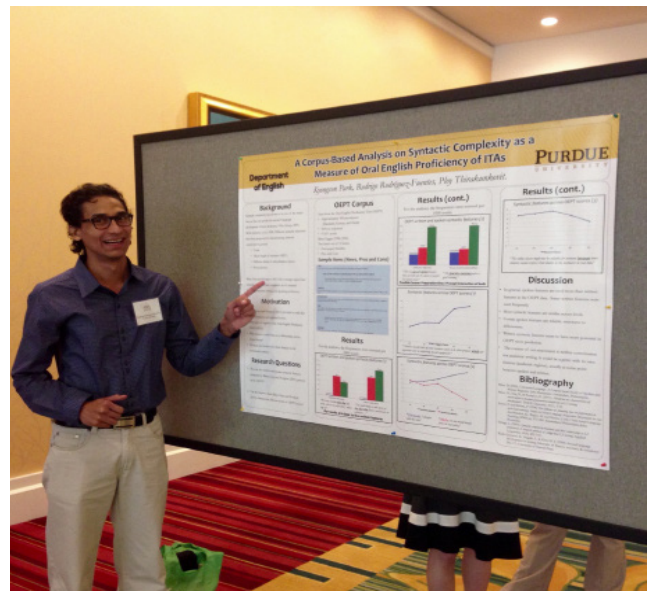


# AAALgrads

INAUGURAL Fall 2016 Edition

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We are excited to present the INAUGURAL issue of the AAAL graduate student newsletter. It has been a long time coming! During our first Graduate Student Council Steering Committee meeting, we began discussing different ways to engage the AAAL graduate student community throughout the year. After considering a range of options, we decided to focus our efforts on a newsletter that would be designed for and by graduate students to specifically address student issues. And, after many months of discussion, writing, and editing, here it is!

In this edition, you will find an introduction to this year's AAAL Graduate Student Council, the student leadership group that works to represent your interests within the broader AAAL community and organizes several conference events each year. This issue also includes content articles written by graduate students, covering a range of topics, including: work/life balance, the job search, transitioning from master's to doctoral study, and becoming an academic writer. You will also find a book review of Karen Kelsky's *The Professor is In* in our "Resource Corner" and an analysis of the survey results from the graduate student events at the 2016 AAAL conference.

We have already put out a call for articles for the spring edition, and we hope you will consider submitting a short piece. By sharing our experiences and expertise, we support one another in this journey through graduate school and beyond. We also welcome any suggestions for this newsletter, as we continue to shape it so that it addresses the areas that are most important to YOU, our wonderful AAAL graduate student community. Please do not hesitate to contact us at lhamman@wisc.edu and elenashvidko@gmail.com.

We hope you enjoy it!

*Laura & Elena*

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

### Greetings from the Graduate Student Council!

The GSC Steering Committee works to serve the interests of AAAL graduate student members worldwide. Our team aims to support graduate student members' academic and professional development, to foster closer interinstitutional 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 top priority for the 2016-17 academic year for GSC Steering Committee is to create more service and leadership opportunities for the graduate student members. We are increasing graduate student engagement in AAAL through activities such as volunteering at the conference, planning graduate student events, and writing for our newsletter. Currently, we are working on planning graduate student events for AAAL's 2017 meeting in Portland, Oregon and are recruiting students to contribute content for our second AAAL Grad newsletter.

One of our long-term priorities is establishing online avenues for outreach to student members who may not be able to attend the conference in person.

The GSC Steering Committee is eager to work collaboratively with the current leadership of the AAAL Executive Committee led by Dr. Kathi Bailey to best represent the interests of AAAL graduate student members!

Please connect with us through Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/AAALGrad>), Twitter (<https://twitter.com/AAALGrad?lang=en>) and Instagram (AAALGRADS). And also please feel free to contact us via a private message on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/AAALGrad> or email us at [grad@aaal.org](mailto:grad@aaal.org) if you have any questions or comments. We look forward to hearing from you!

