

# AAALGrads

THE AAAL GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

## BUILDING COMMUNITY

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

**Congratulations to the winners of AAALGrads logo design competition,**  
**Nicole Deschene**  
**(New York University)**  
**Tianfang Wang**  
**(Pennsylvania State University)**

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# LETTER FROM THE CO-EDITORS

This edition concentrates on the theme “Building Community” in applied linguistics. We selected this theme because it is crucial that graduate students initiate and sustain professional partnerships with researchers, practitioners, and other graduate students within the field of applied linguistics. Technological advancements enable communication across continents, yet still what is needed is supportive professional communities if we are to continue to thrive in this field.

This newsletter responds to the need for professional communities by inviting graduate students to explore this important topic and consider ways to strengthen our professional partnerships in our research practices and in this field. As such, the question, *How can we build community as researchers and practitioners in applied linguistics?*, warrants further exploration in this edition of the AAALGrads Newsletter. The collection of feature articles, resource reviews, and creative expression pieces answers this call and urges us to attend to this topic more closely. The first article is a personal reflection of how two graduate students from different countries developed a professional partnership and friendship through shared research interests. The second article offers insight into how international graduate students navigate the pressures to publish scholarly articles and present at conferences as emerging scholars in the field. The third article urges us to prioritize our own mental health by seeking out supportive mentoring relationships and attending to issues of self-care. We are also excited to include an interview with Dr. Christine Muir, the 2018 AAAL Dissertation Award Recipient, as she shares her dissertation journey and research interests with us.

Our resource reviews and creative expressions section promise to offer insights that challenge what it means to be part of a community of scholars and practitioners. The first review describes how the author uses TED Talks to connect with his students as he works to create an inclusive ESL classroom. In the second review, the author shows how a vocabulary website helps his students search for collocations and choose the appropriate word choice to encourage participation in the English-speaking community. The first creative piece provides a practical example of how a graduate student confronts her own language ideologies and encourages her students to undertake a similar critical reflection. The second creative expression piece is a poem that conveys the various, sometimes tangled emotions that a graduate student experiences in her pursuit to belong to a community.

As we continue to strive to cultivate our professional communities, we hope to provide opportunities for graduate students to share their experiences with those of similar interests. In this way, we aim to continue to be a place that works toward building inclusive professional communities in our field.

Amanda and Jessica  
Co-editors (2018-2019)

# LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

It is the last year for us to serve on the GSC steering committee, and we can confidently say that 2018-2019 definitely has been the year that has increased the presence of the Graduate Student Council in AAAL.

In keeping with the ongoing discussion of diversity in AAAL at large, our social media team organized a webinar, "Navigating Academia as a Minority Scholar." Dr. Hatime Çiftçi (Bahçeşehir University), Dr. Usree Bhattacharya (University of Georgia), and Dr. Nelson Flores (University of Pennsylvania) shared their experiences and tips on not only surviving but also thriving in academia as scholars from underrepresented groups. We especially loved Dr. Nelson Flores's reminder that impostor syndrome is not the problem of individuals but rather of the system and the establishment of academia. We hope our final webinar of this year, "Preparing for the Conference: Strategies for Maximizing your Experience," will help you make the best out of the upcoming AAAL conference in your networking, mentoring, and learning.

Speaking of which, we hope you are reading our blog posts closely because our social media team has been unrolling blog posts to help make your conference trip more enjoyable! Stay up to date on our AAALGrads blog: <https://www.aaal-gsc.org/blog/>.

We would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the winners of the design competition for our fundraiser. As a continued initiative to raise more funds to support Graduate Student Awards, this year we will be selling an insulated water bottle and a phone wallet at the 2019 conference in Atlanta. We received many submissions from talented artists from our graduate student community. Congrats to **Nicole Deschene (New York University)** and **Tianfang Wang (Pennsylvania State University)**! Their designs will appear on the water bottles and phone wallets, respectively. Just as last year, the proceeds will go toward funding for graduate student members of AAAL. The GSC steering committee is working with the Executive Council to create more opportunities for grad student awards, so please consider purchasing the water bottle or phone wallet (or both!).

There are a few more important events coming up in the 2019 conference in Atlanta. Just as in previous years, we are planning three events for graduate students: (1) Graduate Student Meet and Greet (Friday, March 8 at 8 p.m.) (2) Utilizing Your Networks for Publishing and Job Hunting (Saturday, March 9 at 12 p.m.), and (3) Making a Successful Transition: Preparing a Winning Professional Portfolio (Monday March 11 at 6:35 p.m.). This year, we have broadened the scope of our events for those who are considering a career in academia or beyond. We hope to see you all at these events!

Finally, we would like to give a shout-out to our awesome GSC steering committee members and the volunteers in the Social Media Subcommittee and two graduate student event subcommittees. We want to thank all these individuals for their dedication to making the GSC initiatives possible.

Rae and Michael

# HIGHLIGHTS & HAPPENINGS

## GSC Webinar Series of 2018-2019

BY JAMES CODA, GSC MEMBER-AT-LARGE

To uphold the AAAL Student Council's mission of supporting graduate students' professional development, the 2018-2019 AAAL Social Media Subcommittee has provided webinars and increased our social media presence to facilitate outreach. This year, the Social Media Subcommittee consisted of Nicole Deschene (New York University), Andrea Lypka (University of South Florida), and Maria Ruiz-Martinez (University of Colorado-Boulder), with James Coda (University of Georgia) serving as the AAAL GSC Steering Committee Member-At-Large. In September, our first webinar, "Preparing Documents for the Job Market," brought together four early-career and established scholars to offer tips for preparing job documents and going on the job market. The second webinar in December entitled, "Navigating Academia as a Minority Scholar," included three scholars who discussed their experiences as scholars from underrepresented groups in the academy. Our final webinar in February, "Preparing for the Conference: Strategies for Maximizing Your Experience," featured two established scholars and a graduate student who provided suggestions for networking, mentoring, learning, and planning at the upcoming AAAL conference. If you are interested in tips for networking and presenting at the conference, visit our new YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOvyZCPJd5H0YQF096eCSg>

For more tips and info about the upcoming AAAL conference in Atlanta, visit our blog:

<https://www.aal-gsc.org/blog>

Have questions, suggestions, or feedback for the GSC Steering Committee? We value your input and take your concerns seriously! Please never hesitate to contact us with issues big or small:

[aalgrads@gmail.com](mailto:aalgrads@gmail.com). To stay up-to-date with the GSC, follow us on our social media outlets on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, all @AAALGrads.

