

Making the Most Out of Your Graduate School Experience

Ruben Escobar

Ibonne Pineda



Overview

- Ice Breaker
- Successful Grad Student Experience
- Funding Opportunities
- Networking
- Extra-Curricular Involvement
- Leadership
- Practicum / Fieldwork
- Professional Development
- Professional Associations
- Getting Ready for the Job Market

Ice Breaker





Funding Opportunities

- Scholarships, Grants, Fellowships

- ASCA Foundation Scholarship

- *Deadline: October 2011*
 - *\$1,000*

- H.B. McDaniel Scholarship

- *Deadline: April 2011*
 - *Research-based*
 - *\$2,000*

- University-Specific Funding

- Study Abroad Funding

- Working: Part-Time vs. Full-Time

- Financial Aid Appeal

Successful Graduate School Experience

- Successful *School Counseling* grad student vs. successful undergrad student
- What practices from your undergraduate career will help you be successful now?
 - Learning for professional growth & development
 - Relationships with professors
 - Well-rounded student
 - Self-care & support groups

Maximize Practicum & Fieldwork Opportunities

- Consider your training a long-term job interview
- Be present & visible on campus
- Get to Know Counselors; Shadow / Observe different styles
- Meet & Interact with various school staff (teachers, administrators, anyone else who works with students)

Maximize Practicum & Fieldwork Opportunities

- Be data-driven!
- Utilize the ASCA National Model
 - Guidance Lessons
 - Intentional Guidance
- What other ideas do you have?
- Attend workshop on “Interns”
(See Program Schedule)



What Are The Most Important Thing To Know About Practicum / Fieldwork?

- “Get as many hands-on experiences that you can so you can go into an interview and say honestly and with confidence, "yes, I've done that, that, and that, etc." Take initiative to act as much as the ‘real’ counselor as you can.”
- “Treat your practicum site like it is a job... I would treat each site as if you were working and view your supervisor as an actual employer.”
- “Learn the politics of schools. Ask the counselors, teachers, and admin about how the school functions and get an idea of the various politics that you will have to deal with as a counselor.”
- “Keep up with those fieldwork logs, you don't want those deadlines creeping up on you when you’re working on a big assignment

Networking

- What does effective networking look like?
 - Attending Professional Development events
 - School Counselor meetings: site, district, grade-level
 - Meeting other staff, teachers, educators at the school
 - Professors in other departments
 - Connect with Alumni & School Counselors in your area, or region of interest

Extracurricular Involvement

- Community Involvement
 - Volunteering in local schools
 - Professors working in the community
 - Get to know the community you work in, not just the schools
 - Volunteering in community educational events

