

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**Observation/Graduate School Preparation**

**Course Number: COMD 5900**  
**Text: None**

**Instructor: Dee R. Child**  
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**Learning Outcomes:** Through completion of this course you will ...

1. Reflect upon and organize the impressions and experiences you have had to this point in your professional educational training,
2. Gain additional “hands-on” experiences within the field of Communicative Disorders.
3. Prepare for graduate school admission.

**Procedures:**

The class consists primarily of independent work documented through a series of written reports and projects. The course is organized by week with each assignment listed and described in the “Course Content” link on the course homepage. Please follow the Calendar and Course Content closely.

**Methods:**

**1. Experiences Up To This Point:**

You will submit a review of what led you to where you are now in your professional plans through a series of a one-page (double-spaced size 12 font) reports for each of the following:

Report 1: How did you become interested in this profession and why does it still appeal to you?

Report 2: What has been the most rewarding COMD class you have had to this point, either in this USU program or in another program? Why?

Report 3: What has been the least rewarding COMD class you have had to this point, either in this USU program or in another program? Why?

**2. Gaining Additional “Hands-On” Experiences:**

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) requires that students complete at least 25 hours of supervised observation of various disorders of communication prior to the beginning of actual clinical intervention. You will locate a speech-language pathologist (SLP) or audiologist (Aud) and, with the appropriate permissions, observe a variety of communication interactions that will result in completion of these 25 hours of observation. For each hour of observation and experience detailed below, you will write a one-page report and submit it via the Assignment Dropbox to the professor. You should seek an SLP or Aud that has current ASHA certification. If that is absolutely NOT an option, you may observe a non-ASHA certified SLP and your observation reports will be reviewed under the direction of the course instructor, who is an ASHA-certified SLP.

As you complete your observations, please be professionally dressed and act in a professional manner. If you need to leave an evaluation or treatment session before it is finished, please do so quietly and as indiscreetly as possible, not during the middle of a test. Remember that you are watching an actual professional interaction with a real patient. Act like you would like to have someone act if they were observing you at the doctor or dentist's office.

While you are watching each evaluation take notes so you can write a report on what you see. Follow the directions and guidelines listed below very carefully:

Directions for Completing Your Observations of Communicative Disorders

Definitions:

SLP/Aud = Speech-Language Pathologist or Audiologist.

Client = individual who is receiving services from the SLP/Aud and is being discussed in this report. The client's actual name, birth date or other identifying information will not be used in this report.

CD = Communicative Disorder – the client's communicative challenge of concern being addressed in this report.

Therapy – diagnostic and/or treatment activities that relate to the communicative disorder.

ASHA = American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Directions:

Using the outline below, for each hour you observe, write one report for each of the different therapy "sessions" you observe during that hour. For example, some sessions may be approximately 15 minutes long so you would summarize the information from each session by placing the following headings under each section of the report below:

Session 1:

Session 2:

Session 3:

Etc.

You then submit one report using the Assignment Dropbox for each hour of observation. If you are observing a group, focus on one client within the group for your report.

Permission:

It is critical that those individuals being observed or their guardians have given their written permission for other individuals (yourself included) to observe their therapy for educational purposes. It is your responsibility to work with the SLP/Aud to assure that this has been done prior to your observations.

For each report you will document the following:

The SLP/AUD has given you written permission to use his/her name in this report and to observe him/her working with the client you will discuss in this report. If not, do not write a report about this SLP/AUD.

The client or client's guardian has given his/her written permission to be observed for educational purposes while receiving the services of the SLP/AUD. If not, do not write a report about this client.

Follow the outline below in each report...

Observation Report Form

Report #:

I document that SLP/Aud and client (or guardian) have given written permission for their therapy sessions to be observed for educational purposes: YES NO

Observer (you):

First name of the SLP/AUD:

Is this SLP/AUD a member of ASHA? Yes No

If so, what is the ASHA # of the SLP/AUD ?

Date of the Observation:

Length of the Observation:

Age of the Client:

The following information is based on your opinions from your training to this point and does not necessarily come from the written documentation from the SLP/Aud:

General Type of the Communicative Disorder Being Observed:

General impact this communicative disorder has on the client's ability to communicate effectively:

In general terms, briefly describe the ultimate, long-term goals for this client.

In general terms, briefly describe the short-term goals that you think will be addressed during approximately the next month.

Briefly describe the daily goals of this session.

Briefly describe the therapy activities of this session.

Briefly describe the materials used in this session.

Briefly describe any progress you saw in the client's accomplishment of his/her goals in this session.

Briefly describe just one helpful idea you gained from observing this session. This could relate to the technique the clinician used to accomplish the goal, behavior modification, reinforcement, therapy activity, clinician interaction with significant other, etc.

Do you document that, as the observer, you are the student enrolled in this COMD Capstone course? YES NO

Do you document that the information above is based on your actual observation of the SLP/Aud and the client? YES NO

Do you document that you actually completed this observation and wrote this report? YES NO

Use the attached summary sheet (end of syllabus) to keep track of the reports that you submit.

### **“Experiential” Lab Assignments:**

In the weekly assignments listed in the Course Content you will be given experiential lab assignments to complete. The labs are intended to be “reality” experiences, helping you better understand what it would be like to have a communication disorder. You will complete these assignments independently and submit a report on each experience using the Assignment Dropbox.

