

AAALgrads

Fall 2017 Edition

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

With this fall issue, the AAAL graduate student newsletter is starting its second year with new co-editors. Jessica Lian from Georgia State University and I are serving as new co-editors, and we are excited to see our collective work with our contributors come to fruition. The fall issue includes a new section where we share recent news and upcoming events from the AAAL Graduate Student Council.

In addition to the news and events, this issue introduces the new members on the AAAL GSC steering committee, and features survey results from the previous conference. You will also find four content articles contributed by our graduate students members. The topics of the content articles include tips on finding funding, reflections on the Ph.D. journey, strategies for professional development, and the experience of interdisciplinary collaboration.

At the end of this issue, you will find a call for the spring edition, so please consider submitting your proposal. By sharing your expertise and reflections on the graduate student's journey, you can help others navigate their own, and impact the AAAL grad student community as a whole. Please don't hesitate to send us an email if you have any questions or suggestions at aaalgrads@gmail.com.

We hope you enjoy the Fall issue!

Rae and Jessica
Co-editors



LETTER FROM THE GSC CO-CHAIR

Greetings from the Graduate Student Council!

On March 17, 2017, the transition of the AAAL Graduate Student Council (GSC) Steering Committee was completed in Portland, Oregon. This year's GSC Steering Committee includes myself (co-chair, University of Minnesota), Laura Hamman (co-chair, University of Wisconsin-Madison), Michael Amory (secretary, Pennsylvania State University), Rayoung Song (member-at-large, University of Massachusetts-Amherst), and Ai-Chu Ding (member-at-large, Indiana University-Bloomington).

The new GSC Steering Committee will continue to work to best serve the interests of you, the AAAL graduate student members, from all over the world. Our team aims to support graduate student members' academic and professional development; to foster closer inter-institutional relationships, student-to-student collaboration, and networking opportunities with scholars; to increase leadership and service opportunities for student members; and to promote ethnic, cultural, and academic diversity within the field.

The GSC Steering Committee's top priorities for the 2017-2018 academic year include 1) planning graduate student events for next year's conference based on survey feedback from the graduate student events at the 2017 AAAL conference; 2) continuing to publish fall and spring editions of *AAALGrads* newsletter under the leadership of co-editors Rayoung Song (University of Massachusetts Amherst) and Jessica Lian (Georgia State University); and 3) developing and maintaining graduate student outreach initiatives such as a AAAL graduate student website and a series of webinars under the leadership of Ai-Chu Ding (member-at-large, Indiana University-Bloomington).

The new GSC Steering Committee will keep working collaboratively with the current leadership of the AAAL Executive Committee led by Dr. Tim McNamara to best represent the interests of the AAAL graduate student members! Also, we would like to thank the previous co-chair Lindsey Kurtz and member-at-large Lena Shvidko for their commitment to the interests of student members of AAAL.

Finally, please connect with us through our newly released AAAL GSC website (<https://www.aaal-gsc.org/>), Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/AAALGrad>), Twitter (@AAALGrad) and Instagram (@AAALGrads). And also please feel free to contact us via a private message on our Facebook page or email us at grad@aaal.org if you have any questions or are interested in getting more involved in the Graduate Student Council. We look forward to hearing from you!

Mengying
GSC Co-chair

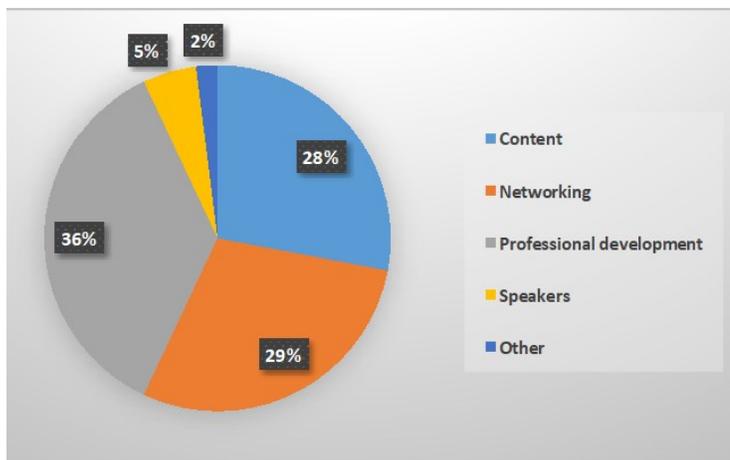
SURVEY RESULTS

WHAT GRADS SAY ABOUT THE 2017 AAAL CONFERENCE

BY MICHAEL AMORY, GSC SECRETARY

One of the main goals of the GSC Steering Committee is to support graduate students' academic and professional development in Applied Linguistics. With this as our guiding principle, the GSC Steering Committee hosted two graduate student events at last year's conference in Portland, Oregon. The first event, held Saturday afternoon, was entitled "Making a Transition: From Graduate Student to Faculty Member." In continuing our series of career workshops, this event consisted of a panel of early career faculty who shared their experiences and advice when making the transition from a graduate student to a full-time professional scholar. The second event, held Sunday evening, was entitled "Publishing 101: Graduate students' forum on writing for publication." Comprised of advanced doctoral students, this panel event discussed questions relating to the publication process and provided tips on how to turn a term or conference paper into a publishable manuscript. Following each event, workshop attendees were surveyed in order to gather comments and feedback, and so that we may learn what motivates and is important to you, our fellow graduate students!

