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Supervision

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Changes in Standards—Changes in Roles

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Abstract

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) revised the standards for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in 2005 (ASHA, 2005). Clinical supervisory faculty have been directly affected in their work with graduate clinicians. Knowledge and skills acquisition now must meet the new certification standards for speech-language pathology. As roles have changed regarding time spent in various duties, a time study (analyzing how supervisors spent their time) was conducted by Valdosta State faculty in 1999. A second study, with more recent data, was initiated to compare to the original study conducted in 1999. This second time study analysis revealed changes in roles and time allotment per roles in one university setting. A comparison of these studies is discussed in this article.

Clinical supervisors are defined as “individuals who engage in clinical teaching through observation, conferences, review of charts, and other procedures” (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, ASHA, 1978, p. 479). According to the 1984 ASHA position statement on supervision, supervision was officially recognized by the Association as a distinct area of expertise within the profession of speech-language pathology (ASHA, 1985). The ASHA 2008 position statement reaffirms this recognition (2008). Supervision is a key element in the training process of future speech-language pathologists (SLPs). Quality clinical teaching is required if a university training program is to ensure that it is graduating speech-language pathology students of the highest caliber.

In 1999, Valdosta State University (VSU) faculty members initiated a study to examine the time requirements for clinical supervision and clinical teaching. In addition, the time required for non-teaching duties assigned to clinical supervisory faculty was charted. These non-teaching duties included such tasks as face-to-face meetings and the paperwork associated with academic advising. Additional non-teaching duties were listed in the area of faculty responsibilities and included faculty/committee meetings, continuing education units

(CEU) activities, research, general administrative duties related to clinic activities, and meetings with personnel of other agencies. The results from the original study indicated that clinical teaching duties consumed the majority of a clinical faculty member's time (76%), with some time reserved for other assigned duties that were unrelated to supervision (Andrews et al., 2000). In 2005, ASHA changed the standards for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. The skills, knowledge, and behaviors that comprise the role of the supervisor changed as well (ASHA, 2005).

One of the ramifications of the changes to the clinical standards was an increase in required documentation. For example, the Knowledge and Skills Acquisition document was created to track a graduate student's progress in academic and clinical skills throughout the academic program (ASHA, 2005). Although this document is useful in tracking student progress and growth, time and workloads on the part of the university supervisor have consequently increased. In addition, changes were implemented within the Communication Disorders Department at Valdosta State University. These changes included increased

1. Advisement of both graduate and undergraduate students
2. Number of on-site visits to students in field placements
3. Associated documentation for advising, travel, and tracking of a student's clinical and academic skills using formative and summative assessment
4. Documentation for student assessment using the technological component, LiveText, for the College of Education

The purpose of the second study, conducted in 2007, was to replicate the previous study in light of departmental and national changes concerning requirements for certification. The three primary objectives identified were to examine the supervisors' current roles in the education and preparation of students, analyze the supervisors' time allotment for various academic and clinical activities, and examine changes in roles between the two studies.

Methodology

Five clinical faculty members affiliated with Valdosta State University's Communication Sciences and Disorders Program participated in the 2-semester-long study. All participants were certified SLPs with a range of 10 to 38 years of experience in the field. Supervisory experience ranged from 4 to 16 years. Each participant completed a time-task analysis data sheet that contained 25 activities which were divided into four distinct supervisory areas during the 8-hour day (see Table 1). Data were collected for 2 consecutive weeks at the beginning, middle, and end of 2 consecutive academic semesters (Fall 2006 and Spring 2007). The data for each participant then were compiled and analyzed. The analysis of the data revealed the summary of weekly time usage by all participants, the average time spent per activity, and the average time spent per activity across the periods of time studied. These data were used to determine the total amount of time spent in the 4 primary responsibilities of a university supervisor: clinical activities, advisement, general faculty duties, and extern/intern duties.

