

Professional Growth and Instructional Shifts of Filipino Science Teachers in The J-1 Visa Program

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ABSTRACT: This qualitative study examined the lived experiences of Filipino Science teachers participating in the J-1 Visa Program in Houston, Texas, focusing on their professional backgrounds, instructional adjustments, and cross-cultural teaching practices. Through semi-structured interviews and reflective narratives, the study explored how these educators navigated the instructional expectations of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), shifted toward inquiry-based and student-centered pedagogy, and integrated literacy and behavior management routines into their daily instruction. The findings revealed that teachers faced challenges related to workload, standardized assessments, communication barriers, and unfamiliar digital tools, yet demonstrated resilience and adaptability as they refined their instructional competence. Participants also employed culturally responsive strategies—including scaffolding, visuals, and identity-affirming examples—to support diverse learners in multilingual classrooms. Their experiences contributed to significant professional growth, fostering reflective practice, stronger data-driven decision-making, and an expanded commitment to equity and inclusion. Teachers further identified essential training programs such as TEKS-aligned preparation, classroom management simulations, cultural communication training, emotional readiness development, and continuous mentorship to better support global teaching readiness. Overall, the study highlights the transformative impact of international teaching experiences on professional identity formation and underscores the need for comprehensive, culturally grounded preparation programs for Filipino educators entering global classrooms.

KEYWORDS: J-1 teachers, Filipino Science teachers, instructional adaptation, cultural responsiveness, professional identity

INTRODUCTION

The global demand for science teachers has been steadily increasing due to a significant shortage of teachers worldwide. According to UNESCO (2024), an estimated 44 million secondary-level teachers will be needed by 2030, with science educators among the most urgently required. In response to these rising needs, countries, including the United States of America, are developing solutions to combat these growing problems.

The Exchange Visitor Teacher Program under the J-1 Visa is one of the solutions the United States is implementing to address the ongoing teacher shortage. This program allows international teachers to work in the U.S. using a temporary visa (U.S. Department of State, 2025). Filipino teachers, in particular, have been heavily recruited through the program, as it offers better salaries, opportunities for travel, personal and professional growth, and exposure to a new culture (Macapagong, Maguate, & Geroso, 2023).

Houston, Texas, has become a key destination for STEM teachers, as it is home to large school districts that face critical shortages due to ongoing challenges in teacher recruitment and retention (Luhn, 2024). As a result, Filipino science teachers are filling the gaps in these districts, navigating new environments, expectations, and policies, making the city an ideal setting for studying their professional growth and instructional shifts (Macapagong et al., 2023).

This study focuses on the lived experiences of J1 Science teachers in Houston regarding their professional growth and instructional shifts. By examining their perceptions, challenges, strategies, and the institutional support they receive or lack, the research aims to generate insights that not only inform classroom practice but also contribute to program components that support more effective and sustainable professional development for international teachers in the U.S. context.

In recent years, the demand for qualified science teachers has increased, leading to the recruitment of international educators through programs such as the J-1 Visa Teacher Program (Allen, 2023). Filipino teachers are among the key contributors to this initiative. These highly qualified educators serve in various school districts across Texas, filling critical roles in bilingual education,

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special education, mathematics, and science (Wilburn, 2023). Their contributions go beyond subject expertise, as they also bring diverse cultural perspectives, strong academic preparation, and valuable classroom experience (Ramon, 2024).

For Filipino J-1 teachers, adjusting to the U.S. educational system involves navigating new curricula, student expectations, classroom management practices, and school policies (Macapagong et al., 2023). These adjustments often require shifts in instructional approaches and teaching philosophies. At the same time, the cultural exchange provides opportunities for professional growth—such as learning new technologies, engaging in interdisciplinary collaboration, and participating in ongoing training (Team J1X, 2024).

In the U.S. context, Lee (2021) explored the lived experiences of international teachers and identified common challenges, including misinterpretations of culture, language barriers, and unfamiliar classroom Management techniques. Despite these difficulties, the study emphasized the importance of structured support systems—including formal induction programs, mentorship, and professional learning communities—in helping international educators adapt. These supports were instrumental in reshaping teachers' professional identities and enabling them to adjust their teaching methods.

Teaching in a foreign or culturally distinct environment often requires instructional shifts to ensure professional survival. One of the sub-themes identified by Macapagong et al. (2023) focused on the adjustments Filipino teachers made to traditional teaching methods, technological integration, and classroom management strategies. Although these educators faced significant challenges, their experiences also created opportunities for professional growth and further development of their teaching competencies (Real & Flordeliz, 2024).

Despite the growing number of Filipino science teachers participating in the J-1 Visa Program, there remains a limited understanding of how their international teaching experiences contribute to their professional development and instructional shifts. This study explores their lived experiences to better understand how they grow as educators and adapt their practices in a new cultural and institutional context. By examining their perceptions, challenges, and strategies, this research aims to contribute to broader conversations on teacher preparation, global teacher mobility, and culturally responsive science education. Using a qualitative approach, the study also seeks to provide both broad trends and deeper insights to inform future policies and support systems for international teachers.