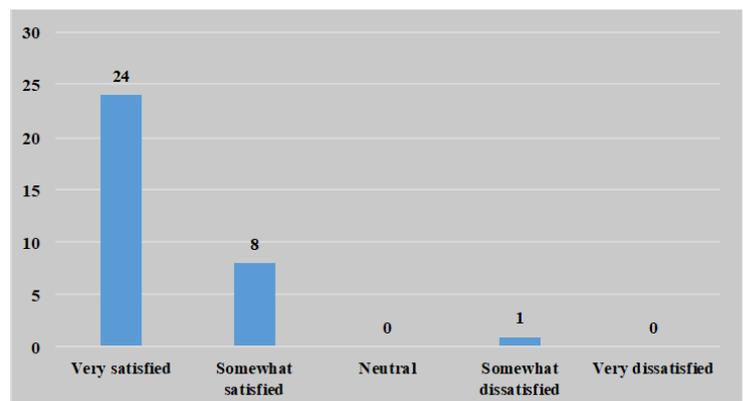
What is main reason for attending the workshop events?



The top reason for attending the day and evening graduate student events was for professional development purposes; this was followed closely by networking purposes and the content of the workshop itself. These survey results encourage us to dig deeper, and generated much discussion during our GSC Steering Committee meetings in the summer. That is, these results are beneficial in helping us to determine ways to best structure our future events as participants attend for a variety of reasons.

How satisfied were graduate students with conference events?

Survey data from both the afternoon and evening event indicate that participants were largely very satisfied with the events. These results are promising since workshop attendance has increased from previous years! Now, some of you may be wondering how these events were determined. The short answer is this: based upon an analysis of the surveys submitted during the previous year's graduate student workshops. This final question on the survey asks participants to write those events that they would like to see held at AAAL. We do take your responses seriously and greatly value your input in selecting relevant topics. Stay tuned for more information regarding our event planning for AAAL 2018 and calls for volunteers. We look forward to seeing you in Chicago!



RECENT NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

GSC's First Webinar

GSC successfully held our very first webinar on November 13, 2017. The topic of the webinar was "Writing Effective Grant Proposals." Forty-seven people joined the webinar from various countries around the world, including the USA, Canada, the UK, Brazil, Spain, Norway, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Mexico and Colombia. Ai-Chu (Elisha) Ding from Indiana University-Bloomington was the moderator of the webinar.

Three scholars who research language and education joined the webinar as panelists: Dr. Vesna Dimitrieska (Indiana University-Bloomington), Laura Hamman (University of Wisconsin-Madison), and Dr. Lesley Bartlett (University of Wisconsin-Madison). The panelists shared their successful experiences applying for research or dissertation grants and offered tips for tailoring the grant proposals to meet the funder's needs. Through presentations and panel discussion, the three panelists offered their insights into different aspects of grant proposal writing including making a timeline, searching for grants, and establishing the legitimacy, urgency and viability of the proposal.

Overall, the panelists provided useful and invaluable information for scholars and graduate students who are new to the grant proposal writing process. Participants have given the GSC highly positive feedback on

this event and requested more of such professional development opportunities in the future. To that end, the GSC steering committee also plans to continue hosting webinars for our graduate students' professional development. The next webinar event "The Social and Political Meaning of Language Tests" (working title) will be held in January, 2018. The AAAL president, Dr. Tim McNamara, will be our invited speaker on this topic. More information about this upcoming webinar will be announced in December via the GSC Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/AAALGrad/>) and website (<https://www.aaal-gsc.org/>).

Conference Connections

After much input from all of you, the Executive Committee has launched a new pilot project for the 2018 conference: **Conference Connections**. This project will provide more structured opportunities for AAAL graduate student members to connect with more senior members at our annual conference for one of three purposes:

1. **Presentation feedback**
2. **Introductions**
3. **Proposal ideas**

For more information about how you can participate, please visit:

<http://www.aaal.org/default.asp?page=ConConnections>

MEET THE GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL



Laura Hamman
Co-Chair

Laura is a fifth year Ph.D. candidate in Curriculum & Instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, specializing in ESL & bilingual education. Her dissertation research explores the language and literacy practices of emergent bilinguals in two-way immersion classrooms and considers how young learners are experiencing and investing in the process of becoming bilingual. Her dissertation has been generously funded by Phi Kappa Phi, The International Research Foundation (TIRF) for English Language Teaching, NFMLTA/MLJ, and Language Learning Journal. Currently, she is working as a research assistant on a national study with the WIDA Consortium to analyze Spanish language proficiency in the writing of K-12 emergent bilingual students.

