

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS' MOTIVATIONS TO ACCEPT OR DECLINE
TO SUPERVISE SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY GRADUATE STUDENTS

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A qualitative research design structured this case study to investigate the motivations of seven speech-language pathologists (SLPs) to supervise graduate fieldwork placements. The purpose of this study was to determine motivational factors affecting the SLPs willingness to work with graduate students which in turn could be contributing to the shortage of fieldwork placements in the field of speech-language pathology. The driving research question for this study was, why are certified speech language pathologists (SLPs) motivated to accept or decline supervision of speech-language pathology graduate students? A focus group interview with seven SLPs was initially completed followed by individual interviews with four of the SLPs. Analysis of the focus group and individual interviews was completed through the use of NVivo software. Utilizing the data from NVivo, factors, both incentivizing and deterring, were determined by the participants.

The incentivizing reasons SLPs volunteered to supervise graduate students during their fieldwork placements were opportunities to teach, learn, give back, and make an impact within the profession. Additionally, the SLPs found that their employers were supportive of working with graduate students and they also stated that they were more efficient throughout their day. Common factors that deterred participants from supervising graduate students was the increased time commitment, stress, and negative past experiences with students. These challenges decreased their willingness to work with graduate students in the future.

The focus group and individual interviews also presented themes of support that universities could provide such as consistent communication with the supervisor, adding knowledge of documentation into the graduate curriculum, and offering continuing education credits in the area of supervision. In conclusion, it is important to encourage and provide the needed support for SLPs who are willing to supervise graduate students while also decreasing the deterring factors that may impact SLPs to decline supervising graduate students.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

To be eligible to become a certified speech-language pathologist (SLP), each student must successfully complete an accredited graduate speech language pathology program. Students are required to obtain 375 direct contact hours under the supervision of a certified speech-language pathologist (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2020a). The way in which speech pathology students obtain their direct contact hours depends on program curricula and use of fieldwork placements. Graduate programs utilize on-campus clinics as well as off-campus sites to provide their students the hands-on experiences that they require. Faculty members, or sometimes graduate students, must organize and acquire the off-campus fieldwork placements, also referred to as externships, to gain training for clinical practice (Warner et al., 2018). Students obtaining their contact hours at off-campus fieldwork sites are at the mercy of the facilities and an SLP's willingness to volunteer resources and time to supervise (Hall et al., 2015). Acquiring fieldwork placements is challenging and even considered a crisis due to the lack of placement opportunities (Hall et al., 2015; O'Keefe et al., 2014; Schober-Peterson et al., 2012; Yoder & Reisfeld, 2019; Zylla-Jones & Brown, 2007). This study will aim to determine the motivations behind SLP decisions to supervise graduate students or their motivation to decline to supervise graduate students during their externship experiences. Investigating the reasons SLPs will supervise graduate students and also the reasons SLPs are deterred from supervising graduate students will provide more insight for higher education programs in planning externship placements. Gaining insight into SLPs' motivations will allow higher education programs to adjust their processes to increase participation from SLPs to more readily volunteer to work with graduate students.

Background of the Study

There is an ongoing documented shortage of fieldwork placements in allied health (Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders, 2019; Hall et al., 2015; O’Keefe et al., 2014; Schober-Peterson et al., 2012; Yoder & Reisfeld, 2019; Zylla-Jones & Brown, 2007). More specifically, Zylla-Jones and Brown (2007) identified a shortage of supervisors for speech pathology students, and Yoder and Reisfeld (2019) again noted it as an ongoing issue for speech pathology graduate programs. Hall et al. (2015) identified many reasons for supervisors’ decisions to accept or decline students. In their 2015 study, they found that the decisions are based on many factors; however, the number of studies on this topic is limited. In the past decade, only a handful of similar studies have been found by this researcher in related fields such as occupational therapy and physical therapy (Hall et al., 2015; Hanson, 2011; Varland et al., 2017). A quantitative study in the area of speech-language pathology explored the challenges of supervising a student clinician from the perspective of the site supervisor (Smith et al., 2017). Further back, a focus group in 2007 at the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association Health Care Conference explored perceptions of externships and, more specifically, included discussion of the benefits and barriers of externships (Ghazzawi, 2007). These studies provide valuable information that informed the construction of this study.

Investigating the motives of speech therapists willing to supervise graduate students is timely as the profession itself is expanding (Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.). The job market for speech therapists is projected to increase substantially –at a rate much higher than other jobs. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) anticipates that the job market for speech therapists will increase by 27 percent from 2018 to 2028. Due to a significant increase in the need for SLPs, graduate programs will be charged with ensuring that the requirements for their programs’

curricula are met to allow students to be eligible for certification. Within the curriculum requirements, students must obtain a minimum of 400 contact hours with patients, clients, or students under the supervision of a credentialed SLP (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2020a). For students to gain their practicum experiences, there is a dire need for SLPs to volunteer to supervise.

Fieldwork experience is essential to student learning and allows them to apply knowledge through many different modalities. The importance of field experiences for the upcoming professional is supported by the theory of experiential learning. Experiential learning theory (ELT) emphasizes the importance for adult learners to gain knowledge through experience (Kolb, 1984). ELT supports the need for and the importance of fieldwork.

Statement of the Problem

A shortage of fieldwork placements for graduate students is an ongoing concern and a social issue in the area of allied health, specifically in the field of speech pathology (Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders, 2019; Yoder & Reisfeld, 2019). Limited studies have been conducted in the areas of physical therapy and occupational therapy; however, there are even fewer studies that explore the field of speech therapy. Speech pathology students enrolled in accredited graduate program are required to meet specific requirements to graduate with a master's degree. Without the volunteerism of professionals to supervise required fieldwork, students would not have the opportunity to meet the necessary requirements set forth by their academic programs. Therefore, the number of graduates entering the profession will be too low, causing a shortage of SLPs at a time when demand for competent professional SLPs is increasing nationally.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate reasons SLPs are willing (or unwilling) to supervise speech pathology graduate students during their externship placements. Graduate students are required to gain experiences working with individuals across the lifespan (ASHA, 2020). Due to this requirement, it was important to obtain participants from the healthcare field who mainly worked with adults to capture different employment settings across the lifespan, both SLPs employed in healthcare facilities and SLPs employed in school districts were interviewed to determine their reasons for accepting or denying requests to supervise graduate students. Understanding SLPs' perspectives on willingness to supervise students may allow academic programs to provide appropriate and effective incentives to increase the number of willing SLP supervisors. In addition, by determining the factors or reasons SLPs decline supervising students, programs may be able to eliminate deterrents to fieldwork placements and adjust their supervising process to better meet the needs of the SLPs and decrease the concerns involved with supervising a graduate student.

Significance of the Study

Identifying the incentives or disincentives that motivate SLPs to supervise speech pathology graduate students will help contribute to the literature in speech pathology and other allied health fields. A handful of studies set out to determine these influencing factors in other allied health fields, but none have focused on speech pathology (Beidas & Kendall, 2010; Hall et al., 2015; So et al., 2019; Wright & Needham, 2016; Wunk Christodoulou, 2016; Zylla-Jones & Brown, 2007). This study will extend the research that has been completed in the fields of physical therapy, occupational therapy, and overall, in allied health. It will also provide updated

findings in the area of speech language pathology, which will allow graduate programs to adjust their approach to obtaining fieldwork placements.

Theoretical Framework

Fieldwork experiences provide environments where students are able to obtain hands-on practice with patients, clients, or students. Experiential learning theory (ELT) is based on the idea that when adults have opportunities to engage in experiences, they can then transform those experiences into knowledge (Jarvis, 1987; Kolb, 1984). In 1984, Kolb proposed a model by which ELT functions. The model Kolb created in 1984 was expanded and discussed further in his later work in 2017. Kolb described ELT through a visual concept as a continuum that provoked learning by the student having a “concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation” (Kolb & Kolb, 2017, p. 32). Providing graduate students with fieldwork experience allows them to have the “concrete experience” that Kolb describes as the first step to experiential learning theory. Without willing supervisors to provide graduate students with fieldwork placements, students would not have the opportunity to practice their skill set and expand on their knowledge base, as suggested through experiential learning theory. Determining reasons SLPs will or will not supervise graduate students’ fieldwork placements will provide higher education programs with information to help encourage SLPs to volunteer and also eliminate reasons that deter supervisors from volunteering, thus, providing more opportunities for graduate students to gain knowledge and skills through experiential learning.

Research Question

A qualitative study of certified speech-language pathologists was guided by a research question modified from Hall et al.’s 2015 study. Permission for use of their research question

was obtained through email correspondence (Appendix A). The research question was adapted to be explored through a qualitative study, specifically a case study design. The adapted research question guiding this study is why are certified SLPs motivated to accept or decline supervision of speech-language pathology graduate students?

The research question was created based on the Hall et al. (2015) quantitative study on physical therapy placements with the purpose to determine factors that impact a physical therapists' decision to supervise a student. Permission was granted from the primary author to apply their purpose of the study and a similar research question to the field of speech-language pathology (Appendix A).

Research Design

A qualitative research design structured this case study of certified speech-language pathologists who had both willingly volunteered to supervise graduate speech pathology students and who had declined to supervise speech pathology students. The purpose of using a qualitative design is to further investigate the issue of fieldwork shortages for graduate students in health care and school-based settings. Using a qualitative design is a well-known research approach when investigating the social sciences due to its “focus on individual meaning, and the importance of reporting the complexity of a situation” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 4). Specifically, a case study design allows for a more thorough investigation of phenomena within a realistic context (Guetterman & Fetters, 2018; Yin, 2012). Yin (2012) elaborates on the definition of a case study, noting that a case study allows for that exploration of a phenomenon “especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 16). The reasons SLPs will or will not supervise students is not obvious as the reasons are individual to each SLP.

This qualitative study began with a pilot study of SLPs in both healthcare-based and school-based sites. Following the pilot study, a focus group was conducted with seven SLPs, and subsequent individual interviews were completed with four of the participants from the focus group. The four participants for the individual interviews were two healthcare-based SLPs and two school-based SLPs. The pilot study took place over the videoconferencing platform Zoom in order to ease the challenges of meeting in person. Following the pilot study, the primary focus group was also completed over Zoom, and the individual interviews were completed over the telephone. The use of both Zoom and the telephone were utilized for the primary study due to the social distancing restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Limitations

Only a small sample of SLPs (seven), located in the same region of Pennsylvania, were interviewed. Since the SLPs' places of employment are located in the same demographic region (western Pennsylvania), not all results can be generalized to every SLP who is willing or unwilling to supervise graduate students. The seven SLPs disclosed the number of graduate students they supervised and also the number of students they declined to supervise. The range of the total number of graduate students who were supervised and declined by each individual SLP varied. The total number of graduate students who each SLP supervised could have significantly impacted their positive or negative perceptions and experiences. The focus group took place over Zoom, which can limit the observed body language of the participants. Lastly, this researcher worked directly with four of the seven participants in some capacity due to the position she held as an externship coordinator for a speech pathology graduate program in higher education. Due to the familiarity of the researcher and due to the potential judgment from peers within the profession in a focus group format, responses from participants may not have been candid.

Organization of the Dissertation

In chapter one, the problem of this study is stated, and the purpose is outlined. Following the outline of the study in chapter one, a thorough review of the literature applicable to the study is discussed in chapter two. Chapter three provides the methodology and research design. The results from the interviews will be presented in chapter four. Lastly, in chapter five, the interview results will be synthesized and applied to the field of speech pathology.

Definition of Terms

1. *Accreditation*: A status that graduate programs in speech-language pathology may hold for promoting excellence in the preparation of their students by following specific guidelines set forth by the Council on Academic Accreditation in audiology and speech-language pathology (Council on Academic Accreditation, n.d.b).
2. *Allied Health*: Health care professionals comprised of speech-language therapy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy (Merriam-Webster, 2021a).
3. *Clinical Supervision*: Means to “teach specific skills, clarify concepts, assist with critical thinking, conduct performance evaluations, mentor, advise, and model professional behavior” (Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders, 2013, p. 3)
4. *Evidence Based Practice (EBP)*: Refers to clinical approaches that are supported by research to ensure the patient or client’s best interest (Crowe et al., 2018)
5. *Experiential Learning Theory (ELT)*: “The process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 41).

6. *Fieldwork*: “Work done in the field (as by students) to gain practical experience and knowledge through firsthand observation” (Merriam-Webster, 2021b). Also known as an externship experience (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d.g).
7. *Productivity*: “The number of hours in direct patient care divided by the number of hours worked” (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d.e).

Summary

With the continued shortage of fieldwork placements for speech pathology graduate students, it is imperative to gather information on the reasons SLPs are willing or unwilling to supervise students. One research question guided this study is: why are certified SLPs motivated to accept or decline supervision of speech-language pathology graduate students? To investigate this important research question, a qualitative framework was used with a case study design. A focus group and individual follow-up interviews provided this study with insight into their motivations to supervise or decline to supervise graduate students. Findings from this study will allow graduate programs to approach their acquisition of fieldwork placements with credentialed supervisors in a more strategic way. A more successful acquisition of fieldwork experiences for graduate students provides students with the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skill set through experiential learning.

The subsequent chapter reviews literature that is applicable to this study. The field of speech-language pathology is described, and the requirements to become an SLP are outlined. Experiential learning theory is also defined and explained as it supports the importance of fieldwork placements. Research in the field of allied health that identifies the incentives and disincentives for supervising graduate students is be outlined. Chapter two provides context

regarding the rationale for conducting this study by linking previous research in the field of allied health.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speech-language pathology is a profession in the field of allied health, which includes many related professions such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy, and nutrition (ASAHP, 2020). The primary focus of this literature review is on the profession of speech-language pathology and its practitioners, known as speech-language pathologists (SLPs). A review of the history of the speech-language pathology profession and the scope of practice is outlined in the initial review of the speech-language pathology profession. Then, the requirements of becoming a speech-language pathologist are discussed in order to provide an understanding of the necessity of fieldwork placements. This review also incorporates components of other allied health professions within the discussion of clinical supervision and fieldwork placements. Experiential Learning Theory is defined and discussed in relation to fieldwork experiences in allied health, followed by a review of the incentives and disincentives of supervision.

Speech-Language Pathologists

A Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) is defined by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) as a “professional who engages in professional practice in the areas of communication and swallowing across the life span” (ASHA, 2016b). The history of speech pathology is discussed below, and the scope of practice is briefly outlined to inform an understanding of the various types of employment opportunities in the field.

History of Speech-Language Pathology

The field of speech-language pathology has roots prior to its recognition as a profession in the early 1900s. In 1925, a group of individuals formed the American Academy of Speech

Correction, and this organization eventually became the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) (Duchan, 2002; Finan, & Tasko, 2012).

The initial focus of the American Academy of Speech Correction profession in the early 1920s was on correcting speech impairments and fluency disorders. The 25 individuals who made up the American Academy of Speech Correction were primarily scholars and speech scientists, with only two individuals recognized as practicing clinicians (Finan & Tasko, 2012). As the profession grew, the title of speech-language-pathologist was endorsed by ASHA in 1976 to include individuals who are “qualified to diagnose, prognose, prescribe for, and/or remediate speech and/or language disorders” (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 1976). From the 25 founding members, the number of ASHA members has steadily grown; and, in 2019, the organization reached over 210,000 members. The members include SLPs, audiologists, speech scientists, and students (ASHA, 2019a).

Not only has the number of members significantly and steadily grown over the years since the endorsement by ASHA in 1976, but the areas of practice under SLPs has also grown. In the early 1920s, the focus was on speech correction and fluency, as stated above. Services for speech and fluency were slowly incorporated into the public-school systems (Duchan, 2010). Duchan outlines the milestones of the profession in the United States school systems and the slow progression from the 1920s until the year 1959 when “thirty-nine states provided speech therapy in their public schools” (p. 157). By 1966, it was required that schools provide speech therapy services to students in need. Although the history of speech-language pathology in this literature review has been focused on areas that address speech and fluency; the profession works with a varying degree of disorders and diagnoses not only within the schools but also in the medical field.

Logeman (2004) detailed more information regarding SLP involvement in the medical field. Logeman noted that in the 1960s and 1970s SLPs began working in medical settings with patients who had neurological impairments. As Logeman noted, many patients with neurological impairments also had difficulty swallowing which is also known as dysphagia. Logeman was a leading researcher and advocate for ASHA to incorporate dysphagia into the scope of practice for SLPs. In 1983, Logeman wrote to the ASHA executive board to consider adding dysphagia into the scope of practice. Following many years of consideration, ASHA added dysphagia to the scope of practice, which has provided SLPs with even more responsibilities for assessment and treatment. The profession's widened scope of practice is described next.

Scope of Practice

The scope of practice for speech-language pathologists (SLPs) currently covers a range of specialty areas to assist individuals from birth to end of life. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (2016b) defines and outlines the areas of SLP scope of practice. Although not an exhaustive list, the general areas in an SLP's scope of practice include fluency, speech production, language, cognition, voice, swallowing, and auditory habilitation. Individuals being evaluated or treated in these areas can experience mild to profound impairments. SLP involvement in these areas can involve screening, assessment, treatment, preventative care, counseling, and collaboration with other professions. SLPs screen individuals to determine if a referral for an assessment would be appropriate to implement a potential treatment approach. Following assessment, an SLP would follow up with a planned treatment that attempts to "establish a new skill or ability or remediate or restore an impaired skill or ability" (p. 12). SLPs will also find themselves involved with preventative care. The purpose of preventative care is to reduce the instances or symptoms of a disorder. Lastly, counseling and collaboration are areas

that the SLP engages in with the client, family, and caregivers. Having such a broad scope of practice allows SLPs to have opportunities in both healthcare settings and school-based settings which are described below.

