AAALgrads

Spring 2017

NEWSLETTER CONTENTS

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We are excited to present the spring issue of the AAAL graduate student newsletter! The 2017 AAAL conference in Portland is just around the corner, and like many of you, the Graduate Student Council Steering Committee has been busy preparing for this event. We will have two special sessions for graduate students at this upcoming conference: “Making a transition from graduate student to faculty member” and “Publishing 101: Graduate students’ forum on writing for publication" (see below for details). If you are planning to be at the conference, we encourage you to attend these sessions.

As in the previous issue, we have included several content articles written by graduate students discussing various topics related to grad life, such as effective note-taking, having a successful conference experience, making the best of collaborative work, building social support networks, publishing as a novice scholar, and finding balance between teaching and graduate student responsibilities. This issue also features Dr. Katie Bernstein, the winner of the 2016 AAAL Dissertation Award.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue, and we encourage you to submit your articles for future issues of the newsletter. We also welcome feedback for this newsletter from you. If you have any suggestions on how to make this publication more useful for you, please do not hesitate to contact the Graduate Student Council Steering Committee at *aaalgrads@gmail.com*.

Enjoy the reading! We hope to see you in Portland!

Elena & Laura

PLEASE JOIN US AT GRAD EVENTS AT THE 2017 AAAL CONFERENCE IN PORTLAND

Publishing 101: Graduate students’ forum on writing for publication
Sunday, March 19th
6:45 pm – 9:15 pm
Oregon I

Have you been to publishing seminars and workshops but are still not sure how to write a publishable paper? Do you have questions about publishing that you feel embarrassed to ask? Do you have course papers but don’t know how to turn them into possible publications? Come join our graduate student panelists who will answer your questions big and small, and share their experience of how they go about publishing their own papers and provide some tips on turning your term papers, or conference papers, into publishable manuscripts. This round-table session is geared toward all graduate students who want to have discussions on writing for publication.

Food will be provided!

Making a Transition: From Graduate Student to Faculty Member
Saturday, March 18th
12:00 pm -1:10 pm
Mt Hood

Are you wondering how to prepare for an academic position? Curious about how to smoothly transition from graduate student to faculty? Searching for advice on getting started as a new professional in the field? This session is for you! In this workshop, a panel of experts will share their experience and offer advice on various aspects of the transition process, including: relocating to a new environment, establishing relations with new colleagues, facing the challenge of course preparations, balancing teaching and research, and working toward tenure/promotion/retention. This workshop is geared toward graduate students in general as well as recent graduates who are preparing for the job market.

LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Much has happened since the first AAAL Grad Newsletter went live in November and while there is much to say about the political and cultural happenings in the United States currently and in recent months, but what I have been reminded of repeatedly is what an important time it is to be an applied linguist and do the work that we do. As we prepare to gather in Portland, I find myself reflecting on what a special opportunity we will have at this conference. Alongside the customary opportunities to gather and discuss our research, our teaching, and our ideas, Portland 2017 also represents the opportunity to think critically about why we do the work that we do, how to engage each other and the public with that work, and why the work of applied linguists is so crucial, especially now.

Recently, I had the privilege to observe leadership in action as AAAL's Executive Committee discussed and then put forth an official AAAL EC Statement on the Travel Executive Order, now posted on the AAAL website (https://aaal.site-ym.com/news/328970/AAAL-Statement-on-Travel-Executive-Order.htm). As a representative of the AAAL Graduate Student Council, I was fortunate to be privy to some of their conversations in the process of writing and releasing a response from AAAL concerning the executive order. The conviction and compassion demonstrated by members of the Executive Committee in those interactions reinforced for me that the work we do as applied linguists transcends the conversations we have with each other at academic conferences and in our publications in academic journals. In observing the leadership of the EC, I felt that I was seeing AAAL's definition of applied linguistics embodied. At the meeting in Portland, members of the AAAL community will have many opportunities to continue to embody that definition, especially through the informal conversations we have with each other at coffee breaks, between sessions, and over dinner. There will also be at least two official opportunities to engage in conversations related to the Travel Executive Order. As outlined in the EC's Statement on Travel Executive Order:

> *At the upcoming meeting in Portland, there will be two public fora for those attending the conference to express their views on these developments. A lunchtime open meeting on Saturday will address the issue of our professional responsibilities as applied linguists in the current troubling political context. On Sunday, an open meeting of the new Public Af fairs and Engagement Committee will provide a further context for the drafting of a public statement. We encourage all those attending to contribute to these discussions; they have been scheduled so that they do not compete with any academic session.*
>
> *(AAAL EC Statement on Travel Executive Order)*

As we head into the annual meeting in Portland, I am excited to see friends old and new, hear about new research and cutting-edge theoretical ideas, but I'm also thinking about all it means to be an applied linguist. I'm thinking about AAAL's definition of what applied linguistics is (see below). I'm thinking about what it means to be a scholar and to not only engage in research and teaching, but also to be involved in service to the profession and to the communities of which we are all part.

I certainly hope that we, the Graduate Student Council Steering Committee, will see many of you at the public fora to discuss the Travel Executive Order. I hope, too, that we'll see you at the events the Steering Committee and our event planning teams have spent the year planning. On a personal note, I know I'll spend time at the conference and after reflecting on what it means to be an applied linguist in today's world and how we can better engage in this important work. I encourage all AAAL Grads to do the same.

Lindsey

"Applied Linguistics is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry that addresses a broad range of language-related issues in order to understand their roles in the lives of individuals and conditions in society. It draws on a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches from various disciplines–from the humanities to the social and natural sciences–as it develops its own knowledge-base about language, its users and uses, and their underlying social and material conditions." (*American Association of Applied Linguistics*)

THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

by **Elnaz Kia**

Conferences provide graduate students with great opportunities for professional development, networking, and visiting old classmates and friends. However, attending a professional conference for the first time can be a little daunting. It is important to learn the preparation steps for attending a conference in order to get the most out of this valuable experience. This article offers the nuts and bolts of a successful conference experience by describing things to do before attending a conference, while at a conference, and after the conference.

In Spring 2016, I attended a panel on presenting in professional conferences at my university led by Dr. Fredricka Stoller. The valuable take-away message from that panel was that, if, as a researcher, you have been given the opportunity to present your study to a professional audience, you should take this privilege seriously as it comes with great responsibility. You owe it to your audience to be prepared, so that you make it worth their time and money. Here are some relevant tips that I learned from this presentation:

BEFORE THE CONFERENCE

Prepare your presentation.