## AAAL 2019 Grad Student Events

**Sheraton Atlanta**

### Grad Student Meet and Greet

*Friday, March 8, 2019  
8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.  
Pool side*

Kick off the conference with some drinks by the pool! Meet the GSC Steering Committee and get to know other grad students!

### Utilizing Your Networks for Publishing and Job Hunting

*Saturday, March 9, 2019  
12:00 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.  
Georgia 13*

Learn how to network for publishing and job opportunities from a panel of early-career applied linguists! Panelists will discuss how utilizing their networks has benefited their careers, for instance, in authoring special editions of journals or books, and what they wish they had known about networking. Registration required:

<https://tinyurl.com/gscsuncheon>

### Making a Successful Transition: Preparing a Winning Professional Portfolio

*Monday, March 11, 2019  
6:35 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
Georgia 13*

Curious about how grad students make their CV shine? Does preparing job documents for your dream job seem like a daunting task? Join us in this workshop dinner as you prepare for the job market! Learn how to make your job documents fit the job descriptions. Panelists will work hands-on with participants to build more effective CVs and discuss other professional job documents along the way.

Registration required:  
<https://tinyurl.com/gscdinner2019>

# INTERVIEW WITH THE 2018 AAAL DISSERTATION AWARD RECIPIENT

By Jessica Lian, GSC Member-at-large

*Dr. Christine Muir is an assistant professor in Second Language Acquisition at the University of Nottingham. She received her PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Nottingham. Her research has been largely centered around a novel motivational framework: directed motivational currents (DMCs), which Muir defines as “an intense motivational drive capable of both stimulating and supporting long-term behavior, such as language learning.” She is the winner of the 2018 AAAL Dissertation Award for her dissertation, “The dynamics of intense long-term motivation in language learning: Directed Motivational Currents in theory and practice.” I talked to Dr. Muir to learn more about her work and her PhD journey.*

**J: For those of us who might not be as familiar with your work, could you just tell us a little bit about yourself?**

Christine: I finished my PhD here at the University of Nottingham in 2016 and now work here as an Assistant Professor in Second Language Acquisition. I'm getting used to life after the PhD, and still doing motivation research!

**J: How did you find yourself on this research path in motivation?**

C: I started out as an English language teacher before I came over to the research side of things. The theoretical side is of course foundational, but actually the practical implications of the research that we do is something that has always been quite central to my thinking and the things I've been interested in. Motivation and the psychology of the language learner have always been

interests I've had even when I was teaching.

**J: How did you decide to pursue a PhD specifically?**

C: I think I fell into it in some ways. I was doing my Master's at the time at The University of Edinburgh. Before that, I had been teaching abroad in Prague. I came back to the U.K. to get my Master's with a plan to go back abroad to get better teaching jobs. I never had any clear plans to go into academia! I'd always had in the back of my mind that I'd like to do a PhD, but never thought I'd have the opportunity. Various things fell into place while I was doing my Master's, which opened the door. So, when I finished, I applied to start a PhD instead.

**J: I was wondering if you could tell us a little more about your dissertation process. How did you decide on this topic, the methods, and the design?**

C: I will always remember my first email to my supervisor (Prof. Zoltán Dörnyei) asking him if he would be willing to supervise me and our first meeting as well. I remember that in both, I think I rambled on about all the different things I was excited to investigate further—motivation, individual differences, Complexity Theory, and a whole host of things I'd come across throughout my MSc, but that I hadn't really been able to explore. I was sure I hadn't presented myself in nearly a coherent enough way that he would be interested in taking me on! (Happily this wasn't the case!) Zoltán shared the beginnings of an idea that he'd had in the back of his mind for a little

while, and it ticked all of the things I was interested in.

So, we tentatively started developing this idea together, which wasn't called a *Directed Motivational Current (DMC)* at the time! Another PhD student also started at around the same time as me—Zana Ibrahim—and we all worked to try to understand if this was a thing, or if this was something that we'd just got very excited about, but actually didn't have any theoretical basis! We started writing about it, and as soon as we did, we began to hear from people all over the world who had read our work, writing to us to tell us about their own experiences of DMCs. And so, I started to interview all these people who were contacting us.

I thought this would be the data I'd use as the basis for my PhD, but actually much of this went into the book, *Motivational Currents in Language Learning*, in collaboration with Zoltán Dörnyei and Alastair Henry. Yet, there were still two burning questions that we didn't have answers for. First, we had started to confirm that the core features of the DMC framework seemed to hold true, but we had no idea how generalizable this was. So, we needed some sort of questionnaire study to try to start to explore this globally—this became the first part of my dissertation. The second study in my dissertation addressed the other major question I had, which was linked back to my time as a teacher. In the back of my mind, I wanted to know, *what could we do with this?* How could we help learners? Could we take our understanding of how an individual/group DMC functions and put it to work in a classroom?

The best way we thought we could answer this was through intensive group projects. So, I contacted someone who since has become a wonderful friend of mine—Jessica. She was one of the people who initially contacted us after seeing one of our articles because she had witnessed a

group DMC with her students! I asked her if she would be willing to collaborate, and this is the point at which her colleague, David, became involved too. We worked together to develop the same project idea that Jessica had used previously, building in all the components that we thought would be important to be able to facilitate the emergence of this type of strong motivational current. I collected as much data as possible both from teachers and students to see if we could see any evidence of a group DMC emerging—and amazingly, we did!

**J: That sounds like a long, complex process. Was there a lot of collaboration involved?**

C: Yes, absolutely! The PhD can be quite a lonely process sometimes, but actually, there's also a lot of collaboration, and I've really enjoyed this part of it. For this second study, Jessica and David were absolutely fantastic and invested an incredible amount of time and work—I simply couldn't have done it without them! We actually have a paper under review at the moment that we're publishing together. With my first study too—the questionnaire study—I couldn't have achieved it without the kindness of colleagues sharing the link with students and so on. I'm very grateful to everyone I've worked with.

**The PhD can be quite a lonely process sometimes, but actually, there's also a lot of collaboration.**

**J: What would you say were the biggest challenges you encountered when you were working on your dissertation?**

C: I suppose the enormity of it. It becomes tough when you think about everything you have to do because it's a huge process that goes on for many years, and there are many things you have to (and want to) achieve. It becomes a bit unwieldy! Of course, the work, the analysis—getting all of that done is a challenge, but that's part of the process. In some ways, the PhD feels like a baptism of fire into the world of academia, but it has been an incredible experience at the same time.

**J: Can you tell us a bit about the current research projects that you're working on?**

C: I'm currently working on a few different things. I'm writing up my PhD research as a manuscript for Multilingual Matters, which is really exciting. And, I'm writing up several other papers as well, drawing on the same ideas—for example, a practical chapter looking at researching group DMCs/group-level motivation from a "complexity" perspective. In many ways, this is all the culmination of my time as a PhD student over the last few years—it's an exciting, but slightly emotional time as well!