Employment Settings

SLPs work in various sectors from education to health care and provide services to individuals across the lifespan. Some of the types of healthcare facilities that SLPs may work in include hospitals, home health agencies, outpatient clinics, pediatric hospitals, rehabilitation hospitals, and skilled nursing facilities (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2019b). SLPs may also work in the education system at preschools, residential schools, both public and private entities, and through teletherapy (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2016a).

Having a wider range of facility types that employ SLPs and an ongoing need for professionals, the field has been growing. The recent American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Survey Report for healthcare job market trends showed an increase in the employment rate of Speech-Language Pathologists in health care settings from 62 to 67 percent from 2005-2017 to 70 percent in 2019 (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2019b). In addition to increased SLP employment in health care, there has also been a noted need for SLPs in school-based settings. In a 2016 survey, 54 percent of school-based SLPs reported that there were more positions open in schools than there were applicants (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2016a).

The employment outlook for Speech-Language Pathologists is projected to significantly increase by 27 percent from 2018 to 2028. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (n.d.), this 27 percent increase in employment is much faster than that of all other occupations. ASHA

suggests multiple reasons for the projected increase in the SLP job market. One reason is that older populations are growing and are more susceptible to underlying impairments treated by SLPs, such as swallowing and cognition. Although the number of anticipated retirees is not noted by ASHA, they suggested that a reason for growth in the field is due to an anticipated increase in retirees in the profession. Also, an increase in early identification of impairments in children will lead to a need for SLPs to diagnose and treat these individuals (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d.e). The early identification of children who would benefit from services is supported by Raches et al.'s (2019) work. Their overview of the early intervention process noted that early and accurate diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder is an important component to ensure that children received the needed support. SLPs serve a very important role in the treatment and assessment of individuals with autism (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2016b).

With the need for SLPs on the rise, higher education programs are charged with preparing graduate students for these roles in healthcare and education settings. The requirements to become an SLP are discussed further in the next section in order to frame the necessity for fieldwork placements and their impact on a student's knowledge base.

Speech-Language Pathology Educational Program Requirements

The Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) establishes and monitors accreditation standards for academic training programs. The ASHA Council for Clinical Certification (CFCC) establishes and monitors standards for national certification of speech-language pathologists as part of the accreditation process for academic programs; alumni files are reviewed by an accreditation site visit team to ensure that each program graduate meets the requisite academic and clinical requirements.

To provide SLP curriculum and training, accredited higher education programs must adhere to specific requirements for graduates to become eligible for national certification, state licensure to practice, and teaching certification. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the governing organization for national certification, and the requirements for certification are based on accreditation standards from the CAA (Council on Academic Accreditation, n.d.a). The national certification is known as the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC). Holding the CCC informs the public that individuals “have the knowledge, skills, and expertise to provide high quality clinical services, and they actively engage in ongoing professional development to keep their certification current” (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d.c). Providing opportunities to meet the requirements to obtain the CCC, accredited graduate programs must follow the requirements set forth by the CAA. These requirements mandated by the CAA include a minimum of 400 supervised client contact hours, 25 of which are observation only (Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, 2019).

Many states have licensure requirements for clinical practice, and SLPs must meet their state requirements. The requirements to practice in a state may be the same as the national requirements, or they could differ. Each state determines its own guidelines for licensure requirements. For example, the licensure requirements to become an SLP in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania coincide with ASHA’s guidelines for national certification: a master’s degree from an accredited program, 375 contact hours, successful completion of a supervised professional experience (clinical fellowship), and a passing score on the Praxis exam in Speech-Language Pathology (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d.f).

Lastly, in Pennsylvania, SLPs must obtain teaching certification if they choose school employment. For SLPs to obtain teaching certification, their graduate programs must place them within a school to complete their fieldwork. Students are required to meet the competencies according to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for either of the two teaching certification options. One of the teaching certificate options is the Special Education Speech-Language Pathologist Impaired PK-12 (Instructional I). To obtain this certificate an individual must complete an approved graduate program which includes a minimum of a 12-week field experience and pass two praxis exams. The two exams include a passing score on the Praxis in Speech-Language Pathology and a passing score on the Fundamental Content Knowledge Praxis. The second teaching certification option is the Speech-Language Pathologist Educational Specialist Certificate PK-12. Similar to the Instructional I teaching certification, an individual must complete an approved graduate program, which also includes a minimum of a 12-week field experience but only a passing grade on the Speech-Language Pathology Praxis exam (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d.f). To obtain the clinical contact hours needed for licensure and certifications, graduate education programs in speech-language pathology may use a variety of resources, such as on-campus clinical rotations. Programs also outsource clinical fieldwork rotations to both education and healthcare settings off campus in order to provide students with opportunities to obtain clinical contact hours with patients or clients across the lifespan. Fieldwork placements are essential in offering students opportunities to apply their skills and to enhance their clinical knowledge and skills across the SLP scope of practice (Solomon-Rice & Robinson, 2015).

Fieldwork Placements

Fieldwork experiences have long been seen as valuable for pedagogical training (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 1998; McAllister & Lincoln, 2004; Ozelie et al., 2015; Sheepway et al., 2014; Walden & Gordon-Pershey, 2013). In the field of speech pathology, the fieldwork experience is commonly referred to as an externship. ASHA details an externship experience as gaining skills within the field of study (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d.g). Although ASHA refers to fieldwork placements as externships, these terms can be used interchangeably. Due to the literature review encompassing other disciplines in Allied Health, the field work experiences will primarily be referred to as “fieldwork.” Field placements provide students with opportunities to synthesize and apply the knowledge they have gained throughout their coursework while receiving support from credentialed clinical supervisors to guide their interactions with clients or patients (Moridi et al., 2014).

Although fieldwork placements are imperative to a student’s skill set and fill a curricular requirement, there is a shortage of placements in allied health programs (Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders, 2019; Hall et al., 2015; O’Keefe et al., 2014; Schober-Peterson et al., 2012; Yoder & Reisfeld, 2019; Zylla-Jones & Brown, 2007). Since 2007, there has been a noted concern about a lack of professionals volunteering to supervise students during their fieldwork placements. These concerns have been recognized by ASHA and documented through the Special Interest Group (11): Administration and Supervision (Yoder & Reisfeld, 2019; Zylla-Jones & Brown, 2007). This shortage of placements is a concern for allied health programs including SLPs. The benefits and importance of fieldwork experience are discussed in the next section.

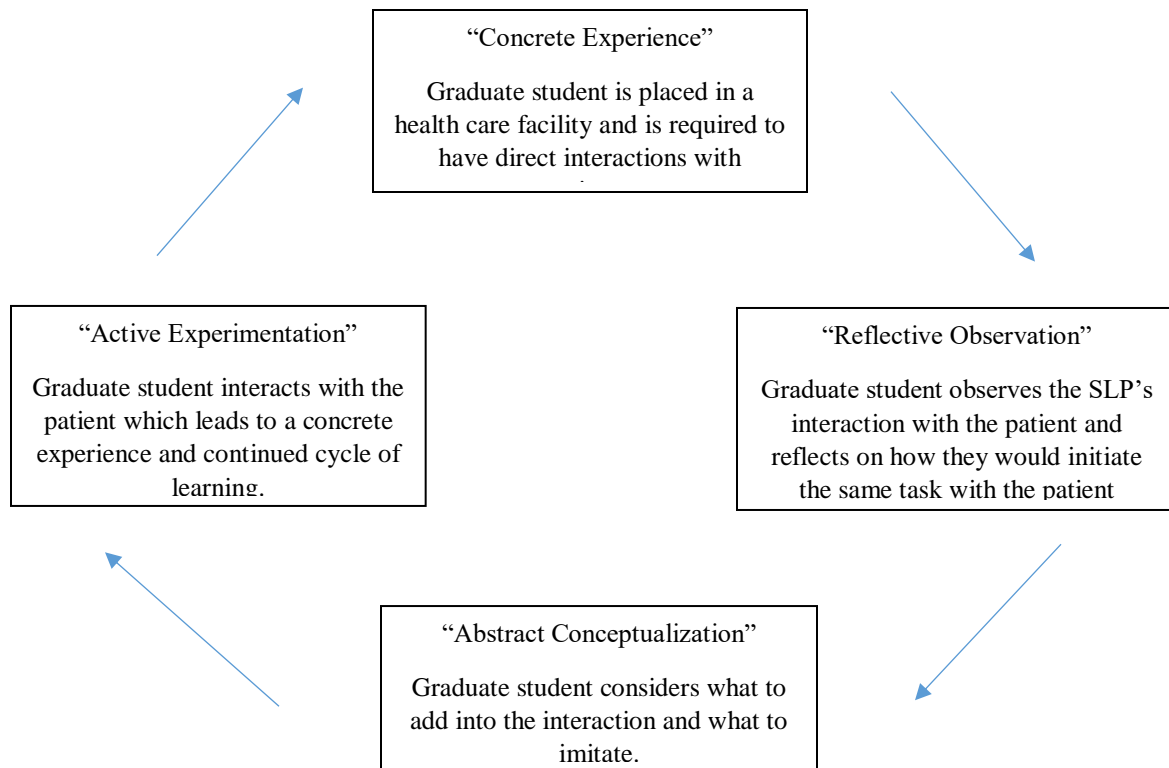
Experiential Learning Theory

With a goal of better understanding the purpose and benefits of fieldwork experience, Kuk and Holst (2018) reviewed the work of John Dewey (1938) and Malcolm Knowles (1978). These two pioneers of adult experiential learning promoted the idea that learning takes place through interactive experiences and not only through traditional classroom teaching.

A learning theory that supports the ways fieldwork experiences promote knowledge is called experiential learning theory (ELT). Experiential learning theory (ELT) was defined by David Kolb as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (1984, p. 41). Kolb proposed a model by which ELT functions. Wallace (2019) summarized the model as a circular pattern that begins with an individual having a concrete experience. From that concrete experience, the individual initiates reflection. The reflection leads to a conclusion about that experience, which then prompts action to test the conclusion. In order to illustrate how ELT relates to the study, Figure 1 was created by this researcher based on Kolb and Kolb’s (2017) “Experiential Learning Cycle” diagram (p. 32). Figure 1 demonstrates ELT in relation to a graduate speech pathology student’s experience on externship.

Figure 1

ELT for a Graduate Speech Pathology Student on Externship



Since Kolb’s creation of this ELT model, others have expanded and clarified areas of the process. Jarvis (1987) added an additional layer to the model to specify the social component that may add to the “experience.” Although Kolb and Jarvis’s models differ, Kuk and Holst (2018) summarized the core concepts of both of their ideas in the following continuum: “experience, reflection based on prior knowledge, and learned experience as a result” (p. 151).

Students engaged in fieldwork may unknowingly or purposefully follow the ELT continuum, which results in learning. Having a knowledgeable supervisor who understands the method by which students learn can improve the likelihood that supervisees will reflect on their

experiences, which then leads to increased knowledge that the students can retain and utilize for their professional practice (Tangen & Borders, 2016).

A key component of fieldwork experiences are professionals who are willing and able to provide qualified supervision for students. Fieldwork supervisors are a key component to identifying students' skill sets and their areas for improvement (Mason et al., 2020). Without the volunteerism of allied health professionals, students are left without the means to obtain the knowledge and experience that is so beneficial (as well as required for graduating and obtaining credentials).

Clinical Supervision

Supervision or the act of supervising means to observe and assist with the execution of a task or activity (Lexico, 2021). Many different scenarios involve supervision, including supervision of hired staff, peer supervision, and student supervision. This literature review focuses on the practice of student supervision, which is referred to as "clinical supervision" in allied health. Clinical supervision entails more than just observation and assistance with executing a task; it also incorporates clinical teaching into the framework of the student/supervisor relationship (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 1998).

Lynch, Happell, and Sharrock (2008) completed an exhaustive review of literature published from 1925 through 2006 on clinical supervision. Their extensive review suggests that there is not an agreed-upon definition of clinical supervision; however, much of the literature suggests the need for an accepted definition. Their findings also highlight the limitations of determining the origin of clinical supervision due to many health professions focusing only on their specific disciplines rather than agreeing on a shared foundation. Allied health practitioners and faculty have increased their research in the area of supervision, although a single definition

has not been agreed upon universally. Within the field of speech-language pathology, ASHA has defined supervision as “the training and education of student clinicians” (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d.a). This very broad definition is narrowed further by the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders. They described more specific behaviors that a supervisor engages in, such as teaching “specific skills, clarify concepts, assist with critical thinking, conduct performance evaluations, mentor, advise, and model professional behavior” (2013). Regardless of the absence of a universal definition or a common foundational history in the area of clinical supervision, the purpose of clinical supervision is clear: supervision “is vital to the overall development of future professionals” (Wright & Needham, 2016, p. 68).

In the field of speech-language pathology, students must engage in clinical fieldwork under a professional’s clinical supervision in order to accrue enough contact hours with clients toward graduate degree requirements (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2020a). SLPs who volunteer to supervise graduate speech-language pathology students must meet specific requirements. Those requirements are described and outlined in the subsequent section.

Supervision Requirements

Clinical supervision holds a long history of significance in speech pathology, dating back to the position statement published in 1985 by the American Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Committee on Supervision. This document was updated in 2008 to reflect a position statement specific to speech pathology (ASHA, 1985; ASHA 2008). The position statement outlined the essential skills that the supervising SLP should hold and the significant role that a clinical supervisor has in a student’s clinical education. The 2008 position statement notes specific areas that a clinical supervisor in speech pathology should practice, such as self-

reflection of one's own skill set, promoting student learning, good communication, and following all ethical guidelines (ASHA 2008). While the importance of clinical supervision has been noted throughout the field of speech-language pathology, the requirements to become a supervisor had been based on the SLP's length of experience in the field, their Certificate of Clinical Competence being in good standing, and their willingness to supervise a student (CAPCSD, 2013; Geller, 2014). The limited guidelines and requirements for SLPs to supervise undergraduate and graduate students prompted the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD) to form a working group to create guidelines for clinical supervision preparedness (CAPCSD, 2013). A central component to the guidelines that the CAPCSD working group suggested in 2013 was the need for clinical supervisors to pursue additional training in the area of supervision. Referencing the work done by the CAPCSD working group in 2013, McCready and McNamara (2016) outlined a plan for a new requirement that clinical supervisors must participate in a training session related to supervision prior to supervising a speech pathology student. The Council for Clinical Certification in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CFCC) then updated the requirements for supervising undergraduate or graduate students. These new requirements were slated to be instated in January 2020 and include the following: obtaining the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC-SLP), being "in good standing for at least nine months," and completing two hours of continuing education in the area of supervision (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d.e). A supervisor who has met all of these requirements is then eligible to supervise a graduate student. In addition to the outlined requirements by ASHA, the additional requirement is the need for an SLP who is motivated to supervise a graduate student.

Locke and Schattke (2019) state that “motivation involves people wanting to get or avoid something” (p. 2778). For SLPs, their response motivation stems from having a “desire” or an “aversion” to mentoring a graduate student (p. 278). In the following section, the motivations to supervise graduate students are described as incentives. Next, the motivations to decline to supervise a graduate student are described as disincentives.

Incentives for Supervision

Students benefit immensely from the opportunities to complete the hands-on requirements of their academic programs; they are not, however, the only individuals who gain value from the experiences (Wright & Needham, 2016). Supervisors may also find themselves benefitting from their interactions with students. Research on incentives that encourage professionals to supervise graduate students was gathered and is discussed in the following sections. These incentives include stimulation of supervisors’ own learning, giving back to the profession, enhanced recruitment for employment, and financial motivation.

Stimulating Learning

Professionals’ willingness to work with students not only benefits the students but also the professionals. Even though supervisors are seen as the “experts,” the experience of working with students can also stimulate learning and development for the professionals themselves (Hanson, 2011; Wright & Needham, 2016; Wunk Christodoulou, 2016; Zylla-Jones & Brown, 2007). Hanson’s (2011) qualitative study used an electronic focus group format to investigate 10 occupational therapists’ (OTs) perspectives on the benefits and drawback of supervision. The OTs discussed “motivation for continued professional development” (p. 171). Not only were the participants from Hanson’s study motivated to reflect on their own skills but participants also noted that they learned “new techniques” from the students (p. 172). Students have opportunities

to enhance their confidence during their fieldwork experiences by sharing their skills and the knowledge they obtained during their coursework and previous clinical experiences with their supervisors. Students sharing these experiences can inadvertently teach their supervisors new information (Hanson, 2011; Wunk Christodoulou, 2016).

New research in allied health occurs on a regular basis, and there is an emphasis on evidence-based practice (EBP) (Crowe et al., 2018). Crowe et al. described clinical EBP as implementing the most supported and recent research with clients or patients (2018). Implementing evidence-based procedures into daily practice is important to ensure a patient receives the best possible care (Beidas & Kendall, 2010; Hall et al., 2015; Hanson, 2011; Ozelie et al., 2015). Emphasis on the importance of having knowledge of and implementing EBP is supported through individual certifying agencies in allied health (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2020a; National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, 2020).

