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# communication **matters**

## **Working in communities with cultural and linguistic diversity**

**Culturally responsive dysphagia assessment and management in Aotearoa  
Phonological awareness and language: Foundations for literacy**

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**Cover:** Ngā whetū o Matariki by Emma Wollum

Please contact the editor with your ideas at any time: [editor@speechtherapy.org.nz](mailto:editor@speechtherapy.org.nz)

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# First words Kupu tuatahi

**Katrina McGarr and Emma Quigan, NZSTA co-presidents**

*Taurewarewa ko te karu nui  
Taurewarewa ko te karu roa  
Taurewarewa  
Ka whati te tūātea  
Te puapua o te tūātea  
Ka tere ki te tai karukaru e  
Ka eke pānuku  
Ka eke Takaroa  
Haumi e, hui e, tāiki e  
Tēna koutou katoa,  
ngā mihi nui ki a koutou.*

This opening karakia is one shared by Kāi Tahu/Ngāi Tahu, and it was chosen to acknowledge our whakapapa and tipuna; as well as for the meaning which is to call forth momentum to help progress forward. It was appropriate to start our time with a karakia that acknowledges who we are, and gives us strength to continue moving forward in guiding our profession.

*Link to karakia online, published by Ngāi Tahu:*

**[youtube.com/watch?v=NS94adHfNh8&list=PLU3heWi5nDdIY8fZnLe4R7CZ0E7q2uqOt&index=6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NS94adHfNh8&list=PLU3heWi5nDdIY8fZnLe4R7CZ0E7q2uqOt&index=6)**

Ngā mihi Annette. We wish to acknowledge you for your commitment and passion for the Speech-Language Therapy profession. Whilst working alongside you on the board, conversations have led to new initiatives and change. Your value of connection and relationships has influenced us and how we approach the role of co-president of the NZSTA in continuing to put people first.

Last year at the wānanga in Ohinemutu, Rotorua, we sang as a group “ka koekoe te kōkō, ka ketekete te kakā, ka kukū te kererū, ka tangi hoki ahau” – each bird has its own sound, its own call, together we make up a chorus and I too call out. There were so many beautiful reflections from this waiata, and one that we are drawing on is the beauty of community and kotahitanga. This was part of the inspiration of accepting a joint co-presidency, to use our differences as the strengths that allow us to work in a partnership and balance what each other can offer to the profession. ●



**Katrina** lives and works in Christchurch, starting her career working in the community with people living with dementia. She currently works at the University of Canterbury as clinical educator and is passionate about supporting ākonga Māori entering our universities.



**Emma** is based in Auckland, with a background working alongside pēpi, tamariki and whānau. She has recently returned to where she graduated and joined the team at Massey University as the work-integrated learning coordinator within the speech-language therapy programme. She has been involved in kōrero around indigenising our practice, and is driven to lift the speech-language therapy profession in New Zealand.

# First words

## Kupu tuatahi

Hana Tuwhare, NZSTA Māori and Cultural Development Portfolio

Tēnā koutou katoa,

*Ka mimiti te puna i Taumārere*

*Ka toto te puna i Hokianga*

*Ka toto te puna i Taumārere*

*Ka mimiti te puna i Hokianga*

*When the spring of  
Taumārere is empty*

*The spring of  
Hokianga is full*

*When the spring of  
Taumārere is full*

*The spring of  
Hokianga is empty*

This whakatauāki from my Ngāpuhi ancestor, Rāhiri, draws on the imagery of two rivers, Hokianga in the west and Taumārere in the east, to show that what happens in one river affects the other. This whakatauāki demonstrates how the destinies of these two rivers are intertwined and represents an alliance

of Ngāpuhi in the east and west of Te Tai Tokerau. The whakatauāki is a reminder that when we work together, we are able to build strength and influence.

The whakatauāki also reminds me that the destinies of Māori and Tauīwi / non-Māori are also intertwined and that finding ways to support each other as SLTs will benefit everyone. At the moment, there is a swell of enthusiasm for developing cultural competency within our profession. While it is incredibly exciting and hopeful to witness the excitement of Tauīwi, it also means that our small group of Māori SLTs are put under the pump to support many kaupapa.

After our first Māori SLT wānanga last year, we are now working more collectively and exploring how we support many kaupapa in a long-term, sustainable way. Therefore, the focus for my role within the Māori and Cultural Development portfolio will be on strengthening our Māori SLTs to feel supported and flourishing as Māori – so that firstly, we can build on our knowledge, skills and relationships, and secondly, support wider kaupapa.

Some of the ways you can support our small puna / spring of Māori SLTs is by continuing to build critical thinking skills around racism within your specific areas of expertise. Our new website will have lots of ideas and resources so keep a lookout for this. I encourage Tauīwi SLTs to seek cultural guidance from cultural support workers within your workplace, the whānau you work with, and Māori in other professions. With your support we can continue to strengthen our profession in Aotearoa. ●



**Hana** is a community activator at Talking Matters, with a kaupapa to build oral language in the first 1000 days. As a second language learner of Te Reo Māori she is passionate about decolonising and recentering matauranga Māori.

# NZSTA happenings

Some of our recent Association happenings at a glance...