I'm also working on several other things. I worked as an RA for a year before I was offered this permanent position and worked on several projects that year—for example, investigating language learner role models—so we're working on completing analysis and the publication

of this work too.

In all honesty, I don't know what's next. I have lots of ideas—I don't know whether other PhD students feel this way too—that I have been saving up, because I haven't had time to think about them properly! I'm actually on research leave in the autumn, which is fantastic. I will be working on revisions for the Multilingual Matters manuscript, and I'll be putting together plans for my next steps too. It's an exciting time! Slightly daunting of course too, starting off in a new part of my career, but I'm trying again not to look too much at the big picture, and to just focus on next steps. And trying to enjoy the ride too, of course!

**J: It sounds like even after graduating and finishing your dissertation, there's still this long process of publishing your work. How did you feel when you finished your dissertation?**

C: There's a moment of anticlimax. I don't know what the process is at other institutions, but at the University of Nottingham, when you submit your dissertation, you go to an office in an administration building. You have your dissertation, and you give it to them, and they say, "Thank you very much." You get a receipt.

That's it! You go home, probably do the washing up if you haven't done it yet...

The advice that I was given was to take someone with you when you submit your dissertation, so you can go for a celebratory coffee together or something. Otherwise, you're just left standing there with your receipt!

**In some ways, the PhD feels like a baptism of fire into the world of academia, but it's been an incredible experience at the same time.**

Actually, you're sort of on hold until you have your viva.\* I remember after the viva, I had to complete my revisions. That process of having to go back into it is quite tough. You want it to be as good as it can be, and you know the ideas and suggestions that came up in your viva are good ones that you want to incorporate. But still, having to sit down again...I suppose that becomes tough because you're ready for it to be the end.

*\*For all the non-British PhD candidates, a viva is also called a defense.*

**J: Can you tell us a bit about how you first got involved with AAAL?**

C: AAAL was this magical place that I'd heard about for a long time before I was actually able to attend—every year the department at Nottingham would empty as everyone would travel over for the conference! I was only able to go quite recently—first in Portland, Oregon in 2017 and then at Chicago in 2018. In Portland, I presented my paper, tried to see as much as I could, but unfortunately I had to fly straight back to the U.K. for a job interview. In Chicago, I flew out a few days before and stayed a few days after (Chicago is a fantastic city!), and I had an incredible time at the conference! It was academically inspiring, and brilliant socially as well.

**J: How did you hear about the AAAL dissertation award? What was that process like?**

C: It's not something that I was aware of or deliberately working towards. My supervisor highlighted it, and he said that I should think about it. I didn't expect anything to come of it, but I completed the paperwork and submitted it, and was then invited to submit a longer summary of my dissertation.

It was just before the end of December,

**To be able to teach, to be able to publish, to be able to collaborate, to be able to present—all of these are important for life after the Ph.D.**

just before the Christmas holidays, at the end of what was an overwhelmingly busy semester, that I received an email from Tim McNamara saying, "Congratulations!" I didn't quite understand at first because I thought the deadline to receive the news had actually passed! I remember sitting there and being completely shocked. It was an entirely unexpected, wonderful surprise!

**J: Do you have any advice that you would want to leave with grad students—Master's or PhD?**

C: It's a tough process! There are times along the PhD process where I'm sure every PhD student has said, "This is too much! I can't do it!" So, I suppose I'd say, keep going... But also, say "yes!" I've been very lucky in the opportunities that I've had, but I think I've always tried to chase down a lot of opportunities too. I've worked hard, and I've said "yes" to everything that I possibly could, more than I thought I had time to do. There were certainly times when I thought, "I've taken on too much! This just isn't feasible! How do I meet all of these deadlines and deliver on things that I've promised?" But you find a way, because missing out on those

## Be sure to find something you're really passionate about. Choose a topic that you think you can live with for the next three, four years.

opportunities—to be able to teach, to be able to publish, to be able to collaborate, to be able to present—all of these are important for life after the PhD.

So, I suppose my advice would be to say yes, so you can also try to finish not just with a PhD but with a really strong CV too, so you put yourself in the best position possible for when you graduate. Think about what it is you want to do after and how you can put yourself in the best position to achieve it.

**J: You mentioned that you were a teacher before you decided to do your PhD. I was wondering, for the MA students who have been teaching for a while and are thinking about doing a PhD, do you have any advice for them or things they should think about?**

C: Perhaps, think about why you want it? It's tough! There's a certain amount of glamour about getting a doctorate, but it's definitely not enough to keep you going through all of the writing and all of the times when actually, the research is really tough.

Be sure to find something you're really passionate about. Choose a topic that you think you can live with for the next three,

four years. Actually, I'm still living with my PhD topic now, and I'm still really enjoying it. I think that's why I'm still here. Choose something you're passionate about that is linked to what you can see yourself doing after the PhD.

It's also really important to find the right supervisor, too, because it's such an important relationship. In the U.K., there aren't any taught components to the PhD program—it's all research based. So, you want to make sure you're on the same wavelength as your supervisor, and that you get on with them on a personal level as well. You want to work with a supervisor whose research aligns with yours—and who gets excited about the same things as you!

So, find something you're passionate about, and find someone who is equally passionate about it to work with you!

**J: Is there anything else you'd like to share?**

C: Well, I followed a bit of an indirect route into academia (as I think a lot of people do?). I actually started out as a classical musician. I was a cellist, and I moved to St. Petersburg and studied several years there at the Conservatory of Music, and that's where I started teaching English... And, I'm starting to play my cello again now! Amongst all the other things a PhD can offer, there is also light at the end of the tunnel for your life and passions outside of academia too!

Jessica Lian is a Ph.D. candidate in Applied Linguistics at Georgia State University. She is a Member-at-large on the AAAL GSC Steering Committee. Her dissertation explores the bilingual interactions of adult language brokers from the lens of translanguaging and resemiotization. Learn about her work at [www.jessicalian.com](http://www.jessicalian.com)

# Building Graduate Student Community on Both Sides of the Pond

**BY KRISTIN ROCK (UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA)  
AND SOPHIE MCBRIDE (UNIVERSITY OF MURCIA)**

The challenges we face upon entering a master's or a doctoral program at an unfamiliar university are numerous—a new campus, new colleagues, new expectations, and new bureaucratic requirements, to name a few. However, when the university is located in a different country, graduate students have a host of additional matters through which they hope to navigate successfully. In this article, we explore how we have built a supportive community among doctoral students from different programs located in different countries. Specifically, we discuss how we have supported one another through key obstacles ranging from accomplishing mundane tasks—such as obtaining a university ID card—to helping one another set and adhere to individual deadlines, to finding a sense of belonging within a diverse community of growing researchers.

