

IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROPOSED PROGRAM FOR THE PREPARATION  
OF AUDIOLOGISTS & EDUCATORS OF THE HEARING IMPAIRED\*

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by  
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A major emphasis on the program proposed in the preceding paper (Lloyd) for preparation of audiologists was to have students majoring in audiology, education of the hearing impaired, and speech pathology take a common core of courses and in addition to share a set of common observation experiences. Inclusion of such experiences in the audiology course of study should help to develop understanding of the educational and linguistic implications of a severe hearing impairment. It should also serve to provide exposure to the educational procedures and pedagogical principles governing the teaching of hearing impaired children of all ages and types. It is felt that exposure to such knowledge could help practicing audiologists to: a) be more cognizant of behaviors other than the auditory when evaluating hearing impaired children, b) to make sounder recommendations concerning aural rehabilitation.

To reverse the coin, educators of the hearing impaired can profit equally from such an academic association. Common coursework should provide education majors with a greater understanding of and appreciation for audiologic data especially as it relates to audiologic assessments and hearing aid evaluations. With the increasing educational interest in early amplification and consistent auditory exposure in the classroom, such knowledge becomes indispensable to the educator. Further such experience should provide opportunities for the establishment of communication between the teacher and the clinician. If both groups, educators and audiologists, have a common core of knowledge upon which to draw and in addition a common seminar or colloquium where they may engage in discussions, then clarification of roles becomes possible. Since both the educator and the audiologist are crucial to the educational process of hearing impaired children, communication and cooperation is a desirable end. As long as misunderstandings persist due to ignorance of the other's field, meaningful interaction is at best a difficult goal to reach.

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Joint course work for educators of the hearing impaired, speech pathologists, and audiologists can be accomplished without jeopardizing the ultimate goal of each preparation program, namely, a well trained professional. Thus, I would like to discuss with you our attempts at Gallaudet to implement some of the curriculum suggestions made by Dr. Lloyd.

My discussion will center around two aspects of the curriculum. First, a set of required joint observations and second, a formal course in which all first year graduate students at Gallaudet were enrolled. Although Gallaudet does not have a formal program in speech pathology at this time, we feel that what we present today could have been easily extended to include students interested in this area.

In an attempt to provide a common set of experiences relative to education, here used in the broadest sense of the word, of hearing impaired children, the staff instituted a series of observations and limited participation sessions, which spanned two semesters, or the first year of a two year program. During the first semester, we had two objectives, first, to provide an overview of both disciplines, audiology and education of the hearing impaired, and second, to give the students some exposure to hearing impaired individuals. The first goal was accomplished by having material about the habilitation process presented by not only staff lecturers but also by a variety of guest lecturers from agencies within the greater Washington, D.C. area. The lecture series was designed to provide information on the community and/or clinical roles of the professions of audiology and education of the hearing impaired. Topics ranged from "What is an audiologist?" and "What is a teacher of the deaf?" to specific diagnostic or referral procedures employed by area audiological and educational facilities; from "What is a hard-of-hearing child?" and "What is a deaf child?" to discussions of the kinds of educational facilities for hearing impaired children located in the metropolitan area. One of the most important lectures was one devoted to how to observe children.

The second objective was achieved by having the students make a series of observations, namely, at the Gallaudet Pre-school, at Kendall School (an elementary school for the hearing impaired on the Gallaudet campus), at preparatory classes at Gallaudet College, and at other educational systems within driving distance of Gallaudet. After each

observation, a group discussion was held. Initially, primary focus of the group discussions was on obtaining from the students a description of the children observed in terms of auditory, linguistic, and speech behavior. As the observations progressed, discussions shifted to an analysis of the classroom settings as well as the procedures employed by the observed teacher. The effects of the latter items on the behavior of the children was analyzed. Topics such as acoustic treatment of the rooms and seating arrangements were included in classroom analysis. After each discussion, the students were required to write a short observation report on the session observed. The reports were to contain a primary emphasis on behavioral description.

In implementing the lecture and observational series, it became evident that careful planning and coordination was necessary. In addition, and perhaps unfortunately, our evaluation revealed that the students began to think after observation of experienced teachers and clinicians, that it was easy to establish communication with a severely hearing impaired individual. We dealt with this misapprehension in discussion groups. We felt later however that the addition of a required interview with an average deaf adult or teenager to obtain certain specific kinds of information might have been added to the common experience to combat this conclusion.

The second semester of the program consisted of a common set of observations of normal hearing and hearing impaired children at various age levels. Two mornings per week were devoted to this activity. One morning was spent in a class of normally hearing children, while the second was with a class of hearing impaired children of comparable age. After a group discussion concerning the effects of deafness on behavior, each student was required to write a report comparing the communication and linguistic skills of the two groups. The observations were made at the preschool, elementary, and secondary levels, four weeks at each level. The education majors were required to stay for all four weeks, while the audiology majors stayed for only two weeks (at each level) and spent the remaining two weeks testing children comparable in age to those they had been observing. Again, careful planning was mandatory to the success of these experiences.

The second aspect of the common curriculum experience was a course entitled History and Education of the Deaf,

Audiology, and Speech Pathology. Through this course, we hoped to provide the maximum amount of information concerning the three disciplines involved with the least amount of drudgery. In addition, we wanted to encourage a dialogue between education of the hearing impaired and audiology majors. Emphasis in this course was placed on discussion and, hopefully, understanding of issues relevant to both of the professional groups. The course was divided into two parts, the first being given over to issues current in the field of education of the hearing impaired, with the second devoted to those issues relevant to audiology. Representative topics discussed were: the impact of linguistics on teaching procedures, the place of multiple-handicapped children, the kinds and relative merits of the programs available to hearing impaired children, integration of hearing impaired children, the methods of communication controversy. In audiology, the topics included the preparation of audiologists, the role of habilitation in audiology. The teaching approach consisted of presenting the various positions possible on each issue, followed by group discussion led by the instructor or other staff members.

In the case of both the directed observation and the discussion course, encouraging comments were obtained from the students. Students in both programs expressed new interest in both fields. They saw that effective communication could be established between the two professions. Indeed several students could not understand why useful communication has not always existed between two such closely allied fields.

In conclusion, it is our feeling that audiology and education of the hearing impaired can profit from sharing common experiences either in the form of observations or formal course work. Such common experiences can be effectively achieved with little or no disruption of the process of adequately preparing audiologists and educators of the hearing impaired.