Not unlike other areas of allied health, speech pathologists are also expected to provide treatments and evaluations that follow EBP. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association outlines three components that when combined allow SLPs to make informed decision on their approach to care. The three components are: 1) “clinical expertise”, 2) “evidence”, and 3) “client/patient/caregiver perspectives” (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d.b). A study completed by Thome et al. (2020) surveyed 176 SLPs regarding their understanding of EBP and also served to report how often the SLPs were using EBP in their plan of care. The survey resulted in respondents demonstrating a general understanding of the definition of EBP; however, their ability to pursue more knowledge in the area of EBP was limited due to their busy workdays. Dependent upon an individual’s learning style, SLPs benefit from gaining their EBP knowledge in different ways. There are typically opportunities to

complete structured continuing education tasks through online presentations, conferences, and seminars (Beidas & Kendall, 2010). An additional way for supervisors to gain knowledge of EBP is by learning from the student they are supervising (Ozelie, et al., 2015). To maintain their accreditation, higher education speech pathology programs must show proof that EBP is being taught to their students (Council on Academic Accreditation, n.d.a). Having EBP taught in the classroom and during on-campus clinical rotations means that the students are exposed to the most recent research along with best practices. Supervising students from an accredited program may expose supervisors to information that they would not have otherwise known.

Professional Obligation

As discussed earlier, fieldwork is a required component of various allied health programs. Higher education programs rely on allied health professionals to volunteer to assist with educating students. The students obtain the required experience, but the supervisors can also experience a feeling of giving back and helping others in their field from volunteering to supervise (Hanson, 2011; Ozelie et al., 2015; Zylla-Jones & Brown, 2007). Yoder and Reisfeld's (2019) article labeled the role of supervising SLPs as mentors and that supervising allows the SLP mentors to "give back and improve the future careers of new clinicians" (p. 42). Henry-Noel et al. (2019) reviewed 35 articles related to mentorship. One of their conclusions was that mentors also benefited from working with students by helping upcoming professionals in the field. The benefits of volunteering, in general, have been well documents. For example, Yeung et al. (2017) investigated the health benefits of volunteering in their survey of 1,504 adults in Texas. Their results showed that volunteering provided positive effects on positive effects on "mental and physical health, life satisfaction, social well-being, and depression" (p. 6).

The act of giving back to the profession not only provides personal benefits to the volunteering SLP but also provides graduate students with the opportunity to meet requirements for potential job openings, which are projected to increase in the next 10 years. As mentioned earlier in this literature review, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a significant increase in job openings in speech pathology from the year 2018 through 2028 (n.d.). Without professionals volunteering to supervise students during their fieldwork and therefore give back to the profession, students would not obtain the requirements set forth by their educational programs. If these requirements are not met, then the number of graduates entering the profession will be too low, causing a shortage of SLPs at a time when demand for competent professional SLPs is increasing nationally.

Recruitment

Growth in the speech-language pathology job market creates open positions for potential SLPs. An additional benefit of supervising speech pathology graduate students is that it can provide healthcare companies with an additional tool for recruitment (Zylla-Jones & Brown, 2007). Hanson's (2011) focus group of speech-language pathologists found that an incentive to supervising a student was that the SLP was honing the skills of a possible co-worker. Students completing their fieldwork at a particular facility are exposed to that company's documentation system and the structure of that organization. Already having exposure to a key component of the daily job such as documentation would likely decrease the resources that are typically needed to train and orient a new hire. Yoder and Reisfeld (2019) noted familiarity with documentation as one of the benefits of a new hire that completed an externship in that facility. They also noted other benefits, such as familiarity with evaluation and treatment material and the relationships between staff. Participants from Ghazzawi's (2007) focus group were asked if their employers

feel there is a benefit to the SLPs supervising graduate students. Two of the participants stated that their employers do see a benefit to having graduate students as a recruiting tool. One of Ghazzawi's SLP participants was representing a university department and stated their experience of a hospital setting declining students because their staff was low; however, the SLP stated that "if no one's in the pipeline, that the pool of qualified job applicants for hospital positions will ultimately dry up" (p. 10).

Continuing Education Credits

Allied health professionals who hold national certifications and state licenses are required to obtain continuing education units/credits (CEUs) to maintain their status in good standing (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2020a; National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, n.d.). Depending on the organization and the state, professionals may be awarded CEUs for their time and effort in supervising students. Varland et al. (2017) conducted a cross-sectional survey of 500 occupational therapists' (OTs) perceptions on supervising students. The authors found that obtaining CEUs as compensation for supervising students was the most effective incentive for supervising occupational therapy students. SLPs who hold a certification through ASHA have requirements they must meet to maintain their certification in good standing. Those requirements are 1) complete "thirty professional development hours, 2) abide by the ASHA code of ethics, 3) pay annual dues" (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d.d). ASHA does not currently allow SLPs to obtain professional development hours (CEUs) for their time supervising students, even though SLPs have cited it as a motivating factor over the past two decades (Ghazzawi, 2007; Yoder & Reisfeld, 2019).

The benefits that can incentivize supervision include SLPs increasing their knowledge through the exchange of ideas and EBP with the student. SLPs can give back by helping students

to complete their program requirements, which increases the number of newly graduated professionals available to apply for job openings. Also, SLPs can mold and shape students for potential job recruitment (Yoder & Reisfield, 2019). Although these incentives are positive reasons to supervise students, there are also factors that have been noted to deter professionals from supervising students. These disincentives will be discussed in the following section.

Disincentives for Supervision

There may not always be a positive impact for professionals supervising students during fieldwork. Negative impacts on the supervisor can also be factors in whether or not a supervisor is willing to work with a student (Varland et al., 2017). The negative outcomes that have been noted in literature and are reviewed here include stress and decreased productivity.

Stress

The stress of working with a graduate student was a drawback to supervising (Hall et al., 2015). In their quantitative study, Hall et al. (2015) investigated the factors influencing whether physical therapists (PTs) in Canada would supervise field work students. The 53-question survey created by Hall et al. was completed by 3,148 Canadian PTs. The results from the survey showed “feelings of stress was the first factor to emerge” in the study results (p. 61). Individuals’ perception of their stress is subjective; however, the demands of delivering high-quality patient or client care to every individual on caseload could be perceived as stressful (Hall et al., 2015; So et al., 2019). Allied health professionals must manage evaluations, treatment, documentation, and patient caregiver education. Varland et al. (2017) completed a study of OT perceptions when working with students. Varland et al.’s study was a quantitative survey design that was comprised of 500 participants. Their study found that adding a student to the professional’s workload increased the challenges of navigating the work day. An example of these increased

challenges in the field of speech therapy could be that an assigned SLP supervisor must adhere to the ASHA supervision requirements, which state that the student must be directly supervised a minimum of 25 percent of the time they are with a patient or client. Although the minimum amount of supervision is 25 percent of the contact time, ASHA also states that the amount of supervision must correlate with the student's knowledge base and abilities and may need to be adjusted upward (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2020a).

If students do not have strong knowledge in the area in which they are working, or the ability to apply that knowledge to treatment, then the amount of direct supervision must increase. The supervision requirements set forth by ASHA correlate with Anderson's supervision continuum (1988). Carter et al. (2017) describe this continuum as an adaptation to students' needs dependent upon their knowledge and understanding of concepts in the field. A student whose content knowledge and skill set are less than expected would pose an additional burden on the supervisor. Hall et al. (2015) noted that supervisors' concerns about working with challenging students also created stress. A qualitative study conducted by So et al. (2019) investigated the experiences of supervisors when mentoring challenging students, or "students performing below expectations (SPBE)" (p. 391). This qualitative study was comprised of 19 physiotherapists (PTs). The interview analysis of the 19 PTs resulted in the authors identifying "stress and frustration" as the most commonly reported feeling when working with SPBEs (p. 394). The additional stress and frustration stemmed from a worry for patient safety and longer hours to ensure all job tasks were completed. So et al. noted that participants' desire to supervise subsequent students also decreased, which correlates with the results of Hall et al.'s (2015) finding that concerns with supervising a challenging student add stress. Further discussion on challenging students is explored in the subsequent section.

Challenging Students

The skills and competency of students entering fieldwork may differ depending on the amount of coursework already taken and previous fieldwork prior to working in any particular placement. A cross-sectional survey was administered to 500 occupational therapists (OTs) and analyzed by Varland et al. (2017). The focus of this occupational therapy study was to investigate underlying factors that may influence a professional's willingness to work with a student. The researchers noted that participants discussed a "student's preparedness" as a factor that would deter a supervisor from accepting a student (p. 8). Similarly, participants noted that having a student who was not a "great fit" socially or professionally would add additional hardship to the supervisor (p.8). On the other hand, understanding the student's preparedness prior to accepting the supervision request was found to increase the chance that a supervisor would agree to work with that individual. Having background knowledge on the student's preparation for a particular placement coincides with Wunk Christodoulou's (2016) review of the literature in the area of SLPs' expectations of working with students. Wunk Christodoulou noted that understanding a student's skill set prior to the fieldwork placement would allow a supervisor to adjust their approach when providing instruction and feedback. Having this information ahead of time would ease the burden of working with students who are less prepared to perform at their assigned site and who might be considered more challenging to supervise.

For some, the disincentives may outweigh the benefits of supervising a student as the pressure of clinical supervision has been noted to increase stress and difficulties in managing workload. The reduced ability to manage caseload may also create added pressures to maintain the level of productivity that is required by an SLP's health care company. The impact of supervision on productivity is reviewed in the next section.

Decrease in Productivity

One of the perceived barriers to professionals wanting to supervise students is the productivity demands that therapy companies place on their healthcare workers (Casares et al., 2003; Ozelie et al., 2015; Varland et al., 2017; Yoder & Reisfeld, 2019). Productivity is defined by ASHA as “the number of hours in direct patient care divided by the number of hours worked” (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2020b). SLPs working in health care are also under pressure to meet productivity requirements. Brown (2015) reports on results from the ASHA health care survey that is completed every two years. Brown noted that the number of SLPs who have a productivity requirement are 60 percent of health care SLPs. ASHA recently implemented the health care survey in 2019 with 1,897 respondents. Similarly, 61 percent of healthcare SLPs had a productivity requirement. Of those respondents in 2019, 416 SLPs worked in skilled nursing settings; 94 percent of the respondents reported having a productivity requirement. The SLPs working in skilled nursing settings reported a mean 84.3 productivity rating (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2019c). Following the ASHA definition of productivity, if an SLP in a skilled nursing setting was required to maintain a productivity rating of 84 percent in an eight-hour day, that equates to six hours and 44 minutes of direct patient time, leaving only an hour and 16 minutes to complete all other daily job tasks, such as meetings, documentation, in-services, or trainings. Given the demanding productivity requirements in healthcare settings, it could be inferred that SLPs are not accepting students due to limited time throughout their day.

While there are not specific studies on factors that may impact a supervisor’s willingness to work with a student in an educational setting, the issues are similar to those found in health care. Katz et al. (2010) surveyed 634 SLPs working in schools across the United States. The

respondents completed an online survey, and from those results Katz et al. concluded that school caseloads can be high and even unmanageable (Katz et al., 2010). In addition to high numbers of students on caseload, the nature and scope of practice of speech-language pathology includes working with individuals who have very complex and challenging needs. All of these factors can contribute to difficulty in managing caseloads and being productive.

Ozelie's (2015) quantitative study of 109 occupational therapists noted that supervising therapists' productivity does not decrease when working with a graduate student. However, the perceived barrier of productivity requirements in healthcare facilities and the demanding workload in school-based settings factors into an allied health professionals' decision to work with a graduate student (Casares et al., 2003; Ozelie et al., 2015; Varland et al., 2017; Yoder & Reisfeld, 2019).

Summary

This chapter reviewed the field of speech pathology and the requirements to become certified in speech pathology, including fieldwork for the soon-to-be professional. Experiential learning theory was linked to the importance of fieldwork and the impact that the shortage of field placements is making in allied health, specifically speech pathology. The perceived incentives and disincentives of supervising graduate students in allied health were presented in this literature review. The incentives that motivate SLPs to supervise graduate students were identified as learning opportunities for the SLP, a sense of professional obligation, a tool for recruitment, and earning continuing education credits. The disincentives that motivate SLPs to decline to supervise graduate students include increased stress, working with challenging students, and a perceived decrease in productivity.

Further investigation is warranted to uncover the reasons professionals accept or deny supervising students in the field of speech pathology. In chapter three, the methodology used to examine and analyze professionals' motivations for accepting (or declining) supervision opportunities is outlined and described. A focus on trustworthiness will follow the outlined methodology of the study. Then the process of selecting the participants the procedure for collecting data. Following the description of the participants and data collection the data analysis will be described in detail.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this case study was to explore the personal and professional motivations that may affect whether a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) will supervise graduate SLP students while they are completing their externship experiences. This exploration, through a qualitative research design, details an analysis of seven SLPs who have both accepted and declined the role as an externship supervisor.

To investigate a social issue in the field of health and human services, a qualitative design is warranted to try to determine the context from which the issue derives (Jiggins-Colorafi & Evans, 2016). The social issue addressed in this study is the shortage of fieldwork placements for graduate SLP students. SLPs are employed in a wide range of settings which includes healthcare and schools (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2016a; American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2019b). To capture both the healthcare setting and educational setting, a focus group and individual interviews of SLPs who were employed in these types of settings served as sources to answer the following research question: Why are certified SLPs motivated to accept or decline supervision of speech-language pathology graduate students?

To start, the research methodology and rationale for its use will be explained. Following the explanation of research methodology, trustworthiness of the study will be discussed, followed by participant selection, data collection procedure, data analysis, and a summary of the chapter.

Research Methodology

Implementing a qualitative design by use of a single instrumental case study allowed for a more in-depth look at an issue in a realistic context (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Guetterman &

Fetters, 2018; Yin, 2012). Yin (2012) suggested that the use of a case study is valid when “a how or why question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which a researcher has little or no control” (p.14). The purpose of this study appropriately aligns with Yin’s criteria to use a case study design. The purpose of this study was to gain insight into reasons SLPs agreed to supervise students or reasons they declined supervising students. A case study design allowed the researcher to identify recurring similarities or differences in SLPs’ thoughts on supervising students.

A focus group interview was the primary source of data used to address the research question. Information gathered from that group discussion was then used to guide one-on-one interviews of selected group members. Member checking was employed, as well as analytical memoing during data collection.

Interviews

Interviews are an important component to case study research as they allow participants to provide their experiences in their own words (Creswell, 2016). A focus group approach was chosen as the initial interview style to provide a group of SLPs opportunities to discuss their responses to semi-structured interview questions. Focus groups are beneficial to prompt participants to talk about their own experiences that may be expanded on when others add perspectives to the conversation (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Stalmeijer et al., 2014). After the focus group interviews, individual follow-up interviews were then completed, which allowed participants to discuss experiences that they may not have shared in a focus group setting. Individual interview participants, in the healthcare field, were limited due to availability. In an attempt to have an equitable number of participants from both areas of the field, two school-based participants were chosen who had supervised the most students. A total of four individual

interviews were completed. Participants were then sent transcripts and asked to verify their responses for member checking purposes. Analytical memoing was also used in this study.

Trustworthiness

To improve trustworthiness in qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) use the terms “credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability” (p. 300). To achieve the trustworthiness that Lincoln and Guba describe, this researcher practiced reflexivity and triangulation to maintain credibility and integrity.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an important component to provide transparency to the participants and the reader regarding the researcher’s background and potential biases (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The position that this researcher holds is as the externship coordinator in a communication sciences and disorders graduate program in higher education. This position requires the researcher to make externship placement requests on behalf of graduate students and maintain consistent communication with the supervising SLPs throughout the graduate students’ experiences. Out of the seven participants, this researcher worked directly with four of the participants in some capacity. This researcher worked with participant 1 and 7 as colleagues in higher education. Participants 2, 4, and 6 had both accepted and declined student placement requests from this researcher. Participant 3’s only interaction with this researcher prior to the study was a single decline to a student request via email. Participant 5 had not worked directly with this researcher in any capacity. Although this researcher was familiar to six of the participants, to practice reflexivity and ensure the participants were aware of this researcher’s background, the following were shared with the participants at the start of the focus group prior to recording, the

researcher's job title as an externship coordinator, the number of years the researcher has held this position (six), and the purpose of the study.

Triangulation

Confirming information that took place throughout the interview process is imperative for trustworthiness of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This researcher used triangulation by taking “evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective” (Cresswell & Poth, 2018, p. 260). The methods used to achieve triangulation and ultimately increase trustworthiness included analytic memos, follow-up individual interviews, and member checks.

Analytic Memos

Analytic memos were taken throughout the interview process to support the examination of the audio transcriptions. Memos allow researchers to organize and map their thoughts and observations from the interviewees (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Saldaña (2011) provides examples of topics to reflect on, such as “(1) emergent patterns, categories, themes, and concepts (2) problems with the study and (3) future directions for the study” (p.102). Analytic memos were taken during three different stages of this study: the pilot study, the focus group interview, and the individual interviews. Each stage will be described below.

Initially a pilot study was completed for the purpose of ensuring the focus group questions were worded appropriately for the purpose of primary study. As noted earlier, the focus group questions had been adapted from a study by Hanson (2011) in the field of occupational therapy. During the pilot study (which will be described in greater detail under the Data Collection Procedure section), analytic memos were taken by this researcher, and it was determined that the focus group questions were transferable to the field of speech pathology. After the pilot study, the focus group interview took place and analytic memos were written by

this researcher. The analytic memos allowed the researcher to identify patterns and themes that assisted in developing specific interview questions for the follow-up individual interviews. Specifically themes about the increased investment of time and the need for additional support from the universities assisted in creating interview questions for the individual interviews that investigated these areas further.

Member Checks

Requesting that the participants review the interview transcripts is a method referred to as a member check (Watson, 2018). Providing participants with the transcribed interview allows them the opportunity to review the communications that occurred and make clarifications, verify, or expand on the content. The participants from this study did not report any changes or clarifications.

Participant Selection

The population for this research were SLPs who hold their Certificates of Clinical Competence (CCC) through the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association (ASHA). A sample of this larger population was limited to SLPs in western Pennsylvania who have both accepted and declined supervising graduate Speech Pathology students during fieldwork experiences. By sampling these particular SLPs, the hope was to determine personal and professional reasons that affect the decision to supervise graduate speech pathology students' fieldwork.