**AUG-NOV**



**Board meetings**

**7 September** in Christchurch – Ōtautahi

**25 November** in Auckland – Tāmaki Makaurau

**18-25 SEP**



**Speech-language Therapy Awareness Week**

Theme: Aroha  
Nationwide

**5-6 SEP**



**NZSTA Symposium 2022**

Theme: Titiro Whakamua – Looking to the future  
Christchurch – Ōtautahi

**20-24 AUG 2023**



**32nd World Congress of the IALP**

Theme: Together Towards Tomorrow  
Auckland – Tāmaki Makaurau



## Notice / call for contributions

Assoc Prof Gloria Olness and Prof Hanna Ulatowska in Texas are compiling a piece of work surrounding recovery from aphasia based on in-depth analysis of lived experiences written in the form of biographies/autobiographies of individuals with aphasia from around the world. If you have any clients with aphasia who have written (auto) biographies Gloria would love to hear from you.

She is also looking for the following book, which is out of print:

Owen, W. (1993). *The Road Back: A Stroke Victim's Recovery*. Little Hills Press.

If anyone has a copy they are willing to share, please contact **Gloria.Olness@unt.edu**

# Working in communities with cultural and linguistic diversity

Joanne Richardson, speech-language therapist, Ministry of Education (Wellington Region)

Reflection is essential in the work we do if we are to employ best practice, and if we are to work in an informed, collaborative, respectful, enquiring, and enthusiastic way. Reflection is often hard won.

This year, I was given the opportunity to spend six months looking at the support provided by the Ministry of Education for children and whānau who are culturally and linguistically diverse. The study was conducted in the Wellington region, with reference to the whole of Aotearoa New Zealand. It involved field research amongst therapists and managers, conversations with several teams inside and outside of MoE, and a research review. The outcomes were a report and several resources, aimed at supporting ongoing growth for teams working with whānau and teaching teams, and developing collaboration with other professionals.

Nationally, StatisticsNZ and Statistica provide figures which show annual increases of refugees and migrants,

and other immigrants (except for the pandemic lockdowns when immigration was curbed – further information is available upon request in our report). In the Wellington region, schools may have up to 22 or more different cultural groups amongst their students, and these cultural groups often do not correspond with one language – for example, ‘Chinese’ as a broader cultural category includes a great deal of linguistic diversity. As Aotearoa New Zealand’s cultural and linguistic diversity continues to increase and strengthen, there is increasing need for those of us working in fields of communication and learning to be aware of how we are supporting the wellbeing, inclusion, learning, and community contributions of tamariki, rangatahi, and their whānau from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This is particularly true for those of us in the communication and learning space who are from European/Pākehā and English-speaking backgrounds. The report that emerged from my reflection and research is particular to managers and speech-language therapists in MoE Learning Support. However, its broader recommendation is far wider – when there are challenges in acquiring knowledge, support for professionals,

and tools to use, there is pressure to upskill to provide appropriate support with cultural humility and safety.

One element of the report reviews screening processes for access to MoE services. Although some aspects of the report are specific to MoE, the following recommendations are important for all departments or groups employing speech-language therapists, and those in private practice:

- The need to work with interpreters and listen to families with respect
- The need to take a sociocultural approach
- The need to make decisions that consider diversity and do not assume difficulty based on uninformed measures
- The need for specialist support and intentional teaching practices to identify challenges early, rather than adopt the “wait and see” approach.

It is recommended that assessment be carried out in the home language and in English. Two of the most prolific researchers in this field, Dr Sean Pert (consultant speech-language therapist and senior clinical lecturer, University of Manchester) and Professor



Photo reference: He Pikorua – Building and Growing Cultural Competence, [hepikorua.education.govt.nz/how-we-work/building-and-growing-cultural-competence](http://hepikorua.education.govt.nz/how-we-work/building-and-growing-cultural-competence)

Sharynne McLeod (professor of speech and language acquisition, Charles Sturt University), are developing specific language and speech assessments in several languages, and importantly looking at approaches. Other researchers also of course contribute to this field (references available upon request).

The sociocultural approach, which involves building whanaungatanga relationships and learning as much as possible about the family's culture, beliefs, and language/s spoken, is considered best practice. This is where an attitude of humility and enquiry is essential. Regarding specific assessment, the Dynamic Assessment approach (references available upon request), carried out through play and relaxed interaction, is also recommended. It allows the observation of **how** a child is learning, and therefore the functionality of their skills acquisition within their whānau, community, and learning environment. Standardised tests are not considered appropriate as they do not tend to be normed on culturally and linguistically diverse populations, unless

they are designed for a specific group (e.g. resources from McLeod & Pert). Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds should only be measured against themselves, and the next steps and strategies for intervention should be specific to each child and their cultural and linguistic background.

The MoE has developed processes focused on fostering whanaungatanga, making space for the agency of families in designing curriculums at early childhood centres, and enabling whānau to participate in their children's education. It is easy to see how internationally – and locally-sourced resources can be embedded in our practice, so that whānau in our communities who seek help for their children with communication and learning challenges may be better served. This is ongoing and exciting work. ●

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Please contact **Claire Winward**, [claire.winward@education.govt.nz](mailto:claire.winward@education.govt.nz), for further information on the report, as well as MoE policies and processes regarding culturally and linguistically diverse children and whānau.

