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Savannah M. Smith
# WHAT I HAVE WISHED MY MENTOR HAD TOLD ME

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PURPOSE OF THIS E-BOOK

In a recent meta-analysis, Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz and Limar (2004) found that objective career success, as measured by compensation and promotion, are more highly related to career mentoring (e.g., sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, and protection) compared to psychosocial mentoring (e.g., role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship). Psychosocial mentoring, in contrast to career mentoring, was more highly associated with satisfaction of the mentor. Nevertheless, it is important to note that both types of mentoring contribute to job performance and career attitudes.

The idea for this text developed from conversations among the editors and from our experiences being mentored and mentoring students. Despite a mentor’s best attempt to provide guidance, there are things that we wished our mentors had told us or that we should have told our students. Thus, our goal was to create a compendium that presented an array of perspectives and suggestions on how career mentoring, psychosocial mentoring, and efforts to institutionalize mentoring can be adopted or adapted to make mentoring more effective.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The authors of the chapters in this book share their experiences with mentors and with mentoring. Having been mentored and currently mentoring students, the authors are acutely aware of the impact that career mentoring, and psychosocial mentoring has on students as well as how mentoring programs can be developed and implemented. To that end, the book has been divided into three sections. Career mentoring, psychosocial mentoring, and mentoring programs.

We lead off with a chapter by Taylor and Topor, who demystify the process of applying to graduate school using known graduate school application resources and Taylor’s personal experiences. This chapter highlights: (1) consideration of the need for graduate school; (2) preparing for graduate school; (3) application logistics; (4) how to identify graduate programs of interest; (5) preparing for the financial costs of applications and graduate school; (6) the personal statement; (7) letters of recommendation; (8) interview day; and (9) next steps based on application outcomes. While applying to graduate school can appear to be a daunting, nebulous task, this chapter guides the reader through the process step by step with a personal touch.

In the next chapter, Norzagaray discusses the necessary steps of applying to a graduate school whether it is applying to medical school, law school, business school, a STEM program, or a psychology program. While some programs have different requirements, the steps discussed are the main steps for any program; taking the appropriate coursework, maintaining a competitive GPA, seeking extracurricular activities, taking the graduate school entrance exam, asking for letters of recommendations, adhering to a timeline, etc. It is important to start early to allow for enough time to prepare and address any potential issues along the way. There are also many DON'T’S that may appear trivial; however, they DO have a significant impact during the application process. Remember to always ask questions when in doubt and to seek guidance from those who have come before you. You are the pilot of your destiny.

In this chapter, Giordano and Turner discuss the role mentors should play in supporting their student mentees during the time between applying to and starting graduate school. While many students prioritize the freedoms and

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enjoyment of their final spring and summer before the start of graduate school, Giordano and Turner advocate that mentors encourage their mentees to use this time to prepare for the rigors of graduate school by improving competencies in five key professional skill areas: (1) quality mentorship; (2) research; (3) academic writing; (4) academic reading; and (5) professionalism. This chapter presents specific recommendations mentors can initiate to foster incoming graduate students’ professional development to make them more prepared, competent, and confident.

Nichols and Powell take a proactive view on publishing with undergraduate co-authors in their chapter by offering consideration of the difficulties involved and solutions to overcoming these difficulties. They acknowledge that it can take substantially more time and effort publishing with undergraduate co-authors than publishing as a sole author or with faculty co-authors. They also acknowledge that publishing with undergraduate co-authors can be beneficial for furthering a faculty member’s research agenda and teaching students valuable skills. Beyond directing readers to useful resources in the literature, an emphasis is placed on providing advice distinct from what can be found elsewhere. Their chapter is organized by best practices for being strategic (e.g., different behaviors based on faculty rank), intentional (e.g., structuring projects to vet students), and efficient (e.g., effective division of tasks) so that publishing with undergraduate students can be worth a faculty member’s time.

Research presentations, from 15-minute conference presentations, to 30-minute brown-bags, to hour-long job presentations and colloquia, are a staple of academic life. In this chapter, Gernsbacher synthesizes advice for how to envision, design, and deliver engaging research presentations. The advice comes from a different type of mentor. Some of the advice comes from psychologists, but a lot of the advice comes from graphic designers and science communicators. Gernsbacher’s chapter begins by reviewing the history of research presentations (and the variety of visual aids used through the ages); continues by analyzing more versus less successful presentations; provides step-by-step instructions for how to design visual aids, including distinguishing between designing slides for handouts versus in-person presentations; and proffers tips for ensuring a smooth delivery and answering questions.

The goal of Rosen and Scott’s chapter is to encourage the development of mentoring relationships that focus on teaching. This chapter begins by outlining some of the shortcomings of many Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) training programs and highlighting the benefits of having a teaching mentor. In the final portion of the chapter, Rosen and Scott offer evidence-based suggestions for those who are teaching mentors or wish to become teaching mentors. These recommendations include reducing mentee’s fear of negative evaluation and the importance of consistent and frequent meetings. Topical suggestions for these meetings are also provided based on the time in the semester (e.g., preparation of course materials at the beginning of the semester and interpreting course evaluations at the end of the semester). In addition, recommendations are offered for observing the mentee’s classes, providing feedback, and connecting mentees to a wide range of resources on campus.

In her chapter, Fitzpatrick describes her entry into teaching undergraduate courses. Although she had a semester’s worth of GTA experience, she experienced an abrupt transition to being a graduate instructor (teaching independently). As a faculty member now, she is able to identify the mentorial support that could be helpful to such transitions for other graduate students. More broadly, this chapter provides a summary of three common approaches to GTA/graduate instructor preparation (manuals, apprenticeships, teaching of psychology courses). However, two components that appear to be absent are consideration of whether faculty have strong (1) mentorship skills and (2) teaching process skills [e.g., classroom management, student engagement] in addition to course content knowledge [e.g., developmental, social, experimental]. Recommendations for enhancing approaches to mentorship for graduate instructors are offered.
In Chapter 8, Hunter and Lloyd offer recommendations for increasing one’s chance of success in the academic job market. These are based on their experiences on both ends of the search process, having received job offers and served on many search committees. They start by suggesting how to select job postings that are most likely to result in interviews, cover what to send (and leave behind), how to make a good impression on phone and in person interviews, and how to handle offers. They conclude with a plea for search committees to also do their fair share to make the process better.

In her chapter, Cerniak explores the mentoring needs of diverse women studying and working in psychology, specifically in terms of financial compensation, career advancement, and issues encountered by working mothers. The chapter provides an overview of critical, historical patterns of gender disparities in psychology, beginning at the time of application to graduate programs through the middle stages of career development. When available, intersectional research about women in psychology is emphasized, and gaps in this research are explored via research pertinent to women employed in other disciplines. Cerniak concludes with reflections derived from varied professional experiences, and she offers guidance to mentors to initiate discussions with female students and colleagues that are focused on career planning, self-advocacy within the workplace, and the anticipation and management of work-life integration in their early and middle career stages.

There are many excellent resources available to undergraduate teachers who want to help their students prepare for entry into the workforce. In their chapter, Christopher and Batsell provide ideas on how teachers can use these resources in their daily work with students. Specifically, this chapter describes ways in which the authors’ respective departments, both housed in small liberal arts colleges, use some of these excellent resources through their academic advising processes and activities and assignments in a variety of classes. Although intended for relatively novice faculty members, this chapter provides “boots on the ground” examples that any teacher can use to prepare students for the workforce without making such preparation an added demand on the teacher’s time. Examples of advising tools and sample activities and assignments that can be readily incorporated into existing courses are provided.

In this chapter, Slifka, Daniels, and Petersen discuss the benefits of providing psychosocial mentorship (e.g., role modeling, acceptance, counseling) for graduate students. In order to introduce the reader to the topic, the authors provide an in-depth discussion of the extant literature on mentorship. This discussion is followed by a challenge that arose for one of the authors during the beginning of her tenure as a psychology professor and how this challenge was resolved by providing psychosocial mentorship. The authors conclude by offering practical recommendations for academic mentors. The overall goal of the chapter is to offer knowledge and tools for psychology educators interested in ways to provide exceptional academic mentorship for graduate students.

Phillips (a faculty member in clinical psychology), and Melhorn and Cruz (two doctoral students in clinical psychology), discuss the importance of self-care in personal and professional life for psychology professionals working in diverse areas. This chapter includes the benefits of self-care, as well as the salience of mentoring students of all levels of higher education and early-career psychologists on the importance of engaging in self-care. This chapter provides recommendations for those mentoring students with insights from literature, the authoring faculty member, and the authoring students.

Next, Taylor and Topor explore coping with the stresses of graduate school using evidence-based approaches and Taylor’s personal experiences. This chapter begins with a discussion of stress, stressors unique to graduate school, burnout, and the effects of burnout before transitioning to methods to cope with stress. The methods include but
are not limited to: practicing mindfulness, engaging in psychotherapy, staying socially engaged, exercising and eating well, and even effective procrastination, all in the service of self-care.

In her chapter, Multhaup notes that airlines advise us, in the case of emergency, to put on our own oxygen masks first and then help others. She makes the analogy that professors must maintain wellness so they are well-positioned to help students and contribute to multiple communities (e.g., departmental, institutional, intellectual). Multhaup shares strategies that she has found to support her own professorial wellness, including: (1) creating multiple circles of support across disciplinary and professional lines; (2) feeding one’s inner-student by attending events sponsored by departments other than one’s own and creating cross-disciplinary collaborations; and (3) seeking service that fits one’s interests, talents, and scheduling preferences. She posits that the time spent on such strategies may be small, but the benefits are large. Moreover, Multhaup reminds readers that they do not need to follow all advice offered to them; rather they should select strategies that fit their unique academic career.

In the next chapter, Pol outlines a seven-step approach to combattin g stress amongst students. Her focus is on changing students’ thoughts. These are in general, mostly accessible, compared to changing feelings or behaviors. However, and luckily, because thoughts, feelings and behaviors are intrinsically intertwined in neural networks, changing one will change them all. This will not happen overnight: she strongly suggests in one of her steps to inform students about the laws of change, among which the logic of falling back and the strength of achieving change in small increments. With useful background information on the working of the brain and on relevant stress studies and interventions, Pol provides a useful instrument for both beginning and senior mentors to start addressing this increasingly important issue.

Burns highlights six myths she believed about students when she began teaching: (1) students are just like me, (2) students need to be “weeded out”, (3) students do not respect me and do not like my class, (4) students just need to study more if they are not doing well, (5) students should all be treated the same, (6) students know why they are being asked to do this project, paper, assignment, etc. The author describes how she came to see these as myths by utilizing research on inclusivity and student success. The chapter focuses on best practices within this literature to show how to become a more inclusive teacher, including recommendations for mentors.

Next, Michl and Kracen draw on their own relationship to discuss the ways that gender influences mentoring experiences, and they examine the creation of safer mentorship spaces and the maintenance of professional and emotional boundaries. Intersectionality is identified as a useful tool for addressing and deconstructing power within mentorship. Finally, the authors make several recommendations for cultivating safer mentoring spaces for transgender and gender nonconforming individuals, including having a willingness to learn, cultivating classrooms in which all identities are affirmed and journeys are celebrated, establishing clear and consistent boundaries, starting from a place of openness and curiosity, discussing biases and tough topics, and apologizing when appropriate. As discussed in the chapter, mentorship can be a wonderfully enriching experience for both people involved, and the relationship can be strengthened by addressing issues of gender, intersectionality, and boundaries.

Finally, Willey considers the steps necessary for creating a formal mentoring program on a regional campus. Considering the higher education landscape today, anyone landing a full-time faculty position at a college or university has already been vetted in myriad ways, showing amazing credentials, though certain marginalized populations may have a hard time navigating their new setting. With knowledge, mentoring, and connection, these new hires can better understand and become an integral part of their new professional home. A formalized mentoring program helps ensure that all new faculty will be able to find and utilize mentoring toward their own
success in academe. This chapter starts with background context for the current mentoring program on one regional campus, and moves through ten steps for building a program, focusing on the need for knowledge, relationships, leadership, and institutional support. These ideas are offered not as a prescription, but as an opportunity to learn from another institution’s experience, borrowing and adapting as needed. To summarize, the Ten Steps are: See What You Have, See What You Need, Garner Support, Develop the Program, Grow the Program, Be Flexible, Get Ready for the Culture Shift, Spread the Culture, Collect Data, and Avoid Dangers.

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We wish to thank our authors for their generous and thoughtful contributions to this e-book. In each chapter, authors have shared their insights about mentoring. Our hope is that the reader will find the text to be a practical introduction on how to mentor effectively.

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May 2019
CAREER MENTORING

WHAT I WISH MY ADVISOR TOLD ME ABOUT APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

PRE-GRADUATE SCHOOL ISSUES

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE TIME BETWEEN APPLYING TO AND STARTING GRADUATE SCHOOL

HOW TO MAKE PUBLISHING WITH UNDERGRADUATE CO-AUTHORS AT LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES WITH A TEACHER-SCHOLAR MODEL WORTH YOUR TIME

HOW TO ENVISION, DESIGN, AND DELIVER ENGAGING RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

WHAT I WISH MY ACADEMIC MENTOR HAD TOLD ME ABOUT TEACHING

WHAT I WISH I COULD HAVE LEARNED FROM MENTORS WHILE TEACHING AS A GRADUATE STUDENT

MAKING THE MOST OF THE MARKET

MENTORING WOMEN IN PSYCHOLOGY: COMPENSATION, ADVANCEMENT, AND WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION

MENTORING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS FOR THE WORKFORCE
INTRODUCTION

As a freshman in college, I had a clear idea of my career goal: to pursue a Ph.D. in Psychology. By the fall of my junior year, I began to prepare to apply to graduate school. But as I began the process, I found applying to graduate school was not as straightforward as I thought. There was conflicting advice from my advisors, myths and legends of how to get accepted from other students, and an underestimation of how much time the application process would take. Given my own experiences, I felt compelled to write a chapter to de-mystify the application experience to hopefully ease a future graduate student’s journey. Please note that all personal experiences are those of Antione D. Taylor.

DO YOU NEED GRADUATE SCHOOL?

Decide if graduate school in psychology is a good fit for you. Think carefully about your decision to apply to graduate school; it is a multi-year intensive endeavor. What are your personal and professional goals for applying? What type of degree program is the best fit for you and your interests? There are many types of master’s and doctoral degrees that can be earned in psychology. Research what type of degree is needed to reach your final goal. If your goal is to do research in clinical psychology, perhaps a doctoral degree in clinical psychology is the best fit. However, a master’s degree may be the preferred way to become a psychometrician. While describing the variety of graduate degree programs in psychology is outside of the scope of this chapter, knowing what interests you about the field of psychology is critical at this stage. Self-reflection of your goals is an important component of this process, as is consulting with family, friends, and advisors. As many graduate programs have specific foci and research areas of interest, identifying your goals will allow you to apply to programs that will best meet your career goals.

HOW TO APPLY TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

Once you have decided that graduate school is the next step in your education, consider what you need to do to apply.
PREPARING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL

TAKE COURSE WORK IN AREAS OF INTEREST

To prepare for graduate school, take classes in your area of interest, such as clinical, school, or cognitive psychology. This is beneficial for several reasons. You will gain more information about your area of interest and it will help you decide if this is an area of study you want to pursue. Look at the classes required by graduate school programs ahead of time and make sure that you have taken these classes.

DO WELL IN YOUR COURSEWORK

Put effort into excelling academically in your courses. Grades are important because they reflect aptitude and provide a track record that reflects your ability to achieve academically over a period of time. Overall, the higher your GPA, the better, but in general a 3.5 GPA or higher will make you competitive for the most selective schools. Be sure to read the APA’s *Graduate Studies in Psychology* text to find GPA requirements. Re-take required classes in which you have earned low grades.

TALK TO PROFESSORS AT YOUR INSTITUTION WHO ARE DOING WORK IN YOUR AREA OF INTEREST

It is beneficial to talk to professors at your undergraduate institution who are doing work in your area of interest for several reasons. They could be potential mentors for you by providing guidance and making you aware of resources and opportunities in your field of interest in which you may not be otherwise privy (such as work-study jobs, or research opportunities). Professors can also write strong letters of recommendation, which are crucial for graduate school applications.

DO RESEARCH IN YOUR AREA OF INTEREST AND PRESENT POSTERS AND PAPERS AT PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES

Becoming involved in research in your area of interest is a worthwhile experience for students because it provides opportunities to learn how to think, organize information, solve problems, and demonstrate commitment to a project. Research skills are essential to graduate school admission. To really make yourself stand out, it would be helpful to present a poster at a professional conference or publish a paper in a journal. There are undergraduate research conferences and journals, and some conferences have specific sessions devoted to undergraduate research.

JOIN PSI CHI, OR OTHER PSYCHOLOGY ORGANIZATIONS

An effective way of forming an identity as a lifelong student of psychology and making yourself more appealing to graduate schools is to get involved in professional psychology organizations, on and off campus. One that is likely available to you is Psi Chi, the international honor society in psychology. Becoming involved in Psi Chi will provide you opportunities to network with other psychology students, develop leadership skills, and get involved in departmental activities. Psi Chi also offers opportunities at regional and national levels such as research grants, travel grants if a student presents at a conference, and scholarships. Another opportunity is to get involved with (or start) a psychology club, that is open to anyone with an interest in psychology, regardless of major. I started the Psychology Council of Majors at my school, an organization for any student interested in psychology, where psychological concepts were presented and discussed on a weekly basis. The group also acted as a peer mentor group for anyone

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taking or interested in taking psychology courses. Finally, the American Psychological Association (APA) and Association for Psychological Science (APS) offer resources for students, such as advice on entering the field of psychology, and access to conferences where researchers and practitioners in the field of psychology gather to learn about the latest research, attend workshops, and network. Both organizations allow students to join at a reduced fee and obtain discounts on psychology journal subscriptions.

GAIN SUPERVISED PRACTICUM EXPERIENCES

Seek out supervised practicum experiences. You might observe or assist in patient intake assessments, psychological testing, report writing, or behavior modification planning. Practicum experiences will offer a hands-on experience of what it is like to work in a particular setting and to apply what you have learned in class. Additionally, practicum experiences give you a chance to develop useful skills that may be hard to learn in a class. They also help you clarify your interests. You may think you enjoy clinical experiences, only to discover that clinical psychology is not a good fit for you. Practicum experiences are looked upon favorably by graduate school admission committees because they are a good indicator of a student’s interest, motivation, and competence in applied settings.

STUDY AND TAKE THE GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATIONS (GRE)

The GRE is a standardized test for graduate school applicants akin to the SAT you took for college admissions. There are verbal, quantitative, and writing sections. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, I began thinking about applying to graduate school in my junior year of college. I planned to take the GRE early in the summer following my junior year to give me extra time should I want to take it again for a better score (spoiler: I did, and so did a great deal of my peers). As such, I began studying with friends for the GRE near the end of the spring semester of my junior year, using GRE practice test websites, study guidebooks, and enrolling in a GRE preparation course. If you feel comfortable studying on your own with just a book, you may not need to take a GRE prep course. Either way, it is recommended that you study using multiple sources, such as study guides, and GRE practice test websites and that you take several practice tests under test-like conditions (i.e., all in one sitting, in the specified time frame). In addition, many doctoral programs require that applicants take the GRE Psychology test. It is recommended you study for the GRE Psychology test in a manner similar to the general GRE test. It is important to note that the Psychology GRE is only offered three times a year and only offered at paper-and-pencil centers which may not be located near to you.

APPLICATION LOGISTICS

Dedicate roughly the same amount of time you study for a class in a week to applying to graduate school. It took me between 6 and 9 hours a week for several months to apply to graduate programs. Given financial and geographical constraints, I applied to five programs, which was on the lower end of the amount of applications submitted by members of my peer group. Depending on whether you decide to apply to master’s or doctoral programs, or a mixture of the two, it is a good idea to apply to 8-10 programs. I kept detailed spreadsheets of what materials each program needed, including the number of letters of recommendations, and the application deadlines. For the reference letters, identify people who are familiar with you and with your work. I gave my reference letter writers approximately 6 week’s notice about the deadlines and clearly articulated my goals for applying to each program.
IDENTIFYING PROGRAMS

Each graduate program has different goals, philosophies, theoretical orientations, facilities, and resources. Some programs may place a higher emphasis on research, while others may focus more on clinical work. Some allow part-time attendance, and some require full-time attendance. Good resources to help understand the focus of clinical programs are the most current edition of *The Insider’s Guide to Graduate Programs in Clinical and Counseling Psychology*, published by Guilford Press, or the APA *Guide to Graduate Study in Psychology*. It is important to be clear on what you are looking for in graduate program to ensure the best fit between you and the program. In my case, I made the decision to pursue a doctorate in clinical psychology. I first determined geographical areas that I wanted to live in, for personal and family reasons. After that, I looked at each program in that area to determine if there were faculty doing research that matched my interests. I looked at each program’s website to find the faculty’s body of research.

Other colleagues conducted a nationwide search for graduate school and started by identifying faculty members who were doing research in their area of interest. I also looked at the program’s admission statistics including average GPA and GRE scores of enrolled students, to determine how competitive I would be. Another statistic to note is the program’s attrition rate, and time of completion. For clinical programs, take note of the current accreditation status, licensure percentage, and internship placement rate. I also asked my professors for recommendations of programs in which to apply and specific faculty in these programs who would be a good fit with my goals.

PREPARING FOR THE COST OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND GRADUATE SCHOOL

Part of the application process meant reconciling the financial costs of applying to and attending graduate school. Each program has an application fee, and there are additional costs to obtain transcripts and mail relevant materials. Also, it is important to consider how you will pay for graduate school. Graduate school tuition and fees in 2016 ranged from $11,100 for in-state public institutions to $31,060 for private institutions (Baum & Steele, 2017), not including living expenses, costs for course materials, or membership in professional organizations. It is important to determine what type of financial aid is offered by the program. Programs may offer a stipend for working in a research lab or teaching courses. Often, funding is available for a limited number of years (e.g., your first four years); find out how many years you would receive funding, and what will be expected of you to receive and maintain this funding (e.g., teaching assistantship, research assistantship). Learn about any other external scholarships and funding sources that might be available to you, and about the loan process. The expected median graduate debt for PsyD students ($160,000) was significantly higher than for Clinical/Counseling Ph.D. students ($76,500) and for research and other Ph.D. ($72,500) candidates (Doran, Marks, Kraha, Ameen, & El-Ghoroury, 2016). Anecdotally, I know recent graduates whose student loan debt has reached close to $300,000.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Most programs will ask you for a personal statement. Topics that can be covered include (1) a statement of your interests in psychology, and how you came to have these interests; (2) what your goals and ambitions in the field of psychology are; and, (3) how the program to which you are applying can help you to achieve those goals. Be specific about your reasons for wanting to attend this particular graduate school. What is it about this program? Faculty research interests? Student activities? Have friends and professors read over your personal statement to ensure that you are clear with your message and that the letter is personable.
LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Every graduate program requires letters of recommendation that discuss the qualities, accomplishments, and experiences that make you unique and a good fit for the programs to which you have applied. These letters are extremely important. But who should you ask to write the letters? Typically, you want to ask people who know your work, know you long enough to write with authority, and have a high opinion of you. While it is acceptable to have references outside of psychology (I had a letter from a math professor), most of your letter writers should be either psychology faculty or people who are familiar with your work in the field of psychology.

INTERVIEW

So, you have turned in a complete, amazing application, and now you are invited to interview at programs. Congratulations! The interview gives admission committees the opportunity to meet candidates and see the people behind the GPAs and GRE scores. It is a chance for them to assess fit with the program and to observe your verbal and nonverbal communication skills. Interviews may range from half an hour with one or two faculty to a full day or more filled with meetings with students and faculty. There may also be small group discussions, large group interviews, or even social hours or parties. It is important to remember that even during the social events, the interview is still being conducted! Be dressed in your best professional attire and prepared to answer questions about your interest in the program, your career goals, research interests, strengths, and areas for growth. Consider how you may answer these questions prior to the interview and practice with friends or family. Also, do not forget, that interviews are your opportunity to ask questions and evaluate programs. Ask thoughtful questions about the program, faculty, and students. Try to get a sense of the department’s emotional climate. A program may seem like a good fit on paper, but upon interview, you may find it is not a good fit for what you are looking for.

APPLICATION OUTCOMES

While every program has a slightly different timeline, method, and style of handling admissions, most programs inform applicants of their application status by mid-April.

ACCEPTANCE

Congratulations! This is great news that you have been accepted. The program will give you a deadline by which you need to accept the offer. You may receive multiple acceptance offers. It is best not to hold multiple offers at the same time. Holding multiple offers will not allow programs to admit other applicants who may be eager to attend. Weigh the pros and cons of each program and discuss with your advisors.

To decide which offer(s) to decline, consider your personal priorities in terms of area of research and clinical interest, geographical location, and funding. Be sure that you clearly understand what funding is being offered to you prior to accepting an offer. Ask questions about financial aid, housing, and assistantships, and compare the acceptance packages. To decline a program, send an e-mail explaining that you are honored by the acceptance, but that you will not be able to attend that program. Ensure that you are declining the correct school. You do not want to make an embarrassing mistake!
REJECTION

What if you are not accepted? Most graduate programs must split hairs when making admissions decisions as there are many highly qualified applicants. The decision usually is based on fit between the applicant and the program. It is difficult to be told that you are not among a program’s top choices, especially if you were invited for an interview. It also may be difficult to inform family, friends, mentors, or professors of the rejection, but it is critical that you seek social support during this time. Allow yourself to feel sad, upset, and/or frustrated. Acknowledge those feelings.

Identify next steps. This might involve asking programs what you can do to be a more competitive applicant in the future. You can re-evaluate the number and competitiveness of the programs you applied to, and the strength of your essays, research experience, transcript, and GRE scores. Use the time until the next application season to improve your grades, seek research experience and/or practicum experiences, and more clearly identify your area of focus for graduate study.

As you have likely realized, applying to graduate school can be a daunting task. However, it can be made easier if you are informed about the process itself and begin thinking about your application as early as possible. Everyone’s path to graduate school is different, but these are a few tips I wish that my mentor would have told me about applying to graduate school.

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION

You have decided that you want to attend graduate school but “where do I begin” you ask? That is a great question because while it may seem like a simple task, especially if you know the program you want to apply to, it is long daunting process with many potential challenges that you may encounter along the way. Some of the issues that will be addressed in this chapter are, selecting the right school, meeting the necessary requirements, financing graduate school, and evaluating offers. My goal for this chapter is to offer my personal experience as well as those issues encountered by others, in an attempt to make this process more manageable and less stressful for future applicants.

WHERE TO START?

Before starting the application process, it may be wise to think about the question we were all asked as children, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” While your answers may have changed over the years, this question has guided your academic career influencing your class schedule not only during undergraduate school but in high school as well (i.e., college track). Knowing what you want to do as a career for the next 40 years and who you want to be is the most important question to address. Graduate school curriculums are tailored to specific areas of study, is time consuming, and expensive. You do not want to be in a graduate school program and realize that it is not what you wanted to do. Many students experience this pitfall if they only attend graduate school because of desires made by their friends or family or, because of some other issues such as salary prospects instead of following their own self-interests. Students are more motivated when they study within a field they enjoy. I like to tell those, who I mentor, to think of a career that you do not dread waking up to in the morning or one that does not feel like a job but an enjoyable hobby.

Ideally, you want to start preparing for graduate school in your first year of undergraduate school but in reality, this may not be the case for many. More recently, there has been an increase in non-traditional students returning to school. It is estimated that approximately 40% of the current undergraduate population at American colleges and universities are non-traditional (CLASP, 2015).

Whether you are a traditional or non-traditional student, if you are entering undergraduate school for the first time and have aspirations to attend graduate school, it is suggested that you do the following during your first two years: take all general and required coursework, begin attending department activities (e.g., join and participate in clubs), identify and select mentors/research advisors, and be involved within the community (Helms & Rogers, 2015). The sooner you start these suggestions, the less stressful the remaining two years will be when you begin conducting research, attending conferences, and applying to graduate school. But what if you wait until the third year, transfer

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3 The author would like to thank Aaron Huntley, BSN, RN, Abigail Hind, Esq., Lauren Clifford, B.A., Megan N. Glass, B.S., Lauren E. Glavin, M.Ed., and Morgan E. Williams, M.S. for providing their personal experiences to that contributed to this chapter.
from a community college, or have taken a few years off? Do not panic it can still be done. I was among the latter

group, had no mentor to guide me, started all those suggestions during my third year after transferring, and still gained admissions to graduate school the first year I applied. The main point I wanted to address is that no matter where you are in the process, most graduate schools have an application deadline that falls between October and December; therefore, you need to have a strategic timeline to follow. If the school you are applying to has rolling admissions then you have more leeway. But before you can follow a timeline you must select the right school(s).

SELECTING THE RIGHT SCHOOL(S)

Selecting the right school(s) is one of the most time consuming but extremely important steps in the application process. L. Clifford (personal communication, January 30, 2019) reported leaving her first graduate program because she disliked it. She worked for five years then realized in order to continue in her field, she needed a master’s degree; she was granted a three year extension in order to complete her degree. Before searching for schools, it is highly suggested that you research what is required for you to work in your desired field. This can be the type of degree (master’s degree, doctoral degree, specialist degree, or graduate certificate) you need and whether or not you need to attend an accredited program. For example, if you want to be a clinical or counseling psychologist in the United States you will need to obtain a doctoral degree (PhD or PsyD) from an American Psychological Association (APA) accredited school or a Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) accredited school in Canada (Bailey, 2004). It is highly recommended that attending a non-health profession, like business or accounting, it is accredited program by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB, n.d.a). When programs are accredited you can find a list of schools from their respective accredited organizations website or you can call directly. Their websites may provide information about when the program was accredited, when the next accreditation visit is scheduled, if the school is on probation, and direct links (Accredited Clinical and Counseling Doctoral Programs; Accredited Business and Accounting Programs; APA, 2019; AACSB, n.d.b). It is not a deal breaker if you do not attend an accredited program but your degree’s validity will be in question, which may significantly hinder internships, post-docs, and job opportunities.

After you have determined what is required for you to achieve your career goals, selecting the right school will require many small steps. Before conducting your online search I suggest creating a spreadsheet to keep everything organized. In the first column, list all the schools you are interested in. It is fine to have prestigious universities such as Harvard on your list. Think of it as a dream sheet of all your colleges and universities. Begin by researching each school’s requirements. You want to look at both the university’s admissions requirements and the programs requirements. This is important because program requirements are often more stringent. For example, general admissions may require a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale but the program may require a GPA higher than this minimum. In your spreadsheet identify additional columns for each requirement you need to meet (e.g., GPA and graduate entrance exam cutoff scores). Once your list is completed then you can examine how and if you can meet the necessary requirements.

MEETING THE NECESSARY REQUIREMENTS

When examining the necessary requirements it is wise to keep in mind that you may cross off several schools from your list due to multiple factors, which is acceptable because it is common and expected. If you find that you have specific questions about the program or application, communication can be an issue. A. Huntley (personal communication, January 29, 2019) found it difficult getting in touch with someone who could answer unique
questions regarding his application; schools that provided webinars, site specific information seminars, and live chats made the process easier.

ACCREDITATION

If your field requires that you attend an accredited program, it is recommended that you refer back to your spreadsheet and cross off any schools that are not accredited. You can still apply and attend a non-accredited program but keep in mind the potential risks discussed previously.

COURSEWORK

Tailoring your coursework to match those courses required or preferred by graduate programs is a wise move. Having a declared major and continuing to pursue an advanced degree within the same field will let you know which additional classes you still need before applying. Many areas of study, such as health-related degrees, require prerequisites that you must take and cannot substitute. For example, the standard medical school prerequisites are biology, chemistry, physics, and mathematics. Less common required courses are English, biochemistry, psychology, and sociology. However, in the most recent revision of the 2015 MCAT, less common courses are becoming more popular among medical schools, which can make you a more desirable candidate (Kaplan, n.d.). Another way to strengthen your application is to go beyond the required coursework if you have the time. This can be done by taking more advanced classes such as calculus. If a medical school does not require calculus, take the class. If the medical school already requires it, then take calculus 2. It should be noted that a common issue for those who attend a smaller college or university is that they might offer the class you need once a year or every other academic year during one of the semesters. I encountered this issue but was fortunate enough to have the class substituted with another class, although the class was significantly harder. If you do find yourself in this situation, know your limitations because taking an advanced class will only look good if you do well in it. The last thing you want to do is have your GPA drop or fail the class. This will negatively impact your application. The other option would be to take the class at another school and transfer it but you want to ensure that your current college/university will accept the transferred class before you take it.

GPA AND GRADUATE ENTRANCE EXAM

It was noted earlier that there may be two different GPA requirements. As a rule of thumb, it is recommended that you meet the specific graduate schools program GPA rather than the general graduate school admissions GPA. If the program does not list a cutoff GPA it is wise to view their enrollment data and student admissions outcomes. The information within this document will provide several years of average scores of students accepted for admission as well as other important data such as program costs, attrition, admission data, etc. It is recommended that you aim for a score close to the average scores from the most recent admissions.

There are several common graduate entrance exams that students are required to take. These exams vary among programs so it is wise to review which exam is required. The most commonly required exam is The General Test of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). It is a computer-based exam developed and administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) consisting of three components: quantitative reasoning, verbal reasoning, and analytical writing (ETS, 2019a). To review more about the test content, structure, and sample questions use the link: GRE Sections. The other common exams are the LSAT (Law School Admission Test; LSAT), GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test – for business schools; GMAT), and the MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test; MCAT). Some business programs allow you to have either the GRE or GMAT but you need to be 100% certain before taking the
exam or sending your scores. One important thing to keep in mind is that if you have taken one of these entrance exams the scores are only reportable for five years. Programs will not accept test scores that are more than five years old (ETS, 2019b). Also, be sure to also review the minimum cutoff scores and the average scores from the most recent admissions.

The GRE Subject Tests are other entrance exams that some programs use to assess a student’s knowledge of a particular field of study. There are six disciplines that are tested: Biology, Chemistry, Literature in English, Mathematics, Physics, and Psychology (ETS, 2019c). Minimum cutoff scores are utilized by some programs. If a program does not require the subject test it may be wise to take the exam to help you stand out from other applicants by emphasizing your knowledge and skill level in a specific area. However, if you do not do well on the exam it is not recommended to send those scores. The Subject Tests are given at paper-delivered test centers worldwide only three times a year: September, October, and April. A potential issue that may arise is that test center locations are not in abundance as they are for the more common exams. So, figuring out how to get there can be an issue if you are not close to a paper-delivered center. Like the GRE, another issue is that if you do not do well the first time, you are only allowed to retake the exam every 21 days, up to five times within any continuous rolling 12-month period, depending on the test center availability (ETS, 2019b).

The last important entrance exam is the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) for applicants who are from a country in which the official language is not English. The TOEFL provides insight into the students’ ability to communicate in English (ETS, 2002). Unlike having some flexibility with GPA’s and entrance exam scores, cutoff scores for the TOEFL are more frequently followed (ETS, 2002).

COMMUNITY SERVICE/VOLUNTEERING AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Many programs like to see that an applicant has been involved within the community by either volunteering or working within areas that fit your interests and career path. While community service/volunteering and extracurricular activities may not be rated highly for some programs, this does not mean you should view it as unimportant. This can make you stand out from other applicants. If you do not have a favorable GPA or entrance exam score, these things may carry more weight (Helms & Rogers, 2015). An issue that may arise is finding opportunities in your area. There may be various factors that prevent or slow down this process such as to living in a rural area, not having the credentials needed, or not having the time to attend training, etc. Starting early by researching online and asking other students and professors may help you find opportunities more quickly.

One thing that is important to graduate programs is being a student member in a professional organization. There are numerous honor societies that a student can join and there is typically a representative within your department that can help you become a member. There are also honor societies that align more with your major. For example, if you are a psychology major it is encouraged that you join Psi Chi, The International Honor Society in Psychology (Psi Chi).

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE AND CONFERENCES

Having research experience and presenting at conferences is an important component of your application. Not all programs emphasize research and conferences; however, doctoral programs and research-oriented programs may rate these components more heavily. As an undergraduate you cannot conduct research on your own without a supervisor. A supervisor can be a professor, someone you have worked with on previous research studies, or are currently working with. Supervisors typically have an advanced degree and previous research experience. If you have
the opportunity to conduct research with someone who has previously published in a peer-reviewed journal, this will greatly enhance your application. Gaining research experience within or related to your field of study is preferred. However, if you are unsure of what you want to study or have several topics of interests, undergraduate school is a perfect time to explore different research ideas because discussing your research experience and interests is typically one of the required essays topics asked in the application or during you interview on campus. It is wise to already have an idea of what you want to study for your master’s thesis and/or dissertation. Keep in mind that areas of interest do change, and that this change is expected as you gain more experience and advance through your academic career. Do not stress or feel like you have to stay with the same topic(s).

Presenting at conferences is not a necessary requirement because it can be difficult to have your research accepted. But it is important to try to present your research at a conference. This is because if you have weaknesses in other areas of our application you may be able to compensate for the weakness by having research presentation experience. Presenting at a conference(s) will significantly enhance your application.

IDENTIFYING A RESEARCH ADVISOR

One major issue that can arise for applicants is that while your application may be spotless, if you have not researched the faculty to make sure your interests align with theirs, you may not be selected. Faculty members will serve as members of your thesis and/or dissertation committee; if they do not have the expertise in your research area, they may not feel comfortable advising you on something in which they do not have expertise. You may wonder, why can’t they just become knowledgeable in the area? Faculty members have spent years within their areas of interest because that is what they enjoy. Second, they may not have the time to become knowledgeable about your topic to properly advise you.

When reviewing each program’s research faculty, it is recommended that students identify at least two to three faculty members from each program with whom you would like to work, learn about their research interests, and then read some of their work (Fischer & Zigmond, 2004). It is recommended that you should send an email to the faculty member expressing your interest in the program, their research, the basis of your interest, and if they are taking on a new student (Fischer & Zigmond, 2004). Be advised you may not get a returned email due to various factors. Do not worry about the lack of response; try contacting them one more time if you wish. However, contacting a faculty member more than twice with no return email may negatively impact your application. Identifying more than one faculty member can increase your chances of being accepted in the event one of them cannot take on another student. Additionally, when sending an email, make sure you proof read your email before sending, be articulate, and convey motivation. Being careless about something as simple as spellchecking beforehand may be perceived as a lack of literacy.

PERSONAL STATEMENT/ESSAYS AND VITAE

Personal statements/essays are a very important components of your application and another time-consuming task. You want to begin working on this early. Personal statements/essays should be well written because they will serve as a writing sample and indicates your professional interests. Your literacy skills are evaluated in your personal statement/essays and as L. E. Glavin (personal communication, January 31, 2019) reported, deficits in these skills can be seen in student from schools where educators lack the skills themselves. You want to have at least one professor to read and make comments before submitting (Fischer & Zigmond, 2004). It is important to review what each school is looking for in your personal statements/essays as requirements may differ. A common mistake students tend to make sending a “one size fits all” statement. Admissions committees can pick up on this quickly, so
tailor each personal statement/essay to fit the program. Oftentimes minor tweaks are in order. Also, be aware of the “six kisses of death”: avoid references to your mental health, excessively altruistic statements, providing self-revealing information, and inappropriate humor, attempts to appear cute or clever, and references to God or religious issues if they are unrelated to the program (Helms & Rogers, 2015).

A curriculum vitae is similar to a resume but it provides a complete story about your academic career thus far, such as your experiences, coursework, etc. There are various ways to format a curriculum vitae and here is just one. A curriculum vitae is something you want to continuously update because an issue students run into is that they forget important information. A curriculum vitae may have a page range in the double digits.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Students should take letters of recommendations (LOR) very seriously. Most programs require three LORs from professors and research advisors. It is also wise to have a backup person in case one of the three identified references declines to write a letter. Another issue that may prevent you from gaining acceptance is if someone writes a generic LOR. Ask beforehand if the letter writer can write a positive LOR. Allow 4-6 weeks for them to write the letter with friendly reminders about the due date (Helms & Rogers, 2015). It is wise to tell them that the due date is a few days to a week sooner to reduce the likelihood of you missing the application deadline, which is a very common issue. If you provide an organized packet with all the requirements discussed previously, names of schools, preaddressed envelopes or links, the recommender will be pleased and may reference about your organization skills (Helms & Rogers, 2015).

REVIEWING WHERE YOU STAND AND TIMELINE

Now that you have all the information you need, you should start cross checking your information against each program. Be realistic but do not sell yourself short. If you cannot meet several of a particular schools’ requirements, do not apply. Applications, transcripts, and score fees add up. Also, be mindful of the application to admissions rates. Many programs are highly competitive and if you see a school with over 200 applicants but only 7 admissions, you need to ask yourself if you have a chance of gaining an interview. If you have doubts, it may be wise to cross that school off your list and replace it with another. Once you finalize your list of schools, you will want to create a timeline for applying so you can complete and submit everything by the programs’ deadlines. If you have several different timelines, it is wise to create a timeline starting with the earliest deadline.

FINANCING GRADUATE SCHOOL

Most students in undergraduate programs have already acquired some type of student loan debt (Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 2018). M.E. Williams (personal communication, January 24, 2019) has completed graduate school and reported her student loans are still weighing heavily on her. Some programs offer financial support if you are trying to avoid taking out additional loans. If you plan on taking out additional loans, start the process as soon as you can. M. Glass (personal communication, January 18, 2019) reported not receiving loans because the school’s financial aid office would not return her inquiries regarding her submitted paperwork. Financial assistance can come from tuition waivers, researching or teaching assistantships, stipends, scholarship, or fellowships so check to see what is available (Helms & Rogers, 2015). If you plan to attend a school in another state, do not students often forget to account for additional costs such as living expenses, transportation, and moving costs. If you cannot afford additional costs, it may be wise to attend a state school or remain local. To avoid
unnecessary debt, A. Hind (personal communication, January 21, 2019) suggests that everyone should attend a state school for any post-secondary education unless you are going to an Ivy League School and entering a field where that makes a significant difference.

EVALUATING OFFERS

After interviews are complete, offers typically begin in late February and continue until April 1. You have until April 15 to accept or decline their offer (Helms & Rogers, 2015). It is very exciting receiving an offer but you do not want to respond right away in the event you receive more than one offer. It is bad form if you have to contact the school to rescind your acceptance of the school’s offer at the last minute. Before accepting or declining an offer it is recommended that you consider all possible variables from geographic location, stipends, community placement, employment, etc. It would be wise to contact a current student to ask questions about their experience, for example, to determine if others started receiving interviews or offers and not you. You can check out The Grad Cafe, a blog where students post the institution, program, decision and date, and notes about graduate programs in the U.S. It is an unofficial way to find information. But be aware that you may have been placed on a waitlist; you could still receive an offer after April 15.

FINAL REMARKS

It is always a good idea to have a plan B in the event you do not receive an offer. Failing to receive an offer could be due to several reasons, including: applying to only high-ranked programs, not applying widely enough, low GPA/entrance exam score, no research experience, etc. (Helms & Rogers, 2015). Not gaining acceptance the first year you apply is common, especially for highly competitive programs in spite of an outstanding application. Therefore, it is wise to contact the program to find out the specific areas in need of improvement. Having safety schools (i.e., schools you feel you have a higher chance of obtaining acceptance to) is another wise decision especially if you were applying to a doctoral program. Attending a master’s program until you can apply again shows commitment to your goals, motivation, perseverance, and you may be able to transfer classes. There are many parts in a graduate application; starting early will help reduce and address any issues during the process, as well as reduce stress.