*Lindsey & Mengying*

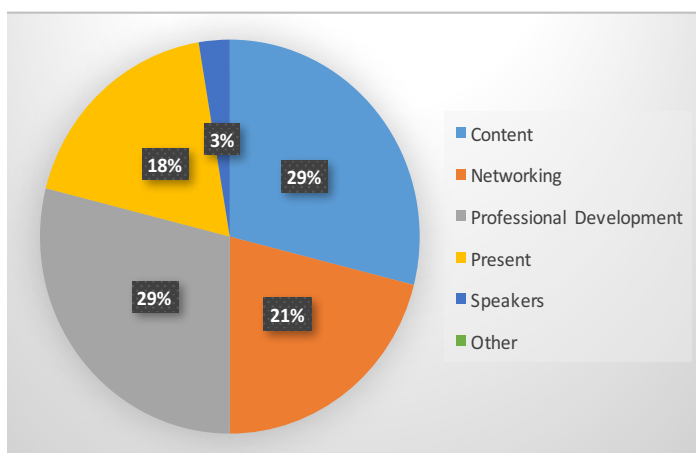
# SURVEY RESULTS

## WHAT GRADS SAY ABOUT THE 2016 AAAL CONFERENCE

At the 2016 conference in Orlando, Florida, the GSC Steering Committee hosted two events tailored to the needs and interests of graduate students. The first event, held on Sunday evening and entitled "Thriving while Striving: A Graduate Student's Forum on Life in Academia", brought graduate students together for roundtable-style discussions on topics related to graduate student life. The second event, held Monday afternoon and entitled "The (Job) Interview: Before, During, and After", was the third in a series of job-related graduate student events at AAAL conferences. Graduate student attendees at each of these events were surveyed so that the GSC Steering Committee might know how to better serve you, our constituents!



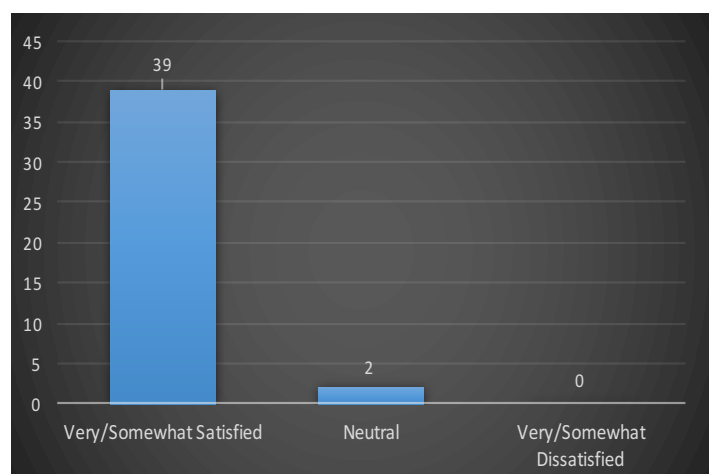
### Why Do Graduate Students Attend the AAAL Conference?



At the evening event, graduate students were asked to select their main reason(s) for attending the conference. The majority of students cited professional development and the content of the conference as the central reasons for attending, although networking and presenting were also highlighted as important factors.

### How Satisfied were Graduate Students with Conference Events?

Response data from the day and evening grad events were combined to evaluate overall satisfaction with sessions specifically designed for graduate students. We are happy to report that graduate students overwhelmingly stated that they were very or somewhat satisfied with the events, with only two students reporting "neutral" and no students reporting being dissatisfied with either event.



# MEET THE GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL



LINDSEY KURTZ  
**Co-President**

Pennsylvania State  
University

Lindsey Kurtz is a Ph.D. candidate in Applied Linguistics at The Pennsylvania State University. Her dissertation research focuses on using a Vygotskian concept-based instruction system to teach case reading and common law analogical reasoning to international Masters of Law students. Her research interests include Vygotskian sociocultural theory, legal literacy and discourse, English for Specific Purposes, English for Academic Purposes, and language teacher education. Lindsey holds a Masters degree from Iowa State University in TESL/ Applied Linguistics, with a specialization in computer assisted language learning.



MENGYING LIU  
**Co-President**

University of Minnesota

Mengying is a second year Ph.D. student in Second Language Education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Minnesota. Before she moved to Minneapolis, she spent two years in Philadelphia doing her Master's degree in TESOL at the University of Pennsylvania. She is interested in Chinese heritage language education. She enjoys working with Chinese heritage language teachers to help them solve problems they encounter in their teaching. Mengying hopes her research will inform not only Chinese heritage language education but heritage language education in general.



