

Capstone Experience in the Major Application Template

Name of the Major*: Communicative Disorders

Department/Unit: School of Communicative Disorders

Contact Person: Gary Cumley, Ph. D., Chair

Report of Dept. Vote: 15 Approve 0 Oppose 0 Abstain Date: 05/10/2012

*Note: Each major must have a designated Capstone Experience in the Major.

Capstone Experience in the Major Learning Outcomes:

A capstone experience is either a single seminar or a broader culminating experience designed to be offered near the completion of a student's program of study. It is meant to provide students the opportunity to make connections between the key learning objectives of their majors and the General Education Program Outcomes, and to consider how their educations have prepared them for the world beyond the university.

To fulfill this requirement, students will:

- Complete a project that integrates knowledge, skills, and experiences related to those General Education Program Outcomes appropriate to the discipline.
- Demonstrate skills, processes, and resources needed to make a successful transition from college to the world beyond.

Capstone Experience in the Major Criteria:

1. Departments will designate a Capstone course(s) or experience for each of its majors.
2. The Capstone course(s) or experience should require the use of skills, methodology, and knowledge which demonstrate continuity between the General Education Program Outcomes and the major.
3. Capstone courses or experiences should have sufficiently small enrollment caps to allow for active participation by each student and feedback by the instructor.

Capstone Experience in the Major

1. If the department is designating a course or courses for the Capstone Experience, list them here:

Communicative Disorders 495- Clinical Practicum

2. Describe how the course(s) listed above will require the use of skills, methodologies, and knowledge that demonstrate continuity between the General Education Program Outcomes and the academic major.

Each student enrolled in COMD 495 is evaluated using a form entitled “Evaluation of Therapy Skills”. The last section of the form is related to professional responsibility and ethical behavior. Specifically, performance in the capstone experience includes expectations that align with the GEP outcomes related to knowledge and methods of the physical, social, and cultural worlds as well as responsible global citizenship.

Each student must receive a satisfactory rating in the following areas to pass the capstone experience:

- a. Initiative, problem-solving and effort to function independently
- b. Independence in learning
- c. Effective interaction with patients, parents, professionals, from all backgrounds
- d. Concern, respect, and cultural sensitivity for the clients and family members
- e. Management of conflicts and respect for others' perspectives
- f. Adherence to facility policy and procedure, and the ASHA Code of Ethics

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) code of ethics sets forth the highest standards of integrity and ethical principles related to professional practice by speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and speech, language, and hearing scientists (ASHA, 2010).

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2010). *Code of ethics* [Ethics]. Available from www.asha.org/policy.

Students utilize paperless clinical records on a secure server and reusable clinical materials from our clinical media center to sustain environmental resources.

Students learn and experience social equity issues related to disability rights during the capstone experience as well. Students learn about how individuals with disabilities face challenges in society and how they can become advocates.

Students develop effective communication skills necessary to interact with clients having communication disorders, caregivers, and other professionals.

3. Describe how the assignments in the course(s) listed above will achieve the following outcomes:

- a. Students will complete a project that integrates knowledge, skills, and experiences related to those General Education Program Outcomes appropriate to the discipline.**

The capstone project in Communicative Disorders is for a student to provide speech and language assessment and treatment to a client having a communication disorder, under the supervision of a clinical supervisor. Most clients attend therapy twice a week for the semester. All therapy is conducted at the UWSP Center for Communicative Disorders. Specific tasks (assignments) which are part of the clinical practicum/capstone experience, and their relationship to the General Education Program Outcomes, are described below.

