

IPA Mentorship Program



Theresa Kruczek, PhD
IPA Science and Education Chair
Muncie

"IPA mentors and protégés" has a nice ring to it, doesn't it? The origin of this relationship stretches back to Greek mythology when Odysseus left his older, wise friend named "Mentor" in charge of his son and palace while Odysseus went off to fight the Trojan War. In modern use, a mentor typically is someone older and with more experience who serves as a teacher, guide, and role model (Roberts, 1999) to younger, less experienced mentees or protégés. Mentors provide their protégés with "knowledge, advice, counsel and challenges" that guide the protégés in their professional development (Johnson, 2007).

Okay, these definitions are great, but why should we care about these relationships? Well, we should care because students with positive mentoring relationships develop stronger professional skills, more confidence, and enhanced professional identities. They demonstrate more scholarly productivity, better professional networking, increased dissertation success, and more satisfaction with graduate school (Clark, Harden & Johnson, 2000).

Dr. Scott Hamilton, IPA Treasurer, said:

"Joining IPA as a graduate student was vitally important to my professional development. Many graduate schools do not prepare students for some of the realities of the profession, such as the importance of advocacy, networking with other psychologists, and learning how to navigate various professional practice issues. I was fortunate that my program encouraged IPA student membership, as I learned things through IPA about the profession of psychology that were as important to me as were the specifics of my coursework.

I am a better psychologist now because of starting my professional association with IPA when I was still a grad student."

Mentoring relationships can also help early career psychologists (ECPs) manage the stressors of debt and navigating the licensure process as well as establish a stronger professional identity (Green & Hawley, 2009).

So this is all great for the protégé/mentee, but what about the mentor? Mentors report that the mentoring relationship enhances their own job performance, gives them positive recognition by others, and provides a rewarding experience and a loyal professional support base (Eby, Durley, Evans, & Ragins, 2006). Further, when our protégés have satisfying mentoring relationships they not only report more job satisfaction, but they are more committed to the organization that's mentoring them and are more likely to stay involved with that organization (Ragins, Cotton & Miller, 2000).

So that brings us back to IPA. Over the summer we have initiated a formal, professional mentoring program. We're seeking IPA members who are interested in serving as a mentor to students and/or ECP's. We're also looking for students and ECP's (psychologists within 7 years of graduation, per APA definition) who are interested in entering into a formal mentoring relationship with an IPA mentor. More information and applications are available on the IPA website. Hopefully, the "news you could use" above has convinced you to join the ranks of *IPA mentors and protégés*. It will be good for you and the organization!