WELCOME to the new academic year and to all newly enrolled students of the Discipline of Speech Pathology. We have a promising new academic year ahead with one of our largest enrollments in the first year Undergraduate and Graduate Entry Masters courses; 7 new higher degree research students started their programs of study over the past 6 months; 3 outstanding students received awards from the national association; a record number of students (241) are embarking on Honours degrees; Dr Cate Madill was one of the most ‘student nominated’ lecturers for the 2010 FHS excellence in teaching award. As well, we have already enjoyed visits and exciting presentations from three international scholars working with different academic staff in Speech Pathology. We look forward to the coming year as we all work toward the visionary goals in Research and Teaching and Learning of the University’s White Paper.

BREAKING SCIENCE

The Future of Aphasia Therapy

On Thursday 10th February, Dr Leora Cherney (right) presented a 3 hour workshop on “The Future of Aphasia Therapy” at the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney on behalf of ASSBI and the CCRE in Aphasia Rehabilitation.

Dr Cherney is a speech-language pathologist and Professor at the Departments of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Communication Sciences and Disorders, Northwestern University, USA. The workshop covered research studies to establish the efficacy and effectiveness of a variety of aphasia treatments with reference to three key principles of neuroplasticity; repetition, intensity and specificity.

Dr Cherney first outlined biologically motivated treatments such as cortical stimulation to improve rehabilitation outcomes in rat and primate models. The findings provided promising results that repetitive rehabilitation combined with cortical stimulation provided better outcomes than rehabilitation alone.

Her recent research in people with aphasia also provided encouraging results that language outcomes can improve with a combination of cortical stimulation and intensive language practice. Larger studies will assist to further inform these early findings.

Dr Cherney then acknowledged the challenges for health professionals in providing intensive rehabilitation in the current health climate. She outlined some innovative reading and script-based treatments that allow people with aphasia to practice their language more independently and intensively at home using state-of-the-art computer technology with a ‘virtual therapist, Miss PAT’.

The workshop finished fittingly with an example of people with aphasia participating in a drama class that culminated in their development and production of a play for an aphasia awareness day performed to family and friends. This was an inspiring insight into the life participation approach to aphasia rehabilitation.

Dr Cherney’s workshop was well received and we look forward to opportunities to continue to follow her research in the future. The Discipline has numerous papers/posters on the program for the SPA conference in June, representing research by staff and students across many fields in Speech Path.

SUMMARY: The Principles of Motor Learning (PML) approach predicts that providing Knowledge of Performance (KP) feedback, such as biofeedback or movement feedback, continually through treatment will interfere with long-term retention of motor skills. We tested this by having twelve healthy English-speaking adults learn to produce a trilled Russian [r] in words with the visual display provided as KP feedback on tongue placement and movement. One group received KP in pre-practice only (initial 10 min of each 1 hr session) and the other group received KP throughout the session. No group differences were found at pre-training or one day post-training for production accuracy. As predicted, the group who received continual KP had deteriorated at the one-week post-treatment test while the limited-KP group maintained their skills. This supports the hypothesis that receiving continual KP in treatment interferes with long-term retention of speech motor skills.

While additional research is needed for people with speech motor disorders, these findings suggest that KP feedback is most useful in early stages of learning a new skill but should be rapidly faded out.

STUDENTS’ SUCCESS

University Medals

The following Speech Pathology Honours students were awarded The University Medal. Congratulations to:

- Gladys Cheung
- Rosemary Hodges
- Sarah Masso
- Annmarie Murphy

Scholarships

Spastic Centre’s Professor Henry J Cowan Scholarship 2011 - $1,500

Congratulations to Bethany Elizabeth Wagg.

Douglas and Lola Douglas Scholarship 2011 - $13,000

Congratulations to Renae Nash.

Grants

National Stroke Foundation Honours Grant - $3,000

Congratulations to Marianne Krupha-Vergis, MSLP student. The grant is to study impairments of prosody in people with Apraxia of Speech from left-hemisphere stroke.

SPAA Student Grants 2010 / 2011

Congratulations to Elizabeth Murray ($5,000), Samantha Warhurst ($500) and Charlotte Joscelyne-May ($500)

Awards

2011 Australian Postgraduate Award

Congratulations to Claire Layfield, PhD student. Funds will support her PhD studies. Clare will be comparing the efficacy of two interventions for dysphagia in stroke patients.
CONGRATULATIONS TO UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY HEALTHFUSION TEAM

Inspired by a program at the University of British Columbia and launched in Australia by the University of Queensland

The HealthFusion Team Challenge (HFTC) is a fun and dynamic competition that promotes interprofessional collaboration and client-centred care.

