

How Well Are We Preparing Behavior Analysts? Alumni-Reported Outcomes from a Master's ABA Program

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BACKGROUND
The growth of graduate-level Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) programs has been driven by rising demand for evidence-based behavioral services and the need for qualified ABA professionals. Using a quantitative survey design, data were collected from alumni who graduated with a master's degree in special education with a concentration in ABA from Texas Tech University (TTU). Preliminary results indicate alignment with employment, attainment of professional credentials, and positive perceptions of program relevance and preparation for applied skills.

METHODS
Participants:
• *Graduates, 1-10 years post-completion, from TTU ABA program:* 17 respondents

Survey Design:
• Five-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree, 1–5 Strongly Agree) and open-ended questions

Recruitment Methods:
• Participants were recruited through a Facebook post shared within alumni networks of the Texas Tech University Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) program.
• The post included a link directing participants to the online survey.

PROCEDURES
• A descriptive analysis was conducted.
• The survey was created by the research team and uploaded to SurveyMonkey. These surveys were distributed to participants through social media groups.
• The survey comprised 18 items, including demographic information and content areas. The survey employed both closed and open-ended questions.
• The purpose of the analysis was to evaluate the mean and standard deviation of the responses of graduates’ perceptions of program alignment and preparedness. Each response option was assigned a numerical value (Strongly Disagree, 1–5 Strongly Agree) to allow for statistical calculation and comparison across items. Mean and standard deviation were calculated to check the variability of the responses.
• Comparison of item means allowed identification of the strongest and weakest rated program areas. Due to the small sample size (n = 12), the analysis focused on descriptive rather than inferential statistics.

RESULTS
Using a 5-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly Agree, 1 = Strongly Disagree), alumni reported high overall ratings across items (M = 4.43, SD = 0.66), indicating strong alignment between the TTU ABA program and professional practice.
• Program relevance: **M = 4.65** (100% Agree/Strongly Agree)
• Use of learned strategies: **M = 4.75** (highest rated)
• Leadership development: **M = 4.00** (lowest rated)
• Preparation for diverse settings: **M = 4.25**
• Would recommend program: **M = 4.50**

Five themes emerged from alumni feedback:
• **Broader preparation across settings** – Expand coursework beyond school and clinic environments.
• **Greater applied depth** – Increase instruction in assessments and BCBA responsibilities.
• **BCBA exam preparation** – Include mock exams and structured study supports.
• **Alumni communication** – Improve networking and ABAI documentation support.
• **Biological foundations** – Add more content on neurological bases of behavior.

LIMITATIONS
• Small sample size of TTU ABA alumni.
• Results rely on self-reported perceptions rather than objective performance measures.
• Findings may not generalize to graduates from other ABA programs.

FUTURE RESEARCH
• Examine how training experiences relate to BCBA exam performance and career outcomes.
• Compare outcomes across multiple ABA graduate programs.