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INTRODUCTION

Every year thousands of prospective graduate students prepare to apply for admissions to graduate school. They study for the GRE, plead for letters of recommendation, write personal statements, and fill out applications. Once this is done, they anxiously await their acceptance notice. After they receive their acceptance, they happily wait for classes to begin that fall. Very few of these future graduate students take advantage of this valuable time between submitting their applications and starting classes. Most spend this time going back to their normal daily routines, excited about their future in graduate school. They may get a case of “senioritis” and spend this time coasting through their remaining classes. We strongly suggest mentors tell their students to begin working to improve the professional skills that they will need to successfully matriculate through graduate school during the period between when they apply and when they begin graduate school. If our mentees are accepted to graduate school they will be better positioned to do well. If they are not accepted, their application the next year may become stronger. This chapter will support mentors in helping students maximize the time between submitting graduate school applications and starting the program. Students should focus on five areas of professional skills (i.e., mentorship, research, academic reading, academic writing, and professionalism) prior to starting graduate school in order to set them on the path of professional and graduate school success.

MENTORING

If you are reading this chapter then you may be about to begin your journey mentoring students, or maybe you are someone who has been doing this for a number of years. Regardless, you should be commended for your commitment to helping students and your willingness to learn how to improve your mentoring skills. We need to instill the importance of mentorship in our students and help them understand the role mentors play in the professional growth of a graduate student. As our mentees prepare for graduate school, we need to explain to our students that they will be interacting with several individuals who will provide them with professional and personal support. Faculty members, such as their academic advisor, research supervisor, and thesis or dissertation chair, are extremely valuable resources, both in and outside of the classroom. These professors will play a significant role along a student’s path to the completion of their degree. But graduate students sometimes confuse the previously mentioned relationships, leading to unrealistic expectations and disgruntled feelings (Lunsford & Baker, 2016). While these faculty members also may become a mentor, that is not always the case, nor does it have to be. All students will work with a variety of faculty members in their graduate experience. But we need to make it clear to our students that these relationships may not develop into a mentoring relationship beyond the basic support faculty need to provide their student.
In general, a mentor is a person who is more advanced that provides guidance with accomplishing one or several tasks. For graduate students, a mentor should provide both professional and personal advice in transitioning into, matriculating thorough, and graduating from graduate school. The relationship may extend beyond graduation, depending on the strength of the relationship. Mentors give constructive advice on writing, research, and preparing for life after graduate school. Some mentors provide psychosocial support through counseling, friendship, role modeling, confirmation and affirmation. Hopefully, they help students balance schoolwork with their personal lives and provide emotional encouragement. A mentor can be a more advanced graduate student, professional staff, or faculty member who is committed to their success.

There are a variety of roles a mentor can play, including: adviser, supporter, tutor, master, sponsor, and model of identity (Zelditch, 1990). Advisers have career experience and are willing to share their knowledge with their mentee. Supporters give emotional and moral encouragement. Tutors are people who provide constructive feedback on mentee performance. Masters scaffold their students to become professionals. Sponsors provide information about opportunities and assistance in acquiring them. Models of identity define what it means to be a well-rounded scholar. We need to be clear with our mentees that it is unlikely they will find one person who will be able to provide all six categories of support; they will need to find more than one mentor.

A lesson many of us learned very early while in graduate school was that you need more than one mentor. One person does not have the time, knowledge, and social capital to provide his or her mentee all the necessary support needed to reach the mentee’s zone of proximal development. The zone of proximal development refers to the current ability level of a novice working independently on a task as compared to the level they can obtain by receiving help from an expert on the same task. We need to instill in our mentees that it is essential that they include a variety of mentors in their support network, also referred to as a developmental network. A developmental network is a small group of people who help students matriculate, train them to become professionals, and provide support. As mentors, we should explain the importance of finding people to become part of their developmental network and support them in making contact with appropriate people. Our mentees should be looking for mentors who can help them get classwork done, train and assist them with completing research, prepare them for their careers, give them personal support, and are role-models.

There are several ways our mentees can go about building their developmental network. The first place to start would be to help our students be honest about their needs (e.g., what are their areas of weakness). Once this self-assessment is completed, here are some suggests with moving forward to fill in the network. Our mentees should explore connecting with faculty members, advanced graduate students, academic program alumni, administrators, staff, and professors at other institutions. Mentees should read potential mentor biographies on departmental websites and LinkedIn as well as ask others for recommendations on people they should meet. Mentees can connect with professionals outside of their institution by attending conferences, workshops, or contacting the author(s) of a publication they read. We must remind students that support networks are fluid, for people retire and leave universities as well as new people present themselves; they should always be ready to replace and add mentors to their network.

**RESEARCH**

Often the mere mention of the words “research” or “statistics” is enough to make psychology students break out in a sweat. Students can use the time between applying and beginning graduate school to increase both their competence and confidence in this area. A good mentor can help demystify the research process by engaging
students and showing them the ropes. As mentors, we should express genuine excitement about the work that we (or our colleagues) are doing. When research is discussed in relatable terms with passion and enthusiasm, it allows students to see the work as interesting and applicable. Once students are excited about the idea of research, they are open to their role in it. Mentors should also connect students to opportunities to participate in research. Many schools have research pools for students enrolled in psychology courses. If this is not a requirement or there is not a system in place, mentors can reach out to graduate programs, who may be in need of research participants, to help provide students with this experience. Alternatively, mentors can forward opportunities to participate in online research to interested students; many professional organizations regularly send such invites to members.

Students with graduate school in their future can also benefit from deeper involvement in the research process. As mentors, you can invite students to participate in some of your current projects. While levels of involvement may vary greatly, some students could conduct data entry while others may be ready to collect data. Regardless of the level of readiness, discussion of all steps of the research process can help support the student’s development in this area. Seemingly simple things such as allowing the student to review the IRB application or to participate in the piloting of a survey can continue to enhance the student’s overall research skills. In addition to your research, consider locating opportunities for your students to collaborate with graduate students on research projects. Whether students work together to support faculty research or an undergraduate student is able to play an active role in a graduate student’s project, this allows for the student to gain invaluable research experience, while also encouraging the development of a peer mentorship relationship. In addition to supporting the research process, this peer mentor can also offer guidance related to overall success in graduate school.

As mentors, we should have open and honest dialogue with our students if they are apprehensive about conducting research. Providing support in areas of need (or pointing out faults in students’ reasoning) can help further enhance feelings of competence and confidence. In addition, encourage students to brainstorm ideas for future research projects they would like to develop. If they leave you with excitement and energy about moving their research agenda forward, they will bring this passion with them to their graduate program. Encouraging student participation in the research process will help to build their CVs, whether this helps them during the interview process, when they begin their classes, or in the unfortunate event that they find themselves reapplying for graduate school next year, it is a needed skill for psychology students.

**ACADEMIC READING**

While in graduate school, our mentees will be assigned a significant amount of reading, but they will likely have less time or opportunity to read all of them thoroughly. McMinn, Tabor, Trihub, Taylor, and Dominguez (2009) reported that professors in Doctoral-level Clinical Psychology programs assigned on average 330 pages of reading per week. The authors found that about half of these assigned readings are completed in a thorough manner. As mentors, we can suggest to our mentees that they work on some skills that will help them manage all of their assigned readings.

Our mentees should use some of the time between being accepted to and beginning graduate school to enhance their academic reading skills. One method to help support this is the SQ4R (Survey-Question-Read-Recite-Relate-Review) Reading Method for book chapters. McDaniel, Howard and Einstein, (2009) found the 3R Reading Method (read-recite-review), a modified version of the SQ4R was more effective with aiding recall as compared with rereading and note-taking strategies. The researchers’ second experiment, which used longer and more complex
passages found the 3R was more effective than the rereading condition, and there was no difference between the 3R and note-taking, but the 3R took less reading time than note taking.

The SQ4R method is structured to aid students with comprehending and retaining the information in their reading assignments. Before a student begins to read, they should “survey” the chapter. While surveying, they should read the headings, subheadings, bolded or italicized words, skim the introduction and concluding paragraphs, view the pictures, charts, graphics then read the captions, review questions and study guides, and the summary. Next, they will write “questions” based on the headings, subheadings, and from what they skimmed. Students will “read” each section with the goal of answering their questions. Then, students should “recite” the answers to the questions they wrote aloud using their own words, while they look away from the text. At this point, it is important students “relate” these responses by providing examples to support their answers. By doing this it will aid them with internalizing what they learned. Finally, students need to periodically review their notes on the readings. Dominick (2013) suggests that when reading journal articles, students should begin with reading the abstract first, then move to the introduction followed by skimming the conclusion. Next, the student should read the methods and results sections, followed by reading the conclusion section then skim the entire article.

Something else mentees should consider is downloading books to their tablets or smartphones, so they can read anywhere. There are also software applications that will turn PDF files into MP3 files (e.g., Zamzar, YaKiToMe!, vozMe and Spoken Text), so our mentees can listen to their materials while driving, on a cardio machine, riding public transportation, or any other place they choose. Our mentees need to be mindful that listening to readings takes more time then reading them. Listening requires more working memory than reading, which can result in challenges with retaining information heard verses read. Another technique students often use is highlighting text while they read. But students often do not review or retain what they have highlighted. Instead, when arriving at important information in the text, students should create a question, which they will then have to return and answer at a later time.

Graduate students have to learn to prioritize their reading assignments. There will be weeks where it is just not feasible to do a thorough reading of all the assigned readings. Students will need to select what to read meticulously and what to skim. Skimming is not ideal, but Duggan and Payne (2009) found there was no advantage of skimming text as compared to the strategy of reading the first or second half of every paragraph, so a student can choose their preferred method. Finally, our mentees should consider becoming proficient in speed reading. Many universities offer their graduate students speed reading classes at no charge. There is affordable online software that a student can learning speed reading at their own pace (e.g., Speed Reader-X, 7 Speed Reading). Students need to be mindful that for readings, they truly need to comprehend the material; speed reading may not be the best choice for them.

ACADEMIC WRITING

Graduate students need to write. A lot. While some of our students may be excited for this (think of the student who says “I would much rather write a paper than take an exam”), this news may cause feelings of dread for others. Regardless of the feelings that arise when they hear this news, we need to prepare students for this reality. For students who should enhance their writing ability or who feel apprehensive about their skills, encourage them to spend the time between acceptance and start of graduate school focusing on this area. When graduate faculty reflect on the challenges of their work, weak writing skills of students often arises as an area of concern. Whether their current writing level is due to lack of high quality writing education, bad writing habits that have not been corrected, or being out of practice, if students spend time working on this skill, they will begin their program at an advantage.
Mentors can connect students to their campus writing centers. These programs will take content that students have written and use that as a starting point for building the student’s skills. Additionally, you can encourage students to investigate the availability of writing support at their future schools; the presence of writing support can be an influential factor for a student who is accepted to multiple programs.

Students also should be encouraged to continue to practice their academic writing during the time between application and graduate school. Students should work on basic writing and APA formatting and the nuances associated with it; in addition to having to write more, the level of writing and expectations for citation may also increase as the student enters grad school. Students can be encouraged to do this as part of their coursework, or they can collaborate with faculty. As a mentor, you can encourage students to draft the literature review for research you are collaborating on. Or you can invite students to collaborate on writing an overview piece for publication; there are journals that encourage submissions of works that are collaborations between faculty and students, with students serving as the first author. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science* is one example of a peer-reviewed journal where each article is required to include at least one student author. This process can keep students focused on their writing skills while also allowing for external feedback. In addition, publications will strengthen students’ CVs. This will put them ahead of the game once they enter graduate school, or if they are not accepted to grad school, this can help strengthen their applications for the next cycle. These practices also are mutually beneficial to the student and the mentor, as in addition to supporting the student’s writing, it also helps move the faculty member’s work forward.

Finally, regardless of the students’ writing ability or experience, students can also benefit from learning about your writing process. When do you write? For how long? Discuss your process and how and why this is the process for you. Encourage them to reach out to other mentors and learn more about their process. Introduce the idea of writing groups and assist students in establishing one of their own. (*How to Write a Lot* by Paul Silvia is a great resource to support students in this process.) The ability to think about and plan for the writing process can not only make the dissertation/thesis process easier, but it can also place students in a leadership role and allow them to build a support system of their peers, which can also aid success.

**PROFESSIONALISM**

In the course of all of the above interactions, mentors should spend time dialoguing with students regarding professionalism. As we are all aware “you only get one chance to make a first impression.” We need to remind our students that they are professionals now and need to act accordingly. As we review this with our mentees we should talk about professional dress and communications. When it comes to dress, students who attended classes in pajamas as undergraduates are sometimes surprised by the professional clothing worn by classmates at the graduate level. They also may be unaware wearing pajamas to class could affect the way their professors view them. While this is not always the case, graduate students may have professional jobs, internships in the field, or their academic programs may have a dress code that causes a shift in clothing worn by students. Encourage students to ask faculty and current students about dress codes and program norms. Regardless of program requirements, remind students that they should dress to impress and try to avoid wrinkled clothing, short skirts, low cut shirts, short or tight shorts, sleeveless white t-shirts, and pajamas—you never know whose path you will cross while on campus! Mentees should also think carefully about their communications with faculty, both written and face-to-face. Sometimes in their undergraduate studies, students have developed close relationships with faculty and have become more informal in their communications. Remind mentees that initial communications should follow a respectful tone. Faculty should be addressed as Dr. or Mr. or Ms., and slang (such as “hey”) should be avoided. Once a relationship has been
established, they can take cues from the faculty member as to the tone communications should have. When sending an email, students should use complete sentences including a greeting, body and closing, and avoid using text messaging lingo. Just because they are sending an email from a smartphone does not mean it can be informal! Students need to be mindful that they must be on-time to classes, work, and appointments. Professionalism is required in all aspects of their lives, especially on social media. Our mentees need to know that they should be kind and courteous to the department support staff. Finally, as laptops, smartphones, and tablets have become common in classrooms, they have the potential to heighten student level of engagement by giving them an avenue to efficiently take notes and look up information that can supplement the class dialog and the course content. But there is also the potential to disrupt their engagement and sour their relationship with their professor. A mentee needs to be honest with themselves on whether using technology is drawing them into class or pulling them away (e.g., emailing, using social media, shopping, preparing for other courses, etc.). Encourage your mentees to be thoughtful about the use of technology in the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS

As students submit their applications to graduate school, senioritis often sets in and the temptation to relax until grad school begins is strong. As mentors, we should push our students to use this time wisely. If, after submitting applications, students spend time developing mentorship relationships, building their research skills, and enhancing their academic reading and writing ability, they will be more confident and competent graduate students. In addition, should the need arise to reapply to graduate school, these activities will further enhance future applications. In our role as mentors, we have the opportunity to inform students of this opportunity and provide them with resources they can use to do just this.

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION

Following a teacher-scholar model, many undergraduate-only institutions require faculty members to predominately allocate one’s time toward teaching classes and interacting with students outside of class, but also stipulate that they must find time to maintain scholarly productivity (i.e., publish). As doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers are generally trained at research-intensive institutions, new liberal arts faculty members generally do not receive firsthand advice from one’s research mentors about publishing at liberal arts colleges. The demands of the job and relative importance placed on teaching and research can be drastically different between where one is trained and where one obtains employment, and these differences reflect the reality that it can be very difficult to be highly productive simultaneously in both teaching and research (Fairweather, 2002). Helpful guidance about working with undergraduates in one’s research lab may be provided by a fellow faculty member or found elsewhere (e.g., Hammack et al., 2017; Morales, Grineski, & Collins, 2017b; Pierce, 2008). However, it is still uncommon for liberal arts faculty members to publish with undergraduate co-authors (Kierniesky, 2005) and rare for faculty members at research-intensive institutions to do so. Therefore, it is unlikely pre- or post-doctoral students would have a faculty mentor who could provide insight into publishing with undergraduate co-authors. We acknowledge there is already good advice and encouragement in the literature specifically focused on publishing with undergraduate co-authors (e.g., Burks & Chumchal, 2009). Thus, in this chapter, we will offer guidance we have not seen elsewhere on the topic of publishing with undergraduates while also providing a set of references that we expect will be helpful for faculty members considering publishing with undergraduate co-authors. Our advice specifically focuses on considerations for when and how to publish with undergraduate co-authors, presuming that the reader is already interested in doing so.

Over the last 6 years, we have worked on over 18 manuscripts with student co-authors, some aimed at undergraduate journals and some aimed at disciplinary journals. There are worthwhile arguments for and against publishing in undergraduate journals (e.g., Siegel, 2004) that we will not directly address, but rather will discuss how the goals of the faculty member (e.g., receiving tenure and promotion, acquiring grant funding) may influence the type of journal to which a student co-authored manuscript is submitted. As students are becoming more aware of the benefits for themselves of working in research labs, we have more students approach us to work in our research
labs than we are able to work with, and we recognize that not all of them have the skill set or mindset to publish while they are undergraduates. We acknowledge there are obstacles to publishing with undergraduate co-authors, some of which have been articulated previously in the literature (e.g., Burks & Chumchal, 2009; Eagen, Sharkness, Hurtado, Mosqueda, & Chang, 2011), such as how publishing with undergraduate co-authors can take substantially more time and effort than publishing as a sole author or with faculty co-authors. However, in-line with what others have concluded (e.g., Hartley, 2014; Griffiths, 2015), we see great value in publishing with undergraduate co-authors. In this piece, we will discuss strategic, intentional, and efficient best practices for making publishing worth a faculty member’s time.

WHY PUBLISH WITH UNDERGRADUATE CO-AUTHORS?

The benefits to students of working on research with faculty members and engaging in research-related tasks have been summarized in many other places (e.g., Bauer & Bennett, 2003; Hayward, Laursen, & Thiry, 2017) and include enhanced problem solving, critical analysis, persistence in education, and communication skills. The benefits to the students of publishing have been less extensively enumerated but consist of improvements in written communication, scholarly skills, and curriculum vitae enhancement (Caprio, 2014; Morales et al., 2017b). There is even less in the literature on the benefits to faculty members of publishing with student co-authors. Some benefits would be expected to match those of more generally working with undergraduates, such as advancing one’s research agenda, completing one’s job requirements, and feeling a sense of purpose (Baker, Pifer, Lunsferd, Greer, & Ihas, 2015; Hayward et al., 2017).

As minimum standards generally need to be met in all three of the areas of research, teaching, and service for tenure and promotion, no area can be neglected and publishing with undergraduates can arguably contribute to all three. Research and teaching need not always be separate endeavors as they could be connected through supervising student projects and course-based undergraduate research experiences (Shortlidge, Bangera, & Brownell, 2016). Colleges vary in the support given for supervising student projects such that some colleges provide teaching credit for overseeing student research projects, others afford a faculty stipend for supervision, and some do not offer any rewards at all. Faculty members are providing service to the college when they publish with undergraduates as doing so enhances the status of the department and the college, and student publishing is a characteristic of the highest benchmarks of psychology programs (Dunn, McCarthy, Baker, Halonen, & Hill, 2007).

Motivations for faculty members working with undergraduate researchers can be intrinsic, such as a drive to develop future members of the scientific workforce and a sense of duty to the profession, or instrumental, such as increasing lab productivity (Hayward et al., 2017). Research has demonstrated that one’s attitude toward incorporating undergraduate research students into one’s research agenda is predictive of one’s actual engagement (Morales, Grineski, & Collins, 2017a). As working with undergraduates in research may entail an intrinsic desire to train students as scientists, working with students all the way through publication gives them exposure to the complete process of research and dissemination (Burks & Chumchal, 2009). The process of research dissemination through drafting, revision, and (at times) rejection is a useful skill for students to develop and can enhance students’ appreciation for the work that goes into the literature they read. For faculty members who feel stress in balancing or integrating teaching and research responsibilities, it may help to read the personal stories of other academics who have reflected on the transition to engaging in a teaching-research nexus (Boyd, O’Reilly, Rendell, Rowe, & Wilson, 2012).
HOW TO PUBLISH WELL WITH UNDERGRADUATE CO-AUTHORS

ON BEING STRATEGIC

Publishing with undergraduate co-authors necessitates an inward focus with an emphasis on where the faculty member is in regard to one’s current faculty rank, the next tenure and promotion opportunity within one’s institution, employability at other institutions, personal research agenda, and future research goals. The current faculty rank is a key factor in whether faculty members may choose to publish with undergraduate co-authors. First and foremost, we recommend meeting the minimum publication standards for tenure and promotion at your institution prior to embarking on an undergraduate student co-authored publication. This recommendation is consistent with other recommendations in the literature (e.g., Burks & Chumchal, 2009). The additional time and training required for publications with undergraduates could otherwise add unnecessary stress to yourself (Hayward et al., 2017) and potentially create detrimental pressure on the developing scientist with whom you are working. The manuscript is unlikely to be a priority of student co-authors, as they are students first with multiple classes, assignments, and extracurricular activities and it is highly unlikely that they will add skills or knowledge beyond what faculty members have or could better acquire with a faculty co-author.

Publication rates for liberal arts faculty members are substantially lower compared to research-intensive institutions, with average publication rates at less than one per year, with total publication rates at less than ten over the course of a career for individual faculty members (Joy, 2006). Publications of any kind beyond the requirements for tenure and promotion at the institution are likely to be viewed favorably by the institution, as well as making faculty members more marketable at other institutions should they consider applying elsewhere. That is, expanding one’s curriculum vitae with success in an area that is still not highly common but may be highly valued by other liberal arts institutions (i.e., publishing with undergraduate co-authors) can help an applicant stand out. Furthermore, faculty members who mentor undergraduates have often published a paper in the last 5 years (Baker et al., 2015) so past success will likely be read as an indicator of future success.

Another area in which faculty members should be strategic is in deciding where a manuscript will be submitted. With an expectation of at least revisions, if not rejection and a need to tailor to another journal, the process of turning a manuscript into a publication can be long. Therefore, in addition to faculty members considering requirements for tenure and promotion, they should also consider how the timing of a manuscript’s submission, acceptance, and so forth could affect the graduate school admission status of students. On the one hand, we have worked with students to publish in an undergraduate journal over the summer before their senior year in order to strengthen graduate school applications. On the other hand, we have continued to work with students post-graduation on submissions to disciplinary journals as these are expected to be more beneficial when they apply for academic positions.

The research agenda of new liberal arts faculty members may initially reflect the research training and expertise of one’s graduate or postdoctoral training. However, it can help to reflect on what influences a particular research agenda, such as scientific ambition and the funding required to carry out the project (Horta & Santos, 2016). Doing so can help faculty members determine how they want to proceed with research at that particular institution, giving consideration to what is most possible given the unique resources and constraints of each place or what is most relevant to faculty members at the college (Pierce, 2008). For example, if a facility does not have space for certain types of in-lab studies (e.g., a shielded room for EEG, an observation window for parent-child or peer-peer interactions), faculty members may need to reconsider how they research constructs of interest. Some specific suggestions for developing a sustainable research program include fitting your research into the local community, such as pairing up with regional non-profits in need of research collaborators, and keeping student research within
your area of expertise (Pierce, 2008). While working with undergraduates can fit well into nearly all research agendas in psychology, special considerations come into play if a faculty member’s goal is to acquire external funding. While publishing with undergraduates may help strengthen the “broader impacts” statement in external funding applications (Burks & Chumchal, 2009), publishing in undergraduate journals with projects for which you plan to seek external funding may weaken the perceived impact of the work by the review committee. Therefore, publishing your primary, fundable agenda projects in higher-tiered journals with or without student co-authors could provide faculty members the freedom and flexibility to publish other secondary or student-driven projects in a journal that is most suitable to the project’s implications or beneficial time-wise to students.

In regards to faculty rank, we believe our above advice is most practical for assistant and associate professors who are working toward promotion. Full professors retain considerations of research agenda and external funding, but are in a position to otherwise oversee projects of student interest that may become published, as well as have the time and expertise to guide the students through the publication process.

ON BEING INTENTIONAL

Intentionality includes preemptively putting structures and processes in place both within the classroom and the research lab that foster student success in undergraduate publishing, such as incorporating skill-enhancing class assignments, vetting students before committing to manuscript writing, and structuring projects to reduce overburdening oneself. Teaching course-based undergraduate research experiences can help research projects progress towards publication by their very nature but choices regarding the type and specifics of the assignments allow for more intentionality in preparing students to co-author papers coming out of the courses. For instance, in a research seminar in neuroscience course, one of us has students go beyond creating graphs of data in Excel and SPSS to edit the axes and fonts in the standardized way in which we use them in our publications. Additionally, those students write final papers using the provided template of Impulse, an undergraduate neuroscience journal, or the Journal of Undergraduate Neuroscience Education, which has facilitated the transformation of course papers into publications (e.g., Hurless et al., 2013; Shields, Morse, Applebaugh, Muntz, & Nichols, 2016).

Others have described department level ways of encouraging students to join research labs (e.g., Wayment & Dickson, 2008) and extolled the benefits within individual labs of recruiting students from introductory or lower-level courses and working with students in the lab for multiple years (e.g., Seeling & Choudhary, 2016). In the process of recruiting research students, we encourage faculty members to be intentional versus reactive regarding student interest in joining a lab when a goal is to work as co-authors; publishing can involve skill sets distinct from high quality recruitment of participants, data collection, and data analysis. For instance, we recommend working with research students for a semester within a research-oriented class or within a research lab prior to beginning a project that has the goal of publishing the findings. This approach allows for thinking, writing, and time management skills all to be assessed prior to committing to working on a manuscript with a particular student. Similarly, summer research training opportunities could also be used to foster the personal gains of students and help faculty members meet internal motivations to help students become scientists (Hunter, Laursen, & Seymour, 2007), but to make it a successful experience of publishing a manuscript, it is recommended that faculty members already work with students for at least one semester before committing to publishing the results of the summer project.

The structuring of projects with the goal of publishing with student co-authors requires more intentional planning than working with students on independent studies or having them assist for a short time on a component of an ongoing project. This is due to the larger number and range of skills that need to be taught (Colbert-White & Simpson, 2017) and the longer timeframe necessary to complete the full research process. We have found such projects to
take a minimum of 12-15 months from start to submission. The longer times, in particular, require interpersonal connections between research students within the same lab to be formed through community building, and faculty members recognizing and attending to the individual needs of students (Pita, Ramirez, Joacin, Prentice, & Clark, 2013; Shanahan, Ackley-Holbrook, Hall, Stewart, & Walkington, 2015). We have found it helpful to structure projects to overlap so that as experienced research students near graduation they train newer research students on the project, as well as spacing projects so that there are not too many at any one time in the same phase of the project (e.g., data collection, data analysis, manuscript creation). We have found that structuring research labs with learning objectives in mind, as faculty members do for courses, and making the expected outcomes explicit, such as professional social interactions and productivity levels, promote intentionality on the part of the students and faculty members. One way to facilitate this structuring and ensure expectations are known and agreed upon is to begin each semester with research contracts that describe research students’ responsibilities, the expectations of both research students and faculty members, and the intentions of research students while a part of the lab and afterwards.

**ON INCREASING EFFICIENCY**

It is particularly important to be time-efficient when working with undergraduate co-authors because of the expected increase in the number of hours involved to publish with this group and their inexperience in writing for a scientific audience. One suggestion is that faculty members and students both may find it helpful to break writing into segments – rather than having student co-authors draft a full manuscript or section of the manuscript – so that faculty members can ensure progress is being made on the manuscript. Moreover, with this process faculty members can provide edits and feedback along the way which students can integrate into the drafting of additional segments. This process permits student co-authors to work on a new segment while faculty members are reviewing a previously drafted segment.

Faculty members may also find it helpful to develop a one-day “writing retreat” during the academic calendar on a day where students do not have classes but are likely to be around campus (e.g., a weekend day) to promote the writing process. During that time, student co-authors can come together as a group and work diligently for several hours on manuscripts, peer review each other’s drafts, and have faculty members there to assist with in-the-moment questions and feedback. Writing regularly and providing group feedback on writing as it progresses can be beneficial to all in the lab, as has been demonstrated in the Publish & Flourish writing intervention program (Gray, Madson, & Jackson, 2018). Additionally, given undergraduate students’ multiple demands (e.g., classes, assignments, extracurriculars) during the academic year, it may be most efficient to collaborate with undergraduate co-authors outside of the academic calendar, such as over the summer or over breaks between terms. Other advice on time-efficiency comes from a synthesis of ideas from a survey of over 900 faculty mentors (Coker & Davies, 2006), which included having simple projects with clear goals, hands-on supervision and well-established protocols, and involving students early and retaining them.

While it may help to limit the number of research students you work with at a time (Pierce, 2008) to increase efficiency, we have found that it may be more important to limit the number of different projects, such that multiple students work together on the same project. That is, it may be most efficient to have a couple students per project to assist one another on the literature review, data collection, and analysis. Working with others is a core skill necessary when employed (Hart Research Associates, 2013; National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2019) and can assist faculty members should one student fail to complete work or make progress on writing. Having multiple students provides a backup option in case one student stops meeting deadlines or requests to pull back on the writing. For a few of our research students, personal situations or post-graduation professional demands meant
that the intended first author could not complete the project; when this happened, the students remained as authors but the order changed. With multiple research students in a faculty member's lab, it also may be helpful for faculty members to consider using a project management app (e.g., Basecamp, Asana, Trello) to assist with the coordination of tasks for each project.

**FINAL CONCLUSIONS**

The suggestions provided here are meant to aide faculty members in overcoming obstacles that exist when publishing with undergraduate co-authors. Concerns have been categorized and ordered to assist faculty members in: (1) strategically considering large-scale concerns relevant to one’s career, such as tenure and promotion and the formation of a research agenda; (2) intentionally structuring one’s teaching responsibilities and student projects, such as incorporating assignments into course-based undergraduate research experiences that facilitate publications; and (3) efficiently managing individual students and projects, such as breaking writing into manageable chunks and coordinating writing retreat days. We expect our suggestions to be beneficial to all faculty members who are interested in or already are publishing with undergraduates, but recognize they are targeted most directly to pre-tenure faculty members and faculty members new to publishing with undergraduates who work at liberal arts colleges. With that said, we wish we had been told years ago about these specific ways to be strategic, intentional, and efficient which we had to learn through experience, and hope others will be assisted by the practices that we developed out of necessity or struggle.

**REFERENCES**


INTRODUCTION

“The One Skill [that Billionaire] Warren Buffett Says Will Raise Your Value by 50 Percent” is the topic of this chapter (Gallo, 2017). It is a skill that is essential throughout academia, at all ages and stages. It is a skill that is required at scientific conferences, job interviews, brown-bags, and colloquia. It is a staple of academic life, and it is the ability to envision, design, and deliver engaging research presentations.

The public might refer to this skill as “public speaking,” some conferences refer to it as delivering “oral presentations” or “spoken presentations,” and many departments refer to presentations at interviews as “job talks.” In this chapter, I will use more inclusive terminology. Although a research presentation can be delivered in spoken or oral language, it can also be delivered in signed language, for example, American Sign Language, which is a visual, not a spoken or oral language. Similarly, a research presentation can be delivered using text-to-speech (e.g., the computer-generated speech used by the late physicist Stephen Hawking). Because research presentations need not be only “spoken presentations” or “oral presentations,” I will refer to research presentations as “presentations.”

In this chapter, I will synthesize advice for how to envision, design, and deliver engaging research presentations. The advice comes from a different type of mentor. Some of the advice comes from psychologists, but a lot of the advice comes from graphic designers and science communicators. I will begin by reviewing the history of research presentations (and the visual aids used historically). I will continue by analyzing more versus less successful presentations. I will then provide step-by-step instructions for how to envision and design research presentations and their visual aids, including distinguishing between designing slides for handouts versus in-person presentations. Lastly, I will proffer tips for ensuring a smooth delivery and answering questions, both during and at the end of a presentation. A fuller description of these tips and strategies is available in Gernsbacher (2013).

KNOW THE HISTORY OF RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

We might think the primary feature of research presentations is that they have accompanying visuals. However, accompanying visuals were not historically a feature of presentations; the use of accompanying visuals dates back fewer than 50 years. Many illustrious academics – William James, Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, Rachel Carson – gave all of their presentations without any slides, graphics, and definitely without PowerPoint, although an occasional chalk board might have been brought in.

The decade or so before I went to graduate school began the first widespread use of accompanying visuals. The visuals were 2x2 photographic slides – meaning, the slides were literal photographs. To prepare these slides,
researchers took the materials they wanted photographed to a photographer, which cost money; therefore, researchers were picky about what they put on a slide, which was a good thing. Researchers also tended to walk around conferences carrying slide carousels, which probably was not a good thing.

Shortly after I left graduate school, overhead transparencies became the preferred form of accompanying visuals for research presentations. These overhead transparencies were initially hand drawn and hand written (considered tacky, but quick); then, the technology to photocopy onto overhead transparencies became available.

PowerPoint, the popular accompanying visual of current day presentations, came into vogue in the mid-1990s. Its advent is recent enough that less than a decade ago when one of my doctoral students asked one of our psychology department faculty members to observe her teaching a statistics course, the faculty member was concerned that the doctoral student was using PowerPoint to teach statistics (rather than writing on overhead transparencies or – gasp – writing on the chalkboard).

My point in taking this walk down memory lane is to highlight the fact that for centuries researchers gave inspiring, insightful, and easily comprehended presentations without any visual aids. For a couple of decades, before, during, and after I was in graduate school, researchers gave inspiring, insightful, and easily comprehended presentations with only photographs. It was only when overhead transparencies became the norm that a plethora of text began appearing on accompanying visuals. Then, PowerPoint arrived on the scene and catapulted heavily text-based visuals to the extreme, which in turn spawned books, websites, blogs, cartoons, and even t-shirts titled, “Death by PowerPoint.”

AVOID DEATH BY POWERPOINT (FOREGO THE BULLETS)

Cartoons across the Internet decry PowerPoint. In one, the cartoon character Dilbert is seated in the audience while a presenter announces, “I could’ve e-mailed you my PowerPoint deck, and you could have read it in five minutes. But I prefer making you sit here for an hour while I read each bullet point in slow motion” (Adams, 2010). In another, a presenter gestures to the screen while warning his audience, “Here’s a remarkable idea, rendered lifeless in 127 … slides that I’ll read word by word for the next 90 minutes” (Fishburne, 2009).

Presentation designer Desjardins (2010a, b) interrogates these cartoons, and the all-too-frequent real-world behavior that inspires them, in the following way: “When someone puts all their text in their presentation I say to myself: ‘Dude?! What’s the point of being here?! Just email me your slides and I’ll read it on my own time without you!’” because “If you’re going to put word for word what you’re are going to say, hand over the slides and sit down, buddy.”

How can you avoid such dilemmas? As Desjardins (2010b) explains, “It’s not PowerPoint that sucks. It’s the speaker (you) who is responsible for using it effectively.” Or, put another way, it is not PowerPoint that causes death, it is the bullets. Think about it: What do textual bullets signify? They signify lists. What are bulleted lists good for? They are good for outlines. What are outlines good for? They are good for organizing your thoughts and planning your project, including your presentation. But outlines are not good as visual accouterments for your presentation.

Recall that decades before PowerPoint and overhead transparencies, researchers gave powerful, engaging presentations with only photographs. Showing photographs is an effective way to use PowerPoint. But showing your
audience slide after slide of outlines is not an effective way to use PowerPoint. There needs to be value added; otherwise, you might as well simply email the slides to your audience.

Below, I provide more advice for how to create engaging slides. But, first, to answer a common question, I will turn to presentation guru, Garr Reynolds, who has authored several books on improving presentations (2006, emphasis added):

Many people often say something like this: “Sorry I missed your presentation. I hear it was great. Can you just send me your PowerPoint slides?” But if they are good slides, they will be of little use without you. Instead of a copy of your PowerPoint slides, it is far better to prepare a written document that highlights your content from the presentation and expands on that content. Audiences are much better served receiving a detailed, written handout as a takeaway from the presentation, rather than a mere copy of your PowerPoint slides. If you have a detailed handout or publication for the audience to be passed out after your talk, you need not feel compelled to fill your PowerPoint slides with a great deal of text.

LEARN THROUGH EXAMPLES

One of the best ways to learn is through examples, in particular, contrasting examples. And one of the best ways to learn how to ditch the bullet-laden PowerPoint slides and embrace engaging visual aids is through contrasting examples. In the presentation world, the classic contrast is between Steve Jobs’ masterful 2005 keynote and Bill Gates’ less-masterful 2005 keynote. Links to video excerpts of these two keynotes are provided in this chapter’s Reference section. Take a few minutes to watch those videos. Observe the difference between Steve Jobs’ and Bill Gates’ presentation style and note particularly their visual accompaniments. Although I am a hard-core Apple aficionado, this contrast goes beyond Mac versus PC. Reynolds (2006) describes the contrast in following way (emphasis added):

Both Steve and Bill use slides to complement their talks. Steve’s visuals are a big part of his talk. The visuals are necessary not decorative. The visuals do not overpower him, but they are an important component of the talk, not just icing on the cake. Steve uses the slides to help him tell a story, and he interacts with them in a natural way, rarely turning his back on the audience.

Steve uses the huge backlit screen behind him in the same spirit that George Lucas uses his screen: to help tell a story. Lucas uses actors, visuals, and effects to convey his message, Steve uses visuals and his own words and natural presence to tell his story. In Bill’s case the slides are not only of low aesthetic quality ... they simply do not really help Bill’s narrative very much.

But the biggest difference is not only the fact that Steve’s slides are simpler with fewer elements and fewer bullet points, the biggest difference is in the way they are used. ... Steve’s slides flow smoothly with his talk. Bill’s slides aren’t really necessary; they are more of an ornament or a decoration off to the side.

However, as Reynolds notes, even Bill Gates has learned the principles of good presentations, and Gates’ more recent presentations illustrate those improvements. I am sure you can, too.
PLAN YOUR PRESENTATION

Before you ever open up your PowerPoint app, plan your presentation. That is, plan your presentation outside the PowerPoint app. Indeed, several experts recommend using low-tech media first, for instance, paper and pencil or electronic notes, but not opening PowerPoint until you have charted out what you want your presentation to be and to do (Grant, 2010; Wienot Films, 2011). That way you will not be tempted to succumb to a PowerPoint template that forces you to enter a set of bullet points on each slide.

Most importantly, plan your presentation’s beginning, middle, and end (Kapterev, 2007; Wienot Films, 2011). If you are having trouble identifying your presentation’s beginning, middle, and end, watch some engaging presentations and practice identifying their beginning, middle, and end. Here are five good examples of engaging research presentations; for each, identify its beginning, middle, and end.

1. Kate Yoshida’s (2017) “Why It Sucks to Be a Male Hyena” (which presents Yoshida’s PhD research)

2. MinuteEarth’s (2015) “Do We Have to Get Old and Die?” (which illustrates that even complex genetic information can be presented engagingly without boring bullet points)


For your beginning, my heartiest advice is to start with a hook, which is how you will reel in your audience. All good presentations (and articles, for that matter) begin with a hook (Gernsbacher, 2018). Do not begin by saying, “My study is about ...” and then proceed to read your title. That is not a hook; that is an invitation to snooze. Google the term “hook writing” if you are unsure what a hook is, but always, always begin with a hook.

Krobman (2006) shares other pearls of wisdom including the fact that “Simplicity is a virtue. Avoid using jargon or acronyms. Aim for simplicity in every aspect of your talk, not just language. Can you organize your data more clearly? Can you make simpler graphs? Can you remove unnecessary nuance from your literature review?” Krobman (2006) also recommends the following:

Know your audience and drop down the sophistication one step. For example, when presenting to developmental psychology professors and graduate students, speak for professors and graduate students in any area of psychology. Why drop down a step? Your most sophisticated audience is listening to your talk as a scientific argument for your hypothesis. They would like you to take them through your argument step by step, and ideally (from your perspective) they should nod at each premise and step you take. Just because people know something does not mean it is at the front of their mind when it is relevant to you.

DESIGN YOUR VISUAL ACCOUTERMENTS (AKA: SLIDES)

Only after planning your presentation’s beginning, middle, and end, are you ready to begin design your visual accompaniments. Remember you want your slides to support your presentation, not be an outline of your

For example, Reynolds’ (2006) recommends using “a consistent visual theme throughout your presentation” but avoiding the standard PowerPoint templates. I too recommend resisting the temptation to place a “Title” (i.e., the thing PowerPoint prompts you for when it says, “Click to Add Title”) at the top of your slides. Remember: In an interesting and engaging talk, your slides are visual aids; they are not written outlines. Unfortunately, the standard PowerPoint (and even Keynote) templates solicit speakers to type in a title and follow that title with bullets, making their slides look like written outlines. Resist this temptation. Indeed, Hite (2010) recommends using only blank slides.

Hite (2010) also provides excellent examples of using photographs to fill the entire slide; when text is needed, working to simplify the text; and ensuring that text is in large font. Hite (2010) also recommends abiding by the “Rule of Thirds,” which is a principle in photography. Google to learn more about the Rule of Thirds, because it works great in slide design. And it is the opposite of what most people do when designing slides, which is they place the focal object in the center (see Dragan, 2009).

I also recommend designing your slides for rooms that are narrow and deep. If you find yourself telling your audience, “You probably can’t see the ___” (e.g., box on the far left, figure at the very bottom, yellow circles around interesting data points), you probably should have not designed your slide that way. Similarly, if you find yourself telling your audience, “That’s probably too small for you to see,” then you probably should not have put it on the slide. I recommend never using a font that is smaller than 48 point on any portion of any slide.

As a short person who has craned her neck in far too many presentations, I recommend not putting anything of interest or importance in the bottom third of your slide. Why not? Most of the rooms in which you present will not have graduated seats (in contrast to what is found in movie theater, for which seats farther from the front are higher in the vertical plane). Therefore, in a typical seminar room and in most hotel conference venues, the short people sitting in the back are unlikely to see the bottom third of your slides.

Most important: Ensure that your slides accompany your presentation, not outline it.

**PRACTICE YOUR PRESENTATION**

Perhaps one of the attractions of bullet-point laden PowerPoint slides is that presenters do not feel the need to practice. They simply read off their slides! But presentations for which slides are the accompaniment rather than the outline require practice. My rule of thumb is that for every presentation, be it 15 minutes or an hour, I rehearse the entire presentation at least three times without stopping.

Nancy Duarte, author of *slide:ology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations* (2008) recommends first practicing with the clock counting up so that if you exceed your allotted time, you will know how much needs to be cut. Then, Duarte recommends repeated practicing with the clock counting down. That way, you will become familiar with where you should be at different time posts (e.g., five-minute warning). Duarte also recommends having two natural ending points, just in case you run over.
DELIVER YOUR PRESENTATION

After planning your presentation, designing your visual aids, and practicing multiple times, you are almost ready for the real show. But there are a few hurdles to ensure you get over. For example, science blogger, SciCurious (2008) reminds us to “Never, never, please never, begin or end your talk with a variation on ‘it’s my first talk, and I’m totally nervous.’” As SciCurious explains: “In the best-case scenario, we should not be able to tell it was your first talk. We should assume you’ve got lots of experience. Being told that you don’t know what you’re doing doesn’t inspire a lot of confidence. Statements like that don’t earn you sympathy.” I, too, abide by the general rule of thumb to never begin a presentation with an apology – unless the apology is part of your planned hook!

Jerry Weissman (2008) recommends “pausing each time you put on a new slide.” Weissman explains why: “The instant a new image appears on the projection screen, the audience suddenly shifts their attention to the screen and away from the presenter, and they do so involuntarily—driven by the reflex actions of their eyes. So focused is the audience on the slide, they do not hear anything the presenter says. There is a simple solution to all of this: Pause. How will the pause feel to you, the presenter? Awful. An eternity. How will that discomfort appear to the audience? They won’t feel it, because they will be focused on the screen.”

Speaking of timing, pace your audience through the components of your slides with the timing of a comedian. Tim K. Lee, an academic turned comedian, illustrates the power of timing in his video, “PowerPoint Comedy” (2007). Note the way Lee presents his first transitional probability graphic at 1:58 (the one about the salmon life history), for which all the information in the graphic is shown simultaneously. That is the way most academics would present such a graphic; they would show the entire graphic and then try to walk the audience through the components. Compare that all-at-once style of simultaneous presentation with Lee’s piece-by-piece style of presentation of a similar graphic starting at 2:23. The piece-by-piece style is more powerful, and there is a reason: Timing during delivery is crucial (which is a skill that comedians know, and academics should hone).