The University of Sydney team competed against interprofessional student health teams from other universities across Australia to tackle a complex clinical case study. They were required to work together in order to develop and present a multidisciplinary management plan to an audience of local practitioners, academic staff, interstate university representatives, registry boards and students.

"While they didn’t make it to the final round, the team did an excellent management plan and presentation, and did particularly well on the team task of interviewing the patient," said Team Coordinator Associate Professor Michelle Lincoln from the Faculty of Health Sciences.

The winner of the 2010 Oz HFTC was Griffith University’s PARC Team, while Monash University’s EQUIP Team took out the audience Choice Award for the second year running.

The Discipline would like to thank Dr Geraldine Bricker-Katz for mentoring Speech Pathology’s Stephanie Hulewicz during the lead-up to the competition.

Click on this link to find out more..... www.healthfusionteamchallenge.com/

THE TEAM: (L to R) Benjamin Tassie (Medicine), Melissa Buduls (OT), Claire Gill (Physio), Stephanie Hulewicz (Speech), Erin Law (Nursing & Midwifery) Nicholas Mudaliar (ESS)

VISITING INTERN STUDENTS
January, February 2011

We were delighted to host two speech pathology intern students from Augusta College near Chicago in the USA.

The students were Ashley Skowronska (right), a final year UG student and Jenny Fortin, a third year student.

Ashley worked with Drs Elise Baker, Natalie Munro and Kimberly Docking and Professor Karla McGregor (visiting fellow) on the “Talking Toddler Study” project.

Jeny worked with Dr Tricia McCabe and PhD student Elizabeth Murray on a wide range of tasks associated with speech motor learning in children.

The intern program counts as an academic unit in their degree programs so in addition to 4 days per week at Cumberland, the students also had to attend classes on Monday nights. Both students travelled widely in Sydney and elsewhere during their stays.

Ashley and Jeny were a delight to work with and we wish them well in their future studies.

SERVICE RECOGNITION AWARD

The 2010 Deirdre Russell Award for Service

The award was presented to Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Health Service (Speech Pathology) at a function held on Tuesday 23 November 2010.

Congratulations and thank you for supporting the Discipline and its students.

Sarah Legge, Jacqueline Reeves and Suzi Drevensek accepted the 2010 award for Hornsby Ku-ring-gai from the Discipline’s Associate Professor Leanne Togher.

For more information about this award and previous winners, see the Discipline’s website under the “About Us” tab.
SUCCESSFUL PROFESSORIAL EXCHANGE FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF SPEECH PATHOLOGY – Dr Karla McGregor

The Discipline of Speech Pathology was proud to host Dr Karla McGregor, professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders from the University of Iowa, from the 31st of January to the 11th of February, 2011. Dr. McGregor’s visit was supported by an International Program Development Fund Professorial Exchange Grant and The Faculty of Health Sciences, The University of Sydney. Dr. McGregor achieved much during her brief visit – collaboration with academics in the Kid’s Talk Lab (Dr’s Natalie Munro, Elise Baker, Kimberley Docking and Joanne Arciuli from the Discipline of Speech Pathology) on a study about the cues that influence typically developing toddlers’ abilities to learn new words, a 1-hour seminar on the role of sleep in word learning, a 2-our seminar for speech pathologists on word learning and teaching, in addition to many conversations with honours, masters and doctoral students about research, writing, grants and more. Dr. Natalie Munro will continue the professorial exchange with a visit to Dr. McGregor’s word learning lab at The University of Iowa in June. Over 50 speech pathologists attended a seminar on Word Learning and Teaching, presented by Dr’s Karla McGregor, Natalie Munro and Elise Baker. A seminar on the role of sleep in word learning left many of the participants keen to get to bed early – given the role of sleep in memory consolidation!