# Remembering Vanessa Parmar

Angelina Stephens and Shannon Hennig

We are sad to acknowledge the sudden passing of Vanessa Parmar of Connect Ability, private practitioner based in Hawke's Bay. Vanessa's speech-language therapy career began in the UK in 2003 after she graduated from the University of Central England (now Birmingham City University). She moved to Aotearoa in 2009 and worked at the Ministry of Education before moving on to Explore and then into Special Education, taking on the role of Team Leader at Kowhai School. Vanessa then took the leap into private practice, starting Let's Talk, before rebranding to Connect Ability to align more with the core values of her clinical practice. Vanessa quickly grew her business and employed a therapy assistant, Music Therapist and more recently welcomed a second speech-language therapist. Vanessa was passionate about her work and a strong advocate for children and adults with complex communication needs. She was known for her ability to connect with her clients, her innovative approach, and her belief that communication is a right of all people.

Vanessa was committed to raising the profile of private practitioners and invested a lot of her own time supervising others. She was instrumental to the current strategic plan of the ATANZ board, and well regarded on the board.

The loss of such a wonderful SLT will be felt far and wide. Vanessa always had time for her clients and colleagues and she is greatly missed.

*"We were lucky to have Vanessa to work with my autistic son for about two years, from when he was six. She was fun and creative, helping my son to develop his communication and also sharing with us useful techniques for the whole family to use to encourage his speech between her visits. He really has made enormous progress with his speech!"*

# Culturally responsive dysphagia assessment and management in Aotearoa

Natalie Shackleton, PhD student, University of Canterbury

## Research genesis

Throughout my undergraduate degree, I was constantly frustrated by the paucity of Māori and Pacific research in the field of speech-language therapy.

It is well documented that Māori and Pacific people are overrepresented in the Aotearoa stroke statistics (Robson & Harris, 2007; Southwick et al., 2012) and experience stroke 10-15 years younger than non-Māori and non-Pacific people (Bonita et al., 1997; Feigen et al., 2006; Feigen et al., 2015). Despite a dysphagia incidence rate of 37-78% in the stroke population (Martino et al., 2005), and significant stroke disparities in Aotearoa, few studies have focused on Māori experiences with dysphagia and cultural considerations in dysphagia management (Manna et al., 2003; Meechan & Brewer, 2021). When I was given the opportunity to complete an honours dissertation, I wanted to contribute to this gap in the dysphagia literature. As tangata Tiriti, I recognise that I have a responsibility to uphold

the rights of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and to contribute to growing the body of Indigenous knowledge and the decolonisation of our profession.

## Methods

A rōpū of Māori, Pacific, and Pākehā researchers, clinicians, and Kaumātua developed the kaupapa of this research, which was to explore and document the experiences of Māori and Pacific people in Aotearoa, with dysphagia secondary to stroke and their whānau. A phenomenological approach was combined with Kaupapa Māori Research (Smith, 1997) for Māori participants, and a Talanoa research paradigm (Vaiolēti, 2006) for Pacific participants. Interviews explored participants' experiences with stroke and dysphagia assessment and intervention. The tiaki model and the power sharing model (Smith, 1992) were the two central Kaupapa Māori Research models used, emphasising supervision by Māori as well as collaboration on the research kaupapa, methods, and data analysis. Pacific researchers and SLTs also collaborated on the methodology for Pacific participants, and contributed to data collection and analysis.



The Fonofale Model (Pulotu-Endemann) and Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie), drawings by Emma Wollum

## Findings

Three participants were included in this study: one Māori stroke survivor and their whānau member, and a Samoan aiga member. In the Māori cohort, these main themes emerged: returning to an oral diet is tough, communication is essential, and the inclusion of whānau is of great importance. In the Samoan cohort, the main themes included: food is not the same when blended, dysphagia is a barrier to caring for aiga, and communication is essential.

Mr. Tahi's story (from the Māori cohort) highlighted the importance of addressing te taha hinengaro in dysphagia management. Mr. Tahi experienced dysphagia in the acute phase of stroke recovery, and returned to an oral diet following a VFSS. During the period of being nil by mouth, he felt unable to express concerns about his swallowing difficulties, due to a tracheostomy and acquired aphasia. This made Mr. Tahi wonder if he would ever eat again, significantly impacting his hinengaro. Mr. Tahi's hauora significantly improved when he was moved to a room with a window. Although the patient's environment does not usually fall within

the scope of an SLT, addressing other aspects of a patient's environment may improve their hauora and impact their ability to engage in therapy and thus facilitate recovery.

Concurrent dysphagia and communication disorders were a significant barrier to providing care for aiga. In the Pacific cohort, Mr. Tolu described his experience providing care for an aiga member with dysphagia and aphasia secondary to stroke. He explained that when his aiga member would reject softened foods, it was difficult to know whether they didn't like the softened foods, or whether they were experiencing discomfort. Mr. Tolu also expressed that diet modification was unpleasant for both the patient and the person preparing the food, and a barrier to being able to provide meals in the hospital. Mr. Tolu's community brought many foods to the hospital; however, they were limited by diet texture recommendations. Mr. Tolu preferred to provide his aiga with naturally soft Samoan foods, such as banana soup or boil-up, rather than blending up meats and vegetables.

