

## Department of Communication Disorders and Special Education

### Assessment Plan for the Undergraduate and Graduate Majors in Communication Disorders

December 14, 2001

#### I. Mission

The Department of Communication Disorders and Special Education offers an undergraduate major in Communication Disorders and a graduate major in Communication Disorders - Speech-Language Pathology. Undergraduate work provides the foundation for graduate preparation as a speech-language pathologist. As with any other undergraduate training program, the communication disorders undergraduate program provides a broad general education. The graduate program completes the student's training as a speech-language pathologist to work in either schools or institutional/agency settings.

The mission of the undergraduate and graduate programs in Communication Disorders at Indiana State University is to develop speech-language pathology professionals 1) who are competent in the public school, hospital, rehabilitation center, and private practice work settings, 2) who are self-motivated to continue professional growth through questioning, research, and self-evaluation, and 3) who are able to practice as speech-language pathologists within the scope of practice as describe by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) (the program's national accreditation body) and according to the ASHA Code of Ethics.

#### II. Intended Student Outcomes

In general terms, over the course of their preparation as speech-language pathologists, students should become able to:

1. demonstrate knowledge of theoretical and applied bases in speech language, hearing sciences,
2. demonstrate ability to define clinical problems, formulate hypotheses, and accomplish systematic analyses and interpretation of data for solutions,
3. demonstrate competency in administration and interpretation of evaluative instruments, as well as the ability to plan, write, implement, revise and terminate remedial treatment programs,
4. demonstrate the communication skills needed to share and obtain information efficiently with clients, spouse, parents, and professionals, and
5. demonstrate a philosophy of continuing education, including self-study recognizing the ongoing process of education and professional growth.

In the pursuit of these general abilities and the mission of the program, the Communication Disorders program defined, developed, and adopted a set of specific student outcomes that was greatly influence by the Standards for School Service Professionals as approved by the Indiana Professional Standards Board on May 20, 1998. These standards have been expanded slightly beyond their original scope so as to allow the program to use them as the

conceptual framework to guide its undergraduate and graduate training programs because these programs prepare students to work not only in schools, but also in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and private practice. The resulting student outcomes were further shaped by the program's interest to link these student outcomes to the "Becoming a Complete Profession" programmatic theme and outcomes of the educator preparation programs of Indiana State University that have now been in place for several years.

Student Outcome #1 - Students and the Learning Process

Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) promote the success of all individuals in their charge by facilitating the academic, emotional, social, and physical development of persons with speech-language-hearing impairments and the quality and effectiveness of the learning environment.

Student Outcome #2 - Education and Learning Systems and Organizations

SLPs understand the breath and scope of habilitation and rehabilitation systems and learning organizations as they relate to provision of speech-language-hearing services. They are able to facilitate processes and engage in practices that promote lifelong development and learning.

Student Outcome #3 - Family and Community

SLPs work within the habilitation and rehabilitation systems to promote lifelong development and learning. They collaborate with families and work with community resources to respond to individual needs.

Student Outcome #4 - Assessment

SLPs understand formal and informal assessment techniques and the theory and research upon which administration, application, and interpretation of such techniques are based. A variety of assessment techniques are employed within the specific area of competence of the professional as appropriate for the given situation.

Student Outcome #5 - Intervention

SLPs understand intervention and prevention options available to address the needs of individuals and the theory and research upon which such interventions are based. Interventions are employed as appropriate within the professional's area of competence.

Student Outcome #6 - Legal Issues

SLPs are aware of and have an understanding of local, state, and federal laws that affect service providers and the educational process.

Student Outcome #7 - Ethics and Professionalism

SLPs conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner.

### III. Assessment Method

#### A. Philosophy and purpose

In general terms, assessment is structured to track and measure abilities to communicate, problem solve, interact with others. In addition, assessment measures the student's ability to apply the knowledge and skills to the evaluation and treatment of clinical speech-language-hearing disorders. The structure of our courses provides the foundation upon which to build the student's knowledge base, to increase the levels of their clinical skills, and to encourage them to work independently.

