

Student Summer Scholar Program Application Examples

A1. Project Goals and Scope

Example 3

The proposed project will allow us to explore the attitudes and interactions between young children and their caregivers, and explore the use of bibliotherapy to improve the resilience of young children who have stuttering or speech sound disorders. Bibliotherapy refers to “the guided use of reading materials to provide therapy for those in need” (Popa & Porumbu, 1970). It has been shown to benefit individuals with a range of difficulties and disorders, including children with autism (Abraham et al., 2020), people with ADHD (Sapra, 2019) and individuals diagnosed with panic disorder (Lidren et al., 1994). Bibliotherapy has been minimally explored in speech-language pathology (e.g, Gerlach & Subramarian, 2016) despite the possible benefits. Our goal for this project is to collect data to support and advocate for the use of bibliotherapy as an additional resource for children with communication disorders and their families.

Our previous research has allowed us to collect data to explore and evaluate both parental and child attitudes toward communication. This research is ongoing and explores differences in attitudes toward communication of children who stutter, children with speech-sound disorders, and children with typically developing speech and language. It also explores the impact that the child’s communication may have on child-caregiver interaction and the changes that occur over time. For this project, we propose to complete the longitudinal nature of this previous study (i.e., complete 3-month and 6-month follow-ups for participants already enrolled in our study).

The ongoing collection and analysis of these data have motivated our lab team to develop a possible intervention and to evaluate the effectiveness of bibliotherapy on children who are receiving speech therapy services. Previous studies on bibliotherapy have found that it may encourage the use of positive coping strategies and decrease social withdrawal (Hodges et al., 1995). More specifically to speech-language pathology, Caughter and Crofts (2018) found bibliotherapy can be used to help adolescents who stutter develop resilience. Therefore, we have decided to target increasing resilience in young children, aged 5-8 years old, through our parent-led bibliotherapy intervention. Targeting resilience earlier in treatment may help prevent the child from having negative experiences as a result of their communication difficulties.

Our study is designed to assess bibliotherapy as a value-added component for individuals already receiving speech therapy. Specifically, we will explore a parent-led bibliotherapy intervention and evaluate changes for the child and caregiver. We have selected inclusionary criteria that participants must be receiving speech therapy services during the time of intervention. In doing so, we can target our goal of better understanding the value

of bibliotherapy treatment to children with communication disorders without withholding other intervention approaches.

The ideal outcome of this project is to provide empirical support for the use and further research of bibliotherapy in the field of speech-language pathology. We plan to share our findings at the summer showcase as well as a national conference. Additionally, we plan to dedicate time in the summer to begin writing a manuscript that will be appropriate for journal submission. Sharing our findings in both conferences as well as written documentation will support our goal of advocating for the use of bibliotherapy in our field.