration" (Bolton, 2010, p. 4).

These above benefits of learning and writing autobiography were composed before I wrote my autobiography. After I wrote my autobiography I gained more benefits, which I

describe in Chapter Six. One of the benefits that I had never thought about is the development of my ability to write narratively. Until I reread my last chapter, I had never thought that I was capable of composing those sentences and after reading them I just knew that I could. These words, my personal creation, gave light to the darkness of my life of fear for the world of *academic writing*.

1.6. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organised within six chapters: Chapter One is the introduction of my dissertation, Chapter Two is my literature review related to reflection, teachers as curriculum planners, and cognitive constructivism. This literature review contains initial theories and research results that informed me in making sense during re-storying my experiences. Chapter three describes the methodological considerations for this study, which consist of theories of autobiography and the application of writing autobiography in teacher education, as well as theories about story telling. Chapters Four and Five present my autobiography. Chapter Four is dedicated to my school life stories, while Chapter Five is dedicated to my teaching stories and my story as a mother. Chapter Six is my reflection on the process of writing my autobiography, the benefits gained from this research, and my further thoughts on the possibilities and the application of reflective practice in UT.

Chapter 2.

Review of Literature

This chapter is dedicated to my review of the literature related to my beliefs as an educator, which have accumulated during my learning experiences. These beliefs became my springboard in analysing my experience, to articulate my story, and further develop my thoughts about the application of reflective practice in Indonesian contexts. I believe that teachers should develop their capacity to reflect on their teaching so that they develop their personal professional knowledge to become empowered in developing and executing the curriculum in the classroom. In turn, the classroom teacher translates the prescribed curriculum into a program of studies that suits the needs of the students. Teachers act as agents to help students achieve their goals; they provide a democratic and safe environment for students to learn. They are not simply government agents who transmit knowledge to students. I believe that students bring to school their own knowledge, resulting from their exposure to their environment and culture, and they construct their understanding and knowledge on this foundation. In the first part of this chapter, I will review theories and the practice on reflection in teacher education, while in the second part I will review curriculum theories related to the role of the teacher as a curriculum developer. In the last section, I will review constructivist theory in learning and teaching as a theory of knowing that brings the concept of reflection into a new light in curriculum studies.

2.1. Reflection in Teacher Education

The role of teachers in classrooms is undoubtedly very important. Their lessons not only influence their students' academic/intellectual development but also their personal, social, and emotional development — ultimately, the social and political dimensions of students' life chances (Zeichner & Liu, 2010). It is still clear in my mind

how my son struggled to cope with his adjustment with his new teacher every year during his primary school. The worst case happened when he was in the first week of his fourth grade. He suddenly had a fever without any apparent cause. As this happened almost every year, I asked him to let me know what his new teacher looked like. With his sad face he told me that his new teacher was a strict teacher. On the first day of his school the teacher introduced the classroom's rules and consequences. One of the punishments for disobeying the classroom's code of conduct was to clean the classroom. He was so afraid to face the punishment that he seemed paralyzed. In an opposite situation, when my son was in grade eight, he had a very special teacher. In the first semester he abhorred school and spent his time doing things he enjoyed: playing music and practicing soccer. As a result he became an under-achiever in his class. In the second semester he had high enthusiasm for schooling, which I thought was a result of my influence. But it all came down to his class guardian.

When the time came for the parent-teacher interview sessions and to receive his report card, the teacher declared in front of all the parents that she was amazed with a particular student who had progressed by leaps and bounds in his academic achievement. When I heard her declaration, my gut feeling told me, "It's probably your son." I was so amazed and could not believe that my son's academic achievement improved remarkably. My puzzlement was answered when my son told me that his class guardian was very kind; she gave attention to every student in the class and my son felt safe with her. She opened up her space, her interaction with the students, not only in the school environment but also in her personal life. She invited students to come to her house; prepared meals along with students. I think this situation, the development of trust between the teacher and students and the feeling of being cared for was in line with Nel Noddings' (1984) notion of ethic of care. And this kind of teacher can be categorised as an imaginative and like-minded teacher described by Noddings (p. 66). From these two experiences I learned how my son reacted to the teachers' dispositions, and how that either hinders or triggers his desire to learn.

It is undeniable that teaching is a very complex practice. Teachers deal with several issues simultaneously, such as content to be delivered, support systems needed, students' welfare, and school culture. Teachers are faced with situations that

are complex, uncertain, unique, instable, and filled with value conflicts, similar to other professional fields (Schön, 1983). When I was a teacher, it was as though I was blindfolded by the curriculum objectives — the targets that I had to achieve since the schools and society demanded me to help pupils achieve their academic goals. I rarely had the time to look out for the students' personal/emotional learning welfare. Looking back, I think of myself then as an inexperienced person and untrained teacher (Sanders & McCutcheon, 1986), unable to perceive and interpret the professionally significant features of the situation, and lacking in the knowledge and confidence to choose actions that are appropriate in these circumstances for producing desired consequences. I especially realized my unprofessional disposition toward my pupils when I taught student teachers.

Since I worked at UT, I facilitate the development of the curriculum and support systems to improve the teachers' qualifications and quality, and lately I have concentrated on the Primary Teacher Education Program (PTEP). This program is dedicated to serving primary school teachers. The PTEP curriculum consists of subjects taught in primary school, pedagogy, pedagogical content knowledge, as well as teaching practicum. The idea of reflection has been introduced as part of two courses, named *Action Research* and *Strengthening Professional Competences*. In the first course, the students are introduced to reflection as part of the action research activities while in the later course students are required to conduct action research in their classroom, which presumably entails their reflection or reflective practice. After being involved in conducting tutorials for these two courses, my understanding and appreciation of the importance of reflection for teachers deepened, and I proposed more deliberation on the notion of reflection in the PTEP curriculum with the aim of helping teachers become professional/reflective teachers in assisting students to learn. Another advantage of having a habit of reflection, the teachers will develop their practical theories of teaching and thus their teaching becomes more accountable to students, parents, and society. Further professional learning can be shared with supervisors and colleagues.

"Reflection" has become a major issue in teacher education worldwide, given that reflective thinking promises to lead to better practice in the profession (Schön, 1983). Some teachers/educators incorporate ideas about reflection and reflective practice in the

teacher education curriculum with the goal to facilitate student teachers in becoming reflective teachers (Liston & Zeichner, 1987; Grimmett, Erickson, MacKinnon, & Riecken, 1990; Brookfield, 1995; Korthagen, 2001, 2010; Larrivee, 2010). According to Schön (1983), practitioners improve their practice over time through reflection — through a critique of their own understanding of the problematic zones of practices. Korthagen (2001) feels that through reflection the teachers will be aware of their thoughts as a subject to be criticized, structured, and restructured. Reflective thinking prevents teachers from conducting their practices as habitual and routine actions. Through reflection, teachers are aware of their actions and the consequences of those actions on students' learning, well-being, and development. In addition, reflective teachers have opportunities to model their reflective thinking and assist students in becoming more effective learners.

The application of reflection in teacher education is extensive with a myriad of meanings and orientations (MacKinnon, 1989b). Meanings of reflection in teacher education are varied (LaBoskey, 1993; Larrivee, 2008; & Korthagen, 2010), and according to Korthagen (2010) one thing agreed on by scholars upon the meaning of reflection is that reflection is a special form of thought. He further summarizes the variety of the meaning of reflection as a way of thinking about educational matters that involves the ability to make better choices for students' learning, as emphasizing the level to which teachers critically assess the moral, ethical, political, and instrumental values embedded in their everyday thinking and practice, and reflection that emphasizes the effectiveness of instructional strategies to achieve specific aims. Based on their evaluation of the articles related to studies that promote teacher reflection in Spain, Marcos, Sanchez, and Thillema (2011) concluded that the core conception of reflection includes problem-solving, which coincides with awareness-raising, in order to construct professional knowledge.

2.1.1. Defining Reflective Thinking

Reflection according to John Dewey and Donald Schön

I begin by reviewing the two prominent scholars of reflection, John Dewey and Donald Schön. In his book, *How We Think*, Dewey (1910) defines the way we think

and the process of reflective thinking. He differentiates four typical ways in using the term thinking or thought. First, in a broad sense, thought is defined as anything that comes up in the mind; what passes through in our mind, un-purposeful, is considered as thinking. Daydreaming and imagining building a castle in the air are examples of this type of thinking. The second meaning of thought, the more restricted meaning, is thinking which is not caused by our perception of our environment, thinking which is not directly influenced by seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling or tasting, thinking which is beyond observation. It can be related to our feelings and emotion or our imagination. This type of thinking is not intended to bring about knowledge and beliefs about facts or truths. Such thinking brings about such imaginative stories. The third and fourth types are thoughts which lead to a belief, such as through the process of thinking we believe something. He states that: "In some cases a belief is accepted with slight or almost no attempt to state the grounds that support it. In other cases, the ground or basis for a belief is deliberately sought and its adequacy to support the belief examined" (p. 1). The third type is thinking that results in belief but is not supported by knowledge or facts. The last type is what he called reflective thinking, thinking that relates to belief which is grounded by something already examined.

For Dewey, to reflect means to find proof and other sources that help to bring about suggestions for further thought or actions, or to challenge the suggested belief; as he asserts, reflective thought is "Active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions ..." (p. 5). He illustrates the act of reflective thinking in terms of what might happen when someone faces a fork in the road where she/he cannot decide which way to turn. She/he should find evidence to support her/his decision. Dewey (1910) further clarifies that, "... to reflect, means to hunt for additional evidence, for new data, that will develop the suggestion, and will either, as we say, bear it out or else make obvious its absurdity and irrelevance" (p. 12). There are two elements involved in reflective thinking: "(a) a state of perplexity, hesitation, doubt; and (b) an act of search or investigation directed toward bringing to light further facts which serve to corroborate or to nullify the suggested belief" (p. 9). The state of perplexity, hesitation, and doubt appear when we are faced by unexpected occurrences or circumstances and lead to confusion and suspend our belief. This confusion urges our thought to find solutions, determined by the

process of reflection. As he states, “Demands for the solution of perplexity is the steadying and guiding factor in the entire process of reflection” (p. 9).

The second element of reflective thinking, the act of searching and investigating, is the core of reflective thinking itself. One should search data either from memory, past knowledge and experience, or new data or knowledge. This inquiry process involves forward and backward thinking. Dewey (1910) writes:

Reflection involves not simply a sequence of ideas, but a *consequence* — a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while each in turn leans back on its predecessors. The successive portions of reflective thought grow out one another and support one another; they do not come and go in a medley. Each phase is a step from something to something — technically speaking, it is a term of thought. Each term leaves a deposit which is utilized in the next term. The stream or flow becomes a train, chain, or thread (p. 2).

When we conduct reflective thinking, we cannot jump into a direct conclusion or action but we need to pause or postpone our inference in order to challenge the existing assumptions and beliefs through conducting an inquiry.

Conducting reflective thinking is not an easy task as we often situate ourselves in a comfort zone and in taken-for-granted knowledge or situation. Dewey (1910) warns us that:

Reflective thinking is always more or less troublesome because it involves overcoming the inertia that inclines one to accept suggestions at their face value; it involves willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest and disturbance. Reflective thinking, in short, means judgment suspended during further inquiry; and suspense is likely to be somewhat painful (p. 12).

In other words, conducting reflective thinking involves a hesitation to draw conclusions or take hasty actions. The process of suspending judgement in order to find other proofs and corroborating evidence requires persistence and passion. The effort to suspend judgment is rewarding since there are inherent values of reflective thinking that are tied to the practitioner’s ethics and sense of self. According to Dewey (1933), reflective thinking “enhance[s] the power of thought which frees us from subjection to instinct, appetite, and routine” (p. 22).

Based on his views on reflective thinking, Dewey (1910) further differentiates between routine action and reflective action. Routine actions are actions that have not been actively considered — guided by habit, instinct, and appetite. In teaching/learning situations routine actions in teaching are guided by impulse, tradition, as well as authority. In the school environment and classroom, actions are guided by taken-for-granted explanations of reality, a kind of ‘collective code’ in which problems, goals, and the means for their accomplishment become defined in particular ways (Zeichner & Liston, 2014). Reflective actions are grounded in reflective thinking.

Based on John Lock’s theory of human ways of thinking — dependence on others, self-interest, and being bounded to experience, Dewey (1910) points out that “thinking needs safeguarding and training” (p. 6). Thinking results in new thoughts, ideas, or actions for better or worse; as he asserts, “thought [may] be developed in positively wrong ways and lead to false and harmful beliefs” (Dewey, 1933, p. 22). In order to bring about positively right results, thinking needs to be guarded through education. He states that:

Education has accordingly not only to safeguard an individual against besetting erroneous tendencies of his own mind — its rashness, presumption, and preference of what chimes with self-interest to objective evidence — but also to undermine and destroy the accumulated and self-perpetuating prejudices of long ages (p. 23).

With a Deweyan conception of education at their heart, Schön’s ideas on reflection in professional practice have influenced the orientation of teacher education (Liston & Zeichner, 1987; Grimmett, Erickson, Mackinnon, & Riecken, 1990; Brookfield, 1995; Korthagen, 2001, 2010; Larrivee, 2010, Zeichner & Liston, 2013; MacKinnon, Clark, Erickson, 2013). Especially the two seminal books of *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think In Action* (1983) and *Educating Reflective Practitioner: Redesigning The Schools Of The Professions* (1987). In his 1983 book, Schön laid the basic approach to epistemology of professional practice — what counts as knowledge in professional practice — based on his study on several professions. Included were architects, psychotherapists, engineers, planners and managers on what they actually do in their practice. He argues that professional knowledge lies in the practitioner’s action. As an example, the knowledge of teaching lies in the action of good teachers. He

opposes the notion that practices are the application of theories and research results, a position he refers to as the model of Technical Rationality. In fact, skillful practitioners can often not say what it is that they know or even articulate their actions (Schön, 1987). The action presently conducted by practitioners, known as know-how or knowing-in-action, is considered to be the “active ingredient” of professional knowledge. This professional knowledge is developed through the process of reflection on practice and in practice, and this “knowing-in-action” is embedded as often tacit.

In other words, professional knowledge develops through a reflective thinking in which Donald Schön (1983) defines the reflective thinking process as follows:

It is initiated by the perception of something troubling or promising, and it is terminated by the production of changes one finds on the whole satisfactory, or by the discovery of new features which give the situation new meaning and change the nature of the questions to be explored (p. 151).

According to this definition, reflection happened whenever problems or unexpected conditions or results arose followed by a thinking process which brings about different features or other actions. He (1983) also states that problems are not readily available; however, practitioners need to be formulised, as he states that “In the real world practice, problems do not present themselves to the practitioners as givens. They must be constructed from the materials of problematic situations which are puzzling, troubling, and uncertain” (p. 40). In relation to finding problems, Schön (1983) states that the understanding of problematic situations happens through a process of problem setting and reframing. Practitioners should transform situations that do not make sense and are uncertain to situations that become clear and more certain. They also need to situate boundaries or to frame the context of the problem.

Schön (1983) differentiates between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Reflection-in-action happens where practitioners learn based on their knowledge to improvise as a result of new information or an unexpected situation. He argues that reflection-in-action “consists in on-the-spot surfacing, criticizing, restructuring, and testing of intuitive understanding of experienced phenomena, often takes the form of

reflective conversation with the situation” (pp. 241-242). The present situation, which is different from practitioners’ expectations or knowledge, triggers further thought or action.

Schön (1987) further develops a sequence of reflection in relation with knowing-in-action as follows:

Reflection starts in a situation where actions perform by spontaneous and routine responses which he called knowing-in-action. The routine responses produce a surprise – an unexpected outcome, pleasant or unpleasant, that does not fit the categories of our knowing-in-action. Surprises lead to reflection within an action-present. Reflection-in-action has a critical function, questioning the assumed structure of knowing-in-action. And reflection-in-action gives rise to on the spot experiment (p. 28).

In other words, reflection-in-action in practitioner practice happens if the response from the application of knowing-in-action is different from the expected outcome. At the moment of perceiving an unexpected response, practitioners question their knowledge and understanding, and then try to find hypothetical knowledge to be applied as an experiment.

Schön (1987) defines two stages of reflection-in-action: namely, frame and reframe the problematic situation and experimentation. The first stage, frame and reframe the problematic situation, is very important as he argues that “Because each practitioner treats his case as unique, he cannot deal with it by applying standard theories or techniques. ... he must construct an understanding of the situation as he finds it. And because he finds the situation problematic, he must reframe it” (p. 129). Framing the situation means perceiving the situation according to our knowledge to understand the situation. This framing processes depend on our belief, perception, values, and appreciation toward present situation. Among the arrays of alternative ways of perceiving the situation we select a particular set with which we try to understand and transform the situation. In the process of framing the situation, practitioners try to solve the problem situation by questioning the situation and the strategies they employ. The practitioners should pause and examine the problem situation from several angles until they are certain of the frame they are concentrating on. So that framing starts from messy situation in our minds and ends with clear problem to be solved. Based on

Schön's work, MacKinnon (1987) clarifies the notion of reframing situation as he states that it

... is the process by which the practitioner identifies the problematic phenomenon of the situation to which he or she will attend, and frames the context in which he or she will attend to it. Reframing is "seeing" in the situation new particulars that gave rise to new understandings of the problematic phenomenon, as well as new possibilities for action. (p. 139)

This means that reframing involves the process of finding tentative answers to a certain problematic situation using several points of views so that practitioners find a new perspective toward the problematic situation. Moreover, this answer brings about an alternative thought or action or we can say a new understanding of the situation.

Experimentation, as the follow-up of the process of reframing, happens where practitioners thought aloud about the present situation which has been framed, attested to the tentative answers and thinking of their consequences, either reappraisal or actions. As he (1987) states:

In order to see what can be made to follow from his [sic] reframing of the situation, each practitioner tries to adapt the situation to the frame. This he does through a web of moves, discovered consequences, implications, appreciations, and further moves. Within the larger web, individual moves yield phenomena to be understood, problems to be solved, or opportunities to be exploited (p. 131).

In the process of experimentation, like scientists conducting experiments, practitioners need to open their minds to the possibilities of the backgrounds of the unexpected events and potentials answers towards the problems being faced. The process of framing and reframing as well as experimentation toward the present situation might be conducted in a series of reframings and experimentation, and this process is called reflective conversation; as Schön (1983) states:

the practitioner's effort to solve the reframed problem yields new discoveries which call for new reflection-in-action. The process spirals through stages of appreciation, action, and reappraisal. The unique and uncertain situation comes to be understood through the attempt to change it, and changed through the attempt to understand it (p.132).

This reflection-in-action represents the art of practice, as he argues, “It is this entire process of reflection-in-action which is central to the ‘art’ by which practitioners sometimes deal well with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict” (p. 50). Schön (1987b) illustrates when a teacher is faced with different kinds of pupils' abilities in the classroom, teachers need to find methods that suit each pupil's ability.

In line with Schön's view of reflection, Kaufman and Mann (2007) define reflection-in-action involving three actions; namely:

Reframing and reworking the problem from different perspectives, establishing where the problem fits into learned schema (i.e., already existing knowledge and expertise), and understanding the elements and implications present in the problem, its solution and consequences (pp. 12-13).

In teaching and learning processes in the classroom, reflection-in-action always emerges as teachers face different situations and experiences that stem from surprises or problems. Schön (1983) further suggests that reflection-in-action may take time and not be made up entirely on the spot; it depends on the “action-present”, “the zone of time in which *action can still make a difference to the situation*. The action-present may stretch over minutes, hours, days, or even weeks or months depending on the pace of activity and the situational boundaries that are characteristic of practice” (p. 62). (emphasis by the writer)

Reflection-on-action, on the other hand, is reflection that is conducted after the action, to learn about what has happened in the action and possible influence to the outcome and consider for further action. As Schön (1987a) elucidates, “We may reflect on action, thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome” (p. 26). In his 1995 paper, Schön illustrates differences between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action in an athlete's circumstances. Reflection-in-action happens when a baseball player recognizes, assesses, and judges the direction and the speed of the coming ball and decides how he/she is going to hit the ball — the strength and direction of the ball and finally hits the ball. Reflection-on-action take place when a basketball player watches

his/her video recording on his/her last match and analyses events which influenced the game to improve his/her next performance.

In talking about object of reflection, Schön (1983) asserts that:

When a practitioner reflects in or on his practice, the possible objects of reflection are as varied as the kind of phenomena before him and the systems of knowing-in-practice which he brings to them. He may reflect on the tacit norms and appreciations which underlie the judgement, or on the strategies and theories implicit in a pattern of behavior. He may reflect on the feeling for a situation which has led him to adopt a particular course of action, on the way in which he has framed the problem he is trying to solve, or on the role he has constructed for himself within a larger institutional context (p. 62).

In other words, practitioners need to have varied lenses to capture the present situation, namely values, norms, feeling, as well as strategies and theories applied. In summarising Schön's theories of reflection and reflective practice, MacKinnon, Clark, and Erickson (2013) point out that:

I think Schön gave us an outline for understanding how the human mind works in practical and professional settings: reflection in and reflection on practice. The basis of his notion of competence in practice in the so-called 'professions' was an idea of someone who could turn problems around in the mind, looking at them from different angles and perspectives, as he would say, setting and reframing these problems in the search for viable solutions and promising courses of action (p. 93).

Reflection according to other scholars

Mezirow (1990) writes of reflection: "thoughtful actions involve a pause to reassess by asking: What am I doing wrong?" (p. 6) and he further justifies that reflective thinking triggers learning. This means that in the process of tackling problems we apply our knowledge and experiences to generate new meanings or actions of the action situation. The experience of generating new meanings or actions is a learning process. And Boud, Cohen, and Walker (1993) argue that learning through experience will take place when the learners are conducting self-reflection. Mezirow (1991) further delineates his views of reflection in the process of meaning making which facilitate learning. He differentiates three types of reflection: namely, content, process, and premise. He asserts that "Reflection is the process of critically assessing the content, process, and

premises of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to experience” (p. 104). Content reflection includes reflection on perception, thought, or action (the what) of the practice. Process reflection relates to reflection on the processes of perceiving, feeling, or acting (the how) of the practice, and premise reflection relates to reasons behind one’s perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and actions (the why) present. In order to make the distinction between these three forms, he illustrates with an example about an individual he names “Joe”— whether he tells the truth about his age. Reflection on the content might concentrate on the Joe’s physical appearance such as the colour of his hair, the lines on his face, and the year he finished school. Reflection on the process might concentrate on the way we find supporting data. Reflection on the premise might ask the value about the content and process of problem-solving. Premise reflection is similar to what others call being critically reflective. It represents the highest level of reflective thought through an analysis of the premises and assumptions inherent in the personal perspectives of the one who reflects. In teaching practices, “critical reflection includes, not only questioning how to teach, but why specific ways of thinking and questioning are part of the reflective process and not others” (Ostorga, 2006, p. 10). In a view that reflection promotes learning and generates knowledge, Clandinin (1992) asserts that new knowledge resulting from reflection becomes “personal practical knowledge” which she means that

It is knowledge that reflects the individual’s prior knowledge and acknowledges the nature of that teacher’s knowledge. It is a kind of knowledge carved out of and shaped by, situations; knowledge that is constructed and reconstructed as we live out our stories and retell and relive them through the processes of reflection. (p. 125)

Parker (1997) and Wilson (2008) affirm the addition of reflective practice proposed by Schön (1983, 1987) which consists of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Parker (1997) argues the importance of reflection-before-action, by which he means scrutinizing the plan in advance (before action). Wilson (2008) argues that Schön’s reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action are a lack of reflection-on-the-future which he means that “the act or process of reflecting on desirable and possible futures with the purpose of evaluating them as well as considering strategies to achieve the intended objective(s)” (p. 180).

Wilson (2008) contends a chronological perspective of reflective practice which involves reflection-on-action, reflection-in-action, and reflection-on-the-future in a linear but interactive mode as featured in the diagram below.

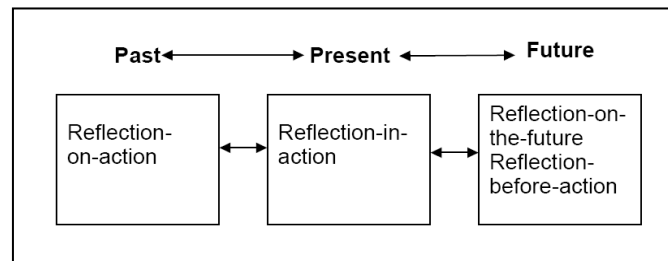


Figure 1. Chronological perspective of reflective practice (Wilson, 2008, p. 183)

Further development of reflection theory was proposed by Taggart and Wilson (2005) in which they argue that there are levels of reflective thinking and they develop a *reflective thinking pyramid*. This level of reflective thinking starts from the simplest, technical level, followed by the contextual level, and the highest, dialectical level. The technical level of reflective thinking is based on referencing past experience; teacher competency towards meeting outcomes; focuses on behavior, content, and skill; and offers a simple and theoretical description. The contextual level looks at alternative practices, choices based on knowledge and value commitments, content related to context/student needs, analysis, clarification, and validation of principles. The highest level, the dialectical level of reflection, addresses moral, ethical, or sociopolitical issues, discipline inquiry, individual autonomy, and self-understanding.

Rodger (2002) redefines the concept of reflection as she argues that for the last 15 years the notion of reflection has varied for scholars. Based on Dewey's thought on reflection, she declares that reflection involves four criteria. First of all, reflection is a meaning-making process that moves a learner from once experience into the next with a deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to experiences and ideas. It is the thread that makes continuity of learning possible, and ensures the progress of individuals, and ultimately society. It is a means to an essentially moral end. Secondly, reflection is a systematic, rigorous, disciplined way of thinking, with its roots in

scientific inquiry. Third, reflection needs to happen in the community, in interaction with others. Fourth, reflection requires attitudes that value the personal and intellectual growth of oneself and others. She further asserts that “reflection is not an end in itself but a tool or vehicle used in transformation of raw experience into meaning-filled theory that is grounded in experience, informed by existing theory, and serves the larger purpose of the moral growth of individual and society” (p. 863).

Larrivee (2010) feels that reflective practice “refers to on-the-job performance resulting from using a reflective process for daily decision making and problem solving” (p. 138). According to her, there are three distinct levels of reflection for teachers. The lowest level she calls the initial level where teachers concentrate their reflection on the teaching performance in a certain time or episode. At a more advanced level, teachers’ reflections relate their actions to theories, and justification underlies their practice. The highest reflection indicates that teachers reflect on their practice on the basis of the ethical, social, and political impacts of their practice.

As mentioned in Chapter One, a recent view of reflection is conveyed by Rose (2013) is quite different from the views of reflection of Schön and Dewey. According to Rose, reflection is a type of thought conducted outside of the practice setting in calmness and slowness; reflection cannot be conducted in a situation where there are a lot of distractions. She asserts that

... reflection entails something more than careful thought: it connotes quietude, solitude and leisurely involvement with ideas. (p. 2)

... reflection as a mode of thought that entails mulling over ideas that have no necessary connections and eventually producing from them, and from the perceived interconnection among them, a new meanings and ideas. Reflection can thus be seen as being more closely align with creativity than analyse. (p. 19)

Reflection would seem to be a dynamic, non-linear mode of thought in which the mind assimilated random bits of material that have been gathered serendipitously, from readings, conversations, and experiences. (p. 21)

Rose’s view of reflection above indicates the separation between thought and actions, or as *reflection-then-action*, which involves a process of synthesis to generate new ideas.

Reflection is not a step by step process to solve problems and produce ready-made results.

From the descriptions above it can be seen that theory of reflection and reflective practice evolves. Reflection not only involves reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, but also reflection-before-action and reflection on the future. And in this latest view (Rose, 2013), reflection is considered as thought separated from action and is called *reflection-then-action*. This notion of reflection allows me to synthesize my experiences and my knowledge derived from theories, research results, and other good practices to form new emergent ideas. Moreover, reflection is not only relating to individual action but also with and within the community (in the society). This form of reflective thinking is valuable for educators in developing and understanding of their practice over time. How the notion of reflection is applied and developed in teacher education will be discussed in the next section.