Research Question

This study aims to explore and understand the lived experiences of J-1 Filipino Science teachers teaching in Houston, Texas. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do J-1 Filipino Science Teachers describe their adjustments to the educational system and classroom culture in Houston?
What instructional shifts or adjustments have you made to align with U.S. science education standards and teaching practices?
 - 1.1. How does your current approach differ from the way you taught in the Philippines?
 - 1.2. What challenges have you encountered while adapting your teaching methods to the American educational system?
 - 1.3. What types of support (e.g., mentoring, training, administrative) have been most helpful—or least helpful—during your transition?
2. How do they navigate cultural differences and communication in a diverse school environment?
 - 2.1. Can you share specific practices or instructional models that helped you engage diverse learners?
 - 2.2. How do you integrate culturally responsive teaching into your science lessons?
 - 2.3. How do your colleagues and school leaders support your instructional work?
3. In what ways do their experiences as J-1 teachers shape their professional identity and teaching practices?
 - 3.1. In what ways, if any, has your participation in the J-1 Visa Program influenced your professional development as a science teacher?
 - 3.2. What new skills, knowledge, or perspectives have you gained while teaching in a U.S. public school system?
 - 3.3. Have your goals as an educator changed since joining the program? If yes, how?
 - 3.4. What teaching strategies or methods have you found most effective in your current classroom context?
4. What training program can be proposed to better prepare Filipino science teachers for global teaching challenges?
 - 4.1. What resources or tools do you wish were available to better support your teaching practice?
 - 4.2. How can pre-departure and ongoing professional development programs be designed to prepare Filipino science teachers for culturally diverse, international classrooms?

II. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study explores the lived experiences of Filipino science teachers currently teaching in three public school districts in Houston, Texas: Aldine Independent School District (ISD), Houston ISD, and YES Prep Public Schools. It specifically examines how

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these teachers experience professional growth and navigate instructional shifts as they adapt to U.S. educational standards and classroom environments. The study investigates their perceptions, teaching strategies, challenges encountered, and the support systems available or lacking within the context of international teaching. The research is limited to Filipino J-1 science teachers with at least one full academic year of teaching experience in the U.S., thereby excluding perspectives from other subject areas or from teachers outside the designated districts. Data collection is conducted using a qualitative approach, with semi-structured interviews to provide in-depth, contextually specific insights into participants' experiences. Additionally, this research does not seek to measure student outcomes but rather concentrates on teachers' self-reported experiences, perceptions, and reflections. The findings are therefore specific to this population and context, and may not be generalizable to all J-1 teachers or international educators.

FRAMEWORK

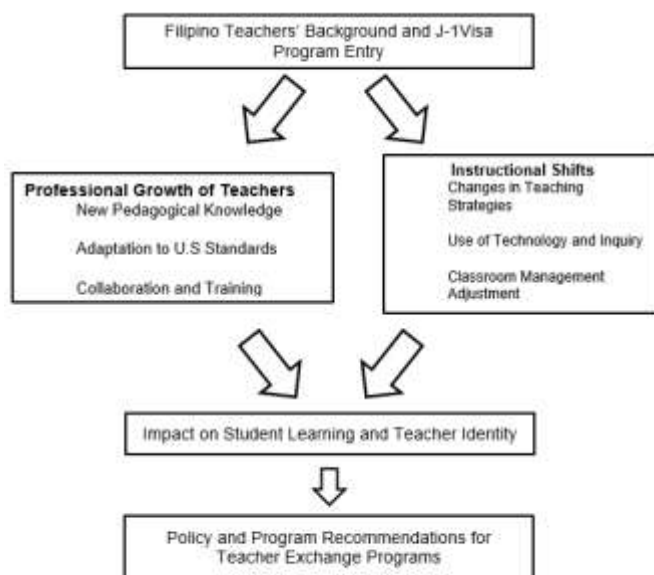


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

This study is anchored in Transformative Learning Theory by Mezirow (1991), which suggests that adult learners grow through critical reflection, often triggered by significant life changes, in the context of international teaching through the J-1 Visa Program. This framework is relevant to understanding how Filipino science teachers reconstruct their professional identities and practices in terms of a new educational and cultural context.

To examine instructional shifts, the study draws upon Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and TPACK, which offer a lens for analyzing how teachers integrate subject matter, pedagogy, and technology in response to new standards and classroom expectations in the U.S.

Moreover, Cultural Adjustment Theory (Oberg, 1960) is used to understand the acculturation challenges and adaptations these teachers face, shaping both their professional development and classroom strategies. These theories collectively frame how personal, professional, and cultural factors interact to influence teaching transformations among Filipino science educators in Houston under the J-1 program.

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design to examine the professional backgrounds, instructional shifts, and classroom practices of Filipino science teachers participating in the J-1 Visa Program in Houston, Texas. The study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these educators adapt, grow, and teach in a cross-cultural educational context.

Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews, follow-up narrative interviews, and reflective journal prompts. These instruments are designed to explore: (1) how Filipino J-1 teachers adapt to the U.S. educational system; (2) what challenges they encounter in their professional journey; (3) and how cultural exchange experiences influence their science teaching practices.

Interviews will be conducted one-on-one, in person or virtually, and will last approximately 45–60 minutes. The collected data will undergo thematic, content, and narrative analyses to enable a rich, layered interpretation of teacher experiences.

This approach mirrors the work of Salerno and Lovette (2020), who, through interviews, revealed the deep pedagogical adjustments made by internationally trained teachers in U.S. classrooms.

Research Instrument

To explore the role of PATHFit in enhancing stress management and mental well-being among tertiary students, this study utilized a semi-structured interview guide as the primary research instrument. The instrument was designed to elicit in-depth responses while allowing flexibility to probe emerging ideas and experiences during the interview process. It consisted of an introductory question, core open-ended questions, and a concluding question, all aligned with the phenomenological nature of the study.

The introductory question established rapport and gathered baseline information by asking students to describe their PATHFit experiences, including the courses taken and duration of participation. This provided essential context for their responses. The main section focused on PATHFit 1 (Fitness for Wellness), PATHFit 2 (Exercise-based Fitness), PATHFit 3 (Dance-based Fitness), and PATHFit 4 (Sports-based Fitness), exploring how these activities influenced students' stress levels, mood, motivation, and overall mental well-being. Participants were also asked about coping strategies, emotional regulation, and resilience developed through physical activity, as well as challenges encountered such as fatigue, lack of motivation, and academic pressures, and how these were managed through PATHFit engagement.

In addition, the guide examined the social dimension of PATHFit, including peer interaction, teamwork, and instructor support, and how these contributed to students' psychological well-being. It also explored how participation influenced their daily routines, lifestyle choices, and ability to cope with academic and personal stressors, allowing for a more holistic understanding of its impact. The concluding question captured the essence of participants' lived experiences by asking them to summarize their overall PATHFit experience and identify its most significant contribution to their stress management and mental well-being, which is central to phenomenological inquiry.

Data Generation

The data for this study will be generated through individual semi-structured interviews with selected Filipino science teachers under the J-1 Visa Program who are currently teaching in intermediate public schools within Aldine Independent School District, Houston Independent School District, and YES Prep Public Schools in Houston, Texas. The main objective of this process is to gather detailed, meaningful insights into their professional growth, instructional shifts, and cultural adjustments while teaching in a U.S. classroom.

The interview guide will consist of open-ended questions aligned with the study's research questions: (1) how Filipino J-1 science teachers describe their adjustments to the educational system and classroom culture in Houston, (2) how they navigate cultural differences and communication in a diverse school environment, (3) in what ways their experiences shape their professional identity and teaching practices, and (4) what training program can be proposed to better prepare Filipino science teachers for global teaching challenges. These questions will allow participants to reflect on and describe their experiences in a narrative and authentic way.

Interviews will be conducted either in person or virtually, depending on what is most convenient for the participants. Each interview is expected to last between 45 to 60 minutes. With the participants' consent, all interviews will be audio-recorded to ensure accurate transcription and analysis. Field notes will also be taken to capture important observations and nonverbal cues that may aid in interpreting the data.

III. RESULTS

This chapter presents the data, their analysis, and interpretation. The data were presented in tabular form, consistent with the statement of the problem. Data were analyzed and interpreted by stating the table's label or title, presenting and analyzing the significant data, and making generalizations based on the concepts of the different authors from the literature or study.

1. Adjustments of J-1 Filipino Science Teachers to the U.S. Educational System and Classroom Culture

The experiences of J-1 Filipino Science teachers revealed a multifaceted process of adjustment as they transitioned into the Houston, Texas, educational system and classroom culture. Their narratives described a profound recalibration across pedagogical, cultural, and professional domains as they confronted new instructional standards, behavioral expectations, communication norms, and institutional structures. These adjustments illustrate not only the technical shift required to meet U.S. science education demands but also the deeper process of identity negotiation and transformative learning that accompanies international teaching assignments. Table 1 presents the significant experiential dimensions derived from their accounts, highlighting instructional shifts toward TEKS-aligned science teaching, adaptations to American classroom culture, challenges encountered, and Support systems that facilitated (or hindered) their transition.