As for other presentation tips, Dorothy Bishop (2011) lists several presentation strategies not to employ. For example, she recommends not “Rapidly flick[ing] through the slides that you don’t have time for” because that “creates a sensation that you could give them far more exciting stuff if only you had more time.” She also recommends not “Spending at least 5 minutes on the Acknowledgements slide” because your audience is not “deeply interested in the many people whom your work depends on, and you should give their name, photograph, country of origin, role in the research, together with a quirky story illustrating their personality.”

My own practice is to show my acknowledgements slide when I ask for questions. That way, people who do not have questions can study the slide, if they want to, but I have not spent any of my precious presentation time on acknowledgments. Calling for questions leads me to my last set of recommendations.

RESPOND TO QUESTIONS DURING AND AFTER YOUR PRESENTATION

During my presentations, I typically welcome only questions that require immediate clarification (e.g., “Did you just say __?”). I do not begin my presentation, or state elsewhere during my presentation, that I am encouraging the audience to stop me and ask questions at any time. Why not? Because I have spent days preparing my presentation, and the organization I have labored over is the organization that I think best serves the topic. When the audience begins jumping in to ask questions (beyond the need for immediate clarification), they’ve now hijacked my organization and replaced it with their organization — and all of my efforts fly out the window.
Therefore, I recommend strongly against speakers beginning their presentation by inviting questions during it. I think speakers extend that invitation because they think it makes them look more causal or more knowledgeable. Maybe speakers extend the invitation simply because they have seen other speakers do it. But I strongly recommend against it. Giving an engaging, well-organized talk will make a speaker look more knowledgeable than getting sidetracked by questions. Therefore, I never invite questions during my talk, and if an audience member does ask a question that is beyond a need for immediate clarification, I typically respond by saying “I’ll be covering that soon,” (hint, hint) or “Let’s talk about that during the question period” (an even bigger hint).

As for how to respond to questions asked after your presentation, Krobman (2006) recommends that you “Anticipate questions you are likely to be asked. Be able to justify your decisions. Why did you choose one method over another (e.g., between-subject vs. within-subject, interview vs. survey)? Why did you choose one analysis over another (e.g., ANOVA vs. regression)? How would someone who is skeptical of your ‘big idea’ counter your findings? How would you respond?”

Krobman (2006) clarifies the above advice in the following way: “Some questions that you can anticipate will be easy to answer with a sentence or two. ‘Were there gender differences?’ ‘No.’ Other questions are harder to answer. For those, and for general information, prepare extra slides [that you can show] after your talk ... when needed. For example, prepare histograms of each measure. Have complex analyses you did not present. Block quotations from famous papers can be helpful for theoretical points. For example, if you said Piaget claims something, have direct quotations prepared.”

Krobman (2006) also recommends taking time to answer the question. “Questions can be tough, especially when you have not anticipated them. [So, you should take the time right then] to think about the question before you begin to answer it. Silence for ten seconds is nothing for your audience, even when it feels excruciating to you. Avoid filling the time with ‘um’s’ or fidgeting.” I heartily underscore this advice! The most masterful responses to unanticipated questions go something like this. The presenter confesses straightforwardly: “Let me think about that for a moment.” There is silence, which feels ever so brief to members of the audience. Then, the presenter answers the question.

Lastly, Krobman (2006) advises the following strategies for handling what feel like challenging questions (challenging in the sense of opposition, rather than in the sense of mere difficulty). “Even if questions feel like a competition, try to reframe them as collaborative efforts to find out the truth. Help your thoughts flow by acknowledging the question and reframing it as a plan for scientific progress. ‘That is an interesting question because if it is true that ... then I should have found that .... As I mentioned, I found ...’ Or ‘these results can’t tease apart these possibilities. In a future study we might ... to answer your question.’ Remember that great scientists do not necessarily have truth; great scientists pursue truth.”

CONCLUSION

Over the past decade, I have wondered why developing lively presentations with visual accompaniments, which are supportive illustrations rather than detailed outlines, is so difficult for current students and postdocs. Then, I had an insight: instant coffee. What the heck is instant coffee? It is freeze-dried coffee that comes in a jar, and you mix it with boiling water. How does it taste? To quote from Wise Geek, it tastes “akin to drinking rat poison.” Maybe that is a bit harsh, but instant coffee tastes as similar to brewed coffee as cherry-flavored cough syrup tastes to a bowlful
of fresh cherries or as Beggin’ Bacon Strips taste like bacon. It is true that I have never eaten Beggin’ Bacon Strips, but I have had cherry-flavored cough syrup, and I have definitely had my share of instant coffee, and it is awful.

Back in the 1950s and 60s, instant coffee was all the rage. It remained the rage till the early 70s when the world’s taste buds were reclaimed by the invention of Mr. Coffee coffee-makers (“automatic drip coffeemakers designed for household use”). How did that happen? Instant coffee per se had been invented during World War II as a convenience to the military. The war-time instant coffee, unlike the instant coffee the general population would later drink, was a powder that did not mix that well or taste that good, but war requires sacrifice. Prior to and apart from the war, the primary means for making coffee was the percolator, usually electric. But percolated coffee took a lot of time to make, and the advent of the 1960s with space food (concoctions placed in toothpaste like tubes) and other fast foods, drove coffee drinkers to want to speed things up. Enter Nescafe and their patented process for freeze drying coffee, and the rest is history.

Trust me; from the time I was a child until I graduated from college, the coffee everyone drank was instant coffee. And it was awful. So why does instant coffee remind me of the contemporary problem with presentations? Well, I think the advent of PowerPoint and the current reliance on PowerPoint and its templates are like the advent of and past reliance on instant coffee. PowerPoint and its templates were designed as a quick way to prepare an entire presentation (just write an outline; PowerPoint will even prompt you for a title and for bullet points!). And they were lauded (and still are) for the fact that if a person misses attending your presentation, you can just send that person your PowerPoint file. The audience does not even need to be there, they do not need to experience the presentation. They can just read what you wrote on your PowerPoint slides. Instant presentation!

Therein lies the rub. Like instant coffee, if making a presentation is that easy and that quick, it is probably not that good. And, like instant coffee, if it is all you have grown up with, as I suspect is the case with PowerPoint for anyone who entered the field after the eighties, it is all you know how to use. Indeed, back during the heyday of instant coffee, it was the older coffee drinkers who remembered coffee before it was instant and who knew there was a better way. Similarly, older audience members like me, who remember back when speakers gave engaging, understandable, and memorable presentations with beautiful 2x2 photographic slides as visual support, know there is a better way. I hope the recommendations in this chapter will lead us back and forward to those better ways.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Teaching your first class as graduate teaching assistant or a new assistant professor can seem like a daunting enterprise. This was our experience, and we were not alone in feeling this way. The majority of graduate teaching assistants indicate feeling unprepared to begin teaching (Russell, 2009). Even before the class begins, graduate teaching assistants may not be fully aware of the tasks and responsibilities of their position (Luo, Bellows, & Grady, 2000). Similar to graduate teaching assistants, new faculty can feel overwhelmed and isolated as they begin their teaching journey (Savage, Karp, & Logue, 2004). The powerful sense of fear that can accompany one’s first teaching experience is well captured by a faculty member’s reflection on her experience as a new graduate teaching assistant:

!I can still remember what it is like to look out at the classroom of 200 students and see their curious faces looking to me to teach them about psychology. I thought to myself, ‘I am 23 years old. What do I know about teaching psychology? For that matter, what do I know about teaching in general?’ (Gaia, Corts, Tatum, & Allen, 2003, p. 61)

Given the apprehension that many new instructors experience, it is surprising that more attention is not devoted to training and mentoring new graduate teaching assistants and junior faculty. This is especially concerning because there is a relationship between teaching efficacy, or confidence, and being an effective instructor (Poore, Stripling, Stephens, & Estepp, 2014). Even though mentoring and training could promote teaching efficacy, graduate programs often focus on research and coursework at the expense of attention to teaching (Gaia et al., 2003; Poore et al., 2014; Sandi-Urena & Gatlin, 2013). Professional development opportunities emphasizing teaching are often described as inadequate to prepare future instructors (Gardner & Jones, 2011). Although some graduate students complete semester long courses on college teaching, many simply attend a day long workshop at the university level that focuses more on policies than pedagogy (Gardner & Jones, 2011; Parker, Ashe, Boersma, Hicks, & Bennett, 2015). Parker and colleagues (2015) describe the preparation of new instructors, noting that they “must learn from ‘on-the-job’, ‘sink or swim’ experiences alone” (p. 86). Others have reflected on these shortcomings in the professional development of graduate students as instructors with many remarking that trial and error is one of the most common methods of learning to teach (e.g., Bullard & Felder, 2003; Poore et al., 2014), and this learning occurs by “practicing on [undergraduate] students” (Sohoni, Cho, & French, 2013, p. 2).

Regardless of the amount of training received on pedagogy, having a teaching mentor can be tremendously helpful as one transitions to the role of instructor (Savage et al., 2004: Yun & Sorcinelli, 2008). Being able to rely on an effective mentor is one of the most important predictors of success, and graduate teaching assistants report learning
much more from mentors than other forms of professional development (Boyle & Boice, 1998; Parker et al., 2015). In fact, Bullard and Felder (2003) suggest that “working with a good mentor can knock years off the learning curve” (p. 66). Mentoring relationships allow for a great deal of one-on-one interaction with new instructors having a resource to discuss issues such as course preparation, teaching style and techniques, student conduct issues, and grading concerns (Boyle & Boice, 1998). Given the potential utility of mentorship, it may be surprising that teaching-centered mentoring relationships are not common (Boyle & Boice, 1998). The underutilization of teaching mentors may in part be due to the predominant emphasis of research at many institutions. The weight placed on research may lead potential mentors to focus on their own publication records rather than assisting new instructors (Boyle & Boice, 1998; Gaia et al., 2003; Poore et al., 2014; Sandi-Urena & Gatlin, 2013). Additionally, there are several myths about mentoring that may contribute to its underuse that Boyle and Boice (1998) outline. There is a commonly held belief that “the best mentoring occurs spontaneously” (Boyle & Boice, 1998, p. 159). However, it is unfortunately rare for new instructors to find a “natural mentor,” and when they do, the meetings are more infrequent and sporadic in less structured mentoring relationships. Further, new instructors may worry that mentors are only needed for those requiring remediation and lacking the skills to teach (Boyle & Boice, 1998). As discussed in more detail below, the concern that mentoring related to teaching is remedial and will adversely influence evaluations is something a strong mentor addresses at the outset of the mentoring relationship (Gardner & Jones, 2011; Savage et al., 2004).

Even though programs for mentoring related to teaching are not common, especially at research intensive schools, graduate students frequently report wanting mentorship in the area of instruction (Gaia et al., 2003). In Gaia and colleagues (2003) focus groups with graduate teaching assistants involved in mentoring relationships, a participant explained why teaching mentors can be critical for success.

Most graduate students in my department want to be at a university where teaching is important, but we get no support for it. I knew no faculty member whom I could talk to about teaching, or who was even remotely interested in teaching. It’s amazing to work with a mentor who will talk to you about teaching, give you articles to read about teaching, and who views teaching as scholarship (p. 64).

Graduate students can learn a great deal through discussions about teaching with a mentor and the sharing of ideas and resources related to teaching. Being part of a mentoring relationship such as that outlined above, can lead to the mentee feeling empowered, and consequently, also result in greater satisfaction in one’s position (Savage et al., 2004). Interestingly, the graduate students who may benefit the most from mentoring programs may not realize their need for assistance on pedagogical issues. Thus, diverse graduate students of all levels and abilities can further hone their teaching through mentorship experiences.

Our goal in writing this chapter is to encourage the development of mentoring relationships that focus on teaching. In this chapter, we discuss the start of our own teaching journeys and reflect on our experience mentoring graduate teaching assistants and new faculty members. In so doing, we pay particular attention to what we wish we learned from our mentors about how to be successful in the classroom. We conclude the chapter by offering recommendations for those wishing to mentor graduate teaching assistants and new instructors in the area of teaching.

One of us (Rosen) had a teaching mentor while the other (Scott) did not. Although not a structured program, Rosen was able to draw on her mentor for help with her syllabus development as she prepared her first course. This was extremely helpful because new instructors often struggle with determining if their assignments are appropriate for
a given course and may be unaware of all the university policies that would inform syllabus development. In addition to syllabus development, Rosen’s mentor observed one of her classes and provided constructive feedback. This feedback was delivered in a meeting during which the mentor focused on strengths, which helps build confidence, but also offered concrete suggestions for improvement. Rosen knew she could rely on her teaching mentor if issues arose in the course.

In contrast, Scott did not have a teaching mentor. As Scott prepared her first course, she did not have a teaching mentor to use as a sounding board. Rather, Scott had to prepare her syllabus on her own and no one observed her class providing no opportunity to discuss her teaching strengths and areas of growth with someone more senior. Scott experienced a concern that is all too common for new instructors - the feeling like there is too little supervision or support (Gaia et al., 2003).

Currently, both Rosen and Scott mentor about 15 graduate teaching assistants a semester. Mentoring new graduate instructors and junior faculty is something we are passionate about, and as others have noted, we find the experience rewarding on both a personal and professional level. Through our mentoring of new instructors, we try to convey the things we wish our mentors had told us. First and foremost, we wish we had known that we were not alone in feeling unprepared. Both of us came from extremely competitive graduate programs where there was little support for teaching, and other students were reluctant to admit their weaknesses. However, even within these types of programs, the majority of graduate students feel unprepared to teach their first class (Russell, 2009). Feeling like an impostor who is lacking in subject knowledge and pedagogical skills is common. We both remember feeling extremely anxious about teaching our first class and worried if the students would realize we were not complete experts in every area of our course as well as spotting us for new instructors without the classroom management skills and pedagogical knowledge of more senior instructors.

One of the ways to feel more confident is to prepare for each class and the semester. In terms of preparation, we try to convey to our mentees that preparing your first class will take longer than you anticipate. When we were new instructors, we underestimated the amount of time it would take to develop syllabi, lectures, and course materials. As such, we try to encourage our mentees to develop systems to manage their work. As first time instructors, we both remember spending vast amounts of time grading students’ papers and providing extremely comprehensive feedback on everything from content to grammar. We wish we had been told not to note every grammatical mistake or violation of APA style in a student’s paper. Therefore, we encourage our mentees to use rubrics and peer review to cut down on their workload. We also encourage mentees to provide feedback to the class as a whole if there are common mistakes rather than marking these individually on each paper. Additionally, we encourage our mentees to share campus resources such as tutoring services and writing assistance programs with their students.

We also wish we had been encouraged to identify our target goals for each class as well as our goals for the semester. As we see many of our mentees do, we also fell victim to wanting to cover all aspects of an assigned chapter in class. We believe it is important for new instructors to be told that they do not have to cover all content in the chapter. Rather, we discuss with our mentees the appropriateness of focusing on some key areas that may be difficult to understand or be of particular interest to students. Moreover, having clear goals for the semester will allow the instructor to focus on key areas and design more comprehensive assignments to help students reach these goals.

Further, we try to encourage new instructors to avoid simply lecturing. When we began our teaching journey, we were sometimes reluctant to try new activities. We let our mentees know that we have had activities that have failed in the class, and shared our experiences of how we used these as teachable moments. We try to provide different
methods for breaking up lectures such as activities, minute papers, and class or small group discussions. We discuss the advantages and challenges of each and give specific suggestions for how to minimize the challenges. We enjoy these discussions of pedagogical strategies, and strongly agree with one mentor who said mentoring also results in “renewed interest and excitement about teaching” (Gaia et al., 2003, p. 63).

Another key point we try to articulate is that no one knows all of the answers. When teaching courses like introduction to psychology and developmental psychology, it is impossible to be an expert in every area to be addressed. As such, it is likely that new instructors might not be able to answer all the questions posed by their students. We let our mentees know that it is completely appropriate to tell students that they raised an excellent question, and that you can let them know that you will research it for them, or perhaps even better suggest that they research the issue and report back to class.

Based on our experiences, we wish our mentors had told us not to take everything personally. For example, if a student falls asleep in class, this does not mean you are boring. If a student is argumentative about grading, this does not mean that you have made an error. If a student remains uninterested in psychology, this does not mean you were a poor instructor. Perhaps, this lesson is most important to remember when reviewing student evaluations. Each of us remember receiving our first set of teaching evaluations and perseverating on the negative feedback while ignoring what students enjoyed about our class. None of us are perfect instructors, and all we can do is apply student feedback that is relevant, appropriate, and something that is in our power to change.

Perhaps most importantly, we wish our mentors had encouraged us to seek help. There is often the fear that if you ask for help, you might be judged as one who lacks the skills needed to succeed as an instructor. However, as noted above, working with others can help new instructors progress more quickly along the learning curve (Bullard & Felder, 2003). As such, we encourage our mentees to seek help from diverse sources. Peers can be a tremendous source of support with more senior instructors assisting more junior instructors in a variety of ways including sharing materials, activities, and strategies. To foster this collaboration among instructors, we have created Google Drives for our graduate teaching assistants to share resources from syllabi to lectures. In addition, new instructors should be encouraged to seek help from a wide variety of individuals on campus as needed. For instance, many campuses have instructional designers who can assist with design of hybrid or online classes as well as managing a course site on a Learning Management System like Canvas or Blackboard for face-to-face classes. Also, an instructor might confer with individuals from Disability Services to learn more about accommodations for a student. Those in the division of Student Life might be able to assist in dealing with conduct issues or a student with a mental health concern. We try to encourage our mentees to seek out these resources as needed and not to hesitate to bring questions or concerns to us as their mentor.

In the final portion of the chapter, we offer evidence-based suggestions for those who are teaching mentors or wish to become teaching mentors. Before this, we find it important to note that administrators should support teaching-centered mentoring. This can be done in a number of ways. At the university level, funds can be designated to develop formal mentoring programs and at the departmental level, mentorship can be encouraged by allowing mentors to count this experience as service on their tenure and promotion materials. Devoting resources to mentoring can have a large effect on the quality of instruction at the university; mentoring affects the student learning environment and has the potential to improve the quality of instruction (Savage et al., 2004). In addition to students, mentors and mentees both benefit from these relationships. As noted by a mentor in a focus group, “Everyone gains something; mentors reengage in issues of everyday teaching; GTAs enjoy support for their burgeoning commitment to classroom teaching and undergraduates experience first-hand the bounty of new
strategies in the classroom” (Gaia et al., 2003, p. 64). Thus, institutional and departmental support of mentoring can yield large dividends.

Based on our own experiences and review of the literature, we offer recommendations for teaching mentors. Before beginning as a mentor, it is valuable to reflect on your mindset. Those with a fixed mindset believe teaching ability is set and cannot be changed whereas those with a growth mindset believe teaching ability can be developed (Rosen & Ahmed, 2019). Those with a fixed mindset will likely be less effective mentors as they see teaching as an innate ability with little they can do to assist their mentee (Gardner & Jones, 2011). Conversely, those with a growth mindset think “good instructors are made, not born” (Pelton, 2014, p. 41), and those who endorse these views are more likely to take active steps to assist their mentees.

As noted above, mentees can be reluctant to share their concerns for fear of negative evaluation. At the outset, mentors can work to reduce this apprehension by alleviating concerns, and if at all possible, ensure that what is shared in the mentoring relationship will not be applied to evaluations (Bullard & Felder, 2003; Gardner & Jones, 2011; Savage et al., 2004). In addition, the mentor should work to forge a relationship that is not threatening (Bullard & Felder, 2003). Interestingly, given these common concerns, some new faculty are assigned mentors outside of their discipline. There are both advantages and disadvantages to this type of approach. One clear advantage is reducing the fear of negative evaluations, and research assessing mentoring programs suggests that a match in terms of discipline and personality may not be as important as including structured activities in the mentoring relationship (Boyle & Boice, 1998). However, a mentoring relationship in the same department can lead to more sharing of subject knowledge and departmental policies. Therefore, conceptualization of teaching as a developmental process in which GTAs and new faculty benefit from formative feedback allows more comfort with the evaluative process and allows evaluation to include responsiveness to feedback.

Mentors can assist with preparation of course materials. If possible, it can be extremely helpful if mentors are able to share their course materials as the new instructor often spends a tremendous amount of time preparing (Bullard & Felder, 2003). In the event that materials are not available, the mentor can offer feedback on syllabi and course design as these are often challenging areas for the novice instructor (Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014). As it may be hard for the new instructor to gauge the appropriate difficulty of an exam for a specific course, mentors can also review exams before they are administered (Bullard & Felder, 2003). By allowing a safe place for these discussions, some of the common errors that undermine new instructors can be avoided.

In terms of meeting, evaluations of mentoring programs indicate that consistent and frequent meetings are critical for success (Parker et al., 2015). Research suggests that efficacious mentors are responsive and meet with the mentee as needed (Boyle & Boice, 1998). Productive mentoring meetings should focus on improving teaching (Parker et al., 2015), and may be particularly helpful if the mentor is willing to share his or her own experiences (Boyle & Boice, 1998). However, in so doing, it is important to maintain a positive outlook and avoid excessively complaining about work (Boyle & Boice, 1998).

Observing one of the mentee’s classes can be one of the most helpful activities for a mentoring relationship focused on teaching (Parker et al., 2015). Likewise, having the mentee observe the mentor’s class can be a valuable learning experience and a chance to observe different teaching strategies (Bullard & Felder, 2003). Meeting prior to the class to discuss any particular concerns can help guide the mentor toward providing targeted feedback on areas concerning to the mentee. After observing or being observed, a discussion about the class can be extremely useful. Senior mentors suggest that the observer not interfere with the running of the class but rather watch and take notes
in an unobtrusive fashion in the back of the room, and this is especially important when the mentee is teaching
(Bullard & Felder, 2003). Further, it is important to provide feedback on both strengths as well as areas of growth.

Another role mentors can play is to help connect their mentees to a wide range of resources on campus. Successful
new instructors may have a network of mentors, which includes peers and more senior colleagues (Yun & Sorcinelli,
2008). Of particular benefit may be fostering relationships between individuals at the same level. Many programs,
for instance, try to facilitate peer collaborations among graduate teaching assistants or new faculty (Gaia et al., 2003;
Gardner & Jones, 2011). By working with peers, individuals can discuss their diverse experiences and share resources.

Mentors can also encourage their mentees to become life-long learners in the area of teaching (Svinicki &
McKeachie, 2014). This includes helping mentees learn from student evaluations (Bullard & Felder, 2003; Weimer,
2018). New instructors often focus on the negative comments, and a strong mentor can help the mentee take a
more objective stance and formulate a plan for appropriately implementing changes to address relevant feedback.
Mentors can discuss the developmental nature of teaching and emphasize how to address areas of negative
comments that are within the mentee’s control. Mentors can also connect mentees with resources related to
teaching in one’s discipline such as the materials provided by the Society for Teaching of Psychology.

As is true for mentees, there are a number of resources for those mentoring in the area of teaching. An article by
Boyle and Boice (1998) titled, “Systematic Mentoring for New Faculty Teachers and Graduate Teaching Assistants”
may be particularly helpful. As part of the article, a mentoring index that assesses the quality of mentoring is
introduced. This may provide a good reflection tool for both teaching mentors and mentees to assess the quality of
their relationships by examining responses to key items such as “pair shows reciprocity and similar perceptions of
mentoring interactions” (p. 164).

As we reflected on the start of our own teaching journey, there are a number of things we wish we had known. The
purpose of this chapter was to outline the advice that we wished we had received from our mentors. As Samuel
Levenson said, “You must learn from the mistakes of others” (Quotes from Sam Levenson, 2019, para. 3). Our hope
is that we can share our mistakes with our students so that they can be more effective in the classroom at the start
of their teaching career. We believe that not only will our own mentees and students benefit from these
relationships, but future students of our mentees will have better experiences due to this investment in future
faculty.

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INTRODUCTION

As a graduate student, I taught eight distinct courses. My preparation for the first and subsequent courses was thin. Although I was given content material (textbook, prior syllabi), the course processes (e.g., pacing, student engagement) were left to me. This paralleled the sink or swim approach (Kuther, 2003), in which graduate teaching assistants (GTAs ⁴) are expected to develop skills in the classroom. Over time, there have been program improvements, and trained GTAs report greater self-efficacy (Buskist, 2013; Young & Bippus, 2008). However, training programs can be limited by a focus on observation of GTAs. A missing link is a two-part process of (a) observing the premier teachers and (b) hearing them deconstruct their processes. This deconstruction is consistent with mentoring principles.

AUTHOR’S EXPERIENCE

In my first year in a Master’s program, I served as a GTA during the first half (Fall) of the academic year. Early in the second half, I was asked to teach an undergraduate course by myself because a faculty member suddenly had to address a personal matter, and would be unavailable for the remainder of the semester. As a GTA, I had participated in ancillary tasks (e.g., showing videos in class, facilitating student discussions, recording grades). However, I was not particularly trained or prepared for the multiplicity and complexity of independent teaching. Faculty were generous in sharing some content materials (e.g., textbooks, prior syllabi), but the course processes (e.g., pacing, student engagement) were left to me.

My entry into teaching paralleled the “sink or swim” approach (Kuther, 2003), in which graduate instructors are expected to develop skills in the classroom. In this approach, the course is perceived as a living lab and each class period is an opportunity for success (or failure). Instructors are expected to determine how well their courses are going, make adjustments if there are problems and meet departmental standards for teaching quality. Thus, there

⁴ The term “GTA” is somewhat nebulous in the teaching literature. Colleagues use this term to refer to graduate students who (a) only provide ancillary support to faculty (e.g., recording grades, distributing documents to students), but do not teach by themselves, (b) teach independently, or (c) a combination of (a) and (b). In some cases, the term GTA is used transitionally (students are TAs before they become independent instructors). In other cases, the term is used to refer to graduate students who are involved in any level of a department’s teaching activities. Such students are labelled perpetually as GTAs because they are assisting in fulfillment of a department’s curriculum goals. When reading the literature, colleagues should consider the context in which it used. When mentoring graduate students, colleagues should consider providing clarity about the distinctions they draw between (a) students’ support for faculty teaching and (b) students’ independent teaching.
is often minimal guidance from teaching mentors. Some colleagues who use minimalism informed me that they seek to avoid intruding on instructors’ own learning processes. This parallels the approach used with other college populations, such as at-risk students. For example, Vivian (2005) reported that minimalism requires students to make better choices and take more responsibility for the consequences of such choices. A second reason is that mentors might have been trained in this same sink-or-swim approach, so they perceive this process as normative (Benassi & Buskist, 2012).

Over a six-year period, I taught eight undergraduate courses in two departments (Family & Child Development; Sociology, Anthropology & Social Work). The degree of mentorship which I received did not change with time. There were a few faculty members who sincerely offered that I could contact them if I had a serious course problem. However, this approach was reactive rather than proactive and did not provide any specific guidance as I was developing and/or teaching the courses. It is possible that they expected each new course to be an inherently informative experience.

AUTHOR’S RESOLUTION

In the parlance of the “sink or swim” approach, I became a “swimmer.” The demands of multiple courses forced me to learn about diverse aspects of teaching. In a period prior to the Internet and social media, I did not have easy access to information about the resources of faculty at other universities. I was reliant upon the teaching articles and books that I could find. Although some books were helpful (see McKeachie, 1994) as general guides, they did not seem to fit my specific questions about issues such as classroom management or student engagement.

In the classroom, I used a microtechnique approach. When trying new techniques or activities, I conducted them in small increments (10-15 minutes) rather than an entire class period. I sought feedback from students and reflected on the success (or failure) of my efforts. This provided an opportunity to refine activities before they were extended to full class periods (Mergler & Tangen, 2010). The reflection also helped to extrapolate insights about the teaching process that could be used for other activities or courses. This was part of the process of becoming a self-scaffolding teacher (Buskist, 2002; Turner & Berkowitz, 2005).

In subsequent years as a faculty member, I have taught an additional 11 distinct courses (five at the graduate level, six at the undergraduate level). The accumulation of experiences has expanded my knowledge and skill base. One of the graduate courses I have taught over the years focuses on advanced teaching techniques, which has allowed me to share this knowledge with graduate instructors. More specifically, I addressed techniques such as problem-based learning groups (Asay & Curry, 2003), literature circles (O’Brian, 2004), media selection processes (Bulman, 2002; Simpson, 2008), walking tours/field trips (Fitzpatrick, 2016; Sanders & Armstrong, 2008), debates/advocacy (Greene, 2008), and service learning/community engagement activities (Fitzpatrick, 2013). The graduate instructors have informed me that this course enhanced their skillset and expanded the options that they considered in their own course preparations.

In hindsight, it would have been helpful to receive more intensive and proactive guidance from mentors while I was teaching. Although there were open-door invitations to ask questions, I often lacked sufficient knowledge or context to do so. Quite simply, I was sometimes too ignorant about teaching/classroom issues to articulate the specific assistance that I desired. In thinking about my gaps and limitations, I would have benefitted from a much more precise scaffolding approach.
LITERATURE REVIEW

It is important to note that there has been some movement away from the “sink or swim” approach in graduate programs. National organizations and specific psychology departments have placed greater emphasis on the ethical obligations to: (a) enhance graduate instructors’ preparation; and (b) provide an adequate educational experience for undergraduates being taught by these instructors. One approach used to meet these objectives was the development of graduate teaching handbooks or manuals. The manuals typically provide information about task requirements, university policies and professional behavior guidelines (e.g., University of Waterloo, 2019). In a realistic anticipation of problems which GTAs might face, some manuals also provide information about issues such as cheating and student distress (e.g., Columbia University, 2019). These manuals have the benefit of offering consistent information to all graduate instructors, but have been criticized as offering insufficient preparation to GTAs (Lowman & Mathie, 1993). For example, it has been noted that manuals cannot meet new instructors’ needs for classroom communication skills or individualized guidance (Davis & Kring, 2001).

A second approach has centered on a teaching course. In a survey of psychology departments, Buskist, Tears, Davis and Rodrigue (2002) found that 98 departments had courses dedicated to the teaching of psychology. In less than a decade, this number increased to 175 departments/programs (Boysen, 2011). In comparison to manuals, the course provides much more information and guidance in teaching preparation. Additionally, the courses can provide a venue for discussion about intense or challenging topics. For example, Boysen (2011) reported that three-fourths of instructors addressed aspects of diversity (race, disability, gender) as well as undergraduates’ inappropriate statements, and teacher bias.

Some courses have an observational component, in which mentors view graduate instructors’ teaching activities and provide feedback. This component has merits, but it is not necessarily a realistic exposure to course demands or an indicator of instructor preparedness. Komarraju (2008) reported that in a 36-hour training program, the graduate students conducted four presentations which totaled 30-55 minutes. Although they received feedback for each presentation, it is not clear whether this is sufficient time to assess teaching competence. In addition, this presentation time pales in comparison to the 40-50 hours of class periods over a semester. This might be analogous to using a sprint as training and assessment of readiness to run a marathon. Overall, the teaching of psychology courses offer the advantages of consistency and extensive instruction, but can be hindered by insufficient attention to the demands of independent instruction. In addition, there is a lack of clarity as to whether the teaching of psychology courses must be completed before, simultaneously or after graduate instructors teach their first undergraduate course.

The third approach has focused on apprenticeship. GTAs are typically assigned to work with individual faculty who already have teaching experience. The GTAs are given an opportunity to observe the faculty member as he/she/ze teaches one or more courses. In addition, there can be opportunities for discussion about multiple tasks such as assignment creation or classroom management (Ellis, 2015). The mentors can provide coaching in the communication skills needed for effective interactions with students (Blaisure & Koivunen, 2003; Fitzpatrick, Boden & Kostina-Ritchey, 2010). This aligns with research which has revealed that GTAs’ teaching concerns focus on issues such as student/group control, impact and communication (Cho, Kim, Svinicki & Decker, 2011). In comparison to the other approaches, apprenticeship offers the advantages of individualized guidance and intensive exposure to actual course conditions. However, it has been reported that there is extensive variation in the quality and effectiveness of this approach. If the GTAs and faculty do not have supportive or collaborative relationships, then this can interfere with GTAs’ training (Park, 2004). Given the hierarchical nature of apprenticeships, graduate students might be inhibited from addressing mentorship issues with faculty (Rastogi, Fitzpatrick, Feng & Shi, 1999).
In addition, mentors can vary considerably in their willingness to address ethical issues such as dual relationships between GTAs and undergraduates (Oberlander & Barnett, 2005).

It is also important to note that there is a distinction between content and process expertise (Luedeman, Leonard, Horton & Wagner, 2003). The fact that a faculty member has specialized knowledge about course content (developmental psychology) does not indicate that she/ze/he is equally knowledgeable about teaching technique issues (e.g., active learning, student engagement, formative assessment, conflict resolution). If faculty lack knowledge in these areas of technique, it is not clear how effective they would be in guiding the development of GTAs’ skills.

Of course, it is not necessary for a program to use only one approach. Given that each approach has some weaknesses, it is recommended that faculty create systematic programs (Buskist, 2013; Davis & Kring, 2001). Such programs focus on integration of best practices (Burk, 2001). Parallel to manual and course approaches, all GTAs receive basic instructional information. In addition, graduate instructors receive mentorship from experienced faculty. However, the faculty group is limited to individuals who have: (a) high levels of content and process competence; (b) willingness to explore teaching innovations; and (c) strong mentorship skills (Ellis, 2015; Fitzpatrick & Busby, 2006). These mentors provide ongoing supervision throughout the duration of the graduate students’ teaching experiences. Persistent monitoring can detect improvements over time. For example, a study on GTA grading skills revealed that consistency and accuracy increased after one semester of training (Doe, Gingerich & Richards, 2013). In a study of psychology GTAs, Prieto and Meyers (1999) reported that only 40% of their sample received a combination of a training program plus supervision. Integrated programs can also utilize other tools such as weekly meetings, reflection papers, recordings of GTAs’ in-class activities, and teaching portfolios (Davis & Huss, 2002; Grover, 2014).

Despite the improvements of systematic programs, one area that remains underdeveloped in mentorship is pedagogical scaffolding with premier instructors. In early elementary education, the term “scaffolding” refers to teachers’ efforts to guide students toward acquisition of new knowledge or skills. As they gain competency, teachers reduce their input and simply foster reflection (what children learned, how they learned it). Teachers then repeat this process by guiding their students to the next level of knowledge (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). This scaffolding is done incrementally, and begins by meeting children at their current levels (Turner & Berkowitz, 2005). Thus, it is the teachers’ obligation to cross the intellectual distance between their level of expertise and students’ knowledge (Fitzpatrick, Kostina-Ritchey, & Hassanzadeh, 2016). More specifically, teachers have to deconstruct complex information/tasks into a form that students can comprehend at their current level of experience. This process requires that teachers are effective in sharing their content expertise and communicating about their instructional processes. Prior research has highlighted these as characteristics of effective mentors (Ferguson, 2011; Garza & Harter, 2016).

Deconstructed mentorship has been offered to large audiences via conference presentations and publications. For example, speeches made by organizational presidents and award recipients have been used as an opportunity to share their teaching insights (Holtzman, 2015). In addition, there have been books comprised of chapters written by well-respected instructors (e.g., Bubb, Stowell & Buskist, 2014). Such books highlight the diffusion of professional development journeys and teaching competencies. In addition, some journal articles have featured the insights of teaching awardees. These qualitative articles allow colleagues to speak about the training they received as graduate students, current teaching strategies and advice for other colleagues (Buskist, 2002).
Such resources can be helpful, but they lack: (a) immediacy of observing premier teachers in real time; and (b) opportunity for individualized deconstructing mentorship. According to Dotger (2011), GTAs want more “context-dependent opportunities to learn to teach effectively” (p. 157), and this context is often the college classroom. Thus, it seems worthwhile to explore the opportunities for psychology GTAs to engage with faculty who are both excellent teachers and excellent mentors (who can articulate or deconstruct their pedagogical choices).

It is important to note that effective teaching and mentorship are not synonymous. Some colleagues have excellent classroom skills, but cannot delineate their processes/decisions for others (i.e., they lack metacognition about their teaching). For example, an award-winning faculty member was invited to a local conference to share insights with graduate students and colleagues. This person stated that she/he could not identify any specific skills or knowledge. So, she/he told the students and colleagues to “be present” and “be yourself.” While the statement might have been made sincerely, it did not offer any particular guidance for skill development. Thus, the deconstruction element is a critical part of this process.

Mentors’ communication skills would be helpful in relaying information about their own teaching as well as observations of graduate instructors. Although premier teachers would not expect new graduate instructors to match their level of skill, these teachers might be well-suited to identify the next best steps for instructors’ professional development. Indeed, it is possible that these teachers’ experiences and judgment could accelerate the pace at which graduate instructors attain competency.

**SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS**

There is an adage that one cannot give to others something which one does not already possess. If faculty did not receive sufficient mentorship or teacher training, then they might lack the knowledge regarding how to provide such guidance for graduate students. Faculty should not be blamed for their history, but they do have ethical obligations to graduate instructors whom they guide. Thus, such faculty are advised to seek mentorship training. There is a wide variety of programs available in academic and general public environments (e.g., Center for Health Leadership & Practice, 2003; Jekielek, Moore, Hair, & Scarupa, 2002; Mentor Illinois, 2019; National Mentoring Partnership, 2019; National Mentoring Resource Center, 2019; Palmer, 2019; United States Corporation for National and Community Service, 2019; United States Office of Personnel Management, 2008). In addition, individuals can seek mentors to guide them in development/use of their own skill set. This approach is parallel to clinical supervisors who provide ongoing feedback to professional counselors and therapists (Falender et al., 2004).

Second, faculty are advised to continue development of their own teaching competencies. This continuity is one quality of colleagues who are identified as premier or master teachers (e.g., Buskist, 2002). This commitment also models to graduate instructors the importance of professional development over time. Another benefit is that it might help faculty to become more aware and effective in engaging a current generation of students (Dolby, 2014). In addition to making faculty better instructors for undergraduates, generational/societal knowledge could facilitate communication with GTAs.

Third, faculty are advised to identify premier teachers (with whom their students dialogue). If these teachers are not particularly effective at deconstruction with GTAs, other faculty might have to take on this task. More specifically, faculty might need to explain the use of particular techniques and impact of classroom interactions. Thus, one option is to develop partnerships between colleagues who are (a) good teachers, but not good mentors with (b) good mentors, but not good teachers.
One criticism of social science instructors is that they underutilize knowledge about psychological principles in teaching and instructional design. Advice about how to utilize this knowledge has been offered for K-12 education (American Psychological Association, 2015), but has not been integrated into graduate instructor training. Yet, the principles seem highly relevant to the mentorship and guidance of instructors’ skill development. If faculty are seeking a resource to enhance their teaching or mentoring skills, then the K-12 resources might be a low-threat starting point.

In sum, I recognize that it can be difficult for faculty to be premier teachers and/or premier GTA mentors. There are many demands on faculty time and intensive mentoring can receive little recognition from university administration. As a faculty member, I am mindful of the sacrifices/opportunity costs which I endure when choosing to mentor GTAs over other professional activities. However, there are some colleagues who have argued that intensive and effective mentorship is an ethical obligation. Faculty are ultimately responsible for the quality of preparation which graduate instructors receive and the course experience which undergraduates receive from their graduate instructors. To the extent that faculty enhance this quality, they are investing in the educational outcomes for two generations of students (and future professionals).

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INTRODUCTION

The academic job market is an intimidating place. There are no set rules for where to look for open positions, nor is there a standard set of materials required for each application. Additionally, information regarding the particulars of a given position such as teaching load, department characteristics, or promotion and tenure requirements are inconsistently available. Advice for how to approach the job search is equally varied (e.g., Throw your hat in! Be picky! Spend all your time on the cover letter! No one reads the cover letter!).

Adding to this frustration, there is a dearth of empirical work on this topic. While research has investigated the characteristics of successful candidates for tenure track positions at research-focused institutions (e.g., Barnard-Brak, Saxon, & Johnson, 2011; Pennycook & Thompson, 2018) and there is older work on how applications are evaluated by search committee chairs (Landrum & Clump, 2004), such an investigation has not recently been applied to other types of positions so far as we could determine. In this chapter, we provide perspective on the market from two angles: our experience on search committees and our experience on the job market. We will tailor our advice for jobs primarily centered on teaching with some research expectation. For detailed suggestions on targeting materials to other types of institutions, we recommend the 2014 book Preparing the new psychology professoriate: Helping graduate students become competent teachers, published by the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (APA Division 2; Busler, Beins, & Buskist, 2014) with 15 chapters of advice on how to obtain a full-time position at institutions ranging from research-intensive to community colleges. Empirical work by Nalbone (2011) is another source of suggestions for tailoring one’s application to a specific type of institution.

Another important resource is your own network. We are presuming you have been cultivating your professional networks since graduate school and have both peers and mentors in the field who can provide you with advice specific to your subdiscipline, pass along job postings, and the like. If you feel you could benefit from additional individual mentoring in this area, many professional organizations have free mentoring programs. One example is the professional development service coordinated by APA Division 2 (https://teachpsych.org/page-1603031).

WHERE TO BEGIN?

Before diving into the job search and application process, it is worth taking time to think about what sort of job you are looking for. What does your dream job look like? What about a position that is not perfect, but you would enjoy? What features would you need for a job to make it minimally acceptable?

During a graduate school seminar, one of us (ASH) was given the following job search advice: You can choose your first job based on one of three factors: who you work with, where you work, or how much you get paid. Figure out
early in the process which of these is most important to you and apply for jobs accordingly. If you get your first choice on two of those three, consider yourself lucky. If you get all three, you can probably stop reading the rest of this chapter and invest a few bucks in lottery tickets. First, think about who you want your colleagues to be. Is it essential to be at a university with a strong program in your area of specialization and many potential collaborators? On the other hand, it may be more important to be within easy traveling distance of your family. Finally, there is a wide range of starting salaries for faculty positions. This is typically negotiable to some degree (see below for information on negotiation), but negotiation is unlikely to result in a significant increase in starting salary. As a general rule, do not waste the search committee’s time and yours by applying for a job that you have no intention of taking without significant modifications from the advertisement. It is helpful to remember that academia is a small world and negative reputations can damage future opportunities. Another thing to keep in mind is that even if you are coming from a faculty position at one type of institution (more on this later), you may not be able to perfectly predict what a job at a different type of institution will be like.

SHOULD I EVEN APPLY?

The first step is to find potential jobs to which you should apply. Although many jobs are posted on APA and APS websites it is also worth subscribing to listservs and checking venues such as http://psychjobsearch.wikidot.com/2018 or Facebook groups for professional organizations of which you are a member. Let people in your professional networks know you are on the market and ask them to forward any relevant postings to you. The typical cycle is for submission deadlines ranging from September 1 to December 1 although occasionally there are earlier and later deadlines. It is a good idea to check in every week or so for new developments. We suggest figuring out a way to organize your list of applications, including required materials for each, and their deadlines in a way that ensures you do not miss either.

It is important to understand your own disposition when deciding whether to apply for a particular position. If you are likely to give yourself too much credit, try to be prudent in sending off applications. If you are often undervaluing your own contributions, be more open. Note that there are gender differences here, with women less likely than men to apply for a job when they do not meet all the criteria (Mohr, 2014). Do not sell yourself short, and seriously consider applying for a job that sounds like a great fit even if there are some less essential criteria you do not meet. Job ads are often a “wish list” for a candidate rather than a “must have” list. For example, are you qualified – that is, have you at least had graduate courses – in areas related to courses to be taught? Have you done any related research? It is important to remember, though, some features in the job posting are likely non-negotiable. For example, if you are a social psychologist and the ad is for a developmental psychologist, applying is highly unlikely to be beneficial unless you can legitimately frame yourself as a developmental social psychologist and – perhaps more importantly – you will be happy with a position as a developmental social psychologist. Again, academia is a small world: Do not pretend to be something you are not to make yourself more competitive for a job posting and think you can do what you want after you are hired. Neither you nor the hiring institution will be happy if that turns out to be the case. Application preparation takes time and it is better to use your time to fine-tune your applications to the positions that are clearer fits for your interests and experience.

