



Becoming a Pinoy Researcher: Is It Even Worth It?

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Ready, Set, G! A Career and Life Webinar

The UST English Language Studies Society

Thursday, November 18, 2021

Icon artwork by Noriel Beltran (@dinorisaur)

Flow

*I will be reflective yet
very confrontational
about this industry.*



(1) My Professional Journey (So Far)

(2) Academia as an Industry

(3) How ELS Degrees Help

(4) The Graduate School Question

(5) Where I'm Going Next



1
My Professional Journey
(so far)

My Professional Journey (So Far)

TESOL Certification (expected by December 2021)
MA in English Language Studies (2020)
BA in English Language Studies (cum laude) (2015)

Instructor 5, English Area, College of Education
Colegio de San Juan de Letran, Manila (August-December 2019)

Module Writer, Research Center for Teacher Quality
Philippine Normal University, Manila (project-based; 2018-2019)

Lecturer 1, (formerly) Department of English, Institute of Arts and Sciences
Far Eastern University, Manila (2016-2017)

*Thesis Editor, FEU Language Learning Center (2016-Present)



My Professional Journey (So Far)

Seminars and Talks Delivered: 8 (including this one)
Conference Presentations: 4 (more to come)
Publications: 1 (so far, more to come in 2022 *crosses fingers*)

Volunteer work:

- ✓ **Organizing Committee Member (Logistics)** (2011-2013) and **Judge** (2012 & 2013) for the Filipino Reader Conference
- ✓ **Regional Municipal Liaison** for the National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) (Asia :: The Philippines / PinoyWriMos) (2016-present)
- ✓ **Community Moderator** (since 2018) and **Game Development Tester** for Freebird Games: *To The Moon* (2011) and *Impostor Factory* (2021)



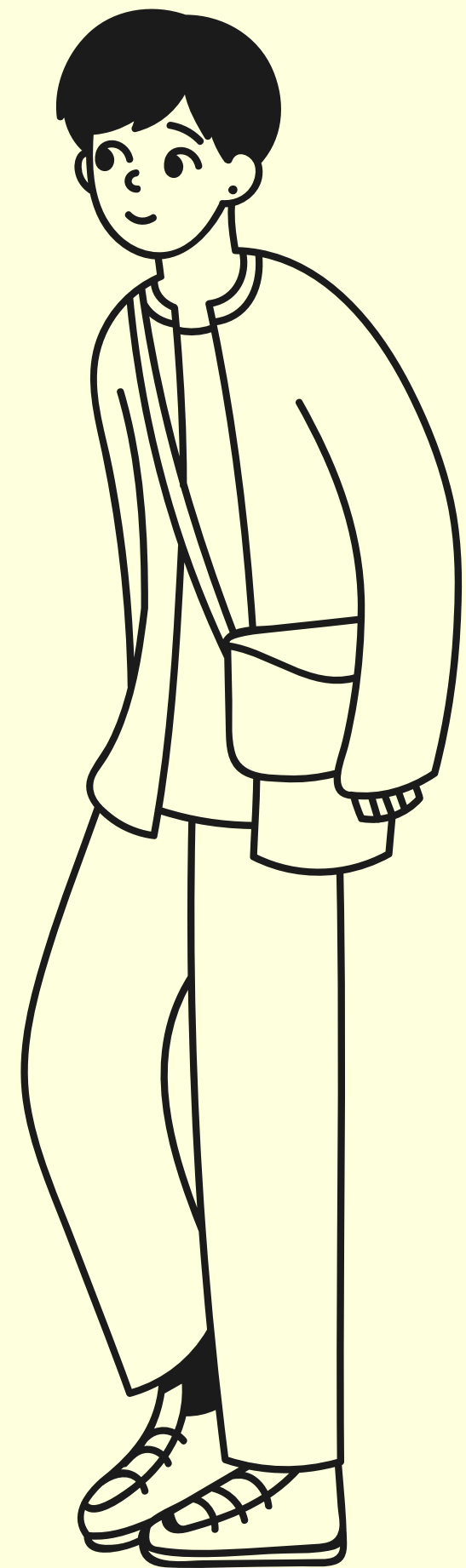
My Professional Journey (So Far)

Broad academic interests:

sociolinguistics, discourse studies, ludolinguistics, forensic linguistics, language (teacher) education, instructed language acquisition, gestures

Specific topical interests:

- ✓ Policy discourses in relation to flooding and terrorism
- ✓ Media discourses and the (re)construction of agency and identity
- ✓ Multimodal behavior of historical distortion and denialism online
- ✓ Lived experiences of multilingualism and multilingual identities (especially with pre-service language teachers)



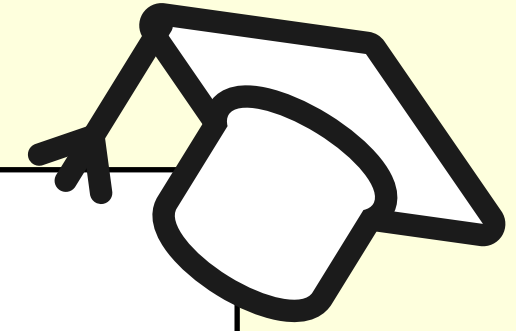
How ELS Helped Me

My long-term professional objective:

To become an inspirational language educator who possesses the values and competencies essential in nurturing students into competent, committed, and responsible citizens of the 21st century



Some Terms



Academia:

an industry devoted to knowledge generation

Early Career Researcher:

emerging researchers who received a graduate qualification (e.g., masters and/or PhD) in less than eight years, aiming to move toward formal research-related positions





Some Terms



Alternative academic (alt-ac)

refers to the idea of a career beyond academia as well as positions outside the professoriate but inside the university (e.g., grant writing, fundraising, etc.)

Post-academic (post-ac)

refers to persons who have experience working in the academia but have decided to leave it



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Academia as an Industry: Duties and Challenges

The Road Not Taken (Robert Frost)

...

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-
**I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.***



The Situation When I First Joined

My Profile in 2016: NO teaching license and master's degree (yet)

Connections: I was invited by a former professor, who happened to be an administrator there, to teach.