A summary of duties that fall under each of the primary responsibilities follows:

DATE: _____ Day: _____ # STUDENT CLINICIANS FOR THE WEEK: _____

TIME	Direct Supervision Activities						Diag/Screening				Advising		General Faculty Activities										Extern/Intern			
	Sbx	Cs	Co	PE	Cad	Tr	Sdx	Ss	Cs	Pdx	Pa	Advi	CM	Cu	CFY	FM	Gad	Mo	Rs	Wr	PF	Offhr	Ofsu	Tr	Cet	
8:00 – 8:15																										
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12:00 – 12:15																										
12:15 – 12:30																										
12:30 – 12:45																										
12:45 – 1:00																										
TOTALS																										

Table 1. Student Clinician Morning Schedule

DATE: _____ Day: _____ # STUDENT CLINICIANS FOR THE WEEK: _____

TIME	Direct Supervision Activities						Diag/Screening				Advising		General Faculty Activities										Extern/Intern			
	Sbx	Cs	Co	PE	Cad	Tr	Sdx	Ss	Cs	Pdx	Pa	Advi	CM	Cu	CFY	FM	Gad	Mo	Rs	Wr	PF	Offhr	Ofsu	Tr	Cet	
1:00 – 1:15																										
1:15 – 1:30																										
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5:15 – 5:30																										
5:30 – 5:45																										
5:45 – 6:00																										
After Clinic Hours																										
TOTALS																										

Key: Direct Supervision Activities:
 Sbx = Direct supervision of treatment
 Cad = Clinical Administration: scheduling, materials, etc
 CS = conferences with students other than direct supervision time; telephone calls, email conferences
 Co = conferences with parents/teachers/VSU supervisors regarding clients, therapy cases
 Tr = travel to off-campus sites
 PE = paperwork/emails/etc

Diagnostics/Screenings:
 Sdx = direct supervision of diagnostics
 Ss = direct supervision of screenings
 Cs = conferences with students other than direct supervision
 Pdx = paperwork related to diagnostics/screenings

Advising Activities:
 Pa = Paperwork for advising
 Advi = advising activities

Faculty Duties:
 CM = committee meetings
 Cu = CEU activities/planning CEU activities
 CFY = supervise CFYer
 FM = faculty meetings
 Gad = General Administration: i.e. filing, organizing, etc.
 Mo = meetings with personnel of other agencies – not directly related to client
 Rs = research
 Wr = professional writing for publication

Extern/Intern Activities:
 PF = portfolios: externs/interns
 Offhr = clock hours for externs/interns
 Ofsu = onsite conferences with supervisors for externs/interns
 Tr = travel
 Cet = email/telephone conferences with students/off-campus supervisors

Table 2. Student Clinician Afternoon Schedule

Direct Supervision of Diagnostics/Treatment

Activities regarding direct supervision of diagnostic and therapy include numerous tasks relating to direct contact with the clinician, client, and/or the parent. Prior to the initial screening/diagnostic or therapy session with the client, the supervisor meets with the student to plan appropriate diagnostic and therapy goals. For diagnostics, client case history is discussed and a diagnostic protocol is planned, including tests to be administered. Once the diagnostics are completed, the supervisor verifies all tests scores and interpretation results are discussed with the client and their family. A diagnostic report is written by the student with the supervisor proofreading and suggesting needed revisions. When therapy is scheduled, the

supervisor meets with the student clinician assigned to the client to discuss diagnostic client results and/or previous treatment. Age-appropriate therapy materials are discussed and shared with the student clinician. A semester therapy plan is discussed and goals are formulated.

Throughout the semester, the supervisor proofs and corrects lesson plans and progress notes, supervises therapy sessions, and provides written and verbal feedback to the student regarding their performance. Direct modeling of therapy techniques, suggestions for treatment strategies (teaching techniques), and behavior management are provided as needed.

Advising

Activities within the area of advising include preconference paperwork such as recording grades for previous semesters and verifying overall grade point averages to ensure the student meets the requirement of the major. Duties also include updating the student's current course of study; using Degree Works, VSU's computerized advising program, to assist in planning coursework to be completed each semester; meeting with the student to discuss course sequence and appropriate choices for electives; completing advising forms and making the student eligible for registration on VSU's computerized system; and completing the graduation application.