Leadership

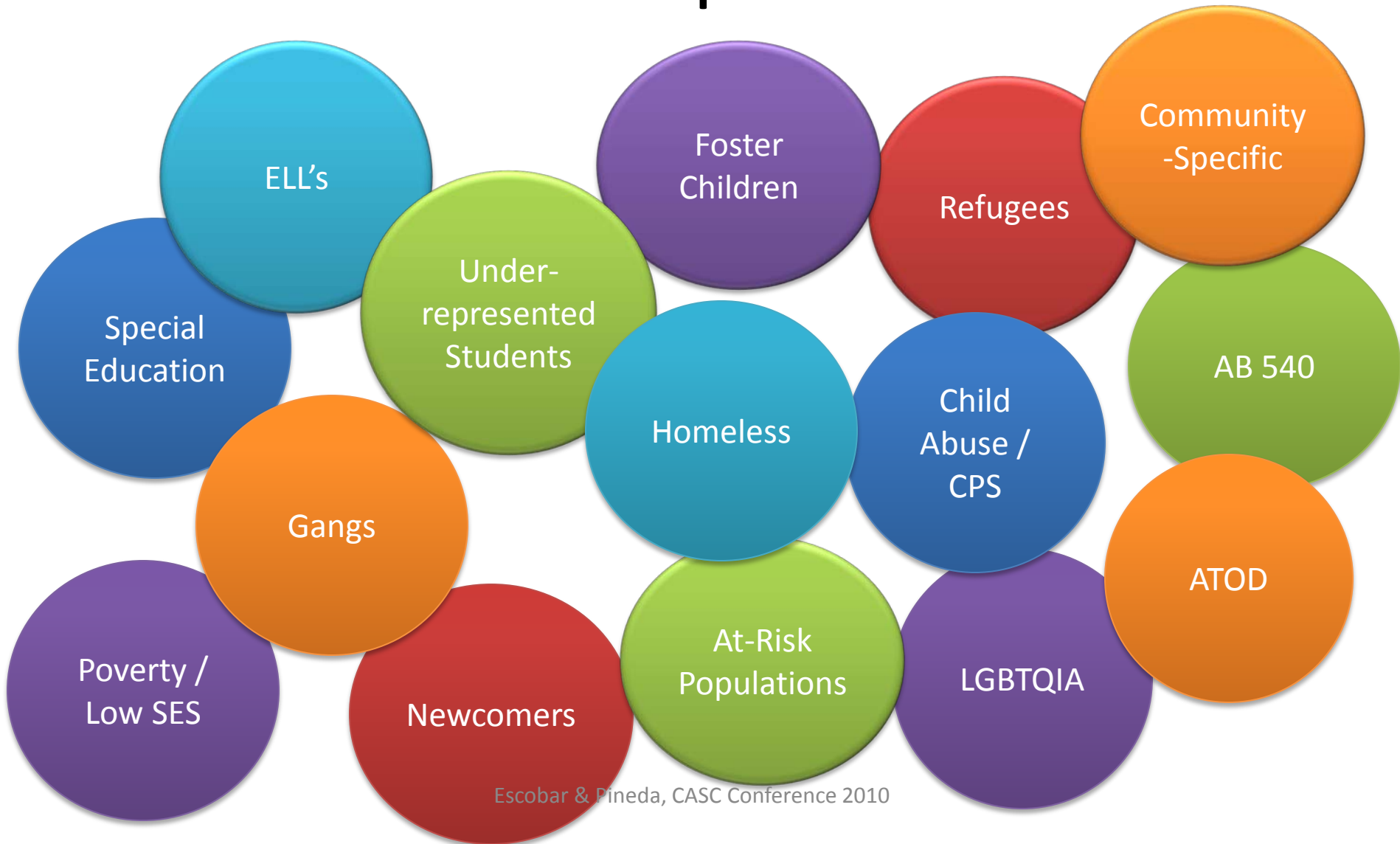
- Involvement in Graduate Student Associations & Student Organizations
- Present at conferences
- Poster sessions

Research

- Graduate Assistant
- Research Assistant
- Grant Writing

- Writing / Collaborating on Research Articles

How Much Do You Know About Diverse Populations?



Professional Development

- Workshops
- Conferences
- In-Service Presentations
- County Office of Education
- Local, Regional, & District Areas Meetings

Professional Association Involvement

- CASC
- ASCA
- Regional Area School Counseling Associations

- School Counselor Advocacy
- Professional Liability Insurance
- Legislative Affairs Involvement (School Counselor Funding & Advocacy)
- Access to resources (print and online)

Staying Informed

- Newsletters
- Journals
- Professional Organizations
 - Websites
 - Listserves
 - Facebook

Important Websites



Is Self-Care Important?

- “Absolutely, it was a critical component to stay balanced.”
- “Always, sometimes weeks would go by where I rarely left my apartment unless I was heading to fieldwork or class. I then made a conscious effort to schedule recreational activities that would allow me to leave my apartment and decompress.”
- “I found it necessary to keep myself active and clear my thoughts of everything school related.”

What Did You Do For Self-Care?

