

The Department of Speech Pathology at Tennessee State University partners with Backlight Productions to provide first year graduate students a HIP opportunity. Backlight is a place where adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities have the opportunity to display their talents in performing arts. At Backlight, the actors have the chance to participate in theatrical experiences, in addition to training in dance and music. The “light” shines on these artists to feature their unique abilities and to illuminate what makes them specially phenomenal.

Student clinicians serve as student coaches to provide actor support in character storytelling, line memorization, expressive language, speech production, and voice projection. Graduate students work together and with other professionals from a variety of backgrounds (specifically theatre, education and applied behavior analysis) to achieve a common goal of providing an entertaining production. The individualized and compartmentalized confines of special education do not exist at Backlight.

This presentation will discuss High Impact Practices and make a connection to Interprofessional Practice/Interprofessional Education. Data from student surveys related to the clinical, theatrical experience will be presented. Quantitative and qualitative students' responses concerning the disability categories of the actors, the cognitive levels of the actors and treatment strategies used during the clinical experience will be presented.