Laura serves as the co-chair for the GSC Steering Committee. Her responsibilities include: serving as the graduate student representative in the AAAL Executive Council, leading Steering Committee meetings, overseeing the planning of two graduate student events at the AAAL conference, and collaborating with the AAAL conference planning committee.

Mengying Liu
Co-Chair

Mengying is a third year PhD student in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Minnesota, Twin-cities campus. Her research interests include Chinese teaching and learning as a heritage and foreign language. For the past two years, her research centers on Chinese teaching and learning, classroom discourse and interaction, and multilingual practices in community-based Chinese heritage language schools. Currently, Mengying works as a graduate instructor teaching courses for the undergraduate TESL minor/certificate program at the University of Minnesota. She enjoys the process to help the undergraduate students master pedagogical theories and skills to support ESL learners in the US and all over the world. In her spare time, Mengying likes swimming, travelling, and reading novels.

As a co-chair for the GSC Steering Committee, Mengying's responsibilities include: structuring and leading Steering Committee meetings, overseeing the planning of two graduate student events at the AAAL conference, and collaborating with the AAAL conference planning committee.



MEET THE GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL

Michael Amory **Secretary**

Michael is currently a PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics at The Pennsylvania State University. His research interests include: applying a Vygotskian Sociocultural Theoretical (SCT) perspective to L2 language teaching-and-learning; the development of L2 teacher cognition; the theory and practice of L2 teacher education; and utilizing the framework of Conversation Analysis to analyze classroom interactions and institutional discourse. Grounded in SCT, his dissertation will examine and document, systematically and longitudinally, the development of teacher/teaching expertise of a cohort of MA TESL novice teachers as they progress through their learning-to-teach experiences in a MA TESL program over a two-year period. Michael serves as the secretary for the GSC Steering Committee. His responsibilities include: taking and maintaining meeting minutes, distributing minutes after each meeting with actionable items, managing the GSC Steering Committee database, and leading and/collaborating in the planning of conference events for graduate students.



Rayoung "Rae" Song **Member-at-large**

Rae is a Ph.D. candidate in language, literacy, and culture in the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Her research interests include how multilingual speakers use their linguistic and cultural repertoires to construct and negotiate their identities, and how they resist and/or recirculate certain language ideologies in the process. Rae is especially interested in informal educational contexts and her dissertation research explores an online English learning community where Korean ESL/EFL speakers use creative online strategies and resources to improve their English skills and develop their bilingual identity. Outside of academic life, Rae enjoys traveling, learning languages, and writing on her blogs. As a member-at-large for the GSC steering committee, Rae's responsibilities include session organization geared

towards graduate students' interests such as publication and job searching. Rae also serves as one of the co-editors for the AAAL Graduate student newsletter.



Ai-Chu (Elisha) Ding **Member-at-large**

Ai-Chu is a doctoral candidate at Indiana University-Bloomington. She is doing double majors in Literary, Culture and Language Education (LCLE) and Instructional Systems Technology (IST). Her dissertation research explores language teachers' reflections on using technology in language education in an online video-enhanced learning environment. She promoted language teachers' reflective practice in online technology professional development using the video case approaches and investigated language teachers' reflective practices and the pedagogical outcomes of engaging in reflections. Currently, she is working as a research assistant on a funded research project that aims to develop video cases to support teachers' professional development on problem-based learning instructional design and technology integration. Ai-Chu serves as the member-at-large for the GSC Steering Committee. Her responsibilities in the Steering Committee includes: overseeing all aspects of the GSC's social media, recruiting and leading a team of student volunteers to grow GSC social media presence, developing and managing GSC website, and organizing and assisting GSC events.



REFLECTIONS ON FIRST PHD YEAR

How I secured on-campus job opportunities outside of my department as a starting point

BY YU-HAN LIN (UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I-MANOA)

My first year at the University of Hawai'i-Manoa (UHM) was not as smooth as that of my cohorts since I was accepted without guaranteed funding. My advisor emailed me about whether I was still considering attending the Second Language Studies Department. Without any hesitation, I replied with my sincere hope to work with her. However, one hidden worry I faced again was the financial issue. Despite the fact that UHM is a public university, its tuition for most out-of-state and international students equals that of Ivy League schools. Another problem is that the department has limited job opportunities for graduate students. Given the fact that the majority of the job positions are teaching oriented, new graduate students—including me—usually need to wait for one or two semesters before securing a position in the department. How would I be able to pay the tuition without borrowing more money? What's more, my husband had been accepted to the M.A. Program in the Linguistics Department with no funding either. That meant we had to solve the "to attend, not to attend" dilemma. For this once-in-a-lifetime chance to work with

our admirable advisors, we decided to pay tuition out of pocket for the first semester. If we could not find funding to support ourselves, then deferring our studies would be necessary.