2.1.2. Reflective Practice in Teacher Education

Reflective practice in teacher education has been widely explored because of the benefits of the application for teachers. In reviewing theories and research results on reflection in teacher education, Grimmert, Erickson, Mackinnon, and Riecken (1990) developed three major conceptual orientations on the idea of reflection in teacher education. This categorisation is based on the differences in source of knowledge, mode of reflection, and the purpose of reflection. The source of knowledge that is being reflected upon can be propositional knowledge derived from research. Mode of reflection relates to how the reflective process is engaged; as an example, reflection is conducted through dialogue between student teachers and university supervisors. The purpose of reflection could be directing or controlling, informing, or transforming practice. The first category views *reflection as instrumental mediation*, “a process that leads to thoughtful, mediated action, usually involving the implementation of research findings and theoretical formulations of education into practice” (p. 21). The second category, *Reflection as deliberating among competing views of teaching*, is characterised by the content of reflection is knowledge of good teaching — as the ground to inform practice. The third category, *Reflection as reconstructing experience*, considers “the degree to

which the act of problem setting in an action situation is made problematic itself” (MacKinnon, 1989b, p. 27). Within this third perspective, context of reflection is mediated either by teachers themselves or by their colleagues, mode of reflective knowing is conducted through dialectical interaction, and the purpose of reflection is to apprehend and to transform practice.

The conception of reflection as reconstructing experience (MacKinnon, 1989b) includes the process of organizing experience in order to bring about either new understandings of action situation — reconstruct action situation, new understandings of self as a teacher by examining the cultural milieu of teaching — reconstruct self as a teacher, or new understandings of taken-for-granted assumption about teaching by using analytical techniques from a “critical-theoretical” tradition — reconstruct taken-for-granted assumption about teaching.

Richardson (1990) analysed the evolution of reflective teaching and teacher education and she delineates the teacher education movement in the United States which involves competent based teacher education, views the teacher as a decision maker, and the teacher as a reflective practitioner. She further argues that competence-based teacher education and the concept of the teacher as a decision maker failed to meet three conditions to provide effective teacher education, while Schön’s ideas on knowledge/action and reflection/action as well as Dewey’s critical approach to reflection meet the three conditions. These three conditions to provide effective teacher education are, namely “ ... the potential for the improvement of the status of teaching; the validity of the concept for the ways teachers view themselves and teacher educators view teaching; and a normative view of teaching that projects a content for teacher education that goes beyond a description of the processes of teaching” (p. 15).

In line with Schön’s sequences of reflection-in-action, Korthagen (2001) develops a spiral professional development in which in each turn of the spiral is a cycle model of reflective practice. The cycle is a learning process model which he applied in his teacher education. This model is called ALACT which stands for *action, looking back on the action, awareness of essential aspect, creating alternative methods of action, and trial*. This ALACT model of learning for student teachers is a systematic reflection which is

procedural and easy to grasp, as well this model names each step of the reflection process.

Korthagen (2001) further asserts that the application of reflective practice in teacher education has one or more of the following aims:

to enable teachers to analyse, discuss, evaluate and change their own practice, adopting an analytical approach towards teaching;

to foster teachers' appreciation of the social and political contexts in which they work, helping teachers to recognise that teaching is socially and politically situated and that teachers' task involves an appreciation and analysis of the context;

to enable teachers to appraise the moral and ethical issues implicit in classroom practices, including the critical examination of their own beliefs about good teaching;

to encourage teachers to take greater responsibility for their own professional growth and to acquire some degree of professional autonomy;

to facilitate teachers' development of their own theories of educational practice, understanding and developing a principled basis for their own classroom work;

to empower teachers so that they may better influence future directions in education and take a more active role in educational decision-making (p. 53).

Brookfield (1995), in his book *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*, provides us with a comprehensive account on conducting reflective practice for a teacher educator. He feels that reflective thinking can be developed to become habitual and that reflective habits are a cultured habit. He further elucidates four aspects to be scrutinised when teachers conduct reflection (critical reflection). The first lens is teachers' autobiographies as learners and teachers. Through the lens as learners, teachers will mirror themselves from their experience as learners so that they will understand why they tend to choose a certain way to teach. From the lens as teachers, they think back upon their performance and the reasons behind the decision to perform. The second lens is from the students' eyes. Educators or teachers need to know their students' feelings and attitudes towards their teaching. He developed the Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ) as one means to

tap the students' perceptions. The third lens is the colleagues' experiences, which mean that others' (colleagues') comments and suggestions are treated as valuable inputs in conducting reflection. The last lens is theoretical literature, reading literature helps to name problems being faced as well as give alternative interpretations.

Shulman and Shulman (2004) developed a learning community model where they pronounce that becoming well rounded teachers, they should possess vision, motivation, understanding, and the ability to conduct teaching and learning as well as conducting reflection. They further view reflection as the central activity for a teacher, reflection from his/her own experiences and from others, as they assert that "A central conjecture of our model is that reflection is the key to teacher learning and development" (p. 264). Reflective thinking becomes a habit for every teacher and becomes one of the criteria considered as good or effective teachers; as Brookfield (1995) asserts, "reflection in and of itself is not enough; it must always be linked to how the world can be changed" (p. 217). Zeichner and Liu (2010) feel that the application of reflection in teacher education helps teachers to educate their students who bring about a just and decent society. Teachers are aware that their teachings influence students' personally — students' social and emotional development and social relationships, academic — students' intellectual development, and political — students' life chances. Practical application of reflective practice in teacher education indicates that the teacher's reflection has its aims in improving teachers' skills in the classroom, teachers' participation in the school and society, as well as for the teachers' professional development.

The next question is: what do reflective teachings and reflective teachers look like? Schön (1988) views reflective teaching as teaching where the teacher really helps students to understand, teachers who know their students difficulties in grasping new knowledge or skills, teachers who know the reasons for students' thoughts, feelings, and behavior, as well as teachers who help children to articulate their thoughts, and Schön (1988) asserts that:

By reflective teaching, I mean what some teachers have called "giving the kids reason": listening to kids and responding to them, inventing and testing responses likely to help them get over their particular difficulties in understanding something, helping them build on what they already know,

helping them discover what they already know but cannot say, helping them coordinate their own spontaneous knowing-in-action with privileged knowledge of the school (p. 19).

Zeichner and Liston (2014) categorised teachers as reflective and unreflective teachers. Unreflective teachers seek to find the most effective and efficient ways to accomplish the defined goals. On the other hand, reflective teachers according to them possess dispositions of openmindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness. They view a disposition of openmindedness as “an active desire to listen to more sides than one, to give full attention to alternative possibilities, and to recognize the possibility of error even in the beliefs that are dearest to us” (p. 4). Reflective teachers always ask the question “Why are they doing what they are doing?” (p. 4). The responsibility characteristic for teachers includes questioning how their teaching affects students’ personally, academically, and socially, as well as the political consequences of their teaching. They define the wholeheartedness characteristic as “Teachers who are wholehearted regularly examine their own assumptions and beliefs and the results of their actions and approach all situations with the attitude that they can learn something new” (p. 4).

Zeichner and Liu (2010) analyse the application of reflective practice in teacher education around the world and suggest that the technical rationality approach appears in teacher education which considers reflective practice as the main goal.

2.1.3. Promoting Reflective Practice in Teacher Education

Scholars provide theoretical and practical knowledge on promoting reflective practice in teacher education. One way of promoting reflective thinking in teacher education is through teaching practice or ‘practicum’ according to Schön’s (1987) term. “A practicum is a setting designed for the task of learning a practice. In a context that approximates a practice world, students learn by doing, although their doing usually falls short of real world work” (p. 37). Student teachers have the opportunity to learn to recognise competent practice with the help of a supervisor or coach. Based on coach roles and the form of dialog between the coach and students, Schön (1987) names three approaches of reflective coaching, namely “follow me”, “joint experimentation”, and “hall of mirrors”. The Coach’s role in the first approach is dominant and the students imitate

the coach. In the second approach, “The coach works at creating and sustaining a process of collaborative inquiry” (p. 296). Coaches provide alternative solutions and let the students select and generate new possibilities for their action. In the third approach “student and coach continually shift perspectives” (p. 297). Coach and student constantly reflect on themselves as their circumstances and situations serve as mirrors. And another important feature of this approach is that the coach can serve as “the model for his student a new way of seeing error and failure as opportunities for learning” (p. 297). These three approaches of reflective coaching can be applied in my situation when I conduct face-to-face tutorials and supervising (coaching) with student teachers.

MacKinnon (1987) conducted research based on a clinical model of supervision with the aim to develop teacher reflective thinking. He focused on the process of problem setting and reframing as the starting point for reflection-in-action. He developed conversations with his students to help them, noting reflection-in-action occurrences during their teaching. In other words, this process facilitates the teacher (the researcher) to develop students’ awareness of reflection-in-action. MacKinnon (1989b) further develops the “reflective practicum” model based on Schön’s teaching practicum model. In a practicum situation a supervisor teacher and a student teacher conduct teaching together and face a phenomenon. This model features the relation between supervisors or coaches and students as well as with phenomenon concerned within the practicum session. These relationships are shown in the diagram below.

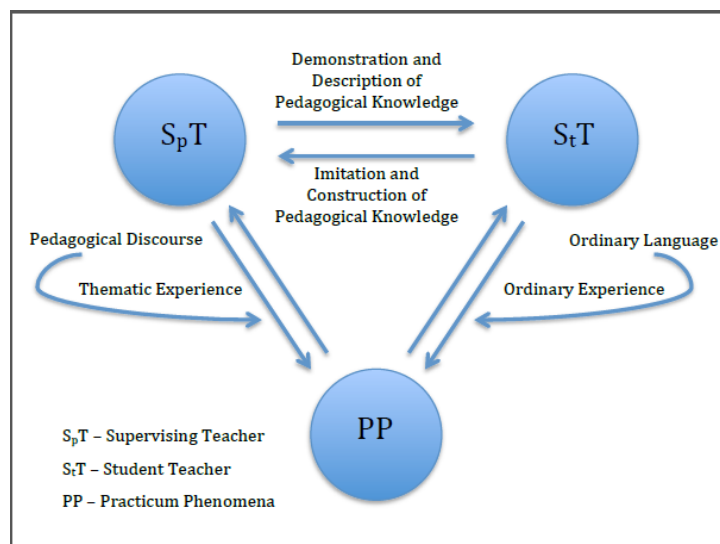


Figure 2. Reflective Practicum (adapted from MacKinnon, 1989b, p. 112)

Based on the diagram above, during the coaching session, it is projected that students learn about pedagogical discourses and knowledge as well as skills and dispositions presented by coaches.

Another form of promoting reflection is accomplished through journal writing. This activity is conducted after instruction; this means it is considered as reflection-on-action. The notion of a journal is used in different terms as learning logs, personal narratives, diaries, or dialog journals. According to Maarof (2007), a characteristic of a reflective journal is “it allows critical and in-depth analysis of what a teacher does in his/her teaching and enables him/her to decide on future corrective steps to improving practice” (p. 207). In his (2007) research he found that writing a reflective journal helps teachers in:

... fulfilling the teaching objective of a lesson ... reflecting on the theories they learnt and the applicability and relationship of these theories to actual practice ... evaluating the teaching aids and method used ... evaluating the activities used ... evaluating teacher-student relationships ... identifying problems in their teaching ... solving some problems identified in teaching ... identifying the successful and unsuccessful aspect of teaching ... identifying changes that needed to be made in teaching ... evaluating their approach to the diverse need of their students ... improving themselves as a teacher ... understanding the teaching and learning process and the curriculum, and identifying the characteristic of a good, interesting, creative, and effective teacher (p. 214).

O’Connell and Dymont (2011) analysed 75 articles on reflective journals to reopen the effectiveness of writing a journal, the advantages and disadvantages. According to them, there are several benefits of journal writing from both the students' and the teachers' sides. Students will benefit from writing a journal as a starting point for learning, centring students in the learning process, fostering reflective thinking, and providing students a way to express their creativity. From the teacher’s side, journal writing benefited pedagogically as it developed dialogic communication between student and teacher, and provided feedback for the teacher that was both formative and summative. Another benefit to giving teachers other roles such as researchers is because they make use of their journals as the source of their research. And journal writing improves the

relationship between teachers and students. But apart from these advantages, journal writing still faces challenges, as O'Connell and Dymont (2011) summarise:

... no training or structure provided to the student; 'writing for the instructor'; overuse of journaling; negative perception of journaling; journals do not meet the need of all students; gender differences; ethical concern; assessment issues; legal consideration; time requirement; and quality of reflection (p. 52).

Video tape recordings can also be used to facilitate student teachers to reflect on their teaching (Bayat, 2010). The video recording is treated as a source of discussion to stimulate reflection; reflective thinking can also be improved through the availability of computer and communication technology with reflective dialogues in a virtual learning environment (Khoury-Bowers, 2005; Bayat, 2010).

There are several ways in helping student teachers and teachers become reflective practitioners. Teacher education might transform their curriculum to adopt reflective practice in its structure and the inaction of curriculum. Or within the individual courses offered, a teacher educator might introduce reflective practice ideas. Teacher education or a teacher educator might employ the advanced communication and information technology available to enhance the adoption of reflective practice. More importantly, before introducing reflective practice to their student teachers or teachers, the teacher educator should become a reflective practitioner in the first place. When teachers are aware of their thoughts and actions in their practice and learn from them, then they develop their professional knowledge and in turn they improve their professional quality. They become the conductor of the classroom's orchestra; they are capable of developing their curriculum in the classroom.

2.2. Teachers as Curriculum Planners

"Curriculum" originated from the Latin word *currere* which means to run the course. Pinar (2004) states, "... the noun *currere* emphasizes curriculum as a complicated conversation among teachers and students focused on texts and the concepts they communicate in specific places and at particular historical moments" (p. 177). He further defines curriculum as *currere* as follows:

As currere, the point of the school curriculum is to inculcate-through the communication and criticism of academic knowledge as civic commitment that extends to the sustainability of the planet. As currere, the point of school curriculum is to teach the students to think and act with intelligence, sensitivity, and courage in both the public sphere — as citizens aspiring to establish a democratic society — and in the private sphere, as an individual committed to other individuals” (p. 178).

From this view, school curriculum has three purposes: namely, to generate humans who guarantee the sustainability of the planet Earth, who are capable of forming a democratic society, and forming humans who care for other humans. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) view curriculum as follows:

It is simply that all teaching and learning questions — all curriculum matters — be looked at from the point of view of the involved persons. We believe that curriculum development and curriculum planning are fundamental questions of teacher thinking and teacher doing. We believe that it is teachers’ “personal knowledge” that determine all matters of significance relative to the planned conduct of classrooms. So “personal knowledge” is the key term (p. 4).

Connelly and Clandinin’s book (1988) delineates their research with teachers who developed their belief that experience is central to teachers’ lives and these experiences were called as *personal practical knowledge* so they began to view teachers as *curriculum planners*. They view “personal practical knowledge” as knowledge which is found in “a person’s past experience, in the present mind and body, and in their future plans and actions” (p. 25). This means at a teaching moment, teachers possess teaching knowledge based on their personal past experience, in the moment experience, and the forthcoming events.

In line with Connelly’s view of the role of the teacher in the classroom, Ted Aoki (1983, in Pinar & Irwin, 2005) feels that the implementation of the curriculum in the classroom should be viewed as situational praxis. He means that curriculum as a text cannot be directly implemented in the classroom in an entirely pre-planned fashion, but it needs to be adjusted to the classroom circumstances. The implemented curriculum is based on the result of the processes and dialogues between the curriculum as a text and the related persons in the classroom, namely teachers and students, as well as the dialog among the students. It is clear to me that this type of curriculum implementation is

meaningful in the teaching learning process since there is interaction between the planned curriculum and persons involved in implementing the curriculum and becoming “lived curriculum”. The role of the teacher is as an interpreter, translator, and transformer of the curriculum. Before implementing the planned curriculum, teachers grasp the idea of the curriculum, interpret, and adjust the curriculum to the classroom’s needs as a result of the dialog between teachers and students and among students. This view places teachers and students as human beings who have experiences.

I believe that this view of curriculum implementation as situational praxis is suitable for the current school condition. In this era of advanced information and communication technology, knowledge is diverse, abundant, and free, and is available through several media outlets, namely the Internet, television, and radio broadcasting. Anyone who owns the means is capable of accessing those resources, including students. In relation to this situation, teachers in the classroom have pivotal roles in enacting the curriculum. Teachers should discover what the learners already know about their knowledge or skills and their attitudes toward them. In Franck McCourt’s (2005) *Teacher Man*, he told how he made use of a student’s unfavorable habit, how it became the means of achieving his planned curriculum. He knew that some of his students wrote their sick notes to leave the class, instead of their parents, so he decided to assign students to write sick notes. This strategy motivated the students to learn meaningfully. Teachers’ roles are not delivering knowledge, but fostering students in making meaning out of the knowledge so that they are moved to inquire or receive the knowledge. Teachers provide the space for students to participate actively in determining the planned curriculum as well as at the implementing curriculum. In relation to the free knowledge available, teachers also need to help the learners to distinguish between useful and useless knowledge.

This view of curriculum gives room for teachers to enact their practical-personal-knowledge of teaching, their philosophical point of view, and their attitudes. Teachers possess their personal reasons in conducting their practice and their reasons become their knowledge of teaching. In turn, this empowerment of teachers in the implementation of curriculum brings about meaningful teaching and learning in the classroom and might change school epistemology. In the process of developing

curriculum, teachers should have the knowledge of how students learn and the constructivist view of learning is an appropriate approach.

2.3. Cognitive Constructivist Approach in Learning and Teaching

Constructivism theory has already pervaded in many areas of the educational field especially in science and mathematics education (Matthews, 2000). Constructivism, according to Ornstein and Hunkins (2009), “addresses the nature of *knowledge* and the nature of *learning* (p. 129). Constructivism views knowledge differently from the old view of knowledge. Airasian and Walsh (1997) differentiate between the “old view” of knowledge and the “new view” of knowledge—the constructivist—as they assert that:

In the old view, knowledge is considered to be fixed and independent of the knower. There are “truths” that reside outside the knower. Knowledge is the accumulation of the “truths” in a subject area. The more “truths” one acquires, the more knowledge one possesses. In sharp contrast, the constructivist view rejects the notion that knowledge is independent from the knower and consists of accumulating “truths”. Rather, knowledge is produced by the knower from existing beliefs and experience. All knowledge is constructed and consists of what individuals create and express. Since individuals make their own meaning from their beliefs and experiences, all knowledge is tentative, subjective, and personal. (p. 445)

According to that definition, there are three principles of knowledge according to the new view. First, knowledge is developed by learners themselves and originates from their beliefs and previous experiences. Secondly, knowledge within the learners’ minds is created and expressed by the learners. Third, as knowledge is created by individual learners, it becomes tentative, subjective, and personal. Moreover, according to Philips (2000), constructivism denies that “the disciplines are objective reflections of an external world” (p. 6). In other words, knowledge is the product of interaction between the mind of the learner and the external world.

Since learners themselves develop their knowledge, this constructivist world view brings about extensive research on learners previous knowledge or learners’ misconceptions, especially for science concepts. In my personal experience in inquiring

about children's ideas on the concept of living and non-living objects for children ages 6 to 11 years old, I found that there was an indication that children had their own concept or criteria of living and non-living objects. Some of them were in accordance with a scientific concept, especially for the older children, and some of them were not. It was interesting also to know that some of the children were having difficulties in defining whether an object was alive or not. Even though they know the characteristics of living objects, they mistakenly defined not living object as living objects (Rokhiyah, 1996).

The nature of learning according to constructivist views is taking place and constructed in the mind of each individual learner. Each learner makes meanings and understandings about phenomena that she/he confronted. Phillips (2000) provides a broad description of the constructivist views on the nature of learning as follows:

Roughly, the second type of constructivist view is that learners actively construct their own ("internal", some would say) sets of meaning and understanding; knowledge is not a mere *copy* of the external world, nor is knowledge acquired by passive absorption or by simple transference from one person (a teacher) to another (a learner or knower). In sum, knowledge is *made* not *acquired*. (p. 7)

von Glasersfeld (1995) provides basic principles of constructivism as a theory of knowing as he asserts that:

Knowledge is not passively received either through the senses or by way of communication ... knowledge is actively built up by the cognizing object ... The function of cognition is adaptive, in the biological sense of the term, tending towards fit or viability ... cognition serves the subject's organization of the experiential world, not the discovery of reality. (p. 51)

It is clear that constructivism views learners (knowers) as taking control of their learning process, of making meaning and understanding about the phenomena being faced. Learners cannot depend on their teacher or others for their learning to take place; teachers or knowledgeable persons cannot directly transfer their knowledge to their students. Learners do not stack all information they receive. Learners do not passively receive information, but instead actively construct knowledge as they strive to make sense of their world (Cobb, 1996). Jardin (2006) provides more elaboration on learning based on constructivism as he asserts that constructivism is "The idea that we actively construct our ongoing experience and understanding of the world based on previously

acquired categories, concepts, and experiences” (p. 21). From this point of view, it can be stated that what we already know influences how we construct knowledge and the results of knowledge construction. MacKinnon (1989b) feels that according to a constructivist orientation, making meaning, in the form of understanding and communication, happens through the process of interpretive construction, as he asserts that “Those who hold a constructivist orientation to teaching and learning believe that all understanding and all communication are a matter of interpretive construction on the part of the experiencing object” (p. 57). We develop our understanding through the process of interpretation towards the phenomena being face.

Constructivism further develops several branches. Matthews (2000) elaborates on the branches of constructivism theory. Constructivism develops into three major constructivist traditions: namely, educational constructivism, philosophical constructivism, and sociological constructivism. Educational constructivism divides into two mainstreams, social constructivism and personal (cognitive) constructivism. Social constructivism originated from Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky and according to Wadsworth (1996) social constructivism is:

... concerned with the question of how social and cultural factors influence intellectual development. Vygotsky theory is a theory of *transmission* of knowledge from the culture to the child. At its core, it is about how individuals interacting with more knowledgeable social agents (teachers, peers), *construct* and internalize knowledge the agents have. (p. 10)

Social constructivism views knowledge as “in any field has been determined by social forces including the influence of ideologies, religion, human interests, group dynamic, and so forth” (Phillips, 2000, p. 9).

The psychological constructivism approach in learning and teaching emerged from cognitive psychology theories from Piaget (von Glasersfeld, 1995; Fosnot, 1996; Wadsworth, 1996; Phillips, 2000). According to Phillips (2000), cognitive constructivism focuses “on the way in which individuals construct their own (psychological) understanding” (p. 10). And according to Wadsworth (1996), Piaget was:

... primarily interested in how knowledge is formed or constructed. His theory is a theory of *invention* or construction, which occurs inside the mind of individuals. ...children acquire their own version of existing social knowledge through their personal construction of that knowledge. (p. 10)

In other words, social constructivism views knowledge as socially constructed, where knowledge is transmitted from social and cultural environments to the learners. Psychological constructivism, on the other hand, concentrated on how the individual learner constructs and makes meaning about the world around, so that learners actively engage. For my study purposes, I begin by exploring psychological or cognitive constructivism in the work of Piaget.

Piaget, historically, was educated as a biologist and in later life he was interested in psychology, especially children's intelligence development. He studied on his own children, experimentally, on his children's thinking and reasoning. His education and work as a biologist influenced his system for conceptualizing human intellectual development. His views are that mind and body are not operated independently and mental activities are subject to the same laws as biology. "He saw intellectual acts as acts of *organization* and *adaptation* to the environment (Wadsworth, 1996, p. 13).

There are four concepts related to Piaget's intellectual organization or how humans learn or understand about an object or information being perceived, namely, *schema*, *assimilation*, *accommodation*, and *equilibrium* (Jardine, 2006; Wadsworth, 1996; Sutherland, 1992). Schema is the structure, while assimilation, accommodation, and equilibrium are cognitive processes as a system. Wadsworth (1996) defines schemata (the plural of schema) as "the cognitive or mental structures by which individuals intellectually adapt to and organize the environment" (p. 14). He illustrates that a schema is like an index card so that schemata are like index files but these index files "are not physical objects which can be observed but as processes within the nervous system" (p. 14). These schemata develop in the early years in terms of quality, and become more refined, more sophisticated, and more differentiated as well as quantitatively more numerous. Wadsworth (1996) illustrates how these schemata change. When a child is confronted with a new phenomenon, for example she/he meets a cow, while she/he already owns the schemata of dogs, she/he compares or matches the cow's characteristics with the dog's characteristics and then she/he categories the

cow as a dog. When she/he then finds out that the new animal is not a dog, she/he refines her/his schemata so that she/he owns the cow's characteristics. Wadsworth (1996) asserts that:

Schemata are intellectual structures that organize events as they are perceived and classified into groups according to common characteristics. They are repeatable psychological events in the sense that a child repeatedly classifies stimuli in a consistent manner. (p. 15)

The second concept of Piaget's intellectual organization is assimilation. Assimilation, while adopted from the biological term, is not a physical transfer of an object from the environment. It is the transfer of perception or conception (von Glasersfelt, 1995). Wadsworth (1996) feels that "Assimilation is the cognitive process by which a person integrates new perceptual, motor, or conceptual matter into existing schemata or pattern of behavior" (p. 17). While Fosnot (1996) argues that "Assimilation is the organization of experience with one's own logical structures or understandings" (p. 13), and she (2005) clarifies that "Assimilation (to make similar) is activity, the organization of experience; it is the individual's self-assertive tendency, a tendency to view, understand, and act on the "surround" with one's own activity or ideas in order to preserve one's autonomy as a part within a whole system" (loc 421 of 6917). And assimilation takes place if the new information fits with what already exists in the mind (von Glasersfelt, 1995), as he asserts that "The cognitive organism perceives (assimilates) only what it can fit into the structures it already has" (p. 63). From these views of assimilation it can be concluded that assimilation is a cognitive process in the mind conducted actively by the mind and only certain phenomena can be perceived, which are phenomena that suit the available structures or schema.

When a new phenomenon does not fit to the existing schema, there is a process of modification in order to fit into the available schema. This modification process is called adaptation. The term 'adaptation' in constructivism's point of view is different from the concept of adaptation in biological terms, as von Glasersfelt (1995) asserts that:

... the adaptation seems to go in the opposite direction of the usual: perception modifies what is perceived in order to fit it into the organism's conceptual structures, whereas in a general biological sense, natural

selection modifies the structure of organisms so that they fit within the constraints inherent in their environment. (p. 63)

From the constructivist point of view, however, adaptation does not mean adequation to an external world of existing things-in-themselves, but rather improving the organism's equilibrium, (i.e., its fit, relative to experience constraints). (p. 63)

In other words, the new phenomenon we face does not change to fit into the available cognitive structure, but, rather, our initial perception about the new phenomenon should be modified in order to fit into the available cognitive structure.

In the process of adaptation there is a possibility that not all the things we perceive can be adapted into the available cognitive structure so that there is information being ignored. This means that we may lose important information from the environment. In relation to that, von Glasersfelt (1995) proclaims that "assimilation always reduces new experiences to already existing sensorimotor or conceptual structures, and this inevitably raises the question why and how learning should ever take place" (p. 63). Assimilation means what we think of our perceived environment which is in accordance with our experience before. We have the structure in our mind, whatever fits the structure we are ready to take. If it does not fit we abandon it. The assimilation process brings about the growth of schemata, and schemata become bigger and bigger.

The third concept is accommodation. According to Jardine (2006), accommodation is "The functional process whereby the pre-existing schemata for structuring experience must adapt to new environmental input in order to return the organism-environment relationship to equilibrium" (p. 46). This view is based on the fact that organisms cannot assimilate all phenomena in the environment into the available schemata. New information or experience sometimes contradict with our previous understanding so that this information becomes insufficient and makes the schemata instable. Fosnot (1996) views this situation as perturbing as it disequilibrates the existing structure. There are two further possibilities of processes happening in the mind (Wadsworth, 1996); either the schemata change or modify in order to fit to the new information or new schemata appear. The process of accommodation is illustrated by von Glasersfelt (1995) as follows:

If the unexpected outcome of the activity was disappointing, one or more of the newly noticed characteristics may effect a change in the recognition pattern and thus in the conditions that will trigger the activity in the future. Alternatively, if the unexpected outcome was pleasant or interesting, a new recognition pattern may be formed to include the new characteristics (p. 65)

Thus, accommodation happens when we discover that a particular structure or pattern that we applied in our mind (from the environment) is not useful or it does not work, we may want to look at that pattern from other point of view or interpret the situation in a different way. We modify what we perceive but we do not modify the situation. Accommodation processes develop more varied and complex schemata. Fosnot (2005) views accommodation as being “comprised of reflective, integrative behavior (reflective abstraction) which serves to change one’s own self and explicate the object, in order to function with cognitive equilibrium in relation to it” (loc 433).

