Improving Doctoral Training by Learning from

CCPTP Graduate Student Award Winners and their Mentors

Martin Heesacker (heesack@ufl.edu)

CCPTP Midwinter Meeting

Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico

February 11th, 2011

**Mentors**

**1. How did you identify such a stellar student during the admissions process?**

Dr. [X] had worked with [the student] as an undergraduate at [university x] and recommended our program to her. [the student] called and from our first conversations was very well prepared and clear in her career direction. She was impressive from the start.

[the student] was recommended by a respected colleague at the University of Illinois, [Dr. X]. She interviewed with me at the [my program], and she evidenced great knowledge and ability from the beginning. She had great academic record and other credentials and was very knowledgeable about my work already.

After a long interview, my colleague and I knew she was a winner….organized, detail oriented, motivated, and bright. I did not nor could I predict she would win such an award.

[the student] was committed to research from the very start. She made that clear in her application. She had a clear focus, but not a rigid one, and she had demonstrated a commitment to the research process throughout her undergraduate career. It also seemed that the research with which she had been involved was in service of answering questions that really interested her, rather than in service of padding her resume.

As [the student] was from [nation], our contact was limited and there was no in person interview. He interviewed well on the phone of course – but what most impressed me was a post interview e-mail. This message was so well written, thoughtful, informative and respectful it blew me out of the water. He shared some ideas for research that I could have planned my own 10 year research program around… Seriously, they were good – and not grandiose. And I could tell he had really done his homework, not just looked at a website. I was convinced at that point.

I had previously met [the student] on one of my visits to [nation], and prior to applying to our program she visited u of [our] campus with her colleagues to learn more about our program and meet current faculty and students.

While the student’s application was very strong, he didn’t stand out initially as stellar (on paper). I do remember that his application materials were submitted far ahead of the deadline. Although it was some time ago, I recall that he had very positive and strong letters of recommendation. During his on-campus interview, a number of students in the program informed me that he would be a perfect fit for the program, in general, and my lab, in particular.

I don’t remember being on the admissions committee. My first recollection of him was when he was assigned to me and he showed up for advising. I did what I do with my students—pretty much ignore him for the first year while they take classes and acquired skills necessary for research. [the student] distinguished himself by making himself known to me—not by demanding time, but by reading everything he could and bringing me studies and articles that I had not read. His curiosity, his dedication to learning what was necessary to do good research (e.g., by taking statistics classes and neuroscience classes), distinguished [the student] . I provide opportunities to all my students—[the student] took advantage of them! Remember, I have had dozens of students over the years and give them exactly what I gave [the student] ; [the student] is what made [the student] special.

**2. How did you recruit your award winner to work with you?**

I think she had heard a lot about our program and really wanted to come. She so valued the earlier mentoring she had received from [Dr. X] and wanted a person who she could have that kind of relationships with again--someone who would mentor her in an apprentice model where students and faculty work closely together on a range of projects. It is a model we have fostered at [our university]--so I am not sure it was so much of a recruitment as she wanted to come and saw it as a good fit.

I was fortunate that Dr. [X] had directed her my way, and she had worked with a research team already familiar with my work, including a grad student at [that university] doing research and her dissertation in my area of work.

Normal process….interviewed her, she talked to our students, and she decided to accept our offer.

[the student] expressed a clear interest in answering the same set of questions (about domestic violence) that I wanted to address. The fit was obvious.

I’m not sure. It just seemed like a good match for me and for him. I could tell he wanted in, big time.

It was natural because of my connections to [university in another nation] where [the student] was a junior faculty member. She had similar interests as mine in international psych and prevention.

I do not recall doing anything special to recruit this student. I spoke with him on the phone and discussed his research interests and work style. In light of his interests on intergroup relations, I spoke with folks in student affairs on campus to identify potential assistantships (e.g., intergroup dialogue facilitator, teaching assistant for course titled “Exploring Cultural Diversity,” and so forth). At [our university], we are unable to guarantee funding and have few fellowships to offer. The student seemed delighted about these graduate assistantship opportunities. I also remember meeting his partner (his closest family) early on in the process, and think that this was an important step in establishing a meaningful personal and professional relationship.

I didn’t. Again, the opportunities to fully participate, as a collaborator, are there for students who want those opportunities. [the student] knew what he wanted and sought out the opportunities.

**3. What did you and the program do that was distinctive to train and nurture your award winner toward an exemplary early career?**

I encouraged her to get involved in research teams early in her career; that if she wanted to become an academic that publishing with me and with others would be important and that even though it seems like a long time til she would be looking for a job--the publication process is slow. I encouraged her to become involved in multicultural and cross cultural issues, to get broad training in practice and research etc. I strongly encouraged her involvement in APA--getting active in the hospitality suite, going to socials, being a student representative to sections etc. I introduced her to faculty from other programs and emphasized the importance of networking. I stressed the importance of stewardship for the profession and her role in that.