1. Adhere to your title and the conference program abstract.

It is your title and abstract in the conference program that will make people choose your presentation over many others. Moreover, your audience has certain expectations based on the content of your abstract. In large international conferences, such as AAAL or TESOL, people sometimes must choose among 3 or 4 interesting concurrent sessions, and it can be really disappointing if they realize at the end of a session that the presentation was not what was described on the abstract. I had this experience at a conference last year. While the topic was as I expected, the content was not: the study was a project in progress, which was still in the initial stages of data analysis. This was not stated in the abstract.

2. Prepare slides or poster.

PowerPoint slides are meant to guide your audience throughout your talk. One common mistake that presenters make in creating slides is they fill slides with all the information they need to present. While this will help presenters in remembering their talk, it will be confusing for the audience. Your audience will not have time to read through long texts on the slides. Therefore, it is recommended to keep slides simple, with concise information. The same rule applies to posters; bullet points and visuals are better options for introducing information than long texts.

Tips for slides or posters:

- Consider your audience. If you anticipate more teachers attending, then you should include meaningful pedagogical implications. Your audience may not be experts in your field. Therefore, you should define key terms in your study.
- Include the title of your talk, your name, email address, and institutional affiliation.
- Add an outline of your presentation soon after the title page. You have limited time to explain your study. Be brief and to-the-point.
- Include a slide towards the end of the presentation that summarizes your findings or presents a take-home message. There is so much to absorb at a large conference and these take-away messages are easier to remember.
- Choose an appropriate font size for text.
- If the figures, pictures, or tables are blurry or of low quality, then don't use them. If you are the only one who can read a figure or table, don't include it.
- Do not add a long list of references on the last slide. Instead, include the main references on your handout.

3. Prepare a well-organized handout.

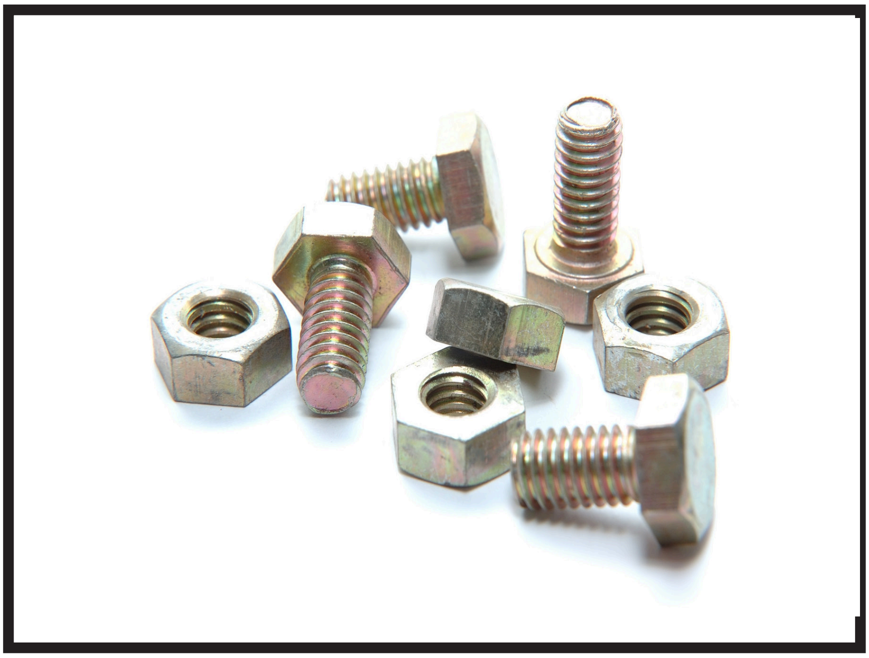
The purpose of having handouts at your paper/poster presentation is three-fold: 1) to direct your audience to tables or figures that could not fit on the PowerPoint presentation, 2) to give your audience an overview of your study, and 3) to share your contact information with the audience for possible future correspondence.

Tips for handouts:

- Include the title of your presentation, your name, your affiliation, and your contact information at the top.
- If you are presenting a paper, contact conference organizers and ask how many seats there are in the room you've been assigned. It is better to have extra handouts. In big conferences with plenty of concurrent sessions, it is possible to have few attendees. You can leave extra handouts at the registration area or in the same room that you presented, if there is another session after you.

Review conference program.
1. Select sessions to attend.
At large international conferences with many concurrent sessions, you may need to decide among 3 or 4 interesting sessions. Read the abstracts carefully to make a wise decision. If possible, this should be done before the conference, as skimming through a thick program booklet, or browsing the app for finding relevant sessions can be very time-consuming at the conference.

2. Identify potential networking opportunities.
While skimming the program, search for names of scholars with similar line of research. Prepare a list of those researchers you would like to meet at the conference.



DURING THE CONFERENCE

Be organized and disciplined!
Conferences are great intensive learning experiences; In order to get the most out of these crash courses, you need to be prepared, organized, and disciplined.

Tips on how to be organized:

- Arrive early to sessions.
- Take notes at the sessions you attend and archive these notes for future reference. Great ideas arise at conference presentations, especially in the 'future research' or 'limitation' sections of the presentations. Take notes of all those ideas!
- If you are presenting, have a paper and pencil ready to record audience suggestions or insightful comments for future improvement or development of your study.

Attend plenaries and poster sessions.
Plenaries are worthwhile in that they usually outline the state of a specific field or introduce new projects. Poster sessions are also valuable and informative. You can have a one-on-one conversation with the presenter and discuss specific aspects of their study without worrying about time.

Build up a network.
I find it very helpful to speak to the presenters after their talk. You might not be able to do this right after the presentations, as the sessions occur immediately, one after another, and the next presenters need to set up their PowerPoint. However, you can approach the presenters in the corridors or during a coffee break, if they are available. First introduce yourself, then talk about your interest in what the presenter is doing. You might also explain your line of research, offer ideas for future research, and request future collaboration. Business cards can come in handy at this time.

AFTER THE CONFERENCE

After attending a conference, it is good to summarize what you have learned and build up your professional network. It is time to turn your learning experience into action.

Follow up with new contacts.
If you talked to presenters about a possible future collaboration, now is the time to contact them. Even if you still do not have a solid idea of the future project, initiating correspondence will help the other person remember your name and

Review your notes.
Review your notes from presentations, as well as those regarding future research ideas. Use what you learned to inform your ongoing projects. Depending on which stage of the project you are at, you could incorporate new theories, different methodologies, or various analytical approaches to improve your study. As for the future research ideas, first evaluate the feasibility of the ideas and choose those that are practical. Afterwards, plan the procedure for conducting the study.