Table 1. *Adjustments of J-1 Filipino Science Teachers to the U.S. Educational System and Classroom Culture*

Theme	Subtheme	Formulated Meanings	Participants	Participant Evidence (Condensed)
Instructional Shifts to U.S. Standards	TEKS alignment; structured pacing	Teachers recalibrate instructional design to comply with TEKS, pacing guides, and data-driven instruction. Transition from lecture-based PH instruction to student-centered, exploratory learning models.	P1, P2, P3	"Studied TEKS closely... pacing is strict."
	Inquiry-based teaching		P2, P4	"Shifted to student-centered, exploratory lessons."
Classroom Culture Adaptation	Behavior management routines	Teachers must prioritize routines, explicit expectations, and consistent management, unlike more compliant PH classrooms.	P3, P5	"Management must come before content."
	Language and literacy demands	Science instruction entails substantial vocabulary, reading, and writing demands unfamiliar to teachers	P1, P6	"Science here is literacy-heavy."
Challenges Encountered	Workload and assessments	Teachers struggle with documentation, lesson planning, standardized testing, and multiple course preparations.	P4, P7	"Overwhelming balancing AP and STAAR."
	Technology and communication	Adjusting to digital platforms and navigating accent-related communication barriers are ongoing struggles.	P6, P8	"Accent made explanations harder."
Support Systems	Mentorship and coaching	Mentors and instructional coaches guide teachers in planning, management, and TEKS alignment.	P2, P5	"Mentoring helped in adjusting to TEKS."
	Peer collaboration	Collegial teamwork provides essential materials, strategies, and emotional support.	P1, P3, P7	"Colleagues supportive in resources."

The teachers' narratives reflected significant instructional shifts as they adapted to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), which required restructuring lesson design, pacing, and assessment practices. Teachers emphasized the need to "study TEKS closely" and follow strict pacing guides, demonstrating the centrality of standards-driven instruction in U.S. classrooms. This aligns with the Texas Education Agency (2024), which specifies that science instruction must be clearly aligned with inquiry-based competencies and measurable learning outcomes. These expectations mark a clear departure from the more teacher-centered, flexibility-oriented formats common in the Philippines, echoing the findings of Cahilog et al. (2023) and Derasin et al. (2024), who noted that insufficient instructional resources and heavy workloads in local contexts constrained teachers' ability to implement modern pedagogies.

A recurring theme was the shift toward inquiry-based, student-centered pedagogy, which required teachers to relinquish traditional lecturer roles and embrace practices that foster exploration and discourse. One teacher described shifting to "student-centered, exploratory lessons," highlighting a transition consistent with Hinostroza et al.'s (2024) systematic review, which emphasized the role of digital tools and inquiry models in modern science instruction. Muñoz et al. (2024) similarly found that sustained professional development fosters long-term adoption of inquiry-based practices, suggesting that J-1 teachers' pedagogical adjustments are part of a larger process of transformative learning (Cardiff Metropolitan University, 2025).

Teachers also encountered substantial changes in classroom culture, particularly in behavior management and student autonomy. Participants noted that "management must come before content," reflecting the centrality of routines, explicit expectations, and proactive strategies in American classrooms. Rathinam (2024) identified classroom behavior and management norms as major adjustment points for internationally recruited teachers, while Brazas (2023) noted that cultural adaptation often leads to professional isolation and a heightened workload as teachers grapple with unfamiliar expectations. Furthermore, language and literacy demands—where "science here is literacy-heavy"—demonstrate how U.S. science classrooms integrate reading, vocabulary, and writing as core components of content learning, consistent with Koellner et al.'s (2018) findings on teacher identity in student-centered STEM settings.

The teachers' narratives further highlighted challenges such as overwhelming workload, extensive documentation, and high-stakes testing (AP, STAAR). These experiences mirror the reports of De Oca and Malaga (2025), who documented the emotional and logistical burden carried by Filipino teachers transitioning to U.S. systems. Technology integration and accent-related communication barriers added another layer of complexity. These findings align with Villaver's (2024) Adaptive Cross-Cultural Pedagogy Theory, which emphasizes that linguistic and cultural mismatches significantly shape the adjustment process of J-1 teachers.

Despite these challenges, Support systems played a crucial role in helping J-1 teachers adjust. Mentorship and coaching were frequently described as "helpful in adjusting to TEKS," consistent with Yan's (2021) autoethnographic findings that culturally responsive mentoring fosters a sense of belonging and professional confidence among foreign-born teachers. Peer collaboration also emerged as a vital source of emotional and instructional support, confirming Jung and Choe's (2024) conclusion that transnational teaching identities are strengthened through community-building and collegial relationships. Institutional

structures—such as district-level onboarding programs highlighted by Dallas ISD and Participate Learning—further support J-1 teachers' transition, though participants noted variability in their effectiveness.

Overall, the lived experiences of these teachers reveal that adjusting to the U.S. educational system is a pedagogical and cultural endeavor that requires resilience, adaptability, and sustained institutional support. These findings resonate with transformative learning perspectives, suggesting that international teachers reconstruct their professional identities through continuous reflection, negotiation, and adaptation (Zhai, Tripp, & Liu, 2024). For Filipino J-1 teachers, alignment to TEKS, integration of inquiry-based practices, mastery of classroom culture, and reliance on support systems collectively shape their evolving practice. Their narratives demonstrate that adaptation is not merely technical compliance—it is an evolving, deeply reflective process that reshapes how they teach, communicate, and understand themselves as science educators in a global context.