We shared a common lab and research space and had common projects and directions, with other members of our research team, with virtually daily contact and multiple group meetings each week. Undergrads, grads, paid staff, post-docs and affiliated faculty worked closely together in coordinated and very productive teams, funded, in part, by federal grants. We also had strong cooperation and synergistic relations across counseling, developmental and quantitative psychology programs. [the student] benefitted from working with quant and counseling faculty and many positive and productive relationships within our own group. The training atmosphere was rich and multi-layered, and highly productive. My door was always open to [the student] and other grads, and I welcomed frequent discussion and interaction towards advancing our scholarly goals.

Honestly, I think that one of the reasons that [the student] became such a stellar researcher is that she was given the time to work on her research. She began her doctoral tenure in the clinical-community program at [another university], where I was then a faculty member. When I moved to [my current university’s counseling psychology program, she came with me. And she ended up having to do an extra year because clinical programs require many fewer courses than counseling programs. For her, that meant more time as a graduate student, and therefore more time to develop her research skills. Also, because she had such a keen interest in research, she did not pick the most time consuming practica.

Hmm.. Wow, I’m not sure I can give myself or our program that much credit – other than we allowed him to flourish. And I think I was able to identify early that he had serious potential to be a lead author on various publications. So I encouraged that to happen. He was a special one and crazy motivated – which helps. Some students have the talent but not the ambition or motivation, he had both. And yet he was still open to feedback, looking for mentorship, and willing to learn. I believe he knew he was going to be a professor someday so while in graduate school he appreciated being a student – which is important.

Our program did several things: encourage participation in APA and Div 17. Encourage presentations at APA convention. Encouraged writing for publication. Inform [the student] about events on campus, especially those that are internationally focused, and encouraged her attendance. The entire faculty was supportive of her, and sought out ways to connect with her. Although, we actually do that with all of our students. Especially for international students, it is very important to be readily available for discussion about both in-school stuff as well as outside school. Helping international students get oriented is important, and also, as much as possible meeting the students’ friends and family when they visit. I was fortunate in that I made several visits to [other nation] while she was a student and had opportunities to meet her family and friends.

It was unclear during the first year that the student would be a superstar, but it was clear that EVERYBODY enjoyed working with him (students, faculty, student affairs professionals). He demonstrated a very strong work ethic, competence, and a sense of humility. To this day, he is open to learning from others. While he worked closely with me on my research for his master’s thesis and as my lab coordinator, I realized that he completed tasks more efficiently (and of higher quality) than many students. Additionally, he excelled in statistics courses and sought experiences to work with large datasets. When he asked about the possibility of working concurrently in my lab and that of Dr. [X], I encouraged it. He gained a variety of skills through his work with [Dr. X], that he would not have gained with me (e.g., collecting data in schools, multilevel modeling). I also recall that [Dr. X] had funds to send him to at least two statistics workshops (SEM and multilevel modeling), which he found very useful. In his second year of the program, he was designing and conducting his own studies (beyond his master’s thesis), and It became clear that he was a superstar. I met with him regularly to discuss his research and professional development. These meetings always were productive. By his third year in the program, he began to feel more like a colleague than student. I encouraged him to apply for various positions (clinical science student representative to APA Board of Scientific Affairs) and awards (local and national).

“Nurture” is not in my vocabulary. “Challenge” is a better descriptor. I challenge students to learn, to participate in research, and most importantly to DISCOVER. The variability in research productivity is due to the student, for the most part. I provide opportunity, students decide if they want to take advantage of it. I am not being glib—I spent hours working WITH [the student], and he learned much from that (i.e., from me). I don’t take a “teaching” role—sure, students learn much in classes and this knowledge and skills are critical—my students learn research by collaborating with me (and each other).

**4. Describe what if anything you did with your award winner to instill counseling psychology’s core values and especially the core value featured in this year’s CCPTP mid-winter meeting, which is “Training for Community Engagement and Prevention: Unique Contributions of Counseling Psychology in Science, Practice, and Social Justice.”**

I had been doing rape prevention research in the community--developing curriculum for high schools and middle schools etc. and I think seeing that kind of community involvement was important to [the student] . She then did more work in the community and continues to do so. I talked very directly about our mission of social justice and encouraged her to think about her role in it. I talked about the importance of not studying ourselves--but reaching out to study those most in need of intervention in our society and globally.

We had a research team with multiple active members concerned with advancing science and practice interface and sharing common goals regarding advancing mental health outcomes. Advancing the welfare of children, families and adults are core aims and goals.

She came in with this perspective….I just tried to help her see how to implement such a perspective, and in a way how to do it more effectively.

[the student] came to our program with these very values. Indeed, she was so committed to research as a social justice enterprise that she left the very prestigious program she was in to come with me to a new program that, she felt, embraced these values in a deeper way. I am sure that our program helped her sustain her engagement with these values by lacing them through our coursework, our research, and our clinical supervision.

Hmm. Tough question, I think our program could do a better job of this, to be honest. So I can’t offer anything that definitive here. But I did help connect him with people who also shared these values. I also emphasized the importance of networking and connecting with other division 17 leaders.