“

As tangata Tiriti, I recognise that I have a responsibility to uphold the rights of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and to contribute to growing the body of Indigenous knowledge and the decolonisation of our profession.

“ Qualitative research is essential in increasing our understanding of patient care and how clinicians can provide dysphagia assessment and management in a culturally responsive and meaningful way.

## Conclusions

Qualitative research is essential in increasing our understanding of patient care and how clinicians can provide dysphagia assessment and management in a culturally responsive and meaningful way. Inherent to conducting research in a small country is the issue of sample size, and thus the findings of this study cannot be generalised to the Aotearoa population. However, this study highlighted that integration of the following practices would significantly improve experiences:

1

**Including aiga and whānau in conversations about dysphagia management, and extending education to the wider aiga**

2

**Exploring foods in the patient’s diet that would naturally align with the texture recommendations**

3

**Utilising Indigenous health models, such as Te Whare Tapa Whā and The Fonofale Model**

4

**Integrating the patient’s own language/s into clinical engagements and resources**

Dysphagia assessment can be initiated with a simple question: **tell me what foods you enjoy**. This question would open a discussion for everyday eating habits, and give SLTs a deeper understanding of a patient’s food preferences, regardless of their ethnicity or cultural background. ●



**Natalie Shackleton**  
BSLP(Hons), Adv ASB Tchg

PhD Student, The University of  
Canterbury Rose Centre for  
Stroke Recovery and Research

## Acknowledgements

I acknowledge the mana of the participants in this study and the research whānau, for the mātauranga they brought, and am privileged to have been included in this collaborative research. I walk alongside this research project as a teina and recognise that the rangatiratanga of this research remains with tangata whenua and Pacific people in Aotearoa.

*References available on request*

# Phonological awareness and language: Foundations for literacy

Nicole Kornelson, PSLT (NZSTA, CSHBC)

As a school-based speech-language therapist currently working in Canada, each school year starts with kindergarten screenings of speech, language, and phonological awareness skills.

In Canada, kindergarten is for all students aged-or-turning five, and speech-language therapist positions are funded and hired at the local school district level. By grade one, students are typically six years old. New entry screening is valuable time spent on identifying areas for further support, and on informing educators about classroom trends in the year ahead.

If you're like me, during phonological awareness screenings, you've noticed how often ākongā even older than seven years old may confidently tell you the first sound in *pōtāe* is "puh-puh-poe-tae" or "p". When asked "what is that red thing Superman flies with?", many new entry learners will just as enthusiastically say "...red!". It's in these moments of assessment that I'm often most animated. Their moments of misinterpretation

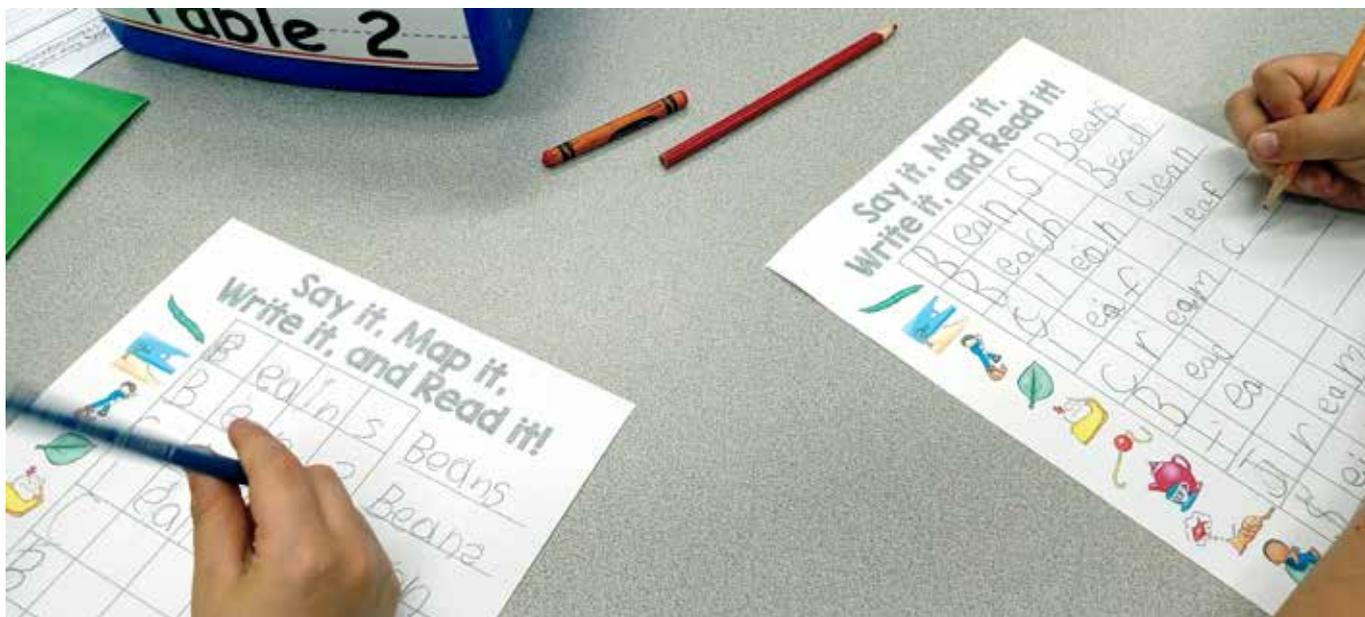


Materials used for phonological awareness in Structured Literacy, photo by Nicole Kornelson

become my signal to use hand gestures, giving maximal supports for the language needed to be understood, in order for them to be successful at the task. Early literacy skills require a great deal of language comprehension. Learners must distinguish the difference between the hou (sound) and the reta (letter), as well as hou and reta combinations. They must also know more abstract sequence words such as first, then, and last. Language required for literacy is highly similar to

the language needed for following directions and negotiating transitions in a classroom, or story re-telling.

