

Students of diverse backgrounds have come and gone the vestibule of ESA for a decade now – each leaving his or her own unique mark on the halls and walls and then off they wander to the vast embrace of the uneven earth. Some have pursued the calling of the world while a few decided to walk the road less travelled.

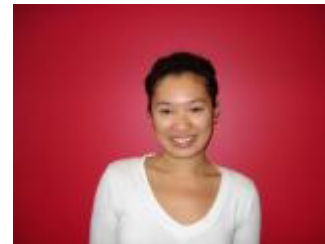
As I was going through the list of some former students, I came across an interesting character working in one of the busiest cities of the Country Down Under. The last name is rather familiar so I decided to consider a probe. Her name is Florence Altarejos, an accountant working in an insurance company in Sydney called Dual Australia.

She entered ESA in 2002 deeming that it would bestow her the opportunity to travel overseas while finishing her studies. She started as a marketing major in ESA and continued her studies at Macquarie University in Australia, thus completing a Bachelor degree in Commerce majoring in both Marketing and Accounting.

I find her quite an anomaly in the world I thought is imposing of its traditions and formed rules because of how she describes herself as an “Outlier” (She attracted more my interest when she added, “If you do not know what that means it is worth googling.”) I was actually not sure if she was referring to the outlying observations in statistics but I would like to remember her that way for two reasons. The first is a given – because literally and geographically, she is miles and miles away from her home country; and second because of how random and nonconforming her thinking is – one needs to read in between the lines to appreciate what she’s trying to impart.

She shared that prior to entering ESA, she was expecting every student to be grade wise competitive which happened not to be the case. The students in her year level were very laid back which according to her has its plus-and-minuses. “The plus is that at least you would not go crazy dwelling on why you did not get a higher mark and the minus is that you just fail,” she put in. Nonconforming as she is, she made sure that her college life was balanced. She had a “work hard, party hard” type of mentality so that she would be in events socializing and would disappear for three weeks getting ready for exams. It was a necessary choice as she believed that a step backward is two steps forward.

## DIFFERENT HUE OF LIFE



When she was asked of the school’s vision and mission if it is on track, she answered openly, “I think it is a huge task to create entrepreneurs – ESA is not there yet but it is on the right track achieving its mission.” She advised that students should consistently challenge themselves as there is always room for improvement.

She reiterated that the knowledge of the fundamentals of the real world she acquired from ESA (i.e. basic accounting skills and the “street smart” skills) is being utilized on a daily basis. She even recounted the debits and the credits she learned in her accounting class with Sir Ed and the masquerade party called “De Voiler”, which she and her classmates came up with that turned out to be a success even if they did not have any experience on event organizing.

Albeit an outlier as she wants to be known for, one may actually see it to be quite farfetched as her current work requires accuracy and numerical conformity. As an accountant, her eyes are glued on spreadsheets and a typical day for her would involve running reports for managers and analyzing data. Nevertheless, I guess this unpredictable conformity is yet another deviation from commonness just like her response when she was asked of her parting words - “I have to get back to work.” It may be good to decipher her message on this last quote but I reckon that it is wiser to leave it for anyone to ponder upon for I believe that a more intelligent interpretation can be had by him or her who seeks.