Great theme for the conference. [the student] was a natural. She had already worked with and conducted research with [other nation’s] drug abusers and HIV-AIDS afflicited people in [the other nation]; two groups that are often hidden in [that nation’s] society. Most important, [the student] got very involved with the 2004 tsunami recovery efforts in [that nation]. I happened to be in [that nation] at that time working on another project, and a group of us (fac and grad students) spent time in the tsunami affected region with the survivors. [the student] was very moved by this experience and decided to change her dissertation topic to study tsunami adolescent survivors. She travelled back to [her nation] several times to collect data, and I was able to make a visits to the region. Therefore, there was a commonality and bond developed as we both experienced the devastation and heard stories of the survivors. Through her research, [the student] wanted to assist survivors and also present information that will be helpful to others in future disaster situations. We continue to collaborate on this work, and she and several [of the overseas university’s] faculty continue the work. Her dissertation was eventually published in JCP (and recently won the [national professional organization] Research Award).

The student entered the program with an established commitment to social justice. He identified as a member of a marginalized group. Importantly, he also demonstrated a unique ability to understand the impact of his privileged identities on others. We spoke regularly and often of the values of counseling psychology (prevention, strengths-based, social justice) and it was clear early on that our research stance incorporated a critical-ideological perspective.

I taught [the student] that what is important for the field is that we produce actionable research evidence. In my research group, we live those values. There is little discussion of core values per se, as we want to spend the time producing research that will have implications for clinical service, policy, and future research. As investigators, we try to understand.

**5. What if any mistakes do you think you made along the way in mentoring your award winner?**

I would now wish I could have gotten her involved in some grant writing experience as that seems so critical for young scholars in our field. I wish I had done more empirical research with her.

I don’t know, it would be a guess on my part….she might be a better source on this one than me….culturally this would be hard for her to say anything like this to me.

I have made many mistakes with graduate students. I can’t think of any obvious ones I made with [the student] though. She was a real self-starter so I had the great privilege of just letting her do her thing, with my support and encouragement. In general, though, I do think that a mistake I/we often make with graduate students is letting them think they can be great at everything (qualitative research, quantitative research, clinical work, courses) without letting them define an area of expertise and develop real skill in one area even if at the expense of others.

Not many, I guess I wish I could have cloned him. That would have been useful. Seriously though, I think the only thing I regret with this student is not enjoying more of the process with him. Further I wish I told him more often that I really enjoyed and appreciated our contact and relationship. I think our meetings were more “business” and “task oriented” than relational. And I wish I would have allowed myself to connect with him further. Part of that I believe was due to me being relatively new in my position as well and in a competitive tenure-track position.

I am sure I made some, but cannot think of anything specific. She turned out very well, so she was able to overcome my errors.

I don’t think that it is possible to make mistakes with [the student] , because he creates opportunities for himself. If I made mistakes, he hid them from me and made the best of the situation. Repeatedly, he told me how much he appreciated my dedication to his professional development, which felt wonderful. He truly was a joy to mentor!

**6. What have you learned in mentoring your award winner that would be useful in working with other students?**

I think getting students involved in a whole range of activities in both practice and science is important. I think having students go with us and participate on many of the roles of an academic is also important. I think meeting regularly (we met weekly) to discuss any aspects of her personal or professional development was critical to her progress. I think letting her know that any issue--problems with other students or faculty, ethical issues, personal issues--anything was fair game for our discussion as learning to deal with all of this is an important part of her development.

I would say I have learned a lot from ALL of my doctoral advisees over the years about mentoring. Perhaps most importantly, I can not do the same thing across advisees….each has different needs, interests, skill sets, goals….so I have learned that it is a different relationship and mentoring dance with each mentee.

I learned early to be very straightforward with my students about their career goals. Further, I try to evaluate their writing and genuine research interests early. If they have the interest, motivation, and skills I try and encourage their individual writing projects. If not, I try and manage my own expectations (that tend to be quite high) and realize I need to be a different type of mentor for different students.

I covered some of this above. In large universities it is important to pave the way for students to meet people important to their scholarship, alert them to events, opportunities to conduct research and teach, and serve the university and larger community. International students need much more in terms of mentoring (I actually was a panelist about this topic at the couns psych conference in [conference city] a few years ago—[Drs. X and Y] chaired it I believe). It is also important that students get connected to the larger professional grps (e. g. Div 17, ACA, international societies). For international students it is important for them to also get connected to professional orgs in their own country and region.

My gut reaction is that [the student] is special. I could provide the same mentorship to others and it may have much lesser effects. I think that our work styles were a natural fit.

**7. What else might be important for you to share as we reflect on your successful mentoring and try to glean and apply important lessons from your experiences to others?**

I believe a lot in cross mentoring. I feel I learn a lot from my students and feel that my being open to that learning is an important part of what makes my relationships with them successful. Frankly, I think often with students like [the student] --it would have been hard not to be a good mentor, she was active, engaged, prepared, socially appropriate, etc. While sometimes mentoring is challenging--in this case it was a delight.