Due to the limited ability to determine which SLPs have both supervised graduate students' fieldwork experiences and denied supervising students' fieldwork experiences, a convenience sample was used to identify the initial participants in the pilot study and primary study. After the initial participants were identified the snowball approach was used to gain

participants. Obtaining participants through the snowball approach relied on the recruited participants to identify other possible contributors (Naderifar et al., 2017). The snowball approach provided the researcher the ability to more easily identify participants that are “information-rich” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 159). In this case, through the snowball approach, the researcher was more likely to be provided with SLPs who had supervised graduate students in the past and also declined to supervise graduate students. The sampling procedure and the participant protection for both the pilot study and primary study are described below.

Sampling Procedure and Participant Protection

An initial participant was obtained through a convenience sample for the pilot study. The SLP was a healthcare based professional and provided the researcher with contact information of an education based SLP who also agreed to participate. Both SLPs who participated in the pilot study were asked by the researcher to provide additional participant names; however, none of the contacts that were provided met the criteria for the study. Due to limited participant information from the pilot study, the initial participant for the primary study was again identified by use of a convenience sample. Additional participants were obtained through the snowball approach. Due to the requirement for graduate students to gain clinical competences across the lifespan, it was important to obtain participants from the healthcare field who mainly worked with adults and also participants from the field of education who worked with children. To capture the perspective from both the healthcare and educational field, it was important that the researcher attempted to gain an equal number of healthcare based SLPs and educational based SLPs. Accordingly, seven SLPs met the criteria and agreed to participate. Four SLPs were education based and three SLPs were healthcare based.

To ensure participant protection the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at Indiana University of Pennsylvania approved this study. An informed consent letter was provided to the participants prior to interviews. Participants were required to read the letter of informed consent and sign the document to confirm that they understood the requirements of the study. The participants' names were removed, and each individual was provided a number to ensure their confidentiality. Participants were able to refrain from responding to questions that they did not feel comfortable answering. They were informed prior to the interview, through the informed consent document and verbally by the researcher, that they could withdraw at any time from the study by informing the researcher or the faculty sponsor. The participants were provided the researcher and the faculty sponsor's phone number and email.

Data Collection Procedure

This section describes the procedures for data collection. First, the instrumentation and pilot study will be discussed, followed by the methods of validity and data analysis.

Instrumentation

Semi-structured interview questions were adapted from Hanson's (2011) focus group, which was conducted in the area of occupational therapy (see Appendix B). The four semi-structured interview questions and probing questions from Hanson's (2011) focus group were adapted to be used in the field of speech-language pathology for this study. A comparison of changes that were made are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1*Focus Group Questions*

Hanson (2011) Focus Group Questions	Adapted Focus Group Questions
1. What are the factors that influence your decision to provide Level II occupational therapy fieldwork education?	1. What are the factors that influence your decision to supervise speech-language pathology student fieldwork?
a. Probing question: How and to what degree to these factors influence your decision-making?	a. Probing question: How and to what degree do these factors influence your decision-making?
2. What do you perceive as the value or benefit of accommodating Level II occupational therapy fieldwork students?	2. What do you perceive as the value or benefit of supervising speech-language pathology fieldwork students?
a. Probing question: How does this benefit influence your work?	a. Probing question: How does this benefit influence your work?
3. What are the drawbacks or challenges in working with Level II occupational therapy students?	3. What are the drawbacks or challenges in working with speech-language pathology students?
a. Probing questions: How do you go about addressing these challenges?	a. Probing questions: How do you go about addressing these challenges?
b. How might academic programs assist you with these challenges?	b. How might academic programs assist you with these challenges?
4. What type of support would you like to have provided by the academic institution when accommodating Level II occupational therapy students?	4. What type of support would you like to have provided by the academic institution when accommodating speech-language pathology students?
a. Probing question: In what form should support be provided?	a. Probing questions: In what form should support be provided?
b. What other advice would you offer to academic programs about supporting your work as a fieldwork educator?	b. What other advice would you offer to academic programs about supporting your work as a fieldwork educator?

Changes were only made at the level of the main four interview questions. The probing questions created by Hanson remained the same. Permission to use the focus group questions was requested and granted via e-mail with the understanding that the questions would be adjusted for use with speech therapists (see Appendix C). To ensure that the questions would address the purpose of this study in the area of speech-language pathology, a pilot study was completed. Following the pilot study, the questions were analyzed and deemed appropriate to achieve the purpose of this study. The upcoming section will provide a descriptive outline of the pilot study focus group procedures.

Pilot Study

Participants were obtained for the pilot study through a snowball approach. The first SLP who was willing to participate recommended an additional SLP who was also willing to participate in the pilot study. Due to graduate students' needs to have experience across the lifespan it was important to have an adequate representation of SLPs in the field that worked with adults and the other who worked with children. One participant was a healthcare-based SLP who worked with adults and one participant was a school-based SLP who worked with children. Both participants were emailed the pilot study invitation (see Appendix D) and the informed consent form (see Appendix E). The researcher confirmed that the SLPs had met the requirements for the study as stated in the informed consent document: (1) at least 18 years old, (2) currently a certified speech-language pathologist in good standing with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, (3) have willingly supervised one or more graduate students during their externship experiences, and (4) have declined at least one request to supervise a graduate student during their externship experience. After respondents confirmed their eligibility and agreed to participate by signing and submitting the informed consent document, the

researcher verified that they held their ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) using the verification tab on the ASHA website. The ASHA website is a public domain and can be found at <https://www.asha.org/eweb/ashadynamicpage.aspx?site=ashacms&webcode=ccchome> (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2018). Using the ASHA website to confirm if the SLP's CCC are current also provides information on the length of time they have held their CCC.

The pilot focus group interview took place over Restricted Zoom technologies to accommodate the demographic locations of the participants and researcher. A mutually agreed upon date and time was determined, and the participants met with the researcher over Zoom. For participant protection, prior to the start of the interview the researcher verbally stated conditions from the informed consent to ensure participants' understanding. These conditions included removing participants' identifying information, assigning a number to each participant in order to ensure their confidentiality keeping responses non-identifiable, and emphasizing that information from the interview should not be shared with others. Participants were informed verbally prior to the start of the study that they did not have to respond to questions that they did not feel comfortable answering, and they could withdraw at any time from the study by contacting the researcher or the faculty sponsor. The pilot focus group interview was recorded with the Otter application. The Otter application also auto-transcribed the conversation. Following the recorded interview, the researcher reviewed and edited the transcription. All identifying information was removed from the transcript. The edited transcript was emailed to both participants to member check the content. The participants were asked to provide feedback on the structure of the interview and the interview questions. Participant feedback was minimal and positive in nature as to the purpose of the study. There were no suggestions pertaining to

changes that should be made to the interview questions. The focus group interview questions were analyzed by the researcher and then confirmed for appropriateness to the primary study. Finally, after the interview and the member checks were completed, the SLPs were asked to provide this researcher with other SLPs' names and contact information, leading to a snowball sampling approach for the primary study.

Primary Focus Group

The snowball approach was also used to obtain participants for the primary focus group study. The number of participants was increased to seven SLPs. Krueger and Casey (2009) suggested that focus groups consist of approximately six participants. In an attempt to equally represent SLPs in the healthcare and school-based settings, the focus group was comprised of three healthcare SLPs and four school-based SLPs. Participants were emailed the study invitation (see Appendix F) and the informed consent form (see Appendix G). The researcher confirmed that the SLPs met the requirements for the study as stated in the informed consent document: (1) at least 18 years old, (2) currently a certified speech-language pathologist in good standing with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, (3) have willingly supervised one or more graduate students during their externship experiences, and (4) have declined at least one request to supervise a graduate student during their externship experience. After respondents confirmed their eligibility and agreed to participate by signing the informed consent, the researcher verified that they held their ASHA CCC using the verification tab on the ASHA website. The ASHA website is a public domain and can be found at <https://www.asha.org/eweb/ashadynamicpage.aspx?site=ashacms&webcode=ccchome> (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2018). Information obtained from the ASHA website confirmed the SLP's CCCs were current and the length of time they had held their CCC.

The participants provided their preferred availability on the signed informed consent document. After gathering all signed informed consent documents, the researcher contacted the participants via email to determine availability for a Zoom focus group. The participants and researcher agreed on a mutually convenient day and time to conduct the focus group interview. All seven participants were in attendance for the Zoom focus group interview. To increase participant protection, prior to the start of the interview the researcher verbally stated conditions from the informed consent to ensure participants' understanding. These conditions included removing all identifying information from the transcripts, assigning numbers to participants in order to ensure their confidentiality, and emphasizing that responses were non-identifiable. The researcher also verbally emphasized that information from the interview should not be shared with others, and participants did not have to respond to questions that they did not feel comfortable answering, and they could withdraw at any time from the study by informing the researcher or faculty sponsor.

The focus group took place over Restricted Zoom to accommodate the nationwide restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. All participants had access to video and audio capabilities. The interview questions that were asked during the interview were the adapted focus group questions conducted by Hanson (2011) in the field of occupational therapy (see Appendix B). The interview was recorded using the Otter application on the researcher's phone. The Otter application also transcribed the audio recording. Following the recording of the focus group interview, the researcher edited the transcripts for accuracy and removed all identifying information. Each participant was assigned a number to ensure confidentiality. The transcripts for the focus group interview were provided to the participants via email, and they were given a timeframe of two and a half weeks to respond back to this researcher if any changes were

required to ensure the accuracy of their thoughts were conveyed. No changes or corrections were asked to be made by any of the participants.

After the primary focus group, four participants were asked to participate in one-on-one phone interviews at a later date and time. The procedures of the individual interviews are described below.

Individual Interviews

To improve the validity of the findings from the focus group interview, an additional data source was used to verify the evidence (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interviewing specific individuals after the focus group allowed the researcher to follow up with probing questions to clarify and elaborate on themes that presented themselves in the focus group interview. The four participants who were chosen to participate in the individual interviews were comprised of two healthcare-based SLPs and two school-based SLPs. Only two healthcare-based participants were chosen for a follow-up interview due to availability. In an attempt to have equitable participation from both areas of the field, two school-based SLPs who supervised the most students were chosen for the follow-up interviews.

Semi-structured individual interview questions were used to follow up with specific participants from the focus group. The follow-up interview questions were created by the researcher based on the discussion during the focus group interview (see Appendix H). The individual interview questions consisted of three questions that were asked of all of the participants, with one question that was specific to the SLPs who worked in a healthcare setting. The individual interviews were conducted over the telephone for convenience to the participants. The phone conversations were recorded using the Otter application. The transcripts were reviewed and edited by the researcher. All identifying information was removed and the

transcripts were submitted via email to each of the individual participants for member checking. Participants for the individual interviews were given one to two weeks to review the transcripts for accuracy rather than the two and a half weeks provided to all participants to review the focus group transcripts. Less time was provided to the individual participants for review of the transcripts because the document had significantly less content than the focus group interview. No corrections or changes were requested by any of the four individual interview participants.

Memos

To assist in synthesizing the information provided during the interview process, the researcher took memos during the focus group interview and individual interviews. The hand-written memos were important to ensure information was not forgotten or missed and to validate the results.

Data Analysis Procedures

Following each of the interviews, the audio files that were auto transcribed by the Otter application were edited and corrected by the researcher to ensure accuracy of each interview. Relistening, reviewing, and editing each of the interviews allowed this researcher to become more familiar to the conversations and it also allowed her to overlay her own hand-written memos into the objective content of the transcript. Hand-written analytic memos were chosen to support the validity of the data that was transcribed. Analytic memos allowed the researcher to reflect and note a personal relationship “to the participants and the emergent patterns, categories, themes, and concepts” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 102).

Computer Assisted Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) was used to store and analyze. Specifically, NVivo 12 software allowed this researcher to identify common themes and to

enable more in-depth interpretation (Bergin, 2011). Categorical aggregation was applied for theme development from the transcripts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This researcher approached the process of coding the transcripts using NVivo software in a naturalistic way “to allow the codes to emerge during the data analysis” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 196). Inductive style coding was discussed by Miles et al. (2020) as an open-minded approach to identify themes that may emerge during the conversation with the participants. Themes from the focus group interview transcripts were created into nodes followed by the same process for the individual interviews. Overarching themes for both the focus group and the individual interviews were created and pared down to more specific and common themes. The nodes created based on themes from the primary focus group interview are listed below in Table 2. The nodes created for the individual interviews were based on the topic of the interview question. The responses from the individual interviews were fairly consistent between participants and were categorized into the following themes: encouragement from the entity, percentage of supervision, types of resources, and productivity. The nodes and themes from the primary focus group and the follow-up individual interviews will be elaborated in chapter four.

Table 2*NVivo Nodes for Primary Focus Group*

Interview Questions			Themes Based on Interview Questions		
Factors that Influenced Accepting a Student	Helping	Positive Past Experiences	Expand Experience	Obligation	Teaching
Benefit of Supervising	Accountability and Knowledge	Perceptions of Skilled Nursing	Impacting the Profession	Efficiency	
Drawbacks of Supervising	Inexperience and Time Commitment	Negative Past Experiences	Professionalism	Stress	
Guidance from the University	Communication	Preparation for Placement			
Support from the University	Support Not Needed	Suggestions for Improvement	Site Visits	Continuing Education	

Summary

The methodology and data analysis for this study was presented in chapter three. A qualitative case study design framed this study with data collected from a focus group interview and individual follow-up interviews of certified SLPs. The data collected was analyzed using NVivo 12 software using categorical aggregation to identify emerging themes. The themes that were identified provided insight as to the reasons SLPs are willing (or unwilling) to supervise

speech pathology graduate students during their externship placements. Chapter four will outline the themes in further detail.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the reasons that SLPs are willing or unwilling to supervise speech pathology graduate students during their externship placements. Three SLPs who are employed in health care and four SLPs who are employed in a school district or Intermediate Unit were interviewed in a focus group. Follow-up individual interviews were then completed with two of the school-based SLPs and two healthcare-based SLPs from the focus group. The purpose of the follow-up individual interviews was to expand on responses from the focus group and to ask supplemental questions. The driving focus of this study stems from the research question: Why are certified SLPs motivated to accept or decline supervision of speech-language pathology graduate students?

This chapter will present the data that was collected and analyzed to determine common themes and, ultimately, the researcher's findings. The first section of this chapter will provide a description of the participants involved in focus group interviews and individual interviews. The second section will outline the design of the study, data collection, and analysis procedures. The third section will elaborate on the researcher's background, including potential bias. Following this section, the outcomes of the research questions will be presented. Lastly, an analysis of the findings will be presented.

Description of the Participants

First, background and descriptions of the participants from the focus group are discussed and outlined in detail. Next, the individuals who were chosen for the follow-up individual interviews are described.

Focus Group Participants

Seven participants volunteered to participate in the study. All seven were speech-language pathologists who had their Certificates of Clinical Competence (CCC). Table 3 identifies the number of years each participant has held their CCCs, their place of employment when they supervised students, the number of graduate extern students they had supervised, and the number of graduate extern students they had declined to supervise.

Table 3

Background Information on Focus Group Participants

Participant Number	Number of Years with CCC	Place of Employment	Number of Students Supervised	Number of Students Declined to Supervise
Participant 1	16	Intermediate Unit	7	2
Participant 2	7	Intermediate Unit	1	1
Participant 3	12	School District	2	2
Participant 4	10	Skilled Nursing Facility	16	2
Participant 5	8	Skilled Nursing Facility	7	1
Participant 6	8	Acute Care and Skilled Nursing Facility	6	1
Participant 7	22	School District	12	4

Each participant's CCCs were verified through the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's (ASHA) website to confirm their certificate was in good standing. All seven participants' CCC were up-to-date, and they were in good standing at the time of the interviews. ASHA's website also allowed the researcher to confirm the number of years each participant had held their CCC at the time of the interviews. Based on ASHA's website, the researcher made corrections to participants 1, 2, 3, and 4's reported number of years for which they had held their CCC at the time of the interview.

Four of the participants were school-based SLPs. Two of the school-based SLPs worked for a school district when they supervised students, and the other two were employed through an

Intermediate Unit that contracted with a school district. Three of the participants were healthcare-based SLPs. All three healthcare-based SLPs worked in a skilled nursing setting when they had supervised graduate students. One of the three healthcare SLPs had also worked in an acute care setting when supervising graduate externship students.

Individual Interview Participants

Four of the participants who completed the focus group interview were asked to participate in the follow-up individual interviews. Only four of the seven participants participated in the individual interviews due to limited availability of the SLPs who worked in healthcare. Two healthcare SLPs were interviewed and to decrease the results of the individual interviews being skewed toward one type of setting, only two school based SLPs were pursued to participate. The school based SLPs that were pursued for the individual interviews had supervised the most students. The follow-up individual interviews occurred within three months of the focus group interview. All of the descriptive background that was provided during the focus group interview (i.e. years of experience and workplace settings) remained the same. The participants who completed the individual interviews are listed in Table 4. Two SLPs who supervised graduate students in the school setting and two of the SLPs who supervised in the healthcare setting were asked to participate in the individual interviews. Each of these participants had supervised six or more graduate students. Three of the participants had declined to supervise two or more graduate students. Participant 6 was the only SLP to decline the supervision of one graduate student.

