

# SLPD: WHAT IT IS, WHAT IT ISN'T, AND WHAT IT CAN BE



**ASHA CE  
APPROVED PROVIDER**

Pennsylvania  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

Introductory Level

.1 ASHA CEUs

**CAILEE CARMELLA M.S. CCC-SLP, KELLY SALMON PHD, SLPD, CCC-SLP, BCS-S, CLT-LANA, NDC, MELISSA WOOTEN SLPD, CCC-SLP, AND KLAIRE BRUMBAUGH EDD, CLINSCD, CCC-SLP**

## Learning Objectives:

- After this presentation, participants will be able to: Identify key components of SLPD curricula across different programs
- After this presentation, participants will be able to: Evaluate the potential benefits and limitations of pursuing an SLPD in relation to personal career goals and professional advancement
- After this presentation, participants will be able to: List individual factors for pursuing an advanced degree



## Course Abstract

Interest in advanced training pathways for speech-language pathologists (SLPs) continues to grow as clinicians seek deeper expertise and broader impact. One option gaining attention is the speech-language pathology clinical doctorate (SLPD). The SLPD was introduced as a way to prepare highly skilled clinicians who could respond to evolving service needs and strengthen leadership within the profession (Golper et al., 2010). In 2015, ASHA gave this pathway formal structure by detailing requirements for the SLPD, ClinScD, and CScD and identifying each as a post-master's clinical doctorate devoted to advanced practice (ASHA, 2015). ASHA notes that graduates of clinical doctorate programs may assume roles such as master clinicians, clinical educators, administrators, or contributors to applied research and evidence translation (ASHA, 2015). Leslie et al. (2011) describe these programs as intentionally designed to cultivate advanced expertise, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the effective integration of research and clinical practice. More recent work shows that SLPs enrolled in SLPD programs view the degree as feasible, meaningful, and well aligned with contemporary clinical demands (Sylvan & Becker, 2022). This panel presentation features clinicians who have completed or are currently pursuing the SLPD at different institutions. The session will review the history and goals of the SLPD, distinguish clinical and research doctorates, and highlight variations across programs. Panelists will share their decision-making processes, experiences with coursework and mentorship, and the ways the SLPD has influenced their professional growth. Attendees will gain practical insight into personal, logistical, and career factors that support informed decisions about pursuing an SLPD.

## Speaker Bios

Cailee Carmella, M.S., CCC-SLP, is a bilingual speech-language pathologist and Speech-Language Pathology Doctorate (SLPD) student at Moravian University. Her work centers on culturally and linguistically responsive care, neurodiversity-affirming practices, and equitable access to augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). As Student Experience Mentor for Moravian's doctoral programs in SLPD, DAT, and PP-OTD, she supports student advocacy, belonging, and professional growth. Clinically, she specializes in pediatric AAC, bilingualism, autism, and complex communication needs, promoting autonomy and cultural identity across all languages.

Kelly Salmon is a speech-language pathologist specializing in adult communication and swallowing disorders across the continuum of care. She has been a Board-Certified Specialist in Swallowing (BCS-S) since 2011 and a CLT-LANA therapist since 2014, focusing on head and neck lymphedema. Her clinical work centers on dysphagia related to complex medical conditions, including device-driven and oncology rehabilitation approaches. Kelly is dedicated to teaching, student supervision, national presentations, and multidisciplinary research. She is an Associate Professor of Speech-Language Pathology at Drexel University's Elkins Park campus.

Dr. Melissa Wooten received her doctorate of Speech-Language Pathology from Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions in 2025. Her capstone focused on receptive vocabulary development in toddlers. She has been a speech-language pathologist for eight years and has provided speech-language therapy and assessment services in Spanish and English in early intervention, preschool, and school-based settings in-person and virtually. She has held clinical supervisory roles at West Chester University of Pennsylvania and trained graduate students in therapeutic and diagnostic care. Dr. Wooten owns a private practice, Swallowtail Speech and Language Therapy, where she provides speech-language therapy and assessment services.

Klaire Brumbaugh is the program director for the SLPD program at Moravian University. Klaire's research and clinical interests are speech sound disorders and professional issues such as supervision and ethics.

## Speaker Disclosures

Cailee is Employed by Moravian University in graduate admissions. Non-financial disclosures: SLPD student at Moravian University. Current member of the SLPD Advocacy Collective

Kelly Receives a salary from Drexel University in Elkins Park, PA, Draws a salary from Forward Focused, LLC, Receives compensation (honoraria and consulting fee) from CIAO Seminars, Receives royalties from MedBridge, Inc. for CE courses created Non-Financial Disclosures: Member of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Member of the Dysphagia Research Society, Member of the Pennsylvania Speech and Hearing Association, Member of the Pennsylvania Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery, Member of the Lymphology Association of North America, Member of the Association for Women in Science

Melissa Receives compensation from Swallowtail Speech and Language Therapy Non-financial disclosures: Member of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Graduate of Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions' Doctorate of Speech-Language Pathology program

Klaire is Employed as program director at Moravian's SLPD program, taught previously at Rocky Mountain University SLPD program, current mentor to SLPD students at Rocky Mountain University Non-financial disclosures: Collaborate with SLPD students for presentations and publications