Sophie McBride, a PhD candidate from Leeds, England, began her doctoral studies under the supervision of Lourdes Cerezo and Rosa María Manchón at the University of Murcia in Spain in October of 2017. Due to commonalities in the academic pursuits of Dr. Manchón and Marta González-Lloret, Kristin's PhD adviser at the University of Hawaii, Kristin applied for a prestigious scholarship that would allow her to conduct the research for her dissertation in Spain. As the recipient of a Fulbright Student Award, Kristin arrived in Murcia in September of 2018 to collect data on the use of analytic rubrics for second

language writing development. As Sophie was exploring the effects of the provision of various types of written corrective feedback on second language students' written production, Dr. Manchón invited us to a meeting in October of 2018 in which we recognized similarities between our research proposals. Not only did we see how we might be able to assist one another in proceeding with our respective data collections, but also this early connection proved to be a lifeline for Kristin. Shortly after the meeting, Sophie led Kristin through a number of seemingly simple—though ultimately complex—tasks, such as obtaining a University of Murcia ID card, gaining access to the university library, and finding an office from which to work.

Upon embarking on the PhD journey, many individuals discover that the endeavor is largely undertaken in solitude. PhD candidates spend hours working alone following a personal timetable and attempting to hold themselves accountable to individually set deadlines. Although this scenario may prove idyllic for some students, for others, the isolation can produce complications that lessen the motivation to persevere. Hence, as a community, we have committed to working a little each day on our research, discussing periodically which elements we would be working on, and even asking for early morning inspiration when our Microsoft Word documents remained untouched. We have encouraged each other to set realistic deadlines and to hold each other

accountable for reaching them. Establishing deadlines such as “read X article,” “work for 25 minutes on X consent form,” and “email X individual about recruiting participants” has pushed us academically while simultaneously providing room for the celebration of small successes. Certainly, one of the most rewarding outcomes of encouraging each other to set deadlines is that upon meeting those deadlines, we have tangible products that we can share not just with each other, but also with other graduate students in the Department of English Philology. This mutually supportive, yet rigorous atmosphere has become a key aspect of our budding graduate student community.

An initial confrontation with decades of research in Applied Linguistics can prove overwhelming, and at the start of our respective graduate programs, we admit to feeling as if we were barely making headway. In addition to this pressure, shortly after meeting, we realized that the scope of our academic formation had been distinct. We found that whereas we were both familiar

**Coming from two different countries and meeting in a third, extremely distinct one, we have grown incredibly as individuals, learning a great deal about the host country, Spain, about the other’s country, and in turn, about our own.**

with seminal articles and a small collection of books related to our field of study, we each had knowledge of studies and theoretical articles that the other did not possess. Thankfully, these different sets of knowledge have created a rich opportunity for the sharing of materials. When one of us recognized that a particular individual’s research might be relevant for the other’s project, we took the time to summarize the piece not only for the benefit of both of our in-progress literature reviews, but also for the convenience of fellow colleagues. Knowing that the summary would have a captive audience was additional motivation to take seriously a potentially mundane task, upon the culmination of which we supplied each other with much welcomed praise and appreciation. The sharing of summaries of articles pertinent to the other’s investigation has also helped to mold our respective research into feasible projects.

Not only have we grown academically over the past year, but also we have laid the foundations for wonderful friendships, learning, as a community, about our varied cultures and customs. These friendships have helped us to create a social environment that has enabled us to work diligently on our doctoral studies while giving us the confidence and positivity to carry on. Coming from two different countries and meeting in a third, extremely distinct one, we have grown incredibly as individuals, learning a great deal about the host country, Spain, about the other’s country, and in turn, about our own. We have also picked up on various subtleties within the language we both claim as native: English. What at first were phrases and expressions alien to us (i.e., “happy days” to Kristin and “behind the eight ball” to Sophie) have become vernacular in our instant messages and emails. In addition, the mix of British English, American English, and Spanish can be seen (and heard) on a regular basis. We have learned that perhaps our conception of time may not be equivalent to that of Murcia, and

that the process of applying to American and European universities is distinct; however, each of these small differences has allowed us to form a deeper bond.

For us, a community is a place to connect—online or in person—in which we can share ideas, discuss issues related to data collection, and chat about the various difficulties that accompany the PhD ride. We have worked enthusiastically to create an international community of graduate students by organizing formal and informal gatherings and by creating a WhatsApp group to open a line of communication a bit less formal than corresponding via university email. This WhatsApp group has allowed us to connect all of the Applied Linguistics PhD candidates at the University of Murcia and to get to know one another in a more social manner, enjoying the connections that university life can offer. Without the support of this community, we likely would have felt isolated, making the PhD experience even more challenging. This mental support is essential at a time when it is presumed we should push all psychological baggage aside and focus solely on completing the task at hand: finishing our PhD dissertations—or theses, depending on which side of the pond the degree is conferred.

**A community is a place to connect—online or in person—in which we can share ideas, discuss issues related to data collection, and chat about the various difficulties that accompany the PhD ride.**

Kristin Rock is a PhD candidate in Second Language Studies in the Department of Second Language Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Her research interests include gender and language learning, instructed second language acquisition, second language teacher education, and Spanish linguistics.

Sophie McBride is a PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics in the Department of English Philology at the University of Murcia. Connect with her on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sophie-mcbride>

# THE CRISES WE LIVE BY

## How to integrate in and expand our professional communities

By Behzad Mansouri (The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa)

Undoubtedly, one of the major goals of many graduate students in the field of applied linguistics and its related disciplines is gaining recognition as successful researchers and scholars. One well-established way of achieving this goal is to rely on our abilities to invest in knowledge development, production, and dissemination via various academic outlets such as conferences and journals. However, with the expansion of various aspects of communication in today's globalized world which has propelled border-crossing in academia, a sole reliance on one's abilities might not suffice, and many other factors need to be put into consideration. With the increasing number of graduate students and scholars from the less-represented and non-Western communities into the field, it seems inevitable that being equipped with the required socializing skills is a prelude to future success. This may lead to complex personal and professional crises that graduate students face during and after completing their studies. Although the word crises might

sound strong here, it encompasses all (excessive) emotional, sociocultural, economical, and academic burdens felt by any graduate student over the course of their graduate studies. Drawing from my own experiences as an international graduate student in the U.S., I will describe the kinds of challenges my peers may encounter on this academic journey, and how these challenges can be turned into opportunities for integration into a community. I will elaborate on how I have been dealing with the discontent of socializing within my surrounding professional community, and how I have claimed my own identity as a legitimate member of this community.