Setting: Amid the chaos in many schools over the K-12 transition, where many HEIs made their tenured faculty **retire** or be subject to **retrenchment**



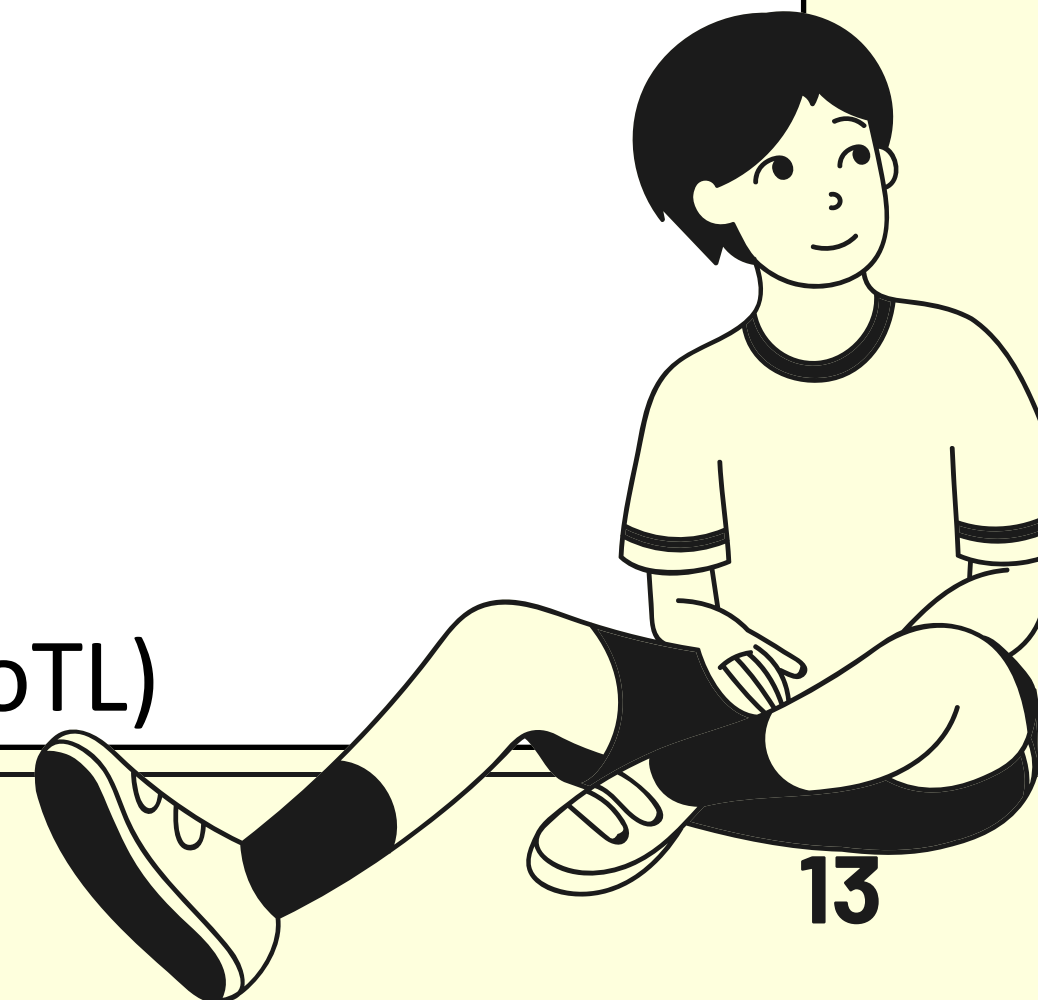
HEI Faculty Responsibilities

Institutional Service (e.g., committee assignments)

Research (e.g., patents, conferences, grants, publications)

Teaching and Mentoring (aka bread and butter)

- Curriculum and syllabus development;
- Planning student-centered lessons;
- Preparing high-quality assessments and materials;
- Reviewing and marking papers;
- Collaborating with stakeholders
- Engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)



Background Reality: Universities Worldwide

Universities are in “crisis” and is a highly unstable industry.

Economic reason: Decades of systemic disinvestment and defunding of HEIs, research, and development initiatives

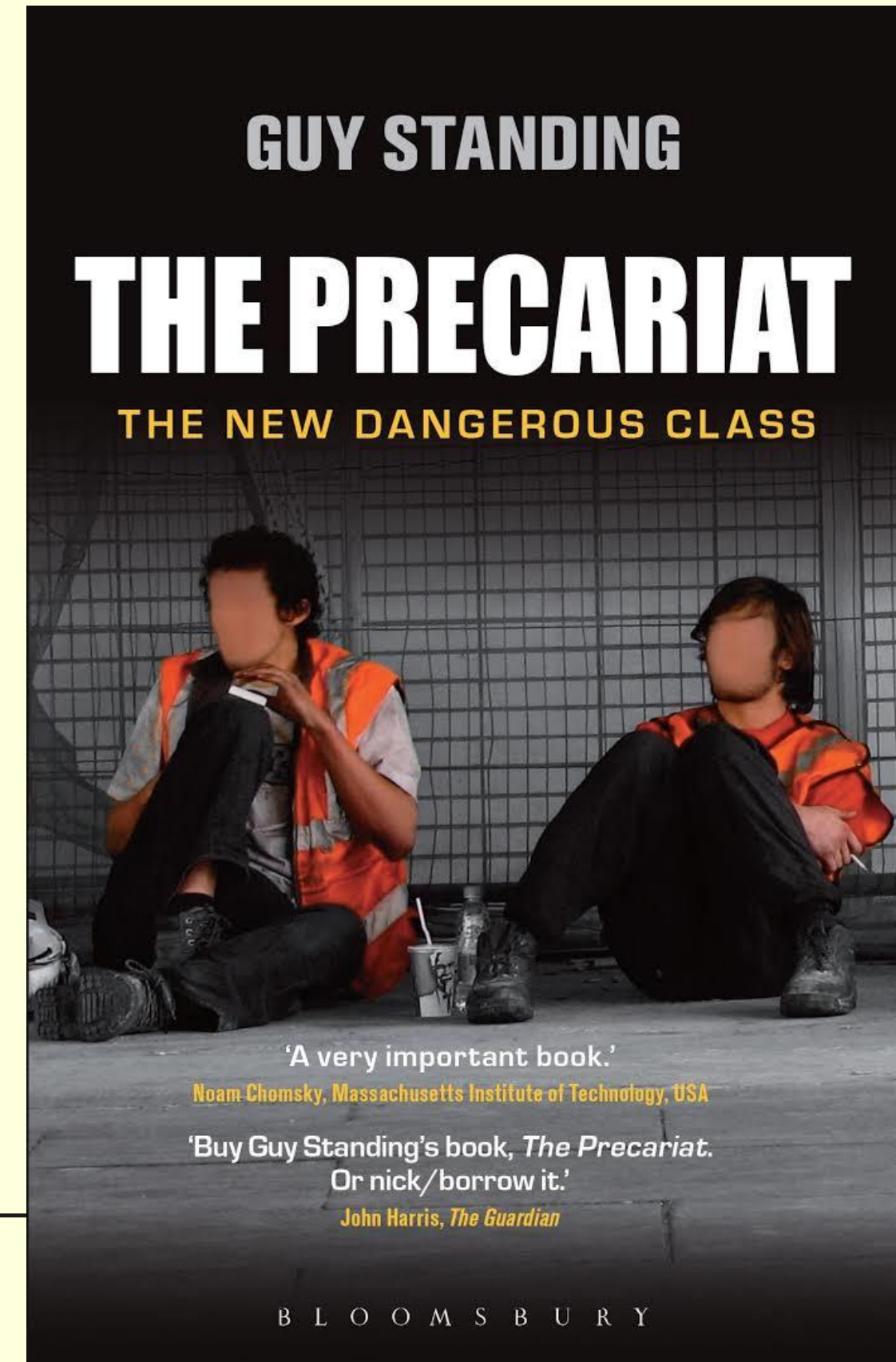
Political reason: Business and corporate logic (i.e., neoliberal management practices) took over administrations and boards of trustees, leading to cost-cutting and downsizing



