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SoTL and University Teaching Education in Communication Disorders PhD Programs

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This study was undertaken to describe how PhD programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) educate students about college teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). ASHA (2016) surveyed 74/76 CSD PhD program directors and included the following, similar, questions to the current study:

- 48% offer and 45% require a course on teaching
- 85% offer and 43% require teaching assistantships
- Students typically co-teach in 60% of programs; 30% of programs require co-teaching
- Students typically teach independently in 70% of programs; 26% require independent teaching

A survey was emailed to the directors of the 69 programs identified on the ASHA website regarding:

- Characteristics of the university
  - Public or Private
  - Carnegie classification
- Open-ended questions for a description of teaching and SoTL (undefined in survey) activities
- Program websites yielded information on what roles students were being prepared for
  - Research only = 7
  - Research & Academia/Teaching = 12
- 21 surveys were returned, 19 with useable data, for a 27.5% return rate
- Quantitative & qualitative analyses were used

There were no differences among programs based on university characteristics (data not shown)

Programs identified teaching experiences, but none described teaching students how to conduct research on teaching (SoTL). This sample of CSD programs addressed teaching training experientially, but the nature and quality of the instructional strategies is unknown. About 1/2 offer formal teaching instruction, suggesting a significant number of new CSD faculty begin their academic careers with a minimal knowledge of teaching.

Future studies should:

- Include a definition of SoTL
- Examine student perceptions of course and experiential teaching offerings

13 of 19 programs stated they introduce SoTL:
- 9 cited a course on “pedagogy” or “teaching”
- 4 cited activities related to teaching experiences