### What I Mean by Crises

Being in graduate school can be economically, emotionally, and socially burdensome in the sense that it might not have immediate rewards. These hardships or crises, as I call them, could be more severe for international graduate students who might see themselves socioculturally and academically detached from their host community. As a fourth-year doctoral student of Educational Linguistics at The University of Alabama, I have been dealing with various types of graduate school-afflicted crises in a setting with which I could not think of having any sort of affinity. However, like many of my peers, I have survived these crises and turned them into valuable opportunities to help me set my foot in the field. In this article, I will list some tips from the experiences I have accrued during my years at The University of Alabama while seeking membership in different scholarly

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organizations. Based on my experiences as well as the ideas stated by other graduate students in our department, I have come to several major tips on how to get over the crises and build our own community of scholars.

### **Tip #1: Integrate into your immediate community first**

Nowadays, we might not have Applied Linguistics departments in many universities per se. Instead, many schools have related programs (e.g. TESOL, Educational Linguistics, and Second Language Studies) offered in departments such as Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Psychology, Language and Literacy Education, etc. Despite having different titles and slightly different missions, most of these departments and programs have some commonalities which can work in favor of any graduate student studying in one of these departments. Each department has a group of faculty members specializing in a specific field of inquiry giving graduate students a chance to think, see broadly, and find a middle ground for collaboration and conducting research. This tip worked well for me. With a background in both Applied Linguistics and Educational Psychology, I teamed up with some of the doctoral students and faculty members in the department of Educational Studies at The University of Alabama and assisted them in their research. After having four papers published and presenting at a dozen conferences, I can say that the outcome of such a collaboration has been really

rewarding. Most importantly, I got to know people from other departments with similar areas of interest and with their help, I can connect to researchers and scholars working at other schools and universities.

### **Tip #2: Have an effective online and offline presence**

I believe that the whole point of being in a graduate program in Applied Linguistics and any other related field is to learn how to be a professional in our field of inquiry. In the past, the professionalization process might have been defined as conducting cutting-edge research and publishing it. However, with the expansion of technology and spread of social media, visibility is also important for researchers. Nowadays a research study cannot be regarded as influential and groundbreaking unless researchers and practitioners within and even beyond the field visit it. This can be simply attained by promoting our research studies on social media and following other scholars within our field of expertise. Different from traditional ways of networking at conferences, this technology-enhanced community building practice connects scholars who might not have a chance to meet each other at conferences. For example, I myself co-authored some publications with people whom I never met in person but followed on Twitter. Due to various constraints that attending conferences entails, these social media platforms can give us an audience which cannot be attained via conference talks and presentations.

**Due to various constraints that attending conferences entails, social media platforms can give us an audience which cannot be attained via conference talks and presentations.**

## Learning how to socialize in this field is an integral part of the agenda we have, and it can be an easy process if we know how to proceed and generously expand our circles.

### Tip #3: Get hands-on review experiences with journals and conferences

Personally, I found this tip very helpful and rewarding. I have been serving as a board member and reviewer for some journals as well as proposal reviewer for some conferences for almost two years. When I think about it, I always regret not starting earlier, and this is something that I always promote in our gatherings within the department. Most graduate students in our field may postpone such kind of service and professional activities until the end of their program. However, the knowledge gained via different courses and small-scale research studies done in the graduate program definitely gives a solid foundation for evaluating someone else's work. One very good starting point is journals commonly known as "working papers" mostly hosted by doctoral students. Moreover, we can ask our advisers or any other faculty member to recommend us for the review board of some journals. This can help a lot in first knowing what kind of research studies are conducted in our field of expertise and then getting in touch with other board members while expanding collaboration opportunities. Some of the papers that I

have published were prepared in collaboration with scholars that I have been connected to this way. Getting more into these kinds of activities will result in knowing other scholars which can lead to expanding our networks. For example, recently I joined a group of scholars to draft a proposal as part of a special issue of an emerging journal in our field. Interestingly, all the people that I am working with are from the board members of journals I have served as a reviewer.

### Concluding remarks

I believe that being a graduate student in applied linguistics is a merit. In our field, we work to research teaching and learning a language which inherently necessitates the importance of communication, socialization, and expanding our communities of practice. In other words, learning how to socialize in this field is an integral part of the agenda we have, and it can be an easy process if we know how to proceed and generously expand our circles.

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# FOSTERING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

## The importance of valuing self-care in an academic community

BY SU YIN KHOR (PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY)  
AND NICOLAS DOYLE (PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY)

As the primary socializing agent for learning about a discipline and becoming socialized into the field, the academic department is where community building begins for graduate students. An important part of community building is developing trust and supportive relationships that can help us reach our potential. However, doing so requires that departments are more aware of and responsive to the mental health needs of their students. This is a primary responsibility of graduate departments and an area in which there is still much work to do. Areas of particular concern that will be expounded upon include the need for strong, supportive mentoring relationships between graduate students and advisers, and the value of encouraging a work-life balance.

### THE NEED FOR ATTENTION TO MENTAL HEALTH

One of our primary goals is to encourage applied linguistics (AL) departments to be more aware of and responsive to the mental health needs of their graduate students. Although this is certainly not a concern specific to our discipline, we believe this is an important topic for those of us in AL to consider and take seriously. Speaking to the need for this discussion, a recent, widely cited study found that graduate students are six times more likely to experience depression and anxiety than the general population (Barreira, Basilico & Bolotnyy, 2018).

For many of us, this finding is not surprising; rather, it confirms what we already know—the mental health of graduate students is not in a good state.

A major concern, as we see it, is that many of us view this as normal or endemic to the nature of grad school. For instance, the view that grad school is inherently harmful to our mental health is commonly seen in the expression “that’s just grad school.” This is a common response to grad students expressing valid concerns about

**A recent, widely cited study found that graduate students are six times more likely to experience depression and anxiety than the general population.**

anxiety, lack of sleep, feelings of inadequacy, or overwhelming workloads. Emotions are inseparable from and interconnected with cognition. So, yes, graduate school should be challenging, and yes, it should push us intellectually and mentally, but that should not amount to mental and emotional harm. In this article, we ask AL to consider the research practices and types of scholars that we are producing if we continue to advocate that graduate students should not be experiencing depression and anxiety as if these simply come with the territory.