Critical thinking, quantitative and communication skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing global society. One of the first tasks a student undertakes upon receiving a clinical assignment is to review the client file and reason for referral. **Critical thinking** is required for a student to filter through all

information and decide what is important for planning assessment and treatment. Students are required to make critical decisions as to what information they need to additionally learn about a client, and then translate that into an action plan. **Quantitative skills** become important as the student undertakes the task of conducting an initial evaluation and measuring responsiveness to intervention. Standardized tests may be administered which require scoring and comparison with normative data. Once therapy begins, a student is continually measuring client performance on tasks, and adjusting the course of therapy based upon the data obtained. Students become knowledgeable about using evidence based practice when determining treatment objectives and approaches. The task of daily interaction promotes the development of written and oral **communication skills** critical to effective work with the client who has a communication disorder, caregivers, and other professionals. Instruction and feedback is inherent in each and every clinical interaction.

Broad knowledge of the physical, social and cultural worlds as well as the methods by which this knowledge is produced. The clinical task of analyzing assessment results and developing a plan of treatment requires the student to apply what is known about **physical, social and cultural information**. Students have foundation knowledge in the areas of biology, anatomy & physiology, chemistry and physics. Nearly every client will present with an underlying factor in one of the areas of biological or physical science (eg- hearing loss- physics of sound; cleft palate- anatomical variation). Likewise, many clients present with problems in social communication. An example is an individual with Asperger's syndrome. Students must apply what they know about normal patterns of communication in a social context in order to determine appropriate treatment objectives. Finally, communication behavior is highly variable for different cultures. Students are commonly assigned a client who does not have English as a first language, so knowledge of the client's cultural background is critical when assessing communication skills and determining appropriate treatment objectives.

Global citizenship involving personal accountability, social equity and environmental sustainability. Rather than a single task, the entire process of providing a treatment to another human being in need requires a student to show **personal accountability**. For example, students are expected to be prepared, prompt, and responsive to constructive criticism, and are graded on those qualities. Students also gain experience in managing conflict, which often requires consideration of **equity issues** (eg- authority status, professional boundaries). Finally, students utilize paperless clinical records on a secure server and reusable clinical materials from our clinical media center to **sustain environmental resources**.

Applying knowledge and skills, working in interdisciplinary ways to solve problems. Inherent to the clinical task of providing speech and language therapy is that the student **applies his/her knowledge and skills regarding communicative disorders**. Additionally, students have to work in an **interdisciplinary** way to solve the client's communication problem. Communication always occurs in the context of at least one other person. Clients are often challenged in the context of their naturally occurring environments, and must learn to more effectively send or receive information in those locations. As a result, students may experience working with a classroom teacher to improve the classroom environment for a client who has a language based learning disability, or working with an audiologist to maximize use of an assistive listening device.

b. Students will demonstrate skills, processes, and resources needed to make a successful transition from college to the world beyond.

The Bachelor's degree in Communicative Disorders is a pre-professional degree, meaning that students must go on to graduate school in order to become credentialed as a Speech-Language Pathologist or Audiologist. The capstone project is completed during the student's senior year, and is intended to prepare students for the next step of graduate study, most often in speech-language pathology or audiology. Students may apply the knowledge and skills gained from the capstone experience to graduate

school, or careers in other professions such as vocational rehabilitation. Throughout the capstone project, students are expected to progress in level of independence across many skills (see *Evaluation of Therapy Skills form- rating scale at top of page one*). The transition from college to the world beyond begins during the capstone experience.

- 4. Capstone courses and experiences should have sufficiently small enrollments which facilitate active participation and allow for feedback from the instructor. Please describe your department's enrollment policy for the Capstone Experience.**

Twenty-one students per section of COMD 495. As a clinical practicum course, each student is then assigned to a specific clinical supervisor for the experience. A single clinical supervisor would typically have between one and ten senior level students registered for COMD 495, during a given semester.

- 5. If your department is designating experiences other than a specific course to meet the Capstone requirement, please list those experience(s) below.**

N/A

- 6. Describe how the Capstone experience(s) listed above will achieve the following outcomes.**

- a. Students will complete a project that integrates knowledge, skills, and experiences related to those General Education Program Outcomes appropriate to the discipline.**

N/A

- b. Students will demonstrate skills, processes, and resources needed to make a successful transition from college to the world beyond.**

N/A