The last concept is equilibrium; the equilibrium of assimilation and accommodation processes occur in the mind. Wadsworth (1996) asserts that:

Piaget called the balance between assimilation and accommodation *equilibrium*. It is the self-regulatory mechanism that ensures the developing child’s efficient interaction with the environment. *Equilibrium* is a state of balance between assimilation and accommodation. (p. 19)

Wadsworth (1996) elaborates the need for equilibrium as follows. If a person conducts more assimilation than accommodation, this person will have a skewed view but large schemata so that she/he finds difficulties in differentiating things. As an example, a person will always consider a cow as a dog. On the other hand, if a person conducts accommodation more than assimilation, she/he will develop very small schemata in a great number, so that this person has difficulties in noting similarities. In order to balance between the two processes, there is a self-regulated mechanism in the mind which is called equilibration.

Equilibrium, according to Fosnot (2005), is not sequential processes of assimilation, brought about by conflict and followed by accommodation, but is a non-linear process, dynamic process. There are two poles of action in our minds when we are faced with new phenomenon, one pole of behaviour that is an action towards the

surroundings and the self-organization pole as the process of reflective, integrative, and accommodative nature.

The imbalanced state of assimilation and accommodation then is called disequilibrium. This state of disequilibrium can happen when there is cognitive conflict as a result of discrepancy between expectation and reality or the prediction is not confirmed by experience (Wadsworth, 1996). She (1996) further delineates the relationship between the state of equilibrium and disequilibrium as follows:

Equilibration allows external experience to be incorporated into internal structures (schemata). When disequilibrium occurs, it motivates the child to seek equilibrium (to further assimilate and accommodate). Disequilibrium activates the process of equilibration and a striving to return to equilibrium. Equilibrium is a necessary condition toward which the organism constantly strives (p. 19).

In other words, the state of disequilibrium serves as the feedback mechanism for a learner to conduct further assimilation and/or accommodation of new phenomenon.

According to this view of learning, it seems that we are capable of making meaning of all knowledge and skills we perceive; however, in reality we cannot. We understand certain things but disregard others. There are two reasons regarding this matter according to von Glasserfeld (1995). The first reason is that organisms acquire knowledge purposefully; they do not acquire knowledge just for the sake of fun but there is intention to acquiring knowledge, as von Glasersfeld (1996) argues that:

Consequently human actions become goal-directed in that they tend to repeat likeable experiences and to avoid the ones that are disliked. The way they attempt to achieve this, is by assuming that there must be regularities or, to put it more ambitiously, that there is some recognizable order in the experiential world. (p. 114)

One kind of knowledge, then, is knowledge of what worked in the past and can be expected to work again. (p. 114)

This quote, especially the words likeable and disliked, resonates with me. It answers my curiosity about the reasons why I became a person who tends to like doing things with tangible results. I was trained by my parents to conduct things which bring about things which can be perceived through my senses.

The second principle is based on the constructivist view of knowledge that knowledge does not constitute a 'picture' of the world but as action schemes, concepts, and thoughts. von Glasersfeld (1995) concludes that "it (*knowledge*) pertains to the ways and means the cognizing subject has conceptually evolved in order to fit into the world as he or she experiences it" (p. 114). This means a person's knowledge development relates to methods and means (availability and tools) she/he employed. In other words, the opportunities to find suitable methods and instruments influence a person's knowledge acquisition or knowledge development.

Language, according to the constructivist point of view, plays an important role in acquiring knowledge. Language, in the form of a word, represents an object, an action, or a concept whose meaning is as a result of a consensus within a community. There are two aspects of language use in the process of learning, namely the construction of meaning through language and language as a mean of communication (Fosnot, 2005). Through language, we construct an understanding in our minds as well as articulate our thoughts to communicate with others. In this sense, teachers' language use and choices influence students learning.

Chapter 3.

Research Methods

This chapter will elaborate on my answer toward Graham's (1991) question: "What are the distinguishing features of autobiography that might assist educators in making a more accurate judgment of its use and potential?" (p. 17). Autobiography as an approach to searching knowledge is a new understanding for me. I started to search the meaning of autobiography in literature as well as its functions in the field of research. In this chapter, I will present my understanding of autobiography as a way of research, starting with a definition of autobiography and then reviewing the role and use of autobiography in research. Writing autobiography involves exploring and reconstructing experiences in the past which exist already in our memories in the form of stories. This section will also describe the role of stories and storytelling in our lives and as a learning process as I believe that telling stories in education is important. We read fiction and watch movies as a way to see how others live their lives which may help our own lives be better. Seeing others' problems and how they solve and make meaning out of it helps us to see our problems differently. I present my dissertation in a narrative storytelling mode of presentation. I also describe my method of collecting data as well as the benefit and limitations of autobiography as a method of inquiry.

3.1. Defining Autobiography

Autobiography consists of three elements of Greek words: *auto* means the self, *bios* means life, and *graph* means the act of writing (Olney, 1980). Based on the root of its word, autobiography can simply be meant as a piece of writing about a person's life. Lejeune (1989) defines autobiography as, "Retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in

particular the story of personality” (p. 4). From this perspective it is clear that autobiography is a form of narrative writing about the writer’s individual life related to the person’s disposition. Olney (1980) describes autobiography as “... memory that reaches its tentacles out into each of these three different ‘times’ — the time now, the time then, and the time of an individual’s historical context” (p. 19). There is a connection between the past, present, and future in autobiography. Graham (1991) views autobiography as a “second reading of experience”, which means that an autobiographic writer consciously discovers experiences that relates to themes they develop.

An extensive summary of autobiography is provided by Gusdorf (1980) where he justifies autobiography as:

The curiosity of the individual about himself, the wonder that he feels before the mystery of his own destiny, is thus tied to the Copernican Revolution: at the moment it enters into history, humanity, which previously aligned its development to the great cosmic cycles, finds itself engaged in an autonomous adventure; soon mankind even brings the domain of the sciences into line with its own reckoning, organizing them, by means of technical expertise, according to its own desire. Henceforth, man knows himself a responsible agent; gatherer of men, of lands, of power, maker of kingdoms or empires, inventor of laws or of wisdom, he alone adds consciousness to nature, leaving signs there of his presence (p. 31).

The author of an autobiography gives himself the job of narrating his own history; what he sets out to do is to reassemble the scattered elements of his individual life and regroup them in a comprehensive sketch. This historian of himself wishes to produce his own portrait, but while the painter captures only a moment of external appearance, the autobiographer strains toward a complete and coherence expression of his entire destiny (p. 35).

Another view of autobiography claimed by Barros (1998) who views autobiography as narrative transformation; as he asserts, “It is a heuristic approach that explores the nature of autobiography by moving back and forth between the assumption that autobiography is a narrative of transformation and a set of functional perspectives or elements that account for transformation” (pp. 9-10).

Clark (1935) identifies four varieties of autobiography as literary work based on the autobiographer’s intention to write. Autobiography may be intended to gain sympathy

or forgiveness from the reader, as though the autobiographer committed a wrong-doing in the past. Autobiography may also be a means of self-justification in which there is an antagonism between the self of the writer and society at the time. The writer may try to assert his or her character in a hostile or critical environment. Autobiography is also one way to appreciate one's achievement or uniqueness as appreciative autobiography. Lastly, autobiography may be used as an approach to communicate self-discovery to satisfy the writer's artistic communication. As a literary work, autobiography is a means to express the character or achievement of the writer and in the later development, writing autobiography is used as a means to query the biography of the writer.

3.2. Writing Autobiography as a Mode of Inquiry

Research tradition requires researchers to define the research paradigm which underlines research activities. Autobiography is considered as one of the qualitative research methods. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) define, in an extensive definition, qualitative research as follows:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representation, including fieldnotes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of meanings that people bring to them (p. 3).

In other words, qualitative research is intended to capture the actual state of the phenomena being investigated, involving interpretation to bring about meaning. Moreover, they (2011) provide a clear understanding of the source and the focus of qualitative research, as they delineate that "Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of empirical materials — case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, artifact, and cultural text and productions, along with observational, historical, interactional, and visual text — that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives" (pp. 3-4).

In writing autobiography, the object of inquiry is self-experience that occurred in the past, which is viewed at the time of writing in relation to the future. Denzin (1989) views autobiography as qualitative research that is part of an interpretive sociology tradition, and he defines interpretive inquiry as:

Interpretation, the act of interpreting and making sense out of something, creates the conditions for *understanding*, which involves being able to grasp the meanings of an interpreted experience for another individual. Understanding is an intersubjective, emotional process. Its goal is to build shareable understandings of the life experiences of another (p. 28).

In this respect the process of interpretation is intended both for making sense of my experiences as well as understanding the meaning of the experiences.

Since I interpreted and constructed and reconstructed my own data, I established my inquiry on the interpretive/constructivism paradigm among the five research paradigms presented by Denzin and Lincoln (2011). I defined my experiences based on my established framework and then tried to understand my experiences through the process of reflection, construction, and reconstruction of my experiences.

Looking back on my personal and professional lives, I define myself as a practitioner researcher as defined by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) as “deliberative intellectuals who constantly theorize practice as part of practice itself and that the goal of teacher learning initiatives is the joint construction of local knowledge, the questioning of common assumptions, and thoughtful critique of the usefulness of research generated by others both inside and outside contexts of practice” (p. 2. Loc 329). They view practitioner researchers, in this case teachers, as searching for the role of their knowledge and actions in students’ learning, school change, and educational reform. They further conclude that there are five themes of practitioner research that emerged from their study of written research that was conducted by teachers as practitioner researchers, which are:

1. the emphasis on the issues of equity, engagement, and agency;
2. the development of new conceptual framework;
3. the continued growth and reinvention of inquiry communities;

4. the use of practitioner research to shape school and district reform and educational policy; and
5. the persistence of efforts to alter the relationships of research and practice in universities (p. 11).

For Denzin (1989), autobiography is “A person’s life written by oneself. Inscribing and creating a life” (p. 10). This means that autobiography is a type of story that is articulated by the owner of the story and it is not only articulating life experiences but also generating a life. In the process of articulating experience, one should search from their own memory which relates to the themes being explored. The process of generating a life in the form of narrative involves the process of connecting experience with the moment of writing and future lenses. In line with Denzin (1989), Bruner (2004) asserts that autobiography should be viewed as a set of procedures of “life making” (p. 692) and he asserts that:

Eventually, the culturally shaped cognitive and linguistic processes that guide the self-telling of live narratives achieve the power to structure perceptual experience, to organize memory, segment and purpose-build the very 'event' of a life. In the end, we *become* the autobiographical narratives by which we 'tell about' our lives (p. 964).

This means that my autobiography will be related to the moments of writing. Different times will result in different accounts of my autobiography.

Writing autobiography with the assumption that the person writes autobiography knows well about her or his life is the best frame of mind to write in (Denzin, 1989). Freeman (2008) defines autobiography as a “specific kind of text that results from the first-person interpretive of either a life in its entirety or significant portion of it, with the aim not merely of recounting “what and when” but also, of understanding, from the vantage point of the current time, the meaning and movement from the past” (p. 46). Freeman (DOI: 10.4135/9781412961909.n28, pp. 46-49) feels that autobiography is the appropriate means for studying a person’s life as he states that autobiography “is among the most important and valuable vehicles for exploring the human realm in all of its depth, complexity, and richness” (p. 46). Writing autobiography according to Freeman (2007) is intended to “understand, to make sense of the past in the light of the present” (p. 141).

Bulogh and Pinnegar (2001) propose quality guidelines for writing autobiography for the teacher education area which consist of nine closely related principles. First, *Autobiographical self-studies should ring true and enable connection*. They mean that autobiography should provide a space for the readers to be enlightened. Second, *Self-studies should promote insight and interpretation*. They view that powerful autobiography consists of “nodal moments”, for educators these nodal moments are related to teaching and learning to teach. As well, autobiography tells a “pattern in experience” which allows for the readers’ interpretation. Third, *Autobiographical self-study research must engage history forthrightly and the author must take an honest stand*. This means that autobiography tells the truth of the self. Fourth, *Biographical and autobiographical self-studies in teacher education are about the problems and issues that make someone an educator*. Fifth, *Authentic voice is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the scholarly standing of a biographical self-study*. Sixth, *The autobiographical self-study researcher has an ineluctable obligation to seek to improve the learning situation not only for the self but for the other*. Seventh, *Powerful autobiographical self-studies portray character development and include dramatic action*. Eighth, *Quality autobiographical self-studies attend care-fully to persons in context or setting*. Ninth, *Quality autobiographical self-studies offer fresh perspectives on established truths*.

In my inquiry, I explored my past experiences lived in a certain time and circumstance. I lived with my lived experiences in the past that were engraved in my memory. I reconstructed my experience in order to bring about meaning in the current situation and for future application. In writing autobiography there are two important issues that need to be addressed, namely the memory and the language. Excavating memories from the mind depends on the writer’s capabilities to explore their memories and it also depends on the writer’s capabilities to articulate her or his experiences.

3.3. Autobiography for Teachers

Writing autobiography conducted by teachers or teacher educators has been extensively applied so that since the year 1992 the American Educational Research Association (AERA) established the Self-study Group to accommodate the emergence of new interest in applying autobiography as an approach to research. Writing

autobiography is a means to excavate our “paradigmatic assumptions and instinctive reasoning that frame how we work” (Brookfield, 1995, p. 30). Taggart and Wilson (2005) feel that teachers or teacher educators write autobiography with the aim to uncover the personal knowledge of learning and teaching they bring into action as well as to promote professional growth. They further argue that writing autobiography is a means to:

Enhances qualitative research by opening new avenues of thought

Provides a vehicle for curricula and educational reform

Help form the foundation for educational policy and practice

Emancipates and empowers practitioners

Promotes self-understanding, personal growth, and professional development (p. 144).

For Claudia Schrader (2004), the most important benefit in writing autobiography is the writing and sharing that her personal narrative can teach her about herself. She wrote her educational autobiography and she found that her teaching approach has not been influenced by her twelve years of parochial education, which according to her is based on a behavioral point of view. Rather, her teaching approach is influenced by her mother's and her teachers' humanistic worldview. She (2004) describes her discovery when she wrote her autobiography:

Writing my educational autobiography has brought me several understandings. First, to a very large extent, my current pedagogy is representative of everything I enjoyed and all that I wanted but never got as a learner. In retrospect it is not surprising that upon arrival at MEC, I sought to re-create the sense of community that I had in the small island of St. Croix by getting to know my students. ... I understand now that the humanistic orientation of my mother, the teacher, has had a far greater influence in my pedagogy than my twelve years in school (p. 123).

Samaras (2002), from her autobiographical self-study, found reasons for her tendency to base her teaching on Vygotskian, a sociocultural based model of teaching for teachers as she elaborates that:

Through using autobiographical self-study, I was able to reconstruct the critical incidents in my education-related life history that led me to profess and practice a Vygotskian approach in preparing teachers. As I sorted out of the sources of my teaching theory and practice, I moved toward an

interpretation of the lived relationship between my education related life experiences and my efforts to learn to teach pre-service teachers from a sociocultural perspective (p. 5).

Writing autobiography for teachers can be viewed as part of their professional learning (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2014). Through her graduate course on autobiography and professional learning, Elbaz-Luwisch (2014) establishes aspects of teacher professional learning based on her students' experiences attending her course. The first aspect was expanding the teaching repertoire; this course offered students alternative strategies to complement the standard "knowledge of teaching" (p. 149). The second aspect was the reflective processes that were acknowledged. Through writing autobiography, students benefited from conducting reflection, as she quoted from her student's insight: "Autobiographic writing breaks down the old and fixed thought patterns we hold on to, and allows for a process of ongoing learning about the present, the past, and the future. This is a process of professional learning" (p. 149). The third aspect was clarifying one's personal story; through writing autobiography students experience their personal exploration, which leads to their learning and development. The last aspect was building a knowledge community; students' pair-share or class-share writing activities demonstrated the growth of the students' sense of belonging to a community, which allows them to thrive inside and outside of the classroom.

3.4. Telling Life Story to Reflect on Our Experience and Perception

When we write an autobiography, we write our story, the story of our life. We *live* in the world of story; when we meet somebody we share or discuss our story of something, even when we teach we are *storying*. Historically, human stories played a significant role in humans' lives before the written word existed. These stories, the human's lived stories, were told from generation to generation for the young to learn about their culture and values, as Abrahamson (1998) summarizes:

In the earliest of times, prior to the advent of writing, storytelling was the only tool available by which individuals within their communities could preserve and share their heritage. Stories not only explained life and preserved history, but also ensured the continuity of experiences from

one generation to the next. Civilizations survived because of storytelling (p. 440).

When we live outside of our community we realise how our elders passed down cultures and beliefs to us. In new circumstances, we find that others think and do differently from our community. I remember how my father and mother taught me and showed me how I was supposed to think and what I was supposed to do in relation to common values in the community through storying the lived experience of others. I transmit useful and suitable values and culture to my children through stories, as well, just as my parents did with me. Stories, according to Goodson, Biesta, Tedder, and Adair (2010):

... have the potential to provide our lives with continuity, vivacity, and endurance. They can create a past of which we have memories and a future about which we have hopes and fears and can thus bring about a sense of the present in which our lives are lived. Stories can give our lives structure, coherence and meaning, or they can provide the backdrop against which we experience our lives as complex, fragmented or without meaning. Stories do not just provide us with a *sense* of who we are. To a large extent the stories about our lives and ourselves *are* who we are (p. 1).

Stories told or written are influential not only to the listeners or the readers but also to others, as stories are retold to others, as Goodall, Jr. (2008) asserts:

The power of story is its ability to change your life. And not just yours, but other people's lives as well. Perhaps you identify with a character, or share a similar challenge. Perhaps you learned how to imagine your life differently, and *better*. Maybe it set you on a path of discovery that led to a realization of what you wanted to do, or become, or whom you wanted to be with or give your life for (Loc. 154).

Connelly and Clandinin (2006) feel that our lives are shaped by story as they assert that "People shape their daily lives by stories of who they are and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories" (p. 477). And I believe that telling stories is important; as Barone and Eisner (1997) assert, "narrative stories, written in the vernacular and without jargon, may promote 'emphatic understanding' of the lives of educational practitioners" (p. 83). Barros (1998) views narrative research in terms of the problem of translating *knowing* into *telling*, that is, the problem of capturing human experience in a form that can be assimilated by others.

For Atkinson (2001), currently we live in a story form; think and speak in story form and bring meaning: "Man is essentially a story-telling animal" (McIntyre, in Butler & Bentley, 1987, p. 5). Since we are capable of speaking, we tell stories, stories about our experience or our perception about the world around us. We all tell stories to give meaning to our lives. When we tell our personal stories, our thoughts work to make sense of the events or perceptions and the influence of these in our lives. And before we tell stories we evaluate whether those stories also will make sense to the listeners; what is the impact of our stories towards our listeners? According to Atkinson (2001), there are four dimensions of telling life stories. Firstly, "They foster an unfolding of the self and help us to centre and integrate ourselves by gaining a clearer understanding of our experiences, our feelings about them, and their meaning for us" (p. 122). When we tell stories we go back to our past memories, scrutinise the clarity of perceptions and feelings towards events and evaluate the meaning for our lives. Secondly, "Stories can affirm, validate, and support our own experiences socially and clarify our relationships to those around us" (p. 122). We cannot live outside of society and stories are situated in society. When we present our stories, we at the same time, compare our stories with the common understanding in the community so that we realise our sameness and differences. Through this process we build a connection to the community.

Thirdly, "Stories awaken feelings of awe, wonder, humility, respect, and gratitude in recognition of the mysteries around us" (p. 122). When we tell stories, we also tell significant living and non-living others. This process triggers our memories of others who played important roles in our lives, who led us to where and who we are. We can never imagine the feeling before we tell the stories. Lastly, "Stories help us to understand the universe of which we are a part, and how we fit into it" (p. 122). Polkinghorne (1995) defines narrative as story, and he asserts that:

A story is a special type of discourse production. In a story, events and actions are drawn together into an organized whole by means of a plot. A plot is a type of conceptual scheme by which a contextual meaning of individual events can be displayed (p. 7).

Mattingly (1991) argues that:

Stories not only give meaningful form to experience we have already lived through. They also provide us a forward glance, helping us anticipate

meaningful shapes for situations even before we enter them, allowing us to envision endings from the very beginning (p. 237).

If storytelling is a natural way we represent experiences to ourselves, might it not provide a quite natural basis for learning from experience? Experience is obviously inconstant teachers; it is perfectly possible to live through something and not learn much as a result. One motive for telling stories is to wrest meaning from experiences, especially powerful or disturbing one. Even everyday experiences are continually more imbued with meaning, rendered more coherent, more vivid, even more real, through story telling (p. 237).

Storytelling becomes interesting, according to Goodall (2008), if the stories are evocative. Evocative storytelling depends of what he calls *the 4Cs*: conflict, connection, continuing curiosity, and climatic satisfaction. He (2008) elaborates that:

Conflict: Conflict is the basis for most good stories, whether the conflict begins in a mystery or a problem to be solved.

Connection: The writer *creates reader identification* with the subject matter, standpoint, and style of telling stories.

Continuing Curiosity: The writer uses the *novelty or uniqueness* in the events depicted, the characters described, the form of the story, and the truth/discovery/conclusion that is ultimately revealed to maintain reader curiosity and page-turning interest throughout the narrative.

Climatic Satisfaction: The ending delivers on the promise of the beginning. It's *unforgettable*. After reading the story, it stays with you. (Loc. 447)

Schön (1988) defines a good story as “a story that is faithful to past experience, coherent in its own right, and evocative for future reflection-in-action” (p. 26). In line with Schön, Clandinin (1992) conducted research involving teachers writing their stories and concluded that, “Our work on narratives of experience draws attention to the broad sweep of our lives, to the ways our pasts are connected to our presents and futures as we live out and tell stories” (p. 124). These realms of stories play an important part in education and there are pedagogical aspects of stories. Parents spend quality time telling stories to their children, teachers tell stories to their students, and there are available story-related programs on television, radio, and in printed and digital media. We learn and are influenced by stories heard, read, or watched.

Life stories, according to Atkinson (2001), possess patterns which follow the pattern of human life as beginning, middle, and resolution, and during a human's life this pattern is repeated over and over.

How may we be helped to learn from our past experience in the mode of reflective transformation? We can encourage one another to tell stories about experiences that hold elements of surprise, positive and negative. Stories are products of reflection, but we do not usually hold onto them long enough to make them into objects of reflection in their own right (Schön, 1988, p. 26).

Telling story through narrative has been practiced in teacher education as a source for research and knowledge construction. Several methods have been conducted by teachers and teacher educators to improve their teaching and learning; one of them is through writing narrative configuration, as Clark (1993) claims: "... narrative – whether diaries or other forms of autobiographical writing or through story telling – is the most accessible and feasible method of action research available to teachers" (p. 32). Clark sees narrative writing as a way of developing a mutual position between teachers and teacher educators so that teachers can reveal their real experiences, feelings, and thoughts about their classroom and school through telling their stories.

Jalongo and Isenberg (1995) collected and wrote about teachers' stories in and out of classrooms from their students as part of their course and their conferences with teachers. Their Master's degree course required students to share their stories during the course and they contended that teachers' stories are essentially a part of the teachers' care of their students and care for themselves. They feel that a teacher's story not only consist of common story elements, which are setting, characters, theme, plot, style, "but it also moves beyond basic elements and into the realm of reflections on teaching" (p. 3). Teachers' stories have a main characteristic as *a bon penser* which means "a good thing to think with" (p. 8). Furthermore, writing narrative not only functions as a mirror for the past to be examined and revealed but also "as a window — when we use it to examine the beliefs, behaviors, and insights of fellow teachers, past, present, and future" (p. 7) and "because teacher narratives combine thinking with feeling, they make information more relevant and memorable" (p. 216). They (1995) further argue that:

Engaging in story telling through teacher narrative is the heart of teacher reflection because narrative is validating. It retrieves and rescues our experience from the realm of a random blur into the realm of meaningful experience. Stories provide teachers with a way of seeing into themselves; they offer good counsel and can be a source of comfort.

This exploration often helps teachers to identify their own important professional and personal perspectives. Thus, storying often leads to significant change and improve practice. (p. 77)

According to Jalongo and Isenberg (1995) there are a minimum of four characteristics of a good teacher's story. First, *it is genuine and rings true* which means that teachers' stories resonate with the readers, providing positive attitudes toward the problem. Secondly, *it invites reflection and discourse, which are fundamental to reflective practice*. They mean that teachers' stories prompt readers to reflect on and discuss actions taken by teachers in the stories. Thirdly, *it is interpreted and reinterpreted*, which means that stories presented can be viewed from different angles. Fourth, *it is powerful and evocative*; they mean that teachers' stories touch readers' emotions. They (1995) argued that "Authenticity, reflection, reinterpretation, and response — we believe that these are the features that elevate a teacher's story from the realm of idle talk" (p. 12).

In teachers' lives, other teachers' stories can also be the source of solving teaching learning problems, as Scott and Dinham (2008) assert: "Teachers who are looking for ways to solve problems or make decisions in their classrooms are highly likely to prefer the example or advice of a colleague to the disembodied wisdom of a theory or a set of empirical findings" (p. 116). I remembered that when I was a novice teacher, I always took more attention with my friends' stories on how they dealt with their teaching problems. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) feel that through telling stories, teachers make sense of their lives and their role in educational context. They further argue:

... people are both living their stories in an ongoing experiential text and telling their stories in words as they reflect upon life and explain themselves to others. ... because a life is also a matter of growth towards an imagined future and, therefore, involves retelling stories and attempt at reliving stories. A person is, at once, engaged in living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories (p. 4).

In teacher education curriculum, storytelling plays an important role, as Bullough Jr. (2010) suggests, in that storytelling provides a way to internalise teaching and learn for student teachers. He believes that parables possess educative power since parables provoke thought, challenge understanding, and stretch the imagination. Parables provide for or invoke further discussion and thought in several ways. The parables provoke discussion on the importance of theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge, they invite the use of metaphor, such as a teacher as a gardener who prepares the soil for seeds to grow, and they encourage discussion about the student's previous understanding and readiness for learning.

Clarke (2012) discusses Schön's idea of reflection through the proses framing and reframing events that become stories. His emphasis is on the capacity to remember and tell stories:

In remembering and retelling I identify, problematize, and specify what it is that I am being attentive to. As I do this, I also draw on my feelings and emotions in re-storying the event. I set the stage and paint the landscape to sufficiently portray as vividly as possible the essence of the event as it unfolded for me. I gave emphasis to some elements and relegate others to background colour. Each of these decisions requires that I pause, think, and then act — that is, to make choice (p. 61).

3.5. Collecting data

Since I decided to write my autobiography, I started to collect my social and cultural background, searching for places, persons, and incidences considered important. I sketched my parent's house, the only house I lived in during my school life as well as the house where my parents spent their whole life. I collected my school report books and sketched my schools buildings and classrooms. In order to understand my cultural identity and my cultural membership, I developed a cultural gram and autobiographical timelines suggested by Chang (2008) as in Appendix A and Appendix B respectively. The initial choice of the incidences I wrote about was based on an intuitive feeling that various themes in my recollections could be connected to the literature I was reviewing on reflection and ideas about education. Developing the stories provided a way of extending my analysis of the literature and my understandings

of the central concepts lying at the heart of Schön's conception of reflection. I could not find the only childhood photograph taken when I was 3 years old; but this picture was engraved in my mind. I stood in front of my house, my left hand holding my skirt while my right hand was holding a snack in front of my mouth. I was shy because the photograph was taken by an affluent gentleman of the village. I spent some time in my village with my mother and my siblings as well as my extended family to refresh my school years in the village and lived with them. It was a very memorable time since this was my last meeting with my mother.