## THE NEED FOR SUPPORTIVE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

Advisors are a crucial part of the graduate school experience and serve as one of our primary sources of guidance for how to become a professional in AL. For that reason, we cannot overstate the value of student-adviser relationships that are supportive and actively model healthy practices. Toward this end, advisers and faculty members should recognize graduate students on the level of their humanity first and as graduate students second. To illustrate our point, we will share a brief anecdote. Early in their PhD program, one of the authors experienced a medical emergency that required immediate surgery that left them unable to read for the final four weeks of the semester. In response, the student consulted with their adviser, still concerned about making deadlines for final papers, submitting abstracts to conferences, and completing their assistantship duties of teaching a freshman composition class. In this meeting, their adviser interrupted the student's frantic stream of thought and said, "Your health is so much more valuable than any of these other concerns. Focus on healing, don't push yourself, and we will manage your academic obligations later" (conversation based on student's reconstruction).

This type of response is what we could advocate. This adviser recognized it was unhealthy for the student to be more concerned with their productivity as a graduate student than their own health.

More importantly, this adviser then addressed the student as a person first and foremost instead of a student. The interaction, though seemingly small, communicates a strong message: even as a graduate student, your health, both physical and mental, is important. Unfortunately, we could share a number of other anecdotes of graduate students in similar situations in which their advisers and supervisors made no such interventions, and instead, reinforced or intensified the message that we are graduate students and our productivity is more important than anything else, including our health.

## SELF-CARE IS NOT SELFISH

With such busy schedules and many responsibilities as PhD students, it is easy to forget about ourselves and our own health. How often do you find yourself going to bed late, ordering takeout, or waiting in line for another Starbucks? Or, how often do you take the time for yourself to do something you enjoy and re-energizes you? Many graduate students struggle with prioritizing their health and finding a harmony between school work and life. Taking care of your physical, mental, and emotional health will only support your academic and personal endeavors.

While some might want more concrete suggestions on self-care strategies, it's important to note that what works or counts as self-care will vary depending on who you are. For instance, self-care could be anything from setting boundaries and saying no, planning fun activities, binge

**Taking care of your physical, mental, and emotional health will only support your academic and personal endeavors.**

watching Netflix the entire day, or letting go of being a perfectionist and the idea of “catching up” on work. Or, it could be all of them. For one of the authors, setting boundaries, letting go of the idea of catching up on work, and listening to their body have significantly improved their emotional and mental health. Learning to say no—or being selective about when to say yes—and setting boundaries have actually allowed them to take on additional responsibilities without sacrificing or compromising their health. What also becomes important, then, is identifying sources of stress, and developing healthy strategies that help you unwind and rest in order to prevent burnout. This is especially important for those with mental health conditions as unhealthy habits and ways of living can be detrimental. Recognizing that self-care is not selfish is the first step: not taking care of yourself is not sustainable, especially if you are just starting out in the program and wish to stay in academia for a long time. It is not too late to start now to develop some healthier habits. Most importantly, find the strategies that work for your life.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This is a timely discussion for AL in light of recent studies on mental health that report alarming information about graduate students’ mental health, such as sleep deprivation, destructive thinking and behavior, and isolation. Being a grad student is challenging not only intellectually, but also physically, emotionally, and mentally. However,

# Academic culture must change to recognize that PhD students are humans too, and their health is just as important as the work they do.

“challenging” should not equate to emotional and mental harm; departments need to be better at modeling—not only encouraging—behavior that is not toxic or destructive for students. Academic culture must change to recognize that PhD students are humans too, and their health is just as important as the work they do. We want to emphasize that it’s not about just saying it—action must follow words. Mentors and academic leadership should model healthy behavior, be there for the students, and carefully consider what kind of researchers and professors are actually being “produced” if we only model toxic and destructive behavior.

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# RESOURCE REVIEW

## Community Building is an Indispensable Part of an ESL Classroom

BY SAURABH ANAND (MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO)

As an international student from India in the United States, the concept of community has always been a source of encouragement and support, which has allowed me to thrive. International students express their fears, worries, satisfaction, and dissatisfaction within the international student community because they feel safer within this milieu. Therefore, as an international student teacher in America at Minnesota State University, Mankato, I am able to understand the relevance and importance of community for international students in a foreign land, especially for the people who are new English learners or immigrants. In my class, I try to create a comfortable atmosphere for my students. In my diverse classroom that has multilingual students from Ghana, Ethiopia, South Korea, Kuwait, and several other countries, I try to create an inclusive environment. Often, I achieve this through the use of community-themed teaching materials used with the aid of technology. In this article, I would like to discuss the relevance of technological resources in an ESL classroom for not only making learning sessions interactive, but also building community among new English language learners to facilitate English language acquisition and how community-themed teaching materials go a long way in facilitating learning.

One resource I used was a TED Talk from a Nigerian author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, called "The Danger of a Single Story" (<https://bit.ly/2COBavg>). I introduced this TED Talk in one of my classes to teach the importance of unbiased perspectives. At the time, my students were involved in writing a problem-solving essay where they had to identify a problem, discuss the problem, and suggest possible solutions. I wanted to use TED Talks so that students could be aware of their blind spots while writing their essays. At the same time, I wanted to use this teaching material for my first-year class, because in this video, the author talks about her experience as an immigrant undergraduate student from Nigeria in the United States. This is a very interesting talk that is told through little anecdotes where Adichie illustrates how she was subjected to the single biased story by her roommate, who perhaps had little knowledge of African societies. There are many more anecdotes in the story where Adichie talks about her experience of being an immigrant from Africa in the United States.

I was hoping that my students would like the video, but I was surprised to see how eloquent my students were after I showed the talk in my class. My class, as I mentioned earlier, is full

**I wanted to use TED Talks so that students could be aware of their blind spots while writing their essays.**

of immigrants from different parts of the world who are all new English learners. No doubt they connected to Adichie's talk, but they were primarily excited to talk about their own immigrant experiences that mirrored Adichie's experience.

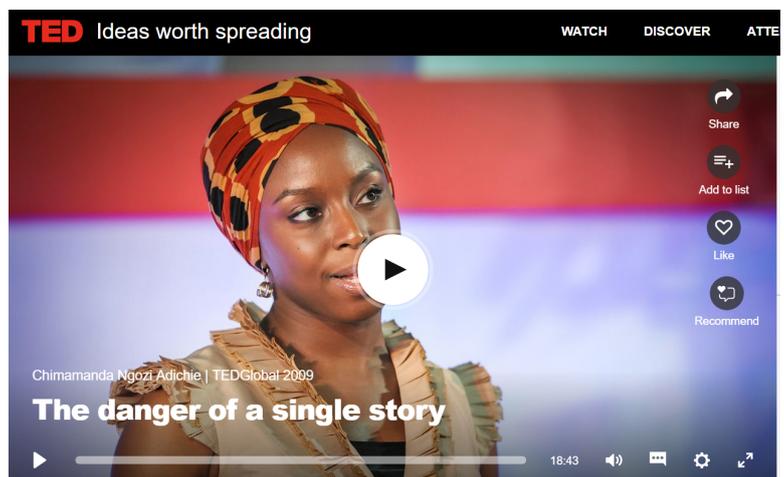
I witnessed the benefits of using this TED Talk throughout the semester, because viewing the video together, bonded us as a community. The speaker's immigrant experience worked as a connecting thread, and at the same time, we found a community in each other. After the talk, we felt emboldened to talk about our own experiences as immigrants. For example, one of my students shared that in her culture, if a person finds someone alone in a public place, such as a cinema hall or college bus, they try to sit next to them to offer their company. However, it is not the case in the United States. People prefer personal space and often find such behavior intrusive.