### Fast Facts about the GSC:

- GSC members serve one-year terms, beginning & ending at the annual AAAL conference.
- Co-presidents attend AAAL Executive Board meetings during the year.
- This is the second year of the GSC as a recognized organizational body within AAAL.



**LAURA HAMMAN**  
**Secretary**

University of Wisconsin-  
Madison

Laura is a fourth year Ph.D. candidate in Curriculum & Instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, with a focus on ESL & bilingual education. Her dissertation research explores how language and literacy practices in dual language immersion classrooms shape opportunities for learning. She is particularly interested in interrogating the intersections of language, ideology and identity in bilingual spaces. Laura teaches undergraduate courses in educational linguistics, SLA theory, and ESL methods and supervises practicing teachers in the ESL Master's program. She is also an avid runner and loves to travel.



**ELENA SHVIDKO**  
**Member-at-Large**

University of Purdue

Elena is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of English at Purdue University. She received her MA degree in TESOL and taught ESL in academic and community contexts. In her dissertation, she studies moment-to-moment alignment between teachers and students in writing conference discourse. She recently passed her proposal defense! Her research interests include second language writing, multimodal interaction, interpersonal aspects of language teaching, and teacher professional development. Outside of life in academia, she enjoys spending time outdoors, especially hiking, camping, and fishing.



**RAYOUNG SONG**  
**Member-at-Large**

University of  
Massachusetts-Amherst

Rayoung "Rae" Song is a doctoral student in language, literacy, and culture in the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Many of Rae's research interests reflect her own experience as a multilingual transnational individual. Her research interests include how multilinguals use their linguistic and cultural repertoires to construct and negotiate identities and to resist marginalizing discourses. Currently, Rae is writing a paper on bilingual identity development and language ideology in online spaces. Rae is also preparing for her dissertation research on Korean transnational youth's multilingual practices, identity construction, and educational trajectories.

# ACHIEVING WORK/LIFE BALANCE: PRIORITIZING LIFE AMIDST MANY DEMANDS

by Kendon Kurzer

*"Linnea! Stay in bed!" Sigh.... Just what I need the night before I'm supposed to get a dissertation chapter to my advisor: a toddler who refuses to stay in bed and doesn't sleep until 10:30pm. Here we go again...*

Welcome to a typical scenario in the life of a Ph.D. student/father, or my life, one that played out yesterday. I married young (the summer before my junior year as an undergraduate student) and rapidly joined the ranks of those who "adult" best: we bought a condo one year later, I worked several jobs while putting myself and my wife through master's programs, we sold the condo and moved several states away where we bought a house, we had a baby at the end of the first year of my Ph.D. program, I supported my wife as she started her own Ph.D... the list goes on. Between family responsibilities, my (minimal) social life, and school duties, life can be complicated. I've picked up a few strategies to help keep me progressing while maintaining some sense of balance (and sanity).

## **Employ Time Management Skills: Long- and Short-term Priorities**

Yes, I know that graduate students hear lecture upon lecture about the need to manage their time, but bear with me. Timely progression through graduate school requires both a long- and short-term focus. Each term has its own demands in terms of teaching and course loads, but those demands shouldn't force us to place longer-term priorities (research and career preparation, for example) on the back burner. If we have solid plans for effective progression, we should do all we can to keep those goals front and center. If we only focus on those projects or issues that are most urgent,

we'd be in constant crisis mode; rather, we need to balance importance and urgency as we plan our time.

It's also critical that we plan enough of a buffer into our schedule to allow for unforeseen circumstances and opportunities. If we constantly wait until just before the deadline for assignments, journal manuscripts, and conference proposals, we may find ourselves unduly stressed or missing out on unexpected opportunities for personal or professional development. For example, by staying ahead of the curve, I don't feel so pressed for time that I can't pause to give my daughter the attention she deserves, when she toddles in to share her latest find,. I still have the time to get what I need done, but with far more little breaks during the day to share in her life and interests.

## **Choose to Drop Balls When Needed**

On a related note, we can't be all we need to be to everyone at all times. In order to remain healthy and sane, at times we may need to neglect certain responsibilities occasionally. How much better is it when we are cognizant about our limitations and priorities, rather than overextending ourselves and causing irreparable harm to our psyche? All too frequently we end up pausing only when our bodies or minds give out. After such a mental or physical breakdown, we end up even far behind on our duties, and have to push ourselves more to catch back up, making it that much more likely that we'll break down again later.

