

# DIRECTING THE BECS: INFUSING BILINGUAL EMPHASIS IN AN SLP GRADUATE PROGRAM

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## **Learning Objectives:**

- List two components of the BECS program
- Describe two ways that the bilingual emphasis is infused into the clinical component of the graduate speech-language program
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**ASHA CE**  
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With the large and growing bilingual population in the United States, it is important to prepare speech-language students to meet the clinical needs of clients from different backgrounds. In fact, practicing speech-language pathologists have reported on the dearth of training and resources regarding providing culturally responsive services (e.g., Gross & Dubé, 2025). Moreover, there is a need for more bilingual speech-language pathologists, with only 8.4% of ASHA constituents (including speech-language pathologist, audiologists, and assistants) self-identifying as multilingual providers (ASHA, 2024). Therefore, it is incumbent on speech-language programs to provide this relevant and essential training. The Bilingual Emphasis Course Sequence (BECS) in the Communication Sciences and Disorders department at West Chester University responds to this imperative. Founded and directed by Dr. Patricia Swasey Washington, the BECS is implemented by infusing the bilingual emphasis into academic and clinical components of the speech-language pathology graduate program. This presentation will provide a history of the BECS, now in its 12th year, explain eligibility requirements, describe the components of the program, detail aspects of the bilingual infusion (with examples), provide student reflections, and discuss future directions. The information obtained from this presentation will offer inspiration and guidance for others wishing to create bilingual emphasis in speech-language programs.

**Speaker's Bio:** Patricia Swasey Washington, Ph.D., CCC-SLP is an associate professor in the Communication Sciences and Disorders Department at West Chester University. Her research areas include bilingual speech/language development and disorders, cultural and linguistic diversity, telepractice, and IPE/IPP. She is the Founder and Director of the Bilingual Course Sequence (BECS) and Communication Sciences and Disorders Study Abroad in Costa Rica program. She has extensive experience as a multilingual speech-language pathologist.