

PROGRAM CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK COMMUNICATION DISORDERS ADVANCED PREPARATION PROGRAM

A. College of Education's Conceptual Framework

The College of Education at the University of Kentucky has adopted the model of "Professional Educator as Reflective Decision Maker" as the conceptual framework for its professional education programs. The characteristics of reflective decision making included in professional educational programs in the College are derived from concepts of reflective practice as espoused by historical and contemporary leaders in education. As such, reflective thinking is based on the individual's open-mindedness, that is, the ability to actively challenge personal beliefs by continually seeking new information. This open-mindedness goes hand-in-hand with wholeheartedness and intellectual responsibility. Wholeheartedness is an absorbing enthusiasm for and dedication to one's work. Intellectual responsibility includes caring enough about the consequences of one's professional duties and actions to seek necessary information on which to base intelligent decisions. Reflective decision-making guides proactive practice as differentiated from reactive practice. Reflective decision making in professional education programs at the University of Kentucky includes knowledge of and attention to Kentucky's New Teacher Standards, Experienced Teacher Standards, and Administrator Standards; contemplation of possible long-term consequences of professional actions; evaluation of the appropriateness of these actions and the effects of these actions on student performance; and maintenance of an informed perspective concerning all aspects of teaching and instruction.

B. Mission of the Division of Communication Disorders

The overall mission of the Division of Communication Disorders is to improve the communication status of Kentuckians through its educational, service, and research programs. Specifically, our mission is to provide for the citizens of the Commonwealth: 1) quality educational opportunities in the area of communication sciences and disorders, thereby promoting the development of quality speech-language pathologists to serve the Commonwealth, 2) support for the process of life-long learning by participating in the provision of continuing education and professional development activities, 3) community service and clinical service both within and outside the University, and 4) generation, evaluation, and dissemination of basic and applied research in the area of communication sciences and disorders.

C. Relationship of the Initial and Advanced Certification Programs in Communication Disorders to the Conceptual Framework

We believe that the provision of speech and language services to children requires knowledge of the science of communication disorders and the art of service delivery. To that end, the professional preparation program in Communication Disorders is committed to preparing speech-language pathologists who are reflective decision makers and who can promote development of the individual in all areas of communication and can facilitate learning of all children. Successful school practitioners must be prepared to face many different situations and to make informed decisions, often under the scrutiny of administrators, other teachers, students, parents, and the public.

In keeping with the academic focus of the Kentucky Educational Reform Act, school-based speech-language pathologists must effectively integrate their practice into the curricular milieu of the classroom. School-based speech-language pathologists must learn to function as providers of direct intervention, as collaborative educators with classroom teachers, and as consultants to teachers, parents, and other professionals. Meaningful education of these practitioners, then involves not just mastery of content and pedagogical strategies (recognizing that both of these areas of endeavor are important to the overall process), but also requires that the student develop an understanding of the nature and purpose of both areas and of the interdependent role of education practitioners. Only by developing this deeper understanding will school-based speech-language pathologists be able to recognize, reflect on, and solve the problems they encounter in practice.

The communication disorders certification program is based on the Experienced Teacher Standards adopted in 1994 and 1999 by the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board and in the academic expectations of the Kentucky Educational Reform Act passed into regulation in 1994. It builds on the entry-level skills delineated in the Standards for the Certificate of Clinical Competence (effective January 1, 1993) adopted by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

The reflective decision maker model produces proactive practice strategies and encourages reasonable experimentation. Practitioners learn to better assess their students and to use that assessment data to set appropriate learning goals and to devise appropriate strategies to reach those goals, resulting in educational practices which assist students in developing a pattern for success. Reflective decision making in the Communication Disorders program is based on an intermingling of research and practice. To that end, all professional preparation courses emphasize the role of research in the building of our professional knowledge base. In addition, all students completing the program are taught to use research strategies and applied behavior analysis tools to evaluate the effectiveness of their interventions. Finally, all students are expected to learn to use current technologies for research, instruction, and personal productivity.

D. Communication of the Conceptual Framework to Students

The advanced preparation Rank I program in Communication Disorders is a non-degree certification program designed to meet the identified needs and goals of its students. Its purpose is to facilitate the professional growth of currently certified speech-language pathologists and to help them grow as reflective decision makers. The program's framework will allow them to devise professional growth plans for themselves, to design a course of study that addresses their professional needs, to reflect on their instructional and assessment activities, to make critical observations of their students' learning and responses, and to evaluate their own teaching performance objectively.

Students will enter the advanced preparation program with a master's degree (or its equivalent) in Communication disorders. They must also have achieved successful performance on Kentucky's New Teacher Standards as evidenced by successful completion of the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program or possession of or eligibility for a standard certificate in Communication Disorders and completion of one year of paid professional experience. Each student's preparation and goals are evaluated as part of the admission process and these factors are used to guide the student planning their course of study.

The advanced preparation Rank I program in Communication Disorders combines didactic coursework and experiential activities to further develop the students' professional skills. The advanced level program includes curricular and assessment activities addressing Kentucky's Experienced Teacher Standards. Although the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) has standards for the master's degree portion of the program, ASHA has not adopted advanced level standards that apply to the advanced level program.

The advanced program is designed to prepare practicing speech-language pathologists to be reflective decision makers, to promote development their students in all areas of communication, and to facilitate learning of all children. To that end, students in the program must complete at least 60 hours of coursework after receipt of an undergraduate degree in Communication Disorders (or its equivalent). Of the 60 hours, 30 – 45 are part of a prerequisite professional core to be completed as part of a master's degree in Communication Disorders. The remaining 15 – 30 hours are in courses taken after admission to the advanced preparation Rank I program. In an effort to enhance students' ability to offer appropriate and quality services to an increasingly diverse population, students are required to take at least one approved course designed to increase their knowledge of diversity issues. To encourage utilization of technology, students will observe instructor use of technology such as PowerPoint and other technology applications in the classroom. They will be required to use technology to complete various written assignments, make presentations, and complete various other program-related activities. Similar to students in the initial certification program, students in the advanced program will be encouraged to participate in research projects, present at state and national conventions, and submit articles for publication.

The advanced certification program is based on a continuous assessment model. In addition to traditional forms of assessment, formal evaluations of student progress are conducted by a subcommittee including the TEP Chair and at least one member of the TEP Faculty at entry, mid-point, and exit points in the program.

E. Communication of the Conceptual Framework to the Community

The Communication Disorders faculty utilizes several strategies for communicating the conceptual framework to the community. Some of these activities include

- Participation of faculty as editorial consultants, officers, members of ad-hoc committees, other activities in professional organizations, such as the Kentucky Speech-Language-Hearing Association, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Council for Exceptional Children, International Reading Association, and International Dyslexia Association that provide informal and formal opportunities for sharing the conceptual framework
- Faculty and student presentations at local, state, national, and international conferences that reflect the program's conceptual framework
- Journal publications and books/ book chapters by both faculty and students that demonstrate the conceptual framework through research and practice
- Service activities, such as speech, language, and hearing screenings, involvement in the Kentucky Teacher Internship program, serving on Kentucky Department of Education monitoring teams, and participation in inservice training projects which offer venues for communicating the conceptual framework.
- Representation of other faculty at the University, school administrators, school speech-language pathologists, family members, and students on program faculties.
- Participation of initial certification students in required observations and clinical training at a university service clinic, various schools, a variety of clinical settings which require regular contacts between field-based personnel and communication disorders faculty including site visits, phone conversations, and email correspondence.

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