MATCHING YOUR APPLICATION TO THE JOB TYPE

Next up is creating an application that will receive initial consideration. This endeavor will consume a surprising amount of time and emotional energy. Different pieces of the application will be of differential importance depending on the specifics of the job. While it is indeed time consuming to craft different cover letters for each
position, the job market is tight and a tailored cover letter is much more likely to get the attention of the search committee.

Karen Kelsky, who has an academic career coaching business called *The Professor Is In*, has a great deal of advice on her blog ([http://theprofessorisin.com](http://theprofessorisin.com)) and in articles written for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. We will not repeat her excellent advice here, but her blog contains posts describing the ideal structure of an academic job search cover letter as well as pitfalls to avoid.

When putting each application together pay attention to the specific materials requested, which will vary widely. Some want a cover letter, CV, and perhaps teaching and research statements. Others may require those materials in addition to preprints/reprints, graduate transcripts, and letters of recommendation (among other things). A general rule is to only send what is requested even if it seems like more would be better. Showing your attention to detail and your ability to follow directions by only sending the requested materials instead of bombarding the committee with everything you have written is a sign of a considerate potential colleague. It also shows you have tailored your application to each institution, which conveys the impression of true interest in a position (as opposed to sending the same packet of materials to every institution regardless of the directions). Hiring committees are considering not only contributions to teaching, research, and service, but also how an applicant will fit into the departmental culture. The ideal candidate will enhance the culture of the department, a satisfactory one will induce no changes, and one who comes across as potentially making the culture less enjoyable will be avoided. Additionally, paying close attention to the materials requested by each institution can give you a sense of their priorities and help you distinguish positions that may otherwise seem very similar.

When writing your materials, do not exaggerate your experience – for example, do not claim teaching one or two courses as instructor of record has given you “extensive teaching experience.” That conveys the message you do not really understand the job of a full-time faculty member. Similarly, if you have not had a position comparable to the one to which you are applying, do not state you understand the job; even if you are looking to make a lateral move, all institutions and departments have quirks that make them unique. Instead, describe how your experience fits with some aspects of the position, anything you can modify from your current position for the new one, and aspects of your professional life you are eager to grow in a new position. Departments should not expect applicants to already have all the skills and experience necessary to jump into a full-time faculty position, so there is no need to overstate your experience in the hope of convincing a search committee that you do. Any department that does expect this may not be a comfortable fit.

**SWITCHING INSTITUTIONS**

Moving from one institution to another while on the tenure track is common. Reasons could include a change in geography, interest in shifting the priorities of your work, or desire to be in a more supportive/resourced space. The good news is that moving from one job to another is likely easier than you might think, especially before tenure. One reason for this is you have already shown yourself capable of handling the actual workload of a faculty member as opposed to just the idea of the workload you will have without first-hand experience. A second reason is you will be able to directly address more of the job specifics with experience. For example, if a job advertisement asks for someone to teach Introductory Psychology, Research Methods, and Abnormal and you have taught some or all these already, your teaching statement and cover letter will be concrete instead of hypothetical. That said, it is important to understand potential ways the two institutions may differ. For example, at our home institution, Statistics is capped at 18 students. If you have been teaching a lecture hall of 180, how will you change the course for a more
personalized approach? If you are seeking to move to a position with more teaching and less research obligations, be clear you are interested in a different sort of job genuinely as a fit issue and not because you believe teaching is “easier.” Or perhaps you are attempting to move to a place with a lower teaching load and increased research expectations. How will you increase your research productivity first to demonstrate you have those skills? Regardless of the situation, make it clear in your application and your interactions that you are not applying just because it is expected at your home institution the year you are up for tenure, as an attempt to obtain an offer letter to negotiate with your current institution, or because you are seeking an easier position.

One issue that frequently arises when moving from one tenure-track job to another is the possibility of applying for tenure or sabbatical “early” – that is, before your sixth year. While some universities will give you credit towards tenure and permit you to apply for tenure early, others may not. The same is true for time toward sabbatical. It is worth thinking about whether or not you want to speed up your tenure clock; on the one hand, this may seem like a no brainer. However, there is always lost time when moving to another institution: time to pack and unpack your lab, time modifying courses for your new students or preparing entirely new courses, time training new research assistants, etc. Regardless of your choice, be sure to have any agreements regarding modified tenure and/or sabbatical clocks in writing before you accept a new position. If possible, read the university’s Faculty Guide or other similar document(s) as well as the department’s promotion and tenure guidelines to be sure you understand the requirements and timeline.

It bears repeating: academia is a small place. Presume your current colleagues will be asked about you when you apply for other positions. This could especially happen off the record if someone from the new university knows someone from your current institution.

**INTERVIEW STRATEGIES**

Interviews are a topic on which one could read books, take courses, and listen to hours of podcasts and still not cover every possibility. We are going to stick to the biggest errors for the most common types of interviews to maximize the odds of leaving a positive impression. We hope you get lots of chances to practice these!

**FOR ALL INTERVIEWS**

First, come across as engaged and interested. Presume the best intentions on the part of the interviewers; they are truly interested in getting to know you and determine whether you are a good fit for the position. Your attitude should be similar. Second, have questions to ask. It is fine to repeat questions to different interviewers so long as you are honest about seeking multiple perspectives, but otherwise it suggests lack of preparation or interest. Do your homework and be prepared with different questions for different people (e.g., untenured vs tenured faculty members). Third, suit the question to the interview level. You can ask about things like teaching load, undergraduate mentoring, and facilities at initial interviews, but other items such as salary and start-up funds should wait until an on-campus interview or perhaps even the offer stage. We would suggest being prepared for such a conversation at the campus interview should there be a clear message to ask (e.g., a comment about “competitive salaries”) but otherwise holding such questions until the offer.
CONFERENCE MEETING, SKYPE, OR OTHER VIDEO

Many institutions do initial interviews for shortlisted candidates using Skype (or the like) or combine them with major meetings in the field. This gives you the opportunity to make an impression beyond your voice. That said, they can be very distracting if not done well. If you are on video, make sure your surroundings are making a good impression (e.g., scan those bookshelves and wall hangings!). Also, try to be careful about fidgeting. One of the authors (MEL) was made dizzy by a candidate’s office chair swirling during a video interview. If you have notes, put them somewhere so you need not look down to read them. Ideally, they will be near where you are looking at the video feed so your use of a cheat sheet is more covert. If you have notes to reference during an in-person interview, it is best to save them for asking questions. Committee members will not expect you to memorize every last detail about an institution, but you should have a general familiarity and be able to explain how the specific features of a position are appealing to you without referring to your notes.

ON CAMPUS

The on-campus interview is critical in landing the position and in helping you assess whether this is a good fit or not. If you have gotten this far in the process, the institution is seriously considering your suitability for the position, and you should do the same: do your homework on the university and surrounding area as well as the department and potential colleagues. Have questions to ask anyone with whom you may meet, including support staff and administrators as well as potential faculty colleagues. Expect that you will be meeting with students and have questions to ask them as well. Independent of a possible conversation regarding salary, be prepared to answer questions regarding your startup needs for positions with expectations of research productivity.

At any stage of the process, if you realize the position is not a good fit for you, it is courteous to withdraw from consideration as soon as feasible. This will leave a positive impression and help other candidates. Additionally, be honest – your goal is to be the best version of yourself, not to twist yourself into knots attempting to be the candidate you think the search committee wants. If you have an interview of any kind, they are interested in you for who you are and what you can contribute to the university. Pretending to be someone you are not will only lead to aggravation on all sides if you are hired. When the co-authors were doing phone interviews for a hire several years back and asked a candidate about teaching a particular graduate course, the candidate’s honesty – that the candidate would not like to teach that course, and in fact, would teach something else – was appreciated. While it meant the candidate was not a great fit, it also left a positive impression.

AFTER THE OFFER

NEGOTIATING

Congratulations on receiving an offer! Now is the time to try to make the offer a bit better. For example, is there any movement on salary? Will the lab space be sufficient? Are there any opportunities for a reduced teaching load or repeating preps? What start-up funds are available? Be careful, though: asking for a reduction in teaching load at an institution with little to no research expectation and high value on teaching will convey the impression you do not understand the culture of the institution. You cannot turn a position that is a poor fit for you into a good one by
negotiating; all that is going to do is alienate your potential colleagues and increase the likelihood they will look for an excuse to rescind the job offer.\(^5\)

**SAYING “YES!”**

Once you are satisfied, it is helpful to let the institution know as soon as possible. There are both official and unofficial ways to do so; check in with your future chair (or with whomever you have been negotiating) to ensure you have completed all the necessary steps on your end. Do not panic if the institution seems slow to send a written offer or contract after you have verbally accepted; this is most likely the result of administrative red tape.

**SAYING “NO, THANK YOU.”**

It is okay to decline a job that is not a good fit. We repeat: *It is okay to decline a job that is not a good fit.* This could be because there was a gap between what the department thought was possible (3/2 load, summer funding) and what the administration offered (4/4 load, no funding). It may be that you did not feel a connection with the department. Keep in mind you will be spending a LOT of time with your colleagues and while you need not be friends outside of work, actively disliking them is not sustainable. Perhaps there were red flags during the campus interview. It may be the cost of living in that geographic area is higher than you anticipated, or it would come at a cost to your relationships with important people. You need not disclose any of this when declining but, like accepting, the faster the better in terms of being helpful to the department and other candidates.

**AFTER THE LACK OF OFFER (AKA, REJECTION)**

Even if you have a terrific on campus interview, you may not receive an offer. This can be due to myriad reasons including many beyond your control (e.g., spousal hires, pulled funding, different priorities of the administration vs the department). First, disappointment is a completely reasonable response to such a situation. Second, do not take it personally. The sad truth is that the academic job market for full-time positions is highly competitive with many highly qualified candidates. It is likely some idiosyncratic reason made another candidate a better fit (see Landrum & Clump, 2004 for research demonstrating the importance of fit). If you felt things went very well and you felt a connection with someone in the department you may be able to circle back with thanks and ask for feedback. Perhaps you gave your research talk with an audience of peers in mind but it was meant to be at a level that would engage students, or vice versa? Perhaps what you considered to be an appropriate level of interest in the position was perceived as a lack thereof or too much? If reaching out to the department seems too forward, you could instead get opinions from trusted colleagues or mentors.

**SOME THOUGHTS FOR SEARCH COMMITTEES**

Our advice above will be more effective if search committees also play by the rules. First, be as open and honest with candidates as possible from start to finish. For example, funding for the position may not be secured at the time the job advertisement is posted or even during the interview stage; candidates deserve to know such information. Similarly, candidates deserve to be told in a timely fashion if they did not get the job. It is unpleasant to find out you

\(^5\) Although rare, it is important to be aware that institutions have rescinded job offers after candidates have attempted to negotiate the terms of the position: https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/03/13/lost-faculty-job-offer-raises-questions-about-negotiation-strategy
did not get a job by seeing a picture of the new hire on the department’s website. If you know an applicant is not a viable candidate, let them know as soon as possible.

Second, treat people like humans and think about the process from the candidate’s perspective. Do you really need three letters of reference for every application when you only look at the cover letter and CV to make the first round of decisions? Even if the job has been tailored to hire an internal candidate, remain open to others. This is particularly true if you bring them to campus! Give candidates a schedule in advance so they know with whom they will meet and when. It is helpful to have one individual as a point of contact who can answer questions about the campus interview process, such as transportation options. If a candidate is arriving the night before the interview and there is no formal meal scheduled for that evening, perhaps leave some suggestions. If paperwork for reimbursement needs to be filled out, send it in advance if possible and process the reimbursement request as soon as possible after the interview. Remember you are looking for someone who will be an active member of your department for decades to come — you want them to feel valued and positive about the position when they arrive on campus in the fall.

Third, write a job ad that will match a candidate fairly. It is unfair to expect to find someone who can teach the entire curriculum and do so while maintaining an active laboratory. Even with many institutions increasing research expectations, encouraging our new colleagues to enjoy their lives on and off campus will increase their job satisfaction and enhance the workplace for us all. After all, this year’s hire will ideally become your colleague for the next 20+ years.

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION

In the midst of the middle stage of career development as a licensed clinical psychologist and associate professor of psychology, I find myself reflecting on what, if any, mentoring conversations or course content I had, at either the master’s or doctoral levels, that explored career issues confronted by women in psychology. While memory is imperfect, I often could not recall any formal academic opportunities, such as colloquia, class meetings, or assigned readings that explored issues related to compensation, advancement, or work-life integration for diverse women in psychology, mothers working in psychology, and the intersection of the two. I also do not recall these topics being a focus of informal mentoring discussions with professors or supervisors. More opportunities of this type should be offered in today’s graduate programs: challenges facing women in psychology are well-documented and consistent with those of professional women across sectors, the experiences of first and second-generation female psychologists (Johnston & Johnson, 2017), and calls made in the 52 Resolutions & Motions Regarding the Status of Women in Psychology (American Psychological Association (APA), 2004).

I do recall, and continue to experience today, many instances in which I engaged in informal co-mentoring with peers. Similar to reciprocal or horizontal mentoring, co-mentoring takes place among peers and, when occurring during the graduate school years, can supplement hierarchical, often unidirectional, faculty mentoring (Dua, 2007). In addition to providing informal mentoring to students, trainees, and colleagues, I also have participated as a mentee and mentor in formal mentoring programs, such as the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (Division 2 of APA) mentorship program, and many discussions occurring within these relationships have centered on issues and concerns related to women’s career planning, advancement, compensation, family planning, and work-life integration.

Selected research focused on mentoring, women’s mentoring experiences, financial compensation, career advancement, particularly in academic settings, working mothers, and the intersection of these issues is reviewed in this chapter. When available, research specific to women in psychology, and intersectional research about women in psychology, is emphasized, and gaps in this research are explored via selected research about women employed in other disciplines. The chapter concludes with some reflections derived from my academic, professional, and mentoring experiences. Related suggestions are shared with the goal of providing psychology students, professors, and mentors information that can be used to initiate meaningful discussions with diverse women about career planning, self-advocacy within the workplace, and anticipation and management of work-life integration in their early and middle career stages.
WOMEN’S MENTORING EXPERIENCES

Before female students enter academic programs, considered a gateway, they face discrimination in the pathway of gaining that entry. In a field experiment set in academia and concerning fictitious, prospective students’ requests for future mentoring in a wide range of university-based doctoral programs, faculty were significantly more responsive to the inquiries of White males than to those of female students or students from diverse ethnic backgrounds (Milkman, Akinola, & Chugh, 2015). This was true especially of faculty working in higher paying disciplines and professional environments (Milkman et al., 2015). Fictitious, prospective female students and students of color experienced no benefit or advantage from contacting same-sex or same-race/ethnicity faculty mentors, respectively, suggesting:

When a field boasts impressive representation of minorities and women within its ranks, this cannot be assumed to eliminate or even necessarily reduce discrimination. More specifically, no discipline, university, or institution in general should assume that its demographic composition will immunize it against the risk of exhibiting discrimination (Milkman et al., 2015, p. 1704).

BENEFITS OF MENTORING

Research and scholarship focused on mentoring, and mentoring in psychology specifically, offer important information about what mentoring is, how it differs from advising or protégé relationships, its subtypes (e.g., psychosocial vs. instrumental) and effects, as well as the obstacles diverse students and professionals encounter when developing and maintaining these relationships (Afful, 2013; APA, 2006a; Curtin, Malley, & Stewart, 2016; Daniel, 2009; Darley, Zanna, & Roediger, 2004; DeAngelis, 2008; Dohm & Cummings, 2002; Healey & Hays, 2012; Johnson & Huwe, 2003; Moyer, Salover, & Casey-Cannon, 1999; O’Brien, Biga, Kessler, & Allen, 2010; Palmer, 2019; Sowell, Allum, & Okahana, 2015; Tracey, 2006; Williams-Nickelson, 2005; Williams-Nickelson, 2009). For mentees, some benefits of mentoring relationships include: increased satisfaction and productivity (Dohm & Cummings, 2002); feeling better prepared for work experiences, quicker attainment of licensure and credentialing, obtaining higher-level initial positions, earning higher teaching and performance evaluations, (Palmer, 2019; Williams-Nickelson, 2005); and, increased earnings and timely career advancement (DeAngelis, 2008). Participating in mentoring relationships also is related positively to the success of members of marginalized groups during the graduate school years and when entering their professions (Williams & Khubchandani, 2011), particularly in academia (Boyd, Carraway, & Flores Niemann, 2017).

FEMALE MENTEES

Because women are under-represented in the highest ranks of the professoriate, and over-represented among its lower ranks (APA, 2017b), female students may not have access to as many female mentors during their educational experiences (O’Brien et al., 2010). In addition to the greater number of male mentors, female students also may be interested in having male mentors, in part, because male mentors are more likely to fulfill leadership positions and have, or are perceived to have, more extensive and influential professional networks (O’Brien et al., 2010).

The research is mixed in terms of possible differences in the amount and type of mentoring male and female students receive (Curtin et al., 2016). For example, some research indicates male students and male professionals may receive more mentoring, and more instrumental mentoring (Curtin et al., 2016). Men also may expect to engage in more career development activities, such as networking events (O’Brien et al., 2010). Women, who may be more likely to experience negative work-related experiences, such as challenges with work-life integration or discrimination in the
workplace, may seek, or be perceived as needing, more psychosocial support (O’Brien et al., 2010). In their study of professional identity development among counseling professionals, Healey and Hays (2012) found male respondents may feel more empowered in their academic programs and field, as well as more drawn toward positions of leadership and status, and males may receive more mentoring and encouragement in these directions than female peers.

CULTURALLY DIVERSE MENTEES

Given the underrepresentation of faculty of color at all ranks of the professoriate (Boyd et al., 2017; Daniel, 2009; National Center on Education Statistics, 2018), students of color likely will experience cross-cultural mentoring. An obstacle to effective mentoring in this circumstance could be mentors’ internalization of intersectional stereotypes that impede initiation and/or commitment to mentoring relationships with students of color (Daniel, 2009). This may be experienced more acutely in research institutions, as research may be viewed as a masculine or White activity (Dohm & Cummings, 2002), and in other psychology subspecialties in which women and women of color are underrepresented. Critically, some evidence indicates positive relationships between female students having research mentors during their academic training and their engagement in research, and serving as others’ research mentors, later in their career (Dohm & Cummings, 2002).

Focused attention also must be paid to the nuances of mentoring experiences of culturally diverse students. Davidson and Foster-Johnson’s (2001) study of cross-cultural mentoring relationships highlights some of the critical issues about which mentors must be aware and adept to address:

- Graduate school preparation assimilates students of color into dominant culture rather than supporting authentic cultural pluralism;
- Many mentors assume similarities, rather than differences, between their and mentees’ workplace experiences;
- Many mentoring programs may not recognize students’ cultural differences and how these may influence performance and expectations; and
- The effectiveness of, and satisfaction with, the mentoring relationship is tied to how race and ethnicity is framed within it.

While some argue mentee-mentor identity congruence is important for the relationship’s success, others have argued it is not necessary, with supporting data for effective cross-cultural mentoring relationships even when students’ original preference was to be matched with a culturally congruent mentor (Curtin et al., 2016). Cross-cultural mentoring can be effective (Daniel, 2009), and White mentors working with students from marginalized groups should practice cultural humility, fully embody allyship, and promote mentees’ work and development of mentorship networks (Johnson, 2017).

WOMEN IN THE PSYCHOLOGY WORKFORCE

Research clearly demonstrates a minority of individuals, approximately 4%, who obtain an undergraduate psychology degree also later earn a doctoral degree in psychology (Lin, Christidis, & Stamm, 2017), and extant research conveys the diversification of today’s psychology workforce. Although some intersectional data is
unavailable, current estimates indicate women represent 67% of the active U.S. psychology workforce (APA, 2018a), and racial/ethnic minority psychologists and psychologists with disabilities comprise 16% and 5% of the active U.S. workforce, respectively (APA, 2018a).

While the overwhelming majority (84%) of faculty and instructional staff working full-time in U.S. institutions of higher education are White (National Center on Education Statistics, 2018), more diversification is afoot in current academic psychology programs and among early career psychology professionals. Approximately one third of recent psychology doctoral degrees were awarded to graduates of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds (Lin, Stamm, & Christidis, 2018), and approximately 9% of recent doctoral psychology program graduates surveyed in 2009 identified as members of the LGBTQ community (Michalski, Kohout, Wicherski, & Hart, 2011). Multiple factors make it difficult to determine the number of psychology students and professionals who have disabilities. For example, definitions of disability vary, and there is no current, comprehensive way to identify and track individuals meeting the definition(s) (Collier, 2015). Individuals living with disabilities also may encounter, as well as possibly fear encountering more, obstacles as a result of disclosing their disabilities in professional settings (Collier, 2015). Preliminary conclusions based on available data suggest individuals with disabilities are underrepresented in graduate psychology programs and in the field at large (Collier, 2015). Taken together, however, trends suggest women in psychology increasingly are diverse, prompting a significant need for more intersectional research about their career development and employment experiences.

**WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN PSYCHOLOGY**

Although disparities have continued to decrease over time, gender differences in employment status persist in psychology. In terms of recent doctorate recipients in psychology, more males reported working full-time and, correspondingly, more females reported working part-time (Michalski et al., 2011). While some evidence supports part-time workers’ preference for that status, many colleagues working part-time would prefer full-time employment (APA, 2000). Doctoral psychology graduates of color reported full-time employment at slightly higher rates than their White peers, and the majority of all respondents who were unemployed reported they were not seeking work due to home or childcare responsibilities (Michalski et al., 2011). Unfortunately, a demographic breakdown of the unemployed subgroup was not included in the discussion, thus, it is unclear if women and men are equally or disproportionately represented among the unemployed. However, APA (2017b, p. 69) asserts today’s psychologists exhibit similar patterns to workers in other fields, “in that women are more likely than men to be employed part-time (and perhaps ‘underemployed’ relative to their education, experience, and aspirations) and to be employed in the kinds of settings that facilitate part-time engagement in work.”

**WAGE DISPARITIES IN PSYCHOLOGY**

Consistent with research conducted in many other disciplines and employment settings, female psychologists continue to earn less than male psychologists. Today’s women in psychology earn approximately 77% what men earn (APA, 2017b; Stringer, 2017). As recently as 2013, male psychologists earned approximately $15,000 more per year than females, with White psychologists earning $15,000 more per year than peers from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds (APA, 2017a).

However, wage disparities in psychology often vary by reported primary work setting. For example, the largest pay gap for doctoral psychology graduates was in health services, with men earning $39,000 more than women (APA,
Educational settings, specifically those in which the government is the primary employer, were correlated with the lowest pay gap between women and men (APA, 2014). Succinctly stated by the APA (2017c)

Two decades into the 21st century and women in psychology continue to experience lower salaries, greater gaps in wages, and an increasing average student loan debt than men in psychology and women in other sciences (para. 1).

Women from marginalized backgrounds face additional adversities, such as students of color graduating with greater student debt than white peers (APA, 2017b; Clay, 2017).

**WAGE DISPARITIES IN ACADEMIA**

Looking specifically in academia, psychology faculty continue to earn less than peers working in other social sciences and in other STEM fields (APA, 2018b). Faculty identifying as members of ethnic/racial minorities earned comparable or slightly higher salaries than White peers, although they are underrepresented in general and at higher faculty ranks (APA, 2018b). Interestingly, recent survey results indicated “nearly equivalent” salaries for male and female faculty in tenure or tenure-track positions (APA, 2018b, para. 6). In regard to primary employment in academia, however, it is important to consider supplementary income and how this may vary by individual diversity variables. For example, focusing primarily on annualized salary results in seeing an incomplete picture of compensation. According to APA (2000, p. 11), “when all additional income sources that come through the academic institutions are included for women who work full-time (including research grants that supplement salaries), women’s supplemental income from their institutions is 49% that of men.” If these women reported having additional, paid employment external to their academic institution, they also reported earning less than male colleagues (APA, 2000).

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO WAGE DISPARITIES**

Akin to research derived from other disciplines and employment settings, much of which is highlighted in the Closing the Women’s Wealth Gap report (McCulloch, 2017), interrelated factors are posited as contributing to the gender disparity in wages in psychology. These include (APA, 2000; APA, 2017b; APA 2017c; Moyer et al., 1999; Stringer, 2017):

- Lack of support and mentorship for women in degree programs at all levels of higher education, as well as in post-graduate workplaces;
- Stressful or hostile working environments, including sexual discrimination and harassment;
- Being isolated or tokenized;
- Systemic and institutional bias in hiring, performance evaluation, and advancement, which may explain, in part, the over-representation of women among part-time workers, lower academic ranks, and non-tenure track academic positions;
- Stereotyping of women leaders;
- Perceived or real role conflicts involving committed relationships (e.g., marriage), parenting, and being an employee; and
- Internalized oppression.
Diverse women who work in the field of psychology may experience acutely these and other organization barriers, including unwelcoming organizational climates, unwritten rules of university life, lack of respect from colleagues, lack of mentoring (Boyd et al., 2017; Daniel, 2009), and compounded marginalization based on intersectional identities (APA, 2017b; APA, 2017c).

**WORKING MOTHERS IN PSYCHOLOGY**

Additional factors to consider in light of gender disparities in wages include committed relationships, parenthood, and employment setting. APA (2000) reported: the majority of men and women working in psychology are married or cohabitating, but the proportion was higher for men (84%) than for women (65%). Women were more likely than men to report never marrying, particularly among full-time working women, and women were less likely to report having dependents, although the type and age of dependents was unknown (e.g., a child or elderly family member) (APA, 2000). The last finding was explained, in part, by men’s higher average age positively correlating with committed relationships, family obligations, or both (APA, 2000).

**WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION**

All workers encounter issues related to work-life integration, and some gender differences arise here as well. Some of these issues include temporary or longer-term departures from the workforce to have children, to care for other loved ones, or to support a partner’s career development, transition, or relocation. Research across fields suggests women were more likely than men: to take breaks from work to care for loved ones; to take more time off work to do so; and, to report taking this time off work had a negative impact on their job, career, and/or earnings (Graf, Brown, & Patten, 2018; Jee, Misra, & Murray-Close, 2018). While female and male psychologists tended not to describe their employment settings as friendly to family or personal lives, both reported greater satisfaction in their jobs and careers, lower job-related stress, higher levels of well-being, and more optimism about future career opportunities when their employment settings were characterized by some values supportive of work-life integration (Burke, Oberklaid, & Burgess, 2005). Research results are mixed in regard to women possibly benefiting more or less from these values than men (Burke et al., 2005). Research also suggests some academic settings and institutional levels may be more family-friendly than others, such as liberal arts colleges offering a greater variety of family-friendly policies than research institutions or community colleges (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). However, some women’s work experiences in these varied academic settings include concerns about how others will perceive their use of family-friendly policies, such as the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). More specifically, some women report concerns related to others’ expectations about when they “should” use these policies (e.g., is there a “better” or “worse” time to take leave during the academic year), and the number of times women “should” utilize the policies before seeking tenure (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006).

**MOTHERHOOD PENALTY**

Typically, the wage gap is discussed in terms of women being paid substantially less relative to what men earn, yet, another earning gap exists, specifically that between working mothers and working women who do not have children (Jee et al., 2018). When compared to women who are not parents, and to men who are or are not parents, working mothers experience a “motherhood penalty” in various forms such as: being less likely to be hired, offered a comparable salary, or promoted; being perceived as less competent and less committed to work; and being held to more rigid expectations around punctuality (APA, 2017b; Correl, Benard, & Paik, 2007). Working mothers may encounter these penalties multiple times during their career, such as being hired or rehired at a lower level of compensation after taking time off to have or raise one or more children, or when they move into mother- or parent-
friendly positions characterized by part-time hours, flexible scheduling, on-site childcare, or decreased demands for travel or time spent away from home, among others (Budig & England, 2001). Correspondingly, employers may be able to offer lower compensation for part-time employment as a result of the position’s other attractive qualities (Budig & England, 2001).

While the earning gap between working mothers and working women who do not have children has narrowed across fields, and varies depending, in part, on the number of children a working mother has, how much education she has obtained, and her labor-market experiences (Budig & England, 2001; Jee et al., 2018), it is clear that temporarily interrupting employment, or placing employment on-hold indefinitely, affects immediate and future financial compensation. Specific research about a possible motherhood penalty occurring within the discipline of psychology was challenging to discover. Given psychology’s gender disparities in hiring, advancement, and compensation, and how this mirrors other disciplines, it is reasonable to hypothesize psychology may be like other disciplines and employment settings in terms of a motherhood penalty, indicating a need for more research in this area (APA, 2017b). Research exploring gender, disparities in wages, and in-person versus remote positions in psychology is needed as well, given advances in tele- and video-communication technology, related platforms for education and service delivery, and the changing landscape of modern employment.

**WOMEN IN PSYCHOLOGY LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**

Women continue to comprise the majority of students in psychology classrooms, and they earn the majority of psychology doctoral degrees (APA, 2017b). While the number of diverse women, including those identifying as sexual minorities, as having ability differences, as being of color, or some combination thereof, who are members of APA, and who participate in APA governance in particular, are increasing (APA, 2017b), gender disparities in leadership positions persist in psychology (APA, 2017b; Stringer, 2017). To begin, the number of women serving as ad hoc reviewers of APA journals has increased substantially in the last 20 years; however, women continue to be under-represented among journal editors, including those of APA journals (APA, 2017b). Among recipients of APA’s prestigious honors, such as being conferred top awards or Fellow status, women are under-represented as well (APA, 2017b). APA (2006b) indicated:

> The growth in the pool of women receiving doctorates or the growth in the pool of senior women in the field (who would be considered to be the more likely candidates for high-level leadership positions) does not by itself effect increases in the proportions of women psychologists who serve in leadership positions within APA governance, as journal editors, [or] as Fellows (p. 20).

**WOMEN IN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP**

In academia, women continue to be underrepresented at the full professor rank and, correspondingly, over-represented in lower academic ranks (APA, 2017b; Malouff, Schutte, & Priest, 2010). Moreover, female academic faculty of color are underrepresented at all ranks of the professoriate (Boyd et al., 2017; Daniel, 2009). On average, it also takes women one year longer to obtain tenure than men (APA, 2017b).

Some evidence suggests men in academic psychology publish more than women peers, with publication rates increasing significantly at each level of academic rank (Joy, 2006; Malouff et al., 2010). More specifically, male academic psychologists in the U.S. publish significantly more than female peers in the first 8 years of their careers (Joy, 2006). Some female students may choose to delay marriage or commitment to a relationship, as well as starting
a family, until they sufficiently advance in their academic programs, graduate, or obtain licensure or full-time employment. Once these milestones are achieved, some women may turn more attention to their investment in committed relationships, such as marriage, or they may begin creating families, which may correspond to the time period in which their male peers are increasingly publishing.

In addition to some women choosing to focus more on teaching and service (Moyer et al., 1999), some research suggests women are externally influenced to move in these directions (APA, 2000). Female faculty are called upon to manage and complete more “emotional labor” in academic programs, such as providing more oversight and emotional support to students and addressing conflicts within departments (Dua, 2007). Female faculty also may be asked to manage departmental projects accorded lower status or to serve on more or lower profile committees (APA, 2000). Female faculty from marginalized backgrounds may experience some of these issues more often or acutely, such as being asked to join a committee to further diversify its composition, or being sought by many students to serve as their advisor or mentor (APA, 2000; Boyd et al., 2017; Daniel, 2009). Of course, these are important roles and functions of academic life, many of which can be satisfying. Nevertheless, female faculty must keep an eye on how their time is spent, the dynamics influencing that, and what is not occurring sufficiently or at preferred levels. Female faculty may need to reallocate and/or rebalance periodically their time and efforts to ensure their involvement in higher status activities needed for retention and advancement.

**WOMEN’S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Drawing on research from other fields, there is evidence to support men experiencing greater career advancement than women despite similar characteristics, such as education and mobility (APA, 2017b; Burke et al., 2005). Women also may be less active in ongoing professional development because of childcare responsibilities, having less available time and financial resources to allocate toward these activities, and lack of social support and career advice, including mentoring (APA 2017b; Chuang, 2015). Moreover, female counselors tended to report lower engagement in professional activities typically associated with positions of higher status, promotion, and linkage to tenure, such as presenting at conferences rather than attending only (Healey & Hays, 2012).

Licensure requirements for clinical psychologists, for example, require completion of state-specific amounts of continuing education units (CEUs) for each licensure renewal cycle, providing an external source of motivation complementing practitioners’ interest in developing their knowledge and skill sets. Yet, the relationships between gender, CEUs, participation in other professional development programs or opportunities, and career advancement in psychology are unclear. In subdisciplines subject to licensure, as well as in those not subject to licensure, it would be helpful to know if gender differences exist in terms of the type and frequency of engagement in professional development activities; obstacles to participation; and how these correlate to rank, compensation, career development, and leadership opportunities in psychology. In general, however, APA (2017b, p. 67) notes “professional women (including psychologists) engage in market work an average of 10 [hours] less per week than do professional men.” Being a woman, being married, and having children were the most significant variables contributing to gender differences in market work hours, which is consistent with a large body of research indicating women’s larger role in caring for the home and family (APA, 2017b). Research exploring possible gender differences in psychology professionals’ preparation to negotiate for, and successfully realize, higher pay, enhanced benefits, and consideration for advancement is needed as well.

Here is one example drawing on many of the themes presented in this chapter regarding gender differences and disparities in mentoring, hiring, compensation, and leadership in psychology. A woman early in her career is hired as an assistant professor and at a lower level of compensation, when compared to male colleagues, in an academic...
psychology department. After securing the position, she may be asked directly, influenced indirectly, and/or interested genuinely for a time in fulfilling some of the roles offering emotional support to students, perhaps to a greater extent than male peers. These requests or choices siphon away some of the time available for engagement in scholarly activity needed to advance to the rank of associate professor, such as competing for external funding, conducting research, and publishing. These may also limit her ability to obtain an external and adjunctive paid position, or to participate in professional development programs or activities that sharpen existing skills, broaden her professional network, and positively impact her professional reputation. Simultaneously, or at some later point in her development, she wants to start a family. Becoming established in her career while also becoming a parent (Afful, 2013) will draw significantly on her resources, positioning her to make challenging choices about how and to what she will allocate those resources. Taken together, this constellation of factors may impede timely progress toward advancement and leadership, should she desire it. As stated by APA (2017b), lower financial compensation and less financial support for women:

May mean less money for child care and household help, less travel to professional meetings, and less up-to-date equipment and research resources, thereby potentially hindering women’s academic success (Kite et al., 2001) and reinforcing economic disparities in an ongoing cycle of cumulative disadvantage in earnings and achievement (p. 87).

REFLECTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

I see many of my experiences and career choices reflected in this research. For example, I have benefitted immensely from informal mentoring relationships, and I appreciate those in which I could ask direct questions and receive candid answers about compensation, advancement, and career planning. Unlike colleagues who work in settings with transparent pay structures, such as state and federal government, I have and do not, thus, I am unsure if my initial salary and subsequent compensation increases are consistent with, or disparate from, those of comparably prepared male and female colleagues, who are or are not parents, working at the same or similar institutions. Motivated by the gender disparities well-documented in this field, I currently participate in committee work focused on faculty equity, a part of which concerns equitable compensation, because, as some version of the saying goes, “if we’re not at the table, we may be on the menu.”

I have been fortunate to be employed full-time and continually, with the exception of maternity leaves, in psychology for over a decade post-licensure doing work I enjoy. It cannot be emphasized enough that a supportive partner and clear, ongoing communication within that relationship, especially if parenthood is desired and realized, is critical to work-life integration (Daniel, 2009). Role flexibility has served my husband and I well, as has recognition that 1) role flexibility means different things at different times to each partner, and 2) different seasons of the family life cycle prompt us to redefine roles, and to revisit and reconfigure personal and professional priorities (Afful, 2013).

Other research findings reviewed in this chapter echo some of my other career decisions. For example, and in anticipation of parenthood, I left a higher paying administrative position to work as a faculty member, a role often accorded greater autonomy. I also have been encouraged to apply for, and was offered opportunities to fulfill, more advanced and financially rewarding positions than I have currently. I declined all but one of them. This signals some privilege, and some possible gender norms, and helps to illustrate how some degree of the gender disparities in psychology also may be related to women’s choices (APA 2017b; Clay, 2017). There have been moments when I second-guessed some of these decisions, too. Returning to my network of mentors, as students and professionals alike benefit from having more than one mentor (Johnson, 2017), I participated in discussions about how success is
often defined (e.g., empirical research vs. scholarship; APA, 2000), who tends to define what success is (e.g., White males), the varied pathways to success, and how I have room to define success for myself and as it relates to my marriage and family (Moyer et al., 1999).

Suggestions for academic programs align with the implementation of American Psychological Association of Graduate Students’ (APAGS; 2014) call for consistent, structured mentoring. The mentoring relationship is informed by mentees’ developmental levels and needs; thus, it makes sense discussions of compensation, advancement, and work-life integration may not occur initially in graduate training, or for students who are not already parents or in committed relationships. However, mentoring discussions must shift focus as academic, professional, and personal development progresses. If academic programs offer classes or other formal opportunities focused on learning to teach, consult, write grants, or manage a private practice, all of which are roles typically available and fulfilled later on in development, room also can be made for discussions of compensation, advancement, advocacy, and work-life integration. Annual panel discussions and brown bag lunches, some focused discussion and related readings assigned in a professional development-oriented course, and having this as a focus in formal mentoring relationships would plant important seeds for diverse female students during their formative, graduate school years. And, if students are unable to attend some of these events because of academic-life-work demands, transcripts or recordings could be made available.

Similarly, many mentors are fulfilling these roles without much formal preparation or study; thus, many may base their mentoring style on some combination of: reflection on personal mentoring experiences; informal conversations with colleagues; and, feedback past mentees may have been willing to offer. The mentoring research is rich, with much of it elucidating specific issues facing members of marginalized groups. This must serve as the foundation on which mentoring is learned and offered. Academic departments and other settings in which mentoring in psychology occurs will be well-served by focusing on this important professional role, its functions and implementation, and its related outcomes in faculty meetings, in discussions with cohorts of matriculating students, and via surveys of current students and alumnæ.

REFERENCES


CHAPTER 10
MENTORING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS FOR THE WORKFORCE

ANDREW N. CHRISTOPHER ALBION COLLEGE
W. ROBERT BATSSELL, JR. KALAMAZOO COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION

We are trained as researchers, one in individual differences and the other in behavioral neuroscience. Topically-speaking, these fields of study typically share relatively little commonality. However, we do share a love of research. And indeed, we are fortunate to work with some undergraduates who share our passion for research. But as is likely the case at almost any college, it is actually the rare student for whom the research process lights a fire in them. Most students, for a variety of reasons, are not going to pursue a research career; most are not going to continue their formal education in any context after receiving their undergraduate degree with a major in psychology. Anecdotally, on our campuses, we are finding that increasingly more students are opting to enter the workforce after completing their undergraduate degree than to pursue an advanced academic career. There could be many reasons for this perceived shift; for instance, there are more first-generation students attending college, the burden of having to take on debt for undergraduate education, and lingering effects, both financially and psychologically, of the Great Recession.

This chapter is aimed at relatively novice faculty, particularly those who advise and mentor, either formally or informally, undergraduate students. We assume most novice faculty can mentor students to do what they were trained to do, likely research. At least from our experiences, it is much more difficult to mentor students who are seeking different career paths, which of course, is the vast majority of students. Here, we share our observations, most of which have been made with the benefit of hindsight and the work of many thoughtful colleagues, some of whose work we will cite throughout this chapter.

In this chapter, we will first highlight ways that teachers can make use of formal and informal advising opportunities to help students develop the knowledge and skills and gain the experiences that will make them attractive applicants to the workforce. Then, we will describe ways we teach courses, including introductory psychology, first-year seminars, psychology of learning, and industrial/organizational psychology to help students achieve these ends. Throughout our chapter, we will provide resources that readers can consult for more details.

ADVISING

At the very least, formal advising consists of helping students select classes to make sure that they satisfy their graduation requirements in as timely of a fashion as they are capable. To be effective in such work, a faculty advisor needs to know what the various requirements are at one’s school. It also helps to know the rotation of course offerings in one’s department, so that students can plan to take certain courses during certain semesters. However, such work, after doing it for a few semesters, is fairly routine and simple.
What we find to be the more challenging, but also the more important and rewarding aspect of advising is helping students prepare for the next phase of their professional lives. As we mentioned previously, helping students prepare for graduate school, particularly research-focused graduate programs, is easy. But what about students preparing for the workforce? Where do we start to help those students, for whom we likely are less-prepared to help? And, there are some students who have no idea what they want to do after college. Some such students need help figuring out why they are in college in the first place. How might we help this full spectrum of students?

In the process of working on this chapter, we created a list of potential professional development questions that an advisor could consider asking a new advisee across the first year of their relationship (see Table 1). In this table, we have organized the questions in a roughly developmental fashion to capture the fact that students vary widely in their career preparation. While there is no requirement to ask every question or to progress through the list in this exact order, it provides some avenues that the advisor can take to learn about the student’s professional interests. In the rest of this chapter, we provide more detail about some of the resources that the advisor can use to help their students work towards answers.

**TABLE 1. POTENTIAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS**

1. How do you like to spend your time?
2. What do you want to do with your life?
3. Have you considered different career paths?
4. Do you know which careers are available to psychology majors?
5. What have you done to explore them?
6. Do you know which classes would help reach that career?
7. Do you know of online resources/books to help with career planning?
8. Have you met with institutional professional development on campus?
9. Do you know which skills employers value?
10. What skills do you think that you have?
11. What can you do to improve/enhance your skills?
12. Do you know which psychology classes promote different types of skill development?
13. Have you considered an internship?
14. Do you know how to get an internship?
15. Do you know how study abroad can help your professional development?
16. Do you know how independent study can help your professional development?
17. Do you know how volunteering/service-learning can help your professional development?
18. What leadership opportunities have you pursued?
19. What is your story for an employer? [Mainly for seniors; but juniors need to be developing this “elevator pitch” about themselves]
Although appropriate for advising any student, the questions in Table 1 can start conversations with students about developing skills and gaining experiences that will help them think about their professional development. Indeed, some students will have thought in great detail about some or even, in relatively rare instances, all of these issues. Even for students who have well-conceived ideas of their career path, it is helpful for them to discuss these ideas and get a faculty member’s perspective on what they are planning to do. For students who have not thought much or otherwise do not know what professional path they may want to take, it is particularly important to start such discussions early in their college careers so that they can begin to explore possibilities as early as possible in their time in college.

Drew Appleby (2018) noted a myriad of careers paths that psychology majors can follow. Indeed, at our two colleges, we have advised students who have gone into such diverse careers as divinity school, social work, financial advising, online marketing, youth services specialist, circus performer, and risk assessment analyst, to name but a handful. Indeed, one of the benefits of the undergraduate psychology major is that it affords many professional paths that a student can follow. Unlike other professional paths (e.g., accounting, teacher education), training in psychology does not prepare students to do one specialized thing. As Landrum (2018) said, “…. students major in accounting become accountants…. students major in nursing become nurses...” (p. 85). Psychology majors, however, can follow many different career paths (in addition to the resources that Drew Appleby provided, see Appendix E in the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major, Version 2.0; APA, 2013).6 As Landrum noted, this wide range of career options for psychology majors is both a blessing and a curse. They need to know about this diversity of career paths (and not just their preconceived notions of what a psychology major affords them), how to decide among them, and how to develop the skills and experiences needed to break into a particular career. To accomplish these goals, they will often look to us as their teachers to help them. Without expanding our own knowledge of what an undergraduate psychology major can do professionally, we have only our own experiences to draw on. It is impossible for a given faculty member to know the details about all of the options that an undergraduate psychology major affords; however, to be a well-rounded and effective advisor, it is imperative that faculty acquaint themselves with resources that they can direct students to explore in more depth.