“The Precariat” by Guy Standing (2013)

Studied the impact of the 2008/2009 Global Financial Crisis on employment

Explained how workers ended up carrying the risks from entrepreneurs, so that they have flexibility over their employees

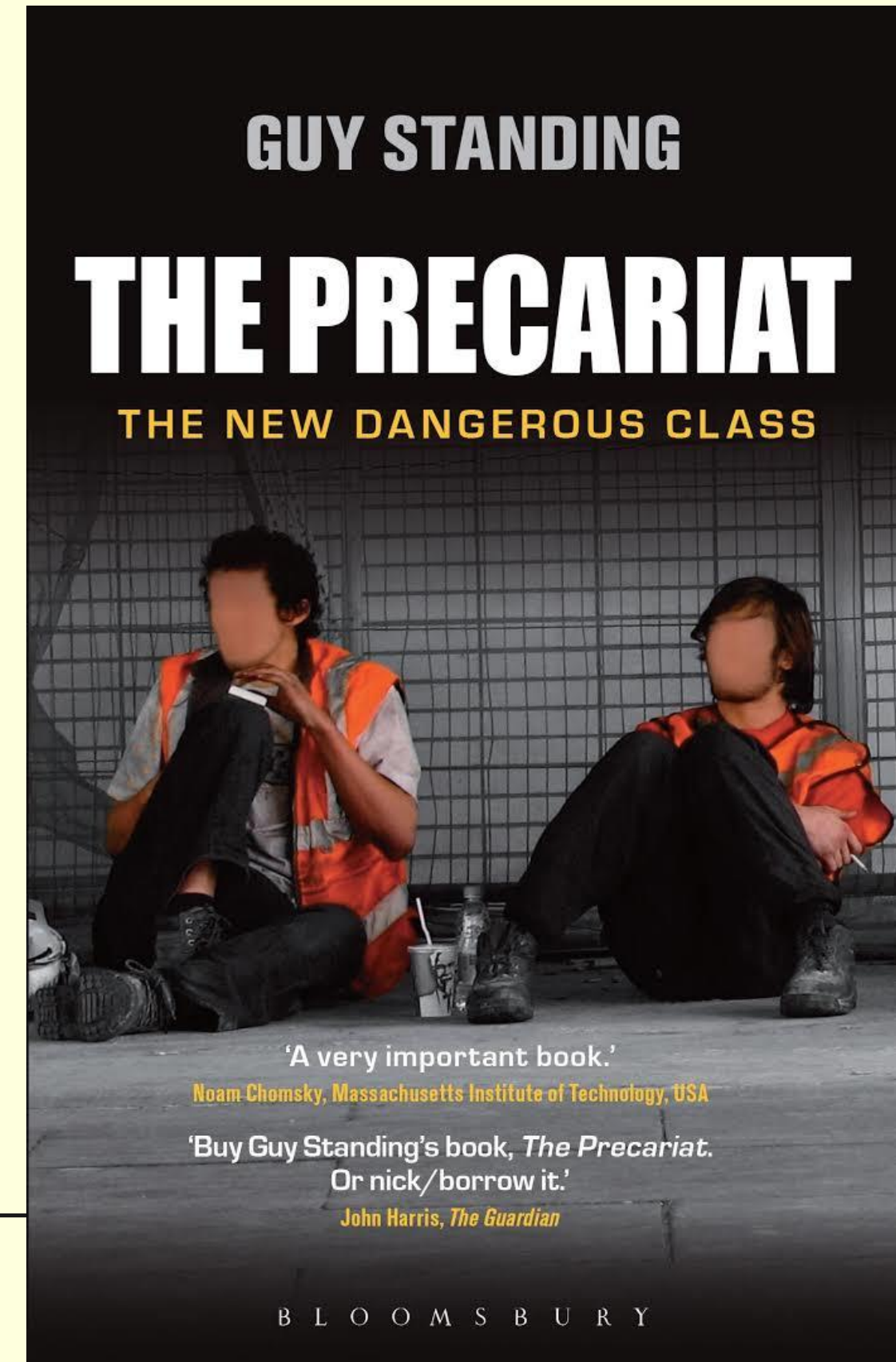


“The Precariat” by Guy Standing (2013)

Two groups:

(a) **the precariat**: employees without benefits and security of tenure such as casual or contractual lecturers

