

# Fischler School of Education Replaces Distant Travels with Zoom



*Brian D. Croswhite  
Executive Director  
Creative Development  
& Innovation at  
Fischler School  
of Education*

## Summary

- Speech pathologists help people with language disorders.
- The Fischler School at NSU has the largest speech-language pathology program in the US.
- Fischler School representatives meet each student in his/her clinical placement via Zoom.
- Zoom saves these interviewers time and stress, and saves the school on travel expenses.

Communication is one of the most important things in life. It is the glue that holds together our society and our relationships. Language is the primary means of human communication, whether oral, written, or non-verbal. Disorders of language hinder a person's ability to understand what is being said, to send a message that is understood by others or to even communicate basic wants and needs. These people need someone to help them overcome their speech disorders and disabilities - a speech language pathologist. Speech-language pathologists are trained to conduct testing, identify the language disorder, design a program for the remediation of the language disorder, and provide therapy.

Many aspiring speech language pathologists prepare for their careers at the Abraham S. Fischler School of Education at Nova Southeastern University. The Fischler School has the largest speech-language pathology program in the United States. We had the opportunity to speak with Brian D. Croswhite, the school's Executive Director of Creative Development and Innovation.

"The Fischler School of Education is the largest speech therapy Master's-level program in the country," said Croswhite. "We also offer two doctoral programs in speech-language pathology. We currently have 800 Master's students in the program and they are spread all over the country. Our Master's program requires 52 credit hours and an additional 375 clinical contact hours in therapy and diagnostic testing under the supervision of an ASHA (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association) certified speech-language pathologist."

To make sure that clinical practicums meet accreditation standards, the program chose to send representatives out into the field to visit each student in his/her clinical placement at least three times during his or her program. These representatives include faculty members and alumni of the program in various areas of the country. Since students complete their clinical practicums in the communities where they live, the interviewers travel to where the students are - whether in large urban areas or small remote towns across the county.

In addition to the time it took for the interviewers, and the hassle of trying to coordinate their interview and travel schedules, it just didn't make sense to spend so much money travelling around the country during this age of technology.

"Historically, we have had representatives, many of whom are based in Ft. Lauderdale, travel to meet with students and their supervisors for a couple of hours to thank the supervisor, review how the student is progressing,

---

address any issues or concerns that may have come up, and answer questions that the supervisor or student may have regarding the clinical practicum. As the number of students has grown to exceed 800, this process has become more of a challenge," he said. A few of the faculty members travel multiple weeks per year to personally visit students and supervisors at their clinical site. About a year ago, faculty members decided to look at web conferencing as an alternate method to conduct site visits that would still be personal in nature.

The only solution to this was to employ help from a reliable, user-friendly video conferencing service. "We tried various video conferencing systems, but they didn't seem to do what we needed them to do," said Croswhite. "As we worked with each one, they all had at least one issue that broke the deal. That's what led us to Zoom."

According to Mr. Croswhite, **Zoom's simple, affordable solution is perfectly suited to their needs.** Instead of wasting time traveling, specialists can work more efficiently by just launching a Zoom meeting on their computer or mobile device. This idea not only benefits the Fischler School, but it also reduces the amount of stress that the specialists endured when leaving home for extended periods of time. It has the added benefit of reducing scheduling issues for the students and their supervisors.

Right now, Zoom is still a relatively new concept to the school, and the only difficulty encountered is that there just hasn't been enough time to get everyone on the bandwagon. "At this point, we have used the product in this capacity for less than two months," said Croswhite. "We really haven't touched on everything we can really do with Zoom; I feel we can do a lot with it. We have people who rapidly have become advocates of Zoom. They just have to get used to it. They have to wrap their minds around simply 'having' a meeting instead of 'calling' one. These are people who have been calling meetings to rooms for years. They're used to coming up elevators or walking across the street. Other video solutions we've used in the past have left a bad taste for some of them, but with Zoom, they're rapidly becoming convinced to give video another try."

Zoom has seen some favoritism among processors who have difficulty meeting with students using other tools. "Most of our classes are taught online. We've been doing that with 14,000 students for years," he said. "The online environment is no stranger to us. We have seen some of our faculty start to use Zoom as an ancillary for communicating with their students. Our current system for online courses allows limited video interactivity, but in situations that could involve the participation of more students at a time, the opportunity to use something like Zoom has been intriguing. Many of our faculty members

are thinking of Zoom as a useful accessory that allows them to speak to larger groups, easily. In addition, some of the **faculty and advisers now are using Zoom for office hours, advice, recruiting, and faculty training.** Some are experimenting with it, as well, as a webinar platform."

Currently, these are the benefits that the Fischler School of Education has realized by using Zoom:

- Travel expenses are either reduced or eliminated entirely.
- Time on the road will be increasingly reduced.
- The reduction in travel lowers the stress on the specialists they assign to do interviews.
- Ease of use makes Zoom readily adoptable.
- Out of the box, meetings have high-quality video and audio.
- Professors are making use of Zoom as a complementary tool to their existing remote learning platforms.

Hopefully, the Fischler School of Education will learn to embrace Zoom even further and find more uses for it. "One of the beauties of Zoom is that it's relatively **simple, straightforward, easy to use, and ideal for meeting and training sessions with 25 or fewer people,**" added Croswhite. "And we have only scratched the surface with what we can do with Zoom."



#### About Zoom

Zoom, the cloud meeting company, unifies cloud video conferencing, simple web meetings, and group collaboration into one easy-to-use platform. Our solution offers the first available mobile-screen sharing and an innovative hybrid cloud service, and works across desktop, tablet, mobile and room systems. Zoom services over 40 million participants and more than 100,000 businesses globally.

**Website**  
zoom.us

#### Innovations

First 3-in-1 Cloud HD Meeting Platform  
First Mobile Screen Sharing  
First Hybrid Cloud Service