Personally, I have found that I needed to de-prioritize my own coursework to ensure that I devoted enough time and energy to planning out my research and career trajectory. Don't tell my professors, but that meant that, at times, I would skim course readings or wouldn't devote my entire attention to class. Other days, the house went uncleaned, dinner was takeout, or (shame on me) our daughter would watch entirely too much television. Many of us graduate students are perfectionists, so neglecting anything can be extremely difficult to do consciously, but I've found it extremely helpful to intentionally determine which responsibilities to neglect at times.

## **Schedule "Me" or "Us" Time**

All (dissertation) work and no play drives Kendon insane and makes for a cranky family. In order to keep grounded and centered, it's crucial to prioritize a little "me" time. We are more than graduate students: we're children, partners, friends, and parents. We're also musicians, artists, and gardeners. So take some time to develop interests outside of graduate work. Don't neglect your hobbies. Personally, I enjoy gardening—there's nothing more cathartic than getting your hands a little dirty. Plus, it gives my brain a bit of a break.

We also don't exist in isolation. We need to take time to be with those we care about. Regular family or roommate dinners, dates, game nights, or nights out can help us rest and recharge. For many of us, social interactions help provide context for our work or keep

us grounded in the real world. But these interactions are often the first to be sacrificed when we begin to feel stressed.

And, when not on the clock, it's important to actually not work on occasion. I'm the king of multi-tasking. I usually do my grading while watching TV, much to the angst of my wife. So I've tried to be more deliberate with my breaks. For me, this means taking vacations to locations without electricity or Wi-Fi. We have made camping more of a priority, and it has been really productive. In our increasingly frenetic lives, a change in pace or scenario can help us rest and rejuvenate our minds. We live in a big, beautiful world; we might as well enjoy it.

**"We are more than graduate students: we're children, partners, friends, and parents. We're also musicians, artists, and gardeners."**

(a tough one, particularly with a little person in the house). While it may be difficult to always maintain healthy habits, say when at a conference or working toward an encroaching deadline, once we've established patterns that contribute to a healthy lifestyle, we will likely find ourselves mentally and emotionally sharper and stronger. But, all too frequently, healthy food and exercise are the first to go when we feel pressed for time.

Sometimes we may need to eat

As with all of life, these strategies can be helpful when mindfully employed, given individual needs and contexts. I've found that I'm happier and more productive when I am cognizant about my personal needs and when I balance those needs with my external demands, like school, work, and family. At two recent conferences, I've heard plenary talks about the need to hold graduate students to high expectations, as it's through the rigor of preparation that we will be adequately prepared to meaningfully contribute to the field. While I understand this perspective, I personally see value in remembering that, for some of us, this is merely a career path. However meaningful and important my future academic work (and I hope to have a long and illustrious career), I see it as being only one aspect of who I am. While some scholars may find total fulfillment from their careers, for others, our careers help us develop other aspects of our lives as well. We all need to determine our own path.

I see a lot of value in the Eastern concepts centered around yin and yang and the five elements. It's by achieving balance in our own lives regarding our needs—intellectual, physical, recreational, restorative, and spiritual—that we are able to fully live our lives. We need to establish patterns of living that support those other aspects of what makes for a fulfilling life, not just the intellectual. By consciously prioritizing all of what makes me a happy, well-rounded person in my own life, I can take the time to appreciate and enjoy the little things: the natural beauty around me, a good meal, story time, or even a distraught little one late at night.



Explicitly scheduling time for us is crucial to maintaining work/life balance.

### **Prioritize Health**

It is extremely difficult to enjoy life without good health. Treating our bodies correctly is the foundation for keeping our minds sharp and energy levels up. We need to prioritize eating healthily (along with the time/financial costs that requires), exercising however we see fit, and getting enough sleep

junk or neglect the gym; however, if that becomes the norm rather than the exception, I suspect that we will find that other aspects of our lives suffer as a result. I try to take advantage of opportunities to develop healthy habits. A long walk to my destination, an exercise break at lunch, or otherwise taking advantage of opportunities to get in at least a little exercise can go a long way toward developing healthy habits.