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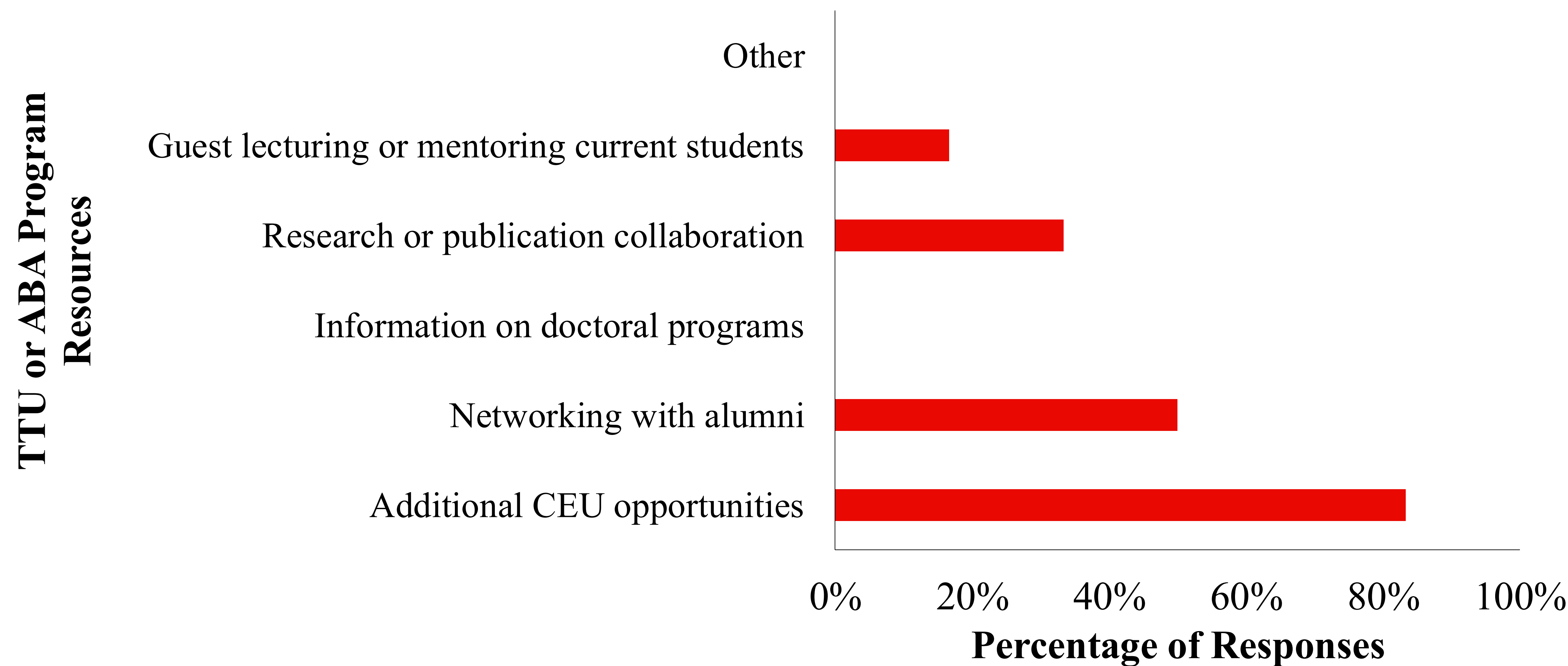
TTU Alumni report the ABA program prepares them well for real-world experiences as a practitioner.

Category	Subcategory	Number	%
Total Respondents (Consent)	Completed survey	17	100%
Employment in ABA Field	Yes	10	83.33%
	Partially ABA-related	1	8.33%
	No	1	8.33%
Organization Type	Public PK–12 School	3	25.00%
	Private ABA Clinic	3	25.00%
	Non-profit/Advocacy	3	25.00%
	Higher Education	2	16.67%
	Other	1	8.33%
	Charter School	0	0%
	Home-Based Provider	0	0%
BCBA Certification Status	Yes (Certified)	8	66.67%
	In Progress	2	16.67%
	Plan to pursue	2	16.67%
	Do not plan to pursue	0	0%
Post-Graduation Academic Pursuit	Doctoral Program	2	16.67%
	None of the Above	9	75.00%
	Other	1	8.33%

Note. The table above presents basic demographic information for respondents who have completed the ABA program at TTU.

Items	Mean (m)	Standard Deviation (SD)
The program content continues to be relevant in my current professional role.	4.6	0.50
The program helped me develop leadership skills relevant to the field of behavior analysis.	4.0	1.21
I regularly use the strategies, tools, or principles I learned in the program.	4.5	0.45
The program prepared me to work effectively in diverse and inclusive environments	4.3	0.45
I would recommend the M.Ed.-ABA program to colleagues or prospective students.	4.5	0.67

Note. The table above presents the mean and standard deviation from respondents of the ABA program at TTU.



Note. The above graph presents the TTU or ABA Program resources used by respondents since graduation.