Careers in Speech-Language Pathology

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What is Speech-Language Pathology?
- Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) assess, diagnose, treat, and help to prevent speech, language, cognitive, voice, swallowing, fluency, and other related disorders. (U.S. Dept of Labor)
- SLPs work with a variety of age-ranges, from infants to the elderly.
- Populations include: normal developing, developmentally delayed, brain injured, stroke victims, dementia patients, second-language learners, individuals who are deaf, and more.

It takes teamwork
- Professionals in speech-language pathology may find themselves working with medically-involved populations, such as:
  - Head and neck cancer patients
  - Laryngectomy patients
  - Severe accident victims
  - Cleft palate
  - Craniofacial syndromes
  - Premature infants
  - SLPs in health care settings work closely with medical doctors, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and recreational therapists, among others. They are an integral part to treatment teams. SLPs are the speech, language, and swallowing experts.

What types of people make good SLP’s? You might be an SLP if…
- You excel in academic environments
  - Students in the UNI SLP program must maintain a GPA of 3.0
- You enjoy affecting lives for the better
  - Clinicians have the joy of watching their clients learn and improve their quality of lives
- You enjoy neurology, anatomy, human development
- You work well with others

So what’s in it for me?
- Speech pathologists are in high demand. Medical advances are also improving the survival rate of premature infants and trauma and stroke victims, who then need assessment and possible treatment. An increased emphasis also has been placed on early identification of speech and language problems in young children. The combination of growth in the occupation and an expected increase in retirements over the coming years will create excellent job opportunities for speech-language pathologists. Opportunities are particularly favorable for those with knowledge of another language, such as Spanish or American Sign Language. (U.S. Dept of Labor)

Where can you work?
- You can work almost anywhere!
  - SLPs find work in hospitals, nursing homes, schools, clinics, universities, private practice, research programs, and elsewhere.
  - At www.slpjobs.com, you can see recent postings from all over the country.
How much might you get paid?

- In the Midwest currently: hospitals typically start out paying $45,000/year. Nursing homes: $53,000/year. Schools: $40,000/year. There are other benefits to keep in mind, too.

Getting a Masters Degree

- A master’s degree is required in all 50 states to work as an SLP
- Before being accepted, students are required to take the GRE.
- At most universities, it takes two years, including full time internships.
- Beyond classes, you will receive extensive clinical experience.
- Some universities require a research project or thesis is required to be completed. Others have students choose between comprehensive exams and a thesis.
- You may join the local and national speech and hearing association.
- The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association is the national organization and information for students, professionals, and those seeking careers in the field are at their website: www.asha.org

Summary

- Speech-language pathology is a highly diverse and rewarding field.
- The field of speech pathology provides opportunities to work in medical, educational, and research arenas.
- The need for qualified speech pathologists is very high.
- If you’re looking to work with a variety of individuals, in a variety of settings, while improving the quality of life for those you treat, this would be a great field for you.

After receiving an M.A. in Speech-Language Pathology, the doors are open for earning your PhD!

- Work specifically in the area that interests you most
- Work with highly respected professionals
- Teach others in your topics of interest and expertise
- Expand your employment opportunities
- Be on the cutting edge of research and clinical practice
- Become nationally and internationally known
- Questions??