Table 4*Background Information on Individual Interview Participants*

Participant Number	Number of Years with CCC	Place of Employment	Number of Students Supervised	Number of Students Declined to Supervise
Participant 1	16	Intermediate Unit	7	2
Participant 4	10	Skilled Nursing Facility	16	2
Participant 6	8	Acute Care and Skilled Nursing Facility	6	1
Participant 7	22	School District	12	4

Study Design, Data Collection, and Analysis Methods

A qualitative case study design was utilized to explore motivations that influence certified SLPs' willingness to supervise graduate speech pathology students and also motivations that influences them to decline to supervise speech pathology students. The researcher conducted a focus group interview with seven certified SLPs via Zoom. The focus group interview was audio recorded using the application, Otter, on the researcher's phone. The focus group interview lasted approximately one hour. An evening time was mutually agreed upon by all participants. Each participant had access to both audio and video capabilities. The participants' audio and video use allowed the researcher to visually and auditorily observe participant responses. In addition, the researcher took notes during the focus group and later organized these notes as analytic memos. Following the focus group, transcripts of the audio recording were produced by the application, Otter. The researcher then reviewed and edited the transcripts for correctness. The transcripts were sent via email to each individual participant for review. Each participant was given two and one-half weeks to review the transcripts for accuracy and to make any corrections or to elaborate on any response they had made during the interview. None of the

participants requested changes and no participants required additional information to be removed or added.

After the focus group interview, four of the participants engaged in an individual follow-up phone interview that was audio recorded using the Otter application on the researcher's phone. Each individual interview was completed within ten minutes. Each individual interview was transcribed with the recording application, Otter. The researcher reviewed and edited the recorded transcription for correctness. The transcripts were sent to the participants via email to check for accuracy and to make any corrections or to elaborate on any area they saw appropriate. The participants were given up to two weeks to respond with any changes or corrections. Less time was provided to the individual participants for review of the transcripts because the document had significantly less content than the focus group interview. None of the participants required any changes or corrections to the transcripts.

NVivo 12 software was utilized to store and analyze the data from all of the interviews. The focus group transcript and each of the individual interview transcripts were transferred to the NVivo 12 software. During the analysis of the data, the researcher created nodes based on each interview question and pulled common themes derived from the interviews.

Researcher Background and Bias

Reflexivity was described by Creswell & Poth (2018) as the researcher providing their background as it “informs their interpretation of the information in a study” and inevitably what the researcher had “to gain from the study” (p. 44). Reflexivity is an important component to provide transparency to the reader about the researcher's background and potential biases. These sections are presented prior to reviewing the data that was analyzed by the researcher.

Researcher Background

This researcher is a certified speech-language pathologist since May 2011. She has worked with adult and geriatric populations in both skilled nursing facilities and sub-acute care settings. During her time in the skilled nursing setting, she supervised three speech pathology graduate students while they completed their externship experiences. She is currently working in higher education as an instructor and externship coordinator for a Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) program that prepares individuals to be eligible for certification after completion of their graduate degree. She instructs in the classroom for both undergraduate and graduate courses. She also supervises graduate students in the CSD department's campus clinic. Instruction and supervision are a consistent assignment for this researcher; however, the primary role that she holds is that of the externship coordinator. She coordinates all graduate students' off-campus experiences. The position of externship coordinator requires her to contact willing SLPs to supervise graduate students during their externship experiences. The off-campus experiences include one school-based setting and one healthcare-based setting, which are both required for degree completion of the masters in speech-language pathology at her university.

Researcher Bias

Prior to starting the study, this researcher suspected that supervisors would not want to supervise graduate students due to poor experiences in the past. She also thought that supervisors would be willing to supervise graduate students due to their enjoyment of teaching and also due to the added assistance that a student may provide to the SLP's demanding work schedule. These thoughts informed her interest in the study but, admittedly, could lead to bias in interpretation. This researcher has had experience with SLPs declining the request to supervise a graduate student. SLPs who declined requests usually did not offer reasons for the decision. The

researcher's experience with SLPs who were willing to work with students indicated that the SLPs were more open to express reasons they would agree to supervise graduate students. These reasons included SLPs' enjoyment of teaching new individuals in the profession and also their experience of a more efficient working environment with the help of a student.

To decrease the impact of personal bias, the researcher was aware of her own experiences that had led to the biases that were held at the start of the study. Being aware of these biases allowed the researcher to maintain a neutral disposition and response to the participants' discussion. The researcher also relied on the triangulation of the data to justify and validate the analysis and interpretation of the findings. The researcher implemented the following strategies: awareness of bias, member checks, analytic memos, and follow-up individual interviews to clarify and expand on findings to validate the study.

Findings

The next section addresses each interview question in the focus group and subsequent individual interviews. Each question is identified, and the themes for each question are outlined along with evidence to support each of the findings,

Focus Group Background Information

Each participant was asked in advance to provide background information through the following questions: How long have you held your Certificate of Clinical Competence? What type of facility do you currently work? How many graduate externship students have you supervised? How many graduate externship students have you declined to supervise? The information gathered from these four preliminary questions provided context for understanding and interpreting participant responses during the focus group. The responses to these background questions are listed in Table 3 under the participant description of this chapter. After

answering the background questions, the participants responded to the five main interview questions asked during the focus group. Each of the questions are identified below with supporting evidence to outline the themes.

Interview Question One

The first focus group interview question asked by the researcher was: “What are the factors that influence your decision to supervise speech-language pathology student fieldwork?” Themes that emerged from responses to this initial question included teaching, expanding types of experiences, obligation, and positive past experiences.

Teaching

The theme that was most prevalent for the first interview question was the participants’ desire to assist students in expanding their knowledge base in speech pathology. Two participants, one healthcare SLP and one school-based SLP, both stated that there are “gaps” or “holes” in graduate programs. The researcher’s analytic memos note participants’ frequent references to areas of speech pathology that are not being addressed in SLP graduate programs. Participant 4 discussed wanting to bridge the gap between what is learned in the classroom and what students encounter in the field. Participant 6 also supported that idea by saying they [SLP fieldwork supervisors] wanted to share their knowledge and teach the students. Responding to Participant 6’s desire to teach, Participant 5 expressed the thought that SLPs generally “enjoy teaching.” Participant 3 indicated that that once the professionals had confidence in their own skill sets, there was a desire to impart that knowledge to students:

Once I felt comfortable as a professional, that was my big thing, was waiting until I felt comfortable in my experience, and then I had enough experience and enough knowledge to impart on someone else. At that point I felt like I had a lot to teach them, and also my

supervisors and my CFY supervisor were amazing women, and they really prepared me to be out there on my own. I had no question about whether I was willing or able to do anything when I got out there because of them. So, I just wanted to instill that on the grad students I've supervised.

Participant 3's experience of having positive role models drove that participant to want to give back to the profession by imparting that same positive experience to other upcoming SLPs.

Expanding Types of Student Experiences

As stated above, many of the participants expressed that they enjoyed teaching students and sharing their experience and knowledge. Branching off the personal desire to teach, two participants also wanted students to have the additional exposure to a different type of setting than they would typically be able to experience. Participant 2 was a school-based SLP at an intermediate unit and described the caseload at the school as "students with the most complex needs." Participant 2 added:

And I know that's something that, not everybody gets a chance to experience. So, I thought that was something that I wanted to share with students. You know that ability to see that not maybe the typical school experience.

Participant 2 wanted students to have the opportunity to work with individuals who had more complex needs. Participant 7 had a similar experience in working with children who have severe disabilities. Referring to the students being supervised on externships, Participant 7 said, "I was able to offer them the opportunity to get some experience with those populations" in reference to students with very complex needs. The participants overall supported the idea that increased variety of experience would better assist with students' knowledge and skill sets.

Obligation

A responsibility to help students obtain knowledge and experience was a common theme among participants. This responsibility was referred to as an “obligation” by the participants which described that feeling of obligation to the student but also to the faculty member making the student placement request. Participant 6 said, “I’ve just always wanted to be able to help, you know? I was in that position before, and I just wanted to be able to help students.” Participant 1 agreed that helping the student was a priority but also described an “obligation of friendship” to the faculty member making the request for a placement on behalf of the student. Participant 1 said: “I would be very honest and say that when asked it was usually by someone who I was friendly with or familiar with. So, an obligation of a friendship to help as well.” Both obligation to the student and to the faculty member making the placement request on behalf of the student were echoed by Participant 5. Participant 5 said “The affiliation to the university to the person requesting the internship take place and paying it forward for the next generation of SLP’s to come. We all needed that externship too.” The participants’ responses lend to a sense of responsibility to supervise and work with graduate students.

Positive Experiences

The final theme that emerged from the initial interview question of the factors that influence participants to supervise a graduate student involved positive experiences that the SLPs had in the past with graduate students. Participant 1 described their positive experience with a student, which encouraged Participant 1 to work with a student again in the future. Participant 1 said, “after you’ve had one good experience it encouraged you to say yes again.”

In summary, SLPs discussed their enjoyment of teaching as the biggest influence on their willingness to supervise graduate students. Additionally, they were encouraged to supervise by

their hope to provide graduate students with the opportunity to engage with more complex diagnoses and cases. The participants also described their feeling of obligation to the faculty member making the request and to the student. Lastly, having positive past experiences with students fortified their decision to supervise additional graduate students.

Interview Question Two

Following the first interview question, participants were asked: “What do you perceive as the value or benefit of supervising speech-language pathology fieldwork students?” The purpose of the second interview question was to probe further regarding the benefits of supervising a graduate externship student. The themes that emerged are, accountability and learning, impact on the profession, and efficiency.

Accountability and Learning

The most common theme that arose from this question was the factor of accountability for the supervising SLP. Supervising a student holds the SLP accountable for their own knowledge and skill set. As a response to ensuring they were up to date on current evidence-based practice, the SLP’s content knowledge improved. In the midst of preparing for an upcoming graduate student to begin their placement, Participant 5 said: “I can't let myself slack; I have to be like, you know, on my toes. And I feel like that was really good for me to, to kind of hold myself accountable and that sort of thing.” Participant 5 felt it was important to ensure their own preparation for the student was up to a standard that would allow the student to learn best and that was helpful to keep them responsible for their knowledge and skills. Participant 1 expanded on the idea of being prepared to teach the student:

I think, along with everybody's thoughts, I think they always say like the highest level of learning is when you can teach your knowledge to someone, you can teach to someone

else. So, I think, although we, as clinicians, um, provide education to our clients in some way, shape, or form, when you're, when you're educating someone who's going to do your job, I think it's a completely different realm of educating. So, I think the benefit is honing your skill and a different way in where you are teaching someone else to do your job is completely different. So that's a huge benefit to turn your knowledge into a way to educate someone else.

Not only did participants feel that they were taking more initiative to improve their skills to prepare for their graduate students, but they also learned new things directly from the students themselves. Participant 6 explained:

For me to, you know, some of the students that I've had recently, I've been out of school for eight years, they've taught me things. You know? New things, new textbook things. So that's like another, you know, another nice benefit too. They've told me new things that they've learned, and that's kind of nice too.

Overall, the SLPs found their knowledge increased from learning evidence-based information in preparation of the students, honing their ability to teach someone else what they know, and learning from the student.

Impact on the Profession

Another concept that was identified by two of the healthcare SLPs was the opportunity to contribute to the profession of speech-language pathology. Participant 4 alluded to the idea that there is an assumption that SLPs working in skilled nursing facilities are not as skilled as SLPs who work in hospital settings. Participant 4 wanted to work with graduate students in order to change the narrative that SLPs in skilled nursing are less knowledgeable or less skilled than SLPs in other types of medical settings:

All I wanted to do was get as many students as possible and tell them we are just as good as acute care SLPs and show them the quality and how difficult it is to work in skilled nursing. And how it's not easy. It's not where the “bad” SLPs go.

Participant 5 responded to the idea of positively affecting the profession by making sure that the students were learning the most up-to-date evidence-based treatment approaches.

Participant 5 did not have a positive experience in graduate school when completing the graduate program's required medical-based experience. Participant 5 explained that the supervising SLP did not focus on important aspects that an entry-level SLP should be well versed in when starting in the field. For Participant 5, the possibility of being a better supervisor than they had experienced was appealing. There was a desire for Participant 5 to work with graduate students and to help prepare them to provide services to the population in need. Participant 5 reflected on negative experience in the medical field:

I didn't learn how to write goals, I didn't go to any meetings, I didn't speak to family members, I did, like it was an absolutely terrible time. Now I make sure with every one of my students, I do the exact opposite of what I learned in that skilled setting and I didn't know any better at the time. So all those mistakes that I didn't know I was making, I wasn't learning the right way. I wanted to teach better after that. And as far as like also teaching our students how to be the very best clinician they can be – the cutting-edge techniques and technology and wanting them to do the best for their patients – because you, we change their lives, and if you're lazy or under-educated in the best techniques, you're not giving the best care.

Efficiency

After the focus group had moved to Interview Question 3 (see the following section), Participant 5 returned to another benefit of supervising students. This benefit was having additional time for the supervisor to complete daily tasks that would otherwise be challenging without the additional help of another individual. This comment alludes to the hurdles of the additional tasks, beyond treatment and evaluation, that an SLP is required to manage.

The participants determined factors that they felt were benefits to supervising graduate students. The most discussed benefit or value was that supervising graduate students created motivation to enhance their own skills while also learning new information from students as well. Additionally, they felt that their ability to demonstrate evidenced based practice in a clinical way would ultimately lead the students to be better clinicians and benefit the populations that SLPs provide services. Lastly, it was noted that SLPs feel that they can more easily complete their required daily tasks when a graduate student is working with them.

Interview Question Three

In addition to understanding the benefits of supervising a graduate speech-pathology student, the third interview question explores the negative impact of supervising a student. The third interview question was: “What are the drawbacks or challenges in working with speech-language pathology students?” Below are the common themes noted by the participants which are, time commitment, past experiences, and stress.

Time Commitment

The most common challenge discussed was the time commitment for supervising a graduate student. Participant 2 (school-based SLP) and Participant 6 (healthcare-based SLP) discussed the increased time and effort that it takes to work with a graduate student. Both

Participant 2 and 6 specifically mention paperwork as a time commitment. Participant 2 referred to the IEP paperwork as being time consuming, more so with explaining and reviewing with graduate students. Participant 6 referred to the increased time that it takes to explain how to write daily notes that are required for their patients in the medical setting:

The first couple of weeks is rough, you know? You, you get out of your routine that you're doing every day and you have to slow it down and, you know, you find that you're there a little bit longer because you're behind and do everything a lot slower, so that's kind of a drawback.

SLPs in both healthcare and school-based settings have different documentation systems. Participants noted that it is not necessarily the type of documentation that impacts the time commitment but the amount of time it takes to review how to document with the graduate student.

Past Experiences

Taking into consideration the past experiences the supervisors have had with their students and the hurdles or challenges with those students, Participant 7 mentioned experiences with students who were less than ideal to supervise. Participant 7 said, “If you get a good one, it’s really good, but if you get a bad one, it's so much work.” A “good one” referred to a graduate student who had knowledge and skills that would be expected at that stage of the student’s graduate program experience.

Participant 3 (a school-based SLP) elaborated on this theme by describing an experience with a graduate student who was unmotivated to further their knowledge in specific areas provided by the supervisor. In regards to this unmotivated student, Participant 3 said, “the lack of motivation and sometimes teetering on professionalism, with the cell phones and things like that”

was a frustrating aspect of supervising. One of the healthcare SLPs, Participant 4, expanded on frustrations with professionalism as well by saying, “content knowledge doesn't bother me as much as professionalism issues.” Participant 7, also a school-based SLP, reinforced both Participant 3’s and 4’s thoughts:

Those times that I have said no have been those breaks in between the very poor student, and in like [Participant 4] said is not poor in terms of skill deficit. It's the lack of professionalism, the lack of ability to follow supervisor instructions, to go read the manual, to come on time, to put the cell phone away.

The SLPs’ discussion of students who were not professional in their behavior appeared to have made a lasting impression on their experiences of supervising graduate students. A graduate student’s lack of professionalism impacted two of the participants’ need for a “break” from working with graduate students.

Stress

Participant 1, who worked in a school setting when supervising a student, discussed the stress added to the SLP when supervising a graduate student: “I think there's a heightened level of, you know, responsibility and stress.” Participant 1 went on to refer to the need to ensure that their caseload is managed appropriately and that children are making progress toward their IEPs but, at the same time, ensuring that the graduate student is learning and progressing toward their competencies to graduate. Participant 4 agreed that “It’s a lot of work, it’s a big commitment”. Participant 4 went on to describe that having a challenging student can lead to needing a break from supervising additional students. The discussion by Participant 4 lends itself to the idea of increased stress when working with a challenging student.

SLPs provided challenges that they had experienced when supervising graduate students. The increased time commitment that comes along with supervising a graduate student was the most frequently talked about challenge. SLPs who had negative past experiences when working with graduate students, was also noted as a deterrent to work with additional graduate students. Lastly, the increased amount of stress due to the added workload and commitment was identified as a challenge.

Interview Question Four

The fourth question proposed to the focus group was a probing question based on the previous question. The question was: “How might academic programs assist you with these challenges?” The question was designed to expand on the challenges and hurdles that the participants described above, such as the increased time commitment, challenging students, increased stress, and lack of professionalism. The overarching themes that the participants thought would be helpful included increased communication and an increased focus on documentation in the graduate curriculum.

Communication

Three of the participants agreed that better communication from the university would aid in decreasing challenges that they experienced as supervisors. Participant 4 suggested that the university liaison communicates with the supervising SLP more regularly. Graduate programs, according to the participants, typically have a faculty member who is assigned as the university supervisor or liaison. Participant 4 referred to the communication between the university liaison and the supervising SLP: “I think we need to have a little bit better contact with our field supervisors and check in more often than we do.” Participant 4 further suggested that more frequent check-ins with the supervising SLPs would warrant a more detailed report of the

student's skill set. Participant 4 also discussed the importance of the faculty liaison communicating with the supervising SLP if the graduate student had challenges prior to clinical field work and if the particular graduate student would need more support from a supervisor than what would typically be expected. Participant 4 thought that letting the SLP know that the student may require more time and effort would be beneficial. Participant 4 said, "I think that level of rapport and honesty makes for a better relationship with the externship supervisor."

