

**Speech Language Pathology Graduate Students' Knowledge and Preparation Pertinent to
the Service Delivery of Children with Cochlear Implants**

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis developed a pilot survey to investigate graduate students' pre-service knowledge and preparation pertinent to the service delivery of children with cochlear implants. The survey was specifically designed to obtain data from graduate students enrolled in speech-language pathology programs from the state of Indiana (Ball State University, Indiana University, Indiana State University, Purdue University, and Saint Mary's University). The final pilot survey included 59-items. All survey items were developed by the author of this Honor's Thesis based upon the research literature relevant to cochlear implants and speech-language pathology service delivery.

PROCESS ANALYSIS

Cochlear implantation is becoming a more favorable option among young children with a severe sensorineural hearing loss. If implanted early enough and with speech and language therapy, young children can develop spoken communication and language skills that are similar to their hearing peers. I did an extensive literature review in how speech-language pathologists are prepared to serve children with cochlear implants and how knowledgeable they are in cochlear implant technology. I found that few studies have been done investigating this area. The studies that have been conducted only assessed certified school-based speech-language pathologists. There were no studies that assessed graduate student's knowledge while they were still enrolled in their graduate program. That's why I chose to develop a pilot survey that would investigate the knowledge of speech-language pathology graduate students' in cochlear implants. To develop my survey, I had to research every aspect of a cochlear implant. I researched what it is, what it does, why a child would need one, how it would benefit a child, how it affects a child's speech and language abilities, and the speech-language pathologist's role in cochlear implantation and in speech and language therapy post-implantation. I went further with researching why children should receive their cochlear implants as early as they can and what specific types of speech and language therapy are most common among children with cochlear implants. After I did my research and reviewed the literature, I began to develop my pilot survey. Throughout this process I learned it takes a vast amount of knowledge and skill to work with children with cochlear implants. There is so much information that speech-language pathologists need to know from the initial hearing screening to the years of speech and language therapy that is necessary for children to develop age-appropriate spoken communication skills. Writing this thesis was challenging for me because there is so much information on cochlear implants and

therapy services for children with cochlear implants that it was easy to get lost in the information. There were many times I had to take a step back and think about how I wanted this thesis to end and what information is necessary to get there. However, writing this thesis and developing this survey gave me the skills I need to succeed in graduate school and reinforced my decision to continue working closely with professors and to pursue more research opportunities.

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