2. Navigating Cultural Differences and Communication in Diverse U.S. Classrooms

The narratives of J-1 Filipino Science teachers revealed that navigating cultural differences and communication demands in Houston schools required intentional adaptation, reflective practice, and sustained collaboration. Their experiences illustrate the complex interplay between pedagogy, cultural responsiveness, and relational competence in multicultural classrooms. Participants described how they learned to modify instructional delivery, affirm student identities, and engage linguistically diverse learners through structured supports and collaborative learning environments. Table 2 summarizes the significant patterns found in their accounts, capturing how teachers enacted culturally responsive instruction, integrated culturally relevant pedagogy, and relied on professional learning communities and leadership support to successfully navigate culturally diverse educational settings.

Table 2. *Navigating Cultural Differences and Communication in Diverse U.S.*

<i>Classrooms</i>				
Theme	Subtheme	Formulated Meanings	Participants	Participant Evidence (Condensed)
Culturally Responsive Instruction	Visuals, modeling, scaffolds	Teachers adjust communication through structured supports (visual cues, modeling, scaffolds) to aid English learners in science comprehension.	P1, P2, P4	"Visual cues help EB learners."
	Peer and home-language support	Strategic peer assistance and first-language (L1) use enhance meaning-making and collaborative understanding.	P3, P5	"Peer helpers support understanding."
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy	Cultural connections in lessons	Teachers embed cultural references and lived experiences to deepen comprehension and engagement.	P2, P6	"Used cultural comparisons in lessons."
	Student identity affirmation	Inviting students to share cultural experiences boosts engagement, confidence, and relational trust.	P1, P4, P7	"Students share experiences; boosts engagement."
Collaborative Support	PLC and team planning	Professional learning communities guide lesson modifications through shared data, analysis, and co-planning.	P3, P6	"PLC guides instructional changes."
	Coaching and administrative support	Walkthroughs, feedback, and consistent coaching from instructional specialists refine culturally responsive practice.	P5, P7	"DOI gives consistent coaching."

The experiences of J-1 Filipino Science teachers illustrate how culturally responsive instruction became a foundational strategy for navigating linguistic and cultural diversity. Teachers emphasized the use of visuals, structured notes, modeling, and vocabulary routines, particularly when teaching emergent bilinguals. One participant noted that "visual cues help EB learners," underscoring the need for multimodal supports in science instruction. These practices reflect Villaver's (2024) Adaptive Cross-Cultural Pedagogy Theory, which underscores that effective instruction in diverse classrooms requires flexible communication approaches tailored to students' linguistic needs. Similarly, Hinojosa et al. (2024) emphasize the role of digital and visual tools in enhancing conceptual understanding during inquiry-based learning, reinforcing the teachers' use of multimodal scaffolds.

Participants also described drawing on peer support and home-language use to enhance comprehension. Encouraging peer helpers and allowing brief L1 discussions helped students process complex scientific terms and concepts—an approach consistent with Jung and Choe's (2024) findings that culturally diverse classrooms benefit from collaborative structures that validate multilingual identities. These strategies align with broader literature on transnational teaching identities, suggesting that effective navigation of cultural differences involves both instructional adaptation and relational attunement (Zheng, Tripp, & Liu, 2024).

Beyond instructional scaffolding, teachers enacted culturally relevant pedagogy by integrating cultural connections into science lessons. Participants explained that linking content to students' lived experiences improved comprehension and engagement, as illustrated in the statement: "Used cultural comparisons in lessons." This echoes the conclusions of Bright and

Heyting (2024), who found that expatriate teachers develop agency and responsiveness when they embrace culturally grounded pedagogical approaches. Teachers further highlighted the importance of affirming student identity, noting that allowing students to share cultural experiences "boosts engagement." Such practices align with the culturally sustaining perspectives of international educators documented by Oca and Malaga (2025), who emphasized that migrant teachers often serve as cultural mediators, bridging diverse classroom narratives.

The teachers' accounts also highlighted the pivotal role of collaborative support systems, particularly through professional learning communities (PLCs) and team planning structures. Participants described how "PLC guides instructional changes," demonstrating that shared data analysis and co-planning serve as mechanisms for culturally responsive lesson modification. This aligns with the Global Partnership for Education's (2025) synthesis, which asserts that sustained, collaborative professional development is essential for teacher growth, especially in culturally diverse contexts. Yan (2021) similarly emphasized that mentoring and collegial collaboration provide emotional grounding and pedagogical confidence for foreign-born teachers navigating new cultural landscapes.

Finally, consistent coaching and administrative support emerged as crucial elements in helping teachers refine their instructional practices. Participants explained that instructional specialists provided feedback through walkthroughs and ongoing guidance, with one stating that "DOI gives consistent coaching." This experience resonates with Rathinam's (2024) study, which found that structured administrative support significantly helps international teachers adapt to U.S. classroom norms, particularly in communication, behavior expectations, and culturally responsive practice. Lockhart (2021) likewise documented that J-1 teachers rely heavily on supportive leadership structures during their cultural adjustment process, highlighting the importance of mentorship and institutional scaffolding.