There's a lot to unpack here, when we consider the strengths an SLT can bring while collaborating on caseload and classroom needs as support specialists. As clinicians, we assess barriers impacting performance and participation in many areas, and identify the level of support a student requires for success.



Materials used for phonological awareness in Structured Literacy, photo by Nicole Kornelson

We often do so explicitly – for example, explicitly modelling how /sun/ starts with the “sss” sound (not the “suh” sound). We use multisensory prompts to support the concepts being targeted, including mirrors, manipulatives such as Gail Gillon Phonological Awareness tiles, and verbal and visual feedback. Most importantly, we do this in a systematic/cumulative way. We often follow a hierarchy, and increase complexity as skills are achieved. We typically know what our next step is, what is mastered, and where to go next.

Structured Literacy is defined as just that: explicit, systematic/cumulative, and multisensory. While clinicians may

not use the term, we implement the approaches. Deeper definitions include multisensory teaching aligning with a student’s academic journey – focusing on morphology, syntax, vocabulary, and etymology. These all work to support repeated exposure for efficient spelling (encoding), reading (decoding), and comprehension skills. Some programmes are more scripted than others.

One feature of Structured Literacy is the teaching of definitions and coding to help ākonga identify sound changes at the syllable level. Consider the definition of an open syllable: “An open syllable ends in one vowel. The vowel in an open, accented syllable is long; code it with

a macron. Long vowels say their name.” While Structured Literacy rules and definitions apply to the English language, we can also do the mahi to incorporate Te Reo. For example, we can use the word *pōtae* or phrase *tō pōtae* when teaching the open syllable definition and examples of its use in language.

A few years ago here in Aotearoa, I curiously asked a lunch room of primary educators “when do you teach short vowels?” No one had an answer on when certain vowels were explicitly taught. Structured Literacy gives the answer with scope and sequence. These road maps also help identify where students may be struggling between low attendance or

learning difficulties too. We can't expect Year 3 reading levels to be achieved if the differences between short vowels [i] and [e], for example, are sound awareness skills slowing readers down as low as the CVC level.

A wonderful mentor of mine once told me research typically takes seventeen years to reach practice, mainly due to barriers of how and when to respond (Morris, Wooding & Grant; 2011). Structured Literacy is no exception. Fortunately, evidence-based practice equally values the expertise of service providers and the experiences of ākongā and their whānau. This precious piece of practice ensures that those most informed on each classroom's unique needs will appropriately collaborate on meeting those needs, in both how and when. I cannot express enough whakawhetai to leaders who have made space for my own professional autonomy, and the collaborative experiences with educators to meet both class and caseload needs together from our different skillsets in both Aotearoa and Canada. •

Morris, Z. S., Wooding, S., & Grant, J. (2011). The answer is 17 years, what is the question: understanding time lags in translational research. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 104(12), 510–520. doi.org/10.1258/jrsm.2011.110180



### Scope and sequence charts are available online by IDA accredited sources and professional training programs such as:

- Orton Gillingham, Neuhaus, Wilson



### Books:

- *Equipped For Reading Success* (David A. Kilpatrick)
- *Comprehensive Literacy For All: Teaching Students with Significant Disabilities to Read and Write* (Karen Erickson and David Koppenhaver)
- *Speech to Print: Language Essentials for Teachers* (Louisa Cook Moats)



### Online resources:

- **sarahsnippets.com** (including scope and sequence chart)
- IG **@droppinknowledgewithheidi** and **@literacy.edventures**
- **campbellcreatesreaders.com**



### NZ-based resources and professional development supports:

- Gail Gillon Phonological Awareness Program and pro-d options
- **lizkaneliteracy.co.nz** for workshops
- **temata.school.nz/Parent-Information/Structured-Literacy**
- **readingteacherstoptentools.com**

# Huh? What? The role of Communication Assistants

Deborah Henderson, Otago Branch Council, NZ Law Society

*I sit at the hospital.*

*I wait for my specialist appointment.*

*I hear my name.*

The specialist quickly begins talking, already under time pressure, detailing and outlining the procedure and what is going to happen before, during, and after. Copious amounts of information come at me, with terms I haven't heard before and no explanation of those medical terms. Numerous questions are asked of me, back-to-back, with minimal clarification about what relevance they have. Little opportunity is given for my own questions. Having finished filling in their forms, the appointment ends.

*I walk away.*

*I feel overwhelmed, uncertain and stupid.*

*I have questions.*

After the above incident, I realised that perhaps people feel the same way as I did, at my medical appointment, when they have to come to court. Entering an unfamiliar place, dealing with people they have never seen before, following an unknown process and hearing words they would never use in their normal life (think 'remand', 'adjournment', 'bail'). There is also the uncertainty of outcome. After my medical appointment, I decided to work harder to make my clients' experience at court as easy and simple

as possible – so that when they walked away, they wouldn't feel as I did leaving the hospital.

