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SECC UPDATE

Think globally, collaborate locally

By Josafa da Cunha, Federal University of Parana (Brazil) & Jonathan Santo, University of Nebraska at Omaha

This column is about capitalizing on one's early career status to develop meaningful international collaborations for your own benefit as a scholar, for the benefit of your scholarship and the developmental science as a whole.

Why this matters

In a recent ISSBD webinar (available at www.youtube.com/ISSBD), Professor Anne Petersen highlighted how we, as a field can benefit from a global approach to generate new knowledge and build capacity. However, she warns us about how many studies engaging minority and majority world researchers are conducted through the extraction of data from the majority world context to the benefit of the minority world. We use the term minority world to describe North America and Europe, which reflects a minority of the world's population. Unfortunately, a disproportionate amount of developmental theory, data, and publications come from the minority world, resulting in a bias that leaves the rest of the world's population (i.e.: the majority world) understudied and, more problematically, underrepresented (Arnett, 2008). We might add to Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1977) words about the state of developmental science at the time as "...is the science of the strange behavior of children in strange situations with strange adults for the briefest possible periods of time" *conducted in the narrowest of contexts*. Bronfenbrenner told us that there was more to the world than what takes place in a lab setting. Now let's face it - there's more to the world than samples coming from western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic countries (i.e: W.E.I.R.D. samples; Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan, 2010).

If we, as a field, want to address global issues, we need to take a global approach to research, not only for the benefit of developmental science, but to promote positive human development globally, as stressed by Masten (2014) in the SRCD Presidential Address. Collaboration can also mean engaging in interdisciplinary dialogue, as argued by former SRCD president Greg Duncan (2012) (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2011.01679.x/pdf>). As early career scholars, we are well positioned to direct our careers towards that framework.

Initiatives aimed at fostering research capacity among early career scholars can help to provide some of the opportunities for engaging early career scholars in advancing developmental research globally. For example, the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development (ISSBD) organized a regional workshop in Gramado, Brazil in 2007, with a strong focus on building collaborations. Thus far it appears to have worked, as both authors of this piece are now early career professors collaborating together on conference submissions, research projects and publications. But how can we get engaged in international collaborations?

Developing international collaborations

First off, attending conferences is a great way to meet other early career scholars in general but early career scholars from other parts of the world in particular. It almost goes without saying that you want discuss shared interests in the hopes of discovering mutual research topics. Often times, people will not look for their peers in conferences, but these are really the ones you will be collaborating the longest if you want to have a successful career in this field. Most conferences, the SRCD conferences being among them, have a number of opportunities (such as coffee hours) to meet people.

Part of our attempts to develop collaborations stemmed from the fact that we'd been fortunate enough to secure funding from various agencies for lab visits to different parts of the world. Find out what sources of support are available at your institution to initiate these connections. For example, Josafa has received support from SRCD to visit labs in Canada and the US, while Jonathan has travelled to Zambia and China.

Besides coordinating lab visits, you can begin establishing collaborations in small steps. Putting together a symposium for a conference you both plan to attend is a reasonable start. Perhaps you may have access to data through which you can explore shared interests and generate the initial fruits of this dialogue. Of course, these

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small initial projects may be setting the stage for that big project you'd like to accomplish. However, the low hanging fruit in the tree of knowledge have mostly been picked. To get those a bit higher, we need to stand on each other's shoulders.

With that in mind, use your early career status to your advantage. Although you may find it hard to believe, there are somewhat more funding opportunities for small projects during your early career stage than are available for more established mid-career researchers. Continuing with the theme of benefiting from available opportunities, this is the time to develop collaborative relationships that will ripen as you progress in your career. Moreover, burgeoning ideas require pilot data to prod whether they have any substance; doing so in graduate school is easier and less costly than during the tenure track process when more definitive results are required.

As a final word of advice, we didn't finish graduate school certain that we'd learned everything there is to know about how to conduct research. The same can be said about doing global research. If this is something you would like to pursue, it's best to see it as a lifelong learning process.

Engaging in global collaboration may be costly (financially but also in time and effort), but in the end we should think of it as an investment in the future of the field. Research predominantly from the minority world is not going to allow the field of developmental science to grow to its fullest potential. We began working on this piece while in Southern Brazil conducting a workshop on research methodology. Through this and other initiatives, we hope to continue expanding access to the global dialogue on advancing the field of developmental science.

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