Since 1989, the Department of Speech-Language Pathology at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), has included a special emphasis in linguistic and cultural diversity in both its undergraduate and graduate programs. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) has recognized the curricular focus at CSULB by inclusion in its list of Bilingual Emphasis Programs. ASHA honored the graduate program at CSULB in 1999, with a singular award of Excellence in Training for Service Provision to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Clients.

At the upper-division undergraduate level at CSULB, there are three required courses encompassing issues of diversity. All of our B.A. graduates are grounded in bilingual assessment and clinical management, as well as cultural-specific and geopolitical factors affecting service delivery. At the graduate level, each student is required to complete a minimum of 25 clinical hours in the assessment and management of clients who do not speak the language of the clinician, or whose primary/native/heritage language is different from that of the clinician. This is accomplished through the use of a trained interpreter.

For students who are bilingual, there is the opportunity to provide clinical services across a spectrum of disorders, to clients whose primary/native/heritage language is the same as the student’s non-English language (e.g., a Spanish-speaking student assesses and treats a client who speaks Spanish). Students who speak, read, and write a language other than English (e.g., Spanish, Korean, etc.), will be assigned to one or more clients for the duration of a semester. This (these) client(s) will be assigned in addition to the assignment to a client who does not speak any language spoken by the student clinician. Thus, the bilingual student will have the opportunity to work in both of her/his languages, and will have the experience of training and working through an interpreter.

If you have other questions about the Bilingual Emphasis Program, please contact the Department Chair, Carolyn Conway Madding, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, at Carolyn.Madding@csulb.edu.