(b) **the salariat**: employees with benefits

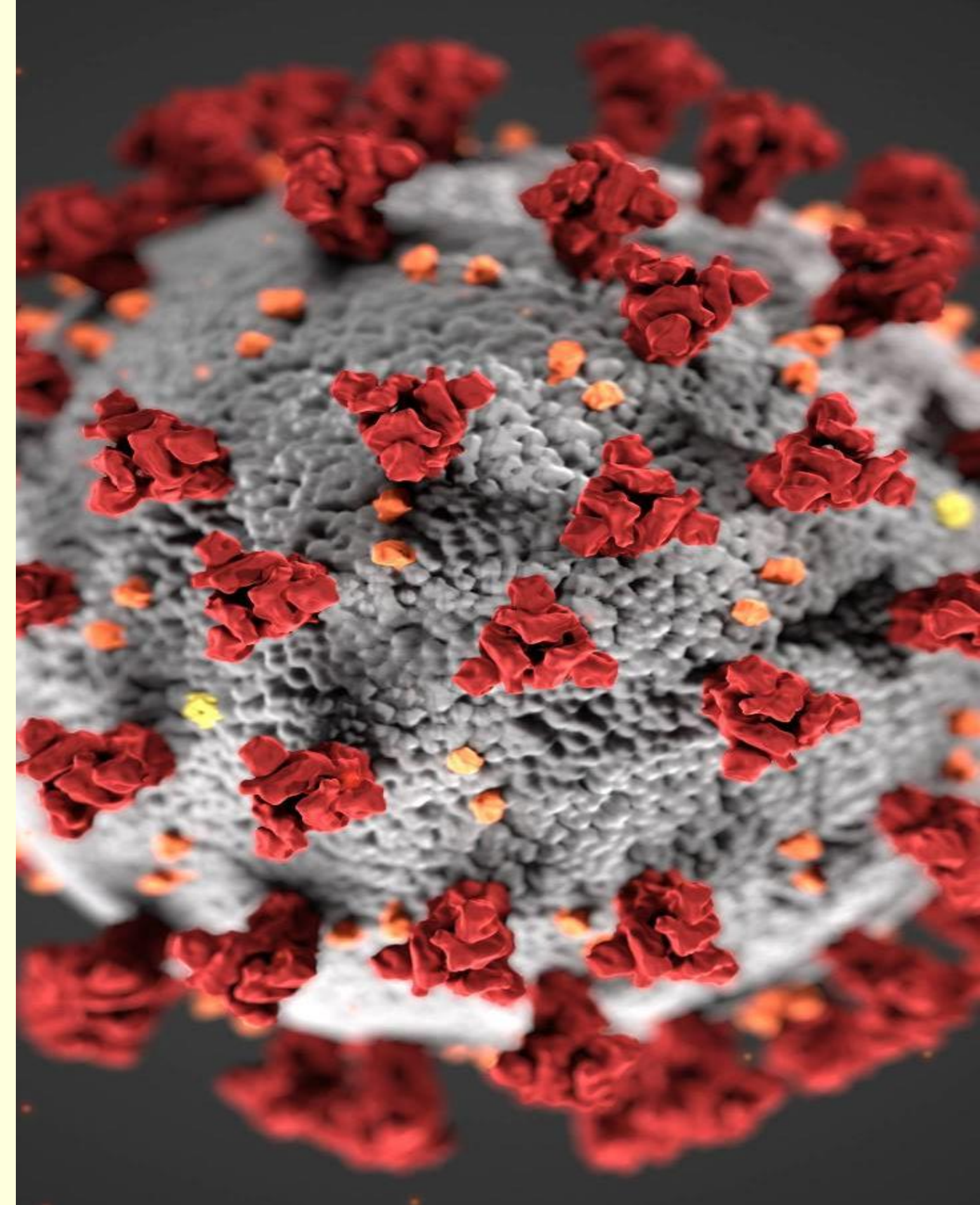


Impact of COVID-19

“A likely extinction event for small schools and colleges”

Manifestations:

- firings
- bankruptcy
- hiring freezes
- furloughs and retrenchment
- permanent closures



Some Challenges in Academia

- ❑ Managing graduate school and teaching responsibilities
- ❑ **“Publish-or-perish”** culture in an already rigorous industry
- ❑ Dealing with **constant rejection** and the **impostor syndrome**
- ❑ Institutional lack of positive (financial) support for researchers pursuing graduate degrees (e.g., delayed stipends, rude scholarship coordinators)

Some Challenges in Academia

- Lack of financial support** for casual faculty members (e.g., when attending conferences hosted abroad or even locally)
- Varying forms of injustice:** ableism, elitism, bullying, gaslighting, etc.
- Widespread precarity in academia**

Some Challenges in Academia



“Teaching is not a profession or a career. It is a devotion – a dedication...” – Margaret Mary Vojtko, Duquesne University

- ❖ Died at her lawn at 83 after being abruptly let go by the university, nearly homeless and destitute

But Why Academia, Even If It Sounds Toxic?

✓ **We can generate new knowledge and keep it alive.** But we must make our research more relevant to the people we serve.

✓ **We can influence the next generation to become socially responsible citizens and lifelong learners.** But we need to make sure we always have our learners in mind.

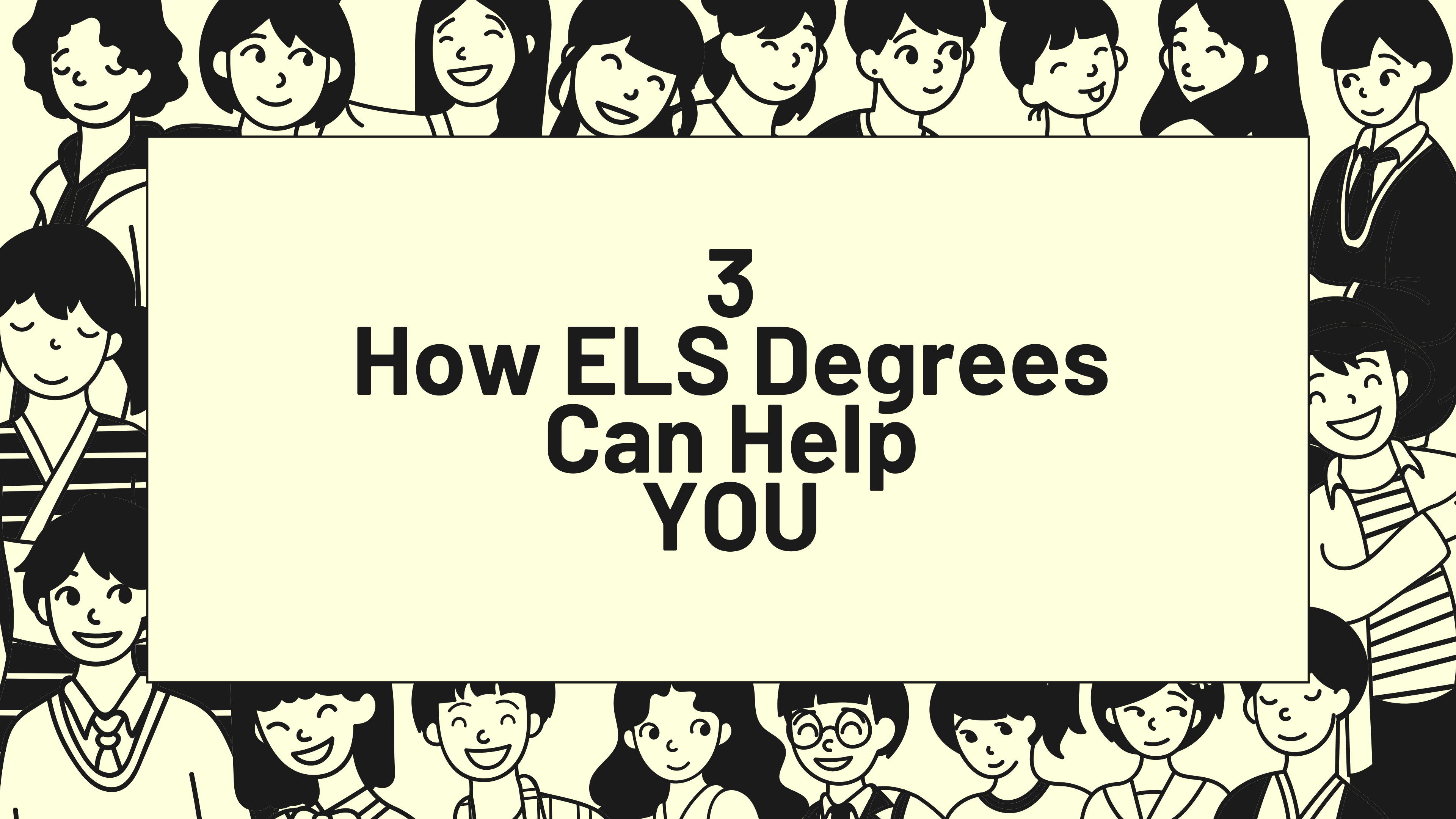
✓ **We can empower local communities.** But we need to step out of our ivory towers.



“The Human Condition” by Hannah Arendt (1958)

- ❑ Described the most dangerous social and political condition in the world
- ❑ All challenges, disasters, and issues in the world start with **thoughtlessness**
- ❑ Consider how we exhibit thoughtlessness:
Maybe we can move through life and never had to think about systemic marginalization?





