WELCOME to the first issue of our new newsletter! We will be using this newsletter in future to try and “keep everybody in the loop” about what is happening in Speech Pathology at The University of Sydney. If you see something of interest please do not hesitate to contact us to find out more!

The Discipline of Speech Pathology has had a busy and successful 2007. The Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Sydney has restructured to promote research and excellence in learning and teaching. Many of our staff members have new roles both within and across Disciplines in the Faculty. The highlight for us in the first half of the year was the Sydney Speech Pathology Australia Conference. Many papers and workshops were given by staff, graduate students and honours students, and we took the opportunity to reconnect with many of our graduates and network with clinicians, researchers and other university staff. In the second half of the year we have focused on building partnerships with external agencies for research collaboration and clinical education experiences. In this newsletter you will find more information about some of these initiatives. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our students, speech pathology colleagues, supporters and collaborators a safe and happy Christmas.

Best wishes,

Michelle Lincoln (Head of Discipline)

Who’s Who in Speech Pathology at SYDNEY UNI?

We are going through a period of change in our academic staffing. Kerrie Lee, Chris Sheard and Susan Balandin are all retiring and Linda Hand has recently taken up a position at the University of Auckland.

Joining us next year will be two new lecturers: Dr Kimberly Docking – Child Language and Dr Joanne Arculli – Foundations of Language Learning

The following staff have new roles within the Discipline:
- Michelle Lincoln (Head of Discipline)
- Belinda Kenny (Undergraduate Course Co-ordinator)
- Kirrie Ballard (Graduate Entry Masters Course Co-ordinator)
- Alison Purcell (Director of Clinical Education and Fieldwork)
- Leanne Togher (Postgraduate Student Co-ordinator)

Service RECOGNITION

Congratulations to The Speech Pathology Department of The Children’s Hospital at Westmead who have been awarded the Deirdre Russell Service Recognition Award for their continued support of our Discipline and our students.

The award was presented at a function held on 20th November 2007.

This award was established in 1991, to recognise those who have, in a non-paid capacity, contributed to and supported the endeavours of the Discipline.

Staff Member PROFILE

Dr Kirrie J. Ballard

Dr Kirrie J. Ballard completed a Bachelor of Speech Therapy from University of Queensland in 1983. After working with both children and adults for nine years in Queensland and New South Wales, she moved to Chicago, USA. There she completed a Master of Arts (Communication Sciences and Disorders) in 1994 and a PhD in 1997, both from Northwestern University. In 1998, she was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship with the National Centre for Voice and Speech at University of Iowa. Since then she has held academic positions at Indiana University and University of Iowa in America and, currently, Senior Lecturer at the University of Sydney. Kirrie’s research has dealt primarily with examining the nature and treatment of motor speech disorders, in particular Apraxia of Speech. Her treatment studies have focused on the application of Principles of Motor Learning to improving outcomes for individuals with motor speech disorders.

She has recently extended this work to Childhood Apraxia of Speech, in collaboration with Dr Tricia McCabe. She also has published on speech disorders that result from genetic mutations involving the FOXP2 gene. Kirrie has a longstanding interest in fostering clinically-based research through collaborations with Speech-Language Pathologists in community settings. Since moving to the University of Sydney in 2006, she has been involved in developing clinically-focused research projects with Speech-Language Pathologists at the War Memorial Hospital in Waverley and the Royal Rehabilitation Centre.
Bronwyn Hemsley

In 1999 I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to secondment from my clinical position working with adults with cerebral palsy to a research project led by A/Prof. Sue Balandin, only to discover a sparkling new horizon - research. Suitably inspired and assured by Sue that the main ingredient to completing a PhD might be tenacity, I enrolled in postgraduate research at The University of Sydney. Gaining the financial support of an NHMRC public health scholarship enabled me to concentrate full time over the past two and a half years to complete my studies. Now as I prepare to submit the final thesis I can't quite believe the sharpening in focus that postgraduate study has brought to my career and to my enthusiasm in working in the field of disability. It is difficult to explain all of the things I have gained from my postgraduate adventure. Put simply, I have really gained all of the things I set out to gain.

