

Cerritos College CTE Program Report, Spring 2020

Program: Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA)

Division: Health Occupations

Attached is a copy of the Annual Unit Plan for: Speech-Language Pathology Assistant.

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1. **Objectives: What are the objectives of the program?** To what extent are these objectives being achieved? How satisfied are students with their preparation for employment? How satisfied are employers with the preparation they receive in this program? Does this program contribute to programs in other fields? What plans are in place for improving the program?

The SLPA Program endeavors to cultivate the following in its student population:

- Awareness and advocacy of communication disorders across the lifespan
- Knowledge and appropriate use of professional language used in the screening, assessment, and intervention of individuals with communication disorders
- Competency in application of clinical procedures, principles, methods, and techniques/strategies in the clinical environment
- Adherence to the SLPA Scope of Practice, health and safety precautions, and ethical practices as mandated by the California SLPAHAD Board and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Alumni have expressed satisfaction with the level of preparation for further academic studies in this area and in their work as SLPAs. They are provided two internship courses to prepare them for diverse student/client populations, different supervision styles, and different work settings. The Cerritos College SLPA program has established a reputation in the region for a high standard of student performance and excellence in professionalism. Many SLPs who provide supervision for the internships prefer to supervise Cerritos SLPA students because they know that they will be organized, professional, and effective in their application of clinical skills.

This program supports students who wish to go on to their Bachelor degrees in the field of speech-language pathology because it provides a strong academic foundation for more advanced theory in this field. Further, SLPAs who complete the Associate's program here at Cerritos College and then go on to apply for a master's degree program in SLP are much more prepared for the clinical component of the master's program than students who do not complete a SLPA degree or complete clinical training.

The program is currently transitioning to an application-based program with the goals of increasing student retention and completion. The application process is intended to help students who are serious in completing the program and meet the basic academic standards are going to have a

chance to complete the program. The open enrollment system was challenging for many students who juggle work, family, and school.

There are prerequisite courses that students will need to take to apply for the program, which will ensure they have developed a well-rounded, fundamental knowledge based essential for success in more advanced courses. This will also allow students to take the time they need to complete the prerequisites so that when they are admitted to the program, they will only have 3 semesters remaining that focus on developing their clinical skill base.

- 2. Market Data Need: How strong is the demand for graduates of the program?** How has demand changed in the past two years and what is the outlook for the next five years. How many jobs are available regionally in this field? Are other similar programs offered in this region and if so, what is their impact on the job market? How is the job market impacting your program?

According to ONET, there is a projected growth of 9-13% in this field with 33,400 openings nationwide between 2014-2024. A search of SLPA positions in the Los Angeles and Orange County area through a job search engine such as Indeed will indicate anywhere between 25-30 SLPA jobs available at this time. There are positions for direct hires in school districts, clinics, and for contract agencies. Even with 3 other regional SLPA AA programs and 3 local bachelor SLPA programs, there continues to be a demand for licensed SLPAs.

- 3. Enrollment/Retention/Placement: What are the trends in student enrollment, success and completion, and placement?** Is there an increase or decline in the last five years? What are the barriers to success and completion? What are placement rates with local employers? What do these data mean for your program?

The numbers of graduates of the SLPA program have fluctuated between 17-25 but average 20.4/year. Typically there is attrition in the introductory courses (SLP 101 & 105) but this has significantly decreased from 31% to 18% over the last five years. Once students have advanced in the program they are likely to finish, and this is reflected in the 89-100% completion rates for SLP 241 and 246 (the internship capstone courses). Some issues that have come up with students completing all of the coursework for the degree in 2-3 years is the impacted courses like SLP 101, SLP 105, and A&P 120. SLP 101 and 105 are now going to be offered every semester; additional sections can be added if the numbers warrant it.

Although the program does not have specific employment rates, many alumni go on to work for the school districts they have interned with, such as Montebello USD, Talk to Me Bilingual Therapy, Share Speech Therapy Services, and DG Therapy. Several alumni also work for Los Angeles Unified School District. Some students choose to go on to a Bachelor's degree or change to a related field (e.g., education, child development) once they have finished the program and do not work as a SLPA. It is a goal for the department to ascertain more specific employment data, as well as identifying how many students go on for further education in the area of SLP and related fields.