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How ELS Degrees Can Help YOU

How ELS Helped Me

My long-term professional objective:

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Knowledge and Skills ELS can Offer

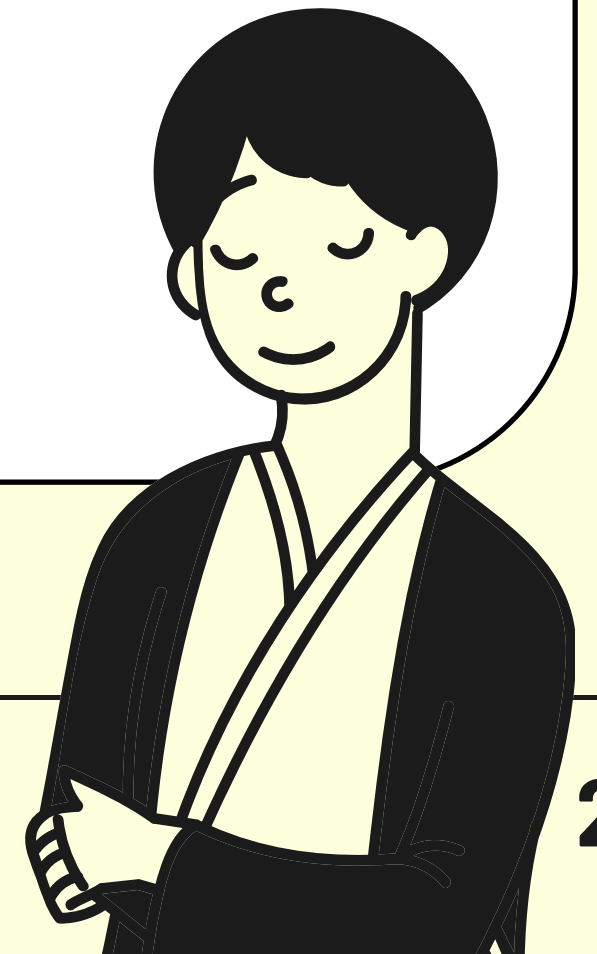
Cross-cultural skills

Relating language to social, cultural and historical contexts

Understanding local and global perspectives

Adapting to and functioning in different cultural settings

Working effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds



Knowledge and Skills ELS can Offer

Communication skills

Dealing with complexities of meaning and social uses of language

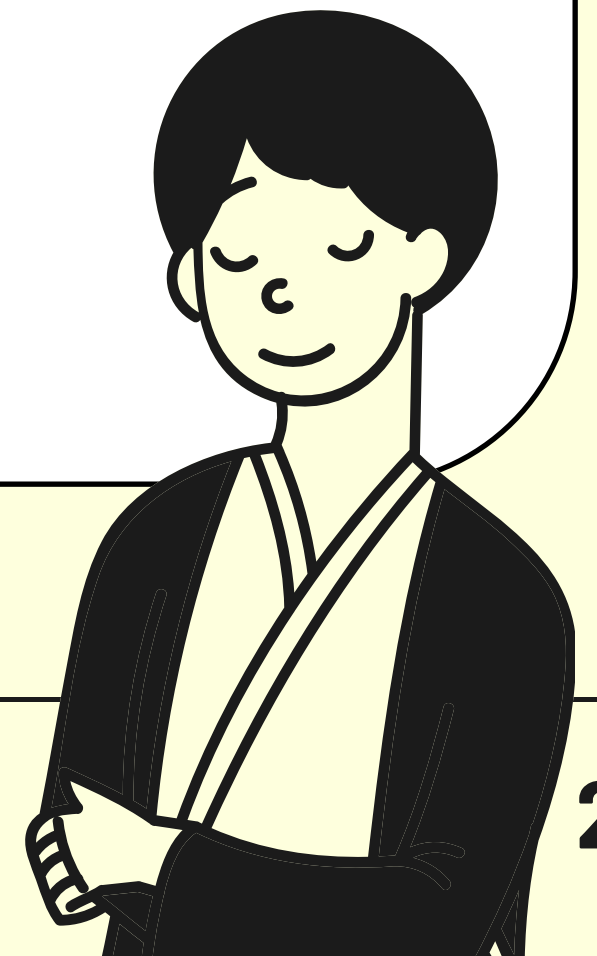
Understanding the properties of discourse