That is needs to me a MUTUAL and INTERDEPENDENT process. There is a readiness factor that affects how far we can go, an availability factor (how much time they devote to learning, and to me as the mentor), a mentor availability factor (smile), a dedication factor, a trust factor, a likeability factor, and a luck factor…..and these factors are applicable to the mentee and mentor. Another factor is the program environment, including what one’s colleagues provide or do with the mentee in question.

In general, [the student]’s trajectory raises an issue that I have been concerned about more generally. At least at [my program], counseling psychology doc students have an extraordinarily large number of required courses; and APA accredited internships require an enormous number of clinical hours. Together, these requirements squeeze out research, which often becomes a third priority for busy graduate students. It seems to me that the only way to produce more “[the student]’s” is to reduce course and clinical hour requirements enough to allow students to spend more time pursuing independent research. The reason [the student] became such a fine researcher is that she took that time when she moved from the [another] program to the [our] counseling psychology program.

One of the ironies about mentoring is that the students who we work with who are “superstars” like this one – don’t really require much work but they make us look brilliant. But I’ve often had to do far more work and mentoring for the students who are struggling. And we don’t get the kudos for that work – nor do those students receive any awards. I’ve had a few on both ends of the spectrum. Also, thinking about this student has really made me recognize how important it is to adapt my expectations and mentoring style for different students.

I think I said it all. I am not sure I did anything special, frankly. [the student] was an exceptional student, and her career continues to develop (she is now assoc dean for research in her psych dept at [the overseas university]). As I indicated above, the unique aspects of our relationship was my long-standing connections with [other nation] and SE [other continent], and the chance event when we were both in [the other nation] during the tsunami aftermath. [The student] was self-motivated as a student, and actually pushed me at times to hurry-up and get her papers read, etc.

I wish that I could take the credit for [the student]’s success. It is clear to me that he is an amazing person and professional who likely would have achieved the same exemplary status regardless of his mentor. Consistently, he demonstrated an incredible work ethic, self-motivation, and initiative. I am delighted to say that I learned much from him (and continue to do so) about the research process, collaboration, and social justice. I am reminded of the incredible mentors that I have had along the way—[Dr. X], who believed in me even after I spent 5 years away from academia; [Dr. Y], who provided an exemplary role model of a consistent, dedicated, supportive, and nurturing mentor; and [Dr. Z], who to this day, checks in (almost weekly) to discuss my career development.

**Award Winners**

Questions for CCPTP Graduate Student Award *Recipients*

**1. How did you decide what doctoral training program to attend and whom to work with?**

I chose my program based on faculty I wanted to work with, match of research interests to faculty, and reputation of the faculty and the program.

Suggested by my undergraduate mentor; I completed an honors thesis as an undergrad and my advisor suggested I apply to the program of one of the researchers in the field related to my thesis

Before I applied, I talked to a number of students at different doctoral programs. I remember being very impressed with the students from [my program] and felt that they would be great classmates to have. Having a strong cohort relationship is very important to me (as someone from a collectivistic culture). I thrive in an environment that is supportive, not cut-throat. I also identified faculty who I shared similar research interests with and read their articles before I applied. When I interviewed at various programs, I paid attention to my potential advisors’ personality and mentoring styles. In other words, I tried to identify a program and an advisor that would be the best fit for me. I believe all that preparation and research paid off.

I didn’t really look at counseling psych programs – it didn’t get a lot of air time during my exposure to psychology as an undergrad – but instead at clinical and clinical-community programs. Did a lit search in subject areas of interest and identified people doing things I wanted to do, contacted them by email (mostly to just get my name familiar to them), and then applied to a subset of those programs. Ultimately decided to attend the clinical program at [another university] and due to (I thought) opportunities for public policy work and sent a separate letter emphasizing this; this led them to discover they had lost my application ☺, which led [my mentor] to freak out and make a big push for me to get the last slot available, and it all worked out. However, the program had shifted emphasis in the time between my acceptance and my arrival (new training director; elimination of community psych emphasis, move towards medical model) and [my mentor] ended up leaving at the end of my first year. For my second year of school I ended up transferring to the [the other program’s] counseling psych program as it was much friendlier towards the work I wanted to do, but eventually when I finished my MA thesis in my second year, I transferred to be with her at [my program]. I looked beyond [the other program] and specifically at [my program] because [my mentor] was there, but ultimately it would have been a fantastic fit for me anyway. (I did look at some other programs during the process of applying to [my program] but felt its attempts to establish a new model for psychology, one prioritizing social justice was really exciting. Plus, [my mentor] was so fantastic throughout this entire process of my first two years that I couldn’t imagine working with anyone else.)

Some response to both questions 1 and 2 – I was only accepted by 1 doctoral program. My decision was simply based on the fact that I was offered admission.

