INTERVIEWS WITH THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS
BRAIN DAY 2016
DYSPHAGIA DIET STANDARDISATION
The year is now well underway and Easter has been past in a flash. For many of us, the new year means new beginnings: new goals, new perspectives, maybe new jobs. I hope that your goals are still in sight, and for those recent graduates among us, that you are well on your way to finding a new job, or perhaps already settling into your new role.

The new year has also brought changes for me: I am now working at TalkLink Trust as an Assistive Technology Technician. My role involves managing and maintaining AAC equipment, and working with the team of Speech-language Therapists to provide communication devices to clients in a timely manner.

In this issue of Communication Matters, we have a spotlight on dysphagia: The National Dysphagia Study Days hosted in Christchurch last November were a success (p. 4), with over fifty Speech-language Therapists from across the country attending. Carly McPherson shares her experiences working as a new graduate in dysphagia management with adults with intellectual impairments (p. 5). We also learn about the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (p. 16), whose standards “promote consistent and accurate use of texture modification.”

This issue kicks off a series of interviews with the NZSTA Executive Council: We hear from Philippa Friary, President, about travel, challenges and opportunities for development, and getting involved as an NZSTA member (p. 6). Karen Brewer, Māori and Cultural Development Officer, talks about the profession’s desire to “better serve our Māori clients and whānau,” cultural competence and cultural safety, and being a Māori Health Researcher (p. 14).

This March saw Brain Day hosted at the University of Auckland (p. 3), a family-friendly event with interactive labs, performances, and seminars. Brain Day is now part of the broader Brain Awareness Week, featuring talks by a variety of experts, including Dr. Clare McCann of The University of Auckland.

If, like many of us, you work as part of a team, you will be interested to hear from Nina Sochon (p. 8), who discusses how being a Speech-language Therapist provided her with foundational skills to lead teams to high performance, and what Speech-language Therapists and other Allied Health professionals can learn from high-performing teams.

Included with this issue of Communication Matters, you will find a copy of the NZSTA’s Strategic Plan for 2016–2020 and its new vision, values, and mission statements. As the colder weather approaches, I’m sure you will have time to sit down with a cup of hot tea, take a look over these documents, think about how they relate to your own practice, and consider joining in on some of the NZSTA’s current and upcoming projects.
Brain Day 2016

**WORDS: THE SPEECH SCIENCE TEAM, THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND**

Speech-language Therapy was very present at the recent Brain Awareness Week, hosted by the Centre for Brain Research at The University of Auckland, with the support of the Neurological Foundation of New Zealand. This year, Brain Day took the form of Your Amazing Brain: An Interactive Expo, and there were three public seminars with talks about our brain from a variety of experts.

Brain Awareness Week is an international campaign, initiated by the Dana Foundation of New York, to raise public awareness of the progress and benefits of brain research. In a series of public talks, experts, including Dr. Clare McCann from Speech Science, The University of Auckland, discussed our understanding of how the brain reacts to injury and disorder, and the implications of this for optimising rehabilitation and compensation. A selection of recordings from these events, including those about the developing brain, are available on the Centre for Brain Research website: https://www.fmhsc.auckland.ac.nz/en/faculty/cbr/brain-awareness-week-2016.html (or http://tx0.org/9i) or the Neurological Foundation of New Zealand YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCV1wFBDUJiBH2dHwIMi53g (or http://tx0.org/9j).

Brain Day was hosted for the first time at The University of Auckland’s Tāmaki Innovation Campus, which provided an atmosphere where visitors could flow between interactive labs, clinic tours, performances, and community talks. With an emphasis on living well, there were opportunities to hear about treatments both medical and holistic, including help from community groups and peers, such as the CeleBRation Choir and the University of Auckland’s Gavel Club. Children’s entertainer Suzy Cato launched the children’s activities, with a ‘brainy routine’ and a great deal of energy. The family focus was extremely successful, with whole families enjoying dance, song, and poi in the Autumn sun, and school-aged children enjoyed interactive scientific experiments and microscope viewing.

The CBR More Than Words Gavel Club and the Movers and Shakers Gavel Club facilitated interactive workshops entitled Talking for Your Brain. These workshops introduced the audience to the philosophy behind a gavel club and a typical agenda, including table topics (impromptu speeches), prepared speeches, and evaluations. These workshops were run by enthusiastic gavel club members and volunteers, and quickly had the audience up on their feet practising breathing exercises and giving speeches.

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It was with much excitement that we hosted the Third National Paediatric Speech Language Therapy Dysphagia Study Days in November 2015. Fifty-seven Speech-language Therapists representing health, community, and education services nationwide, descended on Christchurch for a professional development event that has become an annual fixture on the paediatric speech-language Therapy calendar.

This event was established in 2013 by Stephanie Jackson; Speech-language Therapist at Wellington Hospital. It was designed as a forum for Speech-language Therapists working with infants and children who have feeding difficulties and/or dysphagia with infants and children who have feeding difficulties and/or dysphagia as well as facilitating presentations and case studies, including many of the attendees engaging in local field and making a difference in people’s lives.