An important take-away message is to be prepared and organized before, during, and after the conference! I hope you enjoy your AAAL conference experience and make the most out of this valuable opportunity.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Elnaz is a third-year PhD student in Applied Linguistics at Northern Arizona University interested in the areas of Pragmatics and Corpus Linguistics. She is originally from Iran and speaks Persian and English. As a graduate teaching assistant at NAU, she teaches EAP to international students to help them prepare for their language needs at the university.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. KATIE BERNSTEIN

by **Laura Hamman**

Dr. Katie Bernstein is an assistant professor in the Division of Teacher Preparation at Arizona State University and the winner of the (inaugural) 2016 AAAL Dissertation Award. She received her Ph.D. in Language, Literacy and Culture in 2014 from UC Berkeley. Her dissertation, entitled, "Learning English as an L2 in PreK: A practice perspective on identity and acquisition," explores children's social interactions as context for language learning and for their construction of understandings about how language and literacy work. I sat down with Katie to learn more about her dissertation study and her professional experiences as a former graduate student and, now, as a faculty member.

LH: How did you become interested in your area of study?

I was a preschool teacher first. There are not too many linguists who go from preschool teaching to applied linguistics, but I had studied linguistics prior to becoming a teacher so I was always really fascinated by the language development of the kids in my class, especially students who were learning English as a new language. And one of the things I observed was that kids in the classroom are allowed—not just by their teacher, but by their peers—to do different things with language depending on who they are.

For example, I had English learners who would repeat something that a native English speaker in the class said and that student would say, "That was so cute! Did you hear how she repeated me?" and then another kid would do the same thing and she'd say, "Stop copying me!" And so, even though they were doing the same thing, it seemed there was some sort of relationship between how students were perceived by their peers at three-years-old and what they could do. I started wondering if what they could do with language would have an impact on their language acquisition. At some point, I realized I didn't have the tools to answer that question as a teacher, so I decided to go to grad school to see if I could gain some skills to help me answer it.

LH: Was your dissertation research framed around that question?

It was. Everyone kept warning me throughout grad school that my questions would change, but mine never did—they were just fine-tuned. I went from asking, "What's going on here?" to something a bit more precise with new theoretical and methodological tools. The question I sought to answer in my dissertation was just that, the relationship between students' social relationships and their language learning trajectories.

One of the ways my question became more precise was through learning that there are different ways to approach the question of social identity and language acquisition. There is a whole body of literature, starting with Bonny Norton's work in the 1990's, looking at social positioning and social identity, which considers the challenges associated with negotiating an identity that enables you to have the possibility to start learning a language. And then there's another body of work around interaction, participation, and language—mostly in higher ed foreign language classrooms—that looks at how we can get students to participate more, since there seems to be a relationship between participation and outcomes.

There wasn't, however, much work that went from the first body of work to the second. The literature looking at positioning and looking at microethnographic or discourse analytic work stopped at the point of recognizing that participation patterns are different and will likely have implications for learning.

So, one of the things I wanted to do in my project was connect the two parts, and ask: does social interaction have implications for learning? Can we actually see if students who ended up in really different social positions had different learning outcomes? So that's what I did, with preschoolers, too, which no one was really doing.

LH: And what did you find?

One of my central findings is that outcomes didn't materialize in the way I had anticipated. When I looked at traditional measures of language acquisition like vocabulary and utterance complexity, the student who we all thought was going to knock it out of the park, the one who was popular and always in the middle of everything, didn't excel in the way that one of the peripheral learners did. This student was on the fringe of the social network of the class, but there were affordances to her position that I hadn't really noticed until I went back to explain how she had been so successful. I found she did things like sit on the edge of an interaction and just listen for a long time without having to participate. And then she would go off and practice, talking to herself as she colored and no one bothered her to find out what she was saying or asked why she was repeating the same thing over and over again. And so, I know it's not generalizable to every kid in every situation, but it does raise some questions about the assumption in the earlier group of studies, which argued that students just had negotiate a subject position where they could participate in interactions and then language acquisition would follow.

LH: Since graduating with your Ph.D., you have begun working as an assistant professor. What is it like to be a professor? How would you describe a typical day?

I think the best thing about this job is that there is no typical day. There are typical weeks but, within those weeks, my days look really different. I teach two classes back-to-back on Tuesday and Thursdays, which is great since I can just focus on teaching those days. I try to schedule student meetings and to plan and grade on those days so that I can leave the rest of the week open for the other aspects of my job.

When you are evaluated as a faculty member, you're evaluated on scholarship, teaching, and service, and at different levels—departmentally, institutionally, and nationally. You have to find ways to engage in service, in committee work at all those different levels, that will not take up too much time but will also give you access to meet people that you need to meet. I think figuring out how to bring my teaching and my research together a bit more has been helpful too, realizing that they don't have to be separate. Even in my undergrad classes. If I read a good article, my students can hear about it.

LH: Do you have any other advice for graduate students who are seeking a career in academia? What were some key experiences you had that prepared you for your current role?

I think going to conferences, especially those the size of AAAL, was key because it is difficult, as a graduate student, to get a sense of what is central and what is peripheral to a field. When you go to a conference like AAAL and, like a good graduate student who is trained to find patterns in things, you get a feel for what everybody is talking about and what nobody is talking about. Attending conferences was the most helpful way I found to figure out what the big conversations were and how to speak to people in the field in a way that showed I was engaging in those conversations. Strategically, it also helped me to think about what would make me attractive for people to hire me as an employee.

LH: I agree. I remember going to AAAL as a first-year grad student and becoming engaged with current conversations. You do so much 'catch up' reading in grad school, in the sense that other scholars are already engaging with ideas of the past and looking forward. So I think you're right: conferences enable you to see connections between what you are reading and the conversations that people are having now.

Exactly, especially because publications are a few years behind what people are talking about. That's another key experience that I didn't engage in enough as a graduate student but I wish I would have: publishing. Even failing in the publication process is useful because getting critique and receiving rejections can be really difficult at first, but it gets easier the more you publish. It also feels less personal the more it happens. The first time I began publishing was with my own work, and dissertation work comes from such a personal place. Plus, in graduate school, you likely only have one or two things going on at a time, so each one feels so important. Now, it's gotten easier since I have more irons in the fire.

LH: Do you have any other advice for graduate students?

At some point toward the end of grad school, I organized a symposium at AAAL. I had to strike a balance between senior scholars, mid-career scholars, and a couple other grad students, to think about how to propose it and put it all together. I also got to spend time with these more senior scholars since we all went to lunch afterward. I think was a great way to engage beyond just proposing my own paper. It was also a good way to let people know that I was on the scene. That's another thing conferences are good for: meeting people. That way, when you send out a cover letter, someone in the department might know you. I think just that little bit of name recognition goes a long way.

