

## PHILOSOPHY OF THE COMMUNICATION DISORDERS PROGRAM

The surest way to corrupt youth is to instruct them to hold in higher esteem those who think alike than those who think differently—*Friedrich Nietzsche*

The Communication Disorders Program at NMSU is defined by the following philosophical concepts.

### The NMSU Communication Disorders Program Logo

Imagination is more important than knowledge—*Albert Einstein*

The NMSU Communication Disorders Program Logo (Advising Manual cover) represents how the three individual characteristics and the three major components of the program (Communication/Personal, Knowledge/Academics, and Skills/Clinical Experiences) interact in the transition from being students to developing scholarship and professionalism.

Communication—the competent use of verbal, nonverbal, oral, and literate communication to negotiate meaning is the key to developing and using functional knowledge and skills in the professional, administrative, clinical, educational, and research roles of the Communication Disorders profession.

Knowledge—usable information about basic human communication and swallowing processes; the nature of speech, language, hearing, and communication disorders and differences, and swallowing disorders; and principles and methods of prevention, assessment, and intervention for culturally and linguistically diverse people with communication and swallowing disorders.

Skills—demonstrated clinical competence in evaluation and intervention with culturally and linguistically diverse people with varied types and degrees of hearing, speech, language, and swallowing disorders.

Communication-Knowledge Interaction (self-advocacy)—using competent communication to identify, explore, develop, and use areas of knowledge that will facilitate personal breadth and depth of understanding, thinking, learning, and knowing relevant to areas of communication and disorders.

Communication-Skills Interaction (other-advocacy)—using competent communication to identify, explore, develop, and use areas of “best practice” knowledge and skills that will facilitate the evaluation, intervention, and management of clients’/patients’ communication and its impact on others.

Knowledge-Skills Interaction (scholarship)—synthesizing usable knowledge and skills into unique ways of thinking about and implementing ideas, concepts, hypotheses, and complex phenomena. Scholarship (discovery, application, teaching-learning, and integration) develops within self-directed constructive thinkers, problem solvers, and decision makers.

Communication-Knowledge-Skills Interaction (professionalism)—integrating competent communication, knowledge, and skills in ways that allow members of the Communication Disorders professions to provide services to society as distinguished by superior, on-going understanding, thinking, learning, and knowing. Professionalism earns the respect of society for contributions to using and refining the “best practices” knowledge and skills necessary to assess, treat, and manage individuals with speech, language, hearing, and swallowing disorders.

## **The Transition from Students to Scholars to Professionals**

Education is the best provision for the journey to old age—*Aristotle*

**Students.** A student acquires declarative and procedural knowledge and skills (“what” and “how”). Understanding, thinking, learning, and knowing primarily occur through memorization, rote and paraphrased recall, and basic demonstration of familiar concepts through a student’s personal language core and sensemaking. Students represent Perry’s *Dualism* level of intellectual development where knowledge is black and white, every problem has one and only one correct answer, the teacher has all the solutions, and the job of the student is to memorize and repeat them. Dualists want facts and formulas and don’t like theories or abstract models, open-ended questions, or active or cooperative learning. From: Perry, W.G. (1970). *Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc.

### Concepts Related to Students

- *View of Knowledge:* discrete, known, certain, factual, quantitative, additive
- *Role as Learner:* take in information as given; to learn = to memorize
- *Role of Peers:* Irrelevant, non-legitimate (what do they know?); not authorities
- *“Fairness” in Evaluation:* return information in same form as given; simple, straightforward
- *Sensible, Doable Tasks:* low-level, rote learning; simple explanations/use of terms or concepts
- *Challenges:* multiple perspectives, requests for interpretation by student
- *Support:* hints, assistance, concrete learning activities; a “safe” environment

Shall I tell you the secret of the true scholar? It is this: every man I meet is my master at some point,  
and in that I learn from him—*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

**Scholars.** A scholar acquires declarative, procedural, and structural knowledge and skills (“what,” “how,” and “why”) through contemplation, questioning and hypothesizing, and careful examination and analysis of elements that make up familiar and unfamiliar rules, methods, concepts, principles, laws, and theories, as well as identifying and changing one’s feelings, interests, and values while interacting with others. Scholars operate at varying degrees of Perry’s *Multiplicity* level of intellectual development. They create new ways of thinking about concepts and explore how and why rules, methods, concepts, principle, laws, and theories can help them become better at understanding, thinking, learning, and knowing complex phenomena. They become self-directed constructive thinkers, problem solvers, and decision makers. Scholars start

using supporting evidence to manage issues in productive ways rather than relying completely on what authorities say. They see that knowledge and values depend on context and individual perspective rather than being externally objectively based. Developing Scholars count preconceptions and prejudices as acceptable evidence and once they have reached a solution they have little inclination to examine alternatives. Advanced Scholars see that knowledge and values depend on context and individual perspective rather than being externally and objectively based. Using real evidence to reach and support conclusions becomes habitual and not just something professors want them to do.

#### Concepts Related to Scholars

- *View of Knowledge*: contextual and personally constructed; personal sensemaking of the world
- *Role as Learner*: to construct and live by a world view; to take best practices and integrate in self
- *Role of Peers*: partners in inquiry; community which understands and supports efforts to learn
- *“Fairness” in Evaluation*: evaluation information (+ and -) about how one is doing; formative
- *Sensible, Doable Tasks*: tasks and processes relate to personal issue values; support a stand/view
- *Challenges*: in-depth scholarship; new intellectual horizons outside a comfort zone
- *Support*: opportunities to share views; debate/discuss in secure climate of tolerance and diversity

**Professionals.** Professionals represent what Perry refers to as *commitment to relativism*, i.e., they begin to see the need for commitment to a course of action even in the absence of certainty, basing the commitment on critical evaluation rather than on external authority. Professionals begin to make commitments in personal direction and values, evaluate the consequences and implications of their commitments and attempt to resolve conflicts, and finally acknowledge that the conflicts may never be fully resolved and come to terms with the continuing struggle. According to Thomas D. Miller, “Professionals render services to society as distinguished by their superior [on-going] knowledge, training, and/or skill. They earn the respect of society for services provided. To maintain that respect, professionals are responsible for conforming to stated or implied minimum standards of conduct imposed by society and/or by the professions. The professional assumes legal and ethical liability for demonstration of the ability and competence of an ordinary member in good standing in the profession,” p. 64, in Lubinsky, R., & Frattali, C. (2001). *Professional Issues in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). San Diego, CA: Singular/Delmar/Thomson Learning, Inc.