Speech Pathology

History

People have studied speech and speech problems for more than 2,000 years. However, there was little progress in the treatment of speech defects until the 1700s and 1800s. During the 1700s, speech specialists worked mostly with the deaf. Successful teachers of the deaf included Thomas Braidwood, a Scottish mathematician. Braidwood taught his students to talk by starting with simple sounds and then progressing to syllables and, finally, words. The 1800s brought much research into the causes and treatment of stuttering. In 1817, Jean Marie Itard, a French doctor, declared that stuttering resulted from a weakness of the tongue and larynx nerves. He recommended special exercises to cure stuttering. During the late 1800s, Adolf Kussmaul, a German doctor, wrote about the physical and psychological causes of stuttering. Today, speech therapists agree that there is no single cause.

Speech therapy became a profession in the early 1900s. In Europe, it was associated with the medical profession. During the 1920s, schools for training speech therapists opened in several European countries. In the United States, speech therapy became closely allied with education, psychology and speech.

During World War II (1939-1945), many servicemen developed speech defects as a result of war injuries. The need for speech rehabilitation services attracted large numbers of men and women to the profession of speech therapy. Many speech clinics opened, and research increased into speech problems and their causes. Since the end of World War II, the field of speech therapy has expanded rapidly.

Speech Pathology as a Career Today

Speech-language pathologists, sometimes called speech therapists, assess, diagnose, treat and help to prevent disorders related to speech, language, cognitive-communication, voice, swallowing and fluency. In addition, speech-language pathologists may:

- Teach in college and university programs
- Manage agencies, clinics, organizations, or private practices
- Engage in research to enhance knowledge about human communication processes
- Supervise and direct public school or clinical programs
- Develop new methods and products to evaluate and treat speech-language disorders
In addition, speech pathologists often work as part of a team, which may include teachers, physicians, audiologists, psychologists, social workers, rehabilitation counselors and others. Also, corporate speech pathologists work with their employees in order to improve communication with their customers.

**Aptitude**

To enter this career, one must have a sincere interest in helping people, an above average intellectual aptitude and the sensitivity, personal warmth and perspective to interact with someone person who has a communication problem. Scientific aptitude, patience, emotional stability, tolerance and persistence are necessary as well as resourcefulness and imagination. Other essential traits include a commitment to work cooperatively with others and excellent written and verbal communication skills.

**Education**

Most speech-language pathologist jobs require a Master’s degree. In 2007, more than 230 colleges and universities offered graduate programs in speech-language pathology accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology. While graduation from an accredited program is not always required to become a speech-language pathologist, it may be helpful in obtaining a license or may be required to obtain a license in some states.

Speech-language pathology courses cover anatomy, physiology and the development of the areas of the body involved in speech, language and swallowing; the nature of disorders; principles of acoustics; and psychological aspects of communication. Graduate students also learn to evaluate and treat speech, language and swallowing disorders and receive supervised clinical training in communication disorders.

**Speech Pathology Programs in Louisiana**

Louisiana State University, Bachelors of Arts, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders; for further information, visit http://appl003.lsu.edu/artsci/comd.nsf/index

Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center – New Orleans, Master’s of Communication Disorders Degree – Speech/Language Pathology; School of Allied Health Professions, New Orleans, LA; for further information http://alliedhealth.lsuhsc.edu/communicationdisorders/speechlanguage.htm
Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center – Shreveport, Master’s of Communication Disorders Degree – Speech/Language Pathology, Shreveport, LA; for further information, visit http://www.sh.lsuhsc.edu/ah/data/html/speech_path/speech_path_index.htm

Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, LA; Pre-Professional Speech-Language Pathology, Department of Speech, for further information about the Bachelor’s degree visit, http://www.latech.edu/slp-aud/Pre-Professional%20Speech-Language%20Pathology.htm; for information about the Master’s degree, visit website: http://www.latech.edu/slp-aud/Graduate%20Program%20in%20Speech%20Language%20Pathology.htm

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA; B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders; for further information about the Bachelor’s degree, visit http://www.selu.edu/acad_research/depts/csd/undergrad_degree/index.html; for further information about the Master’s degree, visit http://www.selu.edu/acad_research/depts/csd/grad_degree/index.html

Southern University and A&M College, Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology, Baton Rouge, LA; for further information about the Bachelor’s degree, visit http://web.subr.edu/fileadmin/files/Academic/Science/speechpathology.pdf; for further information about the Master’s degree, visit http://web.subr.edu/index.php?id=603

University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Department of Communicative Disorders, Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in speech-language pathology, and a Ph.D. in Applied Language and Speech Sciences; for further information, visit http://speechandlanguage.louisiana.edu/

University of Louisiana at Monroe; B.S. and M.S. degrees in Speech-Language Pathology, Department of Communicative Disorders; Monroe, LA; for further information, visit http://www.ulm.edu/codi/

Special Scholarship Opportunities

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

Bureau of Health Professions

Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students

*Apply for this scholarship at the student financial aid office of the school where you are or intend to be enrolled.*
The Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students program provides scholarships to full-time, financially needy students from disadvantaged backgrounds, enrolled in health professions and nursing programs. Participating schools are responsible for selecting scholarship recipients, making reasonable determinations of need, and providing scholarships that do not exceed the cost of attendance (tuition, reasonable educational expenses and reasonable living expenses).

AMBUCS Scholars Program

Awards range from $500 to $1,500 annually. There is one two-year award in the amount of $6,000. Approximately $150,000 is awarded annually. Award monies are deposited each semester to the student’s credit account with the financial aid office of the educational institution.

Students must be accepted in an accredited program by the appropriate health therapy profession authority in physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech language pathology, and hearing audiology. Assistant programs are not eligible. Awards are based on financial need, U.S. citizenship, commitment to local community, demonstrated academic accomplishment, character for compassion and integrity and career objectives.

Salaries

The median annual earnings of wage-and-salary speech pathologists were $57,710 in May, 2006. The middle 50 percent earned between $46,360 and $72,410. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $37,970, and the highest 10 percent earned more than $90,400.

Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of speech-language pathologists were, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Median Annual Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nursing care facilities</td>
<td>$70,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offices of other health practitioners</td>
<td>63,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General medical and surgical hospitals</td>
<td>61,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary and secondary schools</td>
<td>53,110</td>
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Professional Associations

Brain Injury Association
http://www.biausa.org

National Stuttering Association
http://www.nsastutter.org
The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
http://www.asha.org/default.htm

The Louisiana Speech-Language-Hearing Association (LSHA)
http://www.lsha.org

**Additional Web Resources**

http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos099.htm
http://careerplanning.about.com/od/occupations/p/speech_path.htm
http://www.collegegrad.com/careers/proft102.shtml
http://www.mayo.edu/mshs/speech-path-career.html