I also wish I had realized earlier that grad school is not a job. It's not something you have to feel like you've mastered before you can move on. I spent a lot of time wondering if I was good enough as a grad student, if my dissertation was good enough, if my class papers were good enough, and I probably could have saved myself a lot of grief if I had recognized that I don't have to be the best at this; I just have to get it done. And that goes hand in hand with the fear that is instilled in us in grad school that we might never get a job. There are jobs out there. You can get a job. I wish someone had said to me, "And you will too. Now get back to writing."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Laura Hamman is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her dissertation research explores the (trans)languaging and (bi)literacy practices of emergent bilinguals in two-way immersion classrooms. She is the founder and co-editor of the *AAALGrads* newsletter and the incoming co-chair of the AAAL Graduate Steering Committee.

UNPACKING MYTHS ABOUT COLLABORATIVE WORK IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by **Shakina Rajendram, Mimi Mason,** and **Elizabeth Jean Larson**

As doctoral students, we have engaged in various types of challenging but also beneficial collaborative work. This paper addresses these challenges by unpacking three common myths about collaborative work. We will critically reflect on collaboration through personal stories that are an amalgamation of our experiences with collaborative work. In the interest of taking a more personal approach, each of us wrote about one of the myths, using the pronoun "I". For us, this approach represents how everyone participating in a group is also an individual, and their personal experiences contribute to the overall experience of collaboration.

MYTH #1: Everyone's ideas are going to be included equally

The first time I was invited to work collaboratively on a research project with a team of graduate students, I was excited, flattered, nervous, and intimidated all at the same time. The days leading up to our first team meeting, many questions raced through my mind. Could I, a complete newbie in academia, have ideas as unique and strong as my brilliant team members? Even if I did have a eureka moment, would I be able to express my ideas as clearly and as eloquently as they could? Would my ideas be good enough to be included with theirs?

When we did have our first meeting, I quickly realized how unfounded these fears had been. Although a silent observer at first, with time, I felt comfortable enough to participate in the discussions and to suggest new directions for the project. Soon I was brimming over with newfound confidence in my own ideas. I wanted to speak out and to contribute new ideas to the collaboration. And I wanted all my ideas to be heard.

But as the saying goes, the higher the rise, the harder the fall. The first time the team had to make a decision about what to include and exclude on the project, one of my ideas didn't make the final cut. I took this to heart and started feeling like my ideas had probably never been as good as theirs to begin with. It took a few more blows to my ego, followed by a period of self-reflection, to realize that, by making a distinction between my ideas and their ideas, I was essentially treating the collaboration as a competition. By worrying about whether or not my ideas had been included equally, I was perceiving my ideas as rigid, fixed and stagnant, rather than fluid, evolving, and dynamic. I realized that I couldn't and shouldn't claim sole credit for my ideas because they had all been shaped by the thought-provoking discussions I had engaged in with my team members. Each one of our ideas had been heard, tested, challenged, expanded, and refined as a result of these discussions so that the ownership of ideas was no longer personal, but collective. I can now see clearly that all the decisions we had made were collaborative because they stemmed not from my ideas or their ideas, but from our ideas.

Tip: Don't be married to your ideas. Be willing to listen, learn, and grow.

MYTH #2: All discussions must be free of contention

"I'm sorry to throw a spanner in the works."
"I'm so sorry for adding frustration to this project."
"Sorry to slow things down, but…"

I have heard and read phrases like these throughout my experiences doing collaborative work and often wondered why researchers, students, and colleagues feel that they need to apologize for disagreeing with a method, direction, or other decision a group wants to take. While these apologies are meant to be polite, they also signal to the group that they know contention isn't desirable. It is unfortunate that the notion that conversations (and thereby collaborative work) must always be free of contention has somehow permeated all of our interactions with each other. Many individuals are afraid of offending someone they work with, causing tension in a group, or being disrespectful to a senior student or (gasp!) their supervisor.

While personalities and group dynamics may be tricky to navigate, contention is essential to the conversation, provided everyone addresses one another as people and shows respect and kindness towards each other. Is hiding our opinions or disagreements with a group actually showing respect for everyone's intellect and pursuit of knowledge?

In my own collaborative efforts, I always keep an open mind and pursue debate as much as possible. I have found that teasing out and wrestling with ideas from every group member can be quite fruitful and actually leads to more innovative ways of approaching a problem. Through dialogue, my colleagues have helped me strengthen my logic, planning, and ethics, which has helped me to grow as a researcher. I value that my collaborators were willing to challenge group decisions and positions because it has made the work all the better.

Tip: It can be difficult but necessary to disagree with colleagues. If you struggle with disagreement, you might consider taking a conflict resolution workshop at your institution.

MYTH #3: Everyone has to move at the same pace

When all the individuals in a group can synch up and enter a collective flow, it enhances group productivity. But sometimes, it can take time for one member to get in synch with the collective rhythm. This is not a process that can be rushed or imposed on anyone. I learned that lesson while working in a participatory action research project involving school teachers and researchers. The expectation for the teachers was to use their funded research time to work on professional development (PD). One teacher however, was doing things in a way that was counterproductive to herself and the group's efforts. Instead of confronting the teacher head on, our team leader explored the tension that emerged between what was expected of the teacher and what she was actually doing.

Our team leader casually pointed out her concern, carefully listened to the teacher and collaboratively reflected on the circumstances with her. I was truly impressed by our team leader's decision to delve deeper into what the teacher was doing with genuine curiosity and interest, and learn from her choices. This seemed counter-intuitive to me. Myself, I would have gone for a more direct approach: confront the teacher about what she was doing 'wrong' and ask her to keep up! What our team leader did was in fact to reset the rhythm of the group, adjusting it slightly to take in the teachers' needs.

In the end, our team leaders' approach was an invitation for the teacher to adjust her rhythm too by thinking more deeply about how her choices were affecting her work and the group's work. Our team leader nonchalantly left a trail of breadcrumbs for the teacher to get in-sync with collective project in her own time.
It took a few more meetings, but slowly, the teacher reflected. Just like our team leader had done for her, she listened. She observed and she inquired. No one judged, criticized, or told her what she had to do. Over time, she gauged the group's direction and when she was ready, she joined us on the path to learning the group had set on, adding to our collaborative professional development experience.

Group dynamics are delicate and take nurturing. Letting members work out expectations, whatever they may be, at their own pace can help maintain and improve group dynamics.

Tip: Be patient and trust others to work things out at their own pace.

