Welcome to Our 3rd Newsletter Co-Editor

Hello, fellow graduate students,

First of all, I would like to express my excitement to serve as the newest co-editor of the AAAL Graduate Student Council newsletter! I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in the field of applied linguistics and hope to provide tangible contributions to the graduate student community through the newsletters. In these unprecedented times in the U.S. and around the world–marked by the ruptures brought about by a global pandemic and the fight for racial justice and equality–it is crucial for us as graduate students to forge alliances and be informed about resources and developments in the field that can shape our work. The AAALGrads Newsletter has been impactful in offering graduate students career guidance (e.g., writing proposals) and serving as a forum where students can share their experiences and foster a sense of solidarity. I am excited to be part of this team and to contribute to the fall 2020 issue of the newsletter focused on the fundamental topics of race, equity, justice, and allyship.

A little bit about me: I am originally from northeastern Brazil, specifically the urban city center of Recife in the state of Pernambuco. There, I completed my Bachelor's degree in Letras and an M.A. in linguistics at the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE). Throughout my undergraduate and graduate studies in Brazil, I also worked as an English as a Foreign Language teacher in a variety of settings, from small language institutes to freshman seminars at the college level. In 2015, I immigrated to the U.S. and began a new chapter of my academic, professional, and personal life in Boston, Massachusetts. I completed a Master's degree in applied linguistics at UMass Boston, where I had the chance to gather new insights on second language and literacy development, while simultaneously pursuing my English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching license in Massachusetts. As I became more familiar with U.S. public schooling and worked with emergent bilinguals in my teacher preparation and practicum through UMass, I started comparing these new experiences with what I had encountered as a practitioner in Brazil. For example, I wondered how students with a recent immigrant background developed a sense of belonging in their new school and communities in the U.S., as well as how bilingual education affected these students' educational experiences. So, I decided to continue in academia at the doctoral level and focus my studies on second language and literacy learning, issues of equity in access to bilingual education, and the educational experiences of bilingual immigrant children.

Now I am in my third year of the Ph.D. program in Curriculum and Instruction at Boston College. Since I began my doctoral studies, I have worked on a large ethnographic project that investigates the effects of Brazilian immigration in an elementary school in Massachusetts implementing a dual language bilingual education program (Portuguese/English). By serving as a field researcher, I have had the opportunity to develop enduring relationships with teachers and other school leaders, Brazilian families, and students. In this role, I have prepared and executed presentations for school staff meetings and bilingual parent association gatherings, and have assisted in the writing of reports that compiled preliminary insights to share with school staff and local community members. From participating in these efforts, I've learned about the importance of creating democratic spaces to disseminate knowledge, generate discussion, and share experiences in ways that lead to meaningful and tangible change.

My transnational experiences between my home country of Brazil and the United States are an integral part of who I am and the scholarly work that I strive to accomplish. I believe that having lived and become familiar with schooling and academia in different countries gives me a unique perspective on teaching emergent bilinguals and education research more broadly, which is also compounded by the experience of being an immigrant in the U.S. These transnational experiences have certainly framed my perspective on issues in the field of linguistics and have strengthened my commitment to working with immigrant communities. Through this work, I aim to help denounce persistent inequities in schooling and improve curricular and instructional approaches to better serve these students and support their bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural development.

I hope to contribute to the AAAL GSC newsletter team with my views grounded in these transnational experiences. For example, I believe that the newsletter can be expanded in scope to further engage with recent discussions surrounding diversity and equity which impact all of our lives and our work as graduate students and researchers. These discussions include the impact of the U.S. elections on schools and communities, immigration, bilingual education for minoritized communities, and language maintenance.

Furthermore, amid a global pandemic, it is crucial to leverage the space of the newsletter to provide our graduate student community with ongoing opportunities to connect with, learn from, and listen to one another. Perhaps now more than ever, writing is a vital means through which we communicate and relate to one another. For this reason, I also wanted to share with you a bit about my experiences with writing. At this point, I have worked with writing in various capacities: as a teacher, a reviewer, and as a doctoral student who has published in scholarly journals and understands the demands of academic writing. For example, I have served as a reviewer for the academic journal *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* and as an abstract reviewer for AAAL. These experiences have given me opportunities to critically engage with others' academic work in respectful ways to improve their submissions. I have also had the chance to collaborate with my advisor and other scholars in recent journal publications in *TESOL Quarterly* and *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education* (*DIME*). I am also interested in recent developments around diversity, equity, and social justice for minoritized populations, and participate in these important conversations through my publications.

As a newsletter co-editor, I am excited to engage with fellow graduate students' writing. I also look forward to pushing the boundaries of the newsletter to ensure that this issue's *theme* (race, equity, justice, and allyship) becomes a common *thread* in all of our issues. Our commitment to equity and social justice has to permeate all of our practices as co-editors, including our calls for proposals, interviews with students and faculty, the resources we share with graduate students in the field, and the like.

Thank you for having me as your newsletter co-editor! I look forward to connecting with you as well as learning about and supporting your work! Please do not hesitate to contact me via email (beckermr@bc.edu) if you have any questions, suggestions, or want to share a bit about your own story and trajectory. I hope that you and your loved ones are healthy and safe in these tumultuous times! Best wishes!

AAALGrads 5(1) / Fall 2020
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This piece originally published at https://www.aaal-gsc.org/profile-new-co-editor