Another approach that we have found to be useful is to educate students about the expectations of potential employers, because this will help them make intentional choices with their course selection, extracurricular activities, and professional behaviors. One resource is from Hart Research Associates (2015), which published the results of their surveys of 400 employers with at least 25 employees. Survey respondents were executives at both nonprofit and for-profit organizations. One of the key findings of this research was that “When hiring recent college graduates, employers say they place the greatest priority on a demonstrated efficiency in skills and knowledge that cut across majors” (p. 4). As psychology teachers, we are indeed fortunate to have an inherently interesting content to teach; however, we must move beyond our disciplinary content to equip all of our majors with the skills, knowledge, and experiences that transcend our major and could be used in a wide variety of professional contexts. Table 2, on the next page, shows the different skills desired by employers that Hart Research Associates identified.

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6 At Kalamazoo College, Appendix E from the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major, Version 2.0 is readily available to students in the department suite.
TABLE 2. EMPLOYERS AND COLLEGE STUDENTS RATE THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLEGE LEARNING OUTCOMES (PROPORTION OF EMPLOYERS AND STUDENTS WHO RATE EACH OUTCOME AN 8, 9, OR 10 ON A ZERO-TO-10 SCALE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Employers %</th>
<th>College Students %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ability to effectively communicate orally</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to work effectively with others in teams</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to effectively communicate in writing</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical judgment and decision-making</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to analyze and solve complex problems</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to innovate and be creative</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying current on changing technologies and their applications to the workplace</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to work with numbers and understand statistics</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to analyze and solve problems with people from different backgrounds and cultures</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of and experience with diverse cultures and communities within the United States</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying current on developments in science</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying current on global developments and trends</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of and experience with cultures and societies outside of the United States</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency in a language other than English</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Another resource regarding employers’ expectations comes from work published by Gardner (2007), who collected data on why new college hires are either fired or promoted. In Table 3 (next page), it can be seen that the two most common reasons that new hires are fired is unethical behavior and a lack of a work ethic. In contrast, the top two reasons why new hires are promoted include taking initiative and demonstrating self-management skills. Although it is certainly important that students are aware of what employers are looking for in terms of skills and experiences, they also need to know and practice displaying traits and behavioral tendencies that will give them the opportunity to not only get a job after college, but advance in a career.
### TABLE 3
Factors that Influence the Promoting or Firing of New College Hires

#### Top Six Reasons a New College Hire is Fired

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unethical Behavior</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Work Ethic</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate Use of Technology</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to Follow Instructions</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Late for Work</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Assignments/Deadlines</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Top Seven Reasons a New College Hire Is Promoted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taking Initiative</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Management/Time-Management</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Attributes</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show and Tell</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Competence</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From “Moving Up or Moving Out of the Company? Factors that Influence the Promoting or Firing of New College Hires” Gardner, 2007 CERI Research Brief

These resources can be used either individually during an advising session or embedded within a class. For example, in an advising session, these documents have been used to encourage students to take classes out of their comfort zone or from a different academic division (science division vs. humanities) so as to acquire skills more desirable to a broader range of employers. We have found simply sharing the information from Tables 2 and 3, is quite enlightening to even our best juniors and seniors. To help them truly engage with this information, we suggest students keep a “skills and experiences” journal of experiences to monitor the skills mastered in Table 2. For example, when students give a presentation in a class, we counsel them to not only take note of it, but to reflect on it in terms of what went well and what they could improve. The next time they make another class presentation, they can use that reflection to improve this highly-valued skilled. Likewise, when working on a group project, the journal can be an excellent opportunity to process how one works with others in a team. As seen in Table 2, this is another highly valued skilled. Another benefit of keeping a “skills and experiences” journal is that students will have stories and anecdotes to share on their interviews. The journal can be a working memory for students in preparation for their interviews. We have also used these data in different classes to explicitly emphasize the skills and characteristics that are developed in that class are not just applicable to graduate work, but are also highly valued in the workforce. We will expand on developing these skills, experiences, and behavioral tendencies in class in the next section of this chapter.

We now turn to three important things that an advisor can do to help students prepare for entry into the workforce.
1. USE INTERNET RESOURCES

There are a number of online sources that can be invaluable to help students learn more about career options and the paths to pursue each of these options. Of course, the selection of a specific site depends on where the student is in their career thinking. If the student is at the early stages where they are still trying to identify their interests and determine potential careers, a helpful site is California CareerZone (http://www.cacareerzone.org). At this site, students can, among other things, complete a 30- or 60-item Interest Profiler that allows them to identify their interests, and find possible career paths that might fit those interests. Likewise, there is a Work Importance Profiler (taken from O*NET, a source to be detailed momentarily) that allows students to learn what is important to them in a job. There are many other helpful resources on this site that serve as a collecting starting point for students who are trying to find what they want to do professionally.

If the student is more advanced in their career planning, and they know the general path they plan to undertake, more specialized sites designed for psychology undergraduates may be helpful. One such site is https://scoutiescareersinpsychology.org/ where students can learn about a range of careers within psychology and in related fields such as medicine or law. Furthermore, at this site, students can explore psychology-related career categories (e.g., government careers) and careers tailored to their personal interests. The site also contains various articles related to career development and possibilities for undergraduate psychology majors, including extensive information about salaries for various careers, from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Finally, students who have now identified a specific career would benefit from a site such as O*Net Online, which is the Occupational Information Network Online (at https://www.onetonline.org/). At O*Net, students can search for a specific career option. Under the 'O*NET Sites' is a dropdown option called "My Next Move," as seen in this screenshot:
Here, students can investigate a variety of specific career options, general career options, and for those students still needing to do more investigation into various career paths, there is an option for them, as seen below:

For illustrative purposes, we chose the career of “forensic scientist” in the “I want to be a” left panel of the previous screenshot. When we hit the Search button, we received the following information:
This a list of careers related to forensic scientist. Although the first career listed, Forensic Science Technician, is likely of most interest for this search, the student received many other careers that, because of their initial interest, may be worth exploring. Now, we click on that first career, and this is what we get:

This information provides a guide as to how a student can prepare for the career in question. The knowledge needed can guide course selection, and the skills, abilities, and personality traits listed can be emphasized in the student’s journal that we recommended previously. Although not seen in the previous screenshot, there is a link at the very bottom of this output that provides more details on all of the categories seen. For students with specific career interests, we have found O*NET to be extremely helpful to them, though we do caution it can be a bit overwhelming to digest all of the information it has to offer.
2. GET TO KNOW YOUR CAMPUS CAREER AND INTERNSHIP CENTER

The campus career and internship center is there to meet the needs of students. However, as an advisor, it would be helpful to know what specific services they can provide and how students can go about accessing those services. Particularly among first- and second-year students, it is better to assume they do not know something, particularly with respect to long-term planning, than to assume they do know it. Unfortunately, if left to their own devises, many students believe, wrongly, that this center is important only as they near graduation. First-years and sophomores likely do not know that this resource, like many of the Internet sites described previously, are part of their formative professional development and not just a “place to get a job” when they are seniors. Indeed, the better the career and internship staff knows a student, the more assistance they can be in helping that student reach their fullest professional potential once they graduate.

3. GET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES

As we mentioned earlier, a part of advising certainly entails helping students select courses and plan their schedules to make sure they meet all graduation requirements and do so on-time. However, we urge advisors to make sure they emphasize high-impact practices (often referred to as HIPs) with their students. Halonen and Dunn (2018) did a particularly outstanding job of providing examples of HIPs that we as psychology teachers can make relatively easy to use of in our departments. Specifically, they provided examples of service learning opportunities, internships, directed studies, research involvement, career center resources, study abroad opportunities, and gaining leadership experience as an undergraduate. It is important to mention all of these possibilities to students, as they may not know about or understand their importance in helping them gain skills and experiences that will prepare them for the workforce. In Table 1, some of the advising questions we suggested may help facilitate discussions of HIPs, in particular, questions 14-19 tap into some of these practices and can be extended to others. We strongly recommend that readers consult Halonen and Dunn (2018) not only for more information about HIPs (see also Kuh, 2013), but also about infusing professional development into courses, a topic that we will address here with some concrete examples of how we do so in some of our classes.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Within classes we already teach, there are opportunities to not only build students’ workforce-related skills, but perhaps just as critically, to draw their attention to those skills. Halonen and Dunn (2018) provided relatively simple suggestions for using classes as means for skill development. For instance, assuming a given course emphasis on the outcomes listed in Table 2, make it explicit not only on the syllabus, but on assignments that they are given. Doing so helps students understand why they are doing what they are doing, and perhaps more importantly, how they benefit from doing what might seem like “busy work” to some students.

INTRODUCTORY PSYCHOLOGY

One example we used in this spirit comes from our introductory psychology course. Much like Hart Research Associates (2015) found that employers highly value the ability to communicate effectively in writing, Halonen and Dunn (2018) also emphasized the importance of promoting communication strategies in our classes that are transferrable beyond the academic environment. In introductory psychology, because of the relatively large numbers of students in the class, we cannot emphasize writing as much as in our other classes. However, one relatively easy way to integrate professional writing into this class is to teach students how to write professional
emails. Indeed, much like problems students might have using social media properly, writing professional emails is not something most of our students know how to do. We have located two particularly good sources that can help in this regard:  https://teachingblog.mcgill.ca/2018/09/26/students-emails-a-creative-video-guide-to-email-etiquette-maintenant-en-francais/

The Youtube video, produced at McGill University, is about 4 minutes in length and it takes students through the contents of professionally-acceptable emails. It divides an email into three parts: a beginning, a middle, and a closing. It walks students through writing informative subject lines, correct salutations, proper email content in a professional setting, and how to sign an email. It also provides a “to-do” list before sending a formal email, things that should be done for anything that one writes. We try to emphasize to students to treat emails as they would any formal writing assignment. All writing is important in the workplace, as if nothing else, it gives people an impression of the person writing it.

In addition, we have found this handout to be particularly helpful as well:  https://www.menlo.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/writing-a-formal-email.pdf

The handout from Menlo College differentiates between formal and informal emails and how that difference can drive how an email is written. It provides information about the structure of an email, highly similar to what is described in the aforementioned video, and tips for writing effective emails that promote effective writing more generally. It also provides examples of emails that contain certain problems that students must identify and correct, with suggested solutions to those problems.

FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS

At our schools, students take an interdisciplinary first-year seminar during their first term. The purpose of this course, which is not specific to psychology, is to acquaint students with the expectations the College has of them (e.g., general education requirements) and the resources it provides students (e.g., academic skills center, off-campus study opportunities, career services). It also emphasizes development of skills that will be needed regardless of a student’s major. In this course, we have developed a “career exploration project” in which students must begin to think about how their time in college will facilitate what they might want to do professionally after they graduate. Even for students who are dead-set on advanced study, this project can help them think about that career path in finer detail than perhaps they have thought about previously. We have included a copy of this assignment, which is perpetually being revised, in Appendix A.

This assignment does tend to be challenging for first-semester college students. However, it could be used in a second-semester course instead, or perhaps during students’ sophomore year. If it cannot fit into a given class, it can still be provided as guidance, through the role of advisor, as it requires students to perform tasks they will eventually need to accomplish if they want to be successful as they enter the workforce.

RESEARCH METHODS AND STATISTICS

Before we discuss the research methods and statistics courses as places to develop students’ workforce readiness, we must disclose that these are our favorite courses to teach. Not surprisingly, we enjoy teaching them in part because we enjoy doing research, doing research with our students, and helping them disseminate it through
conference presentations and peer-reviewed publications. However, it is important to note that these classes are
among the most amenable to developing students’ workforce-desired skills. In fact, we distribute Tables 2 and 3
during the first week of class to emphasize employers’ desired skills (and undesired habits) and to link them to
specific departmental and class objectives. Doing so helps students see the big picture why these classes are so
critical to the major, even though they tend not to be among our students’ favorite course in the major.

We are fortunate to be able to integrate research methods and statistics into a single two-semester course sequence.
This structure inherently lends itself to developing skills such as “critical thinking and analytical reasoning.” For
instance, in these courses, we have an assignment in which students assume the role of a consultant who must
identify the statistical analysis that would be most appropriate for a given research study. An example from this
assignment appears in Table 4. This assignment requires students to understand the relationship between a research
study’s design and how the data should be analyzed.

TABLE 4. TWO EXAMPLES FROM A “CONSULTING” ASSIGNMENT IN RESEARCH METHODS AND
STATISTICS COURSES

Directions: Below are the names of eight statistical tools you’ve learned to use in your research methods and
statistics career. Following this listing are descriptions of eight research studies. Your job is to read each research
study, then select the appropriate tool to analyze the data from that study. After each selection, please offer a brief
explanation of why that is the appropriate statistical tool (two sentences, three at most should do the trick).

Here is an example description with answers:

A researcher wants to see if facial expressions of joy differ between 2nd and 3rd grade. She tests a sample of 2nd
graders and a sample of 3rd graders during a two-week span in April.
Tool to use: Independent samples t-test
Why did you select that tool? The people being tested contributed data to only one group in the study (2nd
graders or 3rd graders).

Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test
Chi-Square Test of Independence
Pearson correlation
Spearman correlation
Independent samples t-test
One-way between-subjects ANOVA
One-way repeated-measures ANOVA
Two-way between-subjects ANOVA

An example that students must answer:
Dr. Christopher wants to know which type of Oreo people prefer: Golden Mega Stuff, Cinnamon Bun, or Hostess
Cupcake. He gives his sample of 100 people one of each of these three types of cookies, and asks them which one
they like the best.

Tool to use:
Why did you select that tool?
In addition to assignments, students complete a major research project in both semesters of the sequence. Close inspection of Table 2 will reveal that although the final product is an APA Style manuscript and a traditional poster or platform presentation, the process of conducting and presenting this research really helps students develop many of these particularly sought-after skills. For instance, making either type of presentation allows students to develop oral communication skills, using relatively complex material to do so. Conducting research involves critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills and the ability to apply basic knowledge to a real-world setting/project. Many students, though, may not realize that they are developing these essential skills, unless their teachers explicitly make that connection for them.

PSYCHOLOGY OF LEARNING

Often the material in this class is quite theoretical and students may get the impression that they are only learning about rats, but the learning principles exposed by these experiments with non-human subjects have been the basis for applied behavior analysis. To help students apply concepts from lectures and to see the possibilities of applied behavior analysis, we have incorporated a Personalized Behavior Project into the class (Morgan, 2009). After the students have some experience with the basic concepts of the class, they read a review of the possibilities of self-experimentation (Roberts, 2004). Next, students are asked to choose one of their own behaviors that they would like to change (either to increase or decrease in frequency), and record the daily frequency of that behavior to establish a baseline measure. During the baseline period, students are instructed to consider multiple manipulations that could produce the most effective behavior change. Students select their intervention, apply it to their behavior, and continue to record responses for the next 10 days. During the final class meetings, each student delivers a PowerPoint presentation during which they describe their target behavior, present their baseline and intervention data, and discuss the success of their project. The most important aspects of this assignment are evaluation of the student’s logic in choice of an intervention and their hindsight explanation of what they would try differently if given a “do-over.” In the past, we have seen students alter a range of behaviors, including lip-biting, running, room-cleaning, diet changes, study changes, sleep changes, and decreasing cell phone/social media usage. Students tend to enjoy this assignment, and some of them have even continued their manipulation once the course concluded. In regard to the present chapter, the key is for the instructor to emphasize that students are modeling in a simplified form the work of an applied behavior analyst (the application of learning principles to alter behavior), and if they enjoyed this process, this may be a viable career path for them.

INDUSTRIAL/ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

The nature of the material in this class may lend itself to projects that promote skill development. One such project is to have students work either a unit on campus or an organization in the local community to assess some outcome(s) of interest in a program assessment project. On Albion’s campus, students in this class worked with the College’s off-campus programs office to assess the effects of off-campus study. This is indeed a broad directive. To help students get a handle on it, the director of the program comes to class about 4 weeks into the semester to describe what her office does and wants to do in terms of providing services to students. In addition, she details the program’s current assessment efforts, allowing students to see what is already being done and to start them thinking on how to suggest improvements. After assigning students into groups of no more than three students, they generally are able to generate ideas for what the program needs to bolster its assessment efforts in order to improve its services to students. As employers value the ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings (from Table 2), this project allows students the ability to do precisely that. Furthermore, for students in the class who have already studied off-campus, they can bring those perspectives to this project. For students who are planning to study
off-campus, it forces them to think further about what they want to gain from this opportunity. The project culminates in a group presentation and paper, giving students the opportunity to develop some of the most valuable skills that employers are seeking. Throughout the process, students must keep a journal, similar to the one described previously in this chapter, of how their group functioned, how they contributed to the end products, and how they dealt with any problems that arose during the project’s completion.

**SUMMARY**

Our purpose in providing our ideas for infusing issues of professional development into our classes is to inspire ideas for your own classes. Using the list provided in Tables 2 and 3, we recommend making explicit how a given assignment meets one or more of these outcomes. Doing so will help students understand why they are doing what they are doing and should facilitate the development of those outcomes that employers find important in hiring new college graduates.

**REFERENCES**


APPENDIX A: CAREER DEVELOPMENT ASSIGNMENT

LA 101 – Psychology in Film
Career Development Planning – Paper and Presentation
Fall 2017

ACADEMIC LIFE AT ALBION
Starting after Fall Break, we have a series of tasks to complete to get you enrolled in class for the spring semester. On Wednesday, October 11 in class, I will take you through the graduation requirements at Albion, regardless of what you are going to major in. Then the next day in your community meeting, we will learn about the “preregistration” and “registration” processes at Albion College. Both “preregistration” and “registration” are parts of enrolling in classes, and you will be doing them each semester you are at Albion. They are not difficult to do, but as you have never done them before, we need to spend some time making sure these processes are clear.

Now, we are you here taking classes (and doing the many other things you are doing as a student here)? Of course, at some point, you will go on to what will be bigger and better things, such as a job, graduate school, medical school, or something else equally as exciting. So, while we’re learning about graduation requirement, preregistration, and registration, let’s extend this conversation to the next step in your life -- after Albion.

College won’t last forever
You are still relatively new to college, so now might seem like a strange time to start planning for graduation. However, it’s never too early to do so. Therefore, in part to start you thinking about your professional life after Albion and in part to introduce you to the resources available to help you do so, you will get to explore a career of potential interest to you. I realize many of you are still trying to figure out what they are even interested in for a major, much less a possible career. That’s perfectly normal. I will be providing you with some resources that will help you jump start not only this project, but start you thinking about your post-Albion life.

THE PROJECT
As noted on the syllabus, this project consists of two products you will deliver:

1. A paper of about 3 pages
2. An in-class presentation of about 5-10 minutes

The paper will be due on December 6 by noon

The presentations will be scheduled for Monday, November 27 during class, Wednesday, November 29 during class, and Wednesday, December 6 at 8 a.m. during final exam week.

RESOURCES TO DO THE PROJECT (AND BEYOND)
One of the resources you just completed -- the Career Interests Inventory -- is one of the more popular career assessment tools that is used to help people learn what their “interest areas” may be. In addition to this starter activity, there are other good resources available to you. In particular, we will check out these two websites, both of which are particularly good for people just starting their careers (i.e., for you): U.S. Department of Labor’s CareerOneStop site (https://www.careeronestop.org/)
We will, in a couple of weeks, explore these sites together in class. However, you are always welcome to poke around them on your own. The results of the Career Interests Inventory that you just completed can be used in some places on these sites.

In addition, you will visit the College’s Career and Internship Center (located on the 1st floor of Ferguson Hall), who will help you develop a 4-year plan to acquire the skills and abilities needed for a job title you will chose for this project. To learn about the skills and abilities for your chosen career, you can visit the two previously-noted websites, as well as https://www.onetonline.org/, and gather this information before going to the Career and Internship Center.

**SO, WHAT DOES THE PAPER AND PRESENTATION CONSIST OF?**

You will, during the next several weeks, need to decide on a job title that interests you that is provided in one of these resources. The paper and presentation are meant not only to inform the class about this job, but to help you develop a plan of action while you’re at Albion to gain the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other experiences needed for an entry-level position in that job field.

What you need to do is assemble a four-year plan for your time at Albion that will help you gain the knowledge, skills, abilities, and work activities needed for the job title you selected. As you will no doubt see, there will be dozens of knowledge, skills, abilities, and work activities listed for your chosen occupation. Select perhaps a few, four or five at most. Otherwise, this activity could take the next four years of your life to complete, defeating its purpose.

At the very least, you need to map out what courses you will take during your Albion College career. You will want to select those classes that help you acquire the knowledge, skills, abilities, and work activities/experiences needed for the occupation that you’re interested in.

In addition to taking classes, there are other experiences available to you at Albion that will help you gain knowledge, skills, abilities, and work activities/experiences. For instance, joining and being actively involved in campus organizations, both academically-focused and socially-focused, can certainly help! Volunteer work, internship experiences, studying off-campus, doing research with faculty members, job shadowing, all of these things can, to varying extents, figure into your four-year plan. For instance, if you love biology and want to do something related to biology, you definitely should make research a part of your four-year plan. If you’re interested in business and related fields, studying off-campus and doing internships should certainly be a part of this activity. Of course, you cannot know with certainty with what organization you’ll do an internship, or where you will study off-campus, or with what faculty member you might do research. However, for this activity, think about your ideals for these experiences. For instance, would you prefer to study someplace where your native language is widely spoken, or would you like the challenge of navigating a social environment in which you have to develop the ability to communicate in a new language? Likewise, what would you be looking for in a volunteer opportunity...working with young kids? Older adults? Domestic violence victims? In short, think about and describe what you want to do and learn from any of these experiences. Doing so will provide a great foundation for you to investigate further these opportunities!

As noted in the Resources section, in addition to talking with me, you will need to meet with the folks in Career and Internship Services, located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall: http://www.albion.edu/academics/career-and-internship-center
They are expecting to hear from you. They’d love to make an appointment with you in person, but you can do so here as well: http://www.albion.edu/academics/career-and-internship-center/contact-us

Frankly, making these sorts of plans is a big chunk of what these people do! They know you are coming and are looking forward to meeting with each one of you (and they’ll tell me whether you met with them or not 😊)

**SO, ANY IDEAS FOR ORGANIZING THIS PROJECT?**

Although there is no one correct way to organize this project, here are three general things you should include in the paper and your presentation to the class:

1. A list of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and work activities/experiences that you identified from your O*NET occupation search. Again, not all of them, just those you particularly want to strengthen and are using for this activity.

2. A sample of classes you’re looking to take, with a brief description (about 2-3 sentences each) of how each one will help you develop one or more of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and work activities/experiences you identified in #1. By “sample,” I am thinking somewhere between 6 and 8 classes would be good! The college course catalog can help in this regard (more on the “course catalog” after Fall Break, lots more on it!).

3. Potential volunteer work, internships, off-campus study, research, and job shadowing experiences (or other experiences you may think of, such as joining and being actively involved in campus organizations), with text for each that details the knowledge, skills, abilities, and work activities/experiences it will, ideally, provide you with the chance to develop.
PSYCHOSOCIAL MENTORING

PROVIDING PSYCHOSOCIAL MENTORSHIP FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

EMPHASIZING SELF-CARE THROUGH MENTORING

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF: WHAT I WISH MY MENTOR HAD TOLD ME ABOUT WELLNESS

STRATEGIES FOR MAINTAINING WELLNESS AS A PROFESSOR

HOW TO COMBAT STUDY STRESS BY GETTING BACK IN CONTROL OVER YOUR OWN THOUGHTS

WHAT I WISHED MY MENTOR HAD TOLD ME: HOW TO BE A MORE INCLUSIVE TEACHER

CELEBRATING GENDER DIVERSITY IN MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS
INTRODUCTION

One of my colleagues recently shared stories of her graduate school experience with me. She was accepted to the doctoral program that was her first choice among several universities. It was one of the best days of her life. Like most graduate students, she was a high achiever in high school and college. Yet, her confidence faded even though she had no reason to doubt her ability to succeed in graduate school as she was an exceptional student and eager young professional. She described her experience as “long days and late nights filled with guilt, anxiety, and dread.” She questioned whether she was cut out for academia and spoke about her daily desire to drop out of her clinical psychology doctoral program. My colleague described her overall experience as “six years of extreme emotional, psychological, and physical exhaustion.”

Unfortunately, the experience described above is not an isolated incident, unique to particular individuals or graduate school programs. Several studies suggest high levels of stress, burnout, and attrition in graduate students (Corner, Lofstrom, & Pyhalto, 2017). In fact, graduate students may be at greater risk for mental health issues than individuals in the general population (e.g., Gewin, 2012; Evans, Bira, Gastelum, Weiss, & Vanderford, 2018).

As a graduate-level professor, I have observed countless students struggle with the pressures of graduate school; therefore, in the midst of my first year as a faculty member, I set out to determine ways to effectively mentor students in order to reduce their negative graduate school experiences. Fortunately, I came across research literature focused on the benefits of providing psychosocial support to graduate students. This knowledge became invaluable.

While I currently strive to provide psychosocial support to all of my students, I regret not prioritizing this practice from the beginning of my tenure as a professor. I still find myself wishing that my academic mentor had told me to provide psychosocial support for my students.

In this chapter, my coauthors and I will discuss the extant literature on the benefits of providing quality faculty mentorship to graduate students, with a particular focus on psychosocial mentoring (also referred to as support throughout our discussion). Next, we will offer the readers with a challenge that arose for one of the authors and how the challenge was resolved by using psychosocial mentorship. Lastly, we will offer faculty recommendations on ways to effectively provide psychosocial mentorship for graduate students.
**SUPPORT FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS THROUGH MENTORSHIP**

The term “mentor” can be traced back to Homer’s the *Odyssey*, composed over 2700 years ago. The *Odyssey* is the story of Odysseus’s forced wandering around the Mediterranean after the desolation of the city of Troy. He is presumed lost by his family, back home in Greece. In the first chapter of this epic poem, the goddess Athena disguises herself as Mentor, an old friend of Odysseus. Mentor (Athena) approaches Odysseus’ son, Telemachus, and encourages him to embark on his own excursion to discover the fate of his father.

In the following chapters, Mentor provides guidance, encouragement, and support to Telemachus during his quest. And so, from this ancient poem, we have inherited the word “mentor,” which has come to mean “a wise and trusted counselor or advisor.” Just as Mentor provided guidance to Telemachus on his journey, a faculty mentor’s role is to provide guidance and support to students throughout their graduate school journey.

Faculty mentoring is a critical component within the research training environment (e.g., Gelso & Lent, 2000; Hollingsworth & Fassinger, 2002). Mentorship includes teaching, advising, and supervising. More specifically, a faculty mentor may: 1) provide advice from graduate school to career; 2) give constructive feedback on writing; 3) help students maintain work/life balance; and 4) provide emotional encouragement during challenging times. While quality mentorship is critical for graduate student success and their belief in their own success (Johnson, 2002; Johnson, Koch, Fallow, & Huwe, 2000; Lunsford, 2012), a negative mentoring relationship may be associated with a mentee doubting his or her competency, potentially leading to limited productivity and/or program drop out (Corner et al., 2017).

Numerous studies have examined the relationships between mentoring and graduate student outcomes indicating significant positive outcomes of mentored graduate students. Mentoring has been associated with the generation of scholarly publications (Cronan-Hillix, Gensheimer, Cronan-Hillix, & Davidson, 1986; Hollingsworth & Fassinger, 2002; Nettles, Millett, & Millett, 2006), interest in research (Kahn, 2000), degree program satisfaction (Brown, Daly, & Leong, 2009), shorter time to degree completion (de Valero, 2001), increased confidence (Brown et al., 2009), and development of professional identity (Brown et al., 2009).

Mentoring relationships may be as beneficial to the mentor as it is to the graduate student. Mentors who provide quality interactions with their mentees report higher job satisfaction (Pullins & Fine, 2002). Additionally, significant engagement in mentoring has been associated with increased job performance (Liu, Liu, Kwan, & Mao, 2009). Mentoring can also provide benefits for an organization. Engaging in mentorship may decrease turnover rates (Payne & Huffman, 2005) potentially saving the cost associated with hiring and training new employees.

**WHAT IS PSYCHOSOCIAL MENTORSHIP?**

Mentoring involves two primary kinds of support: career and psychosocial support (Kram, 1985). Career support is focused on career development and includes sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, provision of challenging assignments, and transmission of applied professional ethics (Kitchener, 1992; Kram, 1985). Psychosocial mentoring includes role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship (Kram, 1985). Zuckerman (1977) found that exceptional mentees valued career support but not necessarily psychosocial support. However, research has suggested that having a supportive mentor may enhance the effectiveness of career advice and the extent in which the mentee listens to that advice (Lunsford, 2012); therefore, the importance of psychosocial support cannot be neglected in graduate school psychology programs.
While there are some conflicting results (Paglis, Green, & Bauer, 2006), the bulk of the research on this topic in higher education suggests graduate students benefit from quality psychosocial mentorship. Furthermore, graduate students have reported psychosocial support as the most meaningful aspect of their mentoring relationships (Brown, 1996). Carpintero (2015) examined the qualities a mentor should have in order to be successful in the mentoring process. Results revealed the majority of qualities most valued by students were components of psychosocial mentoring. Specifically, the concept of “nearness,” defined as a combination of the mentor being sensitive to the problems and circumstances of the student, being approachable, being receptive and an easygoing in demeanor were among the mentor qualities of highest value to graduate students. Other valued mentor qualities included open-mindedness, expertise, empathy, honestly, ability to advise, good communication skills, and ability to understand and interest. Overall, these results highlight the importance of the components of psychosocial mentoring.

Research suggests the importance of integrating career and psychosocial mentoring. Lunsford (2012) examined the extent in which doctoral advisors provided mentoring to their students and if the mentor support influenced doctoral student outcomes. The results of this study were: 1) students reported that mentoring was important to their graduate school success; and 2) both career and psychosocial mentoring was significantly related to publications, presentations, and degree progress. Results of a follow-up study revealed mentors provided students with psychosocial support (Lunsford, 2014). The author concluded that psychosocial support is needed to move scientists through the doctoral experience, but in the long term, career support is related to career progress. Thus, the connection between psychosocial and career support is essential.

More recently, Curtin, Malley, and Stewart (2016) investigated the relationship between mentoring with career self-efficacy and career interest in a sample of doctoral students at a public, research-intensive, Midwest university. Results suggested that psychosocial mentoring, in addition to instrumental mentoring and sponsorship, is associated with increased self-efficacy (students felt confident in their ability to pursue an academic career), as well as increased interest in academic careers. Collectively, the results of these previous studies highlight the importance of providing psychosocial support to graduate students.

**PSYCHOSOCIAL MENTORSHIP CHALLENGE: CASE STUDY**

Psychosocial mentoring, a partner to career mentoring, is important for promoting student confidence, professional advancement, and contribution in the field of psychology. I learned of this relationship clearly through my own experiences as a student, mentor, and professor. This journey started when I initially entered a doctoral program in psychology with the goal of ultimately spending my career “making a difference in the world.” I could not think of a better way to do this aside from conducting research on important topics that could potentially benefit society in addition to educating others. I spent my graduate career training under world-renowned experts in my field of study at multiple universities, including a Research 1 (R1; very high research activity) university that was primarily composed of traditional learners. It was my time at this university where I was provided with the opportunity to serve as a graduate student research mentor for numerous undergraduate students.

The undergraduate degree programs at this R1 university were quite rigorous, as well as the research expectations of those students in these programs. Very few students worked part or full-time jobs or had time-intensive, long-term family obligations; therefore, they were able to devote a significant amount of time on research activities in the laboratory. My work with these students was quite fulfilling. Many student mentees conducted and published
high quality research during their time in their undergraduate program, and subsequently were accepted into competitive post-baccalaureate degree programs.

In addition to serving as a research mentor, I was teaching multiple undergraduate psychology classes at a different university (Research 2 [R2]; high research activity). A large proportion of the student body was composed of adult returning students (previously referred to as nontraditional students). This particular experience was exceptional and motivated me to apply for full-time jobs at universities focused on education for adult returning learners.

Following the completion of my doctoral degree, I was hired at a private university (Doctoral/Professional University [D/PU]; very low research activity) committed to providing quality education for adult returning students. I had found a way to spend my life making the world a better place and felt adequately prepared to do so. However, my transition from graduate school to full-time employment was accompanied by a set of unique challenges.

I was immediately assigned as the dissertation chair for numerous students and faced a much higher level of responsibility than in the past. While I had previous experience providing research mentorship, I had not had the opportunity to serve as a primary research mentor for this specific population of students. Instead of utilizing the skills I obtained as an instructor in a university with a similar population, I approached my new responsibilities in a similar manner as I did at the R1 institution, leading to a substantial disconnect between me and my students.

I was hyper-focused on ensuring the students were conducting rigorous research projects, and in turn being adequately prepared for the workforce. While the research my students were conducting was rigorous, they were not expected to conduct research of similar complexity or sophistication required at the R1 institution. Therefore, many of my expectations were unnecessary and negatively impacting their well-being.

During one particular conversation with a doctoral student, the reality of my behavior came to fruition. The student expressed she was overworked and frustrated. Through her tears, she described feelings of inadequacy. In that moment, I realized that I was significantly contributing to the problems faced by graduate students (e.g., stress, burnout, self-doubt), and I needed to make a change. This “ah ha” moment drove me to evaluate how I interacted with my mentees. Was I simply providing academic instruction? Have I provided more than simple career advice? How can I improve the quality of engagement with my student, attending to their individual needs?

CHALLENGE RESOLUTION

Following the meeting with my doctoral student described above, I approached one of my colleagues for advice. He encouraged me to utilize my research skills and dive into the literature on faculty mentorship. I came across numerous studies providing evidence for the benefits of quality mentorship. I quickly learned that mentorship is not a “one size fits all model.” Without consciously realizing it, I was providing career mentorship, while neglecting psychosocial support that an exceptional mentor should provide mentees.

This activity, along with more experience, helped me change my approach to mentoring doctoral students. Currently, I approach each mentorship opportunity with intention and strive to differentiate my support to meet the unique needs of each student. I have learned the value of ensuring every student knows that I am on their side and that I accept them. I also understand the value of modeling positive behavior.
While I still undergo struggles, the relationships with my students have dramatically strengthened and many of my mentees are on their way to achieving their own dreams. In fact, the particular doctoral student that led me down the path of trying to “break the cycle” of contributing to negative graduate student experiences, has recently successfully defended her dissertation proposal and is currently submitting applications for full-time faculty positions. I am proud of the bond we share and hope to remain in her life in order to be a positive role model and cheerleader as she continues to achieve success.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL MENTORS

The following recommendations are for graduate school mentors. It is important to keep in mind that recommendations are focused on psychosocial support, and this particular type of support should be provided in conjunction with career support.

- Recommendation #1: Cross-cultural and gender differences have been identified as barriers to effective mentoring. Great care must be taken in these situations to ensure effective mentoring of the student (Brown et al., 2009; Curtinet al., 2016; Johnson, 2002; Noy & Ray, 2012). One suggestion is for a mentor to seek out professional development opportunities specifically geared to enhance their ability to mentor and work with minority populations (Thomas, Willis, & Davis, 2007). Additionally, the mentor should consider expanding their professional network in order to provide their minority student additional faculty role models of their same ethnic origins (Thomas et al., 2007).

- Recommendation #2: A mentor should educate their students by encouraging and inspiring the mentees, being approachable, and building mentees’ confidence (Brown et al., 2009; Lunsford, 2014).

- Recommendation #3: Mentors must differentiate support and feedback based on the individual’s level. Mentoring individuals that have different levels of experience and training require different levels of support (Brown et al., 2009).

- Recommendation #4: A mentor should be sensitive to the needs of the mentee and communicate with them clearly and genuinely with a positive regard of the mentee (Brown et al., 2009; Johnson, 2002). These elements, underlying the core of quality human interactions, foster trust in the mentor-mentee relationship.

- Recommendation #5: Providing acceptance and patience to the mentee are critical elements in re-enforcing the mentee’s confidence. Often, mentors may forget emotional experiences that arise during the early career, which can include unrealistic expectations of perfection and frustration when goals are not achieved (Johnson, 2002; Rose, 2005).

- Recommendation #6: Mentors must know, understand, and affirm their mentee’s goals (Johnson, 2002).

- Recommendation #7: Accept the fact that some mentor/mentee relationships will not be successful. Therefore, mentors should be mindful that arising conflicts are possible, dysfunctional relationships may occur, and that the potential of perceived or real exploitation is possible due to the imbalance of power (Johnson, 2002). To address such conflicts, a mentor should rely on a network of support provided by the
university (e.g., conferring with department chairs and deans). Regular review and oversight by administrators is necessary along with reflexivity on the part of the mentor and mentee.

CONCLUSION

Psychosocial mentoring is crucial for psychology graduate students. When students are provided with this support they are adequately prepared for their professional life and can apply learning with confidence. As psychology educators, we should always strive to provide exceptional academic mentorship for all of our students. Psychosocial support is an often overlooked but is a key component of mentoring successful psychology graduate students.

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we focus on the importance of self-care for psychologists and students in psychology, and the role of a mentor in emphasizing self-care. Self-care involves giving sufficient attention to our own physical and psychological wellness (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001). Although this chapter is written by a clinical specialty psychologist and two students in clinical psychology, we emphasize why self-care is a vital facet of one’s career regardless of specialty, and why it is imperative for mentors to engage their mentees in consideration and application of self-care. Emphasizing self-care in the mentoring relationship should occur at all levels of higher education, across the diverse careers a psychology degree holder may pursue (http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/psn/2018/01/bachelors-degree.aspx), into early-career work, and even throughout one’s career.

The first principal that we emphasize is that self-care is ethical. Principal A of the ethics code of the American Psychological Association (2017) preamble states, “Psychologists strive to be aware of the possible effect of their own physical and mental health on their ability to help those with whom they work” (American Psychological Association, 2017, para. 2 of preamble). Self-care is again emphasized in Section 2 (Competence) of the standards, “When psychologists become aware of personal problems that may interfere with their performing work-related duties adequately, they take appropriate measures, such as obtaining professional consultation or assistance, and determine whether they should limit, suspend, or terminate their work-related duties” (American Psychological Association, 2017, para. 12 of section 2). The ethics code, hence, leads us to understand that we must engage in both self-care and self-reflection (to know when we are struggling with self-care, when we need to increase our self-care, and when we may temporarily stop doing a facet of our work and get help to restore our competence). Because self-care is an essential part of being a psychologist, it reasons that mentors should endeavor to emphasize and develop this aspect of our work.

I WISH MY MENTORS HAD EMPHASIZED SELF-CARE: LP’S PERSPECTIVE

When considering the topic of this eBook and reflecting on the many wonderful mentors I have had throughout my education and early career, I tried to think of what I might have needed emphasized to me and where I sometimes find myself lacking. The answer was clear: I significantly struggled to engage in regular self-care throughout graduate school and now as a psychologist in both an academic role and a clinical role in private practice, I am well aware that balancing work, family obligations, and self-care can be challenging (the challenges of finding time for self-care are also discussed by Norcross & VandenBos, 2018). My reflection on my desire to have had more emphasis on self-care while in graduate school was echoed in a recent article on “things I wish I’d known,” summarizing a focus panel
of late-career psychiatrists in Australia (Ng, Steane, Chacko, & Scollay, 2017, p. 78). This panel indicated a core theme that senior psychiatrists felt early career psychiatrists should receive mentoring that encouraged them to, “pay attention to aspects of self-care, stay connected to their loved ones” and “seek an optimal work-life balance” (Ng et al., 2017, p. 78).

While I want to emphasize that self-care mentoring should occur at all levels, graduate school is an obvious time where neglect of self-care might emerge, and in reviewing literature for this chapter, I found that I was not alone. In fact, there is concern that graduate students in clinical psychology, in particular, may be “vulnerable to stress” (Pakenham & Stafford-Brown, 2012). Further, as expressed by Doran (2014), “the unspoken reality is that self-care in graduate school is a struggle. As trainees, we receive mixed messages - perform at a high level and meet all rigorous training demands, while making time for outside activities, relaxation and fun” (https://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2014/04/corner.aspx, para. 2). I wondered, am I giving my students this “mixed message,” especially as I considered my own experience of facing challenges of integrating self-care in graduate school?

Early career, regardless of one’s specialty or education level, can also be a difficult time for self-care (and we later discuss research indicating that later-career psychologists may engage in comparatively more self-care than early-career psychologists; Dorociak, Rupert, & Zahniser, 2017) because there may be job searches, relocations, loan repayment, and job training. For those who pursue a doctoral program, the early career may involve seeking post-doctoral work, and for clinical and counseling psychologists, individuals might be busy pursuing licensure and board certification. Other personal factors might complicate self-care. For example, although making time for self-care sometimes posed challenges in my early career, I found that this was even more complicated when I became a parent and I found my time even more taxed.

Where does mentoring play a role? In my self-reflection about the mentoring I received, I realized that much of my mentoring was specific to tangible career development (e.g., applying to graduate school, internships, and academic jobs; staying focused to complete a degree and study for a licensure examination; starting a private practice). Because self-care is a vital aspect of one’s career, mentors of all levels should regularly integrate discussion of self-care into these discussions. For example, a mentor through the licensure process might say, “how are you going to engage in self-care during the next few months when you have such a busy studying schedule?” We provide more tips for mentors to engage mentees when we conclude this chapter, but first, we address research on the importance of self-care, followed by the voices of the student co-authors, as their perspectives are vital for those of us in the mentoring role to remember as we consider this topic.

RESEARCH: IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE

Past research has addressed the importance of mentors (Ng et al., 2017) and educators (Bamonti et al., 2014; Kolar, von Treuer, & Koh, 2017) discussing and encouraging self-care. Research also indicates the benefits of self-care. Most recently and most comprehensively, Colman et al. (2016) took at closer look at previously inconsistent findings on the benefits of self-care for graduate students (a population frequently utilizing mentoring). Regarding the prior inconsistent findings, some past studies indicated that self-care reduced stress levels, but others found that some who engaged in regular self-care had higher stress levels than those who did not. Colman et al.’s (2016) literature search and resultant meta-analysis included 17 studies, with data from 1,890 participants, and 52 effect sizes. Overall, they found that that students who engage in self-care experienced more benefits (including decreased distress, increased self-compassion, and improved life satisfaction) than students who did not engage in self-care.
Colman et al.’s (2016) review concluded with an urge to engage in continuing investigation of self-care, and for those engaging in clinical work, to investigate if clinical efficacy improves when the clinician engages in self-care, which is a gap in the existent literature.

Of much relevance to our discussion of mentoring about self-care, Dorociak et al. (2017) conducted two surveys of Illinois psychologists at various points in their careers. Notably, psychologists earlier in their careers reported more “emotional exhaustion,” greater “perceived stress,” and more days of “poor mental health in the past month” compared to those later in their career (p. 433). In a comparison of self-care activities throughout the career-span, early-career psychologists in the first survey (but not the second) were found to engage in fewer self-care activities than later-career psychologists. Although only one of two surveys discussed by Dorociak et al. (2017) found that early-career psychologists engage in fewer self-care activities, and further research is warranted, a concerning possibility is that early-career psychologists might face more difficulties while simultaneously engaging in less self-care.

REFLECTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM A CURRENT DOCTORAL STUDENT: BC

In the next two sections, we present narratives from the student co-authors of this chapter, followed by suggestions to help instructors of psychology and mentors of students of all levels of higher education and early-career professionals to encourage and foster self-care.

