

Abstract

Experiential learning is key to preparing Graduate SLP student for clinical practice. The Monmouth University Swallowing and Endoscopic (MUSE) Lab provides hands-on experiences that help students apply classroom knowledge to clinical skills in swallowing, voice, and endoscopic procedures. Through guided simulation and collaboration with faculty, graduate assistants, and medical professionals, students gain early exposure to videostroboscopy and FEES, building clinical skills, confidence, and reasoning. The lab also allows graduate assistants to strengthen their own learning by mentoring peers, highlighting the value of experiential learning in bridging coursework and clinical practice.

What is Experiential learning?

Experiential learning is an educational approach in which students actively engage in hands-on experiences to develop knowledge and skills. Learning occurs through direct participation, guided practice, and reflection, allowing students to connect theoretical concepts to real-world clinical applications.

Why is it Important?

Experiential learning provides students with opportunities to develop clinical judgment and gain confidence in a controlled environment. Studies such as Henderson et al. (2025), which look at the use of peer-led experiential learning, have shown that “peer-led experiential learning reinforces professional identity formation and enhances mission readiness”

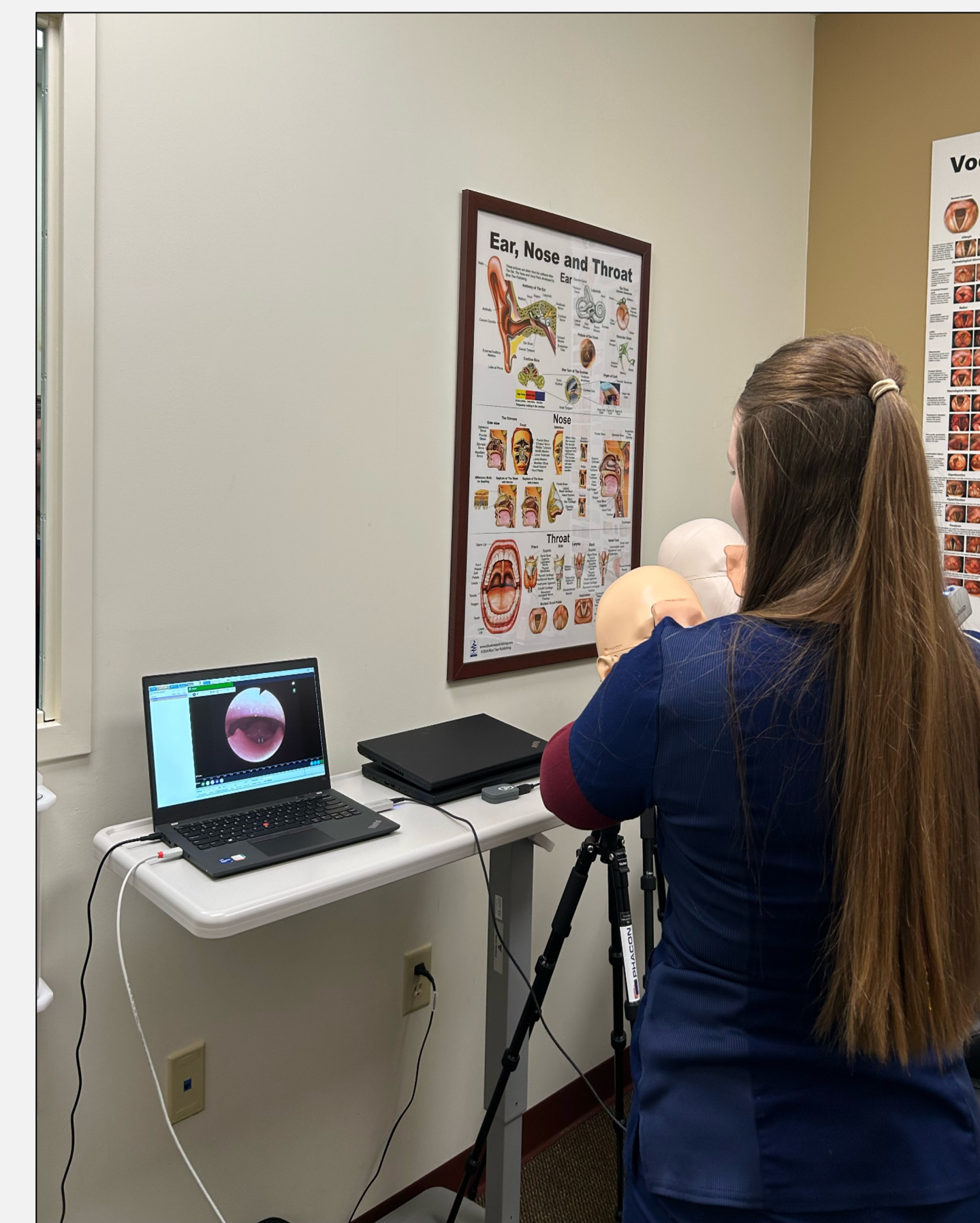
Lab Sessions for First-Year Graduate Students