# NAVIGATING THE JOB SEARCH: GETTING STARTED AND STAYING ORGANIZED

by **Elena Shvidko, Caitlin Gaffney & Huamin Qi**

It's job hunt season! Whether you are in the first year of your graduate program, or now on the job market, it's neither too soon nor too late to plan and act for your own job search process – and the Graduate Student Council aims to help. We'd like to share some advice we gleaned from the 2015 conference event "Navigating the job search: Getting started and staying organized," sponsored by the Graduate Student Council at AAAL/CAAL 2015. Although this panel took place almost two years ago, the advice that the panelists provided are certainly still relevant today. This Q&A panel brought together several Applied Linguistics professionals representing a diverse range of career paths, including administration, publishing, teacher training, and assessment. They inspired us to consider the numerous professional directions that we, graduate students, can take after graduation.

Here are the highlights from the event that we found especially useful, and which we think could be useful to those of you who are currently on the job market.

## **It's never too early to start.**

Even if you won't be defending your dissertation any time soon, you can always begin gathering knowledge and resources that will be necessary for your job search. Down the road, you'll be thankful that you did. For example, you can:

- Look at job postings now so you know what prospective employers look for.
- Begin early to have time to tailor your CV, identify areas for growth (e.g., teaching, research skills), and gain experience before the job hunt is underway.
- Attend job talks at your university. The more you attend these types of presentations, the more comfortable and ready you will feel when it's your turn to take the podium.
- Talk to your committee members and other professors to ask what their job searches were like. Many have served on hiring committees and will have invaluable advice.
- Consider how much time you'd like to devote to your job search; maybe you'd like to set aside some time before your defense to start the process.

## **Find job postings.**

Many professional websites in our field feature job postings in applied linguistics, for example, [aaal.org/jobs](http://aaal.org/jobs), and occasionally our own AAALGrads Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/AAALGrad?ref=bookmarks>. To subscribe to new job posting notifications and search job openings, go to [aaal.org](http://aaal.org) and click on the "Resources" tab. You will then find the "Career Center," where you can find and manage your career postings. Don't forget organizations and websites outside of AAAL, such as TESOL, HigherEd Jobs, and Linguist List. Word of mouth can be very effective too — committee members, other faculty, fellow graduate students, and your department's administration are all great resources for open position announcements.

## **Demonstrate that you're a good match and develop skills required for your dream job.**

When applying for a job, take time to carefully read each job's description—including skills, qualifications, experience—and connect it with your own experience. For example, the cover letter is a great place to explicitly point out which of your professional qualifications are identical – or a close match—to the job's requirements. If you don't have the required skills and qualifications yet, set goals to develop them. Talk to your advisor, your committee, and senior grad students about how to get there. If you start the preparation process early enough, you will be able to master the skills you need for your dream job.

## **Build your teaching dossier as you go.**

Many academic jobs in Applied Linguistics require an ongoing teaching load, so remember to keep teaching on your "to-do-list" as you prepare for the job market! Start developing your teaching portfolio early in order to



keep track of your performance and focus on pedagogical development. This will help you to monitor your own progress, reflect on your skills, and make the task of gathering documents easier when you do begin applying for jobs.

What is in a teaching dossier? Teaching dossiers are composed of various documents such as course evaluations, syllabi and a statement of teaching philosophy. According to one panelist, hiring committees may even request a teaching video, which can be recorded at any time and in any course during your career. Even better, kill two birds with one stone: Record several videos of yourself teaching—choose one for inclusion in job materials (if requested), and use the others for professional teaching development (e.g., watch and reflect).

If you can, try to obtain a variety of pedagogical experiences. For example, are there any pre-service or in-service teacher-training opportunities available? Such experiences could be a major strength if you apply for an administrative position.

### **Craft multiple versions of your CV.**

Some positions are most interested in your teaching background, while others focus mostly on research or administrative experi-

ence. Design a few different versions of your CV to make it easier to tailor to the particular job to which you are applying. Remember to keep a separate master copy of your CV as well!

### **Practice interviews.**

While practicing face-to-face interviews is a must on your job-search agenda, you should also keep in mind that many preliminary job interviews are now conducted via phone (e.g., conference calls) and Skype. Chances are you will experience all of these interview modalities. When preparing for phone interviews, pay particular attention not only to what you say but how you say it, that is, the volume, speed, intonation, and tone of your voice. One of our panelists emphasized the specific demands of Skype interviews. In a Skype context, focus on having your computer's video camera at an appropriate height, distance and angle, looking into the camera rather than at your screen, and making sure your connection will be working properly at the scheduled time of the call.