Outside of the profession of psychology, in settings like social media, self-care may be seen as fashionable: sitting down with a facemask and a cup of tea on a Wednesday evening. While this certainly is self-care, I believe a mentor could show their mentee about what self-care really is, the less glamorous side of things, and discuss the importance of maintaining self-care. One way mentors can demonstrate self-care and its importance is to lead by example. Mentors themselves should be taking time out of their own schedule to engage in self-care. For example, a mentee might observe that their mentor in a workplace always makes time to have a nutritious lunch. If a mentor wishes, they can openly discuss how they engage in self-care (while still preserving professional boundaries with a mentee) and can create a safe environment if their mentee wishes to discuss what they do for self-care (e.g., exercise, walks, meditating, enjoying nature, leisure, healthy sleep scheduling) and the challenges they face. The learned behavior of self-care can be addressed in our educational programs (Bamonti et al., 2014; Kolar et al., 2017) and by our mentors (Ng et al., 2017), in both a discussion of self-care and in some cases, observation of mentor self-care.

REFLECTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM A CURRENT DOCTORAL STUDENT: EM

There are many valuable pieces of wisdom that I find are important for a mentor to address with their mentees regarding self-care. First, I feel it is important that the relationship between the mentor and mentee is one in which the mentee feels comfortable discussing his/her work and how certain facets of his/her work could lead to stress. For me, it has felt so relieving and validating to have a relationship with my mentor in which it I felt comfortable discussing my worries and concerns. Specifically, I have appreciated when my mentors have given me examples in which they too encountered similar worries and concerns throughout their careers. This put my mind at ease and reassured me that it is natural to feel this way during my professional development.

Secondly, in addition to openly discussing self-care (which can be done in a manner that allows for boundaries and privacy of personal life between mentors and mentees), supportive mentors can also address the appropriateness of mentees not over-extending themselves, balancing work and personal life, and allotting time to their self-care
activities (e.g., wellness, relaxation, hobbies, time with loved ones). Students and early career psychologists may be concerned that “saying no” to additional work tasks is looked down upon. It is crucial that mentors express the balance between taking on additional responsibilities/opportunities and understanding personal physical and psychological limits. It wasn’t until a mentor of mine expressed the importance of self-care that I took the suggestion of regular self-care seriously. Hearing how my mentor had struggled with the balance of self-care and work during their professional development made my personal struggle with self-care more relatable and I felt comfortable openly discussing how to work toward a healthier self-care regimen for myself.

PULLING TOGETHER OUR PERSPECTIVES AND THE LITERATURE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MENTORS

We conclude with some suggestions that might help instructors of psychology and other individuals providing mentoring (e.g., supervisors of early career psychologists) to foster the maintenance of self-care in their mentees. These recommendations are informed by our perspectives and the literature, and are certainly not an exhaustive list of ways mentors can engage in consideration and promotion of self-care.

- Instructors of psychology should integrate education and discussion about self-care into their coursework (Bamonti et al., 2014; Kolar et al., 2017). In fact, Dorociak et al. (2017) suggested self-care should be cultivated as early as possible in education and training, making self-care an important area of emphasis for mentors of students.

- Psychology programs may want to consider adding information on self-care in materials they produce for students, such as websites and handbooks. Bamonti et al. (2014) sampled clinical psychology doctoral programs, and utilized seven trained coders to review online program content (e.g., websites, handbooks) for evidence of information on self-care. While many programs mentioned access to services, only 11% had a general psychology department handbook that referenced self-care and only 32.4% had a clinical psychology handbook that referenced self-care. Bamonti et al. (2014) advocate for programs to clearly state the importance of self-care, and adopt self-care practices as an institution. We would like to note that self-care can be emphasized in both materials about the program and in services offered by the university counseling center.

- As discussed in the student perspectives in this chapter, instructors and mentors should endeavor to provide a comfortable, supportive environment and relationship to promote discussion of self-care. We argue that this need not be accomplished in an invasive manner. Mentors do not need to know exactly what mentees are doing for self-care, but they can certainly discuss importance of self-care and invite a discussion if the mentee wishes to share what they are doing and/or challenges they are facing in self-care.

- Barnett and Cooper (2009) discussed the importance of awareness of distress in seeking those who offer support and engaging in self-care; mentors can check regularly with mentees about self-care, especially during times that might be stressful (e.g., finals week for students).

- Mentors can help their mentees learn more about self-care by sharing resources on the topic (such as, https://www.apa.org/monitor/2014/04/self-care.aspx).
For mentors of mentees who are doing or will be doing clinical work at any level (from bachelor level social service positions to early-career psychologists in clinical or counseling), self-care discussions might need to be more explicit. One student author (EM) was encouraged by a mentor to work toward balancing different life responsibilities. This mentor suggested that when working in one setting, be present in that setting. When working in another setting, be present in that setting versus others. When at home, give yourself the permission to leave clinical work at work to be present at home with family and friends.

Mentors should emphasize the importance of setting aside time for self-care activities (e.g., wellness, relaxation activities, personal hobbies, spending time with loved ones). The psychologist author of this chapter (LP) found that regular self-care strategies are far easier to maintain when time is purposively set aside for self-care.

Mentors may want to engage in readings on self-care with their mentees. For example, for those engaged in clinical work, Leaving it at the office: A guide to psychotherapist self-care provides discussion, reviews of research, suggestions (many from experienced psychotherapists), self-care checklists, and more resources that would lead to valuable self-care discussions within the mentoring relationships, and/or for use in a course or even a book discussion group (Norcross & VandenBos, 2018).

When discussing specific self-care strategies or activities, Norcross and VandenBos (2018), in their conclusions from conducting and reviewing 35 years of self-care research, recommended “broad strategies as opposed to specific techniques” (p. 11) for self-care, noting that individuals may have a variety of preferences and options available to them.

While this list represents many options from a review of the literature and our personal perspectives, these are just a few ways in which mentors can address self-care. Because students who engage in self-care may have more benefits (including decreased distress, increased self-compassion, and improved life satisfaction) than students who do not (Colman et al., 2016), much responsibility will fall on mentors and instructors in psychology to integrate discussion of self-care into their relationships with mentees and students. Self-care will be important throughout one’s career span, so those who mentor all levels (students, trainees, and professionals) will benefit from encouraging our mentees to explore self-care and to engage in an active routine of self-care to encourage physical and psychological wellness (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001).

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION

Classes, research, theses, practica, exams, committees, and dissertations. For master’s and doctoral students, these are the unique aspects, and stressors, of graduate school life. While coping with stress and reducing burnout might be sporadically mentioned in graduate school, these are typically not regular discussions topics with supervisors and mentors. The goal of this chapter is to discuss stress in graduate school and identify strategies to reduce stress and decrease a sense of burnout. Please note, all personal experiences are those of Antione D. Taylor.

UNDERSTANDING STRESS

Graduate school has a unique constellation of stressors that are different than undergraduate education and most jobs. Typically, our graduate advisors/mentors provide guidance on career and professional issues, but, in my experience (ADT), talk less about dealing with stress and maintaining wellness. Among graduate students in particular, depression, anxiety, and burnout are salient concerns.

Before we discuss burnout, we first need to understand stress. A certain amount of stress can be beneficial for you. For example, the nervousness you experience before a speech or the pressure of a deadline can actually enhance performance through various autonomic processes. However, in excess, stress can endanger one’s well-being (Lazarus, 1966). Excess stress has been linked to a plethora of negative health outcomes such as physical health problems (e.g., cardiovascular disease) and mental health concerns (e.g., depression, anxiety; Brondolo, Rieppi, Kelly, & Gerin, 2003; Cozier, Wise, Palmer, & Rosenberg, 2010; Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009; Smart Richman, Pek, Pascoe, & Bauer, 2010; Williams & Mohammed, 2013; Williams, Yu, & Jackson, 1997). Sources of stress can be internal, originating from within a person (e.g., medical illness), or external, from outside a person, including difficult environmental and social situations. Stress can be absolute (a clear threat such as a natural disaster), or relative (an implied threat that is novel, unpredictable, and/or uncontrollable, such as being discriminated against; Lupien, Maheu, Tu, Fiocco, & Schramek, 2007). Further, there is great inter-individual variation ranging from mild to pronounced (Lupien et al., 2006) when confronted with stressors. Stress can also be characterized as acute or chronic.

More salient to the purposes of this chapter is stress as a response. Individuals respond to stressful situations in different ways. Initially, they may experience a “fight or flight” response when in a situation perceived as threatening.
(Selye, 1956). This response leads to arousal of the sympathetic nervous system. While this response may be adaptive when confronted with an absolute stressor, it can have a negative impact when experiencing more chronic, relative stressors. This may lead to burnout.

A seminal paper on burnout defined it as a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by chronic stress due to situations that are emotionally demanding (Harrison, 1999). Harrison (1999) posited that “people experience burnout due to a slow decay of their spirit due to daily struggles and chronic stresses, with a plethora of pressures, conflicts, demands, and yet so few emotional rewards, acknowledgments and success” (p. 25). The same can be true for psychology graduate students.

While graduate school can be a rewarding experience, it can also serve as a chronic source of stress, and therefore, may lead to burnout. Stress in graduate school may also exacerbate any pre-existing symptoms of anxiety. In my experience, graduate students seldom discuss stress or mental health concerns with their advisors, peers, or support networks. This conversation is very much needed as graduate students are more than six times as likely to experience depression and anxiety when compared to the general population (Evans, Bira, Gastelum, Weiss, & Vanderford, 2018). In fact, 41% of graduate students reported having severe to moderate anxiety compared to 6% of the general population (Evans et al., 2018). Similarly, 39% of graduate students reported having moderate to severe depression compared to 6% of the population (Evans et al., 2018). However, there are a number of strategies graduate students can use to decrease their level of stress, and maintain their overall wellness.

DISCUSS YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES WITH YOUR ADVISOR

First, many advisors may not have a complete picture of all of your responsibilities, including research, clinical work, and teaching. Keep advisors updated on all of your responsibilities and ask for help to set boundaries to avoid being overwhelmed by your activities. Further, let advisors know of significant personal events happening on your life, as it will help them better advice you and be more effective advocating on your behalf. If you do not feel comfortable sharing some of these details with your advisor, perhaps there are other faculty members who could provide advice and assistance. In fact, it may be helpful to talk with someone who is in a non-evaluative role, who may provide insight on how to manage your responsibilities. This person can be a fellow student, faculty member, trusted friend, or another person with relevant experience who can guide and support you.

TIME AND TASK MANAGEMENT

A mantra I developed in graduate school is “make the mountain molehills.” In graduate school there always seems to be an endless array of tasks that need to be completed. Even when you are relaxing in your safe space, there is always “something” to be done, which may feel overwhelming. Instead of looking at all of these tasks as one giant mountain, step back, and try to see each individual task as a single hill to bound over. Making daily, weekly, and monthly schedules can help you allocate your time to your various tasks and give you a more complete picture of how you are spending your time. Do not under-estimate preparation time for class projects, research activities, or teaching a new class. And if you feel overwhelmed, delegate tasks to others when possible. This is a great skill to learn as a budding professional, as it can show self-awareness and humility. Accept offers of help from family and friends. Know what your limits are. This can make tasks easier and more manageable, and hopefully lower stress levels.
PRACTICE MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is a moment-to-moment awareness of thoughts, feelings, and sensations. Practicing mindfulness means allowing thoughts, feelings, and sensations to come and go, without judgment or the need to do anything with them. It involves acceptance of whatever comes into your awareness in the moment. There are many ways to practice mindfulness, including using online videos and apps on your mobile devices. Practicing mindfulness does not take much time and can be done during daily activities. For example, mindfulness can be practiced when washing the dishes. The mundaneness of the task makes it easy to focus on the senses in the moment. The smell of the soap, the warmth of the water against your skin, and the feel of the dishes in your hand are among the senses of which you can be aware. Regardless of the amount of time you engage in mindfulness or your method, it has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and pain, and improve sleep quality (Black, O’Reilly, Olmstead, Breen, & Irwin, 2015; Kuyken et al., 2016; Shapiro, Schwartz, & Bonner, 1998; Zeidan et al., 2015; Zeidan, Martucci, Kraft, McHaffie, & Coghill, 2013).

ENGAGE IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

Engage in psychotherapy to learn more about your stressors and ways to cope. This might entail talking to a therapist at your school’s counseling center or finding a therapist in the community. Some therapists offer a sliding scale fee structure based on income. Psychotherapy is not just “talking about your problems.” It involves meeting with a trained professional to learn more about your own reaction to stress and more adaptive ways of responding. Some therapy may involve homework, such as tracking your moods, writing about your thoughts, or participating in social activities that have caused anxiety in the past. You might be encouraged to look at things in a different way or to learn new ways to react to events or people. Psychotherapy can be brief and focused on your current thoughts, feelings, and life issues. There are alternative methods such as online therapy, where you can receive mental health services without setting foot in an office. Therapy can be beneficial for anyone navigating a stressful situation, including being in graduate school. Remember, good self-care is proactive, not reactive.

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

People may isolate themselves when stressed; therefore, it is important to make a conscious effort to increase social interactions. Connect or re-connect with family and friends. Grow your support network, which can include mentors, classmates, and people with whom you have shared interests. Study with classmates, commute to school with friends, and engage in group activities. The social support I received during graduate school has been absolutely instrumental to my success, and my loved ones were there to celebrate the highs and help me weather the lows.

EXERCISE AND EAT WELL

Exercise can make both your mind and your body feel better. Exercise releases endorphins, which are the body’s natural tranquilizers, responsible for feelings like a “runner’s high.” Graduate students may put off exercise when under stress, perhaps due to a research deadline, or studying for an exam. Yet it is during these times of stress that exercise may be the most beneficial. Find a form of exercise that you enjoy. If you enjoy your workout, whether it is strength training, hot yoga, cycling, or weekly pickup basketball games, you may be more motivated to maintain it as part of your regular schedule. In my experience, doing some form of exercise with other people (I played tennis) was an amazing way to relieve stress and socialize with others. Along with exercise, it is important to eat well. Avoid the basic graduate student food groups of sugar, grease, and simple carbohydrates. Instead concentrate on fruits and vegetables, lean meats, and complex carbohydrates.
TAKE MENTAL HEALTH DAYS

If you had a cold, you might decide to power through and go to work. However, if you had the flu, you would likely need to stay home and rest. In fact, your co-workers would likely thank you for not coming into the office when you are sick. Mental health rarely gets the same respect as physical health. In my experience, my peers and I have been told to “get over it” when struggling with anxiety, depression, or similar issues. But mental health is part of overall health and it is best to take a proactive approach in dealing with it. Take a day every now and then (outside of the weekend) to practice self-care. Periodically taking mental wellness days made me feel more capable of succeeding in graduate school.

PROCRUSTATE, ACTIVELY

All procrastination is not created equal. Two kinds of procrastination have been identified: active procrastination and passive procrastination (Beheshtifar, Hoseinifar, & Moghadam, 2011; Chun Chu & Choi, 2005; Seo, 2013). Active procrastination involves making a deliberate decision to procrastinate and being mindfully aware you are choosing to do another task. Passive procrastination involves an inability to start or complete a needed task. Active procrastination is associated with a number of benefits, including lower levels of stress, increased creativity, enhanced decision making and ironically, getting more things done (Beheshtifar et al., 2011; Chun Chu & Choi, 2005; Seo, 2013).

The above strategies are ones that I would have liked my mentor to discuss with me in graduate school. I used these strategies as a graduate student. They helped me manage the stress of graduate school and prepared me to deal with stressful situations in the future. Thinking now about these issues will hopefully better prepare you to decrease stress and burnout while a graduate student and to maintain wellness.

REFERENCES


CHAPTER 14

STRATEGIES FOR MAINTAINING WELLNESS AS A PROFESSOR

KRISTI S. MULTHAUP DAVIDSON COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION

As challenging as being an academic is, I know in my bones that I have the best job in the world for me. Even so, after more than 20 years in this job, I still have moments of being completely overwhelmed. My training helped get me my job and nurtured skills that help me teach and conduct research, but it did not arm me with strategies for handling competing demands and the resulting stress. There are classic books on this topic, such as The Compleat Academic (Darley, Zanna & Roediger, 2004), and new volumes, including the present one. Before you read further, however, know this: No one source of advice will be the perfect fit for every new academic. Take what is useful from any source, whether that's a book, a colleague, a blog, or a Tweet thread, and know that it is OK to ignore the rest. I share the following strategies in the hopes that others can find something helpful. At the very least, may readers know they are not alone in searching for strategies to manage the wonderful yet challenging life of an academic.

SUSTAIN CIRCLES OF SUPPORT

Occupational stress and burnout are issues for professors (Navarro, Mas, & Jiménez, 2010). Fortunately, the stress-buffering effects of social support have been documented for decades (Ditzen & Heinrichs, 2014). Social support can arise from a variety of sources including life partners (Unger, Niessen, Sonnentag, & Neff, 2014). Additional options include affinity groups, such as reading groups, which can offer multi-layered benefits from information sharing to solidarity in the face of marginalization (for a case study of early career feminist scholars see Macoun & Miller, 2014). Importantly, a recent review notes that giving support is rewarding and stress-reducing (Inagaki & Orehek, 2017). The combination of giving and receiving of social support among several circles is the most impactful strategy that nurtures my own well-being; I offer three examples.

My first circle grew out of my institution’s new faculty orientation. Three of us started together at our institution and we still aim to meet regularly, currently roughly once per month. Members of this group come from different divisions of the college (natural science, social science, humanities) so offer unique lenses on shared challenges. After years of investing time with one another and sharing laughs as well as struggles, we know one another’s strengths and weaknesses. This positions us to provide frank assessments of whether professional opportunities seem like a good fit. We help remind one another that we are capable (efficacy); we have and will continue to succeed in our careers (optimism); each new class is a chance to make a difference in students’ lives (hope); and that we can handle challenges and learn from them (resilience; for further discussion of the importance of these four concepts in well-being, see Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015). Thus, if you connect with someone in your new faculty orientation, a faculty meeting, or elsewhere, check in with them at future events. You might invite them for coffee at some point. Hopefully you can build on your shared interests toward a long-term friendship, or at the very least a valuable colleague-ship.
A second example is a circle that also included faculty from each of the three college divisions. We agreed to spend 2 hours per week together in a faculty lounge writing. Naturally we spent the first 15 minutes or so catching up, but most of our time together was co-working focused on writing. We did not take time to read one another’s work; the weekly meeting was support for getting the work done. There are ebbs and flows to groups like this. For example, last year was chaotic for professional or personal reasons for all of us, so we suspended meeting. Next semester we will meet again, with some turnover in membership as teaching schedules no longer work well together and additional colleagues wish to join the coworking group. This example illustrates that a circle of support can be very focused (e.g., on writing) and may be a short-term commitment (e.g., a semester) and yet contribute to well-being (e.g., moving writing along, camaraderie, increased familiarity with colleagues across disciplines). To create such a circle, consider asking one or two people to be part of a writing accountability group; you could announce your plan to work as a group and let others know they are welcome—the advantage of co-working as opposed to reading drafts is that it makes the group size less important. I recommend creating this circle with colleagues on your campus to get to know your community, but theoretically this could work long-distance as well via electronic connections and/or in a coffee shop with colleagues from a nearby institution.

The most powerful contributor to my well-being is a third circle of women from multiple departments that blurs the line between professional and personal. In many ways, that blurring is exactly what makes this group so critical to each of our well-being. Together we have gone through tenure, promotion, births, deaths, marriages, divorces, and multiple college administrations. Again, the time invested in this group has resulted in tremendous benefits. We try to have synchronous gatherings at least once a month and have many asynchronous connections via email or text messages. In a typical week, at least one of us contacts the group to say that X happened (e.g., in class or an email exchange), and the initiator needs suggestions for how to best handle it. Cooler heads not involved in X are good at brainstorming, and well-being is enhanced by giving as well as receiving support. Moreover, members of this circle continue to learn from one another about teaching and professional skills. As icing on the cake, we also celebrate one another when we say NO (a topic that deserves its own chapter), respecting that there are only 168 hours in a week.

In summary, multiple circles of support which have different purposes and levels of commitment support my well-being. I have found it beneficial to include people from different disciplines in my overlapping circles of support. While the examples found focus on support from within my institution, additional circles include people outside of academia (e.g., from my yoga and Pilates classes, friends made while on a local non-profit’s board). A word of caution is that more is not always better—support goes both ways and if you are trying to contribute to many different circles of support, you may end up drawing down your resources faster than you replenish them. For me it helps to vary my level of commitment across my different circles of support.

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**STAY A STUDENT**

Love of learning is likely at the core of your decision to pursue an academic career. Feed the student in you! I mean this in a general sense, beyond the reading you do as you update your course materials with new research.

One approach is to attend talks and performances outside of your discipline. So far this semester, for example, I have attended a talk by a historian, most of a mini-conference about slavery hosted by our Africana Studies department, an author reading, and a documentary film. For me, exploring opportunities beyond my own department yields multiple benefits. First, learning about interesting ideas that I do not explore daily is fun. Second, being a student again, even for an hour, often suggests examples to emulate or avoid when trying to welcome people...
new to my discipline. Third, it models for students that learning is life-long and does not need to be tied to course credit.

A second approach to staying a student is to create cross-disciplinary connections related to your intellectual passions. For me, working with colleagues in German Studies, Educational Studies/Africana Studies, Biology/Neuroscience, and more has enriched my understanding of one of my specialties, memory, in productive ways (for details about the multi-disciplinary Memory &... series we co-created, see http://www.funjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/multhaup_10_1_a9_a13-km.pdf). Indeed, it has launched an experimental course in multi-disciplinary teaching (our Twitter handle is @MemDavidson where we post about field trips, panels, memory-related ideas).

Yet another approach is to seek events off campus. For example, I have season tickets to a theater with a friend who is not an academic. This gets me away from academia regularly while simultaneously challenging me with ideas I would not have come across in my scholarship. Similarly, I have a lifelong habit of reading for pleasure at the end of the day, even if for only 15 minutes. Student comments about what they are reading in other courses has led me to explore authors I may not have found on my own. For example, an advisee taking a course on Native American Literature recommended that I read Louise Erdrich’s work including The Plague of Doves; a student in my Psychology of Aging course who was also taking a graphic novels course recommended both Sarah Leavitt’s Tangles: A Story about Alzheimer’s, My Mother, and Me and Roz Chast’s Can’t We Talk about Something More Pleasant?; and a pre-med thesis student recommended Jodi Picoult’s Great Small Things. Indeed, I invite students to share favorite titles with me to add to my ever-growing to-read list, and alumni continue this practice such as when one working in business suggested Cal Newport’s Deep Work.

In short, feed the student in you to keep intellectual curiosity alive and well. You have limited time per week, 168 hours to be exact, but allow your love of learning some time to play.

SEEK SERVICE THAT FITS YOU

In general, I do not enjoy meetings. Service, however, often requires attending meetings regularly. The way I started to manage this was to volunteer for tasks and committees that interested me, some of which allowed self-scheduling of the work. For example, creating a newsletter for the department appealed to me because it was an action that could help build community. Each issue invited students, staff, and faculty to attend upcoming events (e.g., colloquia, meet-and-greets); shared information students could use, ranging from internship and job ads to conference announcements; and celebrated good news such as new grants, articles, babies, and awards. The newsletter helps promote the departmental values that good news for one of us is good news for all of us, all our welcome at our events, and learning is fun. Moreover, editing the newsletter allowed me to be creative with graphics and complete the work at times that were convenient for me.

In terms of College service, one of my most gratifying experiences was co-founding a Teaching Discussion Group with two colleagues. At the time my institution did not have a Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) so we created a grassroots group to explore common teaching challenges (e.g., sparking meaningful discussion, collaborating with students in research). Although this service was not officially recognized by my institution, when a CTL was launched and teaching discussions moved under its auspices, I was tapped to be the first faculty liaison to the CTL and that service was recognized. A second rewarding experience was serving on the advisory committee for our Center for Interdisciplinary Studies. I was appointed to that position after having several conversations with the Director.
Through those discussions we both realized my service in the Center would be mutually beneficial. I share both examples as service commitments that fit my interests, talents, and scheduling preferences. Whatever your own interests, talents, and scheduling preferences are, I encourage you to seek service that fits them. Fulfilling service expectations in this way is much more gratifying than being assigned to other roles. Moreover, when you enjoy what you are doing, that investment of time and energy can foster a sense that one’s work matters in the grand scheme, and mattering fosters meaning in life (Costin & Vignoles, 2019).

SUMMARY

My mentors taught me a tremendous amount that I use every day in my work as a professor. Periodically I hear their words coming out of my mouth in the process of advising my students. One thing missing from my training, however, was discussing strategies for maintain well-being and yet this is critically important to maintaining one’s ability to meet many responsibilities. Airlines advise us, in the case of emergency, to put on our own oxygen masks first and then help others. Analogously, professors need to maintain our own wellness in order to be positioned well to help others. Unlike the airline situation where the masks are one-size-fits-all, each of us can create a custom “oxygen mask” that feeds us. There is not one right way to create an academic career; make yours you own. I hope at least one of the strategies shared above will help you use your 168 hours per week in ways that support maintenance of your wellbeing.

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION

1. Graduate school is increasingly stressful (Curran & Hill, 2017; Hamblin, 2018; Levine, 2018; Naidoo, 2018). Students need to sink or swim to succeed. They struggle with the implicit (and sometimes explicit) message that they need to undertake constant action to outperform others. The resulting stress comes in different forms: fear of failure; perfectionism; psychological distress (depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation); burnout; fatigue; and academic stress (Beiter et al., 2015; Eisenberg, Hunt, & Speer, 2012; Ibrahim, Kelly, Adams, & Glazebrook, 2013; Keyes, 2012). But these different forms of stress have two things in common: they hinder well-being (and thereby possibly academic progress) and something can be done to reduce negative effects of stress. There are several approaches to reducing stress: focusing on the body (f.e., posture and breathing exercises), on feelings (expressing and reframing emotions), changing behavior and focusing on changing thought patterns. The scope of this article is on the latter.
There are seven steps that an individual can use to combat stress. These are:

1. Determine whether stress is due to lack of study skills, or despite current study skills;
2. Explain the basics of how the brain works in the context of learning and stress;
3. Make an individual diagnosis of the stress;
4. Set positive goals;
5. Provide several exercises;
6. Explain the neurophysiological process of change; and
7. Monitor results.

STEP 1. DETERMINE WHETHER THE STUDENT IS EXPERIENCING STRESS DUE TO LACK OF STUDY SKILLS, OR DESPITE CURRENT STUDY SKILLS

In order to exclude the possibility that students suffer from stress due to lack of study skills, they can conduct a self-analysis. By doing so, they gain a sense of control (of utmost importance in combatting stress) and they can practice their self-regulatory skills at the same time.

They can, for example, receive a copy of the booklet ‘Get smarter!’ In this booklet, brain facts are explained (e.g. the necessity of repeating study content and the need for regular breaks), study skills are described (time management, how to increase attention or combat procrastination), and important psychological aspects are shared (how to build a growth mindset, how to beat fear of failure).

After reading the booklet they answer two questions:

1. List three things that are in order or that you do well:
2. Name three things that could be better:

Stress can be reduced by improving knowledge of the learning process, celebrating and activating existing talents and by learning how to improve necessary skills and strategies.

STEP 2: EXPLAIN THE BASICS OF THE BRAIN WORKS IN THE CONTEXT OF LEARNING AND STRESS

If the student is not experiencing stress due to a lack of study skills, steps 2 to 7 come into play. These steps explain how the brain works when it comes to learning.

Learning is about the (re)organization of neural networks (Blakemore & Frith, 2005; Dumont, Istance, & Benavides, 2010; Jones, 2010; Medina, 2014; Souza, 2010). Because all brain processes evolve around connectivity and plasticity, all brain activity can be explained in terms of network activity. Fixed conceptions of learning and behavior are thereby placed in a dynamic context of possible change. This might only take a few seconds to explain.
Nerve cells form the most essential components of your brain. An adult's brain consists of 80-85 billion nerve cells (neurons). At the top of each neuron, there are the dendrites, the antennae, which are thin and highly branched. They receive electrochemical signals from other nerve cells and pass them downward. When you learn something, the number of dendrites grows. This means more connections, meaning creating new networks, strengthening existing networks, and expanding them or making them faster. With one nerve cell being connected approximately with 1,000 to 10,000 other nerve cells, this means the brain can form trillions of connections.

When you learn something new, the number of connections in your brain grows. You can positively influence the (re)organizing of networks in your brain through practice, repetition, motivation and pleasure.

The brain’s inherent desire is to make or change connections. That’s what it does. ALL the time, 24/7. – Mirjam Pol - Get Smarter!

What does stress do to this process? That’s easy: stress hinders learning. It does so through different mechanisms:

1. Stress hinders the hippocampus and thereby the formation of short-term networks in the brain.
2. Stress occupies working memory capacity. The mind needs capacity in order to try to restore balance. But it really hinders efficient studying, because you have to put in more effort, work harder, in order to generate the same capacity that is necessary to fulfill the task at hand (reading, preparing a presentation, writing a thesis).
3. Stress causes loss of prefrontal regulation. In a normal situation, we are in control of our thoughts, feelings and emotions. We can oversee our lives and the tasks at hand. We monitor our errors, make plans, we inhibit indecent thoughts or actions. All this is generated from the prefrontal cortex. Stress flips this process upside down. The amygdala, located next to the hippocampus, takes over waking (old) emotional habits (mostly the ones that do not help) redirecting attention into a bottom-up form of processing, resulting in attention bias and it releases stress hormones. The result is loss of control. This process is called ‘loss of prefrontal regulation’.

Despite all these brain effects, stress does not necessarily lead to bad performance or bad marks. But it sure leads to a more inefficient study process, requiring more effort, and increasing the chance of making mistakes.

Becoming frustrated only worsens the process, because frustration is a form of stress. What is needed is for the individual to get back in control of his or her thoughts.
Your thoughts matter. Your thoughts, or the electrochemical output of your neural thought-networks, determine how you feel and how you act (Gross & John, 2003). When you change your thoughts, you will change how you feel and how you act, by changing the output of their respective neural networks.

There are many interesting studies on this subject. One study, among men between 30 and 60 years old, explored how they interpreted their heart attack (Affleck, Tennen, Croog, & Levine, 1987). Some of the men were positive about their heart attack 7 weeks later. They thought, for example, that they had been given the opportunity to appreciate what they had, to grow, to turn their lives around in a positive way. Other men had a negative interpretation. They blamed themselves or others, for example thinking “You see, that is what you get for always being so stressed out.” The first group who had positive thoughts had less of a chance of having a second heart attack and were healthier 8 years later.

A second study (Keller, 2012) showed that people who indicated experiencing stress and who believed that stress is bad for your health, had a 43% increased chance of premature death, compared to people who indicated experiencing stress but who did not believe stress was bad for them.

A last example: researchers at Harvard told participants who were about to partake in a stressful activity, that stress is good for a person. A pounding heart means that you are prepared for action. Breathing faster is not a problem, on the contrary: it helps your brain to receive extra oxygen. It turned out that reappraising arousal improved cardiovascular and cognitive responses to stress (Jamieson, Nock, & Mendes, 2012).

These kinds of studies show the enormous power of thought. Luckily there are many interventions that one can use to positive change ones thoughts thereby improving health and well-being.

“You can change your thoughts. They are your thoughts. They are inside your head. It’s your head, your brain, your thoughts. Once you change your thoughts, you will feel and act differently.”

STEP 3: MAKE AN INDIVIDUAL DIAGNOSIS OF THE STUDENTS’ STRESS

Before inviting students to change their thoughts, it first needs to be established what their current thoughts are. Additionally, we need to understand their feelings and behavior, because feelings, behavior and thoughts are intrinsically intertwined (Fox et al., 2005; Oosterwijk, 2012; Spreng & Grady, 2010).

See if you can invite the student to speak the words or this word as literally as possible and write them down. If a student cannot find words to express their thoughts, feelings, and behavior, ask the student if he or she can describe his or her feelings (‘Do you feel more angry, sad, scared, frustrated, or hopeless?’). A last attempt might be to ask the student ‘If this [anger/sadness] could speak, what would it say?’ If the question does not lead to words, then ‘no words’ are the words that are internally spoken and that is okay.

You can use the form presented on the next page so that the student is able to see the interconnectedness between thoughts, feelings and behavior. It provides another useful elaboration of the concept of plasticity of the brain.
STEP 4: SET POSITIVE GOALS

When you ask students ‘If you don’t want to experience stress, what is it that you DO want to experience?’ quite often the student does not know how to respond. This is because often students lack the vocabulary necessary to answer the question.

If you are not able to describe what it is you want, the brain does not know how to contribute to a relaxed or a controlled (autonomous) state of mind. Our brains are goal seeking devices. For example, when you want to leave a current location (stress), you need to be specific on where you want to go to. The following form can be used to help students know where they want to go.
The ‘Situation’ concerns the situation a student wants to change. This can be the preparation for an exam, the exam itself, a presentation, the thesis, an internship, the support system, evaluation of grades, physical well-being, and etcetera.

Thoughts involve describing what is being thought. For example, I want a relaxed mind, I want to think “I can do this!” / “I’m worth a lot” / “I will get better, every time I try.”

Feelings describe the emotion or mood that is sought. For example, I want to feel satisfied, relaxed, proud, calm, energetic, optimistic, grateful, open, or at ease.

Behavior concerns the actions that will be taken. For example, I want to (learn how to) say ‘no’ more often, I want to go to bed earlier, I want to reduce time spent on social media, I want to ask other people to give me more feedback, I want to (learn how to) diversify my study methods.

This fourth step of describing positive goals becomes even more powerful when physical signals (biofeedback) are included (soft shoulders, slow breathing, relaxed facial expression, etc.).

STEP 5: PROVIDE SEVERAL EXERCISES

There are many exercises available on changing thoughts. Here are three examples:

1. Parking your thoughts
2. Self-talk
3. Re-attribution

EXERCISE 1: PARKING YOUR THOUGHTS

Casting away our negative thoughts will not work because they are our thoughts. They belong to us. Thoughts like ‘Let me study!’, ‘I hate [this part of me.]’, will not work because you cannot beat yourself. What you CAN do, is manage yourself. This is called energy-management.

The starting point is accepting the thought that all of you is okay even the part that causes you stress. You will park your (negative) thoughts temporarily. This goes as follows:

1. Get yourself a notepad.
2. Once you think a negative thought, note the time, the date and the thought (as literally as possible, do not censor!).
3. Address this thought with the following words: ‘I hear you and I see you. Tonight at 8 o’clock I will get back to you.’ When you have many of these thoughts, park them for the same time. If you do not have that many, park them for later (maybe until the weekend). Set a specific day and time for this.
4. Return to the task at hand.
5. Every time a new negative thought enters your mind, repeat the process of parking them.
6. At the exact date and time you have set, read the thoughts in your notepad carefully. While reading these words and lines, let it enter your mind what would be, at that moment, the best way to deal with them. Maybe you feel like listening to music. Calling a friend. Crying perhaps. Making yourself some tea. Going for a walk. Writing yourself or someone else a letter. It does not matter what you do, as long as you do
something. There is nothing to be solved, only to be listened to, followed by whatever comes to your mind (or heart). This can take one minute or two hours.

7. Repeat this exercise when you’re thinking a negative thought

In the beginning, negative thoughts will return often because they comprise a large and strong network which is easily activated. That is okay. By repeating the exercise, the network will be disrupted and the negative thoughts will start diminishing.

**EXERCISE 2: ‘SELF TALK’**

Self talk is an important instrument to motivate oneself when things get difficult. It is used efficiently in sports, where they call it ‘challenge appraisal.’ Self talk can be taught (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). And as it turns out, changing your thoughts means changing the outcome of the competition. You run and swim faster once you learn to positively appraise obstacles, setbacks and other (imagined) stress factors.

Invite the student to choose words or expressions that fit him or her. Also explain that in order to be effective, you do not have to believe the words you choose to be true. Invite the student to try different words and expressions in the week that follows, in order to experience strength (or lack thereof). Here are a few examples:

- I can’t do this YET
- I can do this I know I can do this
- It’s all about skills and strategies
- Time and dedication will help me
- Trying is the first step
- Learning is about trying over and over again
- The brain is like muscle: the more I use it, the stronger it becomes
- Mistakes provide crucial information
- A failure is only a failure if I don’t learn from it
- Tough is part of the deal
- Let me think in terms of chances and possibilities

Once the student has found words that (might) work, have the student write these words on a post-it and put it on the student’s mirror, or have the student make a screen saver for one of their mobile devices. The student could also write it on a small note and put it in his or her wallet. Tell the student to read the note aloud several times, like a mantra during the day.

**EXERCISE 3: “WHAT YOU CAN ALSO THINK, IS ....”**

There is wonderful and inspiring research on the power of re-interpretation. Jane Gillham and her colleagues for example have shown that interventions aimed at pessimistic explanatory styles in school children, have long lasting effects (Gillham & Reivich, 1999; Gillham, Hamilton, Freres, Patton, & Gallop, 2006).
The method is to focus on a particular situation and then ask:

1. What are you thinking in that situation?
2. What are you feeling? What are you doing?
3. What could you also think?
4. How would that feel like? What would you subsequently do?

The following form could be used to develop an effective intervention.

Start with a simple situation for practice. Here are some examples:

**Situation 1:** You are walking in the city. It is quite busy and crowded. On the other side of the street you see a friend. You call her and wave. She keeps walking on.

**Situation 2:** It is your birthday. You have received post cards, telephone calls and all kind of messages except from an old friend. You have not seen him in a while.

**Situation 3:** You have just given a presentation. You look at the teacher. She looks difficult, rubs her forehead and sighs.

Practice for each situation with all the four questions mentioned before, just to get a grip of the idea.

Next, make a list of the most stressful situations for the student. Ask them, for each situation, to do this exercise. You can offer different examples of changing thoughts.

It is possible that one of these three examples appeals to a student. You also can ask the student to do some (specific) reading, in order to learn about more possible interventions, or ask the student to find (on the Internet) a method that appeals most.
STEP 6: EXPLAIN THE NEUROPHYSIOLOGICAL PROCESS OF ‘CHANGE’

We cannot multi-task. That is good news. This means we cannot have an activated neural stress network (of thoughts, feelings and behaviors) AND a neutral or relaxed neural network at the same time (TEDx, April 17, 2011). What we can do and what we do all the time, is to shift from one task (network) to the other. We shift our attention from one task to the other, sometimes at an incredibly fast speed. The speed to which we shift attention is so fast that we do not notice the shifting of attention. This creates the illusion of multi-tasking.

“You don’t have to stop stressing. You have to become good at shifting. The more you shift and the longer you shift, from the stress network to the alternative network, the smaller and weaker the stress network becomes (‘Use it or lose it’) and the bigger and stronger the alternative network becomes (‘Fire and Wire’).

There are limits to how often and how long we can shift in a day. It takes quite some glucose, oxygen and water for the brain to use its willpower to shift. At one point, your quota of the day has been reached. In that case, thank your brain for the willpower it displayed, clock out and tell yourself ‘Tomorrow is another day, well done for today’...”

COMBATTING STRESS = CHANGING TRACKS:
Dr. Robert Maurer, in his book ‘One Small Step Can Change Your Life – The Kaizen Way’ explains how to circumvent the brain’s built-in resistance to new behavior, providing funny examples from his clinical practice. His main method is to take small steps – steps that are small enough to keep the amygdala quiet and asleep. By taking small steps, students can walk around the amygdala in stocking feet. Providing students with this image and explaining very briefly the neuro-physiological science behind it will help them persist.

Finally, warning that students will relapse, as a law of change, is important (“You will relapse and this makes perfectly sense. This only indicates how strong the neural networks of stress thoughts-feelings-behavior is....”). If the student understands this, relapses will be less intensive and shorter.

**PRACTICE DURING PEACE TIME**

Soldiers are also trained to combat stress (U.S. Army, 2011). And of course, they train ‘during peace time.’ So that once you need it, ‘in war time’ (for students this will be a test, an exam, a presentation, an internship), it will come easily.

Invite the student to practice ‘during peace time’ (in the supermarket, in traffic, with family members, etcetera) and to regularly monitor progress. What works? What doesn’t work? What progress has been made? Is it behavior (self-regulatory behavior; Burnette et al., 2013)? Well-being? Or is it a combination of things? Just as soldiers write down their daily (small) success in a “White Book,” students might be invited to follow their example and bring a “White Book” to the regular meetings with their mentor.
Finally, the seminal work of Carol Dweck (2016) provides inspiring, constructive, and practical recommendations of how to encourage students. These recommendations are to:

1. Praise effort;
2. Praise creativity;
3. Celebrate persistence; and
4. Focus on skills and strategies.

With increased knowledge, awareness, creativity and persistence, mentors can play a vital and inspiring role in increasing students’ well-being and their academic performance.

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION

When I first started teaching, I thought most students would be like me. They would be intrinsically motivated to learn everything about psychology, would want to go on to graduate school to learn even more, and would be able to financially afford college. I did not think about how rare getting a doctorate and then becoming a professor would be, and not representative of most students’ experiences. I wish my mentor had talked to me more about issues of diversity and inclusivity within the classroom.

When students did not do well in my class when I first started teaching, I took it personally. I thought that students who did not attend class did not like me or my class. I thought that students who fell asleep during class found me boring. I thought that students who were late to class did not take me seriously or were disrespectful. I also blamed students when they did not do well. I thought students who did not turn in assignments were lazy. I thought students who failed exams were not “college material.”

Then I attended programming on inclusivity and student success, talked to students about their experiences, and started to realize how many myths I believed about the student experience. Students were juggling multiple jobs and family commitments, struggling with mental health issues, and not seeing how their major would help them in the “real world.” In this chapter, I will describe some of these myths and how I ultimately changed my teaching to be more inclusive. I will focus on best practices in diversity and inclusivity within the classroom. Many colleges and universities are serving a more diverse student population than they did in the past and are becoming more focused on student success and retention efforts. This chapter will help fill in the gaps so that mentors are better able to have these conversations about diversity and inclusivity within the classroom.

MYTH #1: STUDENTS ARE JUST LIKE ME.

The face of higher education is rapidly changing. Nearly three quarters of students have at least one non-traditional characteristic (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Non-traditional is often defined strictly in terms of age, but this statistic also takes into account whether students are financially on their own, have children, work full-time, attend college part-time, or do not pursue college immediately after high school. Mental health symptoms related to stress (e.g., anxiety, worry, depression) are on the rise and millennials were more likely to report an increase in stress than other age groups (American Psychological Association, 2016). Today’s students are also increasingly racially and socioeconomically diverse. Over the last 15 years, Hispanic student enrollment has tripled and Black student enrollment has grown by 72 percent (Lumina Foundation, 2015). Around a third of students report struggling to pay for food or housing (Hess, 2018). Sara Goldrick-Rab and Jesse Stommel (2018) make the argument that today’s
college students are “radically different from the students occupying college classrooms even a decade ago” and describe them as the most “overburdened and undersupported in American history” (para. 1; para. 5).

Faculty are oftentimes not explicitly taught how to teach in graduate school, let alone in an inclusive way (Tinto, 2006). Instead faculty often teach and learn how they themselves were. This was definitely the case for me. I would assign groupwork, expecting that students would be able to find a time outside of class to meet up and work on their group project. Instead students needed to leave the moment class was done to pick up their children from daycare or head to work. After witnessing students’ complicated lives and schedules, I decided that if I expected students to work in groups, I needed to provide dedicated time in class or lab.

My other classroom approaches also were rooted in my own experiences. When I was in college, most of my classes had two exams: A midterm and a final. Recently, I unintentionally constructed one of my classes that way because of my travel schedule. Many of my students did not perform as well as they had hoped on the first exam and then they had only one exam to show any improvement. For students who know how to study, budget their time, and access resources, having only two exams is not an issue (Hogan & Sathy, 2018). However, many students are still very much learning the system, whether they are first generation or transfer students. A more inclusive approach is to utilize frequent low-stakes feedback so students can see how they are doing and what changes they need to make (Hogan & Sathy, 2018).