Concluding Thoughts
Our reflections on the above myths reveal three takeaways:

(1) Collaborative researchers have to be willing to let go of their ideas and have them changed. Sharing ownership of ideas allows for evolution and dynamism in collaborative thinking. The important thing is not that all ideas are always included equally, but that everyone is treated as an equal collaborator, and that his or her thoughts and opinions are heard, acknowledged, and valued at all times.

(2) Disagreements are a healthy part of the collaborative process and a necessary measure in order for collaborative thinking to progress. For productive dissension, it is important to be able to separate our personal egos from our ideas. Learning to negotiate points of contention involves respecting people in the team as individuals, regardless of their ideas.

(3) Not everyone will always move at the same pace during group work. Working out individual and group rhythm is a reflective process that takes time. Just as members adjust to the group, the group can also adjust to its members. Patience and trusting others to listen and reflect are virtues that can be echoed back by the group, ultimately strengthening group cohesion and enhancing group productivity.

There is no one recipe for successful collaboration, but our stories show that being open to one another's ideas, allowing room for contention, and having patience and trust are critical components of collaboration. We have learned that this requires commitment and perseverance. It is our hope that this article provides some ways to navigate the complexities of working in a group. We encourage other graduate researchers to find ways to unpack other myths they have encountered and continue the conversation on collaboration in higher education.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Shakina is a 3rd year doctoral candidate in the Language and Literacies Education/Comparative International Development Education programs at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. Her research focuses on collaborative learning, translanguaging, multiliteracies and language policy.

Mimi is a 4th year Ph.D. student in the Language and Literacies program at OISE. Her interests focus on language teacher learning and identity, collaborative learning networks, arts-based research practices and technology-mediated learning.

Jeannie is a 1st year Ph.D. student in the Language and Literacies program at OISE. Her research focuses on language assessment, particularly speaking proficiency in higher education, as well as intercultural communication, critical literacy, self-assessment measures, and collaborative research practices.

BUILDING CAMARADERIE AND MUTUAL SUPPORT: THE SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF GRAD HAPPY HOUR

by **Lisa Gonzalves**

I began my PhD program in Linguistics at the University of California, Davis in the fall of 2015. I had been out of school for quite some time, so my emotions were a mix of excitement and nervousness. Friends who have doctorates in other departments or from other institutions had warned me of the competition and isolation that can prevail as one undergoes graduate studies, and they tried to prepare me for what lay ahead. Fortunately, their cautionary tales have been far from my own experience at Davis.

Getting Started

Within the initial days of my first quarter, I was pleased to discover that the students in my incoming cohort were fabulous individuals who were focused, bright, and outgoing. Occasionally we'd find ourselves having impromptu hang out sessions, grabbing a coffee or beer in one of the various bars or eateries conveniently within walking distance of campus. As time progressed, these relationships continued to blossom as we sought each other out for insight, advice, or just a compassionate ear.

At the onset of spring quarter, we decided to formalize our social gatherings. Triggered by the fact that many of us were taking a phonology seminar from 2pm - 5pm on Fridays, we agreed that such an arrangement would provide a great excuse to head out to happy hour promptly after. With an ever-changing name somewhere along the lines of "Friday Phon-day" (or some other label equipped with ridiculous linguistic overtones), we'd pick a spot to meet up after class, dutifully changing the location each week to help us discover all the spots in town. While the group initially started small, it quickly expanded to encompass other students in the department.

As first-year students, we were thrilled, as not only were we eager to connect with others but it also provided the platform for us to glean wisdom from the more seasoned students. We soon created our own group email list where an announcement would be sent to interested students with the happy hour details for the week.

An Emotional Support System

In addition to simply providing a comfortable atmosphere to laugh and relax after a long week, our social network provides a strong space of solidarity. As graduate students, some of us have found that our friends and family might not understand the graduate school experience, and may not provide the empathy or advice we often seek. As we all have a first-hand understanding of each other's experience, we can therefore offer one another the encouragement we need to push through those low and frustrating moments.

> "In addition to simply providing a comfortable atmosphere to laugh and relax after a long week, our social network provides a strong space of solidarity."

For example, it is common that we find ourselves freaking out about an upcoming conference presentation that we are insecure about, or are processing heavy criticism we were recently given by members of our committee on a current paper, or are just burdened with general feelings of inadequacy in pleasing our professors. In these situations, the kind words of our loved ones ("You can only do your best, honey!") may not suffice; however, having the attentive ears of not only your peers but of veteran graduate students, who can provide soothing words which are embedded with useful, strategic feedback, is often the priceless antidote that we are searching for.

Academic Benefits

As we collectively decompress at the end of the week, our get-togethers provide an opportune platform for us to discuss the current state of coursework, departmental expectations, and our respective research. As such, during the 2016 summer break we maintained our Friday get-togethers, as many of us would be working on our individual research and we were concerned about feeling isolated and disconnected over the nearly 4 months of vacation. We therefore utilized the routine gatherings as a means to keep ourselves motivated and on-track with our respective projects, knowing that our peers would continually be asking about progress made each week.

Even outside of happy hour, we know we can easily access and rely upon each other for a variety of academic needs - as a practice audience to rehearse our upcoming presentations, as extra sets of eyes to look over our data, to offer critical editorial advice, or simply to bounce ideas off of each other. While our professors may also be available for the same, there is still an inherent power dynamic between the faculty and students; therefore, by accessing our own peer support network, we are often able to leverage each other's expertise in a more comfortable, supportive environment.

Personally, I believe the crucial piece to the success of our model has been the amount of trust we have developed with each other through our ongoing gatherings. I can honestly say that, in place of competition, a strong ethos of mutual aid prevails. As a network, we continually inform each other of fellowship deadlines, calls for proposals, and other opportunities we can benefit from. Just last month, as we were sitting around the table drinking cocktails, we reminded each other of the upcoming LSA (Linguistics Society of America) Summer Institute Fellowship deadline coming up at the end of the month, going over the details and getting excited about the possibility of attending. Even if we are all applying for the same thing, we continually encourage each other towards our common goals.

"Instead of harboring individual feelings of hardship, my peers motivate me to plow through the work, knowing that I am not alone in my struggle."

Cultivating Long-Term Sustainability

As our cohort embarked upon our second academic year together, our social structure provided yet a new benefit - it became incredibly easy for us to welcome the incoming 2016 cohort. Utilizing this foundation of support, we quickly took them under our wing and they are now a well-established and respected part of our peer network. Our gatherings have also expanded – our Friday gatherings now include potlucks, game nights, and other social get-togethers at each other's homes. Our group email list now includes the entire department, and a few of the students' partners are consistent attendees as well. As with any social network, there are 'the regulars' – those that attend every week – in addition those who only come occasionally. We are currently working on new ideas to be increasingly inclusive – for example, there are those who have conflicting commitments on Fridays, so we have begun alternating on Thursdays to invite more participation.