- “Weekends are very precious to me and my time to relax, spending time with my friends and family. It definitely helped keep me sane.”
- “I consistently exercised, spent time with friends outside the cohort took a couple of weekend getaways, and tried to make special time for only my husband and me.”
- “I found it necessary to keep myself active and clear my thoughts of everything school related. I was a part of an Aztec dance group, and danza kept me sane.”

What Do You Do For Self-Care?



What to do in the future?

- Get HIRED!
- Consider Doctoral Programs
- Professional Licensure
(See Program Schedule for session info)
- Fulbright Scholars Program

Getting Ready for the Job Market

- Prepare early
- Create Professional School Counseling Resume & Cover Letter
 - Continuously update as needed
- Monitoring your Professional Image
 - Online identity (e-mail, Facebook, MySpace, etc.)
 - Phone voicemail
- Practice Through Mock Interviews
- Informational Interviewing with Professional School Counselors
- Consider looking for jobs out of state.

Preparation For The Job Search

- “I researched the school I was going to interview for and tried to see if I was a good fit. During my interview I highlighted how I was a good fit and helped the interview panel picture me at their school.”
- “Researched the school, school district, their SARC, read the bios of the existing counselors....EVERYTHING! [Used] practice list of questions (like 50 ?s) and I would review those... and say them all OUT LOUD and in Spanish.”
- “Depending on the grade level that I was interviewing for, I would review my work and evaluations from my practicum and fieldwork sites. For instance, for an elementary school interview, I looked through all of the interventions I had done and the school projects that I had done from my practicum site to refresh my memory on what I can bring to an elementary school.”

Preparation For The Job Search (Cont'd)

- “I reviewed common interview questions and tried to make sure that my answers were unique but also genuine. I also created a mini-portfolio for each particular school that had items that I thought would be relevant for that grade level and environment. I also called my director and asked her for advice before I went into my interviews, she was also very helpful.”
- “I prefer to walk in, be myself, and allow the interview committee to get a sense of who I really am rather than espousing some boring, mechanical answer that will probably sound very similar to what most other interviewees will say. I did however do research about the campus on dataquest to gather some demographics about the school.”

How Did You Prepare For the Interview Process?

- “Through [my] program, I did mock interviews and created resumes.”
- “I made sure to review and refine my resume many times, asked people who truly knew me for letters of rec, and listed them as references, and made sure to activate all my networks and routinely visited edjoin. That's where I saw the posting for my current position.”
- “I just reminded myself that it would be tough, considering the state of the economy... I also spoke to my cohort members and friends to help ground myself and set realistic expectations.” (*Now has a job as a school counselor)
- “...I recommend gathering, scanning and organizing any and all documents you'll need (credentials, recommendations, tb cards, evaluations, whatever you may need). Also, don't only rely on edjoin... many schools and most non-profits advertise on craigslist or their own websites.”

Advice From Recently Hired School Counselors

What was the most important part of your graduate school experience?

- “Practicum and Fieldwork experience.”
- “Gaining the attitude, knowledge, and skills to be a competent, informed, and compassionate school counselor.”
- “Experiencing dialogue that looked at the achievement gap. This allowed [me] to really explore the issues facing kids in school today. This experience gave [me] the courage to be an advocate in the schools.”

Advice For 1st Year Students

- “Find a system that works for you that will help you stay balanced.”
- “Pay attention to those mock scenarios during your [graduate training], Believe it or not, some of them will probably present themselves during your fieldwork.”
- “Keep all your assignments and returned work organized, you'll thank yourself when you have to put together your portfolio.”

Advice For 2nd Year Students

- “Second year is a bit more intense, but don't panic, you've also grown in your knowledge and ability so it's nothing more than a natural progression.”
- “NETWORK and meet as much people as you can that work in education.”
- “I would also say that you should enjoy your last year together.” “The friends you make in grad school are very special.”

What
recommendations do
you have for
everyone?

Good luck with graduate school!!!

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns... feel free to contact me at

Ruben Escobar

gradstudentrep@schoolcounselor-ca.org

Ibonne Pineda

ibonne.pineda@gmail.com