

PHILOSOPHY REGARDING CLINICAL EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH, LANGUAGE, AND HEARING SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

At the University of Florida, the faculty of the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences has developed a philosophy regarding the nature of the clinical education that our students will receive. First and foremost, we are of the philosophy that clinical experience should be one of clinical education as opposed to clinical training. While there is certainly a training component in clinical education, we believe that learning to be a clinician goes beyond the repetitive practice frequently associated with the term “training”. Udrang and Flexner (1960) define the two terms as follows:

Train: “to make proficient by instruction and practice”; “to be trained. . . is to undergo discipline and instruction, drill, etc.”

Education: “the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge and of developing the powers of reasoning and judgment.”

They go on to say that “education is the development of the special and general abilities of the mind (learning to know). Training is practical education (learning to do) or practice, usually under supervision, in some art, trade, or profession.” Clearly, a strong professional needs to have the knowledge base and the ability to perform specific clinical skills.

In keeping with the desire to provide a strong and diverse clinical education for our students, we continually stress that academics, research, and clinical skills must all be combined in order to be an effective clinician. We hope that as the students participate in the various practica and internship experiences that they will see the integration of academic and clinical knowledge in action, and that they will also understand the need for applying and conducting good clinical research.

Finally, by emphasizing education as opposed to training, we hope that our students learn good critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In front of the Graduate Students’ Handbook, we sum up our clinical education philosophy with the following quote from Sanders:

“Techniques, methods, and skills are of secondary value. What is important is that. . . you develop a keen curiosity about the task, that you gain the information necessary to think logically, systematically, and creatively about it and that you are able to approach the task with a problem-solving attitude.”