Prior to embarking on my PhD program, I worked for a decade as an ESL instructor at the adult school and community college level. Throughout those years, I maintained a teaching philosophy of establishing a strong community within the classroom during the first few weeks, having seen the fruits of a solid rapport amongst students as they continued in their studies.

Now, as a student, I find the affinity that we have built in our department at Davis has been priceless. Through our peer support network, I am consistently reminded that I am part of an amazing department that works and succeeds together. Instead of harboring individual feelings of hardship, my peers motivate me to plow through the work, knowing that I am not alone in my struggle. Even if we don't see each other daily, knowing that we'll have face-to-face time on Friday is often enough to sustain me throughout the week.

"...caring for one's own mental health is a vital but often overlooked component to survival."

As a grad student, caring for one's own mental health is a vital but often overlooked component to survival. The camaraderie we all maintain with each other has provided and will continue to provide us with critical support we need to continue together through our program. In the end, it may turn out to be the most essential component of all.

I want to thank Claire, Alyx, Glen, and Claudia for their invaluable input on this article – a true example of their enduring support!

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Lisa Gonzalves is a Ph.D. student in Linguistics at UC Davis. Stemming from her previous work as an immigrant rights advocate, her research focuses on the second language acquisition of non- and low-literate adults, including pedagogy and assessment, gender and identity, as well as education and immigration policies

SURVIVING JOURNAL PUBLICATION AS A NOVICE ESL ACADEMIC WRITER

by **Meng Zhang**

Writing for publication was not an entirely new enterprise for me. Ten years ago, as a high school student who won third place at a national composition competition, I was invited by Chinese Wenlian Publishing House to publish a collection of my poetry. The collection, *十六岁的云,十七岁的雨* (Clouds and Rains in My Teenage Life), a textual representation of my creative voice towards the nuances of life, made me a confident Chinese poetry writer. However, when writing in English (my second language), and writing academically as opposed to writing freely and creatively, I am far from confident or comfortable in claiming the title of an author.

In my first semester of doctoral study at the Ohio State University, my professor encouraged me to select and read an SLA-related book, write a review, and contact journal editors to seek publication. I was excited about this assignment because I saw it as a starting point as an academic. However, faced with the reality of being both a first-year, non-native-English-speaking doctoral student who had limited knowledge of SLA and a novice to academic writing, I felt overwhelmed. I was concerned about my academic English proficiency, as well as my qualification and legitimacy in participating in the academic discourse and in the "game" of scholarly publication. By the end of the class, I produced a list of questions:
How much do I know about SLA? How do I choose and read a book for reviewing purposes and how do I write a book review? What are the resources to consult? What are the expectations for publication in our field? How should I plan and prepare for an academic publishing journey?

Bearing all these concerns, doubts, and questions in mind, I started the book review project by reading our textbook, *Understanding Second Language Acquisition* (Ortega, 2009), to get familiar with mainstream SLA theories. I quickly linked the topic of motivation and SLA to my Master's thesis, which investigated reasons why Chinese college students lack motivation in their English reading and writing practices. I thought that it would be great to take this reviewing opportunity to extend and deepen my understanding of this issue. By browsing the Linguistlist database recommended by the course instructor, I found the twenty most recent publications on the theme of L2 motivation and chose one entitled *Motivation and foreign language learning: From theory to practice* (Lasagabaster, Doiz, & Sierra, 2014).

The next step was to consult both my advisor and the instructor regarding the details of journal selection and "inquiry letter" writing (i.e. formal emails inquiring about journal editors' interest in publishing a review article on the selected book). Understanding that it was my first time writing a book review, both my advisor and the course instructor provided me with a list of questions to consider while searching for appropriate journals (e.g., Does the journal accept book reviews? Who are the readers/audience of the journal? Does the journal require a solicited editor for publishing book reviews?). My advisor also suggested including a webpage link to the book I chose when writing to editors and encouraged me to ask experienced students from my cohort for advice on the tone and content of the letter writing. I carefully followed their suggestions and wrote to two journal editors.

"Does the journal accept book reviews? Who are the readers/audience of the journal? Does the journal require a solicited editor for publishing book reviews?"

Next, I started reading the book. I found the strategy of breaking down the reviewing task into manageable portions was particularly effective for me as a novice ESL academic writer. Instead of drafting a full-length review paper after reading the book, I decided to write chapter summaries first and then examine the connections between each chapter. This practice not only enhanced my memory of the content of the book, but also gave me an overall impression on the advantages and potential shortcomings of the book. I also carefully studied the bibliography as suggested by my advisor and referred to some articles cited in the book. Furthermore, I found the two elements addressed by our course instructor, namely, "alignment" and "argument," crucially important in writing a review. Therefore, I learned to be evaluative and critical in reading and analyzing the book chapters while paying special attention to coherence and consistency in my own writing.

Unfortunately, I heard nothing from the editors for two months, which left me feeling disappointed and discouraged. But, by remembering what the instructor addressed in class, "…for each reading and writing assignment, the bottom line is your own learning," I decided not to think too much about getting my review published. Instead, I made the most of this opportunity to learn about book review as an important academic writing genre and to get myself acquainted with the intensity of doctoral study.

In my weekly academic journals, I termed this two-month waiting a "critical period," in which I learned to live with a sense of uncertainty and deal with academic writing anxiety. It transformed me from an outsider to an "apprentice" of academic literacy; it provided me with opportunities to communicate with and obtain rich insights from my professors, which also prompted the establishment of an interactive and dialogic relationship between me as a newcomer and my professors

"…this two-month waiting [was] a "critical period," in which I learned to live with a sense of uncertainty and deal with academic writing anxiety. It transformed me from an outsider to an 'apprentice' of academic literacy…"

as experts in the field. It made me learn to transfer knowledge and writing skills acquired from one assignment or one course to another. Finally, it also led me to a sizable body of readings, which offered me rich and interdisciplinary insights into the motivation research.

Two months after I wrote inquiry letters to the editors, I got a response from the book review editor of *TESOL Quarterly* (thereafter as TQ), Dr. Diane Pecorari expressing interest in publishing a review article on the book I chose. By that time, I had already finished the first draft. I signed up for my advisor's and the course instructor's office hours to receive their comments and suggestions on my writing and then revised the draft to make it a more polished article for submission.