In specific terms, the program's assessment plan is structured to track and measure improvement of various aspects of the student's knowledge base, skills, and dispositions as they serve as indicators of the students abilities relative to the seven "IPSB" based student outcomes. The program is capitalizing on all the information that it needs to collect about students and their performance related to different IPSB standards for a vast majority of the data that is needed to complete this program-improvement-focused student outcomes initiative.

The program in speech-language pathology is an integrated multistage process involving an undergraduate pre-professional training program and a graduate professional training program. In each program, there are different distinct levels of student outcomes assessment (four for the undergraduate degree program and three for the graduate degree program). For the undergraduate program, the levels are entry, mid, exit, and post-graduation level. For the graduate program, the levels include mid, exit, and post-graduation assessments.

Whereas the graduate program is the program that leads to entry-level licensure for both teachers and health service professionals, and whereas the graduate program has students in it that did not graduate from Indiana State University's undergraduate program in Communication Disorder, student outcomes associated with the graduate program are more extensive in nature and more directly related to the IPSB driven student outcomes described in section II above than those in the undergraduate program.

Finally, both the undergraduate and the graduate programs have significant practicum components to them in which students under the supervision of qualified speech-language pathologists interact with persons with communication disorders within various roles allowed by the scope of practice for speech-language pathologists. These experiences are clustered near the end of the undergraduate program and distributed throughout the graduate program. Given such frequent and readily available opportunities to observe students actually performing as speech-language pathologists in the clinical setting, the program decided to focus a large part of its assessment plan on these components of the training program.

#### B. Assessment Tools

The variety of assessment tools that the program is preparing to use will lead to the program to being able to make strong inferences about student achievement include the following three major categories of activities and student outcomes artifacts associated with 1) in-class performance, 2) on-campus practicum, off-campus student teaching, and off-campus internship performance, and 3) post-graduation activities.

1. Activities and artifacts associated with classroom activities

- Performance on specific portions of written and oral exams
- In class individual presentations
- Written and verbal responses to presented clinical scenarios
- Written observation reports
- Research papers
- Research proposals
- Student consent forms
- Written class projects
- Therapy activity simulation activities
- Power point presentations
- Class discussions
- Group presentations

2. Activities and artifacts associated with practicum, student teaching, and internships

- Direct evaluation of clinical performance of students with clients, family members, teachers, and other professionals by university supervisors, student teacher supervisors, and internship supervisors
- Lesson plans
- Diagnostic reports
- Clinical reports
- Discharge reports
- Individualized Education Plans

3. Activities and artifacts associated with post-graduate performance

- Undergraduate post-graduation evaluation surveys
- Graduate post-graduation evaluation surveys
- Employer post-graduation evaluation surveys

Items listed within these three categories above are meant to represent the variety of assessments that the program plans to use and are not meant to represent all of the activities that will be used. Many of the activities listed about will be used repeatedly across different assessment periods.

**Assessment in the Undergraduate Program in Communication Disorders**

Entry Level Assessment

In the undergraduate program students initially take foundation course work during their freshman and sophomore years that provides the knowledge base for the profession. This initial course work (CD 211, 212, 213, 225, 226, 227, and 311) and the accompanying assigned observations prepare the students for clinical experiences which are designed to provide opportunities to integrate and apply their knowledge to the solution of clinical problems presented by individuals with communication disorders.

Information about student outcomes (e.g., student grades, course work arrays, and performance associated with specific class activities (papers, observations, presentation) will be collected over the first two years of the undergraduate student's program and will be reviewed during the fall semester of the "student's" junior year by the Analysis and Results Committee.

### Mid Level Assessment

Student outcomes associated with grades, class room activities, and clinical performance associated with CD 399, 400, 411, 422 will be collected during the junior and senior year. CD 399 and CD 400 are practicum courses so a considerable amount of information can be gained via direct observation of and evaluation of students as they carry out the roles and responsibilities of speech-language pathologists. This makes this mid level assessment a particularly rich source of student outcomes data. These outcomes data will be analyzed by the Analysis and Results Committee during the spring semester of the "student's" senior year.