My persistence in securing a GAship paid off with my interview preparation and related job experiences. Right after I told my advisor about my financial situation in an email months before my enrollment, she kept encouraging me to apply for whatever job positions I could, especially graduate assistantships (GAships). I submitted numerous job applications and began to work three part-time jobs during August last year. In September, the Language Flagship Technology Innovation Center (the Tech Center) on campus released two graduate assistantships for the spring semester. Before the interview, I copied and pasted the job description, the center's website, and the gatekeepers' information to a Word file. I highlighted and memorized the key information, and drafted corresponding responses based on the job requirements and general interview questions I had collected throughout the years. I also

reviewed my résumé and linked related job experiences to the position. I had two audio-taped mock interviews, one done by myself and the other with my husband, so I could avoid mistakes in my actual interview. This comprehensive preparation ensured that I could handle various questions. For instance, the interviewers asked me if I had experience using WordPress and other programs that I did not have experience with. I was honest about my lack of knowledge, but I highlighted my capability and passion for acquiring new skills. Luckily, I was hired right away due to the center's immediate federal grant activation, which was different from the job description for hiring GAs for the next semester. I had not only my first semester tuition refunded but also my health insurance transferred to an employee based insurance. What I have learned from this experience is mostly the interview preparation tactic: research the interviewers, link previous job experiences to the advertised GAship, and have mock interviews either by myself or with a family member/friend.

Before securing my GAship, my on-campus job application for a part-time teaching position was another example demonstrating my strategy of securing a job

outside of my department. This on-campus teaching position was for one course, "Intercultural Communication," at the Outreach College, one of the on-campus ESL programs. I noticed from the job requirement that they were looking for an instructor to help incoming international students to better understand U.S. culture and acclimate to the academic environment. With this in mind, I emphasized the benefits of my international student experience and how I would teach this course stemming from student's diverse cultural backgrounds. Despite the fact that my overall interview performance did not go as well as I expected, one thing I remember doing well was highlighting my position as an experienced international student, which would help bridge my learners with local communities, and reinforce their interactional competence. I received an acceptance e-mail afterwards. From this experience, I realized that linking my international student experience to the position was the key for securing this job.

My second GAship arrived with more strategic and longer planning. I always thought about applying for a teaching assistantship in my own department. With

What I have learned from this experience is mostly the interview preparation tactic: research the interviewers, link previous job experiences to the advertised GAship, and have mock interviews either by myself or with a family member/friend.

determination, I attended our brown bag series in the first semester to become familiar with potential job opportunities. I then visited the ESL directors for suggestions concerning teaching GAship applications. I observed as many ESL classes as possible to see how different inspiring instructors motivated and engaged their learners in innovative ways, and I directly applied some of them in my Intercultural Communication class. All that work prepared me for my job interview in the second semester. During the interview, I elaborated which class I intended to teach, my teaching experiences with a semester design and a learning management system setup, and

how I tied my teaching to a research design to facilitate learner's L2 speaking and interaction development. With no big surprise, I was offered a teaching position for intermediate level academic writing.

One creative way I prepared for my job interviews was visiting one of my previous interviewers, and asking for suggestions to prepare for my GAsip interview. I saved the key points in a folder "Interview tips" for my application reference. In a 20- or 25-minute interview, there are three main components:

1. Open-ended questions
2. Specific questions
3. Final questions

The first question usually focuses on who you are and what's special about you, so this is the moment to give the interviewers a good impression. As for specific questions, a scenario question about anticipating various situations and providing solutions is common. Integrating your teaching background into the answers will help the interviewers picture you in the actual class. Another common question is what subject you would like to teach, so this question requires a thorough understanding about the ESL centers and how you will teach them. Back to my previous

failed interview, I made a mistake of saying, "I would like to teach grammar;" the interviewer said, "We don't have any grammar-oriented classes." The final questions are usually about your own questions for the program. Most importantly, make sure all answers are interactive instead of "lecturing." Based on my job application experiences, here are my preparation tips for whoever is beginning their graduate student life:

1. Research the interviewing institution and highlight your specialty.

Since the institution wants to hire somebody to their benefit, they are eager to know why they should hire you, what contribution you can make, and whether you are a team member. For my interviews, I emphasized my technology-assisted teaching skills, interactional student experience, and ability to create online classroom platforms.

2. Link related job/internship/volunteer experiences to the position.

I find a similar experience helps envision myself in the applied position. However, as long as my previous experience is relevant, I would underscore that and make a connection to the position. Since I have a background in international business, this experience actually increases my chances

for getting positions such as business language teaching and support.

3. Do multiple mock interviews.

I always do a rehearsal by audiotaping my performance and answering possible questions I have collected from the Internet, career centers, and previous interviews. I will play the recording to myself for self-reflection. This is necessary especially since English is not my first language.

4. Ask veteran interviewers for suggestions.

This may not work for all situations, but if you have a chance, go for it.

My story is just one out of thousands of graduate students' struggles and their diverse solutions. If your department does not have sufficient job positions, it does not mean you cannot find equal, or sometimes even better, GAsips outside of the department. One thing I hear continuously from my friends, especially international students, is that "I may not be qualified for the position since I don't have those experiences." That is not true. My experiences have shown that we never know what will happen until we try. Especially when there do not seem to be any opportunities within one's department, we must step out to seek other opportunities as a first step.