Upon receiving my review, Dr. Pecorari gave me a number of valuable comments and suggestions for revision to make my review more qualified for publication. Specifically, she helped format my review to make it neat and concise; she asked me to clarify certain phrases and expressions to make sure readers would not misunderstand my message; she suggested alternatives to parts of my original writing to make them more concrete and meaningful; she also encouraged me to integrate more of my personal insights as a reader, writer, and researcher into the entire review.

Looking back to the 17 emails Dr. Pecorari and I exchanged with one another, I learned how to negotiate meaning with journal editors as well as to be aware of audience. Half a year later, in July 2015, my book review was officially accepted by TQ and published in that spring (Zhang, M. (2016). Motivation and foreign language learning: From theory to practice. *TESOL Quarterly*, 50(1), 268-270.).

Looking back to my first academic publication experience, the most important things I have learned are the benefits of careful planning, strategically making connections to coursework, consulting outside resources, negotiating meaning with experts, and preparing for the unexpectedness. In sum, the experience of surviving the TQ journal publication process turned me into a more confident academic reader, writer, and researcher and has facilitated my subsequent writing practices across multiple academic genres.

Interested in learning more about academic publishing?

Join us at our graduate student evening event!

Publishing 101: Graduate students' forum on writing for publication
Sunday, March 19,
6:45 pm – 9:15 pm
Oregon I

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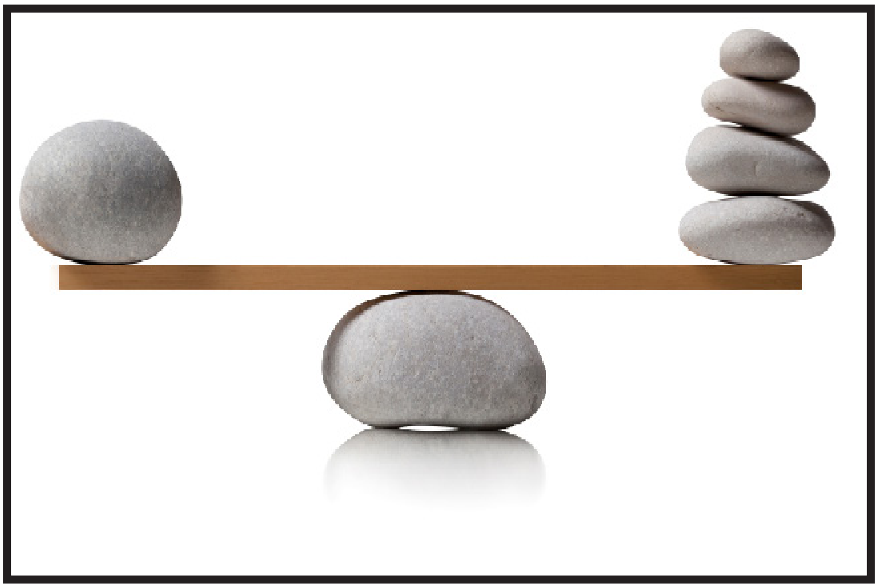
FINDING BALANCE BETWEEN TEACHING AND BEING A GRADUATE STUDENT

by **Olivia Rines**



When you are both a graduate student and TA, achieving balance between these two roles may seem impossible. As a teacher, you feel obligated to devote your time to lesson planning, grading, and student conferences, as you fear becoming the subpar teacher you've experienced or heard about. At the same time, you're a graduate student facing a difficult workload who cannot imagine neglecting your work (and passion) for any reason. You find yourself overwhelmed to say the least.

Having experienced this challenge, I've found that balance can be achieved if you understand the relationship between your priorities and your pedagogy. Are you the teacher who feels obligated to conduct student conferences often? If so, can you be the student who is comfortable skimming a reading to make time for said conferences? As you teach and take more classes, you realize that the push and pull is connected. You must make space for what matters in both aspects of your life without sacrificing too much in either.

> "You must make space for what matters in both aspects of your life without sacrificing too much in either."

I have found that this balance comes naturally if you do four things: (1) focus on the teacher you can be, (2) develop key shortcuts, (3) build flexibility into your schedule, and (4) challenge your perfectionist self. By altering your mindset in these ways, you will establish a strong and rewarding structure that naturally balances your obligations in these two roles.

Focus on the Teacher You Can Be

One of the hardest things I had to do when I first became a TA was to set aside my desire to be a 'perfect teacher' in order to make space for more realistic goals. To do this, you must move beyond an idealized teaching philosophy. When you first received your TA appointment, you may have imagined yourself as a teacher who could do it all, returning papers the next day and responding to student emails within the hour. However, the teacher that you envisioned was not burdened by coursework and the assortment of other responsibilities that come with being a graduate student. Once you have spent one too many nights sacrificing sleep to put the finishing touches on an already acceptable lesson plan or to provide detailed, handwritten feedback on students' drafts, you will recognize that your desire for perfection has encroached on your ability to succeed in other areas of your life.

It took me two semesters to realize that I didn't need to respond to student emails at 2 AM or spend hours revising my PowerPoints for class. As each semester passed, I found myself adjusting my expectations. I took my university email off of my phone, allotted a specified amount of time to the revision of my course materials, and began streamlining my feedback process. In other words, I became the teacher I am capable of being given my constraints. You must come to terms with the teacher you can be here and now, knowing that these pedagogies and experiences will provide a strong and valuable foundation for your future courses.

Develop Key Shortcuts

Part of coming to terms with your new capacity as a teacher and graduate student is recognizing where shortcuts are necessary. This does not mean that you should give your students A's simply because you don't have the time or energy to grade. Instead, you should consistently look for places where you can do less work without sacrificing your students' learning or yours. At times, this will mean that you will need to put less effort into a homework assignment or spend less time on a presentation to make room for student conferences or feedback on drafts. At other times, you will shorten the length of conferences, reduce the number of homework assignments, or make some assignments pass/fail so that you have time to work on your prospectus or seminar papers.

Determining how to fit your workload into your waking hours is essential to your success. When you appropriately allocate your time based on your current priorities (i.e. giving more hours to teaching some days and more hours to your own work other days), you will no longer find yourself faced with nine hours of work to do only six hours before a deadline or the choice between polishing a draft due tomorrow and some much-needed sleep.

Build Flexibility into Your Schedule

If you are like me, you will find that it is easier to efficiently utilize your time if you follow a written schedule. However, schedules (in the form of planners, to-do lists, calendar reminders, etc.) can become increasingly irritating when you are faced with unexpected developments, such as unscheduled meetings, particularly difficult assignments, or illness. It is in those critical moments when your perfectly planned agenda goes out the window and you revert to the untamed, unfed, overstimulated, and exhausted graduate student you have so often observed in the library on late nights during finals. However, if you build flexibility into your schedule, you will be able to maintain organization without sacrificing your priorities.

