

Date: June 9, 2023

Program Contact: Caroline Hudson | caroline.hudson@wku.edu

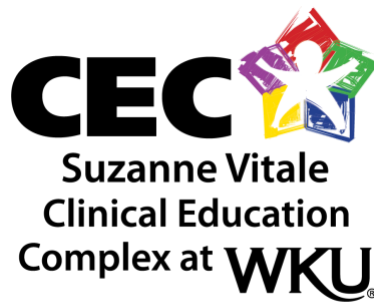
Title: **Maddie and Brylie: The Dynamic Duo**

The Suzanne Vitale Clinical Education Complex (SVCEC) at Western Kentucky University (WKU) is first and foremost a student training facility that many departments and programs throughout WKU's campus utilize. Clinical education opportunities are provided each semester at the SVCEC to a plethora of WKU students from disciplines such as psychology, education, social work, nursing, and speech-language pathology. WKU's Communication Disorders Clinic (CDC) is fortunate to be able to call SVCEC a university partner. The clinical exposure gained at the SVCEC allows WKU students to practice clinical skills and improve confidence while being exposed to a variety of experiences.

Maddie Shaw and Brylie Popplewell are best friends who grew up in Russell Springs, Kentucky. Maddie and Brylie graduated from WKU in May of 2022, each earning a Bachelor of Science in Communication Disorders, and they are now graduate level student clinicians in WKU's Speech-Language Pathology Program. Maddie and Brylie completed a spring internship through the CDC at SVCEC. Both credit their clinical internships at the SVCEC for helping them feel prepared to begin externships in educational and medical based settings in the upcoming 2023-2024 academic year. Although each WKU student placed at the SVCEC will have different clinical education experiences, the process for each moves the student along a clinical continuum.

When Maddie was asked how her spring internship placement at the SVCEC improved her knowledge for the field of speech-language pathology she said, "My internship through the Communication Disorders Clinic at the SVCEC improved my knowledge for the field of speech-language pathology in many ways. I had the opportunity both to assess and treat clients presenting with many different diagnoses and needs. I provided training and education to family/caregivers and worked collaboratively with professionals from many other disciplines. I also gained experience in writing goals and objectives, as well as improving my documentation skills. Overall, I was able to apply my knowledge and evidence-based practice to hands-on delivery, which not only built upon previous knowledge but also challenged me to expand my understanding and appreciation for this amazing field."

On a very similar note, Brylie commented about the appreciation she feels toward WKU for offering her a clinical internship prior to being required to begin educational and medical based externships. Brylie said, "I very much value and appreciate WKU's Speech-Language Pathology



Communication Disorders Clinic

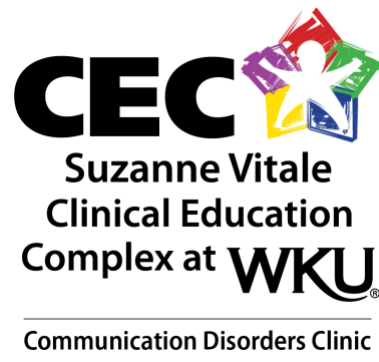
program for offering the clinical internship experience prior to externships. My time and experience as a student clinician at the internship level has truly prepared me to begin externships! My overall clinical skills and competence, clinical decision making, and evidence-based practice knowledge base has grown exponentially since beginning my internship. Furthermore, I feel more confident as a clinician and much more equipped and prepared for what is to come.”

Clinical supervisors who are state licensed and nationally certified provide each student clinician with supervision and support. Academic classroom instruction coupled with these real-life clinical experiences at the internship level provide the perfect bridge for closing any academic gaps and piquing intellectual curiosity.

No matter what profession WKU students pursue, they will certainly discover that most modern work environments require an “all hands-on deck” approach. Through participating in various interprofessional experiences offered at SVCEC, student interns quickly realize that a lot of professions overlap in their duties, and it is beneficial to understand the basic components of each. In addition, interprofessional education experiences teach the value each profession’s expertise brings to the table.

Maddie feels that being placed at the SVCEC allowed her the opportunity to learn how to work alongside many different disciplines on a daily basis. This improved her interpersonal and communication skills, and professionalism tremendously. She reports growing in her appreciation and understanding of the importance of interdisciplinary work. From communication, to problem-solving and empathy, she developed a variety of transferable skills that should help her be ready to eventually be prepared for her desired position as a speech-language pathologist in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Brylie also hopes to work in a hospital-based setting after graduation, and she believes the interprofessional experiences she had at SVCEC prepared her to be able to deliver an integrated model of collaborative care.

While May is a celebratory time on the Hill as graduates are honored. It is also a sentimental time as interns say their goodbyes and are wished the very best as they move on to externships. Brylie and Maddie will certainly be missed in the halls, classrooms, and treatment rooms of the SVCEC. Brylie said, “The SVCEC will always hold such a special place in my heart. I have adored working and learning alongside so many precious people and learning from such brilliant supervisors!” Maddie said, “I will forever be grateful for my experience during my clinical internship. I can confidently say that this has shaped me into the student clinician that I am today. Most importantly, my clinical internship taught me the value in continuously challenging myself to become a better clinician in order to provide the best service to my clients.”



The entire SVCEC team wish Maddie and Brylie and all SVCEC student interns the best as they move one step closer to meeting their career goals, the team is also ready to turn its attention toward the next group of student interns who will complete internship level work at the SVCEC this coming summer or fall. The goal will always be to help WKU students gain a foundational base of knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for growth.