3.6. Limitation of Writing Autobiography as an Approach to Inquiry

From the start of my study, I realised that my study was very subjective and was dependent on my ability to explore my memory. I chose occurrences related to my intention, and I constructed the story to make meaning out of it. In writing an autobiography there is one important critical aspect, which is writer's truthfulness. Olney (1980) defines truthfulness in a direct way as follows:

Did he, for whatever reason, deliberately and consciously alter the details in that body of historical facts that lay there in a clear and objective light to be discovered accurately by the author's memory and to be transmitted faithfully to the reader as the *bios* of this autobiography? (p. 21).

Butt et al. (1994) warned that within the educational research community, the application of writing autobiography as an approach of inquiry is under debate as he describes that:

Autobiographical research, however, even within the qualitative field, remains controversial since its data are subject to incompleteness, personal bias, and selective recall in the process by which narrative is constructed. The fallibility of memory, selective recall, repression, the shaping of stories according to disposition, internal idealization and nostalgia all present the possibility of biased data. The inward-looking nature of autobiography, the making sense of ourselves in our terms, can also be seen as narcissistic and solipsistic, lacking the contrasting "countersubjective" view of others (91).

In order to minimize the shortcomings of writing autobiography, I often reminded myself of the purpose and the meaning of the story that needed to be told.

Chapter 4.

School Lives

During my late school years, I frequently pondered on how to prioritize the responsibilities I had at home. I had to discover a method of prioritizing between school related activities and home chores; conducting personal activities first or helping my parents which mostly the second thought was unavoidable. Since awareness of my parents' struggle to provide financial support for their children's education emanated, it seemed I had no choice but to help them in order to fulfil my eagerness to be educated. Further, as a teenager, I was burdened with the social pressures of society. I frequently had to choose between indulging in leisurely activities with friends after school and rushing home to begin the household chores. Each night as my eyelids began to shut and I was comfortably tucked into my wooden bed, my mind would fill with wonderful thoughts. I would imagine being a daughter of a wealthy family with no fear of financial difficulties, a daughter who captivated the attention of everyone around me. I was envious when one of my friends told me that his father gave him money for his future postsecondary education, while on the other hand, I doubted my parents' capabilities to support me. My spirit was revived when I found out there were several public colleges that provided full scholarships as my older brother was accepted in a full scholarship public health college.

When I looked back on my school years lived with my parents, I was surprised how my family and community taught me life skills unconsciously which proved to be beneficial for my future life. The hurdles I faced facilitated me to explore problem-solving strategies which I never consciously went through them. This chapter is my compiled life stories during my school years lived with my parents within my community as well as my life within the school community. I started with writing my childhood story to represent my family and community's social, economic, and cultural dimensions which inspired me

to be educated. Then it is followed with how my family and my community facilitated and triggered my thoughts to be educated. Having the label of being a village chief's daughter so attached to my body brings about personal advantages and disadvantages. It also bears my rights, duties, and obligations to the family and community. My community, especially the women's communities within it, played a significant role in facilitating me to go through a special approach of learning. My learned skills, facilitated by the community, are comprised of whole processes from raw materials to becoming ready to be served. I learned not only cooking recipes but also cooking manners. Learning my mother tongue's language not only made me master the language but also influenced my way of thinking and doing, my disposition.

Another factor that shaped my personality was the nation's situation during my school life. That was the era when Indonesia was twenty five years old in which the drum of heroism and nationalism were still sounded loudly. The school community especially encouraged students to learn from national heroes on their resilience to achieve their goal. The village culture during my high school life frequently brought about discomfoting feelings in developing friendships in schools.

4.1. The Eagerness to be Educated

I cannot imagine where I would be right now if my parents had no value on the importance of education for their children. They did not want their children to go through the same life as their rough life and they believed that through education people will be free from poverty and suppression — that their feet would be lifted up from the dirt. “It is enough for me to live through this life; be educated and have a better life” — that was my parents' counsel I heard whenever I spent most of the day playing. It became a joke among my close high school friends when I told them that I had guests with the intention to propose to me. It was sufficient for my parents to sacrifice my older sister's dream, to be married before she finished her junior high school in order to educate their children. “I asked your sister to be married soon in order to help your mother. She has someone to talk to and your sister helps your mom thinking of your education,” my father told me when we were walking home from the rice field. Unlike the current Indonesian education system with 9 years compulsory education, at that time parents had to pay meager

school fees, buy school's supplies, and pay other school expenses. We could not go to school with dirty and rag clothes; we had to wear proper attire. Education was for the privileged citizens. For farmers' families, only parents who submitted themselves to strive for their children's education had the passion to send their children to school.

In the morning, while my mother was helping me plait my long black hair she told me her experiences in education under the colonial years. Not every child had the right to go to school and it was fortunate that my mother was a daughter of a village clerk. Even though she had to walk several kilometres to reach her school, she had been educated until grade 3, the very basic education, the three Rs, capable of writing, reading, and working on simple arithmetic. Not only was family privilege a determining factor to education but gender also played a huge role. She told me that because she was a girl she was only allowed to achieve grade 3, unlike her brothers who could continue their study to become teachers and a soldier. She insisted that I had to take advantage of being a child of an independent era where every child, regardless of social, economic, and gender, had the opportunity to go to school. In my later life I then understood the reasons for her insisting on me going to school; she wanted me not to go through that hard life as she did, as I always hoped that my children won't face hard lives as I experienced.

I was a cranky kid as a way to get my parents' attention. I always wanted to follow my mother whenever she went. One Saturday afternoon after school, I saw my mother was ready to go and I begged to go along with her and she allowed me with conventional cautions: be nice and mannered. She took me to a big house and I met an old lady who sat with her dignity on her big bench. When we arrived she greeted us and my mother bowed her body and while squatting she grabbed calmly the old lady's right hand and kissed it. That was the rite I had to follow when I met this special lady. Soon several women gathered and they sat on a mattress. It was a meeting organised by a kind of woman's NGO which currently vanished, consisting of women teachers and wives or widows of retired government officials or veterans. I did not know what they were talking about but I concentrated on the snacks being served. Similar to our culture, every gathering was always accompanied by food. The family provided us with snacks that I never found at home. Now I find that I do not have the skills of baking or grilling

food. We never baked or broiled but we boiled, steamed, or fried. My mother never made snacks out of flour but mainly made snacks out of rice, sweet potatoes, corn, cassava, or fruit or any crop available at home. I took one kind of cookie, the shiny yellow-half moon shaped with a handle at the top and when I put it next to my mouth, I smelt clove. I put all of it at once in my mouth but not the handle. It melted in my mouth and I tasted the pineapple jam when I crushed it with my tongue. If I forgot my mother's counsels of politeness I would have emptied the canister. This was the first time I encountered such a cookie and in later years I only found this kind of cookie in affluent family houses and I always expected to have that kind of cookie whenever I went to these families' houses.

We sat on a pandanus mat and I was right beside my mother and I leaned my back against the wall. While the women were busy with their talk, my eyes never moved from a big sturdy glass cabinet in front of me. There were pink roses and blue cups, saucers, plates, and bowls of China and different kinds of ornaments arranged neatly in the cabinet. I stared at them from a distance and wondered where can I could buy those beautiful displays in the cabinet and I would love to have them at home. My mind whispered to me to directly ask the old lady but I cancelled it. I knew it was impolite and my mother would stare with her round eyes at me and later would reprimand me or worse she would never allow me to go with her again. On the way home, my mother tried to suppress my curiosity. The family was one of the noble families in the village. The father was a sugar plantation commissary and several of their children became prominent persons. Then I knew that one son was a prominent doctor, one was a general, and one of their daughters was an ambassador's wife. My mother's explanation did not satisfy my curiosity about their education. My mother did not know about college or university, but again she insisted to me that their education made them become who they were. "Go to school and be a diligent child," the old lady told me while she whipped my head as I shook her hands when we were about to leave her house.

In my family we hardly watched television programs except for special purposes; music and sports were my children's favorite programs, nature especially for my husband and me, or news was special for me. I was always interested in national and international news so that I had a habit of turning on the television for the nine o'clock

news. Historically, this ritual was started when my father regularly took me to my father's friend's house only to watch the nine o'clock news. At that time only wealthy families owned black and white televisions. In the village there were not more than the number of my fingers who owned a television. After night prayer my father asked me to wear long pants which were unacceptable at that time and warm clothes, then started his old motor bike, and asked me to sit at the back with my legs across the saddle. For the first time I felt strange with the way he asked me to sit which was culturally improper; I had to sit with my two legs at the left side of the bike. But he did not want me to fall and he insisted, "It was night so there will be no one seeing you." The old couple greeted us with their special smile and sometimes they provided hot tea accompanied with meals on the table. We all sat together on wood chairs and watched the news. Soon the news ended, and my father asked for his leave. I cannot recall details of the news but it improved my understanding of the world's shape as the opening news was a motion of the globe and there were other places outside of Indonesia. My special attention was on the presenter which was very inspiring; I pictured her in my mind. She was a middle aged women with short hair and big glasses. She looked smart when she presented the news. She presented with her heavy voice in clear articulation and was convincing. It seemed that all the news she presented was true and real. One night I watched her interviewing a prominent figure in English. It made me more and more fond of her. I had idolized her for her knowledge, intelligence, and ability to communicate fluently in English.

My eagerness to be educated was also triggered by my refusal of my family's status as being farmers. They worked in poor conditions and dirty fields, it was unhealthy I thought, and they worked hard and their incomes were uncertain as they depended on nature. One drizzly morning when I went to the washroom, I heard people talking, men and women; suddenly, I heard, "Walk faster, open your eyes, the sun is coming soon" followed by a crying boy. I recognised the women and the boy's voices. They lived behind my house. They were in a hurry to go to the spring to perform their private purposes as well as fetch water. I was among several village children who had the privilege to own a very simple traditional washroom in the house; I did not need to go to the springs or streams like most of my friends.

When I washed my face I heard the heavy sound of animals' footsteps. That must be the two brown-almost-black buffalos walking in front of a man I knew. He was one of my neighbours who lived exactly behind my house. His feet were bare, black shorts, ragged brown t-shirt, and a long-bamboo hat covered him from his head to his back. He carried a wooden plow on his left shoulder and a wooden wand in his right hand. He ignored the freezing cold; he did not feel the pain from his feet stepping on uneven stones. He swung his wand as these two fatty buffalos walked very slowly. It seemed they knew the burden they were going to face, plowing the rice field till noon. It was the season when these buffalo had no time away from labour. The man was not only ploughing his rice field but also ploughed other farmers' fields in order to feed his family. Even though he worked very hard for his living, it was unfortunate they could not send their children to school. Among his nine children, there were none of them who had completed nine years of basic education and now they have become ordinary farmers and workers. From the opposite direction there was a boy, my senior, a friend of my older brother, who was herding a flock of quacking ducks. The ducks walked very quickly as a troop in a march with their wings curled up tightly toward their bodies, shivering. The boy pushed the ducks to run since he had to be in school at seven in the morning. He had to bring the ducks foraging for food in after crop paddy fields or streams and then bring them back home. These were common sceneries in my village; people started their work early in the morning and the peasants' children played an important role in the family's economy. Whenever I received a red, bad score on my report book, I thought about the boy and other friends who had to work very hard for their families. I would have the same destiny herding my cattle every single, shivering morning if I failed in school.

My early life was exposed, by chance, with experiences which fostered me to my awareness of the imperative nature of education. Through education I would be free from dirty hard work as a farmer and moved toward a profession with economic stability in a comfortable environment. I learned how my social status and my community supported me and triggered me to have a broader vision. With my social status, I had opportunities to get access to new knowledge from the affluent people of the village. I knew there were other places out there, good places and bad places. I knew of other professions other than farmers, teachers, or government officials. It affirmed me to keep

my good attitude towards schooling even though I did not have a clear goal of what I wanted to be. I realised that my parents and my community provided real life examples as learning resources. These experiences allowed me to have a dream of becoming a member of affluent communities and my eagerness to become part of the community motivated me to achieve it.

4.2. Being a Village Chief's Daughter

As early as I can remember, my father was already acting as a village chief and we never knew when my father exactly started his duty since until he passed away we never found any formal letter depicting his position. What I remember was we had a special room as an office, part of our house, besides a huge living room as the front part of the house. It was clear in my mind when my village's friends resented me for being a village chief's daughter. I cannot elude that I gained privileges from being a daughter of my father but my friends never knew the burden I had to endure. The most privileges I had was almost every person in the village knew me; I felt safe and I could ask anything I wanted from them. People at that time felt honoured if they were able to serve what they had for their village's chief and family. I was often confronted with dilemmas whether I followed my desire or followed my mother's counsels, "You are a chief's daughter, you should behave because no one in this village does not know you." During Ramadhan's month, I went to the market after school every day to meet my mother as she was a clothes seller and my intention was to collect as much food for my fasting break as I could get. One afternoon my desire for foraging food was so uncontrollable that my mom gave me money.

Off I went with my best friend. It was a fasting day so that my desire to fulfil my craving for food was very high. It seemed I could eat all the food available on the stall. Every food's seller who knew me offered, "come on have some food, take them." They meant I could have the food I wanted for free. After I bought all the food and fruits I want, I still continued walking around the market to kill the time. At a particular stall where an old woman sat on a big bench, I gazed at my favorite meal, steamed glutinous rice topped with white shredded coconut and palm sugar syrup. My wild imagination went to my dining table where this meal was being served. The creamy taste of shredded

coconut combined with the sweet taste from the palm sugar was lingering in my mouth. I was surprised when the seller asked me, “Would you like me to wrap you this food?” while her thumb pointed to the food I liked and she encouraged me to say yes and her face represented disappointment if I refused her offer. Moreover, she was very kind to me probably because I was one of her grandchild’s friends. I was actually fond of that food but I didn’t have enough money. I remembered my mother’s counsel, “Never ask for food from the sellers. It is not polite. They earn money for their family.” Then I suppressed my desire not to adore my favourite food. I pretended I did not want the food because I had enough food. But I also felt guilty for making the old women disappointed.

When the village had no community center, all village meetings and village activities were conducted at my house. Meetings meant preparing a place and meals for the participants. It was the responsibility of my parents to provide. Even though we had a servant at home, my parents invited their children to take part in the preparation, especially preparing the food, which was always dinner with snacks. My father told my mother that there would be 50 participants in the meeting. My mother decided the menu for the meeting three days before; hot tea and coffee, three types of snacks - one sweet, one salty, and chips, and dinner – a sort of chicken soup with lots of vegetables. The next day after school I helped with shopping in the market and at night helped with frying chips and prawn crackers. The day before the meeting, I was assigned to cut veggies, even though several women helped my mother. At the day of the meeting, after I finished arranging the seating, my mother assigned me to arrange the snacks on small plates. At the time of the meeting I sneaked through the window to count the participant numbers as I had to make sure that the food was sufficient for all participants. After the meeting, everybody in the house cleaned up the place. It wasn’t until midnight that we went to rest. The next day was Sunday so I helped from early morning drying up the cutleries and placed them back in the cupboard. These activities were conducted several times a year so I had to find the best times if I planned to go out with my friends. Sometimes I felt sorry and embarrassed for not participating in my classroom’s social events after school.

I was so disturbed when my father woke me up in the middle of the night when a group of school students were stranded in my village. It was a school break time before

commencing the new school year. There was a tradition for boys to tour several cities by bike. There were ten high school boys, said my father when I opened my eyes. I had to wear my thick clothes before leaving my room. I heard my father move chairs and tables in the living room preparing space for the surprised guests to sleep. My mother opened the cupboard that she remembered there were noodles and several eggs. Let's make noodle soup for them and give them hot tea soon -- that was my mother's instruction. With my anger I only could follow the routine; I fired up the kiln, boiled water, and prepared the veggies. I put a lot of gasoline on the wood to express my irritation as well as to speed up the wood to fire up. It made a big fire over the pot that surprised my mother. I looked at her and her face indicated that she knew I was disturbed but she said: this will ruin the taste of your tea. I ignored it. While arranging glasses over a tray, my father approached me and with his calm face expressed his concerns of the boys. "They must be freezing and very hungry. Could you imagine if your brother experienced the same situation?" he persuaded me so that I willingly prepared the food without any complaint. Not only was I preparing the food for stranded persons staying at my home but also dealing with those unwanted guests. Not once did I confront their rude attitudes. I should have scolded them when they did not appreciate our food; they made fun of it. I suppressed my anger as culturally unacceptable; guests should be respected as we believe that they bring more prosperity to the family. Cleaning the washroom was also another issue; once we had to brush off sticky soil on the washroom floor for the whole day. These unexpected guests interrupted my personal time for socializing with my peers.

My hamlet used to be famous for being a tapioca powder producer. The home-made tapioca powder was manually processed. Several families earned money from running this very small business. They built a tiny plant usually separated from their house. There were tools supporting the processes, such as a hand grating machine for cassava and a wooden tub for cassava milk. Family members were the workers; they worked hand-in-hand through the processes, each member had a special task. The father and adult sons grated raw cassava while the mother and adult daughters sieved the grated cassava to produce cassava milk. Children helped by drying the cassava feculence and guarded them from naughty chickens and ducks. I often visited the plants, observed, and tried the tools. It was heavy when my right hand stirred the grated

cassava to sieve them. That also made my dress wet. Sometimes I could not resist being mischievous; I disturbed the workers. I put my two hands into the “bath tub” and stirred the water in it and the owner shouted, “Don’t do that, it will ruin the feculent. I will tell your father so that he will reprimand you.” I predicted my father would be disappointed if he found out that my dress was wet and smelled. People in the community respected me as the daughter of the village chief and they thought that dirty places were inappropriate places to play.

Throughout my kindergarten and primary school, I was treated differently from my peers. One of my kindergarten friends lately reminded me of my behavior when we were in the class. I was the queen of the class, she told me. She often found me in favor of the teacher; I controlled all the toys and I could ask my friends to give up the toy they played with whenever I wanted. I thought all toys in the class were my toys because I often saw that my father brought the toys to school. I remembered clearly I sat on my teacher’s lap while she was teaching. When I read my primary school report’s book, I realised why my father was so worried about me that he told my older sister not to be mad at me if I could not pass the final exam. In almost every page I found red marks indicating I was an under achiever, but my teachers never reprimanded me as they did to my friends. They only wrote notes on my report’s book, “Study harder.” On the other hand, schooling improved my docility and obedience attitudes towards teachers; I never acted against teachers or was mischief to my classmates. I was afraid that somebody would inform my misbehaviour to my parents so that they would be disappointed.

As a daughter of a village chief, I also saw my father’s role in the community. His natural leadership always thought for the betterment of the village and he set examples not only gave instructions. When the ditch around my primary school building needed improvement he went down into the ditch hoeing and arranging stones among the men of the village. When the primary school was being improved and was under construction, he moved three classes to my living room. One early morning when I was going to boil water, as usual, I found my father sitting on a low stool in front of the kiln curled up and his hands looked to be shivering. My mother told me that he just arrived from his regular village patrol. Village security was guarded voluntarily by people as a neighbourhood watch and each hamlet assigned two persons every night. My father patrolled on foot within all the six hamlets in the village once a week. He left the house at about two

o'clock in the morning and came back home before morning prayers. He told me that he not only walked along the main road but also through small paths and riverbanks. That was the answer to my curiosity for the reason why my father was so tense when he found his only patrolling equipment, the big white torch, was not in place. In my later life, people praised my father's way of maintaining the village security.

He was also compliant to the government policies. He executed the government's programs faithfully so that my village became one of the pilot villages in terms of agriculture, home industries, and woman's role in the community. It was the first Indonesian development era when the government concentrated on village development which was called "village modernisation" with the aim to improve agriculture's effectiveness and efficiency. The government introduced tractors to replace traditional plows and chemical fertilisers to replace manures, as well as pesticides to boost crops. In a village meeting my father innocently encouraged the participants to use these chemicals on their plantations. If I knew the impact of these chemicals towards our environment, I would have encouraged the farmers to stick to the traditional agriculture.

One day I found my living room was full of chairs arranged neatly in rows but unusual. The nicest chairs, not ours, were arranged on the first row and in front of them there were several tables, each covered with table cloths — white, embroidered at each corner — which I had never seen, and decorated with fresh pink roses nicely arranged in a transparent bowl. It must be a special event, and I predicted there would be dignitary guests. Outside, people displayed their best crops, crafts, and expertise. One big table was decorated with shiny yellow and green pumpkins, dried corn on the cob, a bunch of cassava, sweet potatoes, chillies, and all sort of veggies and fruits of the season. They were all the best crops. This was a showcase as the proof of the latest innovation success. On another table there were a bunch of imitated pink chrysanthemum flowers made out of plastic. This stall was guarded by a Chinese lady who demonstrated how to make her flowers to satisfy the guests' curiosity. This was an example of handicrafts by local people. Everybody in the crowd, including my father, seemed to be satisfied since their hard work was recognised by dignitaries from regional offices.

Despite his thoughtfulness, his willingness to help and his humbleness, my father was a tough man. Once I overheard my primary school teacher talking to another teacher about a meeting led by my father. He said that my father insisted on his opinion and did not pay attention to the participants and his impression was, "He was

authoritative and we have to follow him.” I did not know what they were talking about but my gut feeling agreed with him; my father was a tough man for his children. He would easily reprimand me if I missed his task. My siblings and I could not freely join the school’s or community’s activities which did not have a relation to schooling. I could not go to play until I finished my duty.

My daily responsibilities were going to school and helping my parents. Every Tuesday, without my parents’ consent, I practiced volleyball with my village team in the morning not far from my house. I thought I could manage the time because it was two hours from 9.00 am to 11.00 am. On this one day, I woke up so early that I managed to prepare the worker’s food before I went for practice and approaching noon I rushed back home when it finished in order to have time for my school’s preparation. One Tuesday, I dashed home from practicing because it was a little bit late and when I opened the door I saw my father stood next to the clothes lines. I was shocked to see his straight face. I never expected he would be home at that time. He greeted me with his loud voice, “If you are going to be a volleyball player you do not need these uniforms, I will throw them away.” While he said that his hands harshly grabbed my white and grey uniforms ready to be thrown away. Finally, I was caught. I did not dare to make eye contact with him or say a word as I was so scared. I wanted to say that I had finished my chores preparing food for the workers and I cleaned the kitchen. But I had no choice except quit from the volleyball team. My bad mood stayed for several days as I was ashamed to let my friends know that my parents prohibited me from playing volleyball and I had to quit. I didn't want my friends to know that my father was a stern father. One day one of my friends, who lived six houses from my house, surprised me that she knew I was not allowed to play. I was curious, how could she know? She told me that she was home at that time and clearly heard my father's angry voice. This news made my face flushed as I imagined what my friends’ thought about my father and myself. Since this incident I never went to the volleyball field and I avoided meeting with the team members.

4.3. Submersing in a Javanese-Moslem Culture

I belong to the Javanese ethnic which is one among 400 ethnicities in Indonesia. Currently, the Javanese mostly live in Central and East Java island. The Javanese language became my vernacular language as my father and my mother were Javanese from the same region. I lived with my parents at the same house at the same place until I reached 18 years old. The Javanese language is the language spoken by more than 75 million people in Indonesia (Sneddon, 2003). Errington (1988) and Peodjosoedarmo (1968) feel that the Javanese language is a complex language. If I compare one thing when I speak in English and in Javanese, I can say that when I speak in English I always have to be conscious about tenses in relation to time; however, when I speak in Javanese I have to be mindful in choosing words in relation to whom I communicate with and the nature of the situation. Choosing wrong words sounds odd and can be considered as an insult to the addressee. Words used by a person indicate who she or he is. Basically, the Javanese language is comprised of three levels or styles: *kromo* (highest), *madyo* (middle), and *ngoko* (lowest). Each level comprises two sublevels (Errington, 1988). *Kromo* language is used when I converse with noble (*priyayi*) persons — my superiors (parents, teachers, older brothers and sisters) and older people whom I have met for the first time; *madyo* language is used when I talk to my family in informal circumstances; and *ngoko* language is the language of ordinary people and I use it when I talk to my younger family members, my close friends, and my helpers. In everyday life, I only knew two styles, which were *kromo* (Peodjosoedarmo, 1968) or *boso* (Errington, 1988) and *ngoko* (Errington, 1988; Peodjosoedarmo, 1968). Every word has a minimum of two levels and among the three levels *ngoko* is the most comprehensive (Peodjosoedarmo, 1968).

Errington (1988) provides a good example of how to express a sentence such as “Did you take that much rice?” into Javanese with six alternatives, two alternatives for each level. Another example is how my parents and their children communicated. My parents talked to their children in the *ngoko* style; on the other hand, I and my siblings conversed with them in the *kromo* style. I learned it from my mother when she had conversations with my father as well as private conversations with me where my mother used *kromo* language to teach me. Even though I talked in *kromo* style, when I talked

about what I did, I used *madyo* style. My mother taught me *kromo* style because it was the most difficult and safest style to use. Learning and using the *kromo* language was difficult because in everyday life I heard people converse mostly in *ngoko*, but it was safe because it was better to speak in *kromo* as it would not insult the addressee. My mother always corrected my sentences when I picked inappropriate words. I saw my mom's sorry faces when I chose wrong words in conversations. I also learnt from my mother how to present my body and my voice when I conversed in *kromo* style. I should pose my body in a surrender position with eyes looking at my addressee's nose with a low tone voice. I should show my interest and converse attentively, as well; in general, I could not show my abhorrence, sadness, or anxiety. It was considered impolite if I stared at my addressee's eyes with a bloated chest and a high tone. It also sounded strange when somebody spoke furiously in *kromo* style. On the other hand, if someone used *ngoko* style with a loud voice, this could be implied as anger or taking offence, even though the individual did not mean to. In order to avoid this misunderstanding, my husband and I had decided to speak in the Indonesian language instead of Javanese, which I regretted because my children became novices in the Javanese language.

Talking in the Javanese language trained me to always be conscious in choosing words to speak, expressing appropriate mimics and body language, and hiding my undesirable feelings from others. I suppressed my anger, dislikes, disbeliefs, jealousy, and other ruthless character elements in order to display favorable attitudes; I refrained from humiliating, insulting, and hurting others. Another remarkable feature of Javanese was that it trained me to discern my addressee's position in relation to the matter I spoke. For example, when I talked to my niece, saying, "Could you buy a cup of coffee for someone?" The style of the word "buy" was determined by the nature of the "someone" in this conversation. If the "someone" was superior to my niece I used *kromo* style; however, if the "someone" was inferior to my niece I used *ngoko* style. I often asked myself whether my words, mimics, and body language were appropriate. This habit evolved continually, being cautious in speaking and pleasing others. It hindered me to converse socially with people in new situations. I felt at ease whenever I knew my position and purpose of the conversations. I preferred listening rather than talking. Kramsch (1998) delineates that "The theory of linguistic relativity does not claim that linguistic structure constrains what people can think or perceive, only that it tends to

influence what they routinely do think” (p. 14). I agree with Kramsch’s statement since I see myself having difficulties in communicating my ideas with the fear of appropriateness.

Ethnically, Javanese people comprise 40 percent of the Indonesian population (Index Mundi, 2012) and they live spread out all over Indonesia partly because of the government’s policy of transmigration program. Java Island was the most populated island in Indonesia and the government dispersed the population throughout Indonesia. When I visited several provinces’ capital cities, I easily met with the Javanese people and spoke the language and it also meant that I could easily find Javanese food. The hierarchical structure of the language also influences the Javanese people’s disposition. Clifford Geertz (1960) classified the Javanese people in relation with Islamic religion as *santri*, *abangan*, and *priyayi*. The *santri*, was the religious people; they were educated in traditional Islamic schools (*pesantren*) and usually became a religious leader in the village. The *abangan* and the *priyayi* were more concerned with Javanese rituals. The *abangan* and *santri* were descendants of farmers or merchant families while the *priyayi* descended from noble families related to royal families or government (The Dutch’s government) officials. In my village these divisions were remarkable. The *santri* and *abangan* somehow had to pay respect to the *priyayi*. I felt humiliated when I visited a neighbour considered as a *priyayi*. It was *Eid* day, the day after Ramadhan month where people in the village visit each other; the younger people visit the elders. My two sisters and I visited one of the noble families not far from my house and the host asked me about my education. At that time I was in the end of my junior high school. He told stories about the Dutch education systems where only *priyayi* children were allowed to be educated and he insisted that the peasants remained peasants. If there was a mirror in front of me, I could have seen my anger face; it must be red. I was so furious. If it were to happen now I would argue and wake him up from his dream of enjoying to be a respected person. His words and his expressions motivated me not to waste my time in an independent nation, but to be educated. I needed to move my social status. I did not want to be his servant. That was also one of the reasons for my eagerness to speak Javanese decently as the symbol of being a *priyayi*.