### **Be considerate of your committee members.**

Remember that your job search can be a chaotic time for not only you, but for your mentors as well, since they may be proof reading cover letters and writing reference

During the session, panelists shared documents that you might find helpful in your job search.

Check them out here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0BwFEauK5MOvcWpQbWtreV8tNXc>

letters. Maintain good relationships by keeping the various deadlines in order for everyone. One panelist typed the deadlines for each letter in the subject headings of his e-mails. In the body of his email, he outlined the job requirements, what should be covered in the letter, and how it should be submitted.

### **Stay organized.**

Honestly, this was our favorite part of the panel discussion. One of the panelists shared a spreadsheet that she created to systemize her job hunt. Here is a link to that document: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yjXQ8cMWd5wgXiAvy8PnsQurx-HCXjo\\_LULhlq-YDIPA/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yjXQ8cMWd5wgXiAvy8PnsQurx-HCXjo_LULhlq-YDIPA/edit). Each row contained a job posting, and columns were designated to items like deadlines and various application requirements. She also used color coding to further organize the document. The use of this document really emphasized to us how complex the job search can be and how valuable good organization is.

So, what are our final reflections on this panel? Some of us are newer graduate students and found this session very illuminating, as we believe it was for many attendees. A key takeaway is something we can apply to our entire professional careers: although some opportunities may feel out of reach at times, preparedness is key, as small steps toward a large goal add up!



# BECOMING AN ACADEMIC WRITER: A 12-WEEK PROJECT

by Rayoung Song

If you are interested in academic writing, you've probably heard of, or you will soon hear about, Wendy Belcher's *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks*. It is, if I may be so bold, the ultimate guide to journal article writing that demystifies and breaks down the process involved in preparing a manuscript for publication. I was fortunate to learn about this fabulous book early into my doctoral program and followed the steps in a 12-week journey with another writing partner in the summer of 2015. In this article, I would like to reflect on the 12-week project, and introduce the book and my experience to my fellow AAAL grad students.

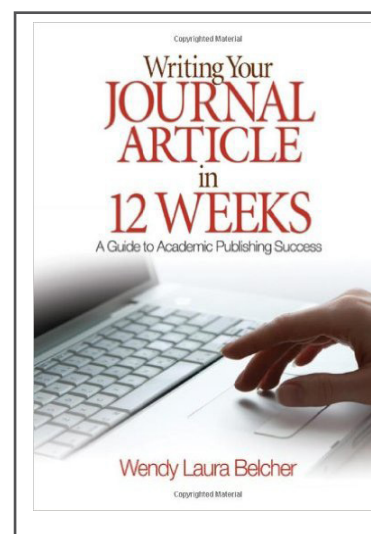
## A Step-by-Step Guide: Creating a Publishable Article

The book, as the title suggests, describes small steps of a 12-week-long project to turn your draft article into a publishable journal article. Each week targets a certain area of the manuscript, but the book does not just focus on what goes into your manuscript (e.g., introduction, literature review, methods, and conclusion). Rather, it showcases what goes in the whole process of preparing, writing, revising, and submitting your article. For example, the book explains types of journal articles; what type of article you should strive to write; specific ways to find, identify, and choose a 'right journal' for your article; and ways to approach a journal editor to gauge interest in your work. In sum, it addresses the things that might seem trivial but are crucial when you are preparing a manuscript. This is what I, a budding academic writer, love about this book: it demystifies the process of academic publishing.

The first four weeks of the project is dedicated to 'housekeeping' issues such as creating a writing plan for the next 12 weeks, selecting which paper to work on, polishing an argument, and selecting a journal according to your argument. The next four weeks plunge into the content of the paper such as literature review, structure, findings, introduction, and conclusion. The last four weeks are all about getting feedback, editing, and submitting your work to a journal. If you judiciously follow the detailed and specific action plan provided, the book ensures that you have your manuscript sent to a journal at the end of the 12 weeks.