### Exit Level Assessment

Student outcomes associated with clinical performance associated with CD 498 (Student Teaching) will be collected during this culminating undergraduate experience. Given the nature of the activities that occur during student teaching as a speech-language pathologist, numerous data points associated with the seven student outcomes will be collected. Another aspect of assessment of student teaching that makes this a particularly powerful student outcomes assessment experience is that students will be evaluated by practicing speech-language pathologists who are working in schools. Results will be analyzed by the Analysis and Results Committee during the fall semester following the "student's" graduation.

### Post-Graduation Assessment

Post-graduation assessment activities will be assessed during the spring semester following the "student's" graduation. Focusing on student outcomes, this survey activity will primarily focus on assess the "student's" success in obtaining either admission into a graduate program or employment related to the undergraduate degree that the student earned.

### **Assessment in the Graduate Program in Communication Disorders - Speech-Language Pathology**

Assessment occurs at three points within Master's degree program in Communication Disorders: Mid, Exit, and Post-Graduation.

### Mid Level Assessment

Mid level assessment is completed by the Analysis and Results Committee at the beginning of the fall semester of second year of the program based on work completed and data collected about the knowledge, skills, and dispositions students have developed at a point approximately halfway through the typical graduate sequence of courses. Activities that yield specific student outcomes data include class exams, class presentation, class discussions, research papers, and research proposals associated with CD 592, 593, 615, 616, and 618. In addition to these classroom-based activities, a large amount of data about student outcomes comes from observation and artifacts generated as part of the two graduate on-campus practica that students are enrolled in during the period of time reviewed at this assessment point.

### Exit Level Assessment

Exit level assessment occurs after the student has completed the rest of the course work, practica, and internships required by the program based on specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions data that can be inferred from specific classroom, practica, and internship activities (CD 594, 620, 621, 696, and 697). As with previous data sets, this one is particularly rich based on work complete during their final on-campus practicum and internship experiences. As with the undergraduate student teaching experience, one of the aspects of assessment of the internship that makes this a particularly powerful student outcomes assessment experience is that students will be evaluated by practicing speech-language pathologists who are working in hospitals and/or rehabilitation centers. Results will be analyzed by the Analysis and Results Committee during the spring semester following the "student's" graduation.

### Post-Graduation Assessment

The goal of the graduate program's post-graduation student outcomes assessment activities is to provide ongoing feedback and analysis of data to determine the effectiveness of the program in providing the needed educational and clinical experiences for the student to meet the specified outcomes which have been determined by faculty and practicing professionals. Whereas the students are no longer on campus and their activities are no longer subject to direct observation and evaluation, post-graduation evaluation is conducted through a series of surveys. The purpose of the post-graduation survey activity is to obtain information on the successful performance of communication disorders graduates in the marketplace. Two surveys, one in which the student evaluates his/her own performance in relation to the identified student outcomes and the other in which their employer or supervisor evaluates the graduate's performance, are used to collect this type of information. Surveys will be sent to recent graduates one and three years post-graduation. Results will be reviewed by the Results and Assessment Committee during the spring of each year beginning the first full-year post graduation for students who progressed through the new student outcomes assessment system and beginning the third full-year for the three year post-graduation evaluation surveys. Postgraduate surveys will also collect information about the various aspects of the graduate program beyond student outcomes (performance) in order to seek other information that might be helpful in improving the program.

### **Summary Chart of Student Outcomes Assessment Related to Assessment Points**

On the following page is a chart that summarizes which specific student outcomes will be evaluated at which assessment point within this assessment plan. This chart highlights the extensive and repeated nature assessments that occur at multiple summary/aggregate points within the undergraduate and graduate programs.