Contact: Dr Natalie Munro - Phone: 61+ 2 93519880 Email: Natalie.Munro@sydney.edu.au

NEW DIRECTIONS IN CLINICAL EDUCATION
A student speech pathology placement within the urban aboriginal community

In 2009 the community controlled Aboriginal Medical Service – Western Sydney (AMS-WS) enlisted The University of Sydney to provide a student speech pathology service for 4 hours per week. The target group was AMS-WS clients - a community of children (0-6 years) and their families who had traditionally not engaged with ‘mainstream’ speech pathology. Following success in the first half of 2009, this partnership has continued during each university semester. 4-6 speech pathology students work on site at an AMS-WS facility, together with an experienced supervising speech pathologist from the Discipline. The AMS-WS has continued to have strong and consistent input into the program - identifying, contacting, transporting and supporting clients. This means that although the speech pathology students are transient, the service and client contacts are maintained by the commitment of the AMS-WS to provide this service within its own community.

A number of benefits from this student service have occurred. One benefit is that a larger number of clients have attended intervention than would have been possible otherwise, with the given funding. Benefits for the student speech pathologists include the opportunity to experience health service provision in the urban Aboriginal community first hand and to gain clinical experience where working with the ‘whole’ client picture is vital.

WHATS HAPPENING IN THE LAB
Update

The University of Sydney Voice Research Laboratory was officially launched in November last year. The lab has a full acoustic analysis suite with Lingwaves and KayElometrics software, laryngograph and standard airflow equipment to comprehensively measure and analyse different vocal parameters. With the recent acquisition of a Wolfe High Speed Videolaryngoscopy unit (one of only 20 operating in the world), we can now visualize the vocal cords at speeds up to 400 frames per second.

We also have stroboscopy and flexible nasendoscopy available for use in our research.

The Voice Research Laboratory is currently undertaking projects investigating the supranormal voice, starting with radio broadcasters, principles of motor learning in voice and development of a self-directed learning package for learning a vocal task.

Watch this space!!

CONFERENCE APPEARANCE
Discipline’s RHD students deliver!

Research masters students Lisa Lim and Margot Lochrin presented at the 8th Asia Pacific Conference on Speech, Language and Hearing at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, January 11-14, 2011.

Well Done!

Lisa (left) (primary supervisor: Jo Arciuli), presented a poster titled “Predictors of English Reading Comprehension in Singaporean Children with Down Syndrome”. Margot (right) (primary supervisor: Jo Arciuli), presented a poster titled “The Relationship between Segmental and Suprasegmental Processes and Reading Difficulties in Children With and Without Auditory Processing Difficulties.”

This is some of what Margot and Lisa had to say about the conference:

“It was a beautiful location for the conference. We were entertained during the welcoming ceremony with both the male and female versions of the Haka. One hundred and twenty delegates attended with presenters from Australia, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, NZ, Sweden, Taiwan, and USA. The keynote speakers covered a wide range of topics. The efficacy of Aphasia Couples Therapy (ACT) was investigated, where the significant other undertakes the role of the speech pathologist during therapy sessions (Larry Boles, University of the Pacific, USA). Professor Jim Montgomery (Ohio University, USA) spoke on his current research into the relationship between working memory and sentence comprehension in SLI.”
FAREWELL TO OUR GRADUATING STUDENTS

Hope you enjoyed the party? See you all at April’s graduation ceremony.

UP-COMING EVENTS

SYDNEY IDEAS – The University of Sydney’s unique public program of lectures - Camperdown Campus

The University’s premier public lecture series aims to bring some of Sydney’s, Australia’s and the world’s, leading thinkers to the wider Sydney community. For more details go to www.sydney.edu.au/sydney_ideas

Just a few of the lectures on offer….

28 March 2011 - Distinguished scholar Professor Suisheng Zhao speaks on The China Model of State Capitalism: Appeals and limitations.

29 March 2011 – Associate Professor Peter O’Connor - Theatre, Democracy and the End of Distraction: Working in the margins to make a difference.

6 April 2011 - American designer, generalist, and pioneer of information technology Theodor Holm Nelson.

7 April 2011 - Leading philosophers in a conversation on Ways of Seeing: Reforming the Humanities.

Visiting SLP students from the USA – May 2011

In late May we will be hosting speech-language pathology students from Texas Christian University (www.tcu.edu) on a travel program to Australia. While they are here they will be learning about the ASRC, speechBITE, and evidence based practice. They will visit our clinic and a number of outside agencies. If any Speech Pathology students would like to meet with them to discuss the similarities and differences in the programs they should contact the SASH Committee for details – via Elizabeth Duffy eduf1634@uni.sydney.edu.au.

SPEECH PATHOLOGY GRADUATION CEREMONY - Friday 8th April, 2pm in the Great Hall, Camperdown

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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website: sydney.edu.au/health_sciences/speech_pathology/