Understanding language change and variation

Organizing and explaining complex ideas

Presenting information effectively in speech and writing

Gaining insight into human-computer interaction



Knowledge and Skills ELS can Offer

Analytical skills

Critically interpreting spoken and written language

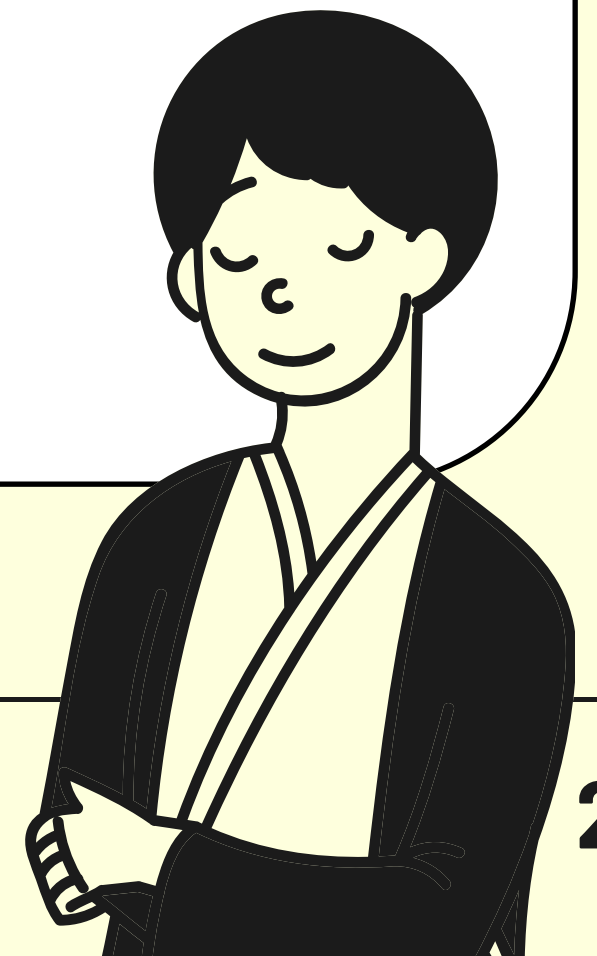
Analyzing and interpreting data

Identifying patterns

Observing people and their behavior

Evaluating evidence

Comparing interpretations



Knowledge and Skills ELS can Offer

Research skills

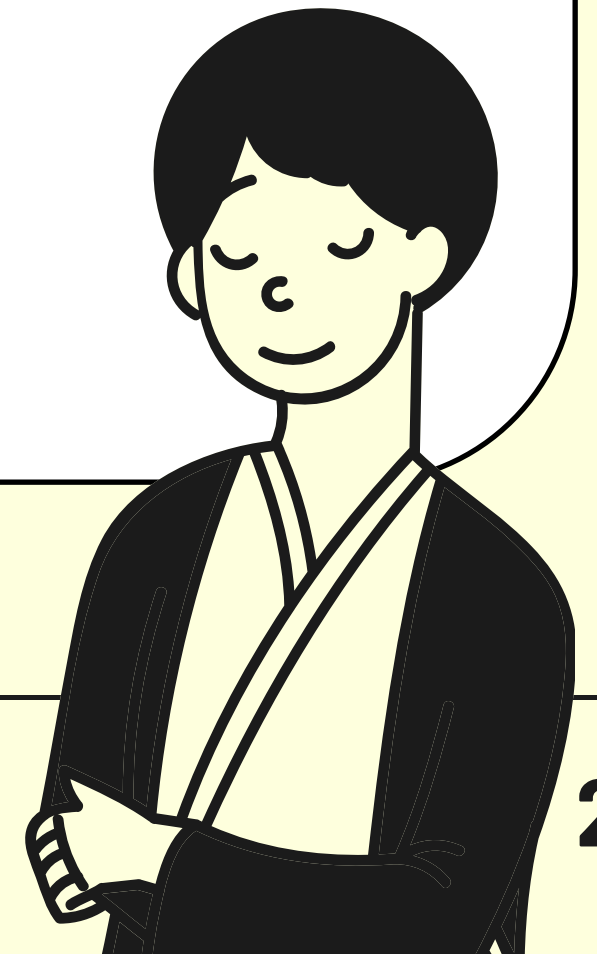
Constructing and applying theories

Using data as evidence, comparatively or historically

Working with research participants

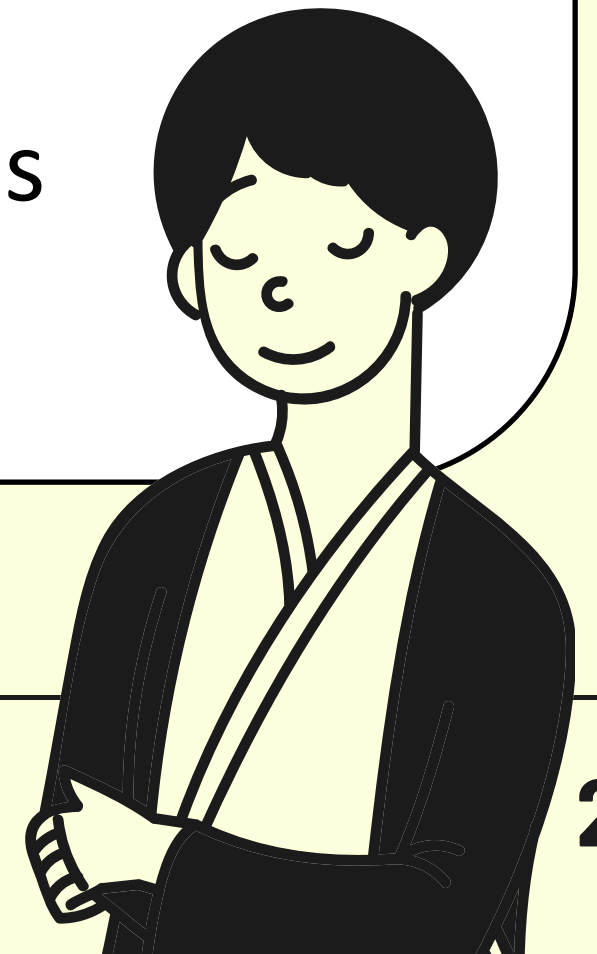
Applying methodologies from many disciplines

Working in interdisciplinary settings



Other Experiences can Complement!

- ✓ how to organize various events (e.g., conferences, write-ins, etc.)
- ✓ how to write professional texts apart from correspondences and research articles (e.g., policy notes, modules for teachers)
- ✓ how to teach language since ELS is not didactics-centered
- ✓ how to communicate scientific information to the public
- ✓ how to code and address bugs in websites and video games



Other Experiences can Complement!



Validation activity at the H20 Hotel by the PNU Research Center for Teacher Quality

Other Experiences can Complement!

ISTORYAHANAY

A Kuwentuhan on the Inequalities of Multilingualism
in the Philippines

Twitter Spaces | June 22, 2021 (Tuesday)
1 PM (UK Time) | 8 PM (PH Time)

MGA KAKUWENTUHAN

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The Australian National University

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Istoryahanay

“It is like listening to the AM
radio” – Dr. Beatriz Lorente

Other Experiences can Complement!



Impostor Factory (2021)



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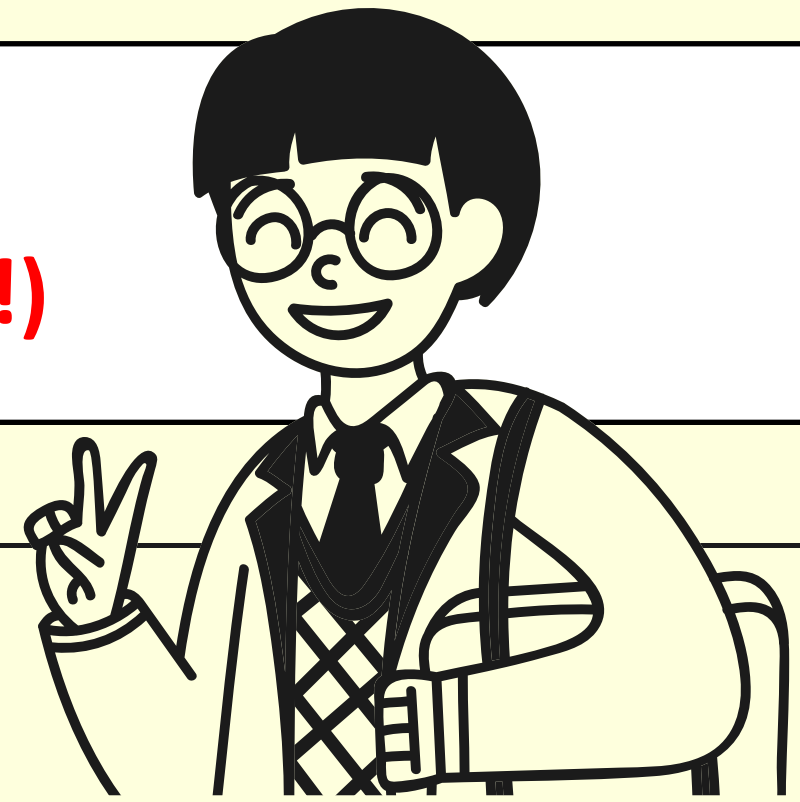
The Graduate School Question

Is Graduate School for You?