Similarly, Participant 7 recalled a time when they needed more guidance from the university about a student who was challenging, and the supervisor didn't know how to handle it. Participant 7 didn't feel the university provided the needed support and help. After experiencing that situation, Participant 7 was less likely to take on another graduate student right away.

Participant 7 reflected on the more challenging students that they supervised:

It's those few that I never could reach that I really took personally because I couldn't reach them, and I really wanted to help them. But, you know, without that relationship with the university, it was, it was really impossible.

Communication on the end of the university is an important piece of the supervising experience. Two of the participants indicated that increased communication could prevent challenges with students. It was also noted that there is a need for increased communication and support when the SLPs are working with challenging graduate students.

Documentation

Depending on the type of facility where the SLP works, documentation is different; however, two of the participants who work in school settings, Participants 2 and 3, suggested that Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) should be a more consistent focus in the graduate curriculum. Participant 3 expanded on the idea of addressing documentation in the curriculum,

specifically mentioning IEPs but also interpreting assessments and writing an evaluation:

“Learning how to write an evaluation, the IEP document, and also looking at those standardized assessments, that's critical to assess children and diagnose correctly.” This suggestion to add

more experience with documentation into the graduate curriculum was noted by a school SLP.

However, it should be noted that the challenge of the time commitment to explain documentation was described by both the healthcare-based and school-based SLPs in interview question three.

The university could decrease the time commitment that SLPs need to make by incorporating school-based and healthcare-based documentation into the graduate curriculum so that students are better prepared prior to entering their field work placements.

Inquiring how universities could provide support for the hurdles that SLPs feel when supervising graduate students provided further insight into two areas. The first was the need for better communication between the university and the SLP. The second was to add more of a focus on different types of documentation within the graduate curriculum so that graduate students are better prepared entering their fieldwork experiences.

Interview Question Five

The final interview question asked by the researcher was: “What type of support would you like to have provided by the academic institution when accommodating speech-language pathology students?” A participant requested clarification on the question prior to the discussion. The question was repeated; however, a probing question was then used to facilitate a response from the participants, which was, “What other advice would you offer to academic programs about supporting your work as a fieldwork educator?” The change of wording to the probing question elicited responses from the participants, and the themes gathered from the question are

consistency with communication and opportunities for continuing education in the areas of supervision.

Consistency with Communication

Participant 1 branched off a comment made earlier in the focus group by Participant 4, which was in regards to more communication and more consistency with that communication. Participant 1 suggested a weekly checklist that the supervisor could utilize to determine if the student is meeting their competencies and if the student is making progress toward specific areas. The suggestion was based on their experience of the university liaison visiting or checking in only at the mid-way point. Participant 1 said:

You know, something more regular – it might not have to be the full shebang. But something quick and easy just to say hey, do we need to talk? Do we need to have a meeting, or....

Participant 1 suggested that the supervisor complete a weekly check-list or a “Google form,” while Participant 5 suggested a virtual site visit, “when we're living in the world of Zoom too so, like, that could even be a possibility to, to check in more frequently, virtually.” The suggestion for a virtual site visit was in reference to a graduate student who may need more than the typically suggested site visits.

Continuing Education

Participant 4 identified the topic of the university supporting the SLP who is supervising the graduate students by offering trainings or continuing education. Participant 4 reflected on past experience and said, “But I would have loved that -- I would love for the university to send me a 10-minute webinar or an article about, you know, the different types of debriefing, how to talk to students, how to ask questions.” Participant 2 agreed that additional trainings or education

on supervising would be a helpful way to support the supervising SLPs. In addition, Participant 7 reflected on a previous experience of a university who had offered a day-long supervisor training and that it was very beneficial to feeling like there was a support system. In regards to that training, Participant 7 said, “And it was really nice to have that, that community as being a new extern supervisor to know that I had support. So, yeah, I found the training I think would be something worth looking into. For sure.”

A probing question was asked by the researcher following Participant 7’s experience: “Do each of you think that having continuing education opportunities would incentivize SLPs, then, to maybe even ask to do it or want to do it?” The purpose of this probing question was to learn if the participants felt that the continuing education opportunities would increase the number of SLPs willing to supervise graduate students. Participant 7 and Participant 1 both agreed that continuing education opportunities offered by the universities would increase participation in accepting graduate speech therapy students. Participant 1 referred to the experience of knowing other SLPs who haven’t worked with graduate students and said:

I know a great majority of them have never taken an extern and I, and I know it's because they don't feel confident in being able to support, another, you know, an extern. And I think if they had that and felt like I went through this and I have, you know, the expectations and I think you would have more opportunities, more options, for placements.

Participant 7 agreed with the sentiment that a training would make more SLPs feel confident and comfortable to take a student when they otherwise may not have. Participant 7 expanded on the sentiment:

I think sometimes SLPs who are out in the field, even if they want to supervise they don't know how to get a supervisee, and they don't know how to get students. So, they might have a really good placement and really have a lot to offer and really need the help that a student clinician can offer but they don't know how to go get a student. So I think doing some of that outreach, outreach would really be worth looking into.

Participant 7's expansion on the idea that offering continuing education or supervisor trainings would not only build an SLP's confidence and willingness to supervise but that extending the opportunities to SLPs would possibly connect with someone who has been wanting to supervise graduate students.

Similar to the participants' discussion of better communication from the fourth research question that was asked, SLPs also wanted more consistent communication to help support them when working with graduate students. The increased and consistent communication would provide general support but it would also assist SLPs to handle challenging students more confidently. Lastly, SLPs felt that they would be better supported with opportunities for continuing education in the areas of supervision.

Individual Follow-Up Interview Background Information

After the focus group interview, four participants were willing to complete an additional interview. Two of the Participants, 4 and 6, worked in healthcare settings. Two of the Participants, 1 and 7, worked in schools. All four SLPs were asked the same questions, but the healthcare SLPs were asked an additional question in regard to productivity for their companies. Each of the interview questions will be outlined below with themes that arose from the participants.

Interview Question One

To determine a better understanding of limitations that might be in place for an SLP to be willing to supervise a student, the participants were asked, “What kind of encouragement do you receive from your school district/therapy company to work with graduate students?”

Positive Response

All four participants stated that their company or school had a positive response to the SLPs working with graduate students. Participant 7, who works in a school setting, said, “So the district was very supportive of having students there, and kind of showcasing what the district was offering in terms of special education services.” One of the SLPs in the medical setting, Participant 4, made a similar statement:

They try to encourage giving back to the college and to the community and just promoting future learning for upcoming therapy students and upcoming, you know, potential employees for the company. So, we all had to be trained by somebody, and so they support paying it forward.

Participant 4 also mentioned “potential employees for the company” in response. The other healthcare SLP, Participant 6, had a similar response; their company allowed graduate students to complete their clinical rotations, and they utilized it as a way to market to potential employees. “Once they go through the program, they give them, like, a packet, you know, so basically, if there's a job opportunity that they would be willing to, you know, interview them.” Participant 6 was referring to the graduate student’s completing their clinical rotation and then the company providing them with a packet and opportunities to interview for an open position.

Interview Question Two

During the focus group interview, one of the supervision challenges discussed by the participants was the time commitment. Under the guidelines of the accrediting body, ASHA, a supervisor must be in direct supervision of the graduate student for a minimum of 25 percent of each student or patient contact. To investigate the amount of time the supervisor spends in direct supervision of their graduate students, this question was asked: “What is the average time you spend in direct supervision, over the minimum 25 percent required by ASHA?”

All four participants stated that they supervise individual graduate students more than 25 percent of the time. Table 5 outlines the responses from each of the four participants.

Table 5

Percentage of Supervision

Participant	Place of Employment	Percentage of Supervision
Participant 1	Intermediate Unit	50-60%
Participant 4	Skilled Nursing Facility	95%
Participant 6	Acute Care and Skilled Nursing Facility	>25%
Participant 7	School District	50%

Participant 6 did not provide an exact estimate of the percentage of supervision, noting that, “It’s very rare that I leave my students. So, unless I have to go to like a meeting or something that they don’t need to attend. But I am usually over that 25 percent, really.”

Interview Question Three

Speech-language pathologists who work for therapy companies may be held to a daily productivity rating that is monitored by their administration. Considering the discussion that took place during the focus group about the increased time it can take to work with a graduate student, the following questions were asked of the healthcare SLPs:

1. What productivity ratings are you required to sustain?
2. Does having a student help with your productivity or hinder productivity?

The purpose of these questions was to investigate further the SLPs' thoughts on whether having a student could impact their productivity negatively or positively. Both questions will be addressed in the section below.

Productivity

Both of the healthcare SLPs' productivity requirements were similar. Participant 4 stated it was 80 percent, and Participant 6's company holds their SLPs to 83 percent productivity. When asked if having a student helps or hinders their productivity, neither felt that it was a hindrance. Participant 4 stated, "So the first couple weeks are very difficult as far as juggling the students and the productivity. But after that it actually gets a lot easier." Participant 6 did not state that it helped or hindered productivity but that their "productivity stays the same."

Interview Question Four

University support was a topic during the focus group, and a suggestion that was discussed was for universities to provide resources for SLPs who are supervising or who may be interested in supervising. The participants suggested that SLPs who were new to supervising may be more encouraged to supervise a student or feel more confident when working with a student if continuing education opportunities were available. During the follow-up interviews, the researcher asked: "What types of resources would you have liked to have had as a new supervisor? What types of resources would you like as a seasoned supervisor?" The question was divided into two parts because of the varying degrees of experience of each participant. Responses are described in the following sections.

New Supervisor

For newer supervisors, the participants suggested a variety of resources. Participant 1 suggested a face-to-face orientation that would allow the SLPs to ask questions. Participant 4 thought it was a positive change that supervisors are now required to have at least two hours of continuing education credits in the area of supervision. Participant 4 also suggested that universities could create a way to network with other SLPs who are working with students: “a little way for us to connect, making sure we're staying on the same page, or things like that.” Participant 7 felt that it would be beneficial for the SLP to know what their pre-service training was prior to going out on externship:

So just knowing what baseline skills to expect would have been helpful. On extern I just kind of expected them to have basic therapy skills and kind of know what they weren't doing. Sometimes that was the case, and sometimes it wasn't. So, I think it would have helped to be more realistic in terms of, okay, these students really don't have any real-world experience, so here's some suggestions. Here's what they've had exposure to, here's what they have not yet experienced.

Seasoned SLP

Participants 4 and 7 responded to this question with a similar theme. They both said that over time they became more knowledgeable of what the students needed for the specific setting where they worked. Participant 7 was based in the schools, and Participant 4 worked in a skilled nursing setting. Participant 7 explained:

As a seasoned supervisor, I became more knowledgeable over time with what students were exposed to and not at the grad levels, so that became easier. I learned that just through experience. What would have been helpful as a seasoned SLP would be more

student-specific information: what are the individual students' strengths and needs. What specifically would the university like me to work with the student on to really increase their skills. Because, as I became more seasoned, I became more specific in terms of being able to meet the students' needs and having that information from the university would have been helpful.

General Suggestions

To answer the two individual interview questions, What types of resources would you have liked to have had as a new supervisor? What types of resources would you like as a seasoned supervisor?" Two participants gave general recommendations that were not specific to new or seasoned supervisors. Participant 1 suggested an expectation checklist for the "do's and don'ts" of supervising. Participant 6 also suggested more information on each student's areas of potential growth. This suggestion was similar to Participant 7's suggestion as a more seasoned supervisor. Participant 6 referred to that need as a general benefit to both new and seasoned supervisors.

Summary

Through a thoughtful analysis of the focus group transcripts, follow-up interview transcripts, member checks, and researcher's analytic memos, themes were identified that proposed to answer the research question, why are certified SLPs motivated to accept or decline supervision of speech-language pathology graduate students? The common themes that arose as positive factors that motivated participants to work with graduate students were opportunities to teach, learn, give back, and make an impact within the profession. Additionally, the SLPs found that their employers were supportive of working with graduate students and they also stated that they were more efficient throughout their day. Common factors that deterred the participants

from supervising graduate students was the increased time commitment and stress. SLPs also stated that negative past experiences decreased their willingness to work with graduate students in the future. The focus group and individual interviews also presented themes of support that universities could provide such as consistent communication with the supervisor, adding knowledge of documentation into the graduate curriculum, and offering continuing education credits in the area of supervision

The final chapter of this document will first provide a summary of the results followed by a discussion of the results and their implications. Then the results will be connected to the theory. Finally, recommendations will be provided for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The chapter will discuss the results that were found from the study. Both the focus group and individual interviews were outlined in chapter four and themes that arose were elaborated to ultimately answer the research question, why are certified SLPs motivated to accept or decline supervision of speech-language pathology graduate students? This chapter will provide a summary of the results followed by discussion related to the literature and to theory. Then, the recommendations for further research will be identified.

Summary of Results

Four school-based SLPs and three health care-based SLPs participated in a focus group to determine the benefits and challenges of working with graduate speech-language pathology students. Following the focus group, two school-based SLPs and two health care-based SLPs participated in follow-up individual interviews to expand on the discussion from the focus group. The common themes that developed from the focus group and individual interviews are listed below. The outline includes the following influences that motivate SLPs to supervise graduate students: teaching, accountability and learning, expanding the types of experiences for students, obligation, positive experiences with students in the past, making an impact on the profession, efficiency, and positive encouragement from entities. Following these factors, the influences that motivate SLPs to decline supervising a student will be discussed. These factors include time commitment, negative experiences with students in the past, and stress. Lastly the areas to support supervisors are outlined. Supportive strategies include increased and consistent communication, adding documentation into the graduate curriculum, and providing continuing education opportunities.

Themes That Motivate Supervisors

Eight themes were indicated by the participants from the primary focus group interview that motivated them in a positive way to volunteer to supervise graduate students. Teaching is the first theme that is noted and briefly summarized followed by accountability and learning, expanding student experiences, a feeling of obligation, positive past experiences with students, the impact their supervision would make on the profession, increased efficiency, and positive encouragement they received from their entities.

1. *Teaching*: The most common theme that participants discussed was that they enjoyed being a part of the process that expanded the graduate student's knowledge base in the areas of speech pathology. Their experiences of having positive mentorship encounters led them to want to impress that same positive learning experience upon another upcoming generation of speech pathologists.
2. *Accountability and learning*: The second most common theme that arose from the participants' discussion was that having a student to supervise holds the SLP accountable for their own knowledge and skill set. The SLPs wanted to ensure that they were up-to-date on current evidence-based practice; and, as a result of that increased self-learning, SLPs' overall content knowledge improved. The SLPs found that their knowledge increased from several vantage points. These learning opportunities included self-inquiry of evidence-based information in preparation of the students, honing their ability to teach someone else, and lastly learning new information from the student.
3. *Expanding the types of experiences for students*: The participants not only wanted to expand graduate students' knowledge and skill set but also to offer graduate students with new experiences with different populations that they would not generally encounter in

graduate school, such as individuals with complex needs and diagnoses. Although the participants are categorized into school-based SLPs and health care-based SLPs, their caseload demographics vary. They explained that their caseloads often times have individuals with very complex needs. They felt that graduate students would not likely have had experiences with individuals who have such diverse and complex needs in their graduate curriculum.

4. *Obligation*: The participants expressed that they felt a desire to give back to the profession by helping graduate students gain their required experiences. The idea that an SLP volunteered to supervise them during their time in graduate school was discussed and a way to pay homage to their previous SLPs was to volunteer to supervise a graduate student, as well. There was also discussion of obligation to the faculty member or the particular university who was asking if the SLP would work with a graduate student. The participants expressed that they were typically asked to supervise a graduate student by someone that they knew or were “friendly with” and they felt the obligation to volunteer to supervise.
5. *Positive experiences in the past*: Having a positive supervisory experience with a graduate student of their own was an encouraging factor that lead SLPs to agree to work with subsequent graduate students. It was also noted that they had positive experiences as students themselves and that also encouraged them to volunteer to supervise graduate students now as a professional.
6. *Making an impact on the profession*: The participants wanted to benefit the profession by ensuring that students had a well-rounded understanding and use of entry level skills to best prepare them for their professional practice. The need for up-to-date evidence-based

practice was elaborated on as an imperative component to SLPs' practice in the field. The participants wanted to ensure that the graduate students have that understanding and ability so that they can provide their clients with the best overall care that can significantly impact their livelihood.

7. *Efficiency*: Supervising a graduate student can positively impact the SLPs' ability to manage their day-to-day required tasks. When SLPs are working with a graduate student who is performing well, there is an added component of assistance that the graduate student provides to the professional.
8. *Positive encouragement from entities*: The entities that the participants were employed under when they supervised graduate students provided an encouraging environment for the SLP to supervise the student. The SLPs believed that the entities found it beneficial to have graduate students learn within their particular environment which may lead to future employees.

Themes That Deter Supervisors

The participants discussed motivations that deterred them to volunteer to supervise graduate students. First the increased time commitment that was required of the SLP is summarized followed by past experiences that were viewed as negative. Lastly the stress that SLPs felt when supervising a student is discussed.

1. *Time commitment*: The most common disadvantage to supervising a graduate student was the amount of added time that was needed to work with a student. The participants expressed that the student's lack of experience with documentation made the biggest impact on the amount of time that was needed to work with the student. Participants in both the medical and school-based settings expressed a general lack of knowledge and

exposure to documentation. Although the time commitment was a challenge that the participants expressed, the health care-based SLPs both agreed that supervising a graduate student did not significantly impact their required level of productivity within their facilities.