Overall, the lived experiences of J-1 Filipino Science teachers demonstrate that navigating cultural differences in U.S. classrooms requires a synthesis of pedagogical adaptation, cultural attunement, and collaborative support. Their practices reflect a shift toward responsive, inclusive, and identity-affirming teaching—an approach consistent with transformative learning principles, wherein educators deepen self-awareness and reshape their instructional identity through cross-cultural interactions (Cardiff Metropolitan University, 2025). These findings underscore that effective communication and cultural responsiveness are not peripheral adjustments but central components of the teachers' evolving pedagogical identities within globally diverse educational environments.

3. Influence of J-1 Experiences on Professional Identity and Teaching Practices

The lived experiences of J-1 Filipino Science teachers revealed profound shifts in how they perceive themselves as educators and how they enact their instructional responsibilities within U.S. classrooms. Their narratives indicate that participation in the J-1 program serves as both a professional catalyst and a transformative developmental process—reshaping identity, expanding pedagogical competence, and prompting reorientation of long-term career goals. As teachers engaged with new instructional expectations, cultural norms, and systemic demands, they developed heightened resilience, broadened perspectives, and renewed commitments to inclusive and equitable practices. Table 3 presents the significant dimensions of identity transformation emerging from their accounts.

Table 3. *Influence of J-1 Experiences on Professional Identity and Teaching*

Practices				
Theme	Subtheme	Formulated Meanings	Participants	Participant Evidence (Condensed)
Transformation of Professional Identity	Resilience and adaptability	Teachers develop stronger reflective habits, strategic thinking, and adaptive mindsets as they navigate challenges abroad.	P1, P3, P5	"Became more strategic and reflective."
	Humility and broadened perspective	Role transitions cultivate humility, patience, and openness to diverse teaching cultures.	P2, P4	"A humbling experience; strengthened patience."
Expansion of Instructional Competence	Data- and literacy-driven teaching	Increased competence in using data to drive interventions and integrating literacy skills into science instruction.	P3, P6	"Data guides intervention daily."
	Inquiry and restorative approaches	Adoption of inquiry routines, CER strategies, lab investigations, discourse structures, and restorative practices.	P1, P4, P7	"Inquiry and structured talk improved learning."
Shift in Professional Goals	Equity and inclusion	Teachers express stronger commitments to supporting marginalized or low-performing learners.	P2, P5	"Focus now on empowering low-performing students."
	Global educator outlook	Teachers aspire to apply U.S.-acquired strategies and perspectives upon returning to the Philippines.	P6, P7	"Plan to bring back methods to PH."

A central theme emerging from the participants' accounts is the transformation of professional identity, characterized by heightened resilience, adaptability, and reflective capacity. Teachers explained that their experiences abroad pushed them to become "more strategic and reflective," underscoring the emotional and cognitive recalibration required when navigating a new

educational landscape. This aligns with the findings of Macapagong et al. (2023), who noted that Filipino teachers working internationally undergo significant personal and professional growth as they confront cultural differences, institutional challenges, and heightened expectations. Similarly, Zheng, Tripp, and Liu (2024) argue that identity reconstruction is an ongoing, transformative process for science teachers, shaped by interactions with new contexts and communities of practice.

Another defining dimension of identity transformation was humility and a broadened perspective. Participants described their J-1 journey as "a humbling experience" that strengthened patience and openness, reflecting Bright and Heyting's (2024) finding that expatriate teachers experience profound shifts in worldview and professional purpose when exposed to alternative educational cultures. Rathinam (2024) likewise documented those international teachers often confront vulnerability during their transition but eventually develop professional maturity as they adapt to U.S. expectations. These identity shifts are consistent with transformative learning theory (Cardiff Metropolitan University, 2025), which posits that exposure to disorienting experiences prompts critical reflection and long-term personal change.

Participants also reported significant expansion in instructional competence, particularly in data-driven teaching and literacy integration. Teachers highlighted improvements in using assessment data to guide interventions, implementing structured vocabulary routines, and embedding literacy tasks into science lessons—skills not traditionally emphasized in Philippine classrooms. These developments mirror the instructional shifts described by the Texas Education Agency (2024), which positions literacy and data use as essential components of science instruction. Muñoz, Pando, and Liu (2024) further note that sustained professional development enhances teachers' capacity to implement inquiry-based and reflective instructional practices—changes clearly reflected in the participants' adoption of CER writing, structured discourse, and laboratory investigations.

Participants also indicated that they adopted inquiry-based and restorative approaches, reporting that "inquiry and structured talk improved learning." This aligns with Hinostroza et al. (2024), who emphasize the role of inquiry models and discourse routines in deepening student understanding. Such practices mark a clear departure from the traditional lecture-based approaches common in the Philippines and contribute to teachers' evolving instructional identities.

