Tips for Resisting “Imposter Syndrome” as a Person of Color in Applied Linguistics

Nelson Flores
What is imposter syndrome?

- Defined by Wikipedia: “psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their accomplishments and has a persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a fraud”
The Problem with Imposter Syndrome

• It suggests that the problem resides in the individual
• It suggests the solution is to change the mindset of the individual
• No focus on the need for institutional change

STOP COMPLAINING, YOU ARE THE PROBLEM.
Tip #1

• Start from the mindset that feelings of being an imposter in applied linguistics stem from the fact that the field has historically been (and continues to be) predominantly white.
Tip #2

• Learn to recognize academic gaslighting when you see it.

• “You are making no new contributions to the literature.”

• “That scholar is a nice person.”

• “You are too ideological.”

• “Are you calling me a racist?”
Tip #3

• Have an academic crew who will support you both professionally and personally.
Tip #4

• Have a non-academic crew who will help remind you that a world exists outside of academia.
Tip #5

- Strategically choose your battles and remember that small changes matter.
Final Takeaway

• You are not the problem
• You belong in applied linguistics
• Applied linguistics needs you
• Together we can transform the field
Nelson Flores

nflores@upenn.edu

@nelsonlflores

https://educationallinguist.wordpress.com