SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY AND HEARING AID DISPENSERS BOARD

OCCUPATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST PROFESSION

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION SERVICES
OCCUPATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST PROFESSION

This report was prepared and written by the Office of Professional Examination Services California Department of Consumer Affairs

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensers Board (Board) requested that the Department of Consumer Affairs’ Office of Professional Examination Services (OPES) conduct an occupational analysis of Speech-Language Pathologist practice in California. The purpose of the occupational analysis is to define practice for Speech-Language Pathologists in terms of actual job tasks that new licensees must be able to perform safely and competently at the time of licensure. The results of this occupational analysis serve as the basis for determining the tasks and knowledge that make up the description of practice for the Speech-Language Pathology profession in California.

OPES test specialists began by researching the profession and conducting telephone interviews with seven Speech-Language Pathologists throughout California. The purpose of these interviews was to identify the tasks performed in Speech-Language Pathology practice, and the knowledge required to perform those tasks in a safe and competent manner. An initial focus group of practitioners and educators was held at OPES in January 2014 to review the results of the interviews, and to identify changes and trends in Speech-Language Pathology practice specific to California. A second focus group was later held with additional Speech-Language Pathology practitioners to review and refine the task and knowledge statements derived from the interviews and initial focus group. Practitioners in these focus groups also performed a preliminary linkage of the task and knowledge statements to ensure that all tasks had a related knowledge and all knowledge statements had a related task. New task and knowledge statements were created as a result of this process, and some statements were eliminated from the final list due to overlap and reconciliation.

Upon completion of the first two focus groups, OPES developed a three-part questionnaire to be completed by Speech-Language Pathologists statewide. Development of the questionnaire included a pilot study which was conducted using a group of six licensees. The participants’ feedback was used to refine the questionnaire. The final questionnaire was prepared by OPES for administration in April 2014.

In the first part of the questionnaire, licensees were asked to provide demographic information relating to their work settings and practice. In the second part, the licensees were asked to rate specific job tasks in terms of frequency (i.e., how often the licensee performs the task in the licensee’s current practice) and importance (i.e., how important the task is to performance of the licensee’s current practice). In the third part of the questionnaire, licensees were asked to rate specific knowledge statements in terms of how important that knowledge is to performance of their current practice.

OPES developed a stratified random sample of licensees to participate in the occupational analysis. The sample was stratified by years of practice and county of practice, with over-sampling of licensees licensed 0 to 5 years. The Board sent notification letters to the sample of 3,595 Speech-Language Pathologists (out of 11,596 total licensees) inviting them to complete the questionnaire online. Fourteen percent of
the licensed Speech-Language Pathologists in the sample (500) responded by accessing the Web-based survey. The final sample size included in the data analysis was 477, or 13 percent of the population that was invited to complete the questionnaire. This response rate reflects two adjustments, the details of which are described in the Response Rate section of this report. The demographic composition of the respondent sample is representative of the California Speech-Language Pathologist population.

OPES then performed data analyses on the task and knowledge rating responses. OPES combined the task ratings to derive an overall criticality index for each task statement. The mean importance rating was used as the criticality index for each knowledge statement.

Once the data had been analyzed, two additional focus groups were conducted with licensed Speech-Language Pathologists. The purpose of these focus groups was to evaluate the criticality indices and determine whether any task or knowledge statements should be eliminated. The licensees in these groups also established the linkage between job tasks and knowledge statements, organized the task and knowledge statements into content areas, and defined those areas. The licensees then evaluated and confirmed the content area weights.

The content outline for Speech-Language Pathology is structured into five content areas weighted by criticality relative to the other content areas. The content outline specifies the job tasks and knowledge critical to safe and effective Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) practice in California at the time of licensure.

The content outline developed as a result of this occupational analysis serves as a basis for developing an examination for inclusion in the process of granting California Speech-Language Pathology licensure. Similarly, this content outline serves as a basis for evaluating the degree to which the content of any examination under consideration measures content critical to California Speech-Language Pathology practice.

At this time, California licensure as a Speech-Language Pathologist is granted by meeting the requisite education and training requirements and passing the national examination for Speech-Language Pathology (the Praxis). There is no additional requirement to pass a California-specific examination, i.e., an additional examination based on applicable California regulations and California-specific practice requirements.
## OVERVIEW OF THE SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY CONTENT OUTLINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Content Area Description</th>
<th>Percent Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. General Competencies</td>
<td>This area assesses the candidate’s knowledge related to core areas of practice applicable across types of clients, disorders, and treatment settings.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Assessment</td>
<td>This area assesses the candidate’s ability to identify, evaluate, and assess the development and disorders of speech, voice, language, or swallowing.</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Diagnosis, Goal Setting, and Treatment Planning</td>
<td>This area assesses the candidate’s ability to use assessment information to formulate an accurate diagnosis for developing a treatment plan and interventions.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Treatment Interventions and Procedures</td>
<td>This area assesses the candidate’s ability to develop culturally relevant treatment interventions based on assessment and diagnostic information that are measureable, objective, and consistent with the client’s readiness and ability to engage in treatment.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Treatment Outcomes and Effectiveness</td>
<td>This area assesses the candidate’s ability to evaluate client progress in relation to treatment goals and develop plans for continuation, remediation, or termination of treatment as appropriate.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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