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I have been working as a RA for Prof. Siva Viswanathan and Prof. Gordon Gao since 2014. We have developed multiple complete working papers during the process, and I learned greatly from the two advisors.

What I appreciate most in my RA experience is that my advisors always encourage me to identify my own research interest (as contrast to following other's agenda or what is trendy in the literature). However, such a discovery process is not easy. At beginning, they showed me concrete ways to form my own questions (e.g. skimming literature, reading tech news, interacting with industry, attending top conferences). Every week in our research meetings, they would spend time going through all the research ideas I generated and would tear them apart one after the other. The constant bombard of questions like "Why this is interesting?" "Why this is different from xxx paper" makes me think harder and harder. As time goes by, such questions becomes less and less. And I believe now I have a better taste on interesting questions.