The teachers' experiences further revealed a notable shift in professional goals, particularly a deepened commitment to equity and inclusion. One participant explained that their current focus is on "empowering low-performing students," demonstrating a shift toward justice-oriented pedagogy. Villaver's (2024) Adaptive Cross-Cultural Pedagogy Theory supports this finding, noting that international teachers often develop stronger dispositions toward culturally responsive and inclusive science instruction. This also resonates with UNESCO's (2024) global teacher report, which underscores equity-centered teaching as a critical competency in diverse 21st-century classrooms.

Finally, teachers described developing a global educator outlook, expressing a desire to transfer the pedagogical insights gained in the U.S. back to the Philippines—"Plan to bring back methods to PH." This mirrors insights from Real and Flordeliz (2024), who found that overseas Filipino teachers often aspire to reinvest their global learning into their home communities. Such aspirations affirm that J-1 experiences not only shape teachers' present roles but also influence their long-term professional trajectories and visions for educational improvement in their home country.

Collectively, these findings demonstrate that participation in the J-1 Visa Program profoundly shapes the professional identity and teaching practices of Filipino science teachers. Through exposure to new pedagogical frameworks, cultural contexts, and institutional structures, teachers engage in continuous reflection, adaptation, and identity negotiation. As they expand their instructional repertoire, redefine professional goals, and reconceptualize their roles within global education systems, their experiences embody the transformative potential of international teaching assignments. These shifts reinforce the importance of structured support, reflective practice, and culturally responsive frameworks in fostering educators' growth in transnational contexts.

4. Proposed Training Program for Preparing Filipino Science Teachers for Global Teaching Contexts

The lived experiences of J-1 Filipino Science teachers revealed that successful participation in international teaching contexts requires more than procedural orientation or short-term policy interventions. Participants emphasized the need for a structured and comprehensive training program that systematically prepares teachers for the pedagogical, cultural, emotional, and institutional demands of teaching in U.S. public schools. Drawing on their narratives, the proposed training program integrates pre-departure preparation, instructional resource support, and sustained professional assistance to address the multidimensional challenges Filipino educators abroad face. Table 4 presents the proposed training program, outlining specific training components, timelines, required resources, and expected outputs grounded in participants' lived experiences.

Participants in the proposed training program reflect the participants' shared recognition that effective global teaching preparation must be holistic, continuous, and experience-based. Enhanced pre-departure preparation emerged as a foundational component, particularly in classroom management, standards alignment, and cultural communication. Participants highlighted that exposure to realistic classroom scenarios and explicit orientation to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) would have reduced early instructional stress and improved their confidence during initial classroom engagement. This finding supports

previous studies indicating that international teachers often struggle with behavior management and standards-based instruction when preparation is insufficient (Rathinam, 2024; Lockhart, 2021).

Instructional resource support was identified as a critical factor in easing the transition of Filipino Science teachers into U.S. classrooms. Participants reported that access to ready-made, standards-aligned instructional materials and digital tools prior to deployment would significantly reduce instructional workload during the adjustment period. Providing curated resources enables teachers to focus on classroom interaction, student engagement, and instructional refinement rather than on excessive lesson preparation. This aligns with Hinostroza et al. (2024), who emphasized that access to instructional resources and educational technologies enhances the implementation of inquiry-based science instruction in diverse learning environments.

Ongoing professional support, particularly through coaching, mentoring, and emotional readiness training, was also emphasized as essential for sustained professional growth and well-being. Participants noted that mentorship should extend beyond initial onboarding and continue throughout the academic year to support instructional decision-making, cultural adjustment, and emotional resilience. Emotional readiness training was viewed as equally important, as teachers frequently experienced stress, homesickness, and cultural dislocation while adapting to unfamiliar educational systems. These findings corroborate earlier research highlighting the importance of mentoring and emotional support in fostering immigrant teachers' sense of belonging and professional stability (Yan, 2021; Brazas, 2023).

Finally, participants stressed the need for explicit orientation to U.S. administrative structures, leadership hierarchies, and discipline protocols. Understanding institutional processes was perceived as vital for effective communication, compliance with school policies, and professional integration. This underscores that instructional competence alone is insufficient for successful global teaching; teachers must also be equipped with institutional literacy to navigate school systems confidently.

Overall, the proposed training program operationalizes the lived experiences of J-1 Filipino Science teachers into a practical and implementable framework. By integrating standards-based preparation, culturally responsive pedagogy, the development of emotional resilience, and sustained professional support, the program addresses the interconnected challenges of international teaching. These findings affirm that preparing Filipino science teachers for global contexts requires a comprehensive training approach that fosters adaptability, reflective practice, and long-term professional growth.

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the study's results. The summary highlights the major findings in relation to the research questions, while the conclusions synthesize the insights derived from them. Recommendations are then proposed to strengthen the preparation, support, and professional development of Filipino science teachers participating in the J-1 Visa Program, as well as to enhance their instructional effectiveness and cultural adaptability in global teaching contexts.