As lawyers, we need to be great communicators. We are comfortable with the legal arena, and the specialised legal language used in that arena. We need to be able to pass on information – often lots of information – that is rarely easy, straightforward, or simple to explain. Our challenge is to make sure that we communicate efficiently so that the receiver understands everything.

I have learnt a lot from seeing communication assistants (CA) in action. CAs are now being used more regularly in court. They are often speech-language therapists who assess clients to see if they need any help with communicating at court. The client may need concepts interpreted in plain English, a visual description of what is going to be happening, or advocacy for more breaks during the court process to facilitate better concentration.

After watching a CA work, I often now use diagrams to explain court processes. I am now more aware that the concept of time can be very difficult. With young people, I might use the idea of sleeps, rather than days, to reconceptualise time. I also try to reframe my questions so they are more straightforward.

It is still a work in progress. I met with a client recently, gave them all the information in a plain English format, and walked away thinking I had communicated well. I thought they had understood me. It turns out that answering 'yes' to all questions can be an indicator of poor understanding. They were later assessed and given a CA.

To get a CA, a client is referred for an assessment. The Court can request one or on the request of Counsel or Police/other agencies. The referral form can be found on the website of [moretalk.co.nz](http://moretalk.co.nz) – the agency that covers Dunedin (another helpful website is [talkingtroublenz.org](http://talkingtroublenz.org), which shows ways to communicate information). Following an assessment, the CA provides a report to the court about the needs of the client. If required, the CA attends all court appearances with the client, to make sure they understand what is going on and to make sure all their needs are met.

Tips from a CA include: slowing down generally with all explanations about processes, pausing after each idea to allow clients to process what's been said, and never asking 'Do you understand?' – rather 'Tell me what you understand about today?'

The toolkits on **theadvocatesgateway.org** also provide ideas about how to frame questions to make them easier to understand.

Examples of this are:

- **Using simpler language and plain English wherever possible:** Asking 'Who was there when that happened?' rather than 'Who was present at the incident?'
- **Avoiding tag questions:** Asking 'Did you go to the neighbour's house?' rather than 'You went to the neighbour's house, didn't you?'
- **Avoiding figures of speech or idioms:** Asking 'Did you and Jane agree about things?' rather than 'Did you and Jane see eye to eye?'

“

Our challenge is to make sure that we communicate efficiently so that the receiver understands everything.

Try rewriting the second paragraph of this article in simpler, plain English – what alternatives are available for terms such as 'copious' and 'procedure'? Perhaps also when meeting with a client, you could challenge yourself to streamline your delivery of information, and provide additional modes of delivering the content of that information (e.g. symbols or a visual guide).

If our clients feel heard and empowered because they understand the information we have given them, then we are great communicators and we have made a difference. ●



Materials used by Communication Assistants, photo by Bridget McArthur

# Autism terminology resource

Autism NZ Research and Advocacy

The language we use when we talk about autism is powerful. Our use of language can help change attitudes towards autism and towards Autistic people. Using the language preferred by the majority of the Autistic community has an important role in empowering and supporting Autistic people in Aotearoa.

The predominant terminology used for autism and Autistic people may appear dynamic and evolving. In many cases, however, the shift in the terminology used reflects the increased recognition and adoption of terminology that the Autistic community has advocated for and preferred for years. As an example, Autistic advocate Jim Sinclair published his support of identity-first language (“Autistic person”, rather than person-first language like “person with autism”) in 1999.

In some cases, the use of potentially offensive language has been encouraged within professional contexts, as it was thought (primarily by non-disabled people) that language like “person with autism” was less stigmatising and disempowering than Autistic-preferred language. This emphasis on certain ways of talking about autism within professional communities meant that parents and carers adopted the same terminology they heard from professionals, and language was

propagated that many Autistic people found inaccurate, condescending, or even offensive. The Autism Terminology Resource is part of an ongoing effort by Autistic people to make those around them aware of the way that they prefer to be talked about, and the language that makes them feel valued, listened to, and empowered.

The Autism Terminology Resource has been developed by Autistic people throughout Aotearoa, led and coordinated by Ruth Monk, an Autistic scholar and member of the Autism New Zealand Community Advisory Group. Autism New Zealand has proudly supported the development of this resource, and the Autism New Zealand Community Advisory Group has provided ongoing feedback. Support and feedback provided by autistic advisors from Altogether Autism, ASK Trust, and Te Pou Disability has also played a vital role in developing the resource, along with contributions from members of the wider New Zealand Autistic community.

The Terminology Resource is a living document that will continue to be updated to remain consistent with the language preferred by the majority of Autistic New Zealanders. As language preferences can be highly personal, it is best to ask Autistic individuals about their own preferred terminology.

The resource is freely available from the Autism New Zealand website and can be accessed here: [autismnz.org.nz/autism-new-zealand-terminology-guide](https://autismnz.org.nz/autism-new-zealand-terminology-guide)



“

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## Are you an Autistic artist?

We are inviting Autistic artists of all ages to have their illustrations featured in this terminology resource.

