

EFFECTS ON GRADUATE STUDENTS' CLINICAL SKILLS FOLLOWING "CASE STUDY NIGHTS"

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INTRODUCTION

The need for supporting growth of entry level graduate students in speech language pathology is essential in student satisfaction and retention as well as assisting them in realizing their academic and career goals.

To prepare graduate students for successful clinical internships and future clinical work, graduate programs provide academic coursework and clinical seminar classes to augment and support knowledge.

Graduate students at Long Island University-Brooklyn, complete a full year of foundation coursework before engaging in clinical work.

Throughout the time leading up to their placements, students are exposed to theoretical knowledge as well as assessment and intervention strategies for speech and language disorders. Despite the amount of time devoted to this endeavor, students may still feel under-prepared for what they will encounter in clinical settings. LIU Brooklyn's NSSLHA chapter has initiated "Case Studies Night" over the past several semesters. This was conceived to expose graduate students enrolled in the speech-language pathology program to clients with various communication disorders. The Case Study Night has a consistent sequence: a professional provides theoretical framework and treatment approaches about a communication disorder, a client with that communication disorder is on hand to present, and graduate students have a Q&A segment to interact with the presenters and clients. This experience provides the graduate students with a rich context-based experience as they are working towards obtaining their professional license and certification in the field. Past "Case Study Nights" have included aphasia, fluency, TBI, voice, cerebral palsy and AAC.



OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this poster is to describe the evolution of graduate students in their clinical knowledge and attitudes after participating in "Case Study Nights". Students from Long Island University (LIU) -Brooklyn had the opportunity to observe professionals describe various clinical etiologies, assessments, and treatments coupled with client presentations. Student reaction papers measured student clinician's outcome with respect to impact on service delivery and treatment approaches when working with multiple clients with communication disorders.

METHODS

It was hypothesized by the authors that the "Case Study Nights" would provide graduate students with a unique clinical experience that impacts the way they approach future clinical work. To test the hypothesis, feedback was elicited from the students. Students were asked to write a reaction paper on the guest lecture. This task allowed them to reflect on the speaker, his/her message, and explain how this lecture will have an impact on them as future speech-language pathologists. The examiners specifically assessed the students' responses to the following questions:

- What are the outcomes and perceived benefits of structured lectures by professionals in the field?
- What are the clinical insights that you feel you have gained from these seminars, and do you feel it will be useful in your future clinical placements?
- What are the outcomes with respect to service delivery and treatment approaches?

DISCUSSION

One "Case Study Night" that was well received by students focused on aphasia. During this seminar, Avi Golden presented on the causes of aphasia, treatment strategies, and benefits of speech language therapy for clients with aphasia. A unique aspect of this workshop was the fact that he is an individual with aphasia and provided the information with a first hand account. His story was also reinforced with other clients who spoke about their experience living with aphasia.

DISCUSSION

A "Case Study Night" on fluency disorders provided students with a lecture on the theories of stuttering, assessment strategies and fluency shaping techniques. A client with a fluency disorder spoke about his journey in therapy and modeled therapy techniques as well as what "worked" for him.

On another occasion, Brendan Houdek M.A, CCC-SLP, discussed the role of the SLP and treatment strategies for clients with a variety of voice disorders. He discussed how he presented with a voice disorder at one time and described the strategies he used in therapy. He provided students with real life experience to bridge theoretical knowledge with clinical applications



RESULTS

Analysis of the student responses revealed benefits from exposure in the areas of: (a.) different clinical perspectives and treatment approaches; (b.) the opportunity to observe various clients; (c.) the ability to enhance clinical expertise; (d.) interaction with professionals in the field; (e.) application of techniques and approaches reflective of real life clinical experiences.

Outcomes and Perceived Benefits

The students reported that the case study nights were helpful in preparing them for future clinical work. Furthermore, these sessions have guided graduate students in their future clinical settings. These findings have important implications for the preparation of future speech-language pathologists and aspire to serve as a model for graduate programs in consideration of developing similar experiences. One student reported:

"The lecture and presentation by an actual client with aphasia greatly impacted the way I approached my work with aphasic clients, and broadened my clinical perspective as well."

CONCLUSION

Student feedback from the "Case Study Nights" provided the examiners with insight about the relationship between providing hands-on experiential learning and fostering clinical development among graduate SLP students. This feedback supported our hypothesis that "Case Study Nights" provided students with a unique clinical experience that positively impacted the way they approached future clinical work. As a result of these experiences, students reported that the lectured topics assisted in increasing knowledge base, and the infusion of actual clients contributed to their understanding of assessment and treatment on a different level. Learning from a client and taking into account the clients' perspective on therapy and their perceived treatment goals and outcomes was a powerful aspect that students reported that they carried with them during their clinical rotations. The graduate students noted that incorporating clients and their perspectives broadened their treatment approaches and allowed them to become more active, informed, and prepared learners.



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REFERENCES

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