My house was separated from the mosque only by my uncle's house. Every dawn I heard people in accordance praising the almighty Allah and Muhammad (peace be upon him) when they were waiting for Morning Prayer. The rhymes they reiterate are embedded in my heart which soothes my soul when I am in despair. Reiterating these rhymes creates peaceful and feelings of ease. The drum sound calling for prayer often woke me up from my sound sleep. I learnt my spirituality both formally and informally. Formally, I went to a religious class when I was in primary school which lied down my basic spirituality. This school was a government school but it was initiated and run by the community. The building was inadequate for a place to learn; it was an unfinished brick building with a soil floor which brings about dust. This is the school for *santri* families' children. *Santri* families were considered as rural and impoverished. It was a common scene to see my friends barefoot without shoes or sandals and with simple clothes. There was no uniform so we dressed freely; we were allowed to wear t-shirts or worn-out clothes. Unlike in my primary school, where every morning the teachers checked the students' uniforms for cleanliness and tidiness, teachers in this school did not pay attention to the students' clothing. It seemed thoughtless but actually the teachers understood their students' attitudes towards schooling and their economic background. The most beneficial part of this school was that there wasn't a school fee but only a contribution; parents gave their contribution according to their economic situation.

In this school, I learnt the Arabic language, which was washed away a long time ago, to recite Al Quran, hadith (the saying and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad), and Islamic history, seven days a week for three hours every day. Unfortunately, the government changed its policy for religious schools. All religious schools were equated with government schools so that the religious schools changed their curriculum as well as changed their time. In spite of encouraging me to be disciplined in conducting prayers and reciting Al Qur'an, this school taught me humility and passion. The majority of the students of the school originated from other villages further towards remote areas. When I was at grade three I visited my friend's house, a girl friend. I walked on my slippers down the stony road and turned left at some point towards a grassy path, up to a hill and walked on a small, muddy path among a rice field. It was so muddy that my slippers were covered with a sticky soil which urged me to take them off. It was about half an hour walk and I arrived at the hut where she lived with her family. There was nothing I

could see in the house except a big bamboo bench covered by a striped pandanus matt. My friend told me that her parents could only afford to send her to religious school as she had to help her parents in the field every morning. She never complained. I never imagined before that she lived in this condition since she was a cheerful and easy going friend and never showed her grievances; she was very energetic and full of courage to learn in the class. She read aloud in front of the class without hesitation. On the way back home, I felt bad as I often refused my mother's commands. Her spirit to learn inspired me to be a diligent kid. When I met her on my way to the market recently, she greeted me with her special full smile; she was aged and carried a basket on her back but she expressed her happiness. With her proud face she told me that all three of her children were married and gave her four grandsons. What an achievement! I was jealous.

Being raised in my Javanese culture prepared me to have the capability to adjust myself in a community or to adapt to the circumstances surrounding me. One value that is inscribed in my mind and soul is the value of respecting my elders and loving the ones younger than me, which made it easier for me to socialize in a new environment. This Javanese disposition is often misinterpreted as a way of pleasing others for personal gain. On the contrary, when I was within the academic community, my confidence dropped to the lowest state since I situated myself as a farmer — the unknowledgeable person — within the knowledgeable community. During my school years, even though Moslems were the majority, I had a lack of confidence to express my identity as a Moslem because Moslems used to be considered as uneducated villagers, and conservative. I could not bear the peer pressure so I refused my parents' appeals to attend a religious boarding camp during school break because of my fear of being judged as a conservative person.

4.4. Learning in the Community

I was puzzled when my friends enjoyed my food and appreciated my ability to cook. I thought they made jokes about me but my cooking partner told the team members how skilful I was when I prepared and cooked the food. I thought because they were starving that they appreciated my food and it was simple cooking. When I was in

grade 7, I was a member of the scout team representing my Junior High School for regional level camp. The second day of the camp was my turn to cook for the day. I was not alone but with one of my seniors as a partner. As a new member and the youngest in the team, I doubted my ability to cook especially cooking with my senior. I was afraid of making a mistake as the team depended on us. I imagined how disappointed my team would be when they came back from their activities, tired and starved and found my food was tasteless or too spicy and not appealing. I was conscious of who I was, the only member originated from a farmer family – villager. My mum must have said those were simple to cook, but not for me. Our menu was omelets, without veggies, cheese, or milk, and stir fry beans.

After we agreed upon our tasks and started to do the job, our conversation developed into sharing our personal knowledge about cooking. My mother's counsel popped up in mind on the type, the amount, and the way to prepare each spice; the way to clean and prepare the foodstuff, and the way to cook. As my partner shared her cooking experiences and I brought along mine, it was an interesting discussion. We had different ways of doing things. One trivial example was about cleaning the raw materials; it was new for my partner to wash the eggs before cooking even though they looked clean and I was surprised when she cut the beans before she washed them. Another example was about the spices for the omelets. It was new to me that my partner put chili powder and pepper into the omelet, while my mother always insisted that we never put pepper and chili powder in the same dish which according to her it made the dish become very hot and could cause heartburn.

Cooking was not my favorite chore before. I preferred cleaning and arranging things in the house. But, culturally, cooking was an essential skill for women as women (wife) were viewed as “rencang wingking” in the family, which literally means friend of the back and contextually means friend who was in the kitchen. Women were responsible for feeding the family. In the community, women's expertise in cooking was needed. For special events such as a wedding ceremony, food was prepared by a group of women in the community lead by master chefs unlike in cities where people order food from catering services, in villages. Good cooks or chefs, in Lave and Wenger's (2002) ideas were called old-timers and were respected and I see it as community

practice. My socialisation on cooking as a community practice was started from an early age whenever there was a special event in my house.

One day my mother sat on a big bench in the kitchen talking to two ladies, one older than the other. They were our neighbors, the master chefs of the village. There must be a big event in the near future, I thought. My mother held a piece of white paper in her left hand and gripped a short black pencil in her right hand. They were talking seriously but when I approached them my mother said, "Shake hands with them." And I smiled at them as a greeting and grabbed her hands and I was kissed on my nose one by one before I sat beside my mother. This was a common scene whenever there would be big events related to family, related to my father's job, or a community affair in my house. And that day the meeting discussed their preparation for a village chief's meeting.

The master chefs helped my mother with the following duties, respectively starting from the beginning: planning the menu, budgeting, cooking management, and presentation of the food. This was what I read on my mother's note. Snacks: *Jentik manis* (sweet dish made of *hunkwe* flour), *Lemper* (glutinous rice dish), and *Emping* (*Gnetum gnemon* cracker). Main menu: *Soto komplit* (complete *soto*, a kind of chicken soup), and banana. With their wisdom, they were capable of planning the menu and keeping it budget wise. They kept reminding my mother what crops she owns so that they did not need to buy them. They suggested places to shop with cheap but good quality foodstuff. I heard names being called for specific tasks. They frequently agreed with each other but sometimes they made arguments which related to the quality of food someone's cooking. I overheard them saying, "I think Lani is not yet good at steaming the rice, I found it hard; it is better we ask Dwi instead." One by one the helper discussed who was doing what and when until finally they established a cooking team. These helpers can be considered as newcomers (Lave & Wenger, 2002) in the community.

Two days before the event, several women including the masters started to come to my house and some of them were followed by their children. My kitchen was big enough to accommodate ten women, as it was equipped with two wood kilns, two charcoal kilns, and two big benches for the preparation process. The day started with a

kind of meeting where all the women sat on the two big benches facing the old-timers. The old-timers then assigned each helper. Almost all of them seemed to know their capabilities and responsibilities to follow-up the task, but some of them expressed their hesitancy. "Don't worry, we make it together or she (mentioned a name) would work with you," one old-timer reassured.

Each woman situated herself in position with the materials and tools she needed. The master chefs dealt with the most delicate task helped by a newcomer. While doing her task, she answered questions from the helper. I could notice the newcomers actively asking questions for the appropriateness of the cooking ingredient or process. These conversations were open to everybody so that not only the inquirer received new knowledge but also others who overheard. While they were cooking they also talked about their bad and best experience as well as their way to solve problems in cooking the dish. This shared knowledge could be applied directly to the present situation which they would know the result soon and might trigger further discussion. Everybody in the community unconsciously grasped new knowledge while she was cooking, and Lave and Wenger (2002) considered this as situated learning, as they view learning as "an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world" (p. 35).

To become a village chef at that time, women did not need special cooking lessons but participated actively in the communities of practice. Cooking knowledge was free in the society embedded in the action of practice. The newcomers started learning from trivial practices and move toward more complex tasks and finally to full participation in the practices in accordance to the learner's engagement in the practice. Lave and Wenger (2002) say that "learning viewed as situated activity" (p. 29) is through the process of *legitimate peripheral participation* (LPP) which means "learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of community" (p. 29).

In spite of grasping cooking knowledge and skills inadvertently from observing and listening to conversation among women within such a community practice, my mother was the most important cooking coach for me. I learned to cook from her elbow

(MacKinnon, 1996). I learnt not only her recipes and her procedures to cook, but also her manners while cooking — how she treated each spice and foodstuff during preparation as well as the cooking actions, which could not be described into words. When my mother asked me to sauté garlic for the first time she told me that I had to continue to sauté the garlic until it was light brownish and smelled before I added the onions. My mother should have thought that I knew what she meant because she always insisted on me closely observing when she was cooking. But, I really had no idea how brownish and how strong the smell was so I frequently asked for her agreement. “Is it okay, mom?” And she would shout, “No, not yet, wait.” While my left hand arranged the wood in the kiln to reduce the flame, my mother grabbed the spatula in my right hand and stirred the garlic as she told me, “It is time to add the onion.” And then I put the onion in while she was stirring. My mother’s warning was, “If you add the onion at the wrong time, the dish would not turn out.”

That was a small example on how I learned my mother’s cooking style. My mother was a perfectionist, especially in relation to her expertise in cooking. Now I can see how she tried hard to make me master her cooking. She demonstrated the tasks and forced me to mimic her manners and small differences would trigger her disappointment. There was no choice for me except to follow her. She expected me to cook as well as her. She harshly criticized my cooking whenever it did not turn out as she expected and her wisdom made her capable of figuring out my fault. It seemed she had the most sophisticated taste buds and the best olfactory senses. I was never capable of dodging her arguments. When I felt frustrated, I often imagined if I was a daughter of a better off family — would I have to cook? I would ask my helpers to cook the best meals for me. I would never have to provide food for the workers. Feelings of disappointment and frustration whenever she pointed at my cooking mistakes washed away when my friends praised my dishes. My peers’ confidence in my cooking capabilities encouraged me to learn more varieties of dishes from my mother as well as from other sources. As a result, my cooking capabilities then improved my self-confidence among my peers. Even though I was a village girl, I had something to offer. Since the appreciation and recognition of my cooking capabilities, I developed my interest in cooking and my creativity led to my own way of cooking. Now I realise that food and cooking are always a hot topic to be discussed in social situations. I used to

cook to fulfil demands and obligations and to make my parents happy and believe in my cooking capability. So I used to not believe when my mother counseled me, saying, “You do not need to stay in the kitchen in your future life but your cooking knowledge and skill would help you in your social life.” I have already proven that she was right.

Learning to cook, for me, was a given choice which I never imagined would influence my way of thinking and doing. I tend to think confidently in a procedural way. When I was assigned to manage the development of systems and procedures as part of the institution’s quality assurance system, I enjoyed working together to produce UT’s written examination systems and procedures. I felt accomplished with my assignment. On the other hand, I was envious of my friends who wrote analytically for their examination monitoring reports. When I was assigned to conduct examination monitoring, I wrote a report. My report was always different from my friends. I wrote descriptively what I found in the field and of the procedure without any analysis. I was frustrated when my friends taught me to write like them and they were amazed that I was paralyzed with fear.

4.5. The Spirit of Patriotism and Nationalism

My school years started when Indonesia was only about 25 years old as a sovereign nation. This was the phase where Indonesia was considered as an underdeveloped country; the time when the New Era replaced the Old Era through horrific political turmoil. It was also the time when the New Order started to improve the nation’s prosperity through its series of five-year plans, starting from the year 1969. The spirit of nationalism, patriotism, and modernisation propagated throughout the country, including through the school systems. Schools from primary to senior high schools were equipped with symbols and infrastructure as the representation of the spirit. In every classroom, the Indonesian national emblem — *Garuda Pancasila* — was posted above the blackboard directly above the president and vice president’s photographs. On each side of the wall hang two or three heroes’ black and white pictures as well as an Indonesian map. All of those symbols encountered every day coupled with the patriotic songs we sang aroused and developed my national identity, as a new nation seized from the oppressor.

Each school was equipped with a lawn where a flag pole stood in the middle close to the school building. The main function of the lawn was for the Flag Monday's ceremony conducted. On Monday's ceremony, all the school's members were obligated to attend the assembly, and absentees should be supported with good reasons. When students were caught staying in the classroom and were deliberately absent from attending the ceremony, they would face a strong warning and were considered as dishonouring the national heroes and disloyal to the state. Students were grouped according to their grade and stood in rows facing the pole, while the principal and teachers stood up in a row behind the pole, facing the students. To observe students' attitudes during the ceremony, some teachers stood up at the back of the students' rows. In the ceremony we raised the flag, sang the national anthem and patriotic songs, read along *Pancasila* as Indonesia's national ideology, and as well listened to the headmaster's speech. In my junior high school, patriotic songs were played through loudspeakers that reminded school members to attend the ceremony. Participants should attend the ceremony solemnly and any negligence or mischief would be reprimanded. The most frequent utterances within the headmaster's speech were a reminder that Indonesia was not a given nation but that the people of Indonesia went through the battlefield for independence. "Our national heroes have fought sacrificing their lives and their wealth for Indonesian independence and now it is time for you (students) as the future generations to embrace the independence through education"; this was part of the headmaster's speech which was engraved in my soul. When I sing or heard the Indonesian anthem or patriotic songs, or saluted the flag, I remember my mother's stories as my "secondhand" story (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2014) about life in the colonized era which aroused my goose bumps. As I write this, my chest hardens, my heart beats faster, my arms shiver, and my hateful feelings emerge for those who persecuted and killed my people.

My mother talked about the monument where I attended the Independence Day ceremony during my primary school years. This monument was erected to commemorate the horrific events on the bridge. The bridge was the place where Indonesian's guerillas were beheaded by aggressors. At each side of this square pole was engraved a picture of a man kneeled on the ground, with his face up, his eyes covered with a handkerchief, and his hands were tied at the back ready to be executed.

My mother told me that the hole on the bridge was the place where executions were conducted so that the dead bodies directly fell to the river. She was a teenager when the Dutch and its ally tried to reoccupy Indonesia after gaining its independence. "It was worse compared to the Japanese and Dutch occupation before the independence," she said. Every day was full of stories about colonial atrocities and her fears were escalated when the dark came. The family hardly slept at night since the aggressors searched for guerillas in villages and dragged whoever they considered as guerillas out of their houses and they hardly ever came back. One night there was a knock on the door. That was a bad sign. Everybody in the house woke up in horror and gathered in the middle of the house waiting for her father to open the door. She was relieved when her father warmly greeted the unwanted guests as an indication of harmless guests. However, a minute later they informed her father that one of her older brothers was caught that night. He was a village clerk. Everybody was in shock and in tears but there was nothing they could do except pray for his safety. The family was waiting for news in horror every minute; they were afraid of the possibility of her brother's execution.

Three days later, her father received news that her brother was detained as a hostage in a jungle up in the mountain and needed to be released. The colonist's soldiers demanded a ransom. I was confused about the reasons they asked for money, but my mother could not explain. What she remembered was she accompanied her mother to sell her jewellery and the next day her father asked her to bring the money to her uncle as the middle man. Her mother dressed her with her worst traditional clothes she had and her father arranged the money under rice with their husks, to camouflage it, in a bamboo basket. My mother carried this bamboo basket with a traditional cloth around her body. She walked alone on bare feet in the middle of the day for about 4 kilometres. Her task not only threatened her life but also the whole family if she were caught. I thought about how brave she was. How she handled her fear since she walked on that special bridge and passed by the colonial soldier's office next to the bridge. I imagined what would have happened if my mother had been stopped and interrogated by a tall-sturdy-black colonial soldier when she passed by his office. She remembered that she had to murmur her prayer suggested by her mother all along the way.

The family waited for days to hear the news which never came. But then one day, my mother found her brother was home with his shabby-dirty clothes, lean body, and pale face sitting on a big bench leaned against the wall, as if he had no energy to sit straight, and he talked lazily to several people around him. When I asked my mother what had happened with her brother, she could not recall exactly what happened to him but she remembered that he was accused of being a spy. My mother further told that no one in the family became a warrior or guerilla but her family facilitated places to hide and supplied food for the warriors or guerillas. Heroic stories to fight for Indonesian independent from the oppressor were taken place and scattered all over Indonesia during 400 years of occupation. My senior high school's Indonesian history class teacher was one of the teachers that I always remember because of his teaching. When he was storying about my nation's past situation and struggle for its independence, I could see his tense feelings through his facial expressions and his voice intonation, just like my mother when she told her story. Not only was he storying about battles against the oppressor but also describing how ordinary people suffered in the colonial period. He frequently reminded students that in order to be able to raise the red-white flag in the Indonesian land freely, many people — uncounted heroes — voluntarily sacrificed their lives, their families, or their wealth. There were terrifying struggles for the Indonesian people being oppressed and heroes to fight for their rights.

Another value I learnt from Indonesian history was the Dutch political approach to occupy Indonesia, which was famous as the politic of *divide et impera*. This political tactic brought about civil wars among people in Indonesia. My teacher insisted that if there had been no emergence of “*bersatu kita teguh, bercerai kita runtuh*” (“when we unite we can stand, when we divide we will collapse”) slogan, there would be no Indonesian nation. Before he finished his class he prompted us, like the headmaster's messages in every flag ceremony, that we should learn from the heroes' sense of nationality and our resilience to achieve their goals. We were encouraged to make use of our time intelligently in order to participate in the developing of the nation.

Goose bumps and saddened feelings when I attended the flag ceremony appeared because I heard the heroic tales and the suffering directly from the participants who felt the misery in the colonial period. I doubt if my children feel the same as I did

when they attend the flag ceremony because I certainly cannot tell them of the struggle for independence as my mother or my history teacher told me.

4.6. The Sponge Ready to Absorb

I lived in a village without electricity; however, it had been equipped with a kindergarten. Historically, kindergarten was already introduced during the Dutch occupation but it was only for the Dutch and noble children. I started my kindergarten very early as my brother told me that I went to kindergarten when I was about two and a half years old. I remember the event which triggered me to go to school. One day my father brought home a bag of toys and I found a white, small, completed miniature bed with a tiny doll; it was not a Barbie-like bed set but it was very simple. I carefully tended the sheet and I put the doll to sleep. Suddenly, my father sat beside me and asked me to give him the toys. I held the toys tight while I refused but he told me that these toys belonged to the school. I was so disappointed but that led me to the idea of going to school in order to play with them. Another reason for going to school was my desire to go to school with my brother; I did not want him to leave me home. When my daughter was two years old, she cried aloud whenever her brother left home for school. It was like playing an old movie of mine so I decided to send my daughter to preschool. What I remember during my kindergarten was playing and singing and my teacher's warm cuddle.

In primary school, it was a common scene that in the morning the students were in a queue, walked accordingly, showed their two hands to the teacher and then shook hands before entering the class. I often had a fear when I was waiting in the line; I was worried that my teacher will be disappointed since she found my friend's nails were unclean. Whenever she found dirty nails she used her plastic ruler to hit the nails. It was not hard though, but embarrassing, so I always had my nails clean. Almost every day I heard my teacher say, "Keep your nails clean otherwise you will have worms in your tummy," but I had clean nails. I walked slowly with my head down, lifted my hands up to show my nails, then with my right hand I pulled my teacher's right hand to put her backhand on my nose to show my respect to her before I entered the class.

When I entered the class, I sat still on a hard stiff wooden bench, as it was a heritage piece from the colonial era. If I was careless while sitting and I hit my knee on the bench, the result was a dark purple bruise on my knee; it hurt. I sat on the same spot for the whole semester which was why on the first day of the semester I always went to school earlier in order to get the best spot, on the right side of the room at the second line. I put my belongings under the table and put my hands on the table while waiting for all the other students to enter the class. "Good morning teacher," was the students' morning choir response greeting to the teacher after my teacher greeted, "Good morning my students." Another common ritual to start the class was saying prayer as the application of the first national ideology, believing in God. Then I took out my books and pencil and opened up my ears. Teachers mostly lectured and while explaining she/he wrote on the blackboard. As I was afraid of failing quizzes and exams due to a lack of time to study at home, I concentrated on listening to the teachers' explanations and I wrote what was written on the board. I tried to put all the information in my head.

Reading a book in turn loudly was also a common practice until I was in grade six. Science was also one lesson taught in primary school. I intensely remember how hard I tried to memorise the sequence of scientific investigation, namely noting the phenomenon, developing hypotheses, conducting experiments, analysis, and generating a conclusion. Instead of teaching scientific skills through hands on experience at the back yard of the school, my teacher asked students to read loudly, in turn an imaginative story written on the science book. It was a national standard science book with each book designated for two students. I did not recall the title of the story but under the title there was a sketched black and white picture of a boy wearing a traditional farmer's hat walking toward a cowshed where there were grasses around the shed. The story was about a farmer's boy who wondered about the grasses around the cowshed. They were the same type of grasses but different colours; grasses near the cowshed were greener compared to the grasses far from it. The boy was curious about this phenomenon. He then thought there was a possibility that the greener grass was the result of the cow's dung. He then put some dung on less green grass and waited for several days. He found that the grass became greener and he finally concluded that the cow's dung made the grass greener.

At that time most of the students in the class were not fluent in reading so my teacher reread sentences to model how to read. Even though the passage was only a page, it took a half day to finish it. This approach helped me to remember the stages of the story so that when I was asked to reveal scientific investigation sequences, I recalled the order of the story but I had difficulties in naming the action.

Sometimes the teachers asked questions and the students who knew the answer put their hand up; the teachers gazed on us and with her grace, calling a name to answer. The type of question was to complete a word(s) at the end of a sentence or true or false questions. The questions were recall questions. If the answer was correct she/he continued to other questions; however, if the answer was incorrect and then the other students who knew it put their hands up while shouting “me ... me ...” begging to be chosen to answer. The teachers concentrated on who gave the right and wrong answers. She wanted to have a rough idea of who was correct; she wanted to know the students who were understanding her teaching. If teachers’ questions functioned as a means of assessing the students’ learning, incorrect answers should have been taken into account. Teachers should have known the reasons of their students’ incorrect answers and help them. However, that was not the case. When I set for quizzes or exams, I often remember concepts or facts that had been asked by my teachers.

When I read my primary school report’s book, I realised why my father was so worried about my academic achievement that he told my older sister not to be mad at me if I could not pass the final exam. Almost on every page of my grade 1 to grade 6 report I can see the red colour which means my score was less than it should have been. My awareness of studying at home started when I was in grade four working on some mathematical homework. One my mother’s perennial questions after having dinner was, “Do you have any homework?” If I had not finished with my homework, she reprimanded that I should have done it after school, as after evening prayer I often felt asleep when I should have worked on my homework at night after learning Al Quran. I was fond of mathematics compared to other subjects. I memorized mathematical rules as I memorized cooking recipes and I applied the rules to solve the problem. I had been drilled to memorize multiplication and division tables and I enjoyed working out mathematical word problems. For example: my mother went to the market, she had 100

rupiahs, she bought three oranges each 5 rupiahs, 2 kg of potatoes each kilogram was 10 rupiahs, etc. How much money was left in my mother's wallet? When I had to solve this kind of math problem I remembered my teacher's endless advice to always write down the summary of the problem as well as the question before working it out to answer. Writing the problem helped me to make sense and develop the logic so that I could exercise mathematical rules which I needed. I kept the procedures for solving problems suggested by my teacher so my mind got used to it that I did not need to write on a piece of paper but I wrote it in my mind.

Learning was remembering; everything should be remembered and ready to be retrieved. When I learned about the physical properties of liquid, gas, and solid, my teacher explained the characteristics of each property based on the book and she gave examples of phenomena familiar to the students. When she clarified a liquid property which flowed from higher to lower places, she gave examples of a waterfall and water fountain. Then I could remember the facts and the rules which were all in the book but I did not remember the reasons for the phenomenon happening. I never complained about this transfer mode of teaching because I thought that was the way I was supposed to study in school, remembering what teachers said. For my son it was boring to listen to his teacher's preaching and one morning he refused to go to school with his reason, "What I hear from my teacher in school is written in the book, why should I go? I could read it at home."

The lecture approach of teaching dominated during my school life. Even though my secondary teachers conducted demonstrations or required experiments, which rarely happened, I interpreted this approach as a way to strengthen my memories toward the concept, like the story in the primary science book, not as a means to help me understand the concept or trigger my curiosity. All my teachers in junior and senior high schools would never make use out of the classroom's resources; teachers were considered as a knowledge resource that was capable of transmitting their knowledge to their students. It was a crucial time for me during my high school years in relation to the increasing house chores and responsibilities as I illustrated above. I had to manage the time between going to school, conducting my chores, and studying at home. As study time at home was often disturbed by family matters, I tried to make the most effective

time at school.. I have never complained about my situation; I surrendered with the circumstances so I had the chance to continue my study. I was always as an ordinary student and never experienced any prominent academic achievement that my parents never demanded. They demanded my spirituality improvement, good manners, and family responsibilities.

4.7. Peer Pressure

Mother's Counsel

Be diligent in putting yourself, choosing your friend

Don't be pompous, willing to oppose

Mother's counsel, always be remembered

Education from mother, father, and teachers not to be ignored

Your life miserable

Mother's counsel, always be remembered

(Anonim)

This is a song lyric I learnt from my art teacher when I was in the first year of my junior high school. One by one my classmates stood in front of the class to sing this song and one particular friend, a boy, sang this song with both his hands folded in front of his chest. His face was so serious and he sang like a professional tenor; with his adult like voice — I imagined my father was telling me, very clear voice, perfect pitch, and intonation. I was so moved with this song. It came at the perfect time and place, when I needed guidance to mingle in my new environment. When the time came, I started to step out of my village meeting with more heterogeneous friends. I felt like I was going to be far away from my mother. I sang this song with my soul and those lyrics are always in my mind. These lyrics are so ingrained in my inner self and spirit; I whisper this song to my children whenever I made them sleep.

I was accepted in one of the two public junior high schools and the only public senior high school in the district at that time. The selections were merit scholarship based on the exam scores from previous schools. I was very eager to be accepted at these two schools with economic reasons as the primary consideration. My schools were located at the district capital town, about 5 kilometres from home. It meant that my economic consciousness started to develop. My parents had to have more money for me. I had to always possess money in my pocket for my transportation and more money for the school fee. My school mates were not only children of farmers, school teachers, and clerks whom I knew their family background but also children of high-class society from the city. Out from the village, I had to be confronted with psychological, social, cultural, and economic challenges. Psychologically, I moved from being somebody, the daughter of a village chief, the centre of attention, to being nobody. The most pronounced loss was the teachers' attention. All my primary school teachers were known to me and they knew me well; but this did not happen in high school circumstances. I felt I was neglected and no teachers took interest in me. I felt the senior high school situation was worse. It was obligatory for students to greet teachers in the first place whenever they met the teachers; however, most teachers, especially those who did not teach me, gave less enthusiastic responses. It seemed teachers placed a distance from the students. Unlike teachers in my primary school, high school teachers never asked about the students' personal matters. Yes there was a students' counsellor to deal with students' personal matters, and during my school years I only met her once.