I have worked as a faculty member of Counseling Psychology at [overseas university] before leaving for my PhD study. At the time, our faculty just started a new PhD program in Counseling Psychology. It was very important to get accepted for my doctoral study in an excellent, research-based training program. At the time, [my program] was ranked by U.S. News and World Report as the best in the nation. There are great supports from the Dean and my [other nation’s] colleagues, when I applied the program there. Regarding the professor to work with, I met my faculty advisor a year before applying to the [doctoral] program. [My mentor] visited Psychology Faculty, [overseas] University. He provided a lecture on his work and has helped us to develop our newly PhD program. I had a great opportunity to learn about his academic work, and later on I developed my doctoral dissertation project under his advice.

I considered several factors, including the match of interests with my mentor, how comfortable I felt when I went to interview (e.g., the supportive and collaborative environment of the program, how students and faculty interacted with each other and with me), attention to issues of diversity, especially attention to of issues around sexual orientation, the extent to which there would be opportunities to be involved in research, and the availability of funding for graduate students.

I read [my adviser’s] book during my masters program and it was the first academic text I had read that I couldn't put down. The ideas were compelling and I was intimidated and also fascinated by the methods. I wanted to learn how to think like that.

Emphasis on diversity within the program was unparalleled. They put it front and center on the website and in everything they do. I decided to work with [my mentor] because when we first met he came across to me as very genuine and was willing to find a research line for us that was a hybrid of what he was interested in and what I was interested in. He didn’t just tell me I had to do exactly what he wanted.

**2. What actions by the program seemed especially important in your decision to attend graduate school there?**

I spoke at length with [my mentor], the person who would be my advisor, about her advising and mentoring style. We spoke a lot about the relationship I would have with her and that mattered incredibly to me.

My advisor was in developmental psych. The department had a combined developmental and counseling psych degree, which I was very interested in. The opportunity to combine my 2 fields of interest was very important.

At that time, [my program] did not conduct in-person interviews. [My mentor] did a phone interview with me, and then I was accepted shortly after that. [My program] does admissions very early, which made me feel that the program is very efficient. Also, the program offers good financial support to students and allows me to tailor my training in a way to develop my own expertise. And most importantly, I remember having such a pleasant conversation with [my mentor] on the phone and could sense he is a very good mentor. He also sent me information about himself (his autobiography and couple of articles), the university, and [the town], which helped me to get to know him, the program, and the community. I visited [my program] before I made my final decision about graduate school. I had a wonderful time visiting the program and felt really welcomed by the students and faculty. When I started my graduate program there, I literally felt that I was joining a big family, not just beginning my doctoral program. Till this day, I still see [the town] as my first “home” in the U.S.

Focusing on [my program], again, knowing [my mentor] so well, I was able to talk with her quite a bit about the program and how it fit with what I now (better) understood I wanted for my graduate school training and career as a psychologist. The program itself actually didn’t have to do much selling / I didn’t have much contact with the program initially other than with [my mentor]?

There are several reasons. First, the program is an APA accredited program in Counseling Psychology and focused on a scientist–practitioner model. The program is also hosting international students, visitors, and scholars from around the world. For an international student like me, being part of a world-scholar community rather than a graduate program in a far country really matters. In addition, the opportunity for students to build up their professional development through engaged fellowship or assistantship offering by the program, active class activities, real-counseling practice experiences, and working on research projects in a variety of ways is also a critical reason.

What really stood out to me about the program when I visited for my interview was how strong a sense of community there was among the faculty and among the students. Even before visiting, [my mentor] connected me with several students who I could talk to about the program and their experiences as LGBT students in the program and community. I felt incredibly welcomed when I visited. Also, when I met with [my mentor], she was very genuine, and I could tell that she would be a very supportive and dedicated mentor and someone I could see myself working with. These factors, in addition to the clear emphasis on research and practice from a multicultural lens, were important in my decision to attend.

Nothing in particular. I came for a visit to the department after being accepted and I really enjoyed the town. Can't say I had an instant connection with the department and faculty. That emerged over time.

Early communication of an offer, interview day in which I could get a feel for the cohesiveness and rigor of the program, professors who seemed accessible.

**3. What did your mentor(s) and the program do that was especially helpful in your professional development?**

[My mentor] spent time with me, each week, getting to know me both personally and professionally. We developed a professional relationship that was very close—she knew what was going on with me in the program but also in my larger life. Helping me manage and grow professionally and personally was instrumental.

Provided opportunities for me to take leadership roles in our lab and research project, facilitating my eventual involvement as a co-author and primary author of research publications. Also, he supported my counseling training (courses and practice placements) even though he was not in the counseling area. Served as an excellent example of a faculty member; encouraged me to seek faculty positions.

The training offered by the program is very solid. I enjoyed the classes I took and had opportunities to work with different clientele. The supervisors I had at the counseling center were top-notch. The faculty members really support my research and clinical interests. I learned the most about research, teaching, and our profession from working very closely with [my mentor] for several years. I had tons of opportunities to observe him in different roles. [My mentor] also had lots of opportunities to observe me and give me feedback. In addition, I started getting involved in Division 17 and co-founded the [overseas nation psychology group] because of [my adviser’s] connection and encouragement. Honestly, there are a million little things that [my mentor] did made me feel that he cares about me as a person and as his student. I believe the close personal connections I developed with [my advisers] and others at [my program] greatly facilitated my professional development. I often felt that as an international student, I had so much I needed to learn and so many barriers to overcome. However, my mentor and program helped me see my cultural background as a strength, NOT a deficit. Therefore, I felt empowered to focus on my own personal and professional development.