**Summary Chart of Student Outcomes Evaluated at Specific Assessment Points for the Undergraduate and Graduate Majors Program in Communication Disorders**

Undergraduate Assessments

Graduate Assessments

	Entry	Mid	Exit	Post-graduate	Mid	Exit	Post Graduate
Student Outcome 1	X	X	X		X	X	X
Student Outcome 2	X	X	X		X	X	X
Student Outcome 3	X	X	X		X	X	X
Student Outcome 4	X	X	X		X	X	X
Student Outcome 5	X	X	X		X	X	X
Student Outcome 6	X	X	X		X	X	X
Student Outcome 7		X	X		X	X	X
employment related to undergrad major				X			
admission into advanced degree program				X			X
employment related to graduate major							X

#### **IV. Time Frame for Implementation**

- Currently     The determination of which classes and practica specific performances (outcomes) will be assessed in has been already been determined. The program is developing tracking sheets to collect data about students outcomes based on performance in classes and practica. Forms have already been developed to assess specific student outcome indicators for practica, student teaching, and internship.
- Spring 02     Continue development of student outcome tracking forms for classes. Begin to use existing tracking forms in all clinical settings.
- Spring 02     Revise undergraduate and graduate curriculums and pre-revise tracking systems in order to come into compliance with other accrediting agencies' requirements.
- Fall    02     Begin to use student outcome assessment plan and assessment instruments to collect formal student outcomes data with freshmen at the undergraduate level and incoming graduate students at the graduate level at the beginning of academic year 2002-2003. Data collection needed for all assessments will occur each semester here after.
- Fall    03     Analyze formal student outcomes data associated with mid level assessment in the graduate program.
- Spring 04     Analyze formal student outcomes data associated with exit level assessment in the graduate program
- Fall    04     Analyze formal student outcomes data associated with mid level assessment in the undergraduate program.
- Spring 05     Analyze first-year post-graduation surveys of graduates and employers for graduate students who received their graduate degrees in Fall 2003.
- Fall    06     Analyze formal student outcomes data associated with exit level assessment in the undergraduate program.
- Spring 07     Analyze third year post-graduation surveys of graduates and employers for graduate students who received their graduate degrees in Fall 2003.
- Spring 07     Analyze post-graduation surveys of students who graduated from the undergraduate program in Spring 2006

#### **V. Analysis and Results**

Results will be analyzed by an Analysis and Results Committee composed of Communication Disorders faculty, an undergraduate student, a graduate student, an outside speech-language pathologist working in a school or hospital every semester following an assessment point. The outside speech-language pathologist should be paid by the university an appropriate honorarium for the work that he/she performs.



It will be the responsibility of this committee to combine and analyze data collected to 1) determine the level of program effectiveness in meeting the seven student outcomes identified in Section II and 2) make recommendations regarding changes that might be implemented in order to modify and improve the program as it relates to positive student outcomes assessments.

This committee will prepare a report each semester that it analyzes results summarizing the results and making specific recommendation for program improvement. These reviews will take place during the first month of the fall or spring semester following the tracked student groups completion of activities associated with these student outcomes assessment levels. A report based on aggregate student outcomes data will be due to the department chair one month after the beginning of each semester that the Analysis and Results Committee completes its work.

#### **VI. Program for Improvement**

The department chair will share the report of the Analysis and Results Committee with Communication Disorders program faculty in writing prior to the first meeting that occurs during the second month of the semester. Following discussion of the report in this meeting, program faculty may modify recommendations from the Analysis and Results committee and will make decisions about which recommendations will be pursued and how and when to pursue the selected courses of action. Minutes of meetings will include a copy of the report and details about the ensuing plan for improvement.

Note: There are several other mechanisms that the Communication Disorders program uses besides Student Outcomes Assessment in order to assess the effectiveness of the program. Other mechanisms include such things as topic specific student surveys, client surveys, SIRs, transcript reviews, clinical clock hour reviews, and focus groups on topics that the program feels it needs additional input. Results of Student Outcomes Assessment will be to be interpreted in this greater context when actions leading to improvement are developed.