I will simply try to highlight two things that have been very important to me in the process of postgraduate study. One is the experience of working with others in 'doing' research, and the other is the excitement of writing about and 'sharing' the outcomes of research with others. I've been very lucky to have strong support from my supervisors Susan Balandin and Leanne Togher. Their enthusiasm for research and the pursuit of excellence in their work and the work of their students continually renewed my energies in progressing my own. It was through their support, and the financial support of the University, that I was able to travel overseas to attend conferences, have many opportunities to present my work, be inspired by the work of others in the field, and develop strong links with other researchers and clinicians. Having an opportunity to do this was important in focussing my efforts on not only doing research, but also on disseminating the outcomes effectively and making an impact on the community. Another thing that I have really enjoyed is working alongside my fellow students. Together, Sue and Leanne developed and nurtured a vibrant network of postgraduate research students with similar research agendas and facing similar experiences, to learn as a group and to actively support one another in making progress to completion. I plan now to develop my academic career in research in the field of lifelong disability and working with adults with complex communication needs. I look forward to continuing my association with the University, and particularly the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Discipline of Speech Pathology, that I have enjoyed so much as a postgraduate student.

VISITORS

Professor Donald Robin
University of Texas, USA

We were very fortunate to have Professor Donald Robin visiting us for four weeks in August and September. Prof Robin is from the University of Texas Health Sciences Center and Research Imaging Center in San Antonio, USA.

He has had a distinguished teaching and research career in the area of childhood and acquired motor speech disorders, with a focus on Apraxia of Speech.

The purpose of Prof Robin's visit was to build a link between the Discipline of Speech Pathology at University of Sydney and the University of Texas, to facilitate exchange of knowledge and develop collaborative research projects.

During the visit, he presented several lectures to students and staff at University of Sydney as well as two workshops on diagnosis and treatment of Apraxia of Speech for faculty, students and community clinicians. We hope to have him visit again in 2008!

Beth Atkins, Scarlett Gaffney and Donna McLaren will be joined by 3 Physiotherapy and 3 Occupational Therapy GEM students in this inaugural placement and will work in interdisciplinary teams in regional hospitals and community child health clinics.

Dr Tricia McCabe, from Speech Pathology, will be joining them to provide clinical education and support and to review this pilot program.

All four have promised to share their experiences on return and you will be able to see photos of their adventure by going to this web page www.ofxexploring.com/usydfhs.

COMPASS™

COMPASS™ has been rolled out into all relevant clinical units of study.

Thanks to everyone who has attended a training session. Ongoing training will be a routine part of Clinical Education workshops from now on, however if you have any concerns or questions please contact Liz Scott (02) 9351-7334 or e.scott@usyd.edu.au

India program continues

Year 3 students continue to have the opportunity to be placed at the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy-Kolkata during the summer break. As well as the cross-cultural learning and speech pathology specific competencies, students typically gain generic skills in clinical reasoning, creativity and communication.

Intensive treatment programs for adults who stutter

We run smooth speech, intensive treatment programs, in February and July each year, for adults who stutter. We are happy to accept referrals from professionals or family members. Please contact the clinic on (02) 9351-9539 if you would like more information about this service.

About half of all graduating students now receive hands-on clinical experience in adult stuttering.

Other clinical education initiatives

This year, a number of fourth year students have participated in a collaborative project with the Catholic Education Office- Parramatta Diocese.

The partnership allows students to participate in school based service delivery models in Catholic schools in the Sydney Area. Our thanks to Fred Patchell who initiated and supported this program.

We are always happy to discuss new ways that we can partner with any organisation, please contact Liz Scott if you have any ideas you'd like to explore.