Developing Teaching, Research, and Service in the First PhD Year

BY DANIELA SILVA
(UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO)

As I start my fourth PhD year, and hopefully the last one, I believe it is important to stop and think about the decisions I have made and the ones I wish I had made during my first year as a doctoral student. As I revisit my CV for job applications, I have no doubt that these decisions will have a great impact on my qualifications to successfully get a job. In this article, I provide some practical advice to incoming PhD students interested in applying for tenure-track positions after graduation.

People pursue a PhD degree for different reasons, so the expectations vary according to each case. However, if you want to continue in academia, you need to invest in teaching, research, and service. The earlier in the program you start setting goals for yourself, the higher the chances are of you accomplishing them. In this article, I reflect on how I pursued these three components in my first PhD year. Even as a PhD candidate in a Culture, Literacy, and Language program, I believe that my experience might benefit many incoming PhD students in general. Hopefully, my experience in graduate school might help those who have just started their programs.

MY EXPERIENCE

Teaching

I have extensive experience in language teaching, in this case Portuguese, in different universities in the United States: University of Miami, University of Mississippi, and Middlebury College. I have extensive experience in language teaching, in this case Portuguese, in different universities in the United States: University of Miami, University of Mississippi, and Middlebury College. I was happy with what I had accomplished before starting my PhD program; however, I knew that I needed experience teaching content courses. I did not ask to be a teaching assistant, but I am happy I was granted this assignment in my first semester. Not only did I have to teach a breakout session on my own, but I also had to teach it in English which is not my first language. Now, as I look back on that semester, I realize how important it was to boost my self-confidence in speaking English in an academic environment in which all students are fluent in English. I also had to use academic English as I discussed topics on bilingualism and second language acquisition. Since that semester, I have taught courses on literacy in second language, culture and diversity in the United States, and even a course in Spanish about second language acquisition and

bilingualism for bilingual preservice teachers.

Having a very supportive professor, who was the instructor of record of the course I taught in my first PhD semester, added another extra layer to this experience. The professor, who turned out to be a great mentor and my dissertation chair, would meet me weekly to talk about my session. As long as I covered the content, I could write my lesson plan the way I wanted under her supervision. The trust, encouragement, and support she deposited in me made me believe that I was on the right track to be an effective educator. She would also let the students know that she had my back and that I had the knowledge and skills to teach them.

Research

I was also a research assistant in my first PhD year. It was then that I really started to refine my research skills. I had another professor who was a great mentor as well. With her, I learned how to write a conference proposal, how to manage citations using Zotero, how to write an annotated bibliography, how to find the best journals that fit my research area of interest, how to look for conferences in my field, and how to develop academic

writing. The product of this relationship has been an article we co-authored and published. Also, I presented my research at an international conference in Mexico for the first time since becoming a student in the United States, and I presented at another conference in New Zealand with her.

However, I wish I had met and worked with more PhD students from other institutions. I wish I could have been involved in graduate student organizations sponsored by professional organizations such as AAAL, AERA, and TESOL.

Being a research assistant in my first PhD year allowed me to get familiar with a professor's line of research and learn how she conducts her research and works on her manuscripts. We had a mutually beneficial relationship: I helped her with her research and she taught me the tools to be successful in academia when it comes to

developing research skills—skills that we usually do not learn in a classroom. I have been able to apply this knowledge in the classes I have taken. Now that I am at the dissertation stage and looking for jobs, these skills have been very handy.

Service

In my first semester, I learned that my department was going to host a conference called Texas Foreign/Second Language Education Conference (TexFLEC) for the first time. This conference had previously been hosted by the University of Texas at Austin for 15 years. In 2014, my department started looking for students to organize it, but I hesitated to join the group at first because I was very busy with teaching and research assignments and with the three graduate courses I was taking. However, after reflecting on this event, I thought that it would be a great opportunity to develop my organizational and leadership skills. I also thought that it would be good to work with other graduate students in the same program and closer to professors. I was right about that.

This event, now called Texas Language Education Research (TexLER) conference, is run by graduate students. For the past

Be an active learner. Be strategic. Create opportunities.

three years, I have been an active member in the organization of this event that has had an average of 200 attendees and presenters each year. We have had Ana Celia Zentella, Deborah Palmer, and Bonny Norton, and several other influential keynote speakers. This year, I served as the conference chair, having also the opportunity to develop research among undergraduate students in my institution.

However, I wish I had met and worked with more PhD students from other institutions. I wish I could have been involved in graduate student organizations sponsored by professional organizations such as AAAL, AERA, and TESOL. These organizations provide an excellent opportunity to network and learn more about other students' research, besides developing leadership skills. I also wish I had learned more about scholarship and grant opportunities. I think it would have helped me to develop skills such as how to write grant proposals and apply for research fellowships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The main message I want you to get out of this article is “Be an active learner. Be strategic. Create

opportunities.” Do not think that just because you just started your first year, you still have plenty of time to figure things out. You will see that time passes by very fast. It is not that you need to have an article published in your first year. It is more about understanding the expectations of what it means to be a PhD student which usually goes beyond taking classes and doing well in them.

