

Q2 - What did you do for your bachelors degree?

A - After a 2 week science co-op from highschool, I went to SFU for a major in Linguistics and minor in Psych. In my last year I applied to UBC Speech Path and magically got in!

Q3 - How can students best maximize their chance to get into grad school?

A - My GPA wasn't super competitive (referred to gradcafe forum

<https://forum.thegradcafe.com/forum/95-speech-language-pathology/> about students helping others posting stats etc), had worked with children a lot and volunteered at speech clinic. In third year, I attended a UBC presentation on speech acquisition and ended up being the only student that attended. A couple months after, I was asked to present at a conference at UVIC and ended up presenting, turning it into a professional development opportunity. After taking Ling 408, I created a poster presentation about stress patterns in JR Tolkein's fictional language. I didn't work at a lab because I heard mixed reviews (potential cons include not working directly with prof)

Q4 - What do you recommend for students to be doing now?

A - Take every opportunity that is presented to you! Volunteer and try to spread it out, have diversity in experiences. Don't give up! Not everyone gets in on their first try. Try to get close to a professor!

Q5 - How to get through Audi 402?

A - Drills! Drawing charts, annotations, tons of colour coding and determination to get through. It's the hardest course you'll have to take! Even in grad school.

Q6 - What is grad school like?

A - lots of group work, assignments. Not too many exams surprisingly.

Q7 - Worst part about grad school?

A - there is some redundancy. Things like research methods are revisited and are not always the best use of time although it's still important to cover again.

Q8 - Best part of grad school?

A - Placements! Columbia speech placement, part of their iTalk program (intensive aphasia treatment). 3 clients, 5 days a week, 4 hours a day. Share society, a preschool placement. Followed a great coordinator but little client time and a lot of report writing. Yellowknife placement, hoped to bring access to first nations but found that she had a hard time living in remote communities. UBC x U Northern BC Prince George working with people with aphasia, running conversation groups.

Q9 - What made you like working with the older population or those with aphasia?

A - I love connecting with adults! They get your dry humour and they are very motivated to get back to where they were before.

Q10 - Is it depressing to work with an aging population?

A - The fact that they know what they've lost and want to know where they want to be is incredible. Rewarding to watch their progress. Any population can be sad to work with (kids with traumatic accidents etc) but the important thing is to always improve or give tools to increase people's quality of life

Q11 - how do you manage your mental health and cope during grad school?

A - I met my closest friends in grad school. Try to find time to relax and do your own thing or socialize. You need the time to recharge! Keep having fun even in the midst of it all.

Q12 - did you ever doubt your chances of getting in?

A - Yes. I did not pass the SAC exam on the first try. It felt terrible to know that I didn't make it and I had to study for another 6 months to take it in march while working my first job. I kept studying but you keep working on it!

Q13 - (Viewer question) Can you explain the SAC?

A - It is the speech and audiology national organization that certifies you in order to practice. It covers everything from grad school in a multiple choice exam. If you don't pass the first time, you have two other opportunities to pass. If you don't pass the next two, you don't get to practice in Canada. It is comprehensive and everyone needs to do it to be certified. But it seems like things are changing but I don't know how. I don't think SAC will be running it, it might be a third party that is putting it together.

Q14 - (Viewer question) How different are SLP and Audiologists in grad school?

A - very different. You take many courses in the beginning together but they branch off and become very different. I'm not too familiar with audiologists.

Q15 - (Viewer question) Which districts did you work for and how was it?

A - I worked for one in Okanagan and Surrey. It was difficult because it was my first job. School districts are hard because the public system is already so scrapped for resources. You have to be careful about not spreading yourself too thin. It was hard to keep track of the entire team that is involved. It was incredibly hard due to so many moving parts but it's not that bad now that I have more boundaries with myself. Tell yourself to just do the best that you can.

Q16 - (Viewer question) Does the UBC masters program focus more on biological topics or behavioural/clinical topics? or both?

A - there is less biology involved. Audi 402 is probably the heaviest physiological course you need to take. It's more foundational language development in grad school and some clinical topics like ASD and other things. It's more clinical topics than biological until you take dysphagia.

Q17 - (Viewer question) Hi Michelle! I was wondering if you have any advice for looking for volunteer opportunities during COVID times? I really want to volunteer at GF Strong but I'm not sure if these organizations are offering any opportunities

A - I don't really know (Larissa mentions online opportunities or teletherapy or organizations that have moved online)

Q18 - Did you take the GRE? If so, how long did you prepare for it?

A - yes I did. It was a nightmare, it was very stressful and challenging for me. I did take it for UofA but I didn't score very well. I think I spent 3 months studying for it. It's a long exam, so please give yourself enough time! I took it mid december while I was still taking classes.

Q19 - (Viewer question) You mentioned AUDI 402 being very challenging. Would you recommend taking it with other SFU classes or not? (If with SFU classes, how many did you take at the same time?)

A - I took audi 402 in the summer and that's how I recommend doing it. No, I don't think I could have maintained my sanity and other classes while I was taking audi 402.

Q20 - (Viewer question) Do you think it's useful to know ASL?

A - It's not a requirement but I think it's handy, just like having any other second language. I would have loved to learn it as a grad class but it didn't work out with scheduling. Not a requirement! But good to have it.

Q21 - have you worked in private practice?

A - just last year with columbia

Q22 - can you talk about the differences between public and private?

A - Public: benefits include having benefits. Also having a union behind you is awesome. If I was only reliant on private income, I would be very concerned with paying my bills. This is because some clients aren't able to do teletherapy or they are in support homes. Public is definitely more stable along with professional development money. Cons include limited resources and it feels like you are not being as effective as you can be but you do what you can. Private: you can have flexible hours (as long as you work it out with clients) and you get a lot of variety of clients. If you want to keep working with adults, you can in private. I wouldn't mind working publicly if I didn't mind losing my adult clients.

Q23 - What is a piece of advice you can give potential SLPs/Audiologists?

A - Don't give up! Take every opportunity you can, meet as many people as you can. Even if it feels like a constant uphill battle, it does end! Once you get there, it's amazing. Improving someone's quality of life is the most valuable thing you could give someone. The more people know what SLPs do, the more advocates there are for such a small program!