## Developing the Manuscript

There are some caveats, of course. The book starts from the assumption that you already have written a draft that you intend to turn into a manuscript, so if you are starting from scratch, you might not be able to readily put the action plan into practice (On a side note, if you are at a drafting stage, I suggest you read ["The Two Week Method of Writing Academic Articles" on Dr. Tanya Golash-Boza's blog, Get a Life, Ph.D.](#)). Secondly, as you probably noticed from my description of the 12-week breakdown, the book does not allocate sufficient time toward developing the actual content of a manuscript. Thus, you might feel a little cramped for time when you are working on the content of the paper. I certainly felt that way, especially when I revised the literature review section of my draft. So, if you believe your literature review portion is particularly rough, I suggest you start by identifying and reading relevant books and articles as soon as you choose the narrative of your manuscript.



## Boosting Accountability

Drawing from my 12-week project experience, I would also recommend adding another layer of accountability. For example, you could log your process on your blog or on other social media platforms. Belcher's book by itself is a wonderful step-by-step guide but having a system to hold yourself accountable and training yourself to write for a larger audience would yield even greater results. This might also be done by doing the project in a writing group, which the book recommends. In my case, I logged my progress on my personal blog. Tracking the process on my blog helped to not only hold me accountable for each week's activities, but also helped to solidify my writer identity. That is, I became more confident in writing in a public forum. If you are not a blogger, you might try out other social media platforms such as Twitter or Facebook. What is important is not which venue you use, but the fact that you do what you promised yourself to do by writing for a larger audience.

Belcher's book has been an invaluable source of information to demystify the ins and outs of writing for publication. I hope you will also allow this guide to help you become a better equipped academic writer.



# CALL FOR ARTICLES FOR THE SPRING EDITION!

We are in need of writers for the spring edition of our new 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 early March.

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](mailto:aaalgrads@gmail.com) with the subject heading "GSC Spring Newsletter." Final content articles will be between 750 and 1500 words.

**Proposals are due by December 15th at midnight, CST.**

Accepted writers will be contacted shortly thereafter to begin work on the full content article (due Jan. 15th). Editors will provide feedback and final submissions will be due in early February.

## Content Article Proposal Guidelines

Please include:

- Your name, institution, and area of study
- Your proposed topic
- 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

**We look forward to reading your submissions!**



# TRANSITIONING FROM MASTER'S TO DOCTORAL STUDENT IN THE FIELD OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

by Bingjie Zheng

Transitioning from a master's to a doctoral student does not just signify a new academic chapter, a more focused research interest, or more dedicated time for reading and writing. It requires a set of new skills to manage doctoral life. In this article, I will share my own experiences with this transition to illustrate how doctoral study differs from master's study from an international student's perspective.

## Getting the Most Out of Your Coursework

During my master's study, I tried to fully utilize the resources from my coursework to develop my academic skills. At the stage of course planning, I selected a wide range of courses, including psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and language policy, in order to develop foundational understanding of the field. I selected these courses either because they were required or the topics were interesting to me. I also carefully worked on course assignments and fully prepared for class discussions in order to get good grades.

In addition, I often sought feedback during instructor's office hours to understand how I could improve. Looking back, I feel these efforts worked well to achieve my goal at that time: to develop academic skills for doctoral application. However, I did not form a big picture of how courses and assignments could work together to support my research interests in the long term, nor did I develop a solid plan to connect my coursework with potential conference presentation or publications. All the work I did was to meet the course requirements which had been decided by instructors.

In a Ph.D. program, the coursework is equally important. How-

ever, the criteria for selecting a course and the goal of completing a course are different. For course selection, I focus more on the set of skills and knowledge I could develop that will prepare me to be a successful researcher. Most of the courses I take are directly relevant to my research focus. For example, I now take more courses on literacy theories, discourse analysis and sociocultural theories because my research interests have shifted from cognitive SLA to bilingual/biliteracy development in K-12 classroom settings.

Customizing a course to fit my own research interests has also become a new priority. In my case, this starts with a clear sense of what I want from the course and how it will contribute to my academic goals. It also requires me to adjust my time commitment to different sessions: Not all of the assignments and sessions are of equal importance. For instance, I will read and review far more than the required readings for certain sessions, which are of high relevance to my research interests, but will skim readings for other sessions. Similarly, I carefully select topics for assignments (e.g., the final paper) that will be useful in my prelim examinations or may lead to a potential publication.