Faculty can also utilize culturally responsive pedagogy to be more inclusive. Culturally responsive pedagogy is an umbrella term that encompasses Geneva Gay’s (2013) “culturally responsive teaching” and Gloria Ladson-Billings’s (2014) “culturally relevant pedagogy.” Culturally responsive pedagogy appreciates cultural differences, taking an asset-based perspective instead of a deficit-based one. It also looks at how instructors can recognize their own beliefs and values and how they can account for students’ cultural differences in their teaching approach. Classroom experiences should be relevant to and reflective of students’ home lives and cultural experiences outside of school in order to be inclusive (e.g., infusing diverse images and examples; Ford & Whiting, 2010).

MYTH #2: STUDENTS NEED TO BE “WEeded OUT.”

While we may no longer ask students to look to the left and to the right and say that one of them will no longer be in college by the end of the term, this “sink or swim” mentality persists among some of my university colleagues. When I first started teaching, I did not think retention efforts were part of my job. This is still a belief that some faculty hold, especially when these efforts are not rewarded in terms of tenure and promotion (Tinto, 2006). Faculty can exert a large influence on whether or not students will stay in college (Tinto, 2006). We talk about students not being “college material.” There is an equity piece to this weeding out. Asian and White students have a six-year drop-out rate of 20% and 26.9%, whereas this number jumps to 44.6% and 35% for Black and Hispanic students (Shapiro et al., 2017). First generation college students are 51 percent less likely to graduate in four years than students whose parents have a bachelor’s degree (Ishitani, 2006). Around 20% of Hispanic men, Black men, and LGBT people reported being discouraged from continuing their education by a teacher or advisor (American Psychological Association, 2016).

Tia Brown McNair and colleagues (2016) wrote a provocative book where they argued for a re-framing of this issue. They assert that faculty and institutions should become “student ready” instead of the traditional narrative of students becoming “college ready.” Sometimes people working with students from diverse backgrounds use a deficit-based perspective. We lament that students are under-prepared for college work and blame the K-12 system.
Faculty should instead think about how they can be better prepared for today’s students, regardless of background. Faculty should view challenges as due to societal structures rather than to students themselves. This also requires institutions to critically analyze their values and beliefs about student success. We may need to form partnerships across the university (e.g., student affairs, counseling center, academic units) in order to increase student success and retention.

**MYTH #3: STUDENTS DO NOT RESPECT ME AND DO NOT LIKE MY CLASS.**

When I first started teaching, I took everything personally. Students who stopped coming to class did not like me or my class. Students who fell asleep or did not pay attention thought I was boring and a bad teacher. I thought every student behavior was a reflection on me and my teaching. Then I read an article about “passively failing” students, students who fail because they do not attend class regularly and often do not respond to attempts to contact them (Howard, 2010). Howard (2010) interviewed a group of “passively failing” students where he discovered that students were embarrassed about not doing well and often had family/relationship problems. It is also very difficult for students to come back to class to face both their professors and peers once they have had significant absences.

A few years ago, I had a Hmong student in my statistics class who was late most of the time. In class, he was very engaged, working with students nearby him and helping explain the material. One day in lab, he told me his story. He had five kids. He would try to come to class on time, but inevitably something would happen and he would end up being late. He told me that most professors took it personally when he was late, but I did not seem to and he appreciated it. He had noticed my approach and made it explicit.

Tanner (2012) asserts that we should critically analyze the assumptions we hold about students and reframe them. Is the student who is late rude, or are they dealing with issues at work? Is the student texting on her phone bored, or is she in contact with family members about someone in the hospital? If we perceive these student behaviors as being disrespectful or not taking us seriously, this affects our treatment of those students whether it is our nonverbal behaviors, verbal comments, or grading. I have had several conversations with colleagues about frustrating student behaviors. We often tend to personalize students’ behaviors when we should not. Students being late is not one of my triggers, but I definitely have a list of my own. Students turning in unstapled work is one of my personal pet peeves. After needlessly raising my blood pressure for several semesters, I started bringing a stapler to class as an easy solution. For larger concerns, I try to keep my own triggers in mind so I can be conscious that the issue is with me and not the student. Thinking about these alternative explanations has helped me over the years reach out to students and not take it personally.

We should also recognize that there may be other reasons that students of color stop coming to class. Sue and colleagues (2007) detail many possible microaggressions that students of color may experience in college, including feeling like they do not belong, are not valued, and are not college material. Race-based stress can affect physiological and behavioral stress responses and can decrease academic motivation (Franklin, Smith, & Hung, 2014). One coping response to this is isolation, in other words, not attending class (Franklin et al., 2014).
MYTH #4: STUDENTS JUST NEED TO STUDY MORE IF THEY ARE NOT DOING WELL.

In addition to passively failing students, I have also had my share of actively failing students. Buskist and Howard (2009) define this as students who attend class and engage with the material, but still show poor performance. In contrast to passively failing students, actively failing students seek us out to determine how to perform better in class. A few years ago, I had a non-traditional student who attended every class, turned in every assignment, took every exam, met regularly with me and a tutor, and still failed my class. This was a first for me. I had students fail in the past, but it was always due to not coming to class or not turning in work. My usual suggestion would be to study more, but this student was visibly working hard, with limited results.

I now think this student would have benefited from changing how he was studying, rather than the amount, and that he lacked insight into how well he understood the material. In other words, he had low metacognition. Tanner (2012) suggests a variety of ways that we can build students’ metacognition. For example, we can add opportunities for reflection within the course, such as asking students what worked well in completing an assignment, what they want to remember to do next time, and what did not work well that they want to change. We can also ask what was most challenging about an assignment or what questions arose in completing it that they had not considered before.

Cia Verschelden (2017) uses a diversity lens to account for another reason behind poor student performance. In her book “Bandwidth Recovery,” she describes how students who are poor or discriminated against face a “bandwidth tax.” Essentially, economic worries and anxieties about being stereotyped take a toll on students in higher education in their ability to process information. Students in these situations will “tunnel” or focus in on those concerns (e.g., worrying about being able to pay their bills), leaving them with reduced cognitive capacity and self-regulation needed for effective learning. Students who experience multiple stereotyped identities due to their demographics or financial situation would experience an even greater bandwidth tax. We often perceive self-control to be under our own personal devices, but Verschelden (2017) argues that the bandwidth tax may negatively affect poor and stereotyped students’ studying behaviors and ultimately their course performance, unless we take steps to be more inclusive in our pedagogy.

MYTH #5: STUDENTS SHOULD ALL BE TREATED THE SAME.

A few years ago, an African American student in my statistics class asked me if he could complete a final project instead of taking the final exam. He was very good at SPSS and our lab assignments, but he would draw a blank anytime he was faced with an exam. I was worried about making sure all students were treated equally in my classroom so I said no. Recently, I have been thinking more about equality versus equity in my classroom and wonder, in retrospect, if I made the right choice.

Equality is treating people the same way whereas equity is about fairness and making sure people get what they need. A visual is often invoked to better explain these concepts. Imagine three people with different heights trying to see something over a fence. If we treat them equally giving them a stool to stand on, only two of the three people will actually see over the fence. If we treat them equitably, we realize that the three people have different needs and treat them fairly to account for these differential needs. In this case, one is tall enough not to need a stool while the other two need different sized stools to ultimately meet our goal of having everyone be able to see over the fence.

Students learn in multiple ways but are often given limited means to demonstrate this learning. Instructors should utilize a variety of assessment methods to be more inclusive (e.g., Ford & Whiting, 2010; Qualters, 2017). The
National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment recommends that students be asked to choose the modality in which they demonstrate their knowledge, rather than only having one option (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017). For example, students may be given the option of a presentation, poster, or debate. Students still have to demonstrate the learning outcome, but how they show it does not matter. Then, rubrics are designed and used to evaluate these differing expressions of learning. This allows more student voice within the assessment process and leads to greater equity and inclusivity within the classroom.

Another way of increasing equity in assessment is re-testing students on exam material at the end of the semester (Verschelden, 2017). If a student performs better at the end of the semester on the exam, the former grade could be substituted with the later one. This “not yet” feedback encourages students to keep persevering and is particularly effective for first-generation and students of color (Verschelden, 2017). I have added cumulative portions to my exams and it does seem effective in sending the message to students that they should keep working hard despite earlier setbacks.

**MYTH #6: STUDENTS KNOW WHY THEY ARE BEING ASKED TO DO THIS PROJECT, PAPER, ASSIGNMENT, ETC.**

When I design my courses, I think about my learning outcomes and, if I am feeling particularly ambitious, may even utilize some “backward design” principles (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). I place my learning outcomes on the syllabus and briefly reference them on the first day of class. However, students often do not pore over the syllabus for these sorts of details and likely do not understand why they are being asked to meet certain course requirements.

Recent work suggests that we should make our assignments more “transparent” so that students better understand why they are being asked to do the work, which helps decrease equity gaps (Winkelmes, 2013). Transparency involves making the purpose, task, and criteria for assignments explicit for students. In the purpose, instructors delineate the skills and knowledge that students will develop by working on an assignment. For the task portion, the assignment is broken down into steps. The criteria part focuses on giving students examples for evaluation, such as a checklist, rubric, or annotated examples of past student work. Past research on transparency has found that there is increased learning when the learning outcomes and rationale for those are explicitly discussed in class before students begin an assignment, especially for first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students (Winkelmes et al., 2016). This need not be an overwhelming exercise either. Winkelmes et al. (2016) found these effects simply asking instructors to re-design two of their assignments with the transparency framework.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MENTORS**

As Goldrick-Rab and Stommel (2018) suggest, we need to design our classrooms for the students we have, not the students we wish we had. This may require re-inventing our teaching approaches and learning more about inclusive pedagogy. Mentors should encourage mentees to seek out training on inclusive excellence, equity, and diversity, but they also should set a good example by participating in professional development in these areas and partnering with other faculty and staff to work on student success initiatives (McNair et al., 2016). Becoming a more inclusive teacher is a process, not a destination. There is growing recognition that instructors should model cultural humility by focusing on this growth process rather than permanently attaining cultural competence (Mosher, Hook, Farrell, Watkins, & Davis, 2017). Mentors can also be more inclusive by diversifying their own classrooms, such as incorporating readings from researchers from diverse backgrounds (Cheung, Ganote, & Souza, 2017) and utilizing best practices in universal design (CAST, 2018).
Mentors can suggest their mentees approach equity in a data-minded way. Just as we utilize mid-semester and final evaluations to make course corrections, we can ask students if there is anything we can do to make them feel more comfortable or safe in the classroom. We can add questions on classroom climate to our mid-semester and final evaluations, such as asking for ways that students can feel included and what has previously made them feel excluded in the class (Hogan & Sathy, 2018). Increasingly, colleges and universities are collecting data on student outcomes and disaggregating it based on gender, race/ethnicity, first-generation status, Pell grant eligibility, and more. In conjunction with your Institutional Research Office, mentors and mentees can discover if there are inequities in their own classrooms and then discuss and initiate changes to reduce equity gaps.

Mentors should reflect on their own beliefs and assumptions for students’ behaviors. Mentors have likely discussed student issues with their mentees, but they may not have considered alternative explanations for students’ behaviors. It may help to get back into a student mindset. Go to a training, department meeting, or conference. How are you acting as a “student?” Are you hanging on every word and taking copious notes, or are you on your phone or checking your e-mail? You might have a lot more empathy for students when you imagine this experience is multiplied 4 to 6 times with each instructor having their own idiosyncratic style and requirements. Helping mentees critically analyze their own assumptions about student behaviors will be immensely helpful as they embark on their own teaching careers and look to improve their teaching.

CONCLUSION

James Lang (2018), the author of “Small Teaching,” wrote a recent article on compassion. He had given students feedback on their papers in the learning management system (LMS) and told them if they could not see it, they should ask another student. No one could actually see the feedback though because he had incorrect settings that prevented students from viewing the feedback, but no one told him about the problem until a week after the feedback had been posted. He realized that his comment was probably due to past frustration with students asking basic LMS questions. How often are we asked basic questions on the syllabus or about an assignment? He argues that compassion is the answer. Students can still be prompted to solve these questions on their own, but how we respond to them in our tone of voice, nonverbal behaviors, and length of response can be compassionate. He expresses it as “my first response should always be an acknowledgement that the human being in front of me has made major sacrifices to be in my classroom” (para. 22). Compassion is a great step toward becoming a more inclusive professor and not falling prey to myths about today’s students.

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION

As gender affects the ways individuals understand and behave in the world, it also influences the mentoring relationship. Dynamics, goals, and structures of mentoring undergraduate students may be enriched by individuals’ gender identities and presentations. Gender becomes an even more pivotal element of mentorship when the participants are engaged in research that explores issues of power. In our case, we are an undergraduate student (Michl, mentee; pronouns they/she) and a faculty member (Kracen, mentor; pronouns she/her) who have conducted research together for the past four years. In this chapter, we discuss how we have explored our own gender differences (gender expansive and cisgender) in our professional relationship. In addition, we examine the creation of safer mentorship spaces and the maintenance of professional and emotional boundaries. We make suggestions for creating supportive mentoring relationships that celebrate gender diversity.

POSITIONALITY

Mentorship can be strengthened by addressing issues of intersectionality, gender and boundaries. We are not experts in mentorship; rather, we share our efforts as a consideration of one model of mentorship that has been intentionally thoughtful about gender issues. As an undergraduate student in gender studies and an associate professor of psychology, we have worked together for nearly four years. Our relationship began in an introductory psychology course, shortly after which Kracen invited Michl to assist with a research study. A few months later, two additional undergraduate students began assisting with the study, and this research team collaborated on two research studies over the course of two and a half years. In addition to faculty-driven research projects, we also worked together on several studies initiated by Michl.

The content of our collaborative projects has included issues of power, culture, gender, professional dynamics and identity, and all research collaborations have been qualitative in nature. For this reason, we have frequently discussed our personal biases that may affect our relationships to the data we collected, analyzed and disseminated, as bias transparency is a crucial component of qualitative research. Due to the identity- and power-centric content of our research, as well as our discussions of ethics and personal biases, conversations surrounding our own identities have been crucial to our professional relationship. Importantly, we are both white, while Michl is a gender expansive person and Kracen is a cisgender woman. Michl’s understanding of and relationship to their own gender has changed considerably over the course of this mentoring relationship, and Kracen’s open and curious approach

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8 We would like to thank Alex Cornejo, Dr. Morgan Grotewiel, and the editors of this book for providing feedback on this chapter; we appreciate their expertise.
has helped to create space for this development. Personal issues of gender and identity have been acknowledged intentionally, supportively and professionally within our relationship and have been important to our growth as collaborators and to the richness and integrity of our research. Drawing on our experiences, as well as the existing published literature, we make recommendations for cultivating mentoring relationships that respect and celebrate gender diversity.

**KEY TERMS**

Unless otherwise noted, the use of the term *gender* in this chapter refers to *gender identity*, “one’s innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One’s gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth” (Human Rights Campaign [HRC], 2019, paragraph 15). Although related, the concept of *gender expression* is distinct from gender identity, as it indicates the “[external] appearance of one’s gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine” (HRC, 2019, paragraph 13).

The following are definitions of identities referenced in this chapter. It is important to note that, although the experiences of gender and sexual minorities are often conflated, gender and sexuality are distinct constructs. Individuals may (but do not necessarily) identify simultaneously with more than one of the identities listed. *Cisgender* (or cis) individuals are people whose genders align with the sex they were assigned at birth. *Transgender* (or trans) individuals are people whose genders differ from the sex they were assigned at birth. Some transgender people identify within the gender binary (as men or women); however, transgender can also be used as an umbrella term to encompass many gender identities that challenge binary models of gender. *Gender expansive* individuals identify and/or express their genders in ways that broaden cultural understandings of gender. This identity can encompass people who are genderqueer, nonbinary, gender nonconforming, and otherwise not cisgender. *Gender nonconforming* (GNC) refers to “people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category” (HRC, 2019, paragraph 16). *Queer* is a historically derogatory term that has been re-appropriated by many LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, and other) individuals who now utilize it as an identity label. This term may refer to gender and/or sexuality and can function as an umbrella term for people who are not heterosexual and/or not cisgender.

**MENTORING**

There is widespread acceptance that mentoring has numerous benefits. According to Ragins and Kram (2007, p. 3), “...mentoring can be a life-altering relationship that inspires mutual growth, learning, and development. Its effects can be remarkable, profound, and enduring; mentoring relationships have the capacity to transform individuals, groups, organizations, and communities.” With such benefits, there has been an increased recognition across academia of the importance of mentoring undergraduate students to accomplish academic, professional, and developmental tasks. Johnson (2016, p. 145) elucidates these developmental tasks for traditionally aged students as, “...developing self-confidence and competence, becoming autonomous, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing an emerging young adult identity, developing a sense of purpose (‘the dream’), and managing emotions effectively in relationships.” This development often occurs as students explore, clarify and celebrate their gender identities.
Undergraduate research experiences are seen as a high impact learning experience (Kuh, 2008), and thus institutions increasingly have encouraged faculty members to mentor students. In working with students on research, psychology faculty members have multiple opportunities to support them. As the field of psychology becomes increasingly diverse (American Psychological Association, 2018), faculty members have the pleasure to work with individuals from varied backgrounds and identities. Faculty can nurture their passion for psychology and science in general, and through their mentoring relationships, they can support students with marginalized identities and help them fight back against oppressive gender binary systems. Singh (2016) writes about working with transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) therapy clients, but her call to action is useful when applied to TGNC and questioning students as well. She writes, “Psychologists must find ways to unpack multiple gender binaries when working with TGNC clients—not just of man and woman. There must also be an interrogation of the gender binary between cisgender and TGNC people to become truly TGNC-competent. To do so, psychologists must challenge the gender binary that not only separates cisgender and TGNC people into ‘women’ or ‘men,’ but also the essentialist gender binary that divides cisgender and TGNC people into separate and nonoverlapping social identity categories” (Singh, 2016, p. 757).

In working with students, especially those exploring gender identity issues or other marginalized identities, mentoring will benefit from being intentional, developmental, relational, and critical. Johnson (2002, p. 88), nearly twenty years ago, encouraged colleagues in psychology to initiate a paradigm shift from viewing mentoring as a “secondary or collateral duty to intentional, professional activity.” He argued that this shift requires preparation and thoughtful engagement. Strong models of mentoring, such as those proposed by Johnson (2002; 2016), recommend taking a developmental approach, specifically meeting a student where they are at in terms of knowledge, skills, and needs. A student’s needs change over time and a good relationship can attend and respond to emerging information. Relational mentoring differs from traditional mentoring in that it prioritizes a collaborative, egalitarian approach that yields high-quality relationships. According to Ragins (2016, p. 229), “. . . high-quality relational states yield experiences of close mentoring bonds, which reflect strong emotional attachment, as well as high levels of mutual learning, growth, generativity, and empowerment.” Weiston-Serdan (2017) argues that truly transformational mentoring relationships need to challenge the status quo. Her model of critical mentoring puts the mentee and their intersectional identity in the forefront, while considering the cultural, contextual and systems of oppression that the relationship operates in. Mentoring can have lifelong benefits for all people involved. Ragins (2016, p. 242) writes that mentoring relationships “. . . affect us in profound and enduring ways. They inspire us to flourish and find our best and authentic selves . . . They offer safe havens that accept us for who we really are, giving us the freedom to experiment and grow in our careers and lives.”

INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality is a perspective useful in all social relationships, especially those containing inherent power disparities such as mentoring relationships. Intersectionality allows us to understand the social, personal and political worlds, as “people’s lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other” (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 2). The term “intersectionality” was coined by Black feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1991) in specific reference to the legal separation of gender and racial identities; when Blackness and womanhood are conceptualized as separate identities and experiences, the unique interactions of these identities in the lives of Black women are erased. According to Gray and Cooke (2018), the concept of intersectionality was theorized earlier by North American Black lesbian socialist feminists such as the Combahee River Collective (Eisenstein, 1978) and even in 1851 by Sojourner Truth during her “Ain’t I A Woman?” speech.
application of this concept has since been expanded to numerous academic fields (psychology, criminology, feminist studies, applied linguistics, etc.) and identity categories (ability, immigration status, sexual orientation, etc.) (Carbado, Crenshaw, May, & Tomlinson, 2013; Gray & Cooke, 2018). The perspective of intersectionality facilitates complex analyses that are utilized in academic and legal work, but which are also useful in everyday social interaction. Intersectionality not only argues that all forms of oppression are interrelated and connected, but it also posits that there is no universal “Black experience,” “woman’s experience,” “queer experience,” etc. Instead, the ways in which a specific identity (whether it be socially dominant or marginalized) manifests in the life of an individual is entirely dependent on the other identities they hold. The intersection of various identities creates an individual’s particular life experience.

Intersectionality theory, then, is not only a useful tool for scholars and academic thinkers. It also is a framework through which the lay person can more fully understand themselves and others in relation to the countless and intersecting factors at play in the social world. In interpersonal relationships, implementing intersectional thought has the potential to create solidarity through shared experience and to celebrate differences. The theory also allows for the cultivation of spaces which prioritize community, individuality and empathy. In relationships which inherently contain uneven distributions of power (such as mentoring relationships), it becomes even more crucial to utilize the lens of intersectionality in order to make power and privilege visible and transparent. Transparency is crucial in building the trust and respect out of which a mutually beneficial, authentic and supportive mentoring relationship can grow. According to Noy and Ray (2012, p. 885), implementing an intersectionality approach within higher education “reformulates how to view the meaning and interpretation of relations between faculty and students by deconstructing traditional frames of whiteness and maleness.” This approach can also be used to deconstruct other dominant frames of identity such as middle-class status, normative physical and cognitive ability status, and cis- and heteronormativity.

In their study examining race and gender in academic relationships, Noy and Ray (2012) found that compared to other graduate students, women of color viewed their advisors to be less respectful. This finding led the researchers to presume that “perhaps racialized processes discussed in other areas of social life are also present in graduate education in the form of perceived discrimination in student-advisor relationships” (Noy & Ray, 2012, p. 903). These findings highlight questions which are useful to think through for both mentors and mentees: How does intersectionality play out in academic mentorship? Why is it especially important to be mindful of power hierarchies and intersecting identities within mentoring relationships? How are these relationships similar to other interpersonal relationships, and how are they different? What are the salient identities (race, gender, class, ability, sexuality, immigrant status, etc.) which intersect to create unique life experiences for a mentor and mentee? What are the commonalities between one’s own intersectional life experience and that of one’s mentor/mentee? In what ways do experiences diverge? How can spaces be created to honor and celebrate these differences, and how might they be utilized as tools to grow as individuals and collaborators?

In their study, Noy and Ray (2012) identify six dimensions of mentorship, including affective, instrumental, intellectual, exploitative, available and respectful mentorship. It is significant that women of color specifically cited receiving less instrumental support, as this includes “providing students with survival skills for being academics in their discipline, building professional relations on behalf of and with students, showing students how to obtain funding and publish, and advocating on students’ behalves” (Noy & Ray, 2012, p. 902). These findings are notable in the context of intersectionality because they indicate that (conscious and unconscious) biases and discrimination within mentoring relationships have the potential to negatively affect students’ professional futures in academia. Adopting an intersectionality perspective may encourage mentors and mentees to recognize the ways different types of power are influencing their relationship. In addition to power derived from dominant social identities (e.g.,
white, cisgender, male), there are inherent power differentials between a mentor and mentee due to professional status and affiliation with a college or university. For instance, a faculty member determines grades, authorship, access to funding, and quality of recommendation letters, thereby serving as a gatekeeper to graduate school and a professional field. Although an imbalance of power is unavoidable in mentoring relationships, the recognition and transparent acknowledgement of its effects has the potential to facilitate the creation of helpful boundaries, and, when possible, the deconstruction and/or redistribution of certain kinds of power to create more just and productive mentoring spaces.

Since the birth of “intersectionality,” it has become extremely important to and widely used in both academic and non-academic spaces. Some claim that the concept’s popularity, although heartening for those invested in struggles for social justice, has allowed for its oversimplification, depoliticization and white-washing (Gray & Cooke, 2018). It is important to note that we, as the authors of the current chapter, are white, and we recognize and celebrate the radical Black feminist roots of intersectionality. It is not our intention to center our whiteness, gender and sexual identities in order to depoliticize or deracialize the concept of intersectionality. Rather, in our relationship, we have attempted to examine the ways that our whiteness is gendered, classed and affected by countless other statuses, as well as the ways our genders (and other identities) are raced as white so as to develop nuanced understandings of who we are in relationship to one another, to our research and to the larger social world. We hope to encourage others in mentoring relationships to engage with intersectionality as a tool characterized by “attention to complexity, a focus on social inequality, social structures and the ways in which these relate to lived experience and the struggle for social justice in specific socio-economic contexts” (Gray & Cooke, 2018, p. 404).

GENDER

As this chapter explores the celebration of gender diversity within mentorship, some background is necessary in regard to gender as an identity, social construction and factor in human relationships. Gender, according to renowned sociologist and gender theorist Judith Lorber (2006, p. 276), “is such a familiar part of daily life that it usually takes a deliberate disruption of our expectations of how women and men are supposed to act to pay attention to how it is produced.” Lorber’s conception of gender as a social phenomenon which is produced and reproduced daily through interpersonal interactions is widely accepted and echoed by experts in the fields of sociology, gender studies, and psychology. Gender is not something which inherently or fundamentally exists, as “there is no essential femaleness or maleness, femininity or masculinity, womanhood or manhood, but once gender is ascribed, the social order constructs and holds individuals to strongly gendered norms and expectations” (Lorber, 2006, p. 278). Sex is distinct from gender because it is assigned at birth based upon the appearance of a child’s genitals (Lorber, 2006). Although sex is often understood as an objective, biological fact, sex is, like gender, socially constructed in that humans have attached particular meanings, expectations, roles and ideas to sex. It is important to note that, although gender and sex are socially constructed, this does not negate the fact that these identities are intimately felt. Socially constructed identities have tangible implications for individuals’ experiences of safety and access to opportunities.

The United States is a highly gendered society in which gender affects the ways individuals think, behave and interact with one another. Gender is an important component of social life in that there is often a simultaneous gender self-categorization and outside gender assumption and categorization from peers, colleagues, mentors, strangers, etc. The ways that individuals express their genders at any given moment may be dependent on the genders of those with whom they are interacting, and the assumptions an individual makes about another’s gender may be dependent on their own gendered experiences and biases (Mehta & Dementieva, 2016). Additionally, gender is hierarchical in
the ways that it institutionally and interpersonally places more value on certain individuals (cisgender men) than others (cis-women, trans and gender nonconforming people). In these ways, gender (as an identity, system of categorization and hierarchical order) affects every human relationship because it is omnipresent in our social world. In seemingly objective mentoring activities such as research, clinical supervision and professional development, gender plays an important role. As it has shaped the life experience of the individuals, it often influences mentorship dynamics, researcher bias and interaction with data.

Although gender plays an important role in all mentoring relationships, its salience cannot be understated when conducting research which grapples with questions of power, gender, race, etc. Positionality (closely related to standpoint theory) is a concept popularized by feminist researchers which is now utilized mainly in qualitative research conducted from many disciplinary frameworks (Hesse-Biber & Brooks, 2007). According to D’Silva and her colleagues (2016, p. 97), standpoint theories “start from the general notion that one’s position in society, including [their] identity construction(s) and cultural background(s), influences the way they perceive the world.” In order to conduct ethical research about and/or within specific communities (namely marginalized populations), researchers must actively acknowledge the ways their identities, life experiences, worldviews, and statuses as “insider” or “outsider” in participant communities may influence their data collection, analysis and dissemination methods (D’Silva et al., 2016). In research teams, this process of researcher positioning is most useful when approached collaboratively.

Within mentoring relationships, creating space for discussions of relevant researcher identities such as gender, race, sexuality, nationality, ability, class, etc. is not only useful in terms of relationship development, but also in terms of conducting ethical and justice-oriented research. For example, when conducting research with trans and gender nonconforming populations, we engaged in numerous discussions surrounding the ways our own gender identities, expressions and biases may interact with our participants, data and methods (Meezan & Martin, 2009). Circling back to intersectionality, although gender was a crucial element to the aforementioned research project, it was important for us to remain aware that gender does not exist in a vacuum. As gender is raced and classed, in our discussions of our respective positions as cisgender and gender expansive, we were also required to engage with our whiteness, our class statuses and our sexualities in order to adequately understand our own identities in reference to our research subjects.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CREATING SAFER SPACES**

Trans and gender nonconforming (TGNC) students at the undergraduate and graduate levels are likely to face both symbolic and physical violence within and outside of collegiate settings. According to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey carried out by the National Center for Transgender Equality, 46% of transgender individuals were verbally harassed and 9% experienced physical attacks in the U.S. as a result of their gender; these figures increase dramatically for TGNC people of color in the U.S. (James et al., 2016). In addition, nearly one-quarter (24%) of respondents whose classmates, professors, or university staff knew they were transgender were verbally, physically, or sexually harassed (James et al., 2016). In academic settings, TGNC individuals are often “subject to harmful experiences that lead to negative outcomes, such as having to leave school to avoid being harassed because of being transgender” (James et al., 2016, p. 137). In 2018, 26 trans people were murdered in the United States; in fact, the average life expectancy of trans women of color in the United States is merely 30-35 years old (Human Rights Campaign, 2018; ANNEX Press Release, 2014). These findings indicate that TGNC populations in the United States are disproportionately vulnerable to violence, and that academia can be a particularly dangerous space for TGNC
populations to exist. In order to ensure the wellbeing and academic success of TGNC students, faculty are well-positioned to intentionally cultivate safer mentoring spaces.

It is also important to note, however, that occupying the status of TGNC within (and outside of) academia can also be accompanied by many positive and rewarding elements. In fact, 90% of trans participants reported at least one positive aspect of having a trans identity in a 2011 study about trans experiences (Riggle, Rostosky, McCants, & Pascale-Hague, 2011). These trans-specific positive experiences included congruency between identity and expression/appearance, personal growth and resiliency, empathy, interpersonal relationships, unique perspective/insight, living beyond the binary, activism and community (Riggle et al., 2011). For this reason, mentorship spaces should not only be constructed in ways that protect TGNC mentees from violence; creating safer spaces also includes welcoming, affirming and celebrating the joys of transness and recognizing the uniquely positive aspects of having a trans and/or gender nonconforming identity. Results from a 2016 study on mentoring LGBTQ+ youth found that queer students sought out mentors who are good listeners, open-minded, non-judgmental, willing to learn about LGBTQ+ issues, interested in the student’s life and wellbeing, confident and generally supportive (Mulcahy, Dalton, Kolbert, & Crothers, 2016). Although the LGBTQ+ participants in this study were high school-aged, understanding their mentoring needs may still be useful in predicting the needs of gender diverse undergraduate and graduate students. Similarly, Lark and Croteau (1998) recommended that faculty mentors to lesbian, bisexual and gay students utilize affirming language, provide refuge from toxic and/or dangerous environments, recognize intersectional realities affecting students’ experiences, and intentionally engage with their own privileges and roles as a mentor to LGB students. These authors do not focus on TGNC mentees, but their recommendations may also be useful for faculty mentoring TGNC students.

Although this chapter focuses on mentorship dynamics in which the mentee is trans and/or gender nonconforming, it is also important to note that there are cases in which the faculty member/mentor is TGNC, rather than and/or in addition to the mentee. According to Robinson (2018, p. 112), LGBTQ+ faculty are generally “likely to experience microaggressions, harassment, prejudice and discrimination in the workplace,” however, treatment of these populations is dependent on individual campus cultures. Although this chapter cannot adequately address this perspective, the experiences of queer, TGNC faculty members must also be centered in conversations surrounding mentorship.

The following are recommendations for individuals who participate in academic mentoring relationships. The purpose of these suggestions is to aid in facilitating the cultivation of mentoring spaces that are safer for all individuals, especially queer, trans, gender nonconforming and other socially marginalized individuals. It is our hope that mentors and mentees can not only create spaces of respect and understanding, but also celebrate the richness of gender diversity and TGNC perspectives.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MENTORS

HAVE A WILLINGNESS TO LEARN

Although mentors are tasked with teaching mentees many useful skills, mentees also have the capacity to facilitate learning experiences for mentors. In cisgender mentors’ relationships with TGNC mentees, space should be created which provides the mentee the opportunity to correct or propose suggestions surrounding the mentor’s treatment of gender issues. In addition, mentors should make intentional efforts to learn about issues of gender, sexuality, oppression and power through their own reading, conference attendance, etc. Not only will this allow for the mentor
to approach these subjects with more information and nuance; seeing this effort to learn about important issues may also increase the mentee’s comfort and trust in their mentor.

CULTIVATE CLASSROOMS IN WHICH ALL IDENTITIES ARE AFFIRMED AND ALL JOURNEYS ARE CELEBRATED

As mentoring relationships often originate in the classroom, class dynamics have important implications for mentoring dynamics. As we all know, language is powerful and can be used as a tool to communicate respect. Utilizing gender-neutral language, then, is an easy way to create an inclusive classroom. For instance, saying “students” or “folks” when talking to a classroom, rather than saying “ladies and gentlemen,” is more affirming to all. In order to make classrooms welcoming to TGNC students, faculty should share their gender pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, ze/hir, etc.) in-class and in their electronic email signature. Doing so helps to normalize sharing pronouns, creating space for TGNC students to share theirs if they wish, while also implicitly communicating that the professor prioritizes respecting the pronouns, names and identities of TGNC students. However, mentors should not require that their students share their pronouns in large groups, as this may be forcible “outing” for some. In addition, mentors can invite their students to share any concerns or critiques regarding the treatment of issues of identity and power in the classroom. This also communicates a genuine desire to learn and a respect for the lived experiences of TGNC students. Finally, when appropriate, faculty should assign readings written by and about TGNC individuals. Centering the work of marginalized groups whose voices are often erased from academia is crucial to being an active ally.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOTH MENTORS AND MENTEES

ESTABLISH CLEAR AND CONSISTENT BOUNDARIES

Johnson (2002, p. 88) provides a useful guide to approaching academic mentorship in psychology; in his view, the goals of mentorship are to provide the mentee with “knowledge, advice, challenge, counsel and support in [their] pursuit of becoming a full member of a particular profession.” In order to cultivate a respectful professional relationship which has the capacity to satisfy these goals, boundaries must be created. According to Johnson (2002), mentoring relationships can be ethically complex due to the nature of their formation, their (often lengthy) duration and the faculty member’s overlapping roles. In an effort to avoid ethical ambiguity, we suggest that clear and consistent boundaries be created and continually discussed throughout the development of the mentoring relationship.

As was mentioned previously, transparent discussions of power, privilege and intersectionality are crucial in the creation of mentoring spaces which are mutually beneficial and as safe as possible. This is especially important in the context of simultaneous mentor roles. Often, mentoring relationships originate in the classroom, and mentors may continue to serve as their mentees’ professors. It is recommended that mentors discuss the ways these multiple roles should be handled by creating expectations for in-class and out-of-class interactions and dynamics which will allow for mentors to evaluate mentees with fairness and objectivity in the classroom. In addition, although conversations surrounding gender, race, power and identity can be intensely personal, clear boundaries allow for these discussions to be conducted professionally. Mentors can establish expectations for the content and frequency of such discussions so as to avoid risks of ethical violations and oversharings. As mentors have professional, institutional and social power in their relationship with mentees, they have the most control over the tone and dynamic of their mentoring relationships. In our case, Kracen engaged in intentional listening and expressing care for the student’s personal experience. She began each meeting by asking questions about Michl’s recent life events,
which allowed the mentee to feel cared for, supported and heard. This was also an intentional act of creating space for Michl to share details about their identities as a queer, gender expansive person. Personal discussions surrounding gender and sexuality were useful in cultivating interpersonal trust, in identifying areas of interest for future research, and in thinking through research motivations and positionality. Kracen never pressed for personal details and continued to utilize professional verbal and nonverbal communication during these more personal discussions. In this way, Kracen demonstrated that she honors the lived experience of Michl, cares about their wellbeing and respects their unique expertise while maintaining clear professional boundaries.

START FROM A PLACE OF OPENNESS AND CURIOSITY

Individuals’ first instinct is often to critique and criticize, especially in regard to that which they do not understand. In mentoring relationships, it is useful for individuals to set intentions to notice and acknowledge their own judgement. Once this tendency has been acknowledged, an individual can begin to move towards nonjudgmental curiosity. Bringing a sense of openness and wonder is instrumental in cultivating respectful and affirming professional relationships. This open approach can facilitate compassion for and celebration of others’ journeys of learning about themselves and the world. Refraining from judgement also requires that individuals recognize that everyone is on their own journey, and that these journeys may look different from one another. Within mentoring relationships, it may be useful to keep in mind that the mentor and the mentee are learning alongside one another.

DISCUSS BIASES

Maintaining transparency surrounding biases is useful in building a trusting relationship and in conducting ethical research. Utilizing the perspective of intersectionality, mentees and mentors can identify the ways that the range of social identities they hold intersect to create their individual experiences of oppression and power. This collaborative acknowledgement allows for relational power dynamics to become transparent, rather than manifesting in a harmful, implicit manner.

TALK ABOUT THE “TOUGH TOPICS” AND APOLOGIZE WHEN NECESSARY

In most relationships, there are uncomfortable topics to address, mistakes may be made, and feelings may be hurt. This can happen related to research tasks (e.g., determining authorship on a project), personal misunderstandings (e.g., being late to meetings) or missteps related to gender (e.g., misgendering a person). We advocate for honest dialogue when there are issues that feel uncertain and/or uncomfortable. Talking about tough topics, addressing hurts, and apologizing, when appropriate, can serve to increase trust and professional intimacy. For instance, in our relationship, we have both initiated challenging discussions about our research, ethical concerns, identities, and missteps we may have made. These discussions allow us to continue working together with increasing trust.

Of note, related to gender, many people are uncertain what to do when they accidentally misgender (use the wrong pronoun) another person. Sallans (2016, p. 1142), a transman, writes that when interacting with trans individuals, “…it is only a matter of time before a wrong name or pronoun slips out. Mistakes happen; we are human. What divides a forgivable error from offensive disregard is how the mistake is handled.” He recommends that, “When personal pronoun usage mistakes happen (and they will), apologize sincerely, and move on.” Pronouns are important, as they reflect how we see each other. Rather than just seeking to get them “right,” we may want to work to see each other more fully and authentically.
CONCLUSION

According to Russel and Horne (2009, p. 198), the “social and political worlds that LGBT people inhabit will inevitably be a part of the mentoring relationship, whether those worlds are acknowledged or not . . . Open and explicit acknowledgement of this reality is fundamental to creating optimal mentoring relationships . . .” In this chapter, we have drawn on our own relationship to discuss the ways that gender influences mentoring relationships. We also identified intersectionality as a useful tool for addressing and deconstructing power within mentorship. Finally, we made several recommendations for cultivating safer mentoring spaces for TGNC individuals, including having a willingness to learn, cultivating classrooms in which all identities are affirmed and journeys are celebrated, establishing clear and consistent boundaries, starting from a place of openness and curiosity, discussing biases and tough topics, and apologizing when appropriate.

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MENTORING PROGRAMS

BUILDING A MENTORING PROGRAM THAT WORKS FOR ALL FACULTY: A MODEL FROM A REGIONAL CAMPUS
INTRODUCTION

It seems that everyone knows we need mentors in an academic setting, but not everyone knows how to be a mentor or receive mentoring. As the person who has been tasked with building a mentoring program on my campus, over the past four years since I have been coordinator, and even earlier than that, I have learned many things about what mentoring makes possible and how to formalize those possibilities. This paper will start with background context for the current mentoring program on my campus, and move through ten steps for building a program, focusing on the need for knowledge, relationships, leadership, and institutional support. I offer these ideas not as a prescription, but as an opportunity to learn from another institution’s experience, borrowing and adapting as needed.

CONTEXT: THE NEED FOR FORMALIZED MENTORING PROGRAMS

I am an English professor, so let me start with a story. I was hired into my first, only, and still held tenure-track line at the age of 29. In preparing for the August commencement ceremony that would mark the end of my student years, a faculty marshal I had never met before told the group of huddled and jubilant soon-to-be-hooded people, “And now your real work begins.” Of course, I had no lens through which to understand the terrible truth and limitless possibility of that statement at the time; frankly, I just saw it as a buzzkill. For those of us who had been fortunate and scrappy enough to land tenure track positions, were we not now supposed to receive our reward?

The “reward” of being on the tenure track (TT) at my institution included a 4-4 teaching load of composition courses (due to senior faculty who felt deserving of all the literature core courses and upper level courses), immediate service responsibilities, and the harrowing warning that this job was indeed “publish or perish.” I made many of the classic blunders of junior faculty. I spent almost all of my energy on teaching--my students were there, equal parts pleasing and demanding, and so I did that work first to the best of my ability. I threw myself into my assigned committees, scared of making a bad impression. My exhaustion from the first two areas left almost no time for me to seriously consider research, and so I hacked up my dissertation and tried to get pieces of it published with no success at all. I nursed wounds of unfairness--both in my local department for the way courses were assigned, and in the academy more generally, which had more publication expectations with fewer outlets for that publication.

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9 I do not wish to downplay the importance here of a living wage, health benefits, and union protection, all things I have with this job, and which unfortunately are not available to all faculty equally.
I had been assigned a mentor, a kind and nurturing person who had barely (lore and her own stories confirmed) received tenure herself a few years prior. She mentored me, I realize now, from a place of fear—her experience had been so traumatic that the advice she passed on carried threats of ill treatment at the hands of faceless senior faculty from the “main” campus. Additionally, as someone who had limited success in research herself, it was difficult to receive any real advice in that area from her. And the more rejections I received (at least three in that first year, long awaited considering how much time it can take to move a piece through the peer review process), the less willing I was to discuss my research productivity, or lack thereof, with anyone. When I became pregnant in late summer after my first year, I started to entertain the idea of moving to the Non-Tenure Track (NTT), a fairly stable contingent full-time faculty position in our system. Or, maybe I would get “lucky” and my husband, who was still looking for a faculty position, having earned his PhD the year after I did, would move us both away and I would simply be able to stop worrying about the problems of the tenure track.

Now, I have the experience to understand that several obstacles were working against me, some of my own creation, and some not. While my PhD granting institution had done a good job in many ways of preparing me for the job market, it had not actually helped me understand what challenges were facing me on the tenure track. It had been implied that I got everything I needed when I got the tenure-track job, the “coin of the realm” as my advisor put it, and they sent me off. (My dissertation advisor did give me one key piece of advice during my first year on the job: “Quit wasting time feeling it’s all unfair. It is, but that won’t help you get where you need to go.”) My campus assumed that in assigning me a mentor in my discipline and giving me a booklet about mentor and mentee responsibilities, they were taking care of me in my probationary status. I found out later that the current faculty chair (a position that rotated usually every two years) simply assigned mentors for all incoming faculty with little to no input from anyone else. Some chairs did this more thoughtfully than others. My mentor, operating from her own trauma and experience, was unable to help me see a new path forward with my research, let alone help me understand that I was spending far too much of my time and energy on teaching and service and not enough for research, which was what I really needed for tenure in a finite time period. Some well-meaning senior faculty gave tidbits of advice, but they were of the “don’t publish on pedagogy—it didn’t work for X” or “never even put the idea of rejection into your reappointment file, don’t mention you sent that article out before” variety. I believe all of these people meant well, but the hodgepodge of information I was receiving, almost like secrets or myths, combined with my rejection letters, which I perceived as personal failure, led to my disconnection from the entire tenure process. If something had not changed, I would have left the position, one way or another.