Other than everything? ☺ [My mentor] is incredible. I’ll dig out a letter I wrote for her for some award a while back and forward that along… That will give a good overall summary of how wonderful she was for my development. In terms of practical things though, her ability to turn dissertation drafts around within a day or so was amazing and was amazingly helpful in allowing me to finish up quickly. I watched many of my fellow students wait weeks and even months to get drafts back and so really appreciate what her speediness contributed to me moving forward. As for the program – just the heavy emphasis on social justice issues and critiquing the dominant paradigm. A good example of this was my theories class in which we’d first spend a week learning about, say, dynamic theories or CBT, and then the next week would be spent reading about critiques of those theories from a social justice perspective. I also really appreciated the program’s attempts to get you out in the community right from your first year, with their first year experience focusing on non-traditional roles for psychology. The faculty at [my program] are so smart, committed, approachable, and thoughtful – it was just a really wonderful place to get my training. I never for a second regretted leaving [the other university] (clinical or counseling), even though it tacked an additional two years onto my training.

Provided lots of opportunities for research and publications from the beginning of my doctoral training. My mentor was (and still is) a prolific researcher. My mentor also encouraged me to write a first-author manuscript in my first year – he had a lot of faith in me.

The countless, prompt, and constructive feedbacks on academic and research work from my faculty advisor and other faculty members were very helpful. The feedbacks provided me valuable insights in order to improve quality of my work. I really appreciated this kind of feedback, especially when something hadn't gone right and I still had the opportunity to correct it on a timely basis. Another helpful thing was being supportive with availability of the mentors. I had a regular meeting with the mentors. The meetings helped me to develop my study plan and to manage my academic concerns/other difficulties.

I could never overstate the impact that [my mentor] had on my development. When I entered graduate school, I had little research experience. [My mentor] went over and above anything that would normally be expected in order to show me how to conduct research and she provided multiple opportunities to be involved in projects. She empowered me to find my own voice and develop my line of research while I was in the program. The program also provided a range of advanced research methods and statistical courses that were well-taught, and there were opportunities to work with several faculty members in our program and across the university. Also, there were several LGBT groups on campus, which allowed me to be active and to develop my sense of identity as a counseling psychologist that extended beyond the traditional role to one that captured the ideals of social justice that our program emphasized. Clinically, [my mentor] always provided a safe and supportive space to process struggles in working with clients, to brainstorm treatment approaches, she cultivated my multicultural awareness and clinical skills, offered helpful examples I could draw on from her own clinical experiences, and showed how research could be translated into clinical work. The program also helped students connect with a variety of practicum placements (e.g., counseling centers, community centers, VA’s). [My mentor] also was deliberate and intentional in making efforts to connect me with others in the profession (e.g., at conferences). The program overall encouraged students to become active in APA and other organizations, whether through presenting research or holding leadership positions in these organizations. Overarching all of this, [my mentor] constantly worked to equalize our relationship through her consistent support and empowerment, her genuine interest and investment in my personal as well as professional development, and through her own genuineness and openness. In reality, I can’t talk about her mentorship as something in the past tense. She continues to provide invaluable mentorship to me now as I navigate my position as a junior faculty member. I see [my mentor] as a model mentor who I strive to emulate as I mentor my students in the development of their research, clinical work, teaching, and their personal growth and development. I feel I should comment that I recognize that these questions are intended to be specific to my professional development. Yet, for me, my professional and personal development intersected in many ways. I would say that it was the attention and commitment of [my mentor] and the program to both my professional and personal development that truly set them apart and made the greatest and most lasting impact on me, and is what I valued most about the experience.

Strong methods and scientific writing training early on. I was initially overwhelmed with the feedback, but it was good prep for journal reviewers, better then than now. My advisor brought me in on projects early and kept asking me to do things. I also had a lot of freedom to explore other collaborations. I often think Phd clinical/counseling programs require too much coursework and not enough freedom to think. Phd students have mostly already shown that they can write 'A' papers. What is needed is time to work on scholarship. I took several incompletes in courses in order to finish research projects i was working on. Not for everyone, but good for me.

Put my needs first in our relationship and helped me achieve my career goals, provided emotional support during challenging times, helped me put minor setbacks in perspective, helped me network at conferences for research collaborations and jobs.

**4. Describe what if anything your mentor(s) and/or training program did to instill in you counseling psychology’s core values and especially the core value featured in this year’s CCPTP mid-winter meeting, which is Training for Community Engagement and Prevention: Unique Contributions of Counseling Psychology in Science, Practice, and Social Justice.**

The beginning Counseling Psyc Foundations course taught by [my mentor] was incredible. I learned SO much about the history of Counseling Psyc, about our pioneers, about all the struggles we’ve endured, the national conferences, questions about our identity, SO much!! That class was pivotal in shaping my beginning identity as a Counseling Psychologist.