As a teacher, I have found that including a clause on my course schedule that indicates that assignments and deadlines may change has allowed me to adapt my schedule as needed when, inevitably, the unexpected occurs. Students never object to the removal of a low stakes assignment or an extension on a paper. Additionally, as a student, I cannot overemphasize the need to plan ahead. One of the first steps I take at the beginning of each semester is to pull all of the major deadlines from each of my courses' syllabi into a single document. I then set progress deadlines that force me to complete assignments early but that also allow me to occasionally fall behind when I need to make space for other priorities. In the moments when I have a major presentation the following week but student conferences this week (and, of course, I'm sick), I find the built-in flexibility invaluable. Although you will never completely eliminate late night writing and grading or the feeling of panic over approaching deadlines, adapting to a schedule that makes space for priorities as they emerge will make it easier to take those moments in stride.

Challenge Your Perfectionist Self

Finally, in order to truly find balance, you must challenge your perfectionist self. You must accept that every article you read will not be perfectly annotated, every paper you submit will not be as polished as you may have wished, and that each time you provide feedback, it may not be flawlessly worded. As the other three components have indicated, balance is about sacrifice. I treasure the last few hours that I put into a paper, when I polish my sentence structure, make last-minute revisions, and fine-tune my ideas. However, this is a component of the writing process that I've shortened or, at times, removed altogether to make space for other priorities, not because I don't care about my writing, but because I recognize that my writing is a work in progress, something I can return to when I'm feeling less overwhelmed.

Similarly, I have developed methods of providing feedback on my students' assignments that allow me to provide quality feedback without spending an hour or more on each paper. While I would prefer to devote more time to each paper and provide more detailed feedback, I recognize that my While I would prefer to devote more time to each paper and provide more detailed feedback, I recognize that my students can always meet with me to discuss their work, which they often do, or can ask for more detailed feedback at a later time. By accepting that you cannot do everything all the time and being okay with a version of yourself that gets everything done successfully but maybe not to the standard you would have liked had you more time, you will begin to celebrate your minor accomplishments (like turning a paper in on time) rather than feel guilty each time you fail to meet the impossible standards you set for yourself.

Conclusion

Balance is about compromise. Part of adapting to your new priorities is coming to terms with the sacrifices that must be made. However, these sacrifices don't have to be painful or difficult. Rather, by focusing on the teacher you can be, developing key shortcuts, building flexibility into your schedule, and challenging your perfectionist self, you will find that balance will come naturally over time. Although this balance will wobble (or topple over completely) at times, by encouraging yourself to discover how you can best manage your time, where you cut back on unnecessary work, and ultimately why you can loosen the reins (because no one can do it all!), you will become comfortable with the balance you can achieve, and the balance itself will become one of your top priorities.

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Olivia Rines is a doctoral student in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at Arizona State University. She received her MA from UNC Charlotte for a thesis on contested authenticity in the hip-hop discourse community. Her research now focuses on the discursive construction of mental health stigma.

TAKING NOTES: THE LITERATURE SURVEY

by **Anna Mendoza**

What is a Literature Survey?

A literature survey is a collection of summaries of readings you have done that might be relevant to a scholarly project. A thesis or dissertation is a substantial undertaking, and it is based on the day-to-day practice of reading and taking notes without yet thinking too hard about how your reading will translate to your own argument. Before making that argument, it's important to build a knowledge base, which is the purpose of the literature survey.

How to Do a Literature Survey

Every time I read a chapter or article, I write a summary of 1–2 pages. I collect these summaries on my computer, each a separate word document labeled "Author Year" and found in a particular folder, usually the name of a course. During my comps, I plan to print out the summaries that I find relevant and put them in binders. Then, I plan to read through the binders in 2–3 weeks. That will let me re-absorb a range of literature that I read over 1.5 years, allowing for connections between many thinkers' ideas and findings that would not be possible otherwise. By doing a literature survey, whether it's small-scale for a course paper or large-scale for the lit review of a thesis or dissertation, you can re-absorb months of reading in days, or years of reading in weeks, increasing the breadth and depth of your synthesis of other scholars' works.

Classifying Literature Surveys

There are three main types of articles—(1) literature reviews, (2) empirical studies (primary research involving methods and findings) and (3) theoretical works. When I write a summary of a reading, the structure of the summary as well as the strategies I use to summarize are different depending on the type of reading.

Note-taking Strategies for Literature Reviews

Some lit reviews are chronological, showing the ways scholars have "revolutionized" previous ways of thinking over time. For example, Block (2014) writes about how social class has been conceptualized since the 19th century in different ways by Marx and Engels, the sociologists Durkheim, Weber, and Bourdieu, and present-day applied linguists. All of them had different ways of looking at social class. If I were to do a summary of Block's article, the sections of the summary would be "Marx and Engels", "Durkheim", "Weber", "Bourdieu", and "The Present".

Other literature reviews are thematic. For instance, Bucholtz and Hall (2005) explain how sociolinguists, who study the social contexts of language learning, believe five things about identity: (i) it changes across time and space, (ii) it is constructed through social interaction, (iii) it is related to social categories, (iv) it is relative rather than absolute, and (v) it is hybrid rather than unitary. If summarizing their lit review, I would make the headings of my summary each of the five principles. Under each heading, I would include details about each principle and the studies on which that principle is based.

Note-taking Strategies for Empirical Articles

In contrast to the summary of a lit review, the summary of an empirical study usually has four sections—the introduction (including the study's literature review and theoretical underpinnings), the methods and methodologies used in investigation, the results, and the Discussion of the results. (Empirical studies are also known as "IMRD" papers.) When summarizing an IMRD paper, I generally organize the summary into these headings.

Note-taking Strategies for Theoretical Articles

Theoretical articles have the least predictable structure. For these, I generally make the headings of the summary the same headings as those in the original article. However, sometimes the article is just one long block of text, so I have to figure out the structure of the discussion and the moves the author(s) make from section to section. Due to the wide variability in the structures of theoretical articles, "go with the flow" is probably the best strategy for note-taking.

A literature survey is not just a strategy to prepare for term papers; for a graduate student, it's the only way to see the big picture in terms of the direction of the field and your place in it. You can build long-term knowledge through daily reading and note-taking, and periodic review of your summaries when you write your own papers, in preparation for an academic career.

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Anna Mendoza is a first-year PhD Student in Second Language Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Her research interests include sociolinguistics, second language writing, critical pedagogy, and teacher action research. This year she is teaching graduate EAP writing and an undergraduate course on sociolinguistic approaches to grammar pedagogy.

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