If you do not have a teaching appointment in your first year, I suggest that you let your graduate advisor know about your interest in teaching an undergraduate course. This way, if a position is available in the department, they will think of you. I have a friend who even let her advisor know that she would teach for free just for the sake of having teaching experience. You can maybe do it for a semester and later you might be able to obtain a fellowship. You might want to reach out to the graduate school office and other departments in your institution to check if there are any teaching fellowships available.

If you want to gain some knowledge about research, I would suggest that you familiarize yourself with the graduate student groups inside

main professional organizations such as TESOL, AAAL, and AERA. You can find further information on these professional associations' websites. You will see that, in order to take an administrative role, you should apply way in advance, so time needs to be on your side. You will also learn that by browsing these websites that they usually have a forum for graduate students to present their work and social events in their annual conventions. They provide information about other conferences as well.

In order to engage in service, if you do not want to get involved in the major organizations in the field of language and education, a good idea would be to start in your own institution. Look for student organizations that are related to your research interests. You can also ask the professors in your department if they are aware of any projects that you could participate in the school or in the community. Having experience in service in addition to teaching and research experiences might be crucial when you are applying for tenure-track positions.

Strategies for Pursuing Professional Development within the Socio-economic Constraints of Graduate Studentship

BY NICOLAS DOYLE AND ŞEYMA TOKER
(PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY)

Beginning an academic career in Applied Linguistics (AL) can be a daunting and, at times, overwhelming process.

Transitioning into life as a graduate student in this field may be a site of struggle for a number of reasons, including social and economic constraints. This is especially salient for doctoral students, many of whom enter their studies after working as teachers and in other professional capacities, typically earning more than what their stipend provides.

Learning how to navigate our professional, academic, and personal lives while adjusting to living on an assistantship stipend may produce certain tension as we are socialized into a professional community in which opportunities for professional development are closely tied to economic resources. Having experienced this tension first hand as graduate students, we sought to understand and learn from the experiences of our fellow doctoral students in

the Department of Applied Linguistics at Pennsylvania State University. Through a series of interviews conducted with 11 AL doctoral students, we learned some useful lessons in how to make the most of the socio-economic resources available to us for our professional development. In this article, we would like to share three common tips/suggestions we gleaned from these interviews.

Although we aim to inform a larger AL graduate student community about how some Penn State Ph.D. students have been dealing with the tension between their economic realities and professional development, we would also like to initiate a conversation with the community at large about how departments and major associations and organizations in Applied Linguistics can better accommodate the needs of AL graduate students.

Tips on How to Maximize Professional Development within Our Socio-Economic Means

Tip #1: Identify intra-departmental opportunities for professional development

While attending conferences and workshops typically requires a relatively large financial commitment, comprised of registration fees, travel, and room/board, many of the doctoral students we interviewed reported that we need not always look outward for professional development opportunities. Within any department is a community of faculty members and graduate students with whom you can network and collaborate on research at home, without additional expenses.

Within Applied Linguistics at Penn State, we have numerous reading and research groups, which provide graduate students with opportunities to engage with faculty and other students, especially collaborating on research projects, frequently leading to collaborative conference presentations, and occasionally publications. We also have a bi-

weekly Department Roundtable where we can present our current and ongoing research and receive feedback from our peers and the faculty. Therefore, we highly recommend AL students begin by exploring all opportunities available to you within your own department, not overlooking the intra-departmental professional development opportunities present in your context.

Tip#2: Be Strategic/ Selective About Conference Presentations

Given that conferences play an essential role in the professional development of graduate students, but are wrapped up in a multitude of expenses, we asked the students in our department how they reconcile this tension. A sage piece of advice was this: You don't need to attend every conference. In fact, many of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th-year Ph.D. students indicated that we *cannot and should not* seek to present at every conference. While recognizing the pressure to present at conferences, they

advised us that presenting at four to five conferences or more is both unrealistic and may lead to quick burn-out. Thus, we should seek to present at only two or three conferences per academic year, which can also help to relieve the financial burdens of travel and conference registration.

However, presenting at only two to three conferences per year begs the question "*How do you decide which conferences to present at?*" We received a number of suggestions on this as well. First and foremost, do your research beforehand.

Ask yourself *who will be attending this conference that I would like to meet and network with?*

Conferences are a great opportunity to meet other scholars in our field, both those that are established and other graduate students. By strategically submitting proposals to conferences where you will have the chance to share your work with experts on your interests and learn about related work of others, you can make the most out of the conferences you *do* attend.

Second, consider the location of the conference and its proximity to you. Many of our peers reported that the location of the conferences plays a major role in whether or not they even submit a proposal. If a conference is too far, even though it may be relevant to their research, many of the students we interviewed would be cautious about the potential travel expenses associated with reaching the conference. Another thing to consider while selecting conferences is the varying benefits of attending or presenting at local versus national/international conferences.

While there tends to be a privileging of attending national/international conferences, local conferences tend to be smaller, which can be a key benefit, as you will have more opportunities to interact with other presenters and plenary speakers.