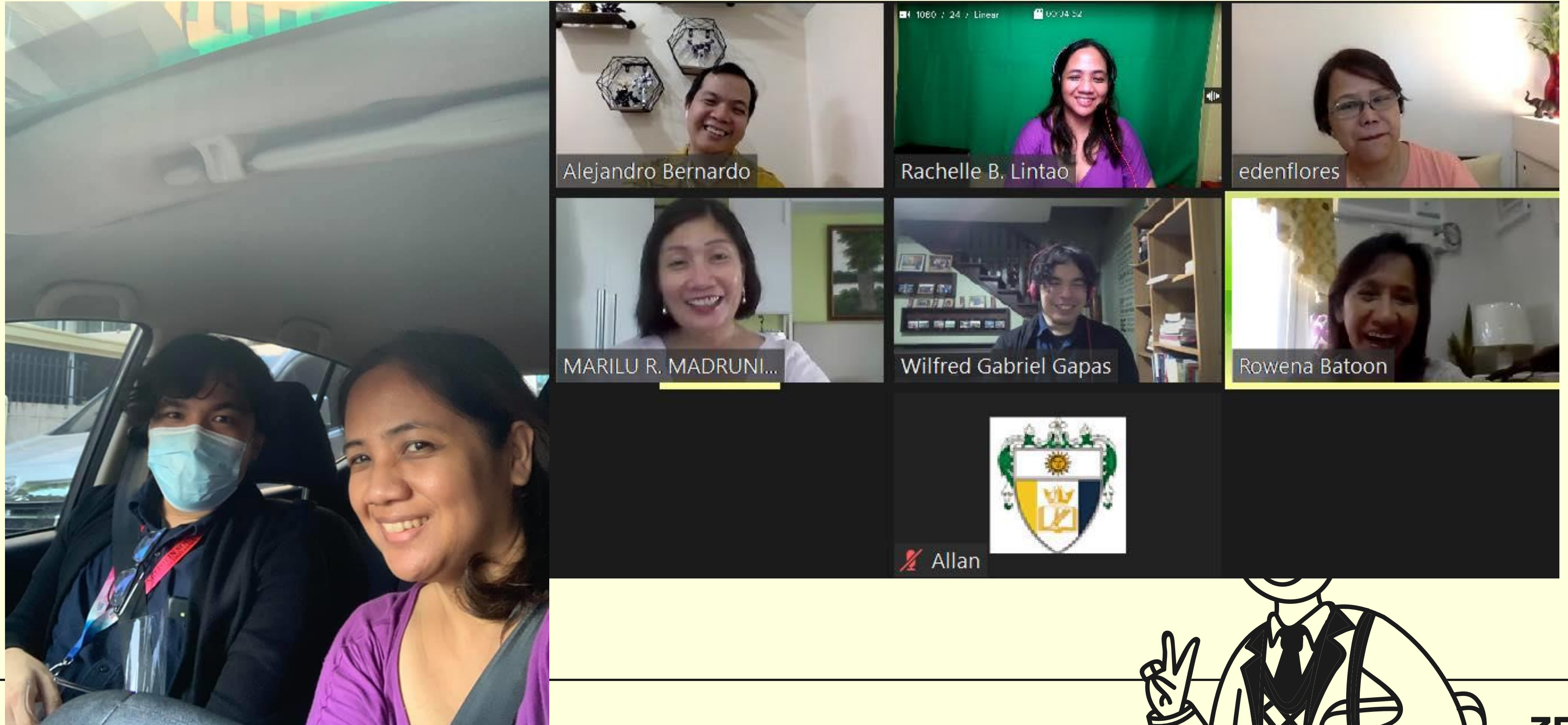
Graduate school is for everyone who wants professional development.

Pursuing graduate degrees is a noble pursuit – We desperately need more people to solve many social, political, cultural, and economic problems with which we are confronted.

Important: Do not pursue graduate school just because you want to be a professor. (It's expensive and hard!)



Is Graduate School for You?

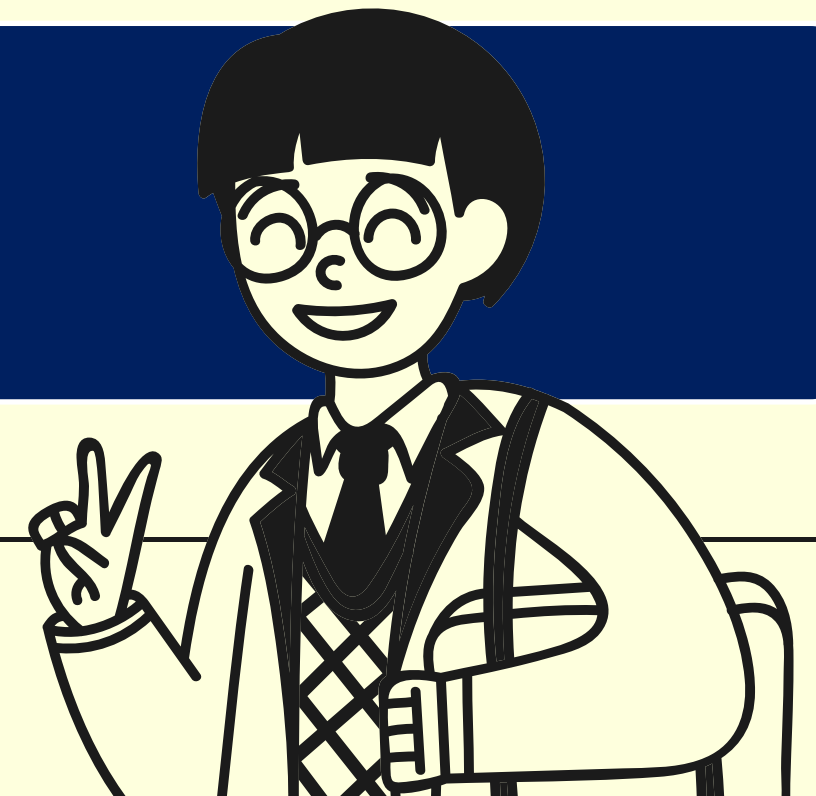


Is Graduate School for You?

Remember: The academic route is only one of many viable career options. **Your worth is not tied to your university or your degree.**

Prioritize a livable income and your spiritual, mental, and physical health.

