

Saito Ronaldo Itaru

GSP 394

Reflection Paper

July 17, 2015

Through this course I had so many things to learn. This was the first time doing a PBL. This was also the first time conducting interviews and writing a research paper using the data I collected by myself. It was also the first time to meet the Filipina immigrants in Akita. This program has broaden my horizons and provided the best experience since I entered AIU. Now in this reflection paper, I will discuss how it met my expectations, learned the ethics of conducting research, and influenced my life.

First, I had expectations to learn new theories and the situation of different migrant groups in order to know what can be done for the education of young Japanese Brazilians and how immigration affected their identity. This course on one hand did not meet my expectations because I did not have chance or time to explore the educational situation of Japanese Brazilians in depth. However, it did go beyond my expectations at the same time because I could actually meet Japanese Brazilians who were struggling and trying to change their situation. In high school, I was the only Japanese Brazilian in my school and I saw many of my friends looking for a job in factories after completing junior high or going back to Brazil. So it was particularly important for me to know that other Brazilians, although only a few, are doing well in Japan. This made me become interested in how other Japanese Brazilians can actually achieve success in Japan. Also, I did not imagine that I could have

been able to meet so many different migrant groups and learn about their history.

Second, by interviewing so many different migrants, I could definitely practice my communication, interviewing, translation, and also academic skills by writing papers and doing presentations. These skills will be useful for my future research and career. Nevertheless, the most important thing I learned was the ethics of doing research. It was particularly difficult for me to make questions that would give me the information I need without asking questions that would be too personal. Such questions would be rude or even offending in some cases. Also, I learned the importance of keeping confidentiality as an ethical person. I could especially see this importance when I was interviewing one Filipina woman who was afraid of me telling her information to other people. Therefore, I learned that it is extremely important to build a relationship based on trust with the interviewee and always keep in mind that they are also humans.

Lastly, this PBL had a huge impact on my personal life for two reasons. The first one is because I now have a new field of interest. As I mentioned above, I was more interested in identity formation at first, but by conducting the interviews I feel more inclined to social mobility. This could affect my future plans for writing my thesis. The second reason is that I could simply find someone who I could relate with. Now I know that there are Japanese Brazilians actually trying to do something to improve their lives. I was really happy to meet the 2 students at Hamamatsu Gakuin University and I was inspired by their passion to do

something for the community. At the same time, it also reminded me of the fact that many Brazilians are stuck in factories, without doing anything to change their lives. Looking at this situation made me wonder what I can do for my own family and community. Although I have no concrete plans, this course made me feel encouraged to help my community in some way in the future.

This program was the hardest course I have ever taken. No other course required me to write summaries for each lecture, write two book reviews, make a presentation in front of my fellow students, and complete a research paper in just 4 weeks. However, such struggles made me grow even more academically and also as a person. I really appreciate all the opportunities that I had to meet people in migrant communities in the US and throughout Japan. Finally, I am really happy and satisfied with the friendships I could make with UC-Berkeley students and other AIU students during this intensive course.