It's also important to balance the number of international, national, and local conferences you are submitting proposals to. It would be financially unrealistic to apply to multiple international conferences overseas because even if your paper is accepted by all of them, the likelihood of being able to afford travel to multiple international conferences is low. However, in the next section, we will discuss some external sources of travel funding that our peers have used to help cover the expense of international professional development. We also recommend that our readers see the Spring 2017 AAAL Graduate Student Newsletter for an article on "The Nuts and Bolts of A Successful Conference Experience" by Elnaz Kia.

Tip #3: Identify External Sources of Funding for Professional Development

Many departments offer travel grants to support travel expenses and conference registration fees. However, they are typically not the only source of financial aid for professional development. Departments or colleges in many universities offer merit-based awards for teaching and research excellence for graduate students. Other types of funding awarded by the graduate school may include dissertation awards, publication

awards, or other external awards sponsored by related foundations and associations. These are usually announced on departmental or collegial listservs, but most of the time you need to take the initiative to identify and apply for these awards (although in some cases, the faculty is asked to nominate candidates).

One award offered to Penn State Ph.D. students within the College of Liberal Arts is the Superior Teaching and Research (STAR) Award, which provides a large sum of money to support graduate student research and professional development. Three of the students we interviewed had been recipients of this award and reported that receiving it enabled them to attend international conferences that they would have been otherwise unable to afford. Thus, it is crucial to search for similar opportunities that may also exist in your department, college, or university.

Additionally, there are opportunities for external research grants, which can help offset expenses associated with conducting research and purchasing equipment. We provide here two examples offered by our peers, though this is by no means an exhaustive list:

- ◆ [Linguistlist](#) posts such opportunities on its website, which are updated regularly.
- ◆ The Modern Language Journal also publishes calls for awards and grants by National Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (FMLTA) in the section entitled “Of Interest to the Profession” (click [here](#) to see the most recent call), which we also recommend checking regularly.

One final way to generate extra funds for conference presentations is to apply to participant or presenter grants offered by the conferences themselves.

Though limited, TESOL, for example, offers several travel grants, awards, and scholarships for both national and international attendees and/or presenters every year. Likewise, AAAL offers graduate student awards to six students every year based on the merit of the paper submitted for the conference.

Despite being limited and

competitive, external sources of funding are certainly available to AL graduate students to support their professional development. The only challenge is that we have to dedicate time and energy to seek for those opportunities.

Concluding Thoughts

Our interviews with Ph.D. students in the Department of Applied Linguistics at Penn State have illuminated some important lessons in how we can maximize our social and economic resources for both professional development and personal expenses. However, we also concluded our interviews by asking what, if anything, the professional community at large could do better to accommodate the needs of graduate students. We would like to similarly conclude this article by summarizing the most frequent comments and suggestions we received in response to this question.

Waiving the conference registration fee for student presenters.

Though reduced, all of our interviewees reported conference registration fees are still too high. The majority of students we talked with

reported that they needed to rely on credit debt to afford to attend conferences. Waiving, or further reducing, conference registration fees especially for graduate student presenters could help to reduce their expenses to some extent.

Organizing financial literacy sessions specific to AL graduate students.

One concern among the 1st and 2nd year Ph.D. students we spoke with was uncertainty about how to use their stipend wisely to both invest in their professional development activities and cover personal expenses. This suggests that it may help alleviate some of this stress if both AL departments and major professional organizations, such as AAAL, make efforts to offer guidance on this major adjustment. One suggestion was that a financial literacy session could be offered to grad students during the annual AAAL Conference.

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FRIENDS ACROSS FIELDS

The uses of cross-disciplinary peer collaboration

BY CATHERINE TEBALDI

(UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST)

At the last AAAL meeting, I presented my first working paper in applied linguistics to a full room of brilliant and intimidating scholars. I started blushing with embarrassment, but ended thrilled at the positive feedback and questions around my work on raciolinguistic ideologies (Rosa & Flores, 2015) in French twitter. My first presentation was supported by faculty in applied linguistics, but would never have happened without the close support and mentoring of friends across disciplines, who helped and challenged me.

Cross-disciplinary peer collaboration expanded my research beyond language, and led me to think about not only verbal art but also theory and methods that address the social and political lives of speakers. As Flores (2017) suggests, work in linguistics and language education needs to take a materialist,

anti-racist approach; the predominant narrow focus on language, as in heritage or bilingual schools, obscures relations of social power, oppression and inequality. Working in conversation with researchers across fields who share this materialist approach can help build new theory that situates the study of language within larger conversations about social power.

CROSS-DISCIPLINARY PEER COLLABORATION EXPANDED MY RESEARCH BEYOND LANGUAGE

For fifty years, UMass Amherst Anthropology has offered a European Field School that provides a group of four students close-mentored support for three semesters as they design projects, write proposals, carry out fieldwork, and analyze and present data.

Somehow, they let me join this school, and I conducted a linguistic ethnography in Paris, France, where I stumbled upon exploring the way the youth language Verlan had been taken up by middle class hipsters. Our group was lead by a sociocultural anthropology professor, and was designed to have students share knowledge while designing and conducting fieldwork.