Faculty Duties

All faculty serve as members of committees within the department and some serve on the College of Education and/or University committees. Faculty members also plan, assist with, and attend local and state continuing education activities. Continuing Education activities to maintain ASHA CEUs and state licensure are required of all faculty members. Faculty members also provide in-service training or other presentations related to the profession. Research and related presentations and/or publications are conducted by all faculty.

Extern/Intern Activities

Faculty who supervise students completing their off-campus medical externship or student teaching internship are required to conference with on-site supervisor through e-mail and/or telephone, etc.; visit and observe therapy sessions; verifying weekly clock hours earned; grade student portfolios; and submit final grades.

Results

The analysis of study results showed an increase in advising responsibilities from 4% in 1999 to 8% in 2006 and 6% in 2007. Externship responsibilities increased from 1% in 1999 to 11% in 2006 and 9% in 2007. An insignificant increase in faculty responsibilities occurred, from 18% in 1999 to 20% in 2006 and 19% in 2007. Due to the increases in the previously mentioned areas, there was a decline in time spent in clinical tasks, from 76% in 1999 to 50% in 2006 and 53 % in 2007. Multi-tasking by the participants in this most recent study may have had some impact on specific percentages. Examples of multi-tasking by clinical faculty include completing paperwork for advising while simultaneously advising students; conferencing with SLPs from other agencies while attending CEU activities; collecting research data while observing therapy sessions; reading previous session progress notes while observing a therapy session; conferencing with parents while observing their child's therapy session; or verifying clock hours, reading portfolios, lesson plans, and diagnostic or therapy reports during the evening while on trips to visit interns/externs. Variations between percentages may be due to the number of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in fall versus spring semester classes, and/or the number of students enrolled in externships in a fall versus a spring semester. The majority of supervisors' time (53%) continued to be utilized for direct clinical teaching and supervision.

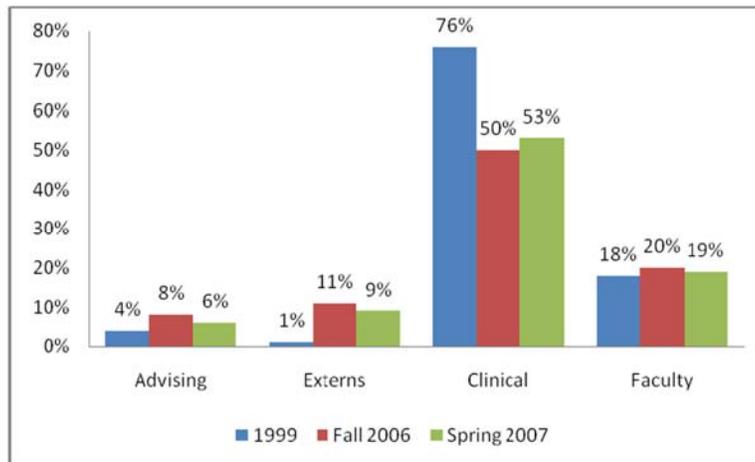


Table 3. Supervisor Duties.

Discussion and Conclusions

Clinical supervisors' responsibilities have expanded in the past decade due to the changes initiated by ASHA regarding certification standards and those implemented by VSU relative to departmental activities. Academic advising roles were augmented to include advising of graduate students. Furthermore, supervisors were required to observe the graduate clinician at least once during each of his/her student teaching and extern experiences and complete a mandatory online (LiveText) observation instrument for the College of Education. Documentation for formative and summative assessment increased as well. Additional duties required supervisors to complete a FACCC form (Formative Assessment of Clinical Competencies) for each student clinician, ranking their diagnostic and therapy skills and listing all diagnostics administered and therapy approaches used throughout the semester. Implementation of the ASHA 2005 standards resulted in completing the KASA form each semester of the graduate student's program. Although the documentation may be time-consuming, it allows tracking of students' coursework and clinical skill progression. Though such changes have increased the supervisors' responsibilities, their primary role continues to be clinical in nature. Faculty supervisors continue to observe more than the 25% of therapy and diagnostics sessions mandated by ASHA.

In conclusion, with expanded advising requirements and documentation of the students' clinical skills and knowledge in coursework, Valdosta State University's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders can provide evidence that graduate students meet the new ASHA requirements for graduation and certification.

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