Pursue a graduate degree when you think you are ready. #NoPressure



Some Graduate Scholarships Abroad

University of Malaya

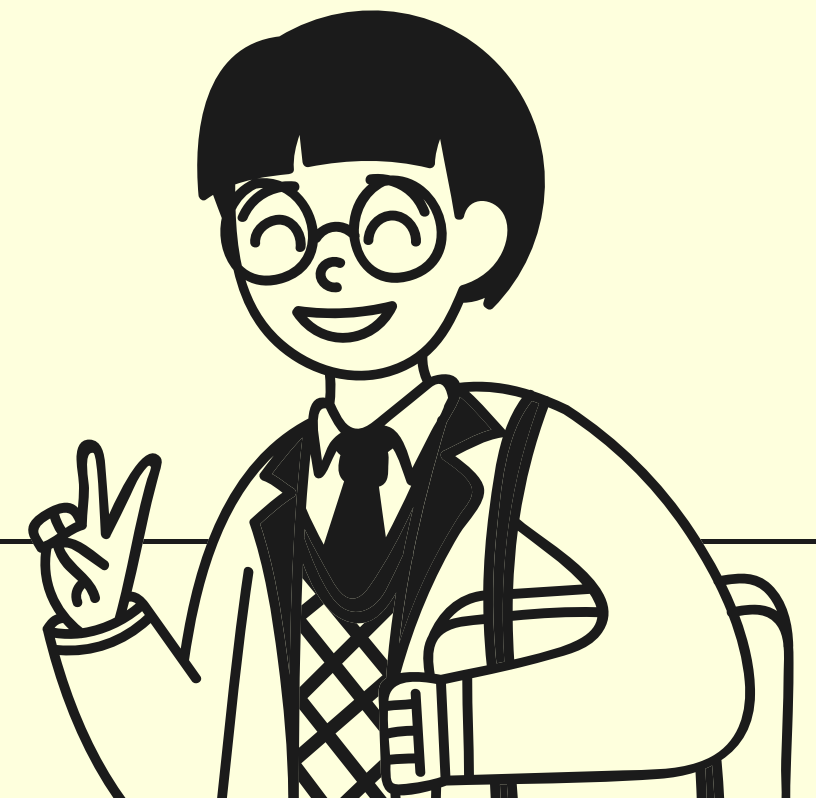
Global Korea Scholarship Scheme

Fulbright Scholarship

MEXT Scholarships

Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme

Graduate school culture in the Philippines is quite different from how it works in other countries.





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Where I'm Going Next

What's next? Continuing My Journey

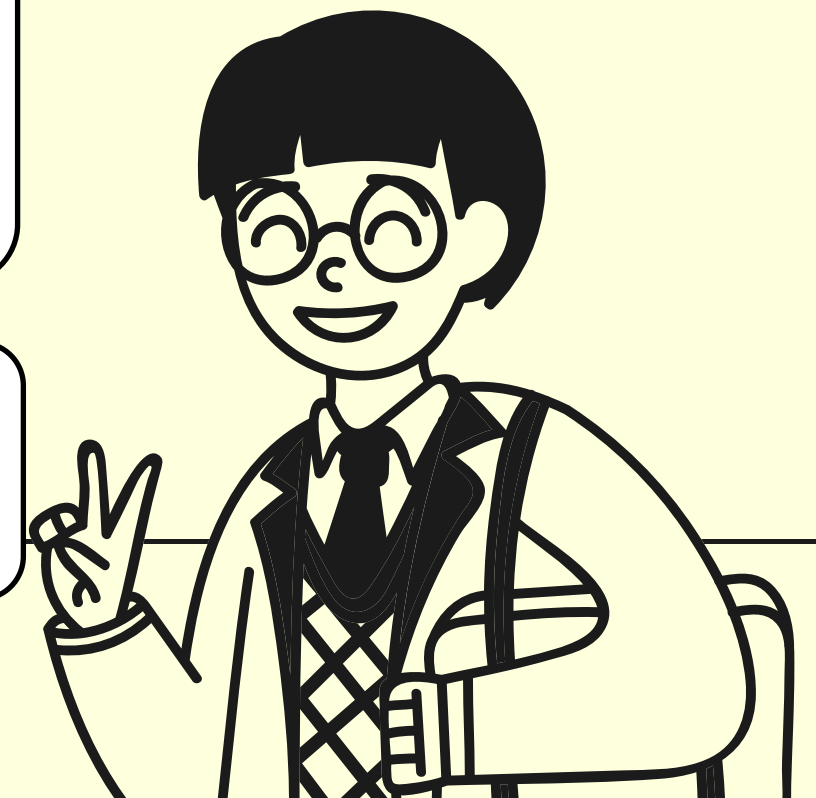
Plan A: Search for language teaching posts abroad (e.g., in Japan).

Plan B: Apply for PhD placements and scholarships abroad.

Plan C: Continue freelance editing and proofreading sidelines.

Plan D: Pursue education coursework and take the LET to teach in basic education.

Plan E: Get out of academia? Take part in family business?





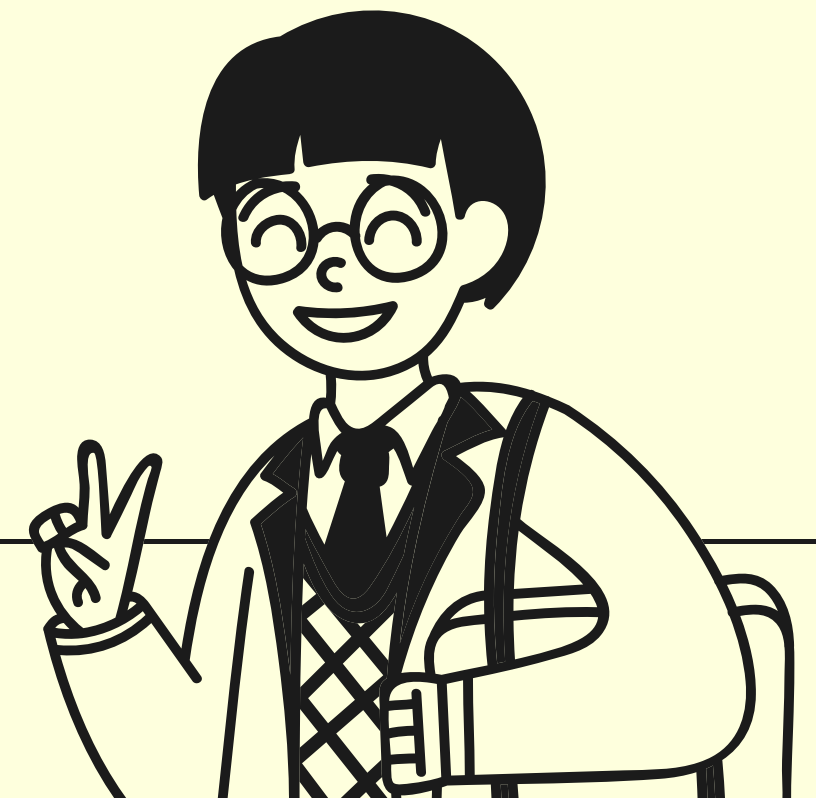
THE COMMUNITY LINGUIST

The Community Linguist (TCL) is an online initiative that hopes to inspire awareness of languages, linguistics, and education and social issues in the Philippines and beyond! We believe that linguistics as a social science should make sense to and help the people we serve.

To make this happen, we aim to (a) publish public-friendly infographics about language-related matters and (b) hold various free knowledge building events such as Research Brainstorming Sessions and reading groups.

Our content will be in English, Tagalog, or both.

Icon Art by Noriel Beltran (@dinorisaur)



While you are still students:

Take note of who facilitates your classes.

Ask where your tuition goes. (It often **does NOT** go to faculty and staff members.)

Please **write to your political leaders** – especially senators and your member of the House – **to fund the education sector and a more healthy, progressive knowledge economy.**





1. Follow a purpose, never a person.

2. Redefine success by setting your own goals and plan to reach it.

3. Integrity matters: Success has to do with what you leave behind.

4. Be determined to work hard and smart to your goal.

5. Find success in your present circumstances.

6. Don't be afraid to ask for help.



**Thank you so much!
Maraming salamat!
Daghang salamat!
Muchas gracias!
감사합니다~**

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