We continue to seek new ways to expand student's understanding of rural health issues. As well as encouraging student placements in rural settings, some recent university initiatives include the opportunity for students to go on a 'Discovery Bus Tour - Orange, Dubbo, Bathurst' in conjunction with medical students.
Breaking SCIENCE


- Findings from a treatment efficacy study with two individuals with Apraxia of Speech plus aphasia provide promising evidence that a variable practice approach to retraining speech behaviours in AOS is effective.

- Variable practice involves practising a behaviour/s over a range of conditions or contexts and is thought to increase accuracy and flexibility in speech production.

- The treatment involved improving production of the voiced / voiceless distinction for several plosive or fricative sounds in phrases.

- This variable practice approach resulted in long-term maintenance of treatment gains and generalisation to untrained speech behaviours.


- This study surveyed adults who stutter in Australia who have used an Altered Auditory Feedback (AAF) Device. The devices are marketed widely overseas as an effective treatment for stuttering.

- Relatively few Australians have experience with the devices and those who do tend to have tried the older more conspicuous forms of the devices. Participants who used the new Speech Easy™ device reported being more satisfied with the device and were less likely to feel self-conscious wearing the device.

- Regardless of which device participants used the devices were reported to be less effective in noisy environments and in anxiety provoking speaking situations. Over half of participants did not use their device in the long term. Many participants reported using their device to assist practice of prolonged speech type patterns and reported using the device in conjunction with smooth or prolonged speech techniques.

Academic UPDATE

The revised undergraduate speech pathology program will commence in 2008. The new, four year program will continue to provide students with research led teaching in the range of communication sciences and disorders studies required for professional competency.

However, the new curriculum integrates broader professional issues of health service delivery, rural and indigenous health, ethical and evidence based practice with academic units of study by adopting case based approaches to learning.

Additionally, the structure of the new curriculum will facilitate students’ opportunities to engage in inter-professional learning and international studies.

By building upon the strengths of our current program and introducing these curriculum innovations, we anticipate that students will graduate with the ‘well rounded’ professional skills required for speech pathology practice.

Congratulations to all of our GRADUATING STUDENTS

Hearing and Speech students – sally forth and bedazzle the world!!!
Undergraduate and Masters Speech students - go out and be great Speechies!!!
Postgraduate Research students – you made it and you are still alive!!!
UP-COMING EVENTS

Health Sciences graduation ceremony - 6th December 2007
Students from the Discipline of Speech Pathology will graduate in the Great Hall
Time: From 11.30am  Location: The Great Hall, Quadrangle
Contact: Liz Gibson  Email: e.gibson@records.usyd.edu.au

Health Sciences graduation ceremony - 23rd April 2008
Students from the Discipline of Speech Pathology will graduate in the Great Hall
Time: From 2.00pm  Location: The Great Hall, Quadrangle
Contact: Liz Gibson  Email: e.gibson@records.usyd.edu.au

Official launch of speechBITE
speechBITE is a database of Speech Pathology Best Interventions and Treatment Efficacy. Speech Pathology Australia and Speech Pathology at Sydney University will be officially launching speechBITE early in 2008. This magnificent resource will be freely available. Clinicians will be able to efficiently search for research evidence that has been rated for methodological quality to support clinical decision making.

Visit by Emeritus Professor Audrey Holland
Emeritus Professor Audrey Holland from the University of Arizona will be visiting with us in 2008. We will distribute information regarding the dates of her visit, presentations and workshops, as soon as they are available.

Clinical Education Workshop - Tuesday 5th February 2008, 9.30am to 4pm
This workshop is specifically designed for speech pathologists who have not supervised students before or who have never completed a clinical education workshop. The workshop will cover areas such as models of clinical education, managing placements, giving and receiving feedback, learning styles and their application to clinical education and an introduction to COMPASTM: Competency Assessment in Speech Pathology. No charge. Contact c.colaco@usyd.edu.au for a registration form.

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