Illustrations may relate to:

- 
- 
- Autistic Terminology
  - Autistic Experiences
  - Autistic Identity
  - Neurodiversity

*Koha will be offered to artists whose illustrations are included in this resource. All Autistic artists who submit illustrations will go in the draw to win a \$100 voucher.*

If you are Autistic or if you know an Autistic person who would be interested in submitting an illustration for this resource, please get in touch with Autism New Zealand at [research@autismnz.org.nz](mailto:research@autismnz.org.nz) for information.

# Working outside the box: speech-language therapist as Childcare Centre Director

Samara Strugnell, Ako Adventures



Daily life at Ako  
Adventures, photo  
by Samara Strugnell

“ I wanted to ‘be the change I wished to see’ in an industry that seems very stretched. There are some amazing centres out there, but I wanted to see if I could establish co-enrolment within a wider community context.

As speech-language therapists I believe we can use our skills and knowledge to do amazing things in our communities – whether in paid or unpaid roles. The following is a brief discussion about the work I am trying to carry out in a private preschool in South Auckland.

After I graduated, I worked for nine years at Kelston Deaf Education Centre (Ko Taku Reo), learning a lot from my wonderful SLT colleagues. I then worked at the Ministry of Education as an advisor on Deaf children. Many of the skills SLTs have are useful in the AODC role. I enjoyed six years in this role, and then completed further postgraduate study.

During my work, I became very aware of a lack of preschool options for children who are D/deaf (capitalised Deaf signifying cultural identity, and lowercase deaf signifying the medical and audiological condition of hearing loss)

in South Auckland. I had read about the issues for D/deaf children “alone in the mainstream”, and the call for “language nests” from Dr Rachel McKee of Victoria University of Wellington for school age children who are D/deaf or hard of hearing. I even contacted Dr McKee to clarify the NZSL sign for ‘inclusion’ (which at the time was the same sign for ‘mainstream’). The concept of inclusion was not always regarded as particularly inclusive, as mainstreaming can mean a lack of access to NZSL.

I also noted through my work some interesting differences in the resourcing of some preschools – whether this resource was the environment, the physical resources, teacher-student ratios, or the investment into the teaching team and their access to quality PLD opportunities.

All of these influences inspired me (and my husband) to buy a childcare centre in an area of South Auckland that experiences significant child poverty levels. I wanted to ‘be the change I wished to see’ in an industry that seems very stretched. There are some amazing centres out there, but I wanted to see if

I could establish co-enrolment within a wider community context. Co-enrolment is a term used within Deaf Education – where children attend a mainstream setting, but have support from specialist teachers alongside their regular teachers. Both the planning and the curriculum are delivered ideally by both a mainstream teacher, and a teacher who specialises in teaching children who are D/deaf.

Given our location, I also wanted to have an explicit focus on language – which I believe should be explicit in all centres, as these are the critical years for our tamariki developing language. Our first step was investment in team development. I engaged with local MoE representatives, who supported two of our staff to join ABC and Beyond. We are also benefiting from involvement in the Incredible Years initiative, and we have funded four places to the Early Childhood Council conference.

We say to our families (on our enrolment forms and on our website) that an SLT works alongside kaiako. However, this has not been traditional therapy or consultation, and often takes the form of quick chats with whānau at drop offs

or pick ups. COVID has also presented a barrier to developing really authentic relationships with whānau. While we hope to support whānau at our centre with information sharing and strategies about how they can support language at home, we haven't really mastered this yet. We have been engaging with various relevant groups within the education sector – including Auckland Parents of Deaf Children (APODC), First Signs, Hearing House, Ko Taku Reo, Ministry of Education, and the Massey University Specialist Teaching (Deaf and Hard of Hearing) programme coordinator.

Six months down the track, we have four children who have various levels of hearing loss, representing just under ten percent of our enrolled children. We have employed a teacher who uses NZSL as her primary language, and we have a centre manager who trained as an early intervention teacher. We are fortunate to have a great deal of cultural and linguistic diversity on our team, including kaiako and support staff who identify as Samoan, Cook Islander, Māori, Indian, and Korean. Parents can often find a member of staff to speak to them in their native language, if this is more comfortable for them.



Daily life at Ako Adventures, photo by Samara Strugnell

As an SLT working a bit outside the box, I am trying to mentally navigate this space. In my role as a childcare centre director, my focus is on promoting language and communication to tamariki who may not have a specific diagnosis, but who will benefit from explicit language strategies being incorporated into their learning spaces. ●



I would be very interested in connecting with other SLTs to discuss ways to navigate the childcare space – if anyone has done similar work, I would love to connect with you. I welcome collegial discussions at

**[samara@akoadventures.co.nz](mailto:samara@akoadventures.co.nz)**

# “Zooming” into parents’ lunchrooms

Evie Gillan, Te Mahau, Ministry of Education

Our collective familiarity with online meetings has allowed greater possibilities for whānau collaboration.

There’s the family member whose cold symptoms in the current climate mean they had better not attend the school meeting face-to-face, but they’re up to contributing from afar. A different meeting that was previously only with Mum, but Dad can come too if it’s online – he can join during his lunch break. Less waiting to hear from busy SENCOs about room availability to meet with a child’s whānau. Caregivers, come as you are – join from your work meeting room, your kitchen, or your car.