### **Evidence-Based Practice Project:**

As you prepare yourself to become a professional SLP or Audiologist, it is important that you develop the excellent practice of basing your assessment and treatment on sound evidence-based principles. In other words, you make your clinical decisions based on sound evidence. For this class you will get a “taste” of evaluating an assessment or treatment approach described in the professional literature to determine its value and relevance in clinic assessment or practice. You will first read the following three articles about evidence-based practice and then you will search out and read a relatively current (i.e., 1998 – 2006 ) research article (i.e., report on a primary *applied* research study) focused on assessment or intervention of a communicative disorder of interest to you. Possible sources include *Journal of Speech, Language, Hearing Research*; *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in the Schools*; *The Reading Teacher*; *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*; *Reading Research Quarterly*; *Journal of Learning Disabilities*; *Journal of Communication Disorders*, etc. You may also wish to try the ASHA website or the

ERIC or PSYCH Info search engines. After you have carefully read and critiqued the research article you will complete the evidence-based practice (EBP) Reference Analysis Worksheet (located later in the syllabus).

Read the following three articles:

Dollaghan, C. (2004, April 13). Evidence-based practice: Myths and realities. *The ASHA Leader*, pp. 4-5, 12. Located on the web at...

<http://www.asha.org/about/publications/leader-online/archives/2004/040413/f040413a1.htm>

Justice, L. M., & Fey, M. E. (2004, Sept. 21). Evidence-based practice in schools: Integrating craft and theory with science and data. *The ASHA Leader*, pp. 4-5, 30-32. Located on the web at...

<http://www.asha.org/about/publications/leader-online/archives/2004/040921/f040921a.htm>

Apel, K.A., & Self, T. (2003, Jul – Sept.) Evidence-Based Practice: The Marriage of Research and Clinical Services. *The ASHA Leader*. Located on the web at...

<http://www.asha.org/about/publications/leader-online/archives/2003/q3/030909.htm>

### **3. Preparing For Graduate School Admission:**

You will thoughtfully develop a list of factors important in choosing the best graduate schools and then you will research different graduate schools to determine which ones best match your list. Then you will develop a strong resume and letter of intent that could be used in your application to the schools of your choice.

#### **Grading:**

Grading will be traditional (A – F). There will be no mid-term or final examinations. You will be graded on your reports submitted through the Dropbox, which must be turned in by the deadlines listed in the calendar.

Each submitted report is worth 10 points with the exception of the Evidence-Based Practice assignment, which is worth 50 points. Points are earned for the following:

Evidence-Based Practice Report:

Submission of the Reference Analysis Worksheet: 10

Completion of all portions of the Reference Analysis Worksheet: 10

Specific wording that reflects thorough reading and accurate interpretation of research article: 20

Accurate spelling, punctuation, and grammar: 10

Clinic Observation Reports:

Completion of all portions of the observation report form: 2

Specific wording that reflects attentive observation and thought: 5

Accurate spelling, punctuation, and grammar: 3

Other Reports:

Specific wording that reflects attentive observation and thought: 6

Accurate spelling, punctuation, and grammar: 4

Total Possible Points: 460

#### **Academic Honesty:**

You are expected to do your own work. No copying or falsification of other individuals' work will be accepted.

Procedures regarding violations of academic honesty as outlined by Utah State University WILL be enforced.

You should review the standards and implications of violating those standards, located at

<http://www.usu.edu/policies/pdf/Acad-Integrity.pdf>.

#### **Disability Accommodation**

Reasonable accommodation will be provided for qualified students with disabilities. Please inform the instructor during the first week of class to make arrangements.

<b>Observation and Report Writing Summary Sheet</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Type of Observation: SLP, Aud, Eval, Treatment, Other</b>	<b>Minutes Spent Observing</b>	<b>Report Submitted in Dropbox</b>

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**Reference Analysis Worksheet<sup>1</sup>**  
**(Use with Evidence-Based Practice Assignment)**

**Reference:**

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<sup>1</sup> Based on American Academy of Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine, 2002; ASHA, 2002; Ashford, 2002; Law, 2000

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**Purpose Statement:**

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**Participants:**

- a. Level of Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_ (see descriptors on reverse side)
  - b. Number of Participants: Total #: \_\_\_\_\_ Total # / group: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Participant selection: (age, gender, disorder-type, native language, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_
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d. Quality of subject description: \_\_\_\_\_ (see descriptors on reverse side) because: \_\_\_\_\_

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e. Randomization of participants \_\_\_\_\_

f. Control group: \_\_\_\_\_

g. Eligibility criteria/testing \_\_\_\_\_

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Appropriate? \_\_\_\_\_

**Method:**

- a. Procedures:
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b. Time Period: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Outcome Measures) : \_\_\_\_\_

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Quality of Outcome Measures: \_\_\_\_\_ because (reliability/validity of tests used to determine effects:

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Blind evaluators or treatment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Results:**

- a. Significant findings/Strong effect sizes:
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- b. Other findings:
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**Overall Comments:**

Control of bias: \_\_\_\_\_

Credibility of source: \_\_\_\_\_