I have also learned how important it is to use lecture time to develop academic social skills. As an international student from a culture with very different social norms regarding class participation, I sometimes find it challenging to act like a "mainstream" student during class discussions. To improve my participation in class, I started to pay attention to how my American peers comment and respond to each other's ideas, and have become more active in expressing my ideas in class.

## From Student to Professional

Being a doctoral student also requires more than simply focusing on coursework: a doctoral student has to be skillful in working in a professional manner in social domains beyond the classroom. We must shift our student mind to a professional mind.

While pursuing my master's, I invested most of my time into studying. Even my internship as an ESL instructor served to fulfill a course requirement. Because of the heavy focus on the academic success, I neglected my social and professional skills. Now, in my Ph.D. program, I have started to work on these skills. For example, I volunteered in two local classrooms and worked as a project assistant at a non-profit that supports minority high school students to better understand the U.S. educational system. Working in these settings taught me how to communicate professionally and develop skills in time management.

Learning how to do research is another important part of professionalism. Before my doctoral study, I did not realize that becoming a researcher requires a large amount of training and sophisticated skills. Learning only theories from methods courses without getting into the field is inadequate. When I realized this, I reached out to a professor who needed student researchers. On this team, I have been able to conduct observations and interviews, which has been helpful for developing a researcher mindset.

The transition to doctoral study can be stressful. But, by developing a constructive relationship with advisors and peers and not being afraid to ask for advice, you can make a successful transition to Ph.D. study.



# THE RESOURCE CORNER

## Book Review of Karen Kelsky's *The Professor is In: The Essential Guide to Turning Your Ph.D. into a Job*

by Laura Hamman

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"  
"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.  
"I don't much care where—" said Alice.  
"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.  
"—so long as I get SOMEWHERE," Alice added as an explanation.  
"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."  
-Lewis Carrol, Alice in Wonderland

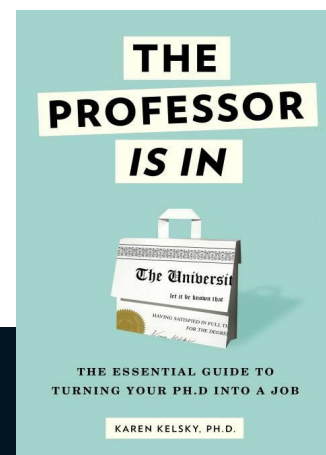
The graduate school journey often feels like a trip down the rabbit hole. Gone are the 9 to 5 workdays, the simple answers to straightforward questions, and the direct relationship between time-on-task and productivity—if they ever existed for you in the first place. Figuring out how to translate five (or more) years of dedicated study into an academic job can be even more puzzling.

Those outside of academia are often of little help. Your friends and family may envy your "flexible" schedule or look with disdain on your prolonged studenthood, despite your best efforts to explain that student-ing is actually a very small part of what you do. Advisors, while (hopefully) concerned with your intellectual growth and well-being, generally do not consider your professional development their responsibility. Fellow graduate students might offer career advice—or, at the very least, will commiserate over a cold IPA—but, too frequently,

this approach amounts to "the blind leading the blind."

What, then, is a job-seeking graduate student to do? Fortunately, Karen Kelsky has set out to answer these questions and demystify academia in her humorous, refreshingly straightforward, and brutally honest book: *The Professor is In: The Essential Guide to Turning Your Ph.D. into a Job*. In it, Kelsky sheds some much needed light on the tenure track hiring process, the steps to become a competitive candidate while still in graduate school, and strategies for being successful on the job market.

Her solutions are candid and blunt. For example, in a chapter entitled "Stop acting like a grad student!" she outlines the most common mistakes of job-seeking graduate students, which includes making excuses for yourself, droning on and on about your dissertation, and being submissive. She is painfully honest about how shifting priorities (and accompanying budget cuts) in academia have



produced a highly competitive job market with too few tenure track positions and too many worthy candidates. At the same time, she provides actionable steps for progressing through graduate school in a way that positions you to become a competitive job candidate.

Developing a strategic plan for graduate school is key to successfully obtaining a faculty position. While graduate students in previous decades may have had the luxury of ignoring employment concerns until their final year of study, today's highly competitive academic job market is not designed for those who simply "walk long enough" in their respective fields. Kelsky's text is a must-read for any graduate student seeking professorship. Her detailed suggestions provide a way to become proactive, to take graduate school by the horns and begin to guide it in the direction of your choosing.



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