The insight that families and whānau can provide into the communication of tamariki is undeniable. And as we know, the more people onboard with the plan to support the child, the better. In one recent situation I experienced, I had a scheduled workshop at a school where the child’s caregiver couldn’t attend at the last minute due to cold symptoms. She was able to join via a Teams link for a portion of the session, leading to valuable discussion that couldn’t have happened without her.

One particular challenge for this child at school was difficulty in recounting events. The teacher and teacher aide were struggling with where to start to help the child communicate, without knowing what the child had been up to recently. The child would recount similar events and activities during each writing session, and the teacher and teacher aide were unsure whether the child had done the same activities again, or if the child was repeating the topics they had been supported to recount during the previous session. The child’s caregiver gave valuable insight into recent adventures and experiences on weekends, new topics that had never been initiated by this child. For example, the teacher was amazed to find that the child had been out on a boat on the weekend! This discussion with the child’s caregiver enabled regular communication to be set up between home and school, for photo sharing of recent activities. It allowed access to a new world of conversations with the student, as well as allowing for easier sharing at classroom news time and writing. Photo sharing was even added to the family’s chore chart, to account for busy family life.

Now, the child’s teenage sibling regularly emails the teacher with photos of something the child did on the weekend! The plan for photo sharing was a simple and easily-implemented solution, facilitated by the caregiver being able to join the kōrero. Thanks to a remote meeting option, whānau voice was valued and collaboration was easy.

We know how important relationships are in our work, and it can be hard to beat face-to-face meetings for relationship building. At the same time, flexibility is also an important attribute in the SLT kete, including the ability to use remote meetings when they suit. Remote meetings won’t work for every family, and access to a stable internet connection and a suitable device is a privilege. I won’t be throwing away in-person meetings altogether, but lives are busy. In my experience, a wider range of options for connecting with family members, especially those who work full-time, represents a definite win. Parents, caregivers, and whānau – I care about what you have to say, so if you don’t mind, let’s Zoom in your lunch break. ●

# Cyber security: Keeping your business and people safe online

Siobhan Molloy, NZSTA Executive Director

At a recent seminar, Nadia Yousef from CERT NZ discussed the best actions you can take to keep your business and clients safe from cyber security threats.

Cyber security is the **application of technologies, processes and controls to protect systems, networks, programs, devices and data from cyber-attacks**. It aims to reduce the risk of cyber attacks and protect against the unauthorised exploitation of systems, networks and technologies.

Vulnerabilities keep being discovered, and software is continuously updated to reduce such exploitation.

In New Zealand, the primary threats are:

- Phishing and credential harvesting
- Scams and other frauds
- Ransomware attacks (often because of successful phishing and credential harvesting)

## How do you stay on top?

1

### Upsize your passwords

Have LONG, STRONG, and UNIQUE for each of your online accounts.

Do NOT use personal information such as birthdates, names of pets, children, street names, etc.

Keep your passwords safe by having a password manager. You can find a range of password managers in your app store. The password manager app allows you to save all your passwords in one place – and need only one LONG, STRONG, and UNIQUE password to access all your passwords. For example, run four words together (and put two-factor password authentication with your access to your password vault).

Check if any of your passwords or email addresses have been compromised at **haveibeenpwned.com**

2

### Add multi-factor authentication

While adding an extra layer of security by asking you for a code or responding to a security question might seem clunky and annoying, the gold standard suggests that this reduces your risk of compromise significantly. Increasingly some platforms are building in two-factor authentication because it makes it harder for cyber attackers to work around this.

3

### Update your devices

Keeping your software and device updated is one of the easiest and most effective ways of protecting yourself and your business from a cyber attack.

Update all your devices – and your apps. Delete those apps you no longer need.

“ Cyber security is the application of technologies, processes and controls to protect systems, networks, programs, devices and data from cyber-attacks.

4

### **Uphold privacy settings**

Protecting your privacy online means you have more control over where your personal information goes and who has access to it.

Share information only when you know who is asking for it.

Review your privacy settings on your social media platforms to only share with those you want to share with.

Avoid social media requests to answer personal questions such as – where did you go to school, your favourite colour, the name of your first pet etc., or add revealing information online.

Hackers may use this personal information to access your private accounts.

5

### **Other tips**

Potential dodgy emails and links – if you hover over the email and link addresses, you can see if there is an alternative email address or website behind the words.

Cyber insurance – this is a business decision. Talk to the agencies involved – think about whether this is helpful for your organisation. Consider what backup plans your organisation is if you are hacked. ●



## **Resources**

See Get Cyber Smart webpages: [cert.govt.nz/cybersmart](https://cert.govt.nz/cybersmart)

**Subscribe to Cyber Smart updates** (top menu on the website above) – this will ensure you stay in the loop when Cyber Smart Week (circa October 2022) partner emails start going out. Becoming a Cyber Smart Week Partner is free and in return for sharing this information with your members and audience, NZCert provide a range of useful resources to support you in spreading the good word. You might also find the advisories for businesses and individuals which will keep them updated on any threats or information for business people.

# Contact details

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Please consider contributing content to *Communication Matters* about any aspect of our profession. Feel free to discuss with Emma Wollum, Editor, any ideas you have.  
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