I was surprised when I met my classmate in a reunion event for the first time after more than 25 years apart when he approached me and with his joker face he told me, "Mr. A was looking for you." My face was the colour of a radish as I remembered one day, after morning break, Mr. A stood in front of the class calling my name as one of the students who had not paid the school's tuition fee. I remembered him with his smiling face and curly hair, as one of the school's administrators. This special tuition fee was 900 rupiahs, which should be paid once a year. I heard he called me but I had no courage to lift my face up; I pretended to be writing on my book while my two eyes got warm with lots of water pushing to fall down. I was embarrassed in front of my classmates even though I was not alone. I had kept these special dues to myself for about nine months. I had no courage to ask for more money from my mom. I felt sorry

for myself why I did not inform my mom in the first place. I imagined how I was going to talk to my mom to ask for that amount of money. Where could she get the money from? How many kilograms of rice would she need to sell, or could she find a loan from her friends? Since that event I tended to withdraw from my classmates' social activities. The finances were always a main issue in my family and my parents shouldn't give up their rice fields to pay for their children's education. It was common in my village that parents sold their properties for their children's education. It was uncommon for students to have a job and the society as well as the government did not provide the facilities.

During high school, I also met lots of friends with diverse family and economic backgrounds. Looking at their clothes, I could see that almost all of my friends originated from better off families, they were neatly dressed. When I observed my girl friends' dresses I remembered my beautiful guests. When I was in grade four, there were four beautiful university students from one of the private universities who stayed in my house for about six months to study community development as part of their university curriculum. This was the first time my village became a place for university students conducting their practical work. One evening, after having a bath, I accompanied them to visit the mosque, one house away from my house. They had a talk in front of the mosque surrounded by my village friends. They were amazed, like me, to see a girl wearing pants. It was unusual in my community. It was against their beliefs; pants were only for men. Women were not allowed to wear things resembling manhood. They were all pretty and had modern, good looking, clothes. The one who had long black hair and tapering eyelashes was the best. She made me comfortable to talk to her; she spent time to play and talk to me. One evening we both sat in the dining room while I worked on my homework. She told me that she was studying about farming. At that time I was surprised why she, who was a city girl coming from a wealthy family wanted to learn about farming. It was contrary to my goal; I wanted to be free from being a farmer. I did not continue my curiosity but I listened to her story. She explained to me that in order to be admitted to a university I had to go to junior and senior high school. But if I was interested in finding a job after senior high school I had to go to vocational school.

I adored these four guests, not only did they answer part of my curiosity about post-secondary education including the school for flight attendants but also they showed

their kindness toward my family as villagers. They were smart and pretty but they were humble. I would like to be like them and I often imagined wearing dresses as beautiful and neat as theirs. So when my classmates wore those kinds of dresses, I was so envious and it often made me feel inferior. I had to save my bus money, which meant that I had to go to school on foot in order to buy girl's necessities. When they talked about the shoes they wore and bags they carried, I had nothing to say. But it reminded me of when my father scolded me in a shoe shop where I would have liked to have sandals similar to one of my friends'. I was so disappointed my brother told me that we didn't have enough money to buy two pairs of shoes. I had no courage to build an acquaintance with those sophisticated friends. I was afraid they would refuse my request that they would be ashamed to be friends with me. Moreover, I was a village girl, which made me more vulnerable. However, I was fortunate as a member of the school scout team as I had the chance to develop close friendships with some of the sophisticated people. We often visited each other's houses. My parents preferred that my friends visited my house. At the first visit, when we were about to find bamboos for camping, I was scared that they would mock my village and my house. As usual, my mother prepared a very simple but healthy meal which one of my senior high school friends made a joke about: "When you go to Isti's house you will be served fried 'tempe' and tofu," which made me embarrassed. Both dishes were ordinary people's food. These were always available every day as the only protein sources for our family.

When the time came to visit my friends' houses — they mostly resided not far from my school — I often was faced with things which were different from my daily life experiences at home. The furniture and house appliances were different as well as the drink and food they served. One afternoon after school, I was in a group that visited our friend; her house was only one block from the school. We sat together on wooden-rattan chairs facing each other and I sat facing the way to go inside the house so I could see a big dining table set. It was a hot day and we were all tired after a long day. My friend, the owner, held a tray where there were five shot glasses on it filled up with cold water as I could see moisture on the outer part of the glass. This was the first time I was served with this type of drink. When I held the glass, it was cold and I thought it was only water which made me wonder why she did not serve tea as I was not used to drinking water. However, when I sipped it I was so surprised that it was not plain water but it was

sweet with a distinct aroma and very refreshing. Without any further thought I asked what kind of drink we had. All my friends smiled and I could see from their faces that they were used to having that kind of drink. It was an embarrassing moment. As this event was so engraved in my mind, I now own similar glasses for my guests. Another day I visited my other friend's house. As we had just come back from school, we directly went to the dining room. The table was already set nicely. Appliances on the table were dominated by a white colour. Four big plates were placed face down accompanied by a spoon on the right and a fork on the left. When I opened the plate, I thought it was too big for me. My first thought was that I ate with the wrong plate because I usually used similar plates for serving snacks. These are some of the city and noble people's cultures which frequently made me felt awkward.

The amazing part about my father was he never asked me about my academic achievement; I think he knows my academic capabilities and my interest, but he always asked me what I learned from going out with my school friends, for example, visiting my friends' houses. The fact is that the higher the age of a village girl, the greater her responsibilities and when I was in high school, my older sister had been married and my older brother lived with her so I was the oldest with two younger sisters and one younger brother. Not only did I have the responsibly of the cleanliness of the house but also I had more tasks in the kitchen so that I had flexibilities to exercise my new knowledge. In order to please my father, I changed the way I did things in the house which I adopted from my friends, and my parents seemed to be pleased with my job. When I told him that I saw a beautiful embroidered table cloth in my friend's house, he sewed a piece of square light-brown cloth and asked me to embroider it at each corner of the cloth. The way my father treated me actually was his way of encouraging me but from my side it also reduced my feelings of inferiority.

4.8. Classroom Science Teaching

During my school years, science was delivered in what MacKinnon (1989a) considered as a traditional way, where teachers mostly stood up in front of the class, explained and elaborated on theories and concepts of natural phenomenon in one direction: from teachers to students. In addition to classroom lessons composed of

lecturing and demonstration, science teaching was also conducted in laboratories to provide students with hands-on, practical experiences. The teacher's role was very dominant, as teachers were considered to be the source of knowledge. I held the perception that teachers knew all the information needed by students to succeed. This perception brought about my habit of listening and taking notes on the teachers' explanations and the teachers' writing on the blackboard. While the teachers were explaining concepts, they sometimes wrote words or sentences on the board and I viewed those as the most important concepts. I was busy with my notes rather than making sense and understanding the teachers' explanations. I noted down everything on the board, while trying to understand and memorise. I was keen on this approach because my notes would summarize the important points of the theories and concepts that would be asked in quizzes and exams. I often lagged behind in taking notes so I needed my friends to lend me their notebooks.

Notes were very precious; I preferred to read my notes rather than the textbook. In the early mornings I read my notes, memorised them, and stacked the concepts and theories in my mind. Closing my eyes I would make a picture of what I read as much as I could. Sometimes I read aloud to help me stay awake and remember, especially when I prepared for quizzes and exams. For special circumstances, I studied together with friends; I slept over at their homes and vice versa. We read our own notes and then quizzed each other. It helped as encouragement and it helped us to memorize the content.

In Indonesian schools the teachers move to designated classes while the students wait in the classroom. The noticeable sound of footsteps in the hallway stopped me from chatting with my friends. My biology teacher would walk down to my classroom holding the attendance book and the biology textbook in her left hand and several pieces of chalk in her right hand. This one day she also held a big roll of paper in her left hand. Her right fingers were full of the white chalk and she had to drop the books on the table to avoid making dirty marks on them. It seemed that she was furious. Her face indicated she had a full day of teaching; it was the last session in my class. The ritual started with her gazing at each corner of the class, noticing who was missing and noting in the attendance book the names of the absent students.

I put my textbook and notebook on my desk as soon as my teacher entered the class; not one of us dared to make sound. Then she opened the textbook while she said, "Last week we talked about ... and today we are going to talk about ...". She then wrote the topic on the board. She then said, "We are going to talk about the human circulatory system." It was a standard procedure that before conducting instruction the teachers deliberated the topic and the objectives of the instruction and she never missed a chance to write on the board. She asked two of my tall friends to pin the diagrammatic picture of the human circulatory system on the board. The diagram represented the human circulatory system and consisted of a heart, with 4 chambers, at the middle between two lungs, with red and blue blood vessels. She started by explaining the two blood circulatory systems with the heart as the main part, functioning as the pump. The first system brought oxygenated blood from the left ventricle of the heart to the rest of the body and back to the right atrium of the heart, while the second system brought deoxygenated blood from the right ventricle to the lung and came back to the left atrium of the heart. She then explained that the heart contracted in order for the blood to flow through the vessels.

The two-dimensional teaching media, used by my teacher, helped me in mapping the big picture of the human blood circulatory system in my mind; however, it could not help me in understanding how the heart worked. My understanding at that time was that each chamber of the heart contracted at different times; the left ventricle pumped the blood to the rest of the body and contracted at different times from the right ventricle to pump the blood to the lungs. This misunderstanding persisted until I took a Human Anatomy course in college. A model of a heart and my lecturer's explanation changed my understanding. My misunderstanding was initiated by my teacher's explanation on the two circulatory systems. I differentiated between the two as different systems so I concluded that each system was independent. There was a possibility that my teacher explained but I did not make the connection; I had already developed my understanding.

Another experience related to language in teaching that influenced my perception in this subject was when my teacher used the phrase "human circulatory system." I felt that I learned about the circulatory system generally, as though it had to do with what was inside someone else's body. I was learning about someone's body, but in fact I

learned something about what is inside my own body. I think it would have been more motivating and interesting if the phrase my teacher used was “our circulatory system” and then followed with encouragement to learn about our bodies.

These two incidences indicated different perceptions in the use of language between my teacher and me. I grasped the literal meaning of my teacher’s language; I developed my understanding of the “two types of circulatory systems” as two separate systems, there was no connection between them. As well I grappled with the word “human” not including myself; I did not extend my thoughts that I was also a human being. These experiences of having a misunderstanding and incomplete understanding made me more cautious when I taught the same subject. I prepared a diagram, which was almost the same diagram used when I was in high school and I explained very carefully and I used my hands as a model of a heart to represent how the heart beats. In current situations the teachers will not face difficulties in teaching about the circulatory system since there are models and three-dimensional diagrams which help students understand the phenomena. Moreover, we can obtain video records on how our heart pumps and sucks blood to and from our body.

My school provided a Biology laboratory room that was used by the entire school. Again, this is unlike Canada where each biology teacher usually has their own classroom, which functions also as a laboratory. I conducted laboratory work in order to provide hands-on experiences for the students; however, this practice started in the first year of my senior high school. These laboratory experiences were intended for the most part to verify the theories and concepts in the textbook. The teachers provided worksheets that mainly covered the objectives, procedures, and sections to write the findings and conclusion of the laboratory exercises. The students’ comprehension of the objectives and procedures would determine whether they were allowed to conduct laboratory investigations. I had to memorise the objectives and procedures of the assigned laboratory work beforehand, as my teacher would quiz each student on entering the laboratory. It was a great strategy in the sense that it helped me to be confident in conducting laboratory work and I would not wander about aimlessly in the room. However, the teachers’ questions were based on what was written on the worksheet. I could hardly remember my teacher’s questions, which were off of the

worksheet, such as my predictions or expectations toward the assigned work or my own way of conducting the work. So before entering the laboratory room, I already had in mind my expected experiences.

To prepare a laboratory work, sometimes the students needed to bring materials from home. One day when I learned about vertebrates, I (my group) was assigned to bring a lizard. Another day, when the topic was Bryophytes, I had to bring a kind of moss. In the laboratory, I recalled the procedures and then conducted the activities based on them. When I observed phenomena of the object, I matched what I perceived with my understanding of the phenomena. Since I had my predisposition of what I had to look for and the expected result of my observation and experiments, I had no encouragement to search other phenomena. When I succeeded in matching the expected phenomena and the real phenomena, I felt a sense of accomplishment. When I found unexpected phenomena I would consider them to be the result of incorrect procedures or faulty observation. I tried hard to match them. In other words, the function of conducting laboratory work was to verify the phenomena and conceptions already in my mind in order to strengthen my understanding. Conducting laboratory work trained my mind and disposition to follow procedures and to find what I was expected to find.

While conducting observations and experiments, I recorded my perceived phenomena, which actually I had predicted before; sometimes these matched but occasionally they did not match. One day I was conducting an experiment to validate that photosynthesis produced oxygen. For this experiment I agreed to bring a bunch of submerged plants, Hydrilla, which I picked from a pond in my village. On the day of experiment I checked the equipment that had been prepared for the laboratory, such as a 1000 ml beaker glass, a big funnel, a test tube, a ring stand, and a test tube clamp. As usual I followed the procedure: I poured water into two thirds of the beaker, arranged the Hydrilla in the water, put in the funnel inverted so that it covered the plants, and put the test tube above the tip of the funnel. Finally, I clamped the test tube and attached it to the ring stand. The apparatus was placed under the sun. I perceived that several bubbles came out from the plant and I assumed (according to the theory) they were bubbles of oxygen. After a considerable amount of time, I think half an hour, I pulled the test tube and covered it with my thumb, while my friend lit a match, blew it, and put the

ambers into the test tube. We found that the ambers faded which were supposed to glow because theoretically amber will glow if oxygenated. I was amazed and I felt that my experiment failed. We finished our experiment without any explanation as to the cause of the failure to produce the glowing amber. This experiment left an unanswered question.

The unanswered question remained unsolved until I conducted similar experiments when I was in Teachers' College. I had the opportunities to conduct similar experiments several times so that I was eventually able to make the glowing splinter light again, proving the presence of oxygen. Moreover, I found the reasons that caused that experiment to fail, such as the amount of Hydrilla, the amount of time under the sun, as well as the tricky part of pulling the test tube and preventing outside air from entering the tube. In later years when my students conducted similar experiments, I had the answer when my students faced the same experience. I also added precautions in the procedures to minimize the possibility for this experiment failing.

My teacher's role in the laboratory was to act as a manager and supervisor. She ascertained that each group was provided with materials and equipment needed and every student conducted her/his tasks correctly. She walked round the room approached and observed students at work on their tasks, asking questions to test the students' understanding, as well as answering students' questions about the procedures. She would sometimes stop the whole class as a group to give an explanation, if she perceived that the group did not correctly conduct the activity. Conversation between the students and teachers related to the reassurance of the procedures and concepts being taught; I hardly heard a conversation that triggered further thought. I hardly heard my teacher asked me, "Why" or, "What if" questions; rather, she would directly explain and corrected my "improper" understanding.

After conducting observations or experiments, the students wrote a lab report. In general, I wrote what I perceived from my observations or experiments when they were in line with the expected results; however, in some cases I wrote what I was expected to write. There was no room to be a deviant; different results were considered as being wrong, whether I made mistakes in conducting observation or experiments, missed

following the procedures, or possessed the wrong perceptions. There was no space to explain the reasons to have different results. If I wrote different results the teachers would not give me the maximum score. There were limited facilities that encouraged students to inquire or investigate phenomena. This was compounded with the evaluation systems; for the laboratory assessments the students were asked to recall the procedures and expected results of experiments or observations. In this sense, the one purpose of learning science, which is learning the scientific methods, was not accomplished.

4.9. Reflection

Writing about my school life gave rise to my awareness on how I have been educated by my parents, teachers, and community, which shaped my way of thinking, my attitude, and my disposition. My parents' role in facilitating and motivating my learning to make it happen was invaluable. Their low education and their economic conditions motivated them to raise their children to achieve better lives through education. They believed that education improves our social and economic status, which I later proved. My parents were farmers and all of their children were educated. Both my father and my mother exposed me unintentionally and deliberately to events or objects that triggered my curiosity and brought about learning. They trained me to sharpen my eyes, ears, and my body to learn from my surroundings. The lived stories they told are so engraved in my mind that I idolized national heroes and prominent persons. I admired national heroes for their commitment and persistence to achieve Indonesian independence while I adored prominent persons as exemplars of successful people.

Living in a conformed culture where shared belief among people in the community was strongly held, I had no other choice except to dive in it. My thoughts and actions should reflect the community's values and beliefs so it trained me to think of other's point of views and interests before my own. Like other living organisms, their lives were influenced by their environment, and I constructed and reconstructed my way of being in response to my environmental condition. High community expectations and demands towards its members, on one hand hampered my wings to fly, but on the other hand motivated me to achieve it. This habitual attitude to fulfil external demands brought

about the feeling of personal fulfillment that thrived inside of my body and penetrated into my conscience. Learning my mother tongue language, Javanese, which is considered as one of the structured languages, contributed also in shaping my personal disposition. On the one hand, I am a humble person when I am among elders or prominent persons, on the other hand I can be an aristocratic person when my ego emerges.

My circumstances prompted me to use my visual, auditory, olfactory, and gustatory senses because in everyday life I was faced with dealing with concrete situations and problem-solving activities. I learned about how my parents, family, communities, and schools provided knowledge, skills, as well as formed my disposition for my future life. My environment facilitates and nurtures like seeds inside of me to cultivate and still in the process of growing.

I thought aloud to understand the reasons I easily learn some things but have difficulty to learn other things. I learn faster through hands-on activities that especially invoke my mind to develop representation, build patterns, and map the knowledge in my mind. Goodall, Jr. (2008) answers my curiosity as he asserts that:

We learn to see things in one way and not another because we are born, reared, and acculturated in a particular way and not the other. How we learn to see and interpret the world is therefore a product of where we come from and who we are (loc 352).

This is in line with the constructivism view of learning where individuals construct their own knowledge from the experience they encountered.

Chapter 5.

My Life as a Teacher and as a Mother

Bjork (2005) observed that teachers in public school focused on educating rather than teaching their students by concentrating on their attitudes and deeds. In my experiences, the two schools' circumstances forced me to educate students rather than to teach them. My moral obligation in helping students to become “good” students was stronger than helping them to attain their academic achievement. I made two assumptions: first, that the parents had no time to talk to their children because of their work to make ends meet, and, second, that my students did not heed their parents' expectations. So I encouraged the students to regularly attend their classes, be responsible in their duties as students, and participate positively in student activities because I believed these would be beneficial for their personal lives. I often considered the village students' struggles to be educated; some had to walk to school for kilometres. I tried to help them to realise the support they received from their families. I was satisfied when my students complied with the school's rules and they were responsible for their actions. At that time I have never thought that my approach to disciplining my students might hinder their creativity. I was paralyzed with fear at that time, as it seemed that there was little support for me as a teacher.

Bjork (2005) illustrates the lives of teachers in Indonesian schools where teachers were more concerned with the social life among the teachers. I then remembered when I sat among the teachers in the staffroom that our talks related more to our personal lives rather than our teaching experiences. We shared our family background and activities, our social activities in the community, and we shared jokes. We built a shared school culture where the staffroom was the place we learned from each other's life stories and a place for teachers to get refreshed after a long day of teaching. We developed more personal rather than professional relations within the

school. We supported each other for our personal well-being. In a special case we talked about the students, especially the students who needed special attention. Each of us shared our approach in dealing with these students. As I was a new comer, I learnt from their practical knowledge of teaching (Schön, 1983, 1987) and I was inclined to approach the problems with my nurtured instinct. We discussed students' academic achievements at the end of the semester after the semester exam and at the time when class guardians needed to write students' report books.

The following stories are stories about my life as a teacher and as a mother as separate entities. I was curious about myself when I had to confront my students, I made sense of decisions I took as my reflection in-action and reflection on-action (Schön, 1983, 1987). I was curious about reasons for actions I took when I was confronted with unexpected events. I start with storying my experiences in handling the fear as a newcomer in the teaching profession, followed by my experience in handling a student problem, and my experience in teaching science, and stories of my relation with my children.

5.1. Being Stern to Hide the Fear

A year before starting to teach, my senior had persuaded me to help her to teach because she was striving to finish her study. Lack of knowledge and skills to teach were the main reasons for me to decline the offer. My best friend, instead, accepted the offer. This best friend in turn offered me a teaching position at a new private senior high school the year after. She reassured me that she benefited from her teaching experiences since her courage to teach grew as she developed rapport with her students. Being equipped with subject knowledge, teaching theories, and the skills gained during my three years of education in a knowledge-based (Shulman, 1997) and technical rationality approach (Schön, 1983, 1987) to teacher education, I motivated myself to teach in a real teaching situation. I started to gain my confidence with the subject knowledge, teaching methods, and teaching practices during my teacher education program that helped to prepare me to teach. I imagined I applied pedagogical content knowledge and teaching skills theories to the real classroom situation in transferring my subject knowledge understanding to the students. However, fear of being an incompetent teacher haunted

me because I have never really stood in front of the classroom without any supervisor teacher, but my friend's encouragements to have experiential learning to teach inspired me.

Since I accepted the offer for three-hour long sessions a week for a grade 10, I started to find as much information as possible about students' characteristics, teaching strategies, and school cultures from practice situations. My experiences as a student as well as my personal experiences as an elder sister of three younger siblings would become a source of knowledge to be applied in my teaching. There were several aspects of teaching that needed to be taken into account, but the students' characteristics were my main concern. I was very anxious because I came from a farmer's family, raised and educated in a village so that there would be cultural gaps between my prospective students—metropolitan high school students—with me. I asked my friend to tell me her teaching experiences, especially dealing with metropolitan students, her instruction, and her interaction with her colleagues. For her, it was easy to adapt to the school environment because she was born, raised, and educated in this metropolitan city; moreover, her mother was a teacher. Nevertheless, she also faced challenging experiences dealing with students. With her daring voice she told me how she tackled her students' behaviors. She solved students' problems with her approach which I thought was based on her experiences. While I was listening to her story, I imagined my approach to confront the same problem; I would deal with it differently from her. Not only were her stories inspiring and motivating for me but also my seniors' stories inspired me. I attentively listened to their teaching stories to help me exercise my imagined approaches. In order to have more thorough teaching preparation, I visited the school. It was a school break time so the classrooms were locked but I could sneak through the glass windows to observe the classrooms' conditions. My first impression of the classroom was dull; tables, chairs, and the blackboard looked unmaintained. I jumped to the conclusion that this school was one among the poor schools in a city. Based on my friend's stories, school conditions, and my heroic courage to teach, I imagined my future classrooms as well as my approach to teaching and dealing with students.

I remember the first day teaching. It was a hot humid day. Tiredness from being in the cramped bus and walking through an uneven narrow street washed away when I was greeted by my colleagues in a very simple staffroom. I was expected to have a cup of hot sweet tea to re-energize, but it was unrealistic. This small staffroom was equipped with a big naked wooden table and six or eight wooden chairs and a cupboard at the corner. There was no glass, water jar, or kettle as I found at the practicing school. If I needed a cup of hot tea, I had to bring it from home because there was also no cafeteria. All of the six teachers stood up and showed their smiles with warm welcome and relieved faces, and the man in a blue shirt pulled out a chair and asked me to sit.

While shaking hands with my colleagues, one by one, I mentioned my name. Then I took a seat next to a middle aged woman who then became my best friend in the school. I was surprised that there was no principal or someone on behalf of the school's administrator to formally welcome me as one of the school's teachers. As a matter of course every first meeting we introduced each other and it was common that we introduced our family and academic backgrounds. It was time to exercise my mother's counsel, "Respect the elders and be kind to those younger." I had anticipated that someone would familiarize me to the school's culture and introduce me to the school's expectations, as well as the teacher's responsibilities, obligation, and rights. Based on my conversation in that school staffroom, I jumped to the conclusion that it seemed there was a common understanding that anybody who was ready to stand up in front of the classroom knew the task and her/his responsibilities. Until I stopped teaching at this school, after three consecutive years of teaching, I had never been informed about this school's visions and missions so that I taught according to my own judgment. In my later life, I then understood the reasons for the school not having strict requirements for its teachers — this school could not satisfy the needed teachers' salaries. My monthly salary could not cover my transport expenses.

"Good afternoon, mom," shouted students in discordant voices, mostly boys, while I was entering the classroom. This was a ritual greeting when teachers entered classrooms as well as a warning sign for misbehaving students indicating that a teacher was entering the class and so to stop doing mischievous acts. Even though they have been taught to be obedient students, to respect teachers, and to follow the school's rules

for more than 9 years, they were still teenagers. Hearing my students' greetings, my prejudice started to spin around in my mind and I jumped to the conclusion that some students greeted with respect, some with indolence, and others with teasing, as I expected that all students would greet me with respect as I used to do to my teachers. I tried to map out where those voices came from; from the front, middle, back, left, or right sides. "Good afternoon," I replied while I put my books on the teacher's table and my bag on the chair beside it. Students started to sit in their chairs, stopped moving, and calmed down. With a short gaze I found some weak and unenthusiastic students' faces. I remembered my friend's stories about her students' behavior and how she dealt with drunk and drug addicted students in her classroom. My anxiety of facing the same problem as my friend increased as I took more closely to the students one by one. I also remembered my colleagues warning about the students' behaviors. I noticed the girls sat in the front row which expressed their concern probably because they noticed my tense face. Seemed they gave me a sign of "Don't bother them" as a sign of supporting me, but seeing their concern made me embarrassed. I thought these girls were worried that I could not handle their friends. Even though the students' expressions and my fear of making mistakes raised my uneasiness, I had to act decently as a teacher, the ruler of the classroom.

My first goal for the day was to build rapport with the students through first of all knowing the students' names correctly and introducing myself. I recalled how my high school teacher acted her first day in the classroom and then I mimicked her. I stood and leaned on the teacher table to support my body, faced my students while my left hand held firmly to the attendance book and my right hand gripped a pencil. I called the students' names in a pace with my heavy and loud voice and the bearer replied with raising—ethically—their right hand and saying, "present." I called the names so slowly so that it gave me an interval to observe and grasp each student's face and voice. I was terrible in remembering names so I did not want to miss a chance to learn them. I strived to match each name, its face, and its voice to help me remember each of them. After calling the students' names, I wrote my name on the board and read it properly because I bear an Arabic name which some have difficulties in reading. I also wrote my home address, which I thought not every teacher would be willing to do. It was my intention to

demonstrate that I welcome them and I trust them with the hope that soon we would build rapport.

The teaching topic that day was biodiversity, introducing organism systematics. With my teaching preparation, I was not as worried as I was about my psychological preparation. Besides writing the teaching plan, I also reviewed the related topic from the Biology student's book. I decided to employ a lecture approach considering the scope I had to cover, the time available, and the school's circumstances. At this night, my friend's stories about dealing with the students' behaviours preoccupied my mind since I anticipated that my school would have the same situation as hers, a private school in a part of a city area. I vividly remember my friend's suggestion, "Cultivate a good relationship with your students but keep a considerable distance because they may dance on your head." I simulated strategies in my head to cope with the students. I would make my students comfortable with me; I would make a reasonable distance with my students. When I remember these first teaching experiences, I imagine how boring my teaching was. For the biodiversity topic, I would have loved to have taken my students for outdoor activities such as to observe plants and animals or conduct field work similar to my field work during my study in college, but at that time it was unrealistic. The first consideration was the school's environment which did not support the activity because the school was located in a densely populated area. Economically, it was unrealistic to take students to the park where I went for my field study because we would have needed transportation. My students came from lower income families which later I knew their parents were manual workers or street paddlers. This was also the reason they go to this low fee school in spite of their previous academic achievement.

I mostly stood in front of the class close to the board while I was lecturing. When I started writing on the board, I felt very nervous since I was aware that my handwriting was the worst among my friends and my height could only reach half of the board. While I was facing the board, I opened my ears and sharpened my hearing to find any whisper or giggle from the students commenting on my writing. When I turned back and faced the students, I saw a student looking at her friend's notes beside her. I walked to her desk and from a distance I read my writing. I could read my writing but it was not so clear because of the worn out board. It was not black anymore but a white, which was

caused by the stubborn white dust that cannot be cleaned. To reaffirm my writing's clarity, I went to the back rows and I sneaked a peek at my students' notes and asked whether they had difficulties in reading my writing. I did not expect the students' to respond to this kind of question because they were trained to be docile students, not to criticise their teacher and to accept the existing condition. They would not ask their teacher but preferred to ask their friends, so I decided to reiterate my story based on my writing on the board.