**The TED Talk not only helped us reach my teaching goal, but also bonded us in a shared, common experience. This went a long way in making my students connect with me and each other.**

Therefore, with the aid of this speech, I developed an emotional bond among the students. Such tools assist new writers in bringing awareness to the stereotypical narratives based on limited or biased experiences. I used this tool because Adichie talks about having a balanced perspective about our world. In the end, she also criticized herself for having similar blind spots. I achieved my teaching goal by helping my students reflect and confront their own biases. This helped my students construct their problem-solving essay with a lot more ease and self-awareness.

The TED Talk not only helped us reach my teaching goal, but also bonded us in a shared, common experience. This went a long way in making my students connect with me and each other. In short, I believe establishing an interactive and pro-technology classroom environment where students feel safe, welcomed, and are allowed to flourish by making mistakes, should be the goal of any ESL instructor. Short videos and films help in engaging students in a fun way without feeling the stress of learning the language. If these videos are about a topic that makes them speak or connect better and encourages classroom investment, then it helps instructors reach their teaching goals. Teaching resources like short films and videos in my ESL classes have become the connecting thread, not something that excludes or creates tension.

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# TEACHING VOCABULARY WITH JUST-THE-WORD.COM

By Ted Daisher (Kent State University)

I imagine many graduate students studying applied linguistics or who may have applied linguistics as a part of their graduate program may also be teaching English as a Second Language. For many of us, a large part of teaching English as a Second Language is teaching vocabulary. While some aspects of vocabulary may be easier to teach—like definitions, synonyms, and antonyms—because they’re more immediately available through dictionaries and thesauruses, other aspects—like collocations—can be more difficult. Teaching students collocations—the combinations in which certain words tend to occur together—can help them with forming natural-sounding expressions and with being accurate in their use of trickier components of English, like prepositions. It is also a way to help students expand their range of expressions so that they can participate fully in their target language communities or communities of practice. You could teach students patterns guiding preposition use, but another viable alternative, I think, would be teaching prepositions with vocabulary words, as a part of general vocabulary instruction. This is where I think [Just-the-word.com](http://Just-the-word.com) is particularly helpful.

Just-the-word.com is an accessible English corpus that finds collocations for given words. When given a word, the website will show a list of collocations organized by the parts of speech of the words that collocate with the given word (e.g. V obj “word you entered” means the word you entered is typically preceded by a verb and a noun as an object). Each collocation also has a green bar that shows how frequent this combination is in the corpus, so you can distinguish between rare and common combinations. Last, upon clicking a collocation, the site gives lines of text in which the collocation appears.

This feature of searching a corpus for collocations is also available in other corpora, like the Corpus for Contemporary American English (COCA). However, a key benefit of Just-the-word.com is that it has a bit of a simpler interface, and it shows the parts of speech of the collocating words. The simpler interface makes it more accessible than some alternative corpora, and the provided parts of speech are convenient for identifying patterns that can be taught to students.

To illustrate, let’s say you have a reading with the key term, “sustainability.”

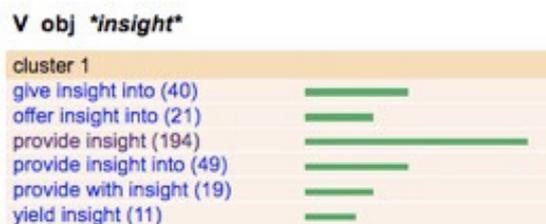
The screenshot shows the Just-the-Word.com website. At the top, there are links for "Getting Started", "More help", "Discussion group", and "JSON API". The main heading is "jtw" in a stylized font. Below the heading is a search bar with the text "Enter a word or short phrase:" and the word "sustainability" entered. Under the search bar are three tabs: "combinations", "alternatives from thesaurus", and "alternatives from learner errors". Below the tabs are two columns of search results. The left column is titled "Recent searches" and lists: Mind, composition, ecosystem, Species, and Policy. The right column is titled "Popular searches" and lists: analysis, ankle, approach, research, and lash.

If I plug that into the site, I find that “sustainable development” is the “\*sustainable\* N”). Upon looking through the lines the site gives, I see that there is sometimes an adjective between “sustainable” and “development,” so I can teach students the following formula: “sustainable” + adj. + “development.” I can then pull example sentences from the corpus to illustrate the formula or maybe write simpler sentences of my own (depending on the level of my students). Some examples might be “sustainable industrial development” or “sustainable economic development.”

and sustainable economic development.  
 . of sustainable development, with environ-  
 ally sustainable development and encourage  
 Sustainable development - action that  
 and sustainable development are not ene-  
 if sustainable development is to be ac-  
 of sustainable agricultural developmen-  
 ing sustainable development on a global  
 of sustainable economic development.



Another example might be a word like “insight.” Maybe a student has asked how to use this word in class. Looking at the results from the site, I see “give insight into,” “offer insight into,” and “provide insight into,” all listed under “V obj \*insight\*.” I also see from the green lines that these are fairly frequent combinations. Even before looking at examples, I’m thinking that I can probably teach students that “insight” is used with “into” and that it’s typically preceded by words like “give,” “offer,” and “provide.” Because some combinations are less flexible, I think it’ll be worthwhile to tell them that there are different synonyms they can use at the beginning of this combination of words. Next, I would look through the examples to see if any additional, important patterns emerge and maybe pull some sentences to show such patterns to students.



Learning collocations can help students form more natural sounding expressions. It can also help them accurately communicate their intended meaning when using somewhat difficult elements of English like prepositions. I think all this serves to help students accurately and confidently use English in their communities of practice inside and outside the classroom.

# CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS

## Helping Students Think Critically About Their Language Ideologies

BY JORDAN BROWN (AMERICAN UNIVERSITY)

In the second language acquisition course I took as part of my master's degree, we read an SLA book with a sample of early stages of learner language for German as second language speakers. In most of the utterances, the speakers did not put direct objects in the accusative case or indirect objects in the dative. I had flashbacks to my time in German classrooms and my six-month stint in Berlin where I would be stopped and corrected the moment I made any mistake. This made me rarely speak, and I improved very little over those six months. My initial reaction to seeing the pared down German without articles or conjugated verbs was, "Nobody ever let me talk like that back then!" After a moment, I realized that "nobody" included myself, and that part of my learning efforts had been stifled by my own beliefs about language learning and use.

In the case of my German class, speaking with errors was not acceptable for my instructors or for me. Fluent speech with a few inaccuracies was rarely if ever encouraged, and in our classes we rarely spoke German spontaneously for fear of being laughed at or corrected. This resulted in a lot of reading from the page and memorizing phrases that were safe to use. Unfortunately, this made sense to me at the time because of the language ideology that I had grown up with: that there was bad speech (such as my family's Appalachian English), and that it was shameful. In the course of my German studies, I was never encouraged to question these ideas. Not only do ideologies like this one have harmful social consequences for people who do not speak the prestige dialect of a national language, they can also demotivate students and make them clam up.

**Not only do ideologies like this one have harmful social consequences for people who do not speak the prestige dialect of a national language, they can also demotivate students and make them clam up.**

Once the proverbial veil had been lifted from my eyes, I tried to disavow my students of common misperceptions about language. However, I did not do so in a systematic, pedagogically sound way. With international students at my university, I would rattle off some facts I learned in my linguistics or second language acquisition class, but it was too abstract to be useful for them. In an adult conversation class, I tried to tell them that it was

important to focus on meaning, and that they won't learn every new word they hear, but they seemed confused about why I was telling them this.

After realizing that I was not framing the issue in a productive way, I developed a new strategy for introducing these topics to students in a more personally relevant way. A starting point is to have them consider their experience with their first language.

- **Have you ever spoken to a non-native speaker of your language? Did you understand them even when they made mistakes? Did you want to understand them?**
- **What do you do when you speak the same language as someone but they have a different accent? When they speak a different style of your language?**
- **What do you do when you misspeak in your first language?**
- **Have you seen a foreign language textbook for your first language? Do people always speak that way?**

After this, it can be helpful for students to figure out what assumptions they have about language that are holding them back. For this, I like to draw on thought logs from cognitive behavioral therapy. On one side of the chart, students see an unhelpful thought pattern. On the other, they write a more positive way of looking at it:

Unhelpful Thought	Helpful Thought
Making mistakes means I am not smart.	I need to make mistakes to improve. Everyone who is learning a new language makes mistakes and this is part of how we learn.

After students see how this works, they can write their own thoughts and turn them into more positive thoughts. When talking to students about ideas of how they can re-frame their thoughts, teachers can share what we know about language learning in a simple way. They have now been primed to be more receptive to it and can see how it can improve their lives.

# BE/LONGING

BY MELISSA KRUT (AMERICAN UNIVERSITY)

The first draft of this piece was written while I was serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Lutsk, Ukraine, working in education and community development. As an outsider, my perspective allowed me a different view of the community, even as I offered my own contributions. Today, as a graduate student pursuing my second MA while working full time, I enjoy multiple perspectives on the student experience as well – excited to be pulled in as part of a learning community, stressed to be pulled away by all the other pressures vying for my time. We seek community, but as teachers, travelers, graduate students – we’ve all been on the outside looking in, and it can be both uncomfortable and rewarding. I wanted to highlight that awareness alongside the desire to belong--the wish to be safe and protected as we play, experiment, and grow. Ultimately, we will become the providers and protectors, shaping the future of our communities.

windside all day again  
 earshot here or not scattered sounds gather  
 washing wideopen glass with sun and shouts  
 thunder and rain and lookedfor rainbow edges  
 I have been remembering  
 I have touched belonging  
 I have felt the center  
 the courtyard cemented  
 looked over but never overlooked  
 keystoneing a geometric jumble of Soviet concrete  
 complex apartments of history

when Mama is called for  
 the right one answers  
 out the right window  
 giving the right reply  
 then time to play again

sudden thunder – the only kind  
 breaking the mostlysunny sky  
 now cries for Sashaaaa and Dimaaa  
 come home come now come safe  
 and again the mothers the sisters call  
 Saashaaaa Diiiiiiimaa Maxiiiiiiiiiiiiim

rain rushes in where small feet stand  
 stay still some but  
 soon enough  
 wishing for disobedience  
 dripping with discipline  
 they scurry inside  
 pale skin and disappointment

peering out it is Diiiiima Diiiiima  
 glorying in wet abandon  
 proud and yet alone alone

the storm passes

the players pour out  
 curiosity and laughter  
 Dima soaked with pride  
 drips from a self-satisfied nose  
 turning hard away from the 6b windows  
 the seventh floor disapproval  
 a shaking head  
 what she'll tell that boy  
 what he'll get for dinner

the time passes

light stays  
 play resumes  
 asphalt basketball  
 goalposts and uneven bars

soon the windows call for dinner  
 waiting for acknowledgement  
 asked and answered  
 herding in the sunshine players  
 toward cleaner hands  
 the talking-over of the day  
 the talking-to of what not to  
 mistakes safely made in the courtyard  
 wrapped in cement and apple trees  
 everyone is watching  
 everyone is calling back  
 yes yes I hear you and I will come

and here

alone in the darkening  
 a small voice calling Maaama Maaaaama  
 but no answer  
 louder and she adds Maaama Leyyyyna  
 trying the false name given to others  
 knowing the true name is Mama  
 the only one of that name  
 but Mama Leyna has stepped away  
 back from the window  
 taking dinner from the oven  
 storing too-small summer clothes  
 soon she will return  
 soon she will set down the laundry the pan the  
 otherwise  
 lean over the balcony  
 soon she will call  
 yes yes my darling my sunshine I am here  
 you are safe and I am calling you  
 I see you I love you I am here

Melissa Krut is currently enrolled in American University's TESOL MA program. A teacher, a writer, and an editor, she's interested in the importance of creativity in language learning. Connect with Melissa on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/mkrut/>.



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**Amanda Giles** is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at The University of Alabama. Her research interests include collaboration between ESL and mainstream content area teachers, literacy, language policy, and effective assessment practices for ESL students. She currently is an ESL teacher at a middle school in the southeastern U.S. where she currently works to promote equitable educational outcomes for ESL students. She has diverse teaching experiences, which include Spanish and English/language arts. She also served as a volunteer English teacher in Ecuador. Her dissertation research examines how ESL and content teachers' collaboration influences content teachers' learning to plan for and teach ESL students and explores how this collaboration influences ESL students' participation in the mainstream classroom.