2. *Negative experiences with students in the past:* Participants described the need to take a break from supervising graduate students after hosting someone who was challenging. Their description of challenging was not based on skill level; however, was based on lack of the graduate student's professionalism and initiative to learn. After supervising students who lacked these skill sets and qualities, the supervisors were more hesitant to agree to supervise a student right away.
3. *Stress:* A heightened feeling of stress was noted as a result of supervising a graduate student. The feeling of stress was described as stemming from wanting to ensure that their clients on caseload were being evaluated or treated appropriately and at the same time ensuring the needs of the graduate student were being met.

Themes That Support Supervisors

In addition to the motivations that encouraged SLPs to supervise graduate students and the factors that deterred them from volunteering to supervise graduate students, the SLPs provided areas that could be improved upon by the university. These suggestions were increased communication between the university and the site, adjusting the curriculum, and offering continuing education opportunities.

1. *Communication:* Supporting supervisors with more consistent communication from the university would aide in decreasing challenges that supervisors had experienced. Increased communication initiated by the university is an important piece of the

supervising experience. An increase in correspondences and communication can prevent challenges with a student and provide support to the supervising SLP.

2. *Adding documentation into the graduate curriculum:* It would be beneficial for universities to increase the amount of graduate student exposure to both school-based and health care-based documentation. Having graduate students familiarized to different types of documentation prior to starting their field work experience would decrease the time commitment that the supervising SLP would be required to incorporate into the orientation process.
3. *Continuing education opportunities:* SLPs had engaged in continuing education opportunities geared toward supervision in the past that were considered a positive experience. Offering continuing education or supervisor trainings would not only build an SLPs' confidence and willingness to supervise but extending the opportunities to SLPs would possibly connect with someone who has been wanting to supervise graduate students.

The themes that are identified above encompass both positive and deterring factors that have led the supervisors to feel encouraged to supervise a graduate student or decline supervising a graduate student. In addition to those common themes, SLPs were able to provide suggestions for universities to consider that may encourage more professionals to volunteer to supervise. The suggestions for increased communication, adding documentation into the graduate curriculum and offering continuing education opportunities would provide a more well-rounded experience for both the student and SLP. In the upcoming section the data from the primary focus group interviews and the individual interviews will be discussed in relation to the literature.

Discussion of the Results and Implications

The results of this case study identified eight themes that influenced SLPs in a positive way to work with graduate students and three drawbacks to supervising students. In addition to the reasons SLPs are motivated to work with students or reasons they decline to supervise graduate students, three themes arose that provided universities with information on a better support system for supervising SLPs. Many of the themes that emerged from this study were not unique in comparison to the literature in other areas of allied health. The following discussion will outline the themes that were prevalent during this research study and ways they connected to previous studies and literature.

An important theme that arose during the focus group discussion was that participants found satisfaction in teaching their students. The satisfaction from teaching that was described by the participants had not been directly discussed in previous literature. One participant stated that SLPs “enjoy teaching”. This generalization that all SLPs enjoy teaching would not hold true for every individual; however, it could be argued that as an SLP working in a health care setting or school-based setting, there are “teaching” moments with patients and students.

According to ASHA, the scope of practice of an SLP includes providing preventative care, counseling, and collaboration with other professions (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2016b). To provide preventative care and counseling, an SLP may find themselves teaching the patient, caregiver, student, or parents about a particular disorder or treatment procedure. An additional circumstance that an SLP may find themselves teaching is during collaboration with other professionals. When collaboration occurs, there is often times a component of educating physicians, nurses, or administration about the needs of the student or patient that the SLP is treating.

Even though it is a generalization to state that SLPs “enjoy teaching,” it is fair to say that teaching and educating is a component in the daily practice of an SLP. The participants from this study enjoyed teaching and being a part of the learning process for the student; they also appreciated that their places of employment could offer exposure to new learning opportunities for students as well. The participants within this study discussed that they had individuals on caseload who had very complex diagnoses. The participants felt that it was a positive experience for students to have had the opportunity to work with patients or students that they would not have had the chance to work with in their previous clinical experiences.

The SLP’s scope of practice covers a range of areas such as; “speech production and fluency, language, cognition, voice, resonance, swallowing, and hearing” (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2016b). Individuals who require services in these areas may range from a mild diagnosis to a severe or profound diagnosis. The participants in this study felt that having graduate students gain the opportunity to work with individuals who had a range of complex needs would lead to better preparation to work independently within the field. Teaching the graduate students and also providing graduate students with opportunities to work with more complex caseloads provided participants with gratification. Not only did the participants feel as though they were an important component to the graduate student’s learning process; but, they also felt that working with the graduate students allowed them to expand their own knowledge base.

Working with a graduate student provided incentive for participants to improve their own skill set and desire to learn more. This motivation to learn was an important benefit that participants felt was imperative to their own growth as an SLP. The participants felt that having a graduate student held them accountable for their own learning and expanding on their skill set.

The idea that the SLPs learn from their experiences with students was a theme that was frequently seen within the literature as well. Working with a graduate student can in fact stimulate learning and the desire to pursue personal development for the professionals themselves (Hanson, 2011; Wright & Needham, 2016; Ghazzawi, 2007; Wunk Christodoulou, 2016; Zylla-Jones & Brown, 2007). Specifically, Hanson's (2011) electronic focus group found that occupational therapists (OTs) felt that working with a student benefited them by encouraging their own pursuit of continuing education credits. Not only were the participants from Hanson's study motivated to self-reflect on their own skills but participants also noted that they learned "new techniques" from the students themselves (p. 172). Working with a graduate student cannot only help the student learn and grow as an upcoming professional; but, it can also teach the supervisors new information (Hanson, 2011; Wunk Christodoulou, 2016).

The participants' self-reflection on their desire to improve their own knowledge base was evidently stated as a benefit to supervise; however, the participants stated another reason that they agreed to supervise a graduate student was due to the obligation that they felt. This obligation was elaborated in two ways. The first was that their feeling of obligation was geared toward the university coordinator who was making the request for the externship placement on behalf of the graduate student. The second description of obligation was that SLPs felt they had a responsibility to the profession to help graduate students who are attempting to earn their graduate degree in speech-language pathology. The participants' obligation to the field was described in a positive way and as a way to give back to the profession. The participants recognized that without their participation in the process of obtaining fieldwork experience, graduate students would not be able to meet the requirements to obtain their degree. Although the feeling of personal obligation to the individual making the placement request was not

specifically noted within the literature, Ghazzawi's (2007) focus group study that was comprised of nine SLP participants did discuss that one of the benefits of supervising a graduate student was that SLPs felt they were "giving back" to the profession (p. 11). The SLPs from Hanson's focus group felt gratified that they were able to give back to the field by assisting others to start their own path as an SLP. In addition to giving back to the students, Hanson's study also discussed participants' desire to make a positive impact on the profession as well. Their description of making a positive impact was not only providing a placement for the graduate student to complete their fieldwork requirement but taking it a step further and prompting the students to understand and expand on their knowledge of evidence-based practice that would in turn create more knowledgeable professionals within the field.

The participants of this study wanted to benefit the profession by ensuring that the students had a well-rounded understanding and use of entry level skills to best prepare them for their professional practice. The need for up-to-date evidence-based practice was elaborated as an imperative base to the practice of an SLP, and the participants wanted to ensure that the graduate students have that understanding and ability so that they can provide their clients with the best overall care that can significantly impact that client's livelihood.

A day in the life of an SLP consists of more than using evidence-based practice to treat and evaluate students or patients. There are additional administrative tasks such as documentation, billing, meetings, and providing education of services. The general case management for SLPs can be onerous. To ease that burden, participants from this study expressed that working with graduate students can positively impact SLPs' ability to manage their day-to-day requirements. Ozelie et al.'s (2015) retrospective quantitative study in the field of occupation therapy supported that supervising a student does not negatively impact the

productivity of an OT. The participants from Ozelie et al.'s study responded that they are more efficient during their day and supervising a student does not impact a therapist's productivity. The data from Ozelie et al.'s study and the participant remarks from this study about being more efficient during the day may be a consideration for therapy companies and school districts to encourage more therapists to work with graduate students. SLPs may feel they can meet their demanding daily job requirements more easily when their day is more efficient. School districts and therapy companies could benefit from SLPs who are more efficient and less stressed during their work day.

Both the school districts and the therapy companies that the participants of this study were employed under when they supervised graduate students were said to have provided an encouraging environment for the SLP to supervise a graduate student. The participants from this study believed that their employers found it beneficial to have graduate students learn within their particular environment which may lead to potential job recruitment within the therapy company or school district. Ghazzawi (2007) and Hanson's (2011) focus group participants also noted that their employers saw the positive side to allowing their therapist to work with graduate students because of the potential job recruitment once the graduate student completed their program requirements. Smith et al.'s (2017) survey of externship supervisors also corroborated that administration is generally supportive of therapist working with graduate students. A more efficient work day and support from administration is a very positive benefit to working with graduate students. Regardless of those two factors, it was a very common theme that the participants of this study were required to invest a significant amount of time to ensure the graduate students were understanding their roles and to ensure that SLPs' caseloads were being serviced appropriately. These disadvantages will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The most common drawback to supervising a graduate student was the time that was required to invest in the student's development. Specifically, participants from this study described the lack of knowledge base in the area of documentation as a hurdle and time commitment for the SLPs. The participants explained that the time that was needed to explain the structure of the documentation and the verbiage that should be used was a challenge. The school based SLPs mainly expressed this concern in the area of individual education plans (IEPs); however, the healthcare based SLPs agreed that documentation was an area of weakness for the graduate students they have supervised. The additional time that is needed to work with students was a common concern throughout the literature as well. Hall et al. (2015), Hanson (2011), Varland et al., (2017) all found that a challenge or deterrent to working with students was due to the increased amount of time that was required of therapists in addition to their typical workload. All three of these studies were investigating the factors that influence a therapist's decision to work with a student and the time commitment was a deterrent in all three studies along with this researcher's study.

The participants from this study noted stress as a deterrent to supervising a graduate student. The participants from this study related the stress to juggling the needs of their graduate students and also to the needs of the individuals on their caseloads. When referring to the needs of the individuals on caseload, they wanted to ensure that their students or patients were making progress toward their goals and receiving the best possible treatment. The stress on the supervisor to meet the needs of the graduate students were based on them reaching areas of competency to appropriately deliver services. The feeling of stress was a common theme throughout the literature review. In fact, stress was the most common theme identified by PT's from Hall et al. (2015) and So et al.'s (2019) studies. So et al.'s study investigated supervisors'

experiences when working with students who were underperforming during their fieldwork placements. The challenges that the participants who were interviewed in So et al.'s study discussed feelings of stress related to working with a student who was not meeting their performance expectations. The feelings of stress for these participants stemmed from a worry for their patients' safety and working additional hours to meet their daily job requirements. Although patient safety was not noted by this research study, the feeling of stress that the participants felt to manage their students and caseloads were similar. So et al.'s study specifically investigated the challenges that PT's encounter when working with challenging students. The study referred to those challenging students as students performing below expectations (SPBE). The study noted that due to the added stress of working with SPBEs, PTs were less inclined to work with future students. The challenges of working with students who are not performing at the level that is expected was also discussed by the participants in this research study.

Participants in this research study described the need to take a break from supervising graduate students after working with a student who was challenging. They described the challenges that they had encountered as a lack of professionalism and a lack of initiative to learn and perform. After supervising students who lacked these skill sets and qualities, the participants from this study were more hesitant to supervise a subsequent student. Smith et al., (2017) completed a survey of 259 participants who were in the field of speech therapy. The focus of this study was to gain the perspective of the externship sites' challenges to working with graduate students. Smith et al.'s study asked supervisors the areas that they would need more assistance to navigate and the top response was that supervisors wanted more support when navigating students who were unprofessional or entitled.

This research study not only identified benefits and challenges of working with graduate students, but it also investigated into areas that the university could improve upon to increase the willingness for SLPs to work with graduate students. The suggestions were based on areas that were considered deterrents to supervise such as the stress due to the increased time commitment and the need for better support from the university when working with challenging students. To assist with these two concerns, it was suggested to increase the exposure to documentation during the graduate student's coursework and to provide more consistent communication from the university. Both of these suggestions will be elaborated on in the subsequent paragraphs.

To decrease the fieldwork supervisor's time commitment on teaching documentation, the participants suggested more exposure to an individualize education plan (IEP) in the classroom setting before going out on externships. The participants stated that they had to invest a large amount of time to teach students the specifics of documentation. They felt that graduate students should be provided more opportunities to complete IEP reports within the graduate curriculum and by doing so would decrease the amount of time a fieldwork supervisor would need to dedicate to the graduate student once out in the field. It was generalized by this researcher that it would also be beneficial to increase the exposure to documentation systems or content that they would encounter in the healthcare field. This researcher came to this conclusion because the participants in the healthcare setting noted the time commitment to the student was a challenge. Previous literature did not note the suggestion to incorporate education on documentation within the curriculum; however, the support needed for more challenging students and consistent communication from the university was corroborated by previous studies.

The participants of this study identified a disadvantage of working with graduate students when the students are more challenging. The participants specifically noted challenges with

professionalism. They suggested that a way the university could better assist them with challenging students was for the university supervisor to be in more consistent communication. Their experiences had typically been a mid-way visit or discussion with the university supervisor. The SLPs suggested a check-in prior to the half-way point and then again before the end of the placement. The participants felt if the university supervisor was more consistently involved in checking in on the graduate student's progress, it would help the field work supervisor be better supported. It was also noted that the SLPs wanted to have more information on specific areas of need for the graduate student who was assigned to them. The idea of better communication was also noted in So et al.'s (2019) study. The study stated that communication between the university and fieldwork supervisor was "critical for improving the clinical internship experience" (p. 397).

During the focus group interview of this research study, the participants discussed the desire for continuing education opportunities to better prepare them to work with graduate students. During the individual interview, the desire for more continuing education was expanded upon to determine if specific resources would be more beneficial for SLPs who are new supervisors versus more seasoned supervisors. The participants in this study suggested webinars, in person events, or access to materials on supervision. Providing therapists who supervise with continuing education materials has been a very prevalent theme throughout the literature. Smith et al., (2017), So et al. (2017), Varland et al., (2017)'s studies all identified that their participants found it beneficial to have continuing education opportunities or access to materials. An additional layer to the continuing education was added from Ghazzawi's (2007) study. The focus group participants expressed a desire to earn continuing education credits for

supervising graduate students. This benefit of earning credits after supervising a graduate student would incentivize SLPs to work with graduate students.

The results from the focus group interview and the individual interviews provide a consistent link to the previous studies that have been completed in the field of speech pathology and other areas of Allied Health. The positive motivations to working with a student were a satisfaction of teaching, an SLP improving their own skill set and knowledge base, the obligation they felt to supervise students, and their increased efficiency in the work day. The motivations that negatively impacted the willingness to supervise graduate students included the feeling of stress. The stress was related to juggling the needs of both the graduate student and the caseload and working with graduate students who are more challenging. Additional results that were linked to literature were the need for increased communication between the university and the supervisor along with offering continuing education credits. In the following section the results from this study will be linked to the theoretical framework, Experiential Learning Theory.

Results Related to the Theoretical Framework

Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) was first published as a theoretical framework by Kolb in 1984. Kolb defined ELT as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (1984, p. 41). Kolb outlined that process within a continuum to represent learning as an ongoing process. Within the continuum, he identified specific occurrences that take place that lead to learning “experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting” (Kolb, & Kolb, 2017, p.31). ELT was the theoretical lens that this study used to support the importance of graduate students’ fieldwork experiences. It should also be noted that the theory not only captured the learning experiences of the students but also the SLPs who supervised the

graduate students. It was noted by the participants within this study and through the literature that the professionals also gained knowledge from the experiences of supervising the fieldwork experiences. ELT provided the framework for the benefits of learning for both the graduate student and professional.

Graduate speech pathology students who are enrolled in an accredited program are required to have clinical experiences with individuals that range across the lifespan (ASHA, 2020). The purpose of required fieldwork provides graduate students with the concrete experiences that Kolb suggests as the initial process of learning. The shortage of clinical fieldwork placements cause concern for graduate students who are not only required but who also benefit from the direct experiences that they need to obtain on their externships. Ghazzawi's (2007) focus group interview with nine SLPs, resulted in an individual agreeing that the externship is an "integral part of the education" (p. 11). The willingness of SLPs to supervise graduate students is the pivotal first step to accessing the fieldwork experience for graduate students. Determining factors that motivate SLPs to supervise graduate students' or decline a request to supervise students has provided insight to the university programs on support that can be provided to the supervisors. Providing this support can help to ensure that graduate students have the opportunity to expand their knowledge base through experiential learning.

Recommendations

Following analysis of the results, several recommendations are identified that could be implemented for practice of higher education programs who are coordinating clinical fieldwork placements. Future research recommendations are also provided in the second section.

For Practice

Analysis of the interview data led to common recommendations that would be beneficial for university programs to implement to increase the likelihood of SLPs volunteering to supervise graduate students. The recommendations are aimed toward changes and opportunities that the university can provide to create a more positive experience for SLPs and to create a more well-rounded experience for graduate students. There are five recommendations that are listed below. These recommendations are not listed in any specific order.