Standing in front of my students and thinking about almost fifty eyes glaring on my appearance made me become awkward. Even though I dressed up as neat as I could with a flowery short sleeve blouse and plain orange skirt with shiny black high heel, I felt something was not right. I was afraid that the students found peculiar things which I did not notice as I remember how my high school friends and I talked about our teacher's dress when we saw a dangling thread on her skirt. I was vigilant to my students' facial expressions which indicated any problem on my appearances. One day the girls bowed their heads with small smiles and showed they were busy writing which I interpreted as a sign of something wrong with me. It was a long day and I had to write on the board frequently, so I had to clean it several times. When I cleaned the board, it produced a lot of dust that made my hands full of white dust. Actually, masks were needed for the teachers when they taught to protect the respiratory system, but it was unrealistic to wear a mask when teaching. Until I bowed my head down was it then that I understood the reason why the girls held their smiles. The right side of my skirt was full of white spots. I seemed to have unconsciously rubbed my right hand on my skirt. In a reflexive action, I flicked the skirt several times but that made it worse and finally I asked my students' permission to go out of the class. I was so embarrassed that I could not control my hands.

While I was lecturing, I often walked along the two aisles circling the room, observing my students' notes. I was keen on standing at the back of the class so that I could see my students' activities and it kept them always facing their heads to the board. My strategy of circling the room was not only to keep the students' time-on-task but also to exercise my power. Randomly, I checked my students' notes and asked questions. My concern was their obedience and attention toward my teaching, if they were listening

to my story as my strategy of transferring knowledge. I was the centre of my students' attention. I did not pay interest to my students' thoughts and feelings. I did not know whether they were intimidated or enjoyed my teaching. I made sure that I delivered all my knowledge as I prepared and accomplished my mission. As a new timer I had no courage to discuss the teaching topic or invite students' questions as I was afraid of being an incompetent teacher; I was afraid that I could not answer the students' questions.

When I needed to write on the board, I wrote as quickly as I could so that I had as much time as I could to make eye contact with the students. I remembered how I hated my teacher who wrote on the board so long that I could only see his back while he was explaining concepts. I had thought he talked to the board not to the students, which became popular among the students. I tried hard to observe the students by gazing at each student's eyes in order to keep them focused and not disturb my teaching. When I scanned around at the students, some of them kept bowing their heads as if they were writing and some of them stared at me like baby birds ready to catch food from their mother's beak.

When I was lecturing, I was terrified as if I had the wrong understanding of the concepts so that I delivered mistaken concepts since teachers were believed to be the major source of knowledge and they never got it wrong. I tried to remember the concepts in the resource book while teaching to the students and I often opened the resource book to have assurance. I tried to talk as clearly as possible and control my intonation in order to make a distinction between the important and the supporting concepts as well as to have a way to attract the students' attention as theories told me. When I saw a frowning face I asked the student whether there was something unclear to her/him. Always without any question, students were afraid or ashamed to ask questions so that they kept silent.

I remember how tired I was after school. My legs were stiff as I stood up with high heels for more than an hour, my throat was dry, and my neck was so tense. I looked at the attendance book, read names, and tried to remember their faces and I stuck on one name. A boy. He sat alone at the back and kept his face down and played

with his pencil with his left hand. He was tall and skinny with a gaunt and tapered face, dark lips, and curly black hair. Remembering his face and posture triggered me to remember one my high school friends. He was a new student when I was at grade 11, transferred from a big city and I heard the rumour that he was expelled from his previous school because he had a drug related problem. That night, I figured out that there was a possibility that my special boy had the same issue as my friend. I was interested to find out more about him. My reflective conversations (Schön, 1983, 1987) about him brought about my fuller understanding of the boy. Sometimes, I talked to him in a break session or I conversed with his friends to know more about him. Not until the end of the first year did I find out that my assumption was quite right and I was fortunate that he trusted me and we developed a good relationship. Moreover, he was the only student who dared to let me know his impression of my teaching performance. He used to be afraid of me because I was a strict and demanding teacher.

5.2. Keeping Students' Good Attitudes towards Education

This special boy attracted my attention the first time I met him coupled with when I knew that he wanted to deflate my friend's motorbike tire. He was really my special student. He wore his shirt out against the regulations and whenever I asked him to fix it he just flipped his shirt to camouflage. He often let his curly hair dangle covering his eyes. The first time I was appointed to write students' report books, I was amazed to find that my special student was born the same year as me; it means he was three years left behind. That fact answered my puzzlement about his attitude towards me. He never made eye contact with me. I appreciated him since he had the courage to attend regular school.

After one year I taught him, when he was at grade 11 he started to lose his focus and his academic performance declined. Whenever I was in his classroom he often made trouble, such as throwing balled up paper to the girls when I wrote on the board or provoking unnecessary jokes which ended with students' bursts of laughter. Moreover, he had a distinct smell; the smell of a person having not taken a bath for weeks. I remembered my friend's utterance when she told me that one characteristic of a drug addicted person was avoiding water. It was a dilemma for me at that time. I could not

stand the smell so I would try to avoid him or did not want to approach him but I did not want him to feel bad that I neglected him. When I stood beside him, I deliberately inhaled the smell so that my smell senses became numb and I would not smell him anymore. I tried so hard to understand him but he continued to challenge my nerves. I suppressed my emotion every time I found him being mischievous. Since I knew his age, I deliberately treated him differently. I never talked to him in a raised voice in front of his peers because I wanted to avoid embarrassing him. I placed myself in his shoes; I would have been humiliated if I had been scolded in front of my friends. Everybody in the class admired him as the oldest student in the class so they never complained about his attitude.

At one point I could not tolerate his behaviour anymore, his rebellious nature was remarkable. I persuaded him to work out his assignments every time he missed it, but for more than five times he neglected to do it. My thoughts then turned to remembering my friend's counsel, but again, I could not reprimand him in the classroom. I was so furious when with his raised voice he told me that he did not want to work on his assignments. I felt I had been ignored. On the other hand, I felt sorry for him and I could not understand why he wasted his time and his parent's money. Why did he not appreciate his parents? I would have liked to have thrown him out of the class. I wished there was a counsellor in the school so that I did not need to deal with this problem. In a second, it flashed in my mind, "How about talking to him privately?"

Then I thought about the place to talk since the staffroom was not a conducive place for conversing with him. Students who were called in the staffroom were there for misbehaving. Finally, I decided to take him home. At the end of my teaching session, I walked next to him and ordered him to go with me after school. He was surprised and asked me the reason but I left him wondering. This was the first experience dealing seriously with a student. After I waited for more than an hour, I looked for him and we walked down to the bus stop. I walked consciously with fear of his behaviour. I thought he could harm me. At that time was the time when lots of students' fight. A students' gang from a school attacked another school's gang so that some students equipped themselves with knives or scissors in their bags for their protection. My belief that my strategy was for the betterment of the student motivated me to continue my plan and

cleared up my fears. It was very awkward and tense standing on a crowded bus and keeping to our own thoughts, no talking.

We later sat in the living room and I opened up the conversation by asking him, "Should I scold you for when you were annoying me in the class?" He kept quiet with his face down. And then I continued to ask, "Why did you do that to me?" Then he started to hold his breath and he asked the same question, "Why did you do that to me?" I was surprised to hear his question back. I did not understand and I did not remember what I did wrong to him. Then he said, "You know you gave a very bad score on me for this semester's report book. You cannot do that. After you gave me a good mark a semester before, then you give me a very bad mark. I was disappointed." I was surprised to find out this fact; I have never thought about it before. As a newcomer, a novice teacher, I worked based on the data at hand without any further thought. I did not have any guilty feelings at that time because his score was based on his quizzes and assignments' results. I remember that he performed well a semester before but I explained to him that I never made scores up; it was based on his performance and I insisted that whenever he performed well I would give him good marks.

He deliberately could not accept my explanation; he argued that the score difference between the two consecutive semesters was impossibly high. I then realised that when I wrote the students' scores for their report books I did not look at their previous report. Nobody had told me about it. It was three points difference and the latest report book was written in a red pen, which means it did not meet the minimal requirement. I could sense his latent outrage; I sensed he wanted me to change his score but I could not and I would never. I told him that I had to be fair with all of the students in relation to assessment results. We had an extensive conversation that evening to make sure that I did not treat him unfairly and he trusted me. I encouraged him, followed my teacher's suggestion, pointed out the importance of education, and I placed myself in his shoes knowing that my parents worked so hard for my education so I assured him how his parents supported him for his study. It was really uneasy for me to teach a student the same age until I asserted my position and I trusted him as a mature student. To end the conversation I exercised my authority as his teacher -- I warned him that I did not like him to misbehave unnecessarily in the classroom and if I found out, I

would treat him the same as his friends. It was my memorable moment with my special student. I was relieved when the week after and since the first time I met him, he looked better and I heard that he attended class regularly. After he graduated from the school he disappeared, but about two years later he sent me postcards depicting where he was and informing me that he liked his work.

After graduation for my teacher education, I taught at another school. It was a new public senior high school with the students' socio-economic backgrounds similar to the students from the other school. Students from this school were mostly the children of traditional fisherman families that lived in littoral areas. In the first month of my teaching, I met some students who behaved similar to the students of the other school. I sometimes smelled alcohol and had to be faced with drunken students. The first horrendous experience was when a student called my name followed by another student calling out a bad word, a slang word for a bad girl, which was followed by the students' applause. It was a hot day when all the students were chatting in front of their classroom during their recess time and I walked through the lawn about to leave the school. The voice was so loud that I heard it clearly from about 50 metres. That was a boy's voice. I felt insulted and it heated up my face and head. I stopped my footsteps, with anger I turned my face and gazed at each cluster of students as well as observed which cluster exposed the most anxiety which I could predict the source of the voice.

If I did not have another appointment, I would have approached the student and dragged him to the staffroom. I left the school with the hope that I would calm down at home. At night, I was not able to erase the voice from my ears. I decided to go to the school even though there was no class for me and I asked for special leave from the other school. Soon as I entered the staffroom, a teacher approached me and had me sit on a comfortable chair. He told me that he had conducted an investigation, found the name of the student, and called the student. He suggested for me to calm down and not to talk to the student. It did not surprise me when my friend told me that the student was in a drunken state yesterday. Even though I believed that he already talked to the student, I would have liked to talk to the student from a woman's point of view.

I did not need to wait for long to see a boy with his face down sitting in front of me. He was powerless. I felt sorry to see him but it could not help me to get rid of my emotions. I clenched my fist and took a deep breath while staring at him. My first interrogation question was, "Do you have a mother?" Since he nodded his head then I asked, "How do you respect your mother?" If he humiliated me as a woman, he might humiliate his mother also. I was interested in how he treated his mother because I thought teachers acted similar to parents at school, not only transferring knowledge to him but also to nurture him. He did not say a word. I bombarded him with lots of questions and my final question was, "How would you feel if somebody called your mother as you called me?" I did not expect him to answer my question and I left him to think. I let him go back to his classroom and before he left me I shook his hand as a peace assign and I whispered him "be a good boy".

Another experience, which put my father in tears when I told this story, was when I had to face ten drunken students in the class. I was a coordinate teacher for the Biology major class in grade 11. The Indonesian educational system directed students at grade 11 to choose their subject interest and at that time there were four majors, namely: Language, Social Sciences, Biology, and Physics. Before I met with the students, I assumed that they were considerate students as they already chosen the major they liked; however, it was not the case. One day when I entered the class, I found only half of my students were in the classroom. When I asked the students about the other students, they had no bravery to tell me, but when I guessed they were having fun, the students agreed with me. To make it easier for me to handle the late students, I asked all students in the classroom to sit on my right side and the left side, which was closest to the door, was left for the late students. While waiting for the late students, I conversed with the students in a friendly way to know more about their background while I was thinking of strategies to punish the late students. I remembered one of my junior high school teachers instructed my friend to write a full page on his promise as a punishment because of his attitude for neglecting homework. Before I finished talking to the students in the classroom the late students came so I rushed to the table next to the door.

One by one the late students entered the class and I let them sit at the empty chairs provided. While the students were entering the class, I observed the way they walked to assess the level of their consciousness by comparing their walk with the way a drunk man walked whom I met on the way home from my campus. From my quick assessment from their walk and their faces' colour, I decided to handle the problem by myself. I did not ask for any help from the other teachers. It seemed they were all conscious. I had to suppress my anger, the anger from being ignored by the students. I felt humiliated by them. I was a young teacher. My mind was hovering. I was frustrated but I had to face them and I did not deserve to be a loser. With my taut voice I asked one of the students the reason of their lateness; he explained that they played football in the rice field not far from the school. I moved my face to the student who sat behind him. "Do you agree with what he said?" I asked, thinking that my strident voice must be heard from the next classroom. He put his face down. I took a deep breath while I walked toward the teacher's table; I knew that it was a lie. I asked all the students with my low tone, "Does anyone know what smell is this?" No one responded to my rhetorical question even though I was sure that every student in the class was familiar with the smell. I did not want to spend considerable time dealing with this problem and then I asked the late students to take their notebooks out and write a full page on their personal reasons for being late as well as their promise not to be again and to hand it in at the end of the session. My aims for this punishment were both to know their reasons and their promise not to do it again, as well as to compare their special writing and their normal writing in a later time.

If I thought about this incident, I regretted what I did. I was an incapable teacher. I unjustly treated the punctual good students badly by paying more attention to the late students. Those good students did not deserve to be in a tense situation and have to listen to my loud and unpleasant voice. They deserved to be taught. I should have disposed of my assumptions about their attitudes so that I could avoid my anger. If there had been counseling services, I would not have needed to handle the troubled students and I could have continued to teach. I also regretted my actions of interrogating the late students in front of the behaving students; I embarrassed them.

5.3. Being a Biology Teacher

Indonesia, like other countries in the world, places science as an important subject being taught in school alongside mathematics and the Indonesian language. Science has a privileged position in the Indonesian curriculum for preparing future citizens. At an early age science is introduced to the students and science is taught as a separate subject since grade three. Indonesia follows international trends for science being taught during the compulsory education years and Indonesian compulsory education goes from grade 1 to grade 9. The science program in senior high school was considered to be the most prestigious; students of this program were known as being smart and diligent. Government policy supported this common view in which graduates from the high school science program were able to enter the social sciences and language programs in university or college, but not vice versa. Among professions, medicine and engineering are seen as being very honourable and respectful.

Indonesian government invests a lot of effort into improving science teaching in schools, such as upgrading teachers' qualifications and training in science teaching as well as providing funds and resources for conducting laboratory activities in school. As another means of improving science teaching, Indonesia participated in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, of which one of the purposes was to measure scientific knowledge and skills. This study compared Indonesian student achievements to other countries so Indonesian policy makers could develop strategies to improve the students' performance. The survey results from the years 2000, 2003, and 2006 indicated that 15-year-old Indonesian students' science knowledge and skills achievements were under average compared to students from other countries that participated in the survey

These very rough survey results can be treated as an indication of the low science achievement of Indonesian students. I believe there were numerous factors influencing the students' achievement; however, since I was a teacher I will focus my attention on teaching and learning processes, science teaching, what was happening in classrooms and how I taught. Since I was a biology teacher, my story will be about learning and teaching biology. However, before narrating my experiences I will discuss

how science is represented in the Indonesian curriculum. Finally, I will reflect on my experiences in making sense of teaching science.

At the time of writing this dissertation, the Indonesian Ministry of Education launched a new school curriculum, the 2013 National Curriculum to replace the 2006 Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP) or Educational Unit Level Curriculum. The former curriculum was viewed as unsuccessful in developing students' characters—demonstrated, among other things, by the presence of the students' intolerance toward Indonesian diversity as well as their delinquency. The introduction of this new curriculum was a response to external challenges such as globalisation and, in particular, the role of science, technology, and information in dealing with environmental problems and the world economic power shift. Above all, future generations should be prepared with not only *hard* skills but also *soft* skills such as communication skills, critical and conscious thinking skills, moral consideration, and tolerance in order to be successful in life. This new curriculum was designed to assist students in developing their talents and interests in facing their future lives, to improve their readiness for the workforce, to develop their intelligence based on their talents and interests, and to develop their sense of responsibility toward the environment (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2013a).

This new curriculum was considered as a refinement from the previous curriculum; however, there were several remarkable changes. The structure of the curriculum in primary school was changed to begin science and social science as separate subjects starting in grade 4, rather than in grade 3 as in the former curriculum. Teaching in primary school will be delivered using a thematic approach. Public comments and suggestions were considered as resources for revising the draft curriculum. In the 2013/2014 school year this new curriculum was implemented in pilot schools and some grades. Targets for this first year of implementation are grades 1, 4, 7, and 9 and will involve 6,325 schools from throughout Indonesia (Mendikbud, 2013b).

My career as a Biology teacher started during a national curriculum transition from the 1975 to the 1984 curriculum. The 1975 curriculum was oriented to specific educational goals from national level, institutional, curricular, general instructional

objectives and specific instructional objectives. Central government defined the national, institutional and curricular goals and teachers developed general and specific objectives. This curriculum was also marked by the introduction of *Prosedur Pengembangan Sistem Instruksional (PPSI)*, which literally means Development Procedure for Instructional System, where high school students studied modular systems. Each individual student had opportunities to exercise his/her academic capability to learn each module. Students with high academic ability completed each module faster and continued to the next module. This was a national project in several high schools affiliated with teacher education institutions. The 1984 curriculum emphasized student-centered, active learning, and a process approach. This was a contrary approach to the previous curriculum.

At the practical level during my three years of teaching, I could not differentiate between the first year of teaching with the old curriculum and the second and third years teaching with the later curriculum. I was aware of the innovation, but my teaching resources were the Biology students' textbooks provided by the government, developed according to the old curriculum. In the case of the Biology, the two curricula were quite similar. My teaching was also influenced by my experiences of being taught in the classroom because I started to teach only three years after high school graduation. Mostly, I lectured in front of the class mimicking the teachers I had in my own schooling

During my teaching, I conducted different teaching approaches only twice. First, I conducted laboratory work. Only one of the three schools I taught at was equipped with a science laboratory. The teaching topic was introduction to vertebrates. A week before I gave out the Laboratory Worksheet which describing the aim of the activity, the procedures, and the end results to be written, introduced laboratory etiquettes and procedures to handle the animals. I assigned the class to form groups of four to five students and assigned each group to prepare the apparatus such as fish, frog, lizard, and bird. There was no animal ethics issue at that time so I could easily assign students to prepare these dissections. Once I investigated students' ideas of living and non-living objects and I used fish dissection as a probe; my supervisor asked me how I planned to dispose of the fish after the activity. I was naïve, I thought it would be easy to dispose of the fish or gave them away to the school. In fact I had to ask the school permission.

Students were very enthusiastic about laboratory work, especially the boys. However, some students expressed their fear of handling the animals. Often these students were from wealthy families. Only a few students raised their hands when I confirmed who has the experience of handling such animals. I also gave the Laboratory Worksheet to the person in charge for the laboratory so that he managed to prepare the tools, materials and chemicals needed such as dissecting sets and chloroform.

My fear to face students from this school was different from the fear I had with the other two schools. Students from this school, mostly, had high learning motivation accompanied by sufficient resources. When I assigned students to present a topic, I saw a student brought an Encyclopedia Britannica, which her teacher have never touched, as a resource for discussion. I was afraid that I could not answer students' questions, as I had the view that teachers should know everything. It was in the early hours, so that students did not enter the class but went directly to the laboratory with their animals. There were two fishes, two frogs, one lizard, and one dove. Students sat at the assigned table I had tagged with the group number. Each table was equipped with the necessary tools, materials, and chemicals. The laboratory assistant helped me to coach the students. I anticipated finding some students to be squeamish about the dissection, but it did not materialize. I copied my biology teacher to run this activity with a small modification; I asked each group to explain the activities and their observations before we left the room.

The second activity was a field trip to *Bogor Botanical Garden*, a modification from activities I conducted with my Botany lecture. This was my favorite place to learn about plant systematics because the plants were organised according to their phylum and family. This activity I allocated for a Biology class of 24 students. Since this school was one of the underprivileged schools, I asked the school's principal to support the project financially in order to minimise students' expenses. We could not afford to hire a guide so my fear was about handling students in open spaces, as this was the first time for me. I did not give them a rigid assignment, but introduced them to the biodiversity about which they were never aware, or which they never experienced, say if they resided in a coastal area, for example. I also aimed to share my connection to the subject I taught.

After we entered the admission gate, we were greeted by lines of huge trees, probably more than 100 years old. We could feel the fresh air. Students walked in a huge group together. Every time we were passed by a group of trees or plants within a family, we stopped and I read the labels in front of the trees. It was in Latin language; I read it loudly so that students learned how to pronounce the names. Sometimes I asked one or two students to repeat after me, or without my command some students read the signs. I asked students to observe the similar characteristics of the plants in a family and discuss them. Most of the students enjoyed the field trip, we did not recognise the time passing. This garden is in the city which is famous as the raining city; rain comes every afternoon. Before having lunch we sat in a circle on the grass in the middle of huge, green lawn. I exercised my knowledge and skill of learning through games. I prepared a number of pieces of paper on which I wrote a question. The questions were recalling questions related to name of a plant or a family. I folded the papers and each student took one. I asked them to open their paper after we agreed on the rules of the game. I randomly appointed a student to read the question and provide the answer. There was a punishment for the student who could not answer the question. She or he had to sing or act, or tell a story. An unexpected event happened when one of my student's questions was not related because we didn't have time to observe the entire park. Nonetheless, I felt I was closer to my students and I think my students were also more comfortable after this activity.

5.4. Relation between a mother and her children

What is most fundamental to our lives as men and women sharing moment on this planet is the process of producing ourselves (Grummet, 1988, p. 8)

Since in grade three I was introduced to characteristics of living things, one of them is the capability to reproduce. During this grade three also I was the first time saw pictures of human reproduction systems. It was my in older sister's book, a 'broken-white paper-bag' book. Unfortunately, I did not remember the book's title. I was curious about the book because my sister prohibited me from seeing the book; I noticed that she put the book under her pillow. It is different from today; this book was considered as a taboo

book for kids. “You could not read this book yet”, shouted my sister. At that time, knowledge related to human reproduction, especially for women, was taboo. I could not talk about my menstruation freely, especially not in front of other gender. The knowledge of human reproduction was undisclosed. I heard my sister stories that one of her girlfriends could not sleep because she was afraid of being pregnant because a man hold her shoulder when she was in the bus went home from school. When I had my periods, I had to hide my circumstances so that no one knew. One afternoon, when my sister went out, I searched the book under the pillow where she usually kept it, but none, then I went to the cupboard across the bed, pulled up folded cloths but still could not find it and then I went back to the bed, pulled the mattress; it was not so heavy because it made of real cotton, and I saw a broken-white book. I grabbed it. My heart was beating very fast, like a thief chased by policeman, when I opened the book page by page. I did not read in detail; I read some of the titles such as menstruation, pregnancy, and lactation. I eagerly wanted to know the reason I was not allowed to touch the book. I found diagrammatic pictures of woman’s and man’s urogenital systems as well as woman and man’s outer genitals. I guessed these pictures as the cause for this book becoming secret book.

Two months after the wedding day I found out that there was a one month’s embryo inside of my body. Feeling of relief, excitement, as well as anxiety, and gratefulness adorned our following days. I almost became a true woman as expected by the society; I am a real woman. I would not suffer from tortured queries from people around me, especially family. Soon I knew my pregnancy, connection between me and my baby started. I consciously nourish and look after my body well. Within our limited resources, every evening my husband, with his old motorbike went to a special shop for a burger which was a new fast food and considered expensive in our standard. But we cannot do anything because it was the only food I could eat during my first four month pregnancy.

The increase of progesterone hormone and the presence of a new organism in my body influenced my physical and psychological conditions for the first four months. I understand that was a natural phenomenon. I went through an opposite experience with morning sickness. I was very fresh every morning started from four but at four in the

afternoon I was shivering, even though others suffer from the heat. Soon arrived home after office, I washed my feet, put my socks on, climbed up into the bed and curled under the thick blanket. I was disturbed by my body's condition but the happy and accomplishment feelings washed out the uncomfortable. This same condition happened for my second pregnancy.

My first pregnancy was very hard on my body. One of the reasons was that while I was combatting with the uncomfortable feeling of pregnancy, my psychological and physiological states had to adjust, each to the other. My husband and I were still learning how to live together and I was getting used to living under the same roof with him. However, with our novice idea of parenting we put efforts to look after the gift we received. Culturally, a pregnant woman becomes a center of attention among families, friends, and neighbors. During a woman's pregnancy the family has celebrations with communal praying as the main purpose to express thankfulness and hopes of the family. Families, friends, and neighbors got together saying prayers and enjoying the food. The celebrations are conducted twice; when the pregnancy enters the fifth month and at eight months. I think this celebration is scientifically sound since a four-month fetus has a complete body and a seven-month fetus is already a baby. However, as it was economically unreasonable, we did not celebrate my pregnancy; instead we delivered food to our neighbors with a piece of paper asking for good wishes for me and my baby.

My relation with the baby grew in line with the pregnancy. When I heard a noise from my stomach, I interpreted it as the baby's craving for food and I grabbed for food. At a time when the work in the office was demanding, I had to sit almost a whole day and at the end of the day, his feet kicked me behind my chest which made it hard to breathe and was only relieved after I lay down. I then realised his small space had been crushed for the day and he needed to stretch his body. I talked to my babies as if they heard me. When he stretched his body and his head pressed my belly hard, I whispered my pain and asked him to calm down.

Labor was the time everybody in the family waited for. The delivery process was considered as a war for a woman. War between life and death because in villages labors were conducted by traditional midwives. I heard from my family and friends that the labor

process was painful and I anticipated the pain. It was painful for a long time and the worst pain came when the head suppressed the lower part of my tummy, it seemed I felt the widening of the *osteum pubis*. All of the pain disappeared when I held my baby on my chest. The feeling of gratitude, joy, and love blended together. Another painful relation happened during the first days of breastfeeding. When the baby sucked the milk, the pain was like somebody pulled a bit of my hair. No wonder I heard of women refusing to breastfeed.

After labor I stayed with my mother because a new born baby and the mother could not go out of the house before thirty five days. And during these days, the mother cannot do much, even wiping the floor was prohibited. There came a frustration as a paralyzed human. However, after-labor was the most delightful period in my life, when my mother spoiled me with her love and care. Every day my mother searched for special herbs, some of them bought from the market and some of them fetched from the backyard. And in the early morning, she boiled the herbs for me to wash my body and when it was ready, my mom called me. Every time I entered the bathroom I saw a pink bucket at the corner with steam coming out from it. The warm fumes and the distinct fragrant of the herbs from the pink bucket greeted me. When I shut the door, the steam and the fragrance entered my body's pores and I felt the rejuvenation of my face, nerves and all parts of my body. That was my mother's sauna. After a morning bath, a midwife would already be waiting for me to give me a massage and apply a traditional masker all over my body, after which a setting of breakfast was always ready on the dining table – the healthiest food for after labor, vegetarian breakfast. How luxurious my life was at that time! My mother really treated me very well, like a princess for a month while transferring her heritage knowledge to her descendant.

I had the time to observe each corner of my baby's body and felt the bodily connection between me and my baby. When I put my daughter's tummy close to my tummy, I had a pain seemed something wrong with my intestine but my daughter cried in such a pain. For several days in her life, my daughter defecated differently from my son. She defecated almost every hour while my son only once in a day. Since my first experience I observed my daughter's stool and one day I found blood in the stool. I often carried my daughter in order for me to feel her pain. I was horrified every time I found

blood in her stool. Not until she was fourth months old, after changing two pediatricians, did the new pediatrician conclude that she suffered from lactose intolerance. Since then she drinks and eats only products made from soy. Another example of my body's connection with my children was when I felt a sharp pinch in my left chest and I was afraid of my heart, but it was fine. Two days later my son was sick and then I remember when my mom often asked her children about our health and touched and observed on our body closely. I did not believe when she told me that her left breast pain was an indication that one of her children was not well. Since then I believed her.

Living under one roof and communicated intensely through verbal and gesture communications developed typical relationships among family members, especially between parents and their children. I could guess who opened the door — my son, my daughter, or my husband — from the particular sound of the door. One day when my son was about to leave home for boarding school, he told me that he was going to miss my morning calls. For him my voice intonation was very distinctive. Grummet (1988) illustrates the interrelation between parents, the kids, and the home as follows:

For the parents and the child, the touch, the voice, and the living space the share persist in tying them to each other like the crossed taut strings of a cat's cradle. Disapproval, encouragement, contact, and guidance are as likely to come through touch and sound as they are through sight. Home is mapped on coordinates of physical intimacy: the rhythm of feet on the stairs, the sound of breathing, the cough at night. The jacket draped over the chair, the laughter, and the warm forehead are moments of a child's presence that displace the sight of her as the primordial sensation of the other. (p. 103)

The kind of relation between my children and I was unique as they were once a part of my body. Physical senses as well as emotional connection between my children and I appeared along the way of my life as love and care always in my mind.