I think the scientific foundations classes that first-year students at [my program] take really help instill those core values in me. Other than that, seeing and being engaged in faculty’s research projects made me realize what it truly means to emphasize the value of research, practice, and social justice. Till this day, when I do research, I always think about how to engage the community and advocate for minorities by using my research.

Experiences like the first year experience; readings for classes and discussions in classes all focused so heavily on social justice issues – it was just embedded in every second of your experience at [my program]. It was just the frame everyone (students and faculty alike) used in thinking and talking about things.

My mentor introduced me to other counseling psychologists at APA conventions.

Those core values are being self motivated, goal oriented, determined, reliable, and honest. My faculty advisor and the [program] faculty members as well as my clinical and research supervisors all really love what they do. Surrounding myself with those who have such a passion, I have learned doing my best. As a counseling psychologist, I am genuinely interested in using my best counseling knowledge and skills to work with clients, regardless of their nationality, to help them construct their lives and to be responsible and happy person. In my view, our counseling research, teaching, services for people should focus not only on an individual level (i.e., a within-individual and/or longitudinal study), but should include an interaction effect of an individual with his/her other dimensions (family, school, community, culture, medias, and public policy).

From the beginning, our program emphasized a scientist-practitioner model and one that was dedicated to issues of diversity and was committed to social justice and advocacy. These values were infused within course materials and modeled by faculty members in their own professional work. [My mentor] and other faculty members were committed to addressing relevant social issues in their research and then using their research to inform clinical work and applying findings to address current issues within the broader community. Several examples stand out: the department-wide endorsement of support for same-sex partner benefits to be offered by the university, and the faculty’s active stance and involvement in the university’s decision to end their use of their racist mascot. It was especially powerful for me to see [my mentor] so committed to these issues. As a faculty member not yet tenured, most people would consider this a substantial risk and one to avoid. Instead, [my mentor] showed unwavering commitment to these and other issues.

Not sure, I think the best thing I learned was methods and then had the encouragement and freedom to think about and ask hard questions. A broader issue was that I learned from my advisor how counseling psychologists can contribute to larger debates within psychology. I often think CPers isolate themselves from larger issues in psychology (clinical psych, experimental, social, etc.). I think this is why many good counseling psych programs are disappearing.

When I had an idea to bring a group of counseling psychology students to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, the program got behind me 100%. They provided our group of students with a supervisor, financial support, a full set of trainings for what we would encounter. The program also infused social justice principles into every aspect of the curriculum, ranging from coursework to research projects to practicum sites.

**5. What if any missteps did your mentor(s) and/or your training program make in mentoring you professionally?**

Nothing I can think of.

I started a faculty position right after my clinical psych internship. Sometimes I regret not completing a postdoc to obtain the hours needed for licensure. I don’t think my mentor or program made any mistake here, but I think that if I had worked with a counseling or clinical psych faculty member, I would have been more likely to focus on the clinical work while I had the opportunity. Because my research and clinical/counseling work were distinct (due to topic and being part of a joint program) I always felt a sense of disconnect between obtaining a research-focused faculty job and completing my counseling placements. I am very happy in my current position and wouldn’t necessarily change the path I took to get here, but wish I could fit the postdoc requirements into my current role.

I can’t think of any!

I’m thinking hard and not having anything really come to mind… We didn’t learn a lot about the licensure process while in school but I also think it might have been overwhelming to learn about at that point. Maybe one other gap was that there wasn’t a whole lot of explicit attention to looking for/finding a job that would let you put a lot of the program’s emphasis into practice – other than, of course, the everyday conversations about how to work it into your research and clinical work…

Can’t think of any.

It is about some expectation regarding the unclear length of the training program. My home university allowed me to leave for PhD study with in 3-5 years like other doctoral degree program. However, I spent my first five years attending required classes and conducting my doctoral dissertation project. I also spent one more year as a psychology pre-doctoral internship. It was six years in total. I was so worried that I would be fired or cut off scholarships and financial supports if I requested a study extension for my fifth year in the program. I brought this issue to discuss with colleagues in Thailand and my faculty advisor. As a result, a series of the support letters from my advisor along with my request of study extension were sent to my home university. It’s time consuming and a very distressing experience.

This is a very difficult question to answer. I feel a very large debt to [my mentor] and the program for all they did to mentor me. I never would have expected that I would gain so much from my graduate experience. I honestly cannot think of any missteps that [my mentor] made, which just underscores how fortunate I am to have her as a mentor.

I think it took longer to get started in my research than necessary. There was a lot of methods training that my advisor wanted me to have before getting into research team work. I got a little bored that first year.