During the fall class, SLP 655, *Disorders of Voice and Resonance*, each student dedicated time to learn about Flexible and Rigid Videostroboscopy. Under the facilitation of pre-trained Graduate assistants, students learn scoping through the nasal pathway on a manikin, as well as introduction to nasal, oral, and pharyngeal anatomical structures.

Using JedMed equipment and DScope software, the students receive both visual and verbal feedback on their passes, with the goal of achieving a clear view of the vocal folds. This initial experience provides early exposure to skills commonly used in medical-based speech-language pathology and serve as a foundation for future clinical training.

Opportunities

At the beginning of the semester, Graduate Assistants (GAs) were trained in the MUSE Lab by Dr. Susan Pattay, CCC-SLP, BCS-S. They learned how to hold the scope, operate the technological equipment, set up the scope, and clean the scope after each use. This process allowed them to learn from a board certified professional and become more comfortable with the process of using the scope.



After being trained by Dr. Pattay, throughout the fall and spring semesters, GAs had the opportunity to teach other students about flexible videostroboscopy. Showing them how to hold the flexible scope and pass on a low fidelity manikin. This experience strengthened both our learning and our classmates learning.

As graduate assistants working in the MUSE Lab, they get to run monthly ENT Clinics with other students, faculty, community members alongside guided instruction from Dr. Corina Din-Lovinescu, DO. Students gained a deeper insight into FEES while getting feedback from professionals in the field.



What is the MUSE LAB?

The Monmouth University Swallowing and Endoscopic (MUSE) Lab, under the direction of Dr. Susan Pattay, CCC-SLP, BCS-S, is housed in the Monmouth University Center for Speech and Language Disorders in the Department of Speech-Language Pathology at Monmouth University in West Long Branch, NJ. This laboratory collaborates with The Linda Grunin Simulation Lab and Learning Center (a joint partnership between Monmouth University and Monmouth Medical Center), as well as the Walden Voice Lab.

What makes the Lab Different?

This lab differs from other labs statewide because it gives students the opportunity to learn about the study of clinical practice related to swallowing, voice and speech functions. The MUSE Lab also offers monthly training clinics in collaboration with Dr. Din for practice in both rigid and flexible videostroboscopy, in addition to fiberoptic endoscopic evaluation of swallowing (FEES).

Experiential Review from MU Second-Year Graduate Student

“I felt super fortunate being able to practice on manikins, but then also apply the knowledge to real life, as it is very different once you actually do it. For me, getting over the fear of doing it for the first time in a comfortable space really helped me to be able to feel confident in my FEES skills. When I spoke to other interns at my externship placement, they were surprised that we were able to receive that type of training, so I am very thankful to have been able to gain experience in that area on multiple occasions.”

Conclusion

The MUSE Lab provides a unique experiential learning environment that allows students to apply classroom knowledge in a hands-on, clinical setting. Reviews from students suggest that this real-time practice helps build confidence that is needed for practical skills in areas such as videostroboscopy and FEES. These experiences help bridge the gap between coursework and clinical practice—better preparing students for future clinical placements and professional practice in speech-language pathology.

References

- MUSE. (2025). *MUSE Lab*. MUSE Lab. <https://www.muse-laboratory.com/>
Henderson, J. D., Cole, R., Hildreth, A. F., Myers, M., Henderson, J. J., & Shen, C. (2025). The Benefits of Peer-led Experiential Learning in Military Medical Education: Reflections From Peer Educators. *Military medicine*, 190(11-12), e2565–e2571. <https://doi.org/10.1093/milmed/usaf202>