5.5. Reflection

... stories of practice enable teachers to give serious examination to a larger context: how their personal values, beliefs, instructional practices, or views of children and families inform their teaching (Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995, p. 92)

The first days of my teaching were the most memorable experience. My thought was so occupied with the fear of others' opinions or judgement that pushed me to conduct teaching preparation meticulously. It seemed I was preparing for an open battle. Finding the supposed best weapons and gathered as much supplies as possible and developed written and imaginative plans and strategies to win the battle. One among supplies that I collected before my teaching was my friends' personal teaching stories. Such teachers' personal practical experience stories were never found in courses during my formal teacher education. These stories significantly helped me to prepare not only for practical aspects in developing a teaching plan but also, and most importantly, for the psychological aspects. Based on stories I heard, I exercised my emotional readiness in dealing with such circumstances. I did not want to be a loser in front of my students and considered as unqualified teacher in front of my colleagues. Decades ago, Fuller and Bown (1975) wrote about young teachers' concerns about survival and anxiety in first days of teaching:

At first contact with actual teaching, however, education students' concerns change radically. Their idealized concerns about pupils are replaced by concerns about their own survival as teachers. They are concerned about class control, their mastery of content to be taught, and evaluations by their supervisors. They wonder whether they will ever learn to teach at all. This is a period of great stress. (p. 38)

Conway and Clark (2003) conducted further researched based on Fuller and Bown's (1975) developmental conceptualization of teachers' concerns; they argue that teachers journey from concerns about self (survival concern), to the task of teaching (teaching situation concern), and finally to students (students' learning and social and emotional needs). Teachers cultivate their awareness based on these concerns and well as their hopes and aspirations, which are seen to motivate teachers' professional development.

Knowledge of students' characteristics from the practice situation is important for teachers to have beforehand in order to create effective teaching. Like other information that goes into our minds, our minds would process the information to bring about further thought or actions, positively or negatively. Positively, this knowledge becomes one aspect of anticipation in order to plan attainable teaching activities. As anticipation, in

case I have to face similar events I would not be so surprised so that it hampered my teaching. However, based on my experience from the first days of teaching, students' characteristics, especially students' misbehaviour information, furthered my imagination, influenced my mind negatively, which built prejudices towards the students. In my mind I placed students as my enemies which I wanted to defeat and make them surrender so that they were under my control. Any student's action which was against my goals was considered as a challenge to be put off not as a challenge to be learned. Moreover, this prejudice mind raised my body and senses to be sensitive towards students' actions. My body and senses were always in an alert state towards students' behaviour.

The early phase of teaching needs to be nurtured by expert teachers because teaching practical knowledge develops along with the experience of teaching. If teachers find their teaching approaches to be effective and they feel accomplishment with their professional achievements, actually their concerns are about themselves and not about the students. In other words, newly appointed teachers need mentors and guides to help them become a better teachers.

In a classroom situation, power relations among individual members are taking place; power relations between the teacher and students, as well as among students. In my early phase of my teaching, as my survival phase, I put myself as the ruler of the classroom because I wanted to make sure that my teaching plan was enacted. As the ruler I took control of the classroom and delivered the banking system of education (Freire, 1970/2000). However, I made an effort to build good relationship with students, such as declaring part of my personal information and I tried to pose my body in as relaxed pose as possible so that students would not be tense. There was a dynamic shift during my exercises building trust between students and me.

When confronted with an unexpected students' behaviour, I had to make a judgement and decision in a very short time as reflection-in-action which "is a process we can deliver without being able to say what we are doing" Schön (1987, p. 31). I could not describe the actions, as a kind of impulse action that came out from my mind. When I wrote these actions I tried to remember reasons for my action through reliving the

experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) in more attentive ways so that the blurred experiences became clear.

My experience as a biology teacher revealed that my teaching approaches were influenced by my previous experiences as a student in high school and as a student in my teacher education. The school's conditions and teachers' workload hindered me to apply "ideal" biology teaching approaches that I received from courses in my teacher education program. My scout experiences and my love for outdoor activities were not fully applied, since I ended my career as biology teacher after only a few short years.

Bodily and emotional relationships between a mother and her children, the love and care of a mother for her children are unconsciously carried by a teacher. She cannot separate between her body and mind within her personal life and her professional life in this matter. Her understanding and her practice of love and care for her children is manifested in her teaching.

Chapter 6.

Conclusion and Further Thought

My broad goal of writing my autobiography was to exercise my thought as a means of becoming a reflective teacher. In the process of becoming an imagined person, for which there is no end, metaphorically I was a planet revolving about itself while circling the sun. Revolving myself through thinking and acting in response to my inner body's sensations, as well as to the sun's rays which I voluntarily allow to penetrate my body. Rays of the sun not only warm up my body, killing the germs, and pouring in vitamin D, but also trigger my deep thoughts. Phenomena that are perceived and enter the body to be assimilated and accommodated with existing experiences and thought bring about new thought and actions. When I wrote my autobiography I sought 'new rays' in making sense of my past experiences so that I would have a clear understanding of the experiences. Through autobiographical research into the nature of learning and teaching I painted my roots and my route, pruned the weeds along the way, and constructed an imagined better teacher – a reflective teacher, a teacher who keeps students' wellbeing in her mind and who radiates into classroom and school cultures, a teacher who teaches students in a safe, caring, and nurturing environment. Schön's (1988) words are inspiring:

... "giving the kids reason": listening to kids and responding to them, inventing and testing responses likely to help them get over their particular difficulties in understanding something, helping them build on what they already know, helping them discover what they already know but cannot say, helping them coordinate their own spontaneous knowing-in-action with privileged knowledge of the school (19)

I strive to be a teacher who actively exercises her practical knowledge in order to improve her professional competencies and to contribute to my community in the most productive and generative ways.

This last chapter is dedicated to storying my experience in writing my narrative autobiography and envisioning the possibilities to share my belief about the value of writing autobiography as one means to help teachers become reflective practitioners to the teacher education at UT.

6.1. Writing my Autobiography

I wrote this dissertation to have personal experience in writing autobiography as a way to reflect on my educational experiences. I focused on the experiences that shaped me into who I am now as a person and as a teacher educator and provide direction for where I am going in the future. I would like to feel the dark, the disoriented, the dreadful feeling and the brightness of writing autobiography narratively as a pathway to clarity and illumination. I focused on my personal, lived experience and wrote in the form of narrative story telling in order to reveal myself.

My previous knowledge of autobiography and my cultural background hindered me in revealing the self when I started to write my autobiography. I never thought of writing an autobiography as a means of inquiry; my culture views such revealing of the self as narcissistic conduct. When I decided to write my autobiography my feeling and thoughts were that I was at the brink of a cliff at the seashore about to jump into the open ocean. My chest was stiff and breathless. I knew there were treasures that I could fetch and beautiful creatures in the sea that I could play with, but I imagined it was dark inside there and there was no rope to hold on to. Yet I wanted to dive. I was in doubt because it was the first time I conducted this kind of research. After two years of my intention to write my autobiography, I still found my notes, which indicated that I was still in the dark side. My habit of finding procedures or manuals on how to do things was always in my mind to start writing my autobiography. I had hoped to find conventions, guidance, and structures on writing autobiography that I could follow. When I considered the traditional reasons for writing autobiography and the variety of autobiography (Clark, 1935) I struggled to find anything remarkable in my life that was worthy of sharing. I was an ordinary person with simple aspirations whose environment harnessed me to become a teacher, which I am thankful for. I have been living my life, following the path offered in front of me. I have been walking on a trail of tiles in a

wooden world and I can see the path behind me but cannot see any path to follow in front of me. Before I stepped on the next tile I had to choose the tile, to *construct* it. Sometimes I could freely choose the tile I found there, but frequently the tile suggested itself from the environment and I had to step on it. I never knew the exact tile I would find until my feet stepped on it. Once I was on a tile, the circumstances restricted me from going astray and I would have to stay on the tile to understand it.

When I began writing my autobiography I was inspired by Gusdorf (1980):

The author of an autobiography gives himself the job of narrating his own history; what he sets out to do is to reassemble that scattered elements of his individual life and regroup them in a comprehensive sketch. This historian of himself wishes to produce his own portrait, but while the painter captures only a moment of external appearance, the autobiographer strains toward a complete and coherence expression of his entire destiny. (p. 35)

And I wrote my very first draft. My first writing was procedural and linear, starting from my early childhood life, through my adolescence, my college life, my teaching life, and my personal life as a mother. Besides writing my life story, I searched my sense of cultural identity and my cultural membership. I developed a *cultural gram* and autobiographical timelines suggested by Chang (2008) in order to understand who I was at that time. When I read and reread my stories, I always found that they were plain and simple, that they did not match the criteria or guidelines for autobiographical writing such as those suggested by Bullogh and Pinnegar (2001). I then looked for educational experiences, both formal and non-formal, which stood out for me and which I felt shaped my values, beliefs and dispositions. This allowed me to rearrange words, phrases, or sentences, adding more writing to make more sense, or editing out the unnecessary sentences which, as the writing progressed, were not consistent with the emerging themes.

Writing autobiography required me to search for literatures that inspired or clarified my writing. Before writing my autobiography, I was not interested in reading autobiographical books. Instead I was interested in learning somebody's stories from direct experience, witnessing their life or from somebody's story about their life. Since starting my writing I read examples of teachers' autobiographies and the book that

resonated with me was Frank McCourt's book *Teacher Man* (2005). He wrote in rich detail of his experiences and challenges while teaching English in a high school in New York. His understanding of students' attitudes who cheated him with their sick notes led to Frank McCourt's successful teaching approach. His ways of dealing with students' behaviour represented his ethic of care towards his students. Reading his autobiography allowed me to mirror my experiences with his experiences. His stories mingled with my memories and brought about the elicitation of particular events in my teaching experiences. When I wrote my experiences, I also searched for literature to help me understand more deeply about the experience in relation to the topic I am pursuing in this thesis. For example, when I wrote my cultural background, I read about Javanese language, which helped me to make sense who I am; I learned how language influences my way of thinking and my disposition. When I wrote my experiences in learning about cooking, I was confronted with Lave and Wenger's (1991) ideas about situated learning.. This book helped me understand my experiences. It helped to map out my role as a learner in the community and the role of the experts, how learning was taking place in this community and what motivated the novices to learn from the experts.

Writing past stories was an emotional experience. I was surprised that my fingers were dancing on the keyboards composing words following my memory, my face became hot from the flow of the blood and I could not restrain the burst of my tears. My writing's flow paused to satisfy my emotion, but I did not want to lose the moment so I continued my writing in tears and sobbing. When I reread this story, I still felt the same feeling as when I wrote it. Another time, my chest became stiff, followed by my neck. It happened when I was re-living the anger when I confronted my students' behaviour. The process of re-living the feeling of an experience triggered the choice of words, phrases, and sentences in composing and articulating my thoughts which I never planned. The words I have chosen or phrases or sentences which have been written can be changed several times into words, phrases or sentences which are faithful in representing the feelings, circumstances, and experiences being reported.

Starting to write in a blank paper was agonizing for me but when the writing has been started, it flowed as if I swam under the current of a stream. I put myself out of my body and composed sentences about my thoughts and my feelings about the sequences

I experienced, which in turn, were synthesized with knowledge I gained from readings or from other experiences. However, when I compared my writing with others' I found myself feeling lost. It seemed my writing was worthless and I felt that I learned nothing.

Writing an autobiography about how we live in this world always walks hand in hand with challenges. The biggest challenge I faced during writing my autobiography was removing my fear of writing in my heart and my thought. Whenever my mind thought of *academic writing*, my heart beat faster and it stopped my thoughts from moving on. However, with more writing exercises, I was capable of reducing the heartbeat syndrome. Another challenge was when I realised that my writing was not what I intended to write. I knew through my instinct that my writing was not right. My writing went astray. When I reread I became aware of the cause of it; when I was writing I remembered the spell of *to show not to tell* my experiences. One strategy of doing it was to write as much detail as possible. This strategy dragged me to write “unnecessary” stories. I wrote “unnecessary” stories also because I enjoyed writing happy occasions or sad occasions which stood out for me.

6.2. Benefits Gained from Writing My Autobiography

My experience in researching and writing an autobiography benefited me personally and professionally. I am more aware of who I am, what I am, what I do professionally, and how I can contribute professionally as a teacher educator. I understand my identity. Writing autobiography narratively is a means to reflecting on the question, “why I am doing what I am doing both as a person and as an educator?” (adopted from Zeichner & Liston, 2014) and conducted reflection as a mode of synthesising the experiences and knowledge I gained from literature and from conversations with experts and colleagues during my study at SFU. This brought me to have new ideas (Rose, 2013).

Writing my autobiography made me more aware of my identity and my understanding of myself. Myself as an integrated being consists of body, mind and soul (Miller, 2000) and spirit. Finding self-identity is important for teachers because according to Palmer (2007) teacher's strong self-identity is an important resource for good

teaching. Being aware of my identity helps me to situate myself as a teacher educator. Palmer (2007) defines good teacher as follows.

Good teachers join self, subject, and students in the fabric of life because they teach from integral and undivided self; they manifest in their own lives, and evoke in their students, a “capacity for connectedness.” They are able to weave a complex web of connections between themselves, their subjects, and their students, so that students learn to weave a world for themselves. (p. 72)

In other words, revealing the self helps me to develop connection with the subject being taught and with students. Understanding of the self is not intended to be self-indulgent, but to be more understanding of others and become aware of other’s feelings, thoughts, and dispositions. Understanding personal identity is important as a teacher because through understanding ourselves we can understand our students (Palmer, 2007). When I believe that my being is an expression of historical, social, political, and spiritual background in temporality, I will project others as being in the same situation. This understanding, then will suspend my quick judgment of others.

I have a deeper understanding of my learning style through writing about my school life. According to *The Kolb Learning Style Inventory* Version 3 (1999) my highest score in learning mode was active experimentation, followed by reflective observation, then concrete experience, and then abstract conceptualisation. My learning style is considered as accommodating, which means that there is the tendency that I grasp knowledge from concrete experience and transform knowledge into understanding through the process of active experimentation. As the stories about my formative life were presented in Chapter Four, I was confronted with experiences that evoked bodily sensations and responses. This helped me to make sense of my curiosity about why I tend to understand more easily things that I perceived through my bodily senses, how I grasp new knowledge better when I see, hear, feel, or experience.

According to Kolb (2008), accommodating persons have characteristics as follows.

People with this learning style have the ability to learn primarily from “hands-on” experience. If this your style, you probably enjoy carrying out plans and involving yourself in new and challenging experiences. Your

tendency may be to act on “gut” feelings rather than on logical analysis. In solving problems, you may rely more heavily on people for information rather than on your own technical analysis. (p. 7)

Knowing my learning style helps me to strengthen my traits in order to improve my learning effectiveness. I can exercise learning through abstract conceptualisation which was the least used learning mode.

Writing my autobiography developed my understanding of what lay behind my passion and my motivation in teaching during difficult times and who I was in front of the students. I was aware that teaching was not my ‘dream profession,’ but when I was among my students I had the courage to stay with them even though I had to face challenges that often seemed to diminish me as a teacher. The national hero’s spirits cultivated by my parents, teachers, and society during my school life are engraved in my mind and contribute to my disposition for not easily giving up when facing challenges. My belief about the importance of education for producing knowledgeable people, and that only knowledgeable people can be free from oppression, is my motivation to stay with students and to help them to succeed in their education.

Writing my autobiography also changed my perception about myself. Before I wrote my teaching stories, I considered myself as a caring teacher who made students feel cared for. However, based on my teaching story in Chapter Five, it was not the case. My actions created students’ fear, which I did not aware of. I did not take into account students’ wellbeing. If this disposition continued to grow, I would become a negligent teacher. On the other hand, in another experience, I thought of myself as a mother for my students. A mother, with her love, strives to facilitate children to become a good person.

While writing my story, my mind moved back and forth in time and opened pages of my memories so that I could grasp meanings and reasons of each event that I did not understand before. Elbaz-Luwisch (2014) illustrates that,

The possibility of telling it anew each time is precious: to make sense of what we did not understand while it was happening, perhaps to get it right the next time around, if not, at least to be able to start over, to have the

freedom to choose, right now, in this moment, how to begin is an inestimable gift. (p. xviii)

The most precious experience in writing my autobiography was the unearthing my new understanding of each event that I took for granted before. I never thought of my mother's cooking training and my participation in the community as triggering me to master skills that would improve my confidence, not only to the related knowledge and skills but also to other activities. I could apply my skills and capacities to manage, organize, and structure my cooking activities in my everyday life. My mother's training to plan, execute, and to evaluate and improve the results are ingrained in my mind. Through learning to cook, I was trained to conduct *reflection-in-action* and *reflection-on-action* to generate favourable results. I found that learning to cook through direct involvement in a community is very effective since I learn knowledge, skills, and disposition at the same time.

From writing my autobiography I learned that I cannot separate learning for life from learning about my profession. I learned about my life's strategies and skills, as my personal knowledge, mostly from my parents, families, and communities as well as from the environment where I learned about my profession through formal education. Since I performed better in my personal life training compare to my professional life training, I feel confidence in personal life and less confidence in my professional life as academician.

6.3. Further Thought

For the last five years I withdrew from my routine duties and responsibilities as a teacher educator to reflect (Rose, 2013), thinking about my personal and my professional life, about learning, teaching, and being a teacher and teacher educator, and it is time to deliberate my further thought.

Universitas Terbuka (UT), through the Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences, has successfully participated in the government's plan in improving under-qualified and unqualified practicing teachers to gain a Strata 1 (4 year degree) required by Indonesian Law Number 14, 2005. The government aimed to

achieve its targets by the year 2015 with all teachers earning the S1 degree certificates (Jalal, 2006). By 2013 UT had graduated well over a million students since its inception, out of which 90 percent were teachers (Belawati, et. al. 2014). UT strives to improve its teaching learning processes' quality through several approaches, such as the development and application of quality assurance (QA) systems, and UT has been considered as credible institution according to external auditors (Zuhairi, Zulaikha, & Sinar, 2013).

The advancement of computer and communication technologies enables UT to improve its teaching and learning quality as a mode of communication and as educational resources in the form of online tutorials, dry labs, online self-assessment, online enrichment course materials, online library, and special portal for teachers — *Guru Pintar Online* (GPO), which literally means Online Smart Teachers. This portal allows students, as practicing teachers, to discuss the teaching and learning video exemplars provided as well as discuss other matters faced by teachers. This kind of Open Educational Resources (OER) portal can only be assessed by UT students and students' participation in these facilities is promising (Zuhairi, Isman, & Zulaikha, 2014).

Students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational studies are practicing teachers. This means that they to some degree possess teaching experiences as their practical knowledge. It is among the strategies for the PTEP program to introduce reflection in its curriculum. It is in line with theories and research results around the world in which the application of reflective practice in teacher education promotes improving teachers' effectiveness in helping students to learn. Based on my experience conducting face-to-face tutorials for PTEP students, and corroborated by Wardani et al. (2002), Zulaikha (2009), and Marsinah (2010), the notion of reflection needs to be elaborated. PTEP students need to have a broader understanding of the form and content of reflection. Teachers reflect not only on students' knowledge and skill achievement but also on their welfare, with the view that makes the lives of children better. There are several approaches to improve teacher reflection in PTEP curriculum.

First of all, the introduction of Schön's reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action would contribute to improving teachers' practice, especially by encouraging teachers to

construct and reconstruct their understandings of particular situations that emerge in their daily lives as teachers. Process of framing and reframing present situation will help teachers to improve their bodies and minds receptivity so that teachers become more sensitive towards their students' needs. This can be materialised through observing PTEP students' teachings, directly or indirectly using videos. PTEP students in a study group (kelompok belajar or pokjar) can observe each other or video record each other on their teaching as the basis for discussions. Their discussion can focus on how a teacher makes sense of teaching experiences and how problems teachers face in practice are thought about and dealt with. Student teachers could discuss their observations either through face-to-face tutorials or online tutorials or through GPO facilities. Through this exercise, PTEP students will be more able to learn from experience and improve their practice over time if they are reflective: that is, if they have the habit of reframing the problems they experience in their practice. They in turn will focus on helping students to understand and articulate their understanding.

Secondly, based on benefits I gained from writing my autobiography, I see that reflection in teacher education can be introduced partly through autobiographical work assigned to the student's teachers (Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995). This could take the form of modern social networking at UT through online tutorials or GPO facilities to encourage student teachers to learn and write their educational experiences in a narrative storytelling approach. PTEP students are encouraged to write what learning was like for them in their youth and about memorable learning experiences, and to think about what kind of teachers they would like to become. Then in a safe environment student teachers share their experiences. According to Jalongo & Isenberg (1995) sharing real life experiences triggers others to learn and to find any similar situation or circumstances which they can further explore. Through this exercise PTEP students might find their root and routes (Blake & Blake, 2012) that make sense of their disposition towards their teaching. Moreover, Alvine (2001) asserts that "teacher educators have recognised the important of individual's lived experience as relevant to the development what he or she will bring to the classroom. Thus, the life histories have come to be seen as grounded experience for knowledge of teaching" (p. 5).

Thirdly, Rose's (2013) ideas of reflection as a synthesis process, which requires quietness and slowness, can be introduced to student teachers at UT, especially for graduate students, to encourage them to have more understanding of their identity as teachers, to search for what is important in their lives so that they will find who they are as teachers, their view of education, what they teach and how they teach. Student teachers should develop their understanding that reflection is an ongoing process because teachers are continuously faced with new challenges, either from students, the school, community or government.

When students teachers are versed in computer and communication technology, UT teacher education program may adopt a *third space* program (Abrams, 2012) as the platform for students teachers to "begin to share their experiences, find commonalities among their responses, learn from each other, and reconsider and improve their pedagogy and practice" (p.116). This third space program can be a discussion forum among students, for sharing their knowledge and experiences in synchronous virtual forums. The uniqueness of this forum is the discussion, conducted as though in a classroom situation where students and lecturer sit at the same table, while they discuss in written communication through their computers. This program benefited students as "the virtual context of the synchronous medium afforded students a degree of agency in their reflection, as they control their time, font modification, and the use of emoticons and abbreviated language, assuming ownership of a space" (p. 114). Through this kind of program development, student teachers would have a safe space that permeates genuine reflection as a means for personal and professional development.

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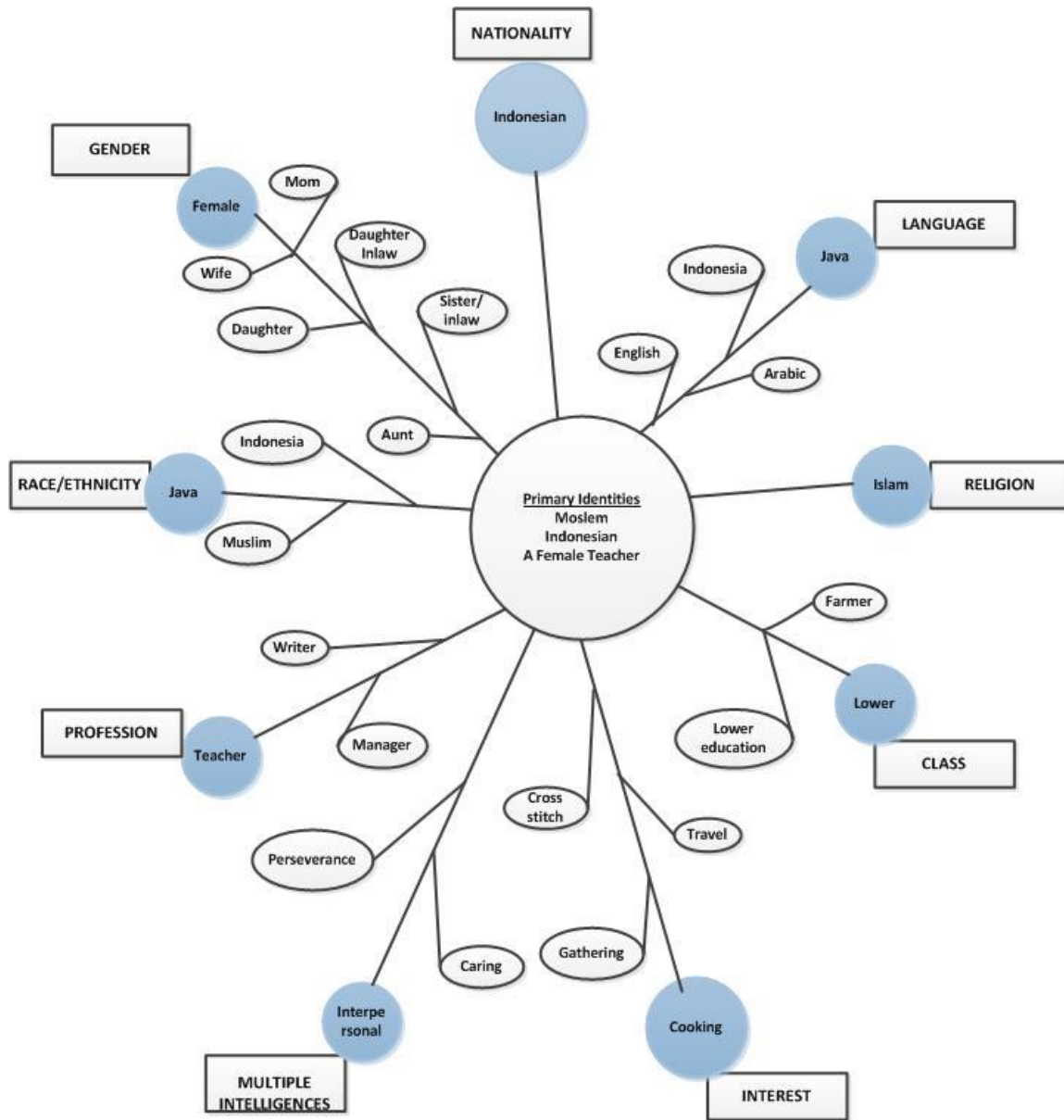
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Appendix A.

Cultural Gram



Note: The Cultural Gram is based on the methodology from Chang, 2008.

Appendix B.

Autobiographical Timelines

- 1962 Born into farmers' family
- 1965 Entered a public kindergarten that was a one of a kind kindergarten. At that time it was the only kindergarten in the municipality. One teacher, a women, she was kind, caring, but tough. This kindergarten was in the same village.
- 1967 Entered a public primary education school. A Dutch school, and when I entered the school it was the only primary school in the same village.
- I also went to Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, religious primary school, until grade 2. First conducted after school but it was changed into a morning school so I could not attend. Religious education continued privately, in a house of one of the informal religious teachers.
- 1973 Started Junior High School. Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri 2 (public Junior High School 2), Temanggung, family preferences followed my brother, in town, 5 km from home. Feel of detachment from teachers.
- 1976 Started Senior High School. It was the only Sekolah Menengah Atas Negeri (public Senior High School) in the same town as JHS. It was my friends' preferences.
- 1980 Started Teacher education, Jakarta Institute of Teacher Training, studying Biology education at the capital city of Indonesia, was unintentional.
- 1983 Started to teach at a private Senior High School. Reasons: biology teachers demand and as a way to learn how to teach.
- 1984 Graduated from the teacher education.
- 1986 Started as a teacher educator at Universitas Terbuka (The Indonesian Open University).
- 1988 Married to a colleague from the same university.
- 1989 First child, a boy, was born.

- 1990 Started to study Graduate Diploma in Higher Education Administration while accompanying my husband studied at the University of New England, Australia.
- 1994 Second Child, a girl, was born.
- 1995 Started to study for a Master Degree in Primary School Education at the Institute of Education, University of London.
- 2009 Started to study for a Doctoral Degree at Simon Fraser University, Curriculum Theory and Implementation Program.

I have been fascinated with my life's journey, having originated from a small village in central Java, having had the opportunity to attain the highest level of education, as well as travel and live in several places out of my country that I never consciously prepared for.

Note: The Autobiographical Timelines is based on the methodology from Chang, 2008.