Fortunately, circumstances changed. First, my husband ended up landing a job at the same campus, also a tenure-track position. A different kind of pressure, and desire, to succeed now took shape. We had a rare chance to be an academic couple in which both partners had tenured positions, without long commutes, and I wanted that for us, and for our baby. Long hours in the short term would, I hoped, mean security, more financial freedom, and less stress and work hours later. (I was only partly right about “less stress” later, as any senior faculty member knows.) Secondly, I found my voice. I started seeking out advice from multiple people on publication venues and strategies. I learned I had been given bad advice to not share in my annual reappointment review a thorough list of works in the pipeline, even if they had been rejected. And importantly, I learned that the rumor that research on pedagogy would not “count” was baseless in my discipline. My first publication on the tenure track was for a journal called *Teaching English at the Two-Year College* for the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and it was about my experience in the classroom at my campus. That success buoyed my spirits, and together with my new network of mentors—some in my discipline, some on my campus, and some not—I figured out how to succeed in my job.

Sixteen years later I am still there, now a full professor (the first woman to hold that position on my campus) and the local Faculty Mentoring Program Coordinator. My goal in running our mentoring program is to make sure no
one else suffers from the lack of shared knowledge that I did upon starting this job, and to help people find their version of success. The rest of this chapter will detail what I see as the ten growth steps for building a mentoring program. While these steps could be instructive to faculty in a variety of institutions, there are challenges and opportunities unique to my regional campus and university system, which I try to highlight here. Writing a “how to” about this particular topic strikes me as incredibly important, if not urgent, particularly for smaller campuses and regional campuses within a larger system where resources are sometimes even more embattled than elsewhere. But also, as I remember who I was as a 29 year-old junior faculty member, it seems somewhat miraculous. I truly feel, and tell mentees, that if someone like me can find success in the academy, so can they. Considering the higher education landscape today, anyone landing a full-time faculty position at a college or university has already been vetted in myriad ways. With knowledge, mentoring, and connection, these new hires can find success. We just have to help them get there. Here are my ten guidelines for starting a new mentoring program.

1. SEE WHAT YOU HAVE

Higher education has come a long way from the National Education Association (NEA) statement on its importance in 1993, in which “[m]entoring may be defined as a process in which one person, usually of superior rank, achievement, and prestige, guides the development of or sponsors another person, who is seen as the protégé” (p. 17). At the time, the NEA wanted to release a clear statement that mentoring programs could mitigate the once customary practice of ignoring junior faculty and letting them sink or swim until their first big tenure and promotion decision. This former mentality may have been a way to help senior faculty “[d]iscern which faculty have the ‘right stuff’”, a goal which in itself is not “transparently objective” (Fryberg and Martínez, 2014, p. 19). Fortunately, that culture has largely been dislodged, and “[a]cross professions, across fields of study, for students, and for new employees, mentors play critical roles in helping to foster professional and personal advancement” (Riofrio, 2014, p. 203). We know that mentoring is positive, even if we do not always know how to define it. Vicente Lechuga (2014) notes that there is “. . .no single comprehensive definition of mentoring” (p. 910), though it is still often seen as the typical dyad mentioned by the NEA of senior faculty paired with junior faculty. We now know that those dyads do not always work, and that often faculty needs for professional guidance and interpersonal connection could still be high even with mentoring dyads (Colón-Emeric, Bowlby, & Svetkey, 2012). For good mentoring, whether dyadic in format or not, we need “respect, proximity, comprehensive feedback, and mentor experience” as well as “expertise, honesty, accessibility, approachability, and supportiveness” (Efstahiou et al., 2018, p. 2). This is a tall order; it is therefore important to See What You Have already in mentoring at your institution before creating a new program. It will be likely that dyads have formed, formally or informally, and that some senior colleagues are already excellent mentors who share many of the qualities listed above. It may be just as likely that mentees (people who would like to be mentored or who are being formally mentored) are not getting their needs met in some of the common areas junior faculty have questions about: “Career development, research, and promotion. . .followed by. . .institutional resources and administration/service” (Voytko et al., 2018, p. 1045).

My institution had formal dyads assigned, along with a booklet on both mentor and mentee responsibilities, an idea perhaps slightly ahead of its time, as it is rarely noticed that “. . .mentees must be proactive, receptive to feedback, self-reflective, and committed to sustaining the mentoring relationship” (Efstahiou et al., 2018, p. 2). Some of these dyads worked, or partially worked, but many more did not. One mentee was given one piece of advice: “Look at X’s file; that’s what you need.” No other mentoring took place. Another colleague told me that her mentor did not know she had been assigned to her as a mentee, and the relationship did not improve much from there. I already shared the story of my mentor who meant well, but her own lens of the tenure track meant that her advice was skewed. Now I know that this system of the “guru” mentor is one in which we are setting up mentors for failure, as it is impossible for one person to be everything to a mentee, as I will discuss below. It almost goes without saying
that aside from listing a name of a faculty member you mentored on your CV, there was no reward at all for mentors on my campus. Worse, once I was at the Reappointment, Tenure and Promotion (RTP) table, I knew that the grumble of “Well, who was her mentor?” signaled the willingness to blame a mentor for their mentee’s shortcomings. While I was junior faculty, these dyads just felt like a lottery that some people, actually most people, lost, and if we were industrious, we could scramble to find our own mentors.

After I had my first couple publications and felt slightly more secure on the tenure track, I was part of a discussion in the Faculty Affairs Committee of the need for a more robust mentoring plan. The current Dean then (like the president or chancellor of our individual campus) did not see the need. In retrospect, I understand now that he had a great record with tenure and promotion on our campus, and that was partly due to a generous research award system that could reallocate time for faculty away from teaching to work on their projects, as well as a personal touch that meant he got involved when he saw faculty headed for trouble. To my knowledge, only three faculty did not receive tenure during his leadership, and near a score earned tenure, usually coupled with promotion. Still, as a junior faculty member (who happened to be the creator of the file my colleague had been told to replicate), I was already fielding questions about documentation and requirements, and I knew our mentoring program left much to be desired.

2. SEE WHAT YOU NEED

It is one thing for individuals to see what an institution needs from their perspectives; it is another thing for the institution (effectively, the administration), to see that they need to make changes: “Those institutions that acknowledge their limits are the ones, perhaps, who have the necessary self-confidence to engage intentionally and thoughtfully to establish effective mentoring programs” (Fraga, 2014, p. 259). Under previous leadership, the Faculty Affairs Committee was unable to build momentum for a better, more intentional, mentoring program. We spent a year offering workshops as “Super Mentors,” but as an unofficial add on to already busy faculty schedules, and with no one in charge, this program did not last. I want to note that when our campus was smaller, with a higher ratio of tenure-stream faculty, we may not have needed more mentoring for most junior faculty member’s success. But it is widely known that academia is changing, and all faculty, but particularly junior faculty, face new challenges: “The three primary forces of change that directly affect faculty members’ abilities to carry out their teaching, research, and service include a changing professoriate, a changing student body; and the changing nature of teaching, learning, and scholarship” (Yun, Baldi, & Sorcinelli, 2016, p. 442). Specifically, tenure-stream faculty have more duties, with less people to complete them, as their students are becoming more diverse (Yun et al., 2016, p. 442). The old mentoring system was not working.

We had our formal dyads (many of which did not work), and we had an informal peer and near peer group of newer faculty who worked together, from before or just after the tenure decision, to help each other create better documents for RTP. We also had, just after my decision, an open format electronic dossier system, in which anyone interested could see samples of dossiers. (This was great for seeking out excellent models; it could be more nefarious, though, when people combed over previous dossiers for purposes of finding problems in their colleagues’ cases, post decision.) However, as I became senior faculty and started to sit on committees making personnel decisions, it became exceedingly clear that some people were falling through the cracks of this informal mentoring circuit. All too often, we assume that people who do not ask for help do not need it. Far too often at my campus, the people not asking for help were outside of the predominantly white, middle class, American-born status of the majority of faculty. It was apparent to junior (or recent junior) faculty at my campus that “the traditional dyadic mentorship is strained when the availability of senior faculty is limited, or when junior faculty members are unable to find a compatible mentor” (Colón-Emeric et al., 2012, p. 631). Additionally, because women and
underrepresented faculty have additional mentoring needs, “new mentorship models to complement the traditional senior-junior dyad are needed” (Colón-Emeric et al., 2012, p. 631). It was past time to create change.

We needed, desperately, a more formal way to share information about how to be successful on the tenure track, and we needed a way to make that program helpful, transparent, and available to everyone. We had to find a way to move beyond the hierarchies on display in our dyadic and underwhelming mentoring program, mentoring that replicated the hierarchies of the campus: “(a) one-way, nonmutual relationships; (b) power-over, controlling relationships: (c) conflict being controlled or suppressed; and (d) devaluing of relational practice” (Hammer, Trepal, & Speelin, 2014, pp. 7-8). In a professional organization dedicated to mothering studies that I have belonged to for over two decades, I was told that once we make it to the senior ranks, it becomes our job to shepherd and protect the next group. This philosophy guides me as I try to utilize my “power to empower others” (Hammer et al., 2014, p. 8). Far from the top down, motivated by fear, sink or swim approaches my cohort and I had been mentored (or not mentored) through, we needed to provide all junior faculty with the same opportunities for mentoring and growth. This need, and seeing what we need, became the starting point for my colleagues and me on Faculty Affairs who had shared this interest in mentoring, and several of whom had been “Super” or informal mentors to and alongside me. Luckily, we now had the power and an opening to make change.

3. GARNER SUPPORT

I was elected Faculty Chair of our campus concurrently with our Dean of 19 years announcing his retirement. This meant that I became immersed in the search process for a new Dean, during one administration’s final year, and I had a close relationship with the new Dean as the whole campus underwent some major changes during his first year. Under both deans, one of my roles as chair was to act as liaison between the dean and the faculty, trying to understand important issues from both perspectives and to help communicate those perspectives to each body in a way that would lead to appropriate action. In other words, I had the new Dean’s ear. The culture of any campus is unique, and part of my job in that first year was to share my institutional memory with our new boss. This became key in the quest to garner support for a new and more holistic mentoring program. I was able to argue for a better mentoring system directly to the person who would need to support it; fortunately for all of us, our new Dean believed in holistic mentoring programs and immediately saw that what we had could be improved. We no longer had an uphill battle, which was fortunate as “a mentoring-rich environment will depend on administrative support” (Riofrio, 2014, p. 223).

Current faculty leadership believed in mentoring, and the new administrator in charge believed in mentoring. This coup was followed by another key moment: the entire university system was engaged in creating new faculty handbooks. Our task was to turn our older faculty handbook into a more streamlined one that was consistent with a larger handbook for the system, while retaining and creating our own policies as appropriate. At first, this task

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10 On my campus, of the three failed tenure bids I know of, ranging over 17 years, all three were white women. Additionally, several of our faculty who are non-native English speakers, not American born, or of color have had serious challenges in Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion. While those cases were all ultimately successful, one left soon after tenure and promotion, I believe, due to never quite becoming a part of campus life. We needed to do better to “. . .exen[d] pedagogy for equity to mentoring approaches, especially for underrepresented faculty groups, [which would] engende[r] opportunities to exchange tacit informal and formal knowledge about how to navigate the academy, thereby facilitating a sense of belonging and legitimacy” (Nuñez, Murakami, & Gonzales, 2015, p. 93). In one of these situations, where a faculty person of color (FOC) was having trouble with teaching due to students' perceptions of him due to his race and accent, one senior faculty member spent a considerable amount of time in his classroom, and the junior faculty member sat in on his mentor’s class for a whole semester to learn new techniques. This, not surprisingly, has led to success for that dedicated, new senior, FOC, and I believe he will be one of our new full professors in the next couple of years. We had pockets of great mentoring, but it was not universally available.
seemed almost insurmountable, as our faculty, former dean, and provost were unable to agree upon a new version we had almost formalized about seven years prior; thus we were working from an even older model contractually, while our practices had actually undergone much change. I asked our resident handbook expert, a previous super mentor, and dedicated senior faculty member to chair Faculty Affairs, and she accepted, even knowing it entailed having to get a new handbook through faculty council, the dean’s office, and ultimately the provost. Her leadership would become another piece of good fortune in the solidifying of a new mentoring program.

Practice, culture, and policy are all necessary ingredients in creating any institutional change, and different situations call for different approaches to program creation. In my experience, both with this program and with building a service-learning program earlier in my career, a leader is needed, one who can envision the new program and communicate effectively those needs as well as have a vision for what the program should entail: “Any faculty mentoring program must have a single, visible locus,” or director (Kohn, 2014, p. 5). Finding handbook language, or in this case, creating handbook language, that would enable the creation of a new program also is key. About eight years earlier, with the service-learning program, I used our handbook to argue for a special administrative assignment for the new program, first in committee (I was chair of Faculty Affairs), and then presented it to the Dean and ultimately the whole faculty council. This time, the order would be reversed: the future NTT mentor coordinator, and myself, the future TT mentor coordinator, were on hand with other committed faculty as we created language specific to these two new positions. I provide this portion of our handbook here:

**Tenure Track TT and Full-Time Non Tenure Track FTNTT Faculty Mentors** – one (1) to six (6) credit hours per year. One senior TT faculty mentor and one promoted FTNTT faculty mentor are appointed after an application process. These mentors should be familiar with the University system used for submitting reappointment and tenure/promotion files. These individuals would be responsible for the following activities:

- Orient new faculty to the campus and operation of the regional campus system.
- Meet with first year faculty as a group to discuss any issues (problems with teaching, difficulty finding time for research, problems with student conduct, etc.)
- Offer workshops on reappointment materials and provide junior faculty with good examples of reappointment documents.
- Meet at least twice a semester with each junior faculty member to discuss upcoming personnel actions.
- Serve as possible peer reviewers for classroom observations.
- Meet periodically with the Campus Dean to discuss progress.
- Other duties as determined by the Campus Dean in consultation with the mentors.

These positions will not replace individual faculty mentors. (Kent State University Tuscarawas)

We wrote this by committee, and our committee chair had frequent meetings with the Dean to make sure he approved the language (of all parts of the Handbook, particularly new language) before finalizing a section and taking it to Faculty Council. The chair of Faculty Affairs did a fantastic job of providing informational meetings and pieces of the handbook to the faculty body for discussion prior to taking the entire handbook to a full faculty vote. Needless to say, this process took multiple years to be finalized. Fortunately for our mentoring program, our Dean did not wait for full handbook adoption before advertising and starting the new proposed administrative positions.
I cannot overstate how important administrative “buy in” is for starting, implementing, and growing a robust mentoring program. One of the immediate pieces of support needed was that the new Mentor Coordinators needed administrative load for their work. Some context: our campus requires TT faculty members to carry 24 credits of load per year, typically in the form of 12 teaching credits per semester, though load can be met in other ways. Obviously, a reallocation of time away from teaching was needed to really create and run the program. On our campus, administrative duties carry a range of credits approved, and that process happens through negotiation between the faculty member and the Dean. Some further context: I was concurrently preparing my own full professor promotion files, a year later than I had intended due to the strain of constant administrative duties (even with reduced load). I have already mentioned that I was the first woman to earn rank to Professor on my campus, and it is important to note that:

Another area of service that impedes faculty productivity is lower-level administrative positions. . . Although such positions may have a certain level of distinction and perhaps extra stipends or course releases, they often include heavy administrative duties, time-consuming political maneuvering, and the development of a knowledge base that is often outside of the faculty member’s area of expertise. (Castañeda & Hames-Garcia, 2014, p. 274)

All of the above applies to my situation. While receiving the boon of an official TT Mentor Coordinator title carried with it load hours (at the start four per year), and gave me the motivation to be accountable for starting the new program well, it was daunting and probably not enough load to offset the demands. Still, I reasoned, I was already informally helping many junior faculty with their questions and files; I might as well do that more efficiently and get paid for it. The naming of the positions, the formalizing of the roles, the negotiation for load hours: these were the key moments to program creation on my campus, and I was fortunate that garnering support was not an uphill battle. Now the real work could begin.

4. DEVELOP THE PROGRAM

With support gathered and leadership in place, it was time to define the program. I wish I could say that I went into the program with best practices already clearly understood in my knowledge base. Instead, and as is mentioned in the quote above, mentoring was outside of my formal scholarship. My research had morphed from 19th century sentimental novels and slave narratives and an engagement with African feminism and gender studies, to contemporary motherhood memoir and parenting research. In my traditional scholarship, I was doing work on raising sons and feminist fathering as I started this program. Perhaps my area of study was closer to the nurturing and relational relationship goals for mentoring that I can now name (and cite), but when I started, I was flying on instinct. I was primarily guided by what I wished I had when I was junior faculty. I also asked my Dean for sponsorship to a local year-long leadership program, and quickly acquainted myself with the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, an excellent mentoring organization of which my system was already a member. Webinars, Monday Motivators, and articles housed on this website provided me, and the junior faculty I was mentoring, with much of our information during that first year, inadvertently (but positively) creating a situation in which:

Those who develop or evaluate mentoring programs or those who have the ability to support mentoring efforts within academia must provide support that allows for the development of a community of scholars. This means that resources must allow for teaching and learning among the mentors and mentees. (Nuñez et al., 2015, p. 92)
The mentees and I learned together. That institutional membership was key to much of our learning and mentoring for success that year.

Additionally, I learned which offices and people were working on mentoring in the university system and reached out. In communicating with our Center for Teaching and Learning, I learned of an associate provost who was an ally in mentoring, and it was from her that I learned that the university system had moved away from the “guru” mentoring model. (At the time of this writing, this information still has not been adequately communicated or received in all of our units and campuses.) Resources she shared on personal mentoring maps allowed me to create a focal point for pulling together former mentors and learning about their interests and expertise areas. In inviting all senior faculty, but ultimately allowing senior faculty to choose if they wanted to be involved, I was able to utilize a team of mentors, many of whom had excellent ideas and mentoring practices already. Together we built “a cross-departmental networking model” (Golden et al., 2017, p. 494). Utilizing the “National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD) Mentoring Map,” the NTT Coordinator and I received enthusiasm and permissions from people on our campus who were willing and had expertise to fill certain types of roles for our junior faculty, and we formalized their roles by including them in a mentoring handbook unique to our campus. (Needless to say, this needs to be updated and tweaked annually; we currently keep this as an online presence in google.docs spaces for interested faculty.)

In building the program we continued the practice of assigning individual mentors, but this was now done by the coordinators, drawing from our group of interested mentors. We encouraged all mentees to find their own “constellations” or “networks” of mentors (Yun et al., 2016, p. 443), generating their own personal mentoring maps. While we were not as intentional as Yun et al. (2016) in creating “Mutual Mentoring” groups, we did encourage faculty to “work with multiple mentors who provide support in their respective area(s) of expertise, rather than a single mentor who is less likely to be able to address the wide variety of opportunities and challenges faced by diverse scholars in a modern academic career” (pp. 443-444).

In the early days we also focused primarily on file preparation, offering workshops on narratives, course reflections, and curriculum vitae construction. We had a cohort that ranged from almost ready for tenure and promotion to brand new, and I attempted to serve all of their needs in one large TT Cohort meeting; this did not always work. Additionally, we faced challenges of time with heavy teaching loads that did not always lead to common free times, but that cohort did provide support for each other internally. For my part, I was also holding formal one-on-one meetings post review with each member of the cohort, as well as providing “drop in” informal services to listen and answer questions, as well as providing editorial services for file materials. My time being shorter than the need, and perhaps the “networks” not being utilized as well as I had hoped, I decided to create a Mentoring Retreat day, in which other experts, mostly from the “main” campus resources I had found, but also local mentors, would come to present on issues that I thought would help our junior faculty. This was supported with space, food, and PR from my Dean and campus, and it was largely well-received. The first year passed in a blur, and I continued to see gaps in needs being fulfilled and more opportunities for growth. Developing the program had started, albeit somewhat haphazardly, and it was now time to grow in better directions.

5. GROW THE PROGRAM

Sometime during the second year, in which I had help in the form of a mentor volunteer to facilitate a faculty writing group, I started to see that with as many needs as were being met, still other faculty were not being reached. Better quality dossiers were already being noticed, and the program was beginning to be mentioned at university level meetings in the presence of my Dean. I started to think bigger, and again with my Dean’s support and our shared
vision of a more comprehensive faculty mentoring program, I was awarded two additional hours per year (extending my release to two courses—six credits—per year) to begin development of a mentoring program that would reach all faculty and provide some consistency across tenure stream and NTT faculty, as well as starting to focus on mid-career faculty needs as well. I need to recognize, with gratitude, that not only did my boss, the most essential force in supporting my efforts, enthusiastically agree that expanded load would be required for our program growth, but he helped me envision that expansion, both in the short and long term. Women are often asked or called to lead initiatives, particularly those related to service and morale in the academy, and their success is often preordained by financial/time-based support, as well as public statements of belief in their abilities: “Groups led by qualified solo women performed better if someone of high status (e.g., a professor) expressed high confidence in the solo woman in front of the group compared to groups in which the qualified solo woman was not publicly legitimated to others” (Sekaquaptewa, 2014, p. 112). My Dean’s behind-the-scenes support was essential, but so were his public statements of appreciation and his belief in the program and in my work.

Admittedly, I had an easier time than many might in each step of formalizing the program, and particularly in growing the program. It is easy to understand how an administration might believe they have already done enough, and in seeing good results, they might be hesitant to provide even more support. When administrators are not able to see the need for expansion, it may become important to remind them that there are high costs associated with faculty turnover (Myloa et al., 2016). Institutions that commit to their faculty, and a robust mentoring program is one way to show that commitment, will have faculty who will “feel more compelled to contribute to organisational goals and to remain with the organization” (Myloa et al., 2016, p. 679). We all had the goal of getting our junior faculty to success, but how that should be reached depended on many factors, and the mentoring program as it was at the start could not reach everyone.

The challenge is that different disciplines, different groups of faculty, indeed different individuals, might need different mentoring practices to find their path to success (Lechuga, 2014). As a regional campus unit, the mentoring program needed to address faculty in STEM disciplines as well as the humanities, professional programs and liberal arts core disciplines. A junior faculty in biology had as his primary concern the issue of finding secure and safe lab space and materials, while a psychology assistant professor was told she needed to create a new and independent study and new data to ensure her promotion, and a communications faculty member needed help with transcription of lengthy interviews and the IRB process. Not all faculty had been given the same information about campus car use or travel funding for conferences. Add to these issues the fact that NTT nursing faculty were so pressed for time between team teaching and clinicals that they could almost never attend file preparation workshops, or the fact that part-time faculty—a large percentage of instructors on our campus, as they are most everywhere—often felt invisible and many did not know where to go for help with their teaching or copying issues. While some of these overlapping or particular needs do, sometimes, still feel overwhelming for one (or two) people to address, the expansion of the program helped me feel better about the time it was taking to formulate efficient solutions and spend the time necessary to share information.

One common need that the literature shows, and that is certainly true in my experience, is that mentees need safe spaces to ask questions; they need to be able to “discuss sensitive issues with an individual from another area who can also help them understand the larger picture of their institution” (Kohn, 2014, p. 2). All faculty will have varying needs, but they will have an easier time finding success in their multiple roles if “they have the freedom to determine their work activities, teaching, and research agendas while, at the same time, feeling that there is a support system they can seek out if needed, without fear of reprisal for doing so” (Lechuga, 2014, p. 923). Experienced mentors and group facilitators can help with finding answers to these questions, and the networks built in groups based on position, can create the connections, social and professional, that can help them feel better about their place of
work and stresses. We know that “[j]unior faculty have been found to have the lowest levels of wellness” in university systems, so these protective spaces and supportive networks can truly help people to find their way through difficulties (Hammer et al., 2014, p. 12).

It has taken two years since I have been given expanded duties and time to grow our mentoring program to get to where we are today—in other words, I do not recommend trying to institute everything all at once. See what is needed most acutely, and then see where it makes sense to expand. Both mentees and mentors/COORDINATORS can get burnt out if too many activities are added all at once. Currently, our campus mentoring program offers:

- New Faculty Orientation
- New Faculty Cohort Meetings
- Tenure Track Cohort Meetings
- Non Tenure Track Cohort Meetings
- Writing Group
- Teaching Circle
- Part-Time Appreciation and (Voluntary) Mentoring
- Annual Mentoring Retreat
- File Guidance, Models, and Proofing
- Flashfolio Workshops (our electronic dossier program)
- Mid-Career Counseling
- Peer Review of Teaching
- Individual Post-Review Meetings
- Archived Google Docs spaces for groups and common forms/models/information.

Honestly, looking at this list, I am a little overwhelmed. Again, this cannot (and should not) happen all at once, and not all of these items might be appropriate for every institution. I am the primary facilitator of these activities, but I rely on support from the NTT Coordinator, other senior faculty, our in-house PR department, faculty and staff throughout the system, the Dean’s office, and mentees themselves to provide programming, offer review and expertise, create materials, help with food and event planning, and more. It is a group effort, but one that, I believe, needs that focal point, the person with a vision who facilitates the smaller pieces to make a whole program.

6. BE FLEXIBLE

One of the most exciting things about running the Mentoring Program on my campus is the fact that the needs of the faculty body change frequently, and so I never have the option of resting on my past successes and getting bored. One of the limitations of the old dyad mentoring model is its built-in lack of flexibility:

Based on comprehensive needs assessment of our faculty, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups conducted over a six-month period, we determined that a traditional, one-on-one mentoring model was not sufficiently flexible enough for our faculty members, who reported a wide range of professional and
psychosocial mentoring needs that were unlikely to be addressed by a single mentor. (Yun et al., 2016, p. 443)

I wish I could say that I started my program armed with this type of data, but as I already admitted, I started the program learning along the way and moving on instinct. Immediately though, and starting with the second year (as of this writing, the program is in its fourth year), I create surveys at the beginning of the academic year to help me determine faculty needs, which in turn help me determine programming to provide. For instance, this year, based on a plethora of interest shown in surveys, I started Teaching Circles. Attendance at these events has ranged from nine to five people present, presenter and myself included. I typically count an event as successful, even if sparsely attended, if the people who were there feel positive and served by the time they spent. Still, this might be an aspect of the program I rethink or reconfigure as we move forward.

And then there are the needs that crop up unexpectedly. I might think my calendar is clear for an afternoon, only to find out that a junior faculty mentor really needs to discuss the pros and cons of tolling (stopping the tenure clock for a period of time due to health or family pressures), or the reality that the recently earned tenure and promotion did not, in fact, lead to fulfillment in the job for another. I have been told by mentees that sometimes those types of discussions end up being the most useful part of the mentoring program. Sometimes new needs are less personal and more systemic. The NTT Cohort surfaced the issue of travel support, and we soon realized that we needed more consistent messaging and shared information around this topic. That discussion led to a discussion in Faculty Council, which led to a request for better instructions from the Business Office. Last spring, in discussing work-life balance with the TT Cohort, it became apparent that some of our junior faculty members were doing a huge amount of administrative work, comparable, I suspected, to work more senior faculty were doing with a title and load. I knew instinctively what has been proven elsewhere: the best way to help mentees is to reduce their teaching loads and get them more mentoring when they are overextended, particularly with service and mentoring students, as these junior faculty were (Goff, 2014, p. 133). After conferring with some trusted colleagues, we decided that bringing up this issue in faculty council was appropriate. I offered a description of my concerns, and ultimately chaired a small working group on “Load Reconsideration.” Our task was to look at faculty members who were doing administrative tasks, officially and unofficially, and try to determine if anyone would benefit from receiving either a disciplinary coordination load or a special assignment load. The work of this group--which was primarily about making a data-driven argument to faculty council who adopted measures to recommend positions for these four junior faculty members--was successful. It was also a type of advocacy work I had not anticipated doing as part of my job, but it was perhaps one of the most important roles I have played, at least in the careers of these four individuals. Following my own or someone else’s prescription for a mentoring program would not have allowed me to seize this opportunity. Flexibility is a good rule for any program.

7. GET READY FOR THE CULTURE SHIFT

Mentoring programs are not a panacea for all of the ills that can be found on a campus, but I believe that any time faculty can be shown that relational models can work better than the “individualistic” models so common to universities, everyone can eventually benefit:

[. . .] the less frequently encountered relational model emphasizes an understanding of the institution as a community of intertwined people. Under this model, individuals are linked through relationships of mutual purpose and responsibility rather than social contract. Self-protection and self-promotion are eschewed as primary values in favor of collaborative achievement. (Plout, 2014, p. 41)
“Collaborative achievement” can take many shapes. I have witnessed the start of several collaborative research projects—some between junior faculty members in the same cohort, learning for the first time that the work they are doing overlaps productively, and some interdisciplinary matches between junior and senior faculty. For instance, a Modeling, Animation, and Game Creation first-year faculty member is creating a project for his students to produce an app for a senior nursing faculty member and fourth year junior faculty member in communications who are working on a public health game. Sometimes, far more simply, collaboration takes the shape of someone mentioning a stress or problem they are having with their research in writing group, and another faculty member sharing ideas or resources for fixing that problem. If one junior faculty member had not mentioned she was concerned about indexing her new book, she would have never learned our university has resources for outsourcing that type of work. Her book was ultimately finished ahead of schedule.

Collaboration can also be seen in a new camaraderie around the RTP table. Instead of the growled question, “Who was her mentor?” we now brainstorm together what messages the junior faculty needs to receive officially and unofficially to protect them on their journey forward. When we read files with Student Surveys of Instruction that indicate, on the surface, poor teaching, we have thoughtful discussions about how language and cultural barriers might be at play in students’ assessments, working out how to support the faculty member in delivering needed material to students. These conversations continue into the safe mentoring spaces of various cohorts or in individual meetings. As Monisha Bajaj (2014) notes, “Questions of institutional racism, campus climate, and intellectual priorities cannot and should not be engaged in isolation, but within a rich context of shared advice, experience, and critical thinking. . .” (p. 236). Together, particularly through mentoring retreat programming and as needed, we discuss strategies and realities of dealing with various types of racism and microaggressions at our campus, another important role for mentoring (Bajaj, 2014, p. 241).

Not all senior faculty are intimately involved with the mentoring program, but for those who are, their willingness to help junior faculty ranges from observing classes to combing through dossier materials to being a face of care and compassion on the campus. This feeling of wanting to nurture and retain our junior faculty leads to a shared feeling of positivity in the hallways. While I am not (yet) in a position to offer these mentors any tangible supports, it seems they have learned the value of relational mentoring not just for altruism’s sake, but also for what they receive from it:

> But given the realities of academic pressures—research expectations, outstanding teaching, service commitments, university citizenship—and the need to seek work-life balance, altruism only goes so far. Fortunately for those of us committed to mentoring the benefits for faculty of mutual vulnerability go well beyond the altruistic. (Riofrio, 2014, p. 218)

In addition to feeling part of the relational team we are forming on our campus, mentors might also be benefiting from learning new knowledge and seeing our profession (and sometimes our disciplines) anew through our mentees and mentoring practices (Riofrio, 2014).

The warmth of the mentoring program is clear to me also when newly-minted senior faculty still want to be included on my e-mail lists for various activities. I see their friendships and their desire to stay connected as ameliorative to the situation that all too often happens in academic halls, when “people, especially very bright and accomplished people, are more comfortable speaking about each other than they are with each other, especially when someone else has said or done something that upset or disappointed them” (Larimore, 2014, p. 228). Admittedly, I try to shield myself from the rumor mill, and I must maintain confidentiality for mentees, so I try to model direct conversation
rather than gossip. I think those safe space networks grow out and expand, and support is becoming a larger norm on our campus. Between new attitudes, mentee success, and closer professional and social relationships, the work of mentoring speaks for itself, and the culture shifts and spreads.

8. SPREAD THE CULTURE

One of the features of my university system is that it consists of the “main” campus and seven regional campuses, plus one learning center. We spread out over a large region, with the two furthest campuses being approximately two hours apart by car. We are a network with distinct parts, all striving to offer education at a variety of levels, with a high quality and innovative research footprint in a plethora of areas, as well as open access and distance learning options for people who are placebound and want professional certifications. We offer everything from certificates to PhDs. Most of the regional campuses have signature programs, but all strive to offer excellent associate or baccalaureate programming (or at least the first two years of bachelor’s degrees) at a reasonable cost. Regional campus faculty must adhere to accreditation requirements regarding terminal degrees, and handbook requirements for their departments requiring varying amounts of research productivity, but we also have large teaching loads, full of classes with students who are often first generation or in other ways marginalized. Faculty and students alike often reach true excellence, despite a harder battle to get to that excellence. Add to this mix varying amounts of community support and regional affluence among the regional campuses, and you get a situation in which each campus unit is unique, with its own strengths and weaknesses.

The recently hired Vice President of our regional system has been touting the excellent RTP files he has seen from my campus. Recently, the NTT Coordinator and I were invited to the meeting of regional campus faculty chairs. We were given 20 minutes to speak, and an hour later, we were still in conversation. Afterward, we were invited to a meeting of the regional campus deans, a meeting which will take place later this semester, and I have recently been asked for information to provide to regional campus assistant deans as well. Clearly, the idea of more intentional mentoring has taken hold on the regionals, and it should. Often, mentoring “varies greatly from one department to another” (Yun et al., 2016, p. 442), and indeed that is even more true when discussing regional campuses that function in many ways as individual units, but units with myriad programs and disciplinary concerns. What I learned in that meeting of faculty chairs is that great mentoring is happening in pockets around my system, but it is, like it had been at my campus, not fully institutionalized or available equally to everyone. I know from another university-wide committee I serve on related to faculty perceptions and morale, and from my own observations, that academic departments, which are housed at the “main” campus and which operate as separate units, are also suffering from inequitable practices related to mentoring.

My concern about this predicament for far flung regional colleagues grew when I served on two separate promotion committees, neither of which were “slam dunks.” In one case in particular, it was quite clear to me that it was not necessarily the work itself that was a problem, but more a lack of understanding about the norms required to get to full professor. This individual, it seemed, had not sought out mentoring on basic file conventions (which had changed considerably since his first promotion), nor had he been provided with (or made use of) even the most basic types of advice leading to a bid for full. We know that not only do we expect more and higher quality publications than for tenure to get to the final promotion (Castañeda and Hames-Garcia, 2014, p. 268), but the candidate must be good at documenting these publications, as well as showing their national/international reputation (Castañeda and Hames-Garcia, 2014). It may seem that someone standing for full should instinctively know the moves necessary, but as someone who stood for full just recently myself, I can tell you that at the outset I had no idea how much time it was going to take, or just how much I was going to have to write for my file, and in what way. As someone who believes in mentoring, I formally asked two full professors in my discipline if they would mentor me through the
process, making sure they knew that in addition to being available for questions, I hoped they could provide their own materials as exemplars, as well as possibly give feedback on mine. I am fortunate that they both agreed.

We might be tempted to think that standing for full professor is not that big a deal, because we can reapply indefinitely, but of course those who prepare and review these dossiers know that “developing a case for full professor takes enormous time and energy and thus is not a process that should be taken lightly. The notion that a professor can reapply for promotion fails to take into account the emotional, physical, and material tolls that such a process places on a faculty member” (Castañeda and Hames-Garcia, 2014, p. 278). Mari Castañeda and Michael Hames-Garcia (2014) actually refer to the need for women and FOC to break through the “Associate Professor Glass Ceiling” in their article. For regional faculty, being called and seeing ourselves as “second-class” faculty is only recently dissolving. Part of the reason for this is that in our university system, regional faculty have only relatively recently been seeing the potential for themselves as full professors as a matter of course—it used to be only a few outliers who even pictured full professorship as a possibility within the regional system. As our numbers grow, at least on my campus, it is fortunately becoming more of a goal for junior faculty at the outset—they can see themselves ultimately reaching that pinnacle of achievement.

While it is beyond my scope to take on the entire system, I have realized that I may have an opportunity to help the regional campuses begin to institutionalize better mentoring practices at their locations. Recently a call went out for proposals for competitive faculty fellow positions, and one of the suggestions for a proposal included the phrase “mentoring mid-career faculty in the regional system.” Needless to say, I decided immediately that I needed to apply. I secured the necessary support from my Dean and worked on a proposal, again seeking mentorship as I developed my plan, this time from one of the directors of the center who offers the fellow positions. If I receive this fellowship, my pilot program will follow and adapt a peer mentoring model that worked at a medical school, complete with inviting all senior faculty to apply and rate areas of interest, forming groups local to each campus, and facilitating three meetings in each location (Colón-Emeric et al., 2012). After receiving a list of full professors on each campus, and realizing how just how small (or nonexistent) the numbers are at some campuses, I realized that I might not be able to have full professors at each campus join the effort, so I may need to utilize some form of “E-mentoring” (Doyle, Jacobs, & Ryan, 2016) or teleconferencing to join groups together in their work, an effort made easier by the Zoom technology our campuses already possess. I hope that we can utilize an approach that will recognize “a network approach of sharing resources and [which] presumes that all participants possess distinctive assets to contribute to one another’s development” (Nuñez et al., 2015, p. 89).

In my excitement to spread the program, I am trying to be careful not to overextend myself. I have sought additional support, and I have made clear, through strategy sessions with my own Dean, and in communications with the Vice President, that I will need additional support if I am taking on additional duties. As always, “[a] supportive administration and dedicated core of mentors is absolutely essential to success. Administrative support can be demonstrated in financial terms (eg. stipends), release time, recognition for merit review, or other means, but it must be significant and relevant” (Kohn, 2014, p. 5). I do not yet know what this support, or the extended program, will look like, but I am interested in and energized by the potential for growth.

9. COLLECT DATA

Unlike the way I started the program on my own campus, this time, if given the opportunity to expand, I realize that I need to collect data regarding pre- and post-program perceptions of involved faculty. Word of mouth and visible success has been helpful thus far, but I have been working in an environment in which the administration is already supportive of mentoring activities. Now that I am planning to expand into multiple campuses, I will likely need to
prove the worth of the mentoring program(s) in order to continue, and perhaps, based on need, continue to expand offerings. When asked in that meeting with regional faculty chairs if I would simply “share my models and materials,” I was surprised. Many of those models were given to me with permissions to use them on our campus--to expand the reach, I would need to secure additional permissions. I realized in that moment that some might be looking for quick fixes to the problem of mentoring. My refusal to have a hands-off approach may seem mean, but the crux of the matter is really two-fold. On the one hand, if other campuses simply took my raw materials, but no one was charged locally with making sure the models fit their needs and facilitating workshops, at the very least, for junior faculty, I do not believe the “mentoring” would actually yield results. Additionally, as someone who has spent almost four years now creating materials, I do not wish to see them partially used, declared a “failure,” and put on the chopping block. I told the faculty chairs that day, and still believe, that they really need buy in from their local administration, and they need a local person to facilitate and manage the program.

Where I see my role is on the side of “mentoring the mentors,” and perhaps, providing the type of data that will lead to more systemic support for intentional mentoring on each campus. Fortunately, I already have a sabbatical scheduled for next fall, and my stated research goals have to do with researching mentoring programs and best practices in order to improve my own campus’ mentoring program. Thus, I will have the time to develop pre- and post-measurements for faculty, as well as the time to receive IRB approval for the data I wish to collect. Following up with faculty, short and long term, to show results, will not only help me to tweak programming, but it can also help provide the argument for continuing and expanding support as needed (Yun et al., 2016). I recognize the need to grow the program incrementally and in the right ways, but over time I wonder if this could expand into a university-wide initiative and changing roles for the leaders involved. Data-proven results, and data-driven practice, will only increase the chances that more faculty in the system will receive the types of mentoring they need.

10. AVOIDING DANGERS

Mentoring is a huge responsibility, and creating and facilitating a mentoring program is amplified responsibility. Ethically, as I hope it is now abundantly clear, I feel we have no choice but to helpfully and equitably mentor our faculty toward success. However, in doing the ethical act, other ethical issues can crop up that were never intended by the program or actors within it. Effective mentoring is relational and authentic; therefore, both mentors and mentees can experience vulnerabilities as they share their stories. As an English professor, I am constantly reminded and reassured that it is through giving voice to our multiple perspectives and sharing our stories that we form connections and empathy. Still, sticky situations can occur.

It is, of course, less problematic for me now, as one who has made it through both of my promotions, to be authentic, to let mentees in on my own “insecurities, failures, and growth experiences” on the path of my professional success (Hammer et al., 2014, p. 10). My old failures are behind me, with new successes in their place. But for a junior faculty member, sharing the story of another rejection, or a failed data set, or challenges in the classroom, are of course more painful, and could, if the space is not truly safe, work to harm them. Confidentiality and care with information are a must, but sometimes the information a mentor receives is powerful, and remaining silent or sharing it can have important implications. For instance, what should a mentor coordinator do when they know that the real reason a faculty member is tolling has to do with depression, but the mentee does not want anyone to know of this struggle, and therefore the tolling request is denied? What happens when a successful faculty member comes for private advice about exiting the institution? What if the mentor coordinator learns about risky or unsavory behavior of a faculty member through a confidential channel? Or how should a mentor coordinator handle a situation in which she is blamed for not offering enough help and accused of harming the struggling junior faculty member by not having more mentoring in place sooner? How can a mentor coordinator protect mentees and the
institution? And how can a mentor coordinator keep her own emotions in check when she feels attacked? How can a mentor coordinator maintain positivity with a mentee who has sabotaged their own progress?

It goes without saying that mentors could abuse their power, and that personal relationships, particularly romantic ones, should never be entered into between the mentor and mentee (Leon, 1993). But what happens when, as shown in a recent New York Times column by Maya Salam (2019), it becomes clear that certain mentors, often men, are reluctant to take on mentoring positions for (women or other marginalized) faculty whom they feel could harm their reputations? And even if everyone is behaving absolutely appropriately, how can mentors work to mitigate the problem of disconnection? In mentioning a concern about a mentee’s progress to that mentee, could a mentor actually be inadvertently creating disconnection, giving the mentee the chance to say “I am rejecting you before you reject me” (Hammer et al., 2014, p. 7)? The main problem I have had with mentoring is that the people who most need advice are often the ones who are the least likely to seek it out or follow it. How can I maintain my own professionalism in helping that person, without feeling frustrated?

I ask all of these questions not because I have answers. Many of these situations have happened in and around my program. Each one has had to be dealt with—either internally by me, or through working it out with the mentee, or in some cases, sharing my knowledge, circumspectly or outright, with the appropriate person who can handle the issue. It is never easy. I tend to have a positive outlook, which is why I am both good at facilitating the mentoring program, but also blindsided when some of these bigger problems occur. In general, I would suggest it is a must for the mentor coordinator to understand the campus culture and rules (formal and informal) guiding it, as well as having a clear understanding of what constitutes a problem that necessitates sharing resources with the mentee, or actually having to seek additional help with and for the person and the problem. Typically, there are not clear answers here, and these are precisely the types of problems that will cause the most grief and work. With open and honest relationships with both mentees and supervisors, as well as a working knowledge of procedures and resources, these dangers can usually be mitigated.

CONCLUSIONS

I have been a Mentor Program Coordinator for two years, a TT Mentor Coordinator for four years, and an informal and formal mentor for individual faculty for at least an additional six years. My vulnerable position as a junior faculty member who was far from a “slam dunk” early in my career has informed my programming, and I have picked up a lot along the way, only recently finding the time to treat mentoring as a subject for serious scholarship. I recommend anyone attempting to start a mentoring program to flip the order, if possible, and do some research first, and perhaps have the foresight to collect data from the beginning in the effort to gain support. My hope is that this rumination on the mentoring program I helped create, grow, and am now in the process of expanding and spreading, will help you and your campus along the same path. Mentoring matters— for junior faculty, for women, for FOC, for the entire campus culture. It matters in academia as it matters throughout our society. As Michelle Obama (2018) writes in her recent bestseller:

[. . .] I saw the benefits of more formal mentoring firsthand. I knew from my own life experience that when someone shows genuine interest in your learning and development, even if only for ten minutes in a busy day, it matters. It matters especially for women, for minorities, for anyone society is quick to overlook. (p. 356)
Those of us who have made it to the other side of tenure, those of us who find success in the academy, need to spend our time and energy on those who have not made it yet, and we need leaders and administrations that support us in those efforts.

REFERENCES