Program: not communicating to students as well as they potentially could what courses we should be taking at what times. I know that was challenging at the beginning of my PhD program because I felt like a deer in the headlights, but then I learned to ask for what I need in terms of guidance and things became quite a bit clearer. So programs can go out of their way to provide details to newer students to make the transition into grad school smoother.

**6. What have you learned because of how you were mentored that would be useful for mentors working with current and future students?**

That spending time with students—outside the classroom--is critical to student development. That fostering a holistic relationship is essential to their growth, both personally and professionally. We need to attend to the whole person and as Counseling Psychologists we should know that.

Please stay in touch with your mentees after they complete the program. Try to keep your lab/advisee size manageable enough so that you can continue to provide some mentoring/opportunities to former advisees.

First of all, match is very important. I think traditional mentoring model works very well when there is a good match between the mentor and mentee. [My mentor] and I share some similar values and interests and have similar styles. A good match makes it so much easier to form a close relationship and makes it fun for the mentors and mentors to work together! I also care about my mentees’ personal and professional development and provide them with opportunities to do research or involve in professional organizations (I try to do what [my mentor] did for me). I believe having a mutually trusting relationship and regular communication is imperative. Finally, lots of encouragement definitely helps empower the trainee!!

The importance of responsivity…of being approachable, willing to share my own struggles and journey…to get in the weeds with students to think through things – have a research team meeting or weekly meetings…to get students involved in publishing early on…to have your students feel like you have their back and will advocate for them when needed.

I was very fortunate to work with two very prolific researchers during my doctoral training. The first was my mentor. The second was the director of a research center in which I worked as an RA. I was essentially paid to do research and to publish with the director – I couldn’t have asked for a better deal.

The important lesson I have learned is how to maximize one’s highest potential. The [program’s] faculty members have international affiliations or experience as visiting scholars in another country. They apparently acknowledged that my capability surpasses my English language skill. They were very patient and demonstrated their confidence in me. This allowed me to begin to learn how to adjustment to a new environment as well as to reach a human’s highest potential through classes, counseling practice, and researcher studies. I can already see the effects of this lesson on my present job as I have applied it in all my work groups, especially on working with my students at [overseas] University and [the other nation’s] clients.

I have learned so many things from [my mentor] through her mentorship and it would be impossible to name them all, so I will just focus on one that seems salient to me at the moment. One thing I would like to highlight is the need for mentors to invest time that is both high in quantity and quality. To truly mentor a student (as opposed to simply serving as their advisor) involves a substantial time investment to say the least. This is no small task given the many other responsibilities that come with being a faculty member. Yet, having a mentor that is available, reliable, and dedicated makes such a difference. I’ve also learned that, in addition to mentorship on research, clinical work, and teaching, high quality mentorship involves attention to personal growth and development just as much as it does to professional development. I feel that attention to both is something that sets the field of counseling psychology apart from other disciplines of psychology. Moreover, attention to both is what makes a mentoring relationship truly rewarding, meaningful, and productive, and ensures the mentoring relationship will continue long after the formal training is complete.

Freedom to think and disagree, be generous with crediting your students contributions. My advisor was fantastic about this.

Though [my mentor] was always very professional in our relationship, he was willing to be genuine and real, and through everything he did, had my best interest at heart. I deeply appreciated that. He didn’t work any personal issues out on me, as I’ve seen happen to so many of my friends in other programs. And he wasn’t trying to use me as a stepping stone for his career. Instead, I really felt as if helping me and his other graduate students was the central focus of his career.

**7. What else might be important for you to share as we reflect on your early professional success and try to glean and apply important lessons from your experiences to others?**

The mentoring is important, no doubt, but the student also needs to come ready to work, motivated, and focused on research and publications. If a student doesn’t really have that passion, she/he won’t gain the type of success that a CCPTP Student Award Winner must have to earn that award. Not all students want to focus that strongly on research and mentoring oftentimes can’t alter that.

Although the importance of having a wonderful mentor cannot be overstated, a mentor can only do that much. Like the old saying, “When the student is ready, the teacher will appear,” I believe that it is also important for the mentee to be motivated to work hard and to be open to feedback. So, I guess I am trying to say that the mentees should also make efforts to make the mentoring relationship work.

Just that despite the rocky beginnings of my graduate school career, I feel truly blessed to have found [my mentor] and to have had the excellent training I got from [my program]… Your mentor really makes a big difference in your progress, much more than you realize when you are applying.

Research mentoring is critical. It’s important to for students who have a strong interest in research to be paired with prolific researchers who can provide the appropriate guidance.

One of the keys to share is strong interpersonal skill. The ability to get along with others and to work in teams is very critical to me. The genuine interest in people’s qualities, stories, or anything else closely connected to that persons wherever they come from, I found it is a powerful factor. My home culture taught me to treat people with respect and gratitude and thank often for what they do for me. I have learned that it is important both in professional and personal life to building this sincere and successful relationship.

Perseverance is more important than passion. Of course a combination of both is important. However, I wasn't prepared for how long research takes. I recently finished a paper (and had accepted into a top journal) a paper had been revised 30ish times and rejected twice.