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Member Spotlight: Lisa M. López, Ph.D.

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Why did you decide to choose Developmental Science as a course of study or career?

As an undergraduate student, I took my first developmental psychology course and was captivated. In that class, I learned about the Ecological Systems theory. I grew up in a very unique community in the United States. My community was bilingual and bicultural. Having the opportunity to think about my community and its influence on who I am as a person really motivated me to choose Developmental Science. I didn't see my normative experiences highlighted in the field of Developmental Science, and I wanted to both better understand my own experiences and question the field on what was considered normative development.

Who inspired you and why (and/or who inspired you to go into your chosen field of study)?

As an undergraduate, I had to opportunity to be part of a research study in Head Start programs, under the mentorship of Dr. Daryl Greenfield. Visiting the schools and working with the children really inspired me to pursue graduate school. Once I was in graduate school, the connections I made with the teachers and Latinx students in the Head Start programs I worked with continued to inspire me, leading to more questions than answers. As I have continued to work for the past 20 years, both with amazing colleagues and in classrooms with Latinx children and their teachers, I am constantly inspired to keep doing research and advocating for better educational programs that meet the needs of our learners.

Do you have a mentor or mentors who have been instrumental to your career and, if so, who and how?

I have so many mentors that took me under their wing. Daryl Greenfield showed me what it meant to do community-engaged research with Head Start. Applied research is about partnerships and that was instrumental in my development of my research agenda. My success after graduate school is owed to Patton Tabors, Adele Miccio, and Carol Hammer, who each helped guide me and supported me as a junior scholar, setting me up for a successful career in academia. I am so blessed to have had each of these mentors in my life. More recently in my mid-career, and through SRCD, I have added additional mentors, Carola Suarez-Orozco and Cynthia Garcia Coll - two greats in our field who encourage me and push me in my journey.

What is your best SRCD memory?

My best SRCD memory is a recent one. Having served as co-organizer for the Construction of the Other conference, I was able to stand on stage with my co-organizers, Gus Carlo, Linda Halgunseth, Cynthia Garcia-Coll, and Norma Perez-Brena, looking out into a packed ballroom and realizing we had done it. We organized an amazing sold-out conference focused on the science behind racism, prejudice, and discrimination, with the beautiful island of Puerto Rico as the backdrop. It was monumental!

What is your favorite social media platform (if you have one) and why?

My favorite social media platform is Twitter. Twitter is such a great place to follow the careers of other like-minded people, make new connections and collaborations, and learn about the latest and greatest research. Twitter is like networking, engaging, and learning at a conference every day.

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