1. Provide opportunities to meet the two-hour continuing education requirement for SLP supervisors or financially reimburse courses that are taken in supervision. Creating opportunities to meet the continuing education requirement decrease the time and also the cost of SLPs finding and paying for a course in supervision.
2. Provide continuing education opportunities as a tool for outreach to SLPs who have never supervised graduate students and it would assist more individuals to meet the growing need for supervisors willing to work with graduate students.
3. Create a consistent communication protocol to ensure students are meeting the required competencies but also to provide ongoing support to supervisors who are working with challenging students. Providing the SLPs with consistent communication and checkpoints will decrease stress that may arise from working with a student who is challenging and more easily provide the support that SLPs may require.
4. Provide SLPs with information on the past experiences that graduate students have encountered with along with strengths and areas for improvement. Having students' past experiences and areas for improvement will better allow SLPs to focus on student's needs.

5. Implement more exposure to documentation within the graduate curriculum. Both for individual education plans (IEPs) and documentation in the healthcare setting. It would be beneficial to more consistently offer exposure to the structure of documentation within the graduate curriculum to better prepare graduate students on the appropriate verbiage for content purposes. Providing more consistent exposure to documentation sources also decreases the time that SLPs are required to present and teach documentation.
6. Meet and foster a good working relationship with the administrators at school districts and healthcare facilities to provide education on the benefits of their SLPs supervising graduate students.
7. Incorporate opportunities within the graduate curriculum for students to practice and exercise professionalism skills that can carry over into their externship experiences.

For Future Research

The focus group and individual interviews provided evidence of the motivating factors that SLPs consider prior to supervising a graduate student. Below are suggestions listed to further the research in this area:

1. Replicate this study with SLPs who are working in a different geographical area for comparison purposes to determine if the themes could be generalized to a wider population of professionals.
2. Replicate this study with a neutral moderator who does not hold a title of an externship coordinator which may alleviate participants concern to be candid.
3. Investigate reasons SLPs (who are qualified to supervise by ASHA standards) have not taken on the role of supervising a graduate student.

4. Replicate this study across other fields such as physical therapy and occupational therapy to provide comparisons within Allied Health.
5. Complete a quantitative study to investigate benefits and deterrents of supervising graduate students in the field of speech therapy. A quantitative study may provide a larger response rate that could be better generalized to the population of SLPs.
6. Investigate this topic utilizing a mixed methods approach. Replicate the focus group with SLPs and add a quantitative survey. Adding an additional survey may prompt the participants to respond more honestly about topics without the judgement of their peers within a focus group setting.
7. Investigate the influence of possible financial compensation that may impact an SLPs' motivation to supervise a graduate student, beyond providing continuing education credit opportunities.
8. Investigate SLP's intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to allow university programs to have a more comprehensive approach to providing incentives and decreasing deterrents to supervising graduate students.

Summary

The ongoing shortage of fieldwork placements in speech pathology required an investigation into reasons that an SLP is willing or unwilling to supervise graduate students. Themes that arose as factors that encouraged SLPs to work with graduate students were expanding the SLP's content knowledge, gratification of teaching someone and giving back to the profession, more efficiency throughout the work day, and supportive administration. The themes that arose as factors that deterred SLPs to work with graduate students were investment of time, stress, and negative past experiences with challenging graduate students. The themes

that presented themselves throughout the interviews were primarily positive in nature to working with graduate students. Themes that were considered deterrents were elaborated by participants and provided suggestions of ways university programs can ease the burden on the SLP. The suggestions to assist with the challenges were to incorporate more knowledge in the area of documentation throughout the graduate curriculum, provide continuing education credits to increase SLPs knowledge base in the areas of supervision, and provide consistent communication between the university supervisor and the fieldwork supervisor.

In summary, the demand for SLPs in the field is growing. The increased need for SLPs lends itself to be a promising degree to pursue. Fieldwork learning experiences are an essential component and a requirement within speech-language pathology graduate programs. To ensure that fieldwork placements will be available for budding professionals, it is important that considerations are made to best support fieldwork supervisors. Providing support and consideration to supervising SLPs' needs will encourage continued participation in providing these necessary fieldwork experiences to graduate students.

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Appendix A

Research Question Permission

Re: Request for research permission_Armstrong

Mark Hall

Wed 5/15/2019 2:01 PM

To:

- Natalie Armstrong Dear Natalie

Sorry for the delay.

Yes - absolutely no problem using a similar research questions in your study. Best of luck with your work.

Mark Hall PT, PhD

Associate Professor

Associate Chair and Director MScPT program

Department of Physical Therapy

On Thu, May 9, 2019 at 10:47 AM Natalie Armstrong wrote:

Hello Dr. Hall,

I had requested your article, To Supervise or Not to Supervise a Physical Therapist Student: A National Survey of Canadian Physical Therapists, through Research Gate back in November. I am now reaching out to you in regards to possibly obtaining permission to utilize similar research questions and your aim of a study but in the field of Speech Pathology.

I am a SLP and faculty member at Clarion University in the US. I am responsible for making placements for our Speech Path graduate students' externship experiences. Your study was particularly interesting to me, as it can be very difficult to find supervisors to accept students during their clinical placements. Some supervisors outwardly express how much they love having students but the majority of the time when I make a placement I only receive a "yes" or "no" response without any reasoning behind their decision. My curiosity and your study has led me to reach out to you! I am in the process of obtaining my doctoral degree at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and I was hoping to do a similar study but in the field of Speech Path for my dissertation. I have not been able to find any studies that have investigated this area of supervision in my field. I think it would be worthwhile to investigate the factors that influence a supervisor's decision to accept or deny a Speech Path student. I was hoping that you would provide permission for me to utilize similar research questions and topic of study; however, in the area Speech Path supervision. I am hoping to do a qualitative study and am in the process of submitting my Research Topic Approval Form. If you are willing to grant me permission, I would greatly appreciate it! I have attached a more formal/standardized letter with additional information as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Natalie

Natalie Armstrong

Doctoral Candidate

Administration and Leadership Studies
Department of Professional Studies in Education
Indiana University of PA
Indiana, PA 15705

Appendix B

Focus Group Interview Questions

1. What are the factors that influence your decision to supervise speech-language pathology fieldwork?
 - a. Probing question: How and to what degree do these factors influence your decision-making?
2. What do you perceive as the value or benefit of supervising speech-language pathology fieldwork students?
 - a. Probing question: How does this benefit influence your work?
3. What are the drawbacks or challenges in working with speech-language pathology students?
 - a. Probing questions: How do you go about addressing these challenges? How might academic programs assist you with these challenges?
4. What type of support would you like to have provided by the academic institution when accommodating speech-language pathology students?
 - a. Probing questions: In what form should support be provided? What other advice would you offer to academic programs about supporting your work as a fieldwork educator?

Appendix C

Interview Protocol Permission

Debra J. Hanson
Sun 4/12/2020 10:05 PM
To:

- Natalie Armstrong

Hello Natalie,

You are welcome to use my questions and probes for your study. In return, I'd love to see your final paper! I wish you well!

Best,

Dr Hanson

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Natalie Armstrong
Sent: Sunday, April 12, 2020 2:47:31 PM
To: Debra J. Hanson
Subject: Research Question
Hi Dr. Hanson,

I hope this email finds you well! I am reaching out to you in regards to possibly obtaining permission to utilize similar focus group discussion questions that you had used in your published work from 2011 (The Perspectives of Fieldwork Educators Regarding Level II Fieldwork Students). I was hoping to obtain permission to use your questions and probes; however, specific to the field of Speech Pathology.

I am an SLP and faculty member at Clarion University in Pennsylvania. I am responsible for making placements for our speech-language pathology graduate students' externship experiences. Your study was particularly interesting to me, as it can be very difficult to find supervisors to accept students during their clinical placements. Some supervisors outwardly express how much they love having students but the majority of the time when I make a placement I only receive a "yes" or "no" response without any reasoning behind their decision. My curiosity and your study has led me to reach out to you! I am in the process of obtaining my doctoral degree at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and I was hoping to do a similar study but in the field of Speech Path for my dissertation. I have only been able to find a few studies that have investigated this area of supervision in my field and similarly to what you had noted in 2011, not many in PT or OT either. The shortage of placements for students continues and I think it would be worthwhile to investigate the factors that influence a supervisor's decision to accept or deny a Speech Path student. I was hoping that you would provide permission for me to utilize your focus group questions/probes; however, in the area Speech Path supervision. I am hoping to complete my comprehensive exam very soon and then submit for IRB approval. If you are willing to grant me permission, I would greatly appreciate it!

If you have any additional questions, I am more than happy to discuss those with you.

I hope that you are staying safe and well throughout the pandemic! I appreciate your time and consideration in my request, as I know this is a very trying time for everyone.

Thank you,

Natalie

Natalie Armstrong
Doctoral Candidate
Administration and Leadership Studies
Department of Professional Studies in Education
Indiana University of PA
Indiana, PA 15705

Appendix D

Pilot Study Invitation

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Department of Professional Studies
in Education
Davis Hall, Room 303
570 S. Eleventh Street
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705-1087

724-357-2400
Internet: <http://www.iup.edu>

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Natalie Armstrong. I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Professional Studies in Education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) in the Administration and Leadership Studies program. I am currently conducting a pilot study for my dissertation on factors that impact speech-language pathologists' willingness to supervise speech-language pathology graduate students. I am contacting you today to invite you to participate in my pilot study and identify other speech-language pathologists who may be willing to participate in my primary study, as well.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study. Participation will include completing a focus group interview via Zoom for about 45 minutes at a convenient time for you. The focus group will include six to ten other speech language pathologists from both the medical field and education. An individual follow-up interview may also be conducted to address additional questions or the need for clarification. The individual interview will take about 15 minutes. Through this pilot study, I expect to detect any potential problems in the interview protocol.

Attached to this email is the Pilot Study Informed Consent Agreement. If you agree to participate in this pilot study, please review the consent document, sign it, and return it to me via email. Also attached to this email is a list of the focus group interview questions you will be asked and potential individual interview questions, should you agree to participate.

Also, will you please reply to this email with the name and contact information of at least one other speech-language pathologist who has acted as a supervisor to graduate students during their externship who may be willing to participate in this study. Even if you do not wish to participate in this pilot study, providing the contact information of other speech-language pathologists would be invaluable to me and possibly providing graduate programs with information on how to approach finding fieldwork experiences for graduate speech pathology students.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. Your interview responses will be kept confidential. Throughout the focus group interview, individual interview, and during data

analysis a pseudonym will be used and all identifiable information will be removed. Should you wish to withdraw from the study at any time simply inform the lead researcher via email or by phone. Participation or non-participation will neither affect your relationship with myself or with IUP. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by phone or email.

Thank you so much; your participation is of the utmost value to me.

Warm Regards,

Natalie Armstrong M.S., CCC-SLP
Doctoral Candidate
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, PA, 15705

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Kelli Paquette, Professor
Chair, Dept of Professional Studies in Education
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, PA 15705

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects. (Phone: 724-357-7730)

Appendix E

Pilot Study Informed Consent Agreement

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Department of Professional Studies
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Davis Hall, Room 303
570 S. Eleventh Street
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705-1087

724-357-2400
Internet: <http://www.iup.edu>

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information is being provided to you so that you may make an informed decision to participate or not. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. You are eligible to participate because you meet the criteria: (1) You are at least 18 years old, (2) you are currently a certified speech-language pathologist in good standing with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, (3) you have willingly supervised one or more graduate students during their externship experiences, and (4) you have declined at least one request to supervise a graduate student during their externship experience. Your participation is voluntary. Due to the nature of the possible responses to questions, there is a slight risk of breach of confidentiality with regards to the names or identities of students that the SLPs did or did not supervise. In the event that student names are stated, that information will be assigned a pseudonym. There are no direct benefits to you if you choose to participate in this study.

Purpose and Benefits of this Study:

The current study has been designed to collect the reasons speech-language pathologist are willing or unwilling to supervise graduate students during their externship experiences. Upon completion of this study, a better understanding of factors leading to speech-language pathologists' decision to supervise a graduate student on externship is expected to be gained.

Your Involvement in this Study:

You will:

- 1.) Read and sign this consent form.
- 2.) Determine a private space for the interview so that others cannot hear your responses.
- 3.) Complete the focus group interview with the lead researcher. The focus group interview will consist of six to ten participants who will all meet via Zoom at a mutually agreed upon time. The focus group interview will take about 45 minutes to complete.
- 4.) Review the transcript for accuracy which will be provided by the researcher post interview.

- 5.) Complete a follow-up individual interview with the lead researcher, as needed for clarification purposes. The individual interview will take about 15 minutes to complete.

Confidentiality:

Participants will sign a consent form with the understanding that they will not share information from the focus group interview or from the individual interview with others. All information that is provide during the focus group interview and individual interview will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms for the participants will be used throughout the entirety of the study and all identifying information will be removed from the study. Participants will be reminded of the need to omit student names or identifying information during the focus group interview and individual interviews. If student names or identifying information is stated, a pseudonym will be used.

Your Participation in this Study is Voluntary.

You are free to choose if you want to participate or not participate in this study. Participation or non-participation will not affect you relationship with the lead researcher or IUP. You can withdraw at any point during the study by simply informing the lead researcher via email or by phone. You may also contact the Faculty Sponsor, Dr. Kelli Paquette. If you wish to withdraw from the study during the interview, please state this and the interview will cease. Should you wish to withdraw from the study, no information you may have provided will be used to inform the study and all information you had provided will be destroyed. All data will be kept on a password protected laptop and external hard drive that only the lead researcher has the password to. When the study is finished, the study results may be presented at conferences and/or published in academic journals. The information will only be used for academic purposes.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance with this study. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Natalie Armstrong, the lead researcher.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below and return a copy of it to the lead researcher. Please retain a copy for your records.

Natalie Armstrong M.S., CCC-SLP
Doctoral Candidate
Education
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, PA, 15705

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Kelli Paquette, Professor
Chair, Department of Professional Studies in
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, PA 15705

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects. (Phone: 724-357-7730)

Voluntary Consent Form

I have read and understand the information on the form, and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have

the right to withdraw at any time. I understand that I will not share information from the focus group interview or from the individual interview with others. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (Please Print)

Signature

Date

Email and/or phone number where you may be reached

Best days and times to reach you

Appendix F

Study Invitation

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Department of Professional Studies
in Education
Davis Hall, Room 303
570 S. Eleventh Street
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705-1087

724-357-2400
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You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study. Participation will include completing a focus group interview via Zoom for about 45 minutes at a convenient time for you.

Attached to this email is the Informed Consent Agreement. If you agree to participate in this study, please review the consent document, sign it, and return it to me via email. Also attached to this email is a list of interview questions you will be asked, should you agree to participate.

Also, will you please reply to this email with the name and contact information of at least one other speech-language pathologist in the northwestern or southwestern areas of Pennsylvania who has acted as a supervisor to graduate students during their externship and who may be willing to participate in this study. Even if you do not wish to participate in this study, providing the contact information of other speech-language pathologists would be invaluable to me and possibly providing graduate programs with information on how to approach finding fieldwork experiences for graduate speech pathology students.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. Your interview responses will be kept confidential. Throughout the interview and during data analysis a pseudonym will be used and all identifiable information will be removed. Should you wish to withdraw from the study at any time simply inform the lead researcher via email or by phone. Participation or non-participation will neither affect your relationship with myself or with IUP. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me via phone or email.

Thank you so much; your participation is of the utmost value to me.

Warm Regards,
Natalie Armstrong M.S., CCC-SLP

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Kelli Paquette, Professor

Doctoral Candidate
Education
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, PA, 15705

Chair, Department of Professional Studies in
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, PA 15705

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Appendix G

Informed Consent Agreement

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Internet: <http://www.iup.edu>

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- 2.) Determine a private space for the interview so that others cannot hear your responses.
- 3.) Complete the focus group interview with the lead researcher. The focus group interview will consist of six to ten participants who will all meet via Zoom at a mutually agreed upon time. The focus group interview will take about 45 minutes to complete.
- 4.) Review the transcript for accuracy which will be provided by the researcher post interview.
- 5.) Complete a follow-up individual interview with the lead researcher, as needed for clarification purposes. The individual interview will take about 15 minutes to complete.

Confidentiality:

Participants will sign a consent form with the understanding that they will not share information from the focus group interview or from the individual interview with others. All information that is provide during the focus group interview and individual interview will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms for the participants will be used throughout the entirety of the study and all identifying information will be removed from the study. Participants will be reminded of the need to omit student names or identifying information during the focus group interview and individual interviews. If student names or identifying information is stated, a pseudonym will be used.

Your Participation in this Study is Voluntary.

You are free to choose if you want to participate or not participate in this study. Participation or non-participation will not affect you relationship with the lead researcher or IUP. You can withdraw at any point during the study by simply informing the lead researcher via email or by phone. You may also contact the Faculty Sponsor, Dr. Kelli Paquette. If you wish to withdraw from the study during the interview, please state this and the interview will cease. Should you wish to withdraw from the study, no information you may have provided will be used to inform the study and all information you had provided will be destroyed. All data will be kept on a password protected laptop and external hard drive that only the lead researcher has the password to. When the study is finished, the study results may be presented at conferences and/or published in academic journals. The information will only be used for academic purposes.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance with this study. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Natalie Armstrong, the lead researcher.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below and return a copy of it to the lead researcher. Please retain a copy for your records.

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I have read and understand the information on the form, and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I understand that I will not share information from the focus group interview or from the individual interview with others. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (Please Print)

Signature

Date

Email and/or phone number where you may be reached

Best days and times to reach you

Appendix H

One-on-One Interview Questions

1. What kind of encouragement do you receive from your school district/therapy company to work with graduate students?
2. (Medical) What productivity ratings are you required to sustain?
 - a. Does having a student help with your productivity or hinder productivity?
 - b. How does it impact productivity?
3. What is the average time you spend in direct supervision, over the minimum 25% required by ASHA?

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