1. The study shows that J-1 Filipino Science teachers experienced significant instructional and cultural adjustments upon transitioning to the U.S. educational system. Findings indicate that teachers were required to align instruction with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), follow structured pacing guides, and implement data-driven and inquiry-based teaching approaches, which differed markedly from their prior teaching experiences in the Philippines.
2. Results reveal that teachers addressed cultural and communication challenges through culturally responsive instructional practices. These included visual supports, modeling, vocabulary routines, peer-assisted learning, and culturally relevant examples to support linguistically and culturally diverse learners. Collaboration with colleagues, participation in professional learning communities, and guidance from instructional coaches and school leaders were essential in facilitating effective classroom communication and inclusion.
3. The findings indicate that participation in the J-1 Visa Program significantly influenced teachers' professional identity and teaching practices. Teachers developed increased resilience, adaptability, and reflective capacity, alongside enhanced instructional competence in inquiry-based instruction, literacy integration, and data-informed decision-making. Their experiences strengthened their commitment to equity, inclusion, and global-minded teaching.
4. The study further shows that teachers identified the need for a structured training program to better prepare Filipino science teachers for global teaching contexts. Key components identified include pre-departure orientation on TEKS and assessment systems, classroom management preparation, cultural communication training, access to instructional resources, development of emotional readiness, and sustained mentorship to support instructional effectiveness and professional well-being.

Based on the major findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Their experiences reveal that aligning with TEKS, implementing inquiry-based instruction, and navigating behavior-intensive classroom environments require substantial adaptation. These adjustments reshape teachers' professional identities, develop their reflective capacities, and deepen their understanding of student-centered and data-driven approaches.
2. Teachers rely on scaffolds, visuals, vocabulary routines, and culturally relevant examples to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps. Their ability to integrate students' identities and establish culturally affirming learning environments highlights the centrality of relational competence in multicultural education.

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3. Through exposure to diverse learners, rigorous instructional expectations, and collaborative professional structures, teachers develop new skills in inquiry, literacy integration, data use, and restorative practices. Their goals shift toward equity, inclusion, and global-minded teaching, demonstrating a transformative redefinition of their professional identity.
4. Teachers emphasize that pre-departure preparation should include TEKS orientation, classroom management simulations, cultural communication training, and emotional readiness development. Access to instructional resources and sustained mentorship is essential for easing the transition and ensuring instructional effectiveness in international classrooms.
5. The findings affirm that global teaching success depends not only on technical competence but also on teachers' capacity to navigate cultural differences, collaborate with diverse school communities, and adapt to leadership and behavioral frameworks unique to host-country contexts. Comprehensive preparation enhances teachers' resilience, confidence, and instructional effectiveness abroad.

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the preparation, support, and long-term development of Filipino science teachers entering global teaching contexts, particularly under the J-1 Visa Program:

1. Institutions and training providers may strengthen pre-departure programs by integrating standards-based and culturally grounded preparation modules.

Pre-departure training should include TEKS orientation, analysis of the pacing guide, assessment expectations (STAAR/AP), and realistic classroom management simulations that reflect actual U.S. behavior norms. Such modules will equip Filipino teachers with foundational instructional competence while reducing the steepness of the adjustment curve upon deployment.

2. Cultural communication and language development programs may be incorporated into the training of outgoing Filipino teachers.

Structured activities focused on English fluency, academic vocabulary, accent clarity, and culturally adaptive communication can help teachers navigate diverse U.S. classrooms more easily. These programs should also cultivate cultural humility, Awareness of American school norms, and strategies for engaging multilingual learners.

3. Educational agencies and partner institutions may provide resource-based support to reduce instructional burden during the transition period.

Teachers may be supplied with TEKS-aligned instructional materials, sample lesson plans, assessment templates, CER and inquiry routines, and access to digital platforms prior to deployment. Ensuring that teachers have ready-made and standards-aligned resources can improve instructional quality while preventing burnout during their early months abroad.

4. Mentorship and ongoing professional learning should be sustained throughout the first year of teaching in the host country.

Structured coaching cycles, PLC participation, observation and feedback routines, and leadership support are essential to strengthening instructional practice and emotional well-being. Mentorship should not end after onboarding; instead, it should continue consistently as teachers navigate cultural adjustment, instructional demands, and institutional expectations.

5. Training programs may incorporate emotional resilience and well-being components to prepare teachers for the psychological demands of migration.

Workshops on stress management, homesickness, culture shock, and work-life balance may be included in pre-departure and ongoing PD. Providing tools for emotional regulation and reflective practice can help teachers cope with the pressures of teaching in a foreign environment and maintain professional stability.

6. Orientation modules may be developed to clarify U.S. school leadership structures, discipline systems, and administrative processes.

A clear introduction to disciplinary hierarchies, referral systems, communication protocols, and instructional expectations can help teachers navigate institutional frameworks more confidently. Understanding these systems contributes to smoother school integration and reduces role confusion and procedural challenges.

7. Future research may explore longitudinal outcomes of Filipino Science teachers who return to the Philippines after their J-1 experience.

Studies may examine global teaching experiences and their influences on instructional practices, leadership trajectories, and contributions to Philippine science education. Comparative studies across states, visa pathways, or teaching levels may also expand understanding of diverse migration experiences.

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