Our practices included intensive reading of each other's project ideas, methods and literature reviews. I learned there were hundreds of kinds of ethnography I had never heard of. During fieldwork, we shared our impressions and observations through weekly Skype meetings and a group blog. These taught us that collaboration was an ongoing part of our reflection, and these conversations helped me deal with problems as they came up, and remain flexible enough to take up fieldwork opportunities. Afterwards,

experienced peers introduced tools for qualitative data analysis, and engaged in supportive practices such as preparing presentations and sharing writing. They offered new perspectives and drama-free support, perhaps because they weren't all applying for the same TA jobs as I was.

This exchange of ideas between qualitative researchers made our theory stronger. I discussed urban governmentality with an archaeologist, whose work on heritage management gave me a new lens for understanding debates around heritage language. Agamben's "bare life" was much more concrete when explained by researchers who knew skeletons. Sharing a discussion on language, materiality, and politics strengthened all our work.

Learning to talk to people across disciplines not only strengthened theory, but also helped me in developing proposal writing. I noticed immediately that it helped me learn how to keep my writing from getting cluttered with jargon I don't really know, and misplaced references to postmodern theories—a skill that has greatly improved my ability to share my ideas. Another participant of this program explained that working across disciplines also forced

her to explain things she took for granted as an anthropology student, thinking through concepts and theories, and not using so much jargon. An archaeologist noted that cross-disciplinary work helped her not only write grants, but also communicate with a wider audience, which is important as she looks to make her work relevant outside academia. She concluded that cross-field collaboration also allowed her to expand her job search—something that is key in the current academic job market.

Cross-disciplinary work has pushed me to discover new qualitative methodologies for the study of language that goes beyond discourse analysis to deeply engage with social context. While I may understand what medical anthropology is, the medical anthropologist I

collaborated with built a visual corpus of cartoons about cholera, which helped me organize my work with memes. Other researchers in language education I spoke with shared the value of learning about multimedia or multimodal analysis, while many researchers shared an interest in engaged ethnography and participatory methods. Cross-disciplinary sharing brought us new ways to make research relevant to students with work on social media, or to local communities.

Working with people outside your field can offer a fresh perspective (and an escape from department drama). Cross-disciplinary work can improve your ability to write a competitive grant proposal, design research with innovative methods, and develop stronger theories. It can help move work

SHARING A DISCUSSION ON LANGUAGE, MATERIALITY, AND POLITICS STRENGTHENED ALL OUR WORK.

beyond just looking at language, and better explore language as a social process. Most importantly, it might help research be more politically engaged, as speaking to people outside of your field can help speak to people outside of academia.

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO THINK ABOUT STRUCTURING PEER COLLABORATION

Join a certificate program or field school.

If your school offers field schools and qualitative research groups, these are great ways to work closely. Certificate programs can also bring you connection to people across disciplines who share your interests. These types of programs can expand your connections, teach you new methods, and perhaps help open up additional job opportunities.

Take methods courses across disciplines.

If you can't or don't want to commit to a whole certificate, taking methods courses in new disciplines is helpful. Many people I spoke to said that learning new methods was the most rewarding part of cross-disciplinary work.

Create interdisciplinary writing groups.

Get together with colleagues from other fields who can help you improve your knowledge of your field from a different perspective.

Put together cross disciplinary panels.

Anthropologists, educators, and linguists, can all offer complementary perspectives that deepen how we understand key topics around language and society. I'll be looking for one at next year's AAAL.

Call for Articles for the AAAL Graduate Student Newsletter

We are in need of writers for the Spring edition of our AAAL Graduate Student Newsletter. Please consider submitting a proposal! If selected, you will be asked to write a content article that addresses graduate student interests and issues, to be published in late February.

The proposal (approximately 300 words) should include the topic you would like to write about and a brief overview of what you plan to include in the article. We are seeking proposals that address topics that would be of interest to the broader AAAL graduate student community (see below for some ideas). Personal stories are encouraged! **Proposals should be submitted in a Word document and emailed to aaalgrads@gmail.com with the subject heading “GSC Spring Newsletter.”** Final content articles will be between 750 and 1500 words.

CONTENT ARTICLE PROPOSAL

Please include:

- Your name, institution, and area of study
- Your proposed topic (see above for ideas)
- A short but specific summary of what you plan to write about (300 words max.)
- A short statement about your ability to commit to the timeline

Suggestions for topics (feel free to submit your own unique idea):

- Reflections on first PhD year/Advice for incoming PhD students
- Reflection on AAAL grad student events
- Work-Life balance: the three pillars of academia
- Jumping into the job market
- Planning research projects to publish
- Collaborating on research projects with peers
- Research
- Technology
- Teaching
- Tools of the trade

Proposals are due by 11:59 P.M. EST December 15, 2017. Accepted writers will be contacted shortly thereafter to begin work on the full content article. The first full draft should be submitted by January 15, 2018. Editors will provide feedback and final submissions will be due in late-February.

We look forward to reading your submissions!

Best,
Rayoung Song and Jessica Lian,
Co-Editors

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