The event has evolved over the years to include presentations from interdisciplinary team members, as well as facilitated discussions on important topics of current interest. It is an excellent local professional development opportunity for those working in this area. The event had previously been held in Wellington and Auckland; in 2015 it was time for Christchurch to have its turn.

The event ran over two days, with an exciting mix of presenters, including Speech-language Therapists and interdisciplinary team members covering a wide variety of topics, including dietary integration, gastroesophageal reflux, feeding versus eating disorders, and nasopharyngeal airways. Tube weaning continues to be a hot topic, and this complex area was well-covered with a number of presentations and case studies, including one from the Interdisciplinary Feeding Team at Christchurch Hospital.

Facilitated discussions were a useful way to coordinate exchanges around important clinical considerations. Bianca Jackson, Speech-language Therapist and Professional Teaching Fellow at The University of Auckland, facilitated an exciting discussion regarding local level agreements between health and education—a highly relevant topic across the country. It was great to hear some case studies from Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health therapists who had worked collaboratively to manage complex cases as well as a new global initiative, citywide, to share expertise and ideas. The study days provided an opportunity for some informal networking, including many of the attendees engaging in local field and making a difference in people’s lives.

The experience has opened up the possibility of having Music Therapy as a permanent part of the neuro-rehabilitation setting in New Zealand. The experience has opened up the possibility of having Music Therapy as a permanent part of the neuro-rehabilitation setting in New Zealand.
What motivated you to become a Speech-language Therapist? Coming from Tarakani, I made the big trip south to Canterbury to study psychology. Being fresh from high school, I felt a bit disillusioned by the large lecture rooms and uncertain direction. Someone next door at the hostel was studying Speech, and I thought, “That sounds like me.” I’m interested in people, I’m interested in communication, I’m interested in being part of a collective, a professional group.

I really do believe we’ve got a role that enhances people’s lives, and it’s really a rewarding feeling that you can make a difference, and that you’re at the forefront of a profession which is changing, new, and innovative.

Can you tell me about going overseas to practice as a Speech-language Therapist? I ended up taking my first locum role on the Isle of Wight, and I knew where I wanted to work. I said, “I want to be somewhere I loved it. I did eventually move to London. It was a real pivotal point of my career, being in the United Kingdom. It gave me the confidence that I am coming with a great set of qualifications part of my career, being in the United Kingdom. It gave me the confidence that I am coming with a great set of qualifications and that you’re at the forefront of a profession which is changing, new, and innovative.

What did you bring back with you as a therapist? I came back realising that New Zealand is ahead of its game. There’s this perception that we’re small, we’re away from everything else, and so we’ve not up with the play as far as the latest technology, the latest practices, yet we are.

Also the concept of travelling does change you as a person. I learnt a lot about myself, what I value, and what drives me. I’d definitely recommend travelling to our graduates. We just want them to come back eventually. There’s a real opportunity for us to be engaging with our international New Zealanders that are working all over the world, and to be encouraging them back, with their knowledge and their new skills.

What professional development opportunities are available to Speech-language Therapists? In the Professional Development portfolio, I had the opportunity to introduce some e-learning modules to our members. We’ve had some wonderful uptake, particularly from our national Expert Advisors, who’ve put some great quality modules together.

Yet I also do strongly believe in the power of talking to people face-to-face. You pull together a room full of Speech-language Therapists, and the knowledge, the skill, and the potential in that room is incredible. It’s through that conversation that ideas come up, solutions are found, and alliances are formed.

We also hold annual professional development events. We have the Professional Development Symposium, which we run every two years, and then every other year is our three-day national conference, which is coming up on September 7-9 in Auckland. Thanks to Claire Winward and the Conference Planning Committee for all their hard work in pulling this conference together.

Our New Zealand university programmes graduate approximately 100 great Speech-language Therapists each year. We have collaborated on a research project which has been written up by Jaimee Brownfield to understand more about the early career experiences of our graduates. We are hoping to present this study at the September conference.

While it is wonderful that our profession has transferable skills that enable us to go into areas like communication and allied health, it would be a shame if we were really losing this talent from our profession. I think the key here is having quality supervision and support, and not being scared to say, “I’m needing more of a challenge.” It’s important to have challenges to keep moving us forward.

Can you tell me about your involvement in inter-professional education? It’s a real passion of mine: working as a team, collaborating. It probably derives from my interest in sports, and just knowing that there’s little that you can do as a solo unit. I don’t think inter-professional education is anything new. But we’re looking at new ways of doing it because the ways we’ve been teaching future graduates to work together haven’t been working. There are pockets nationally and internationally of amazing inter-professional practice, yet I feel as a country we haven’t. Technology has been a real driver for change, and the ways we’ve been teaching future graduates to work together haven’t. Technology has been a real driver for change, and the ways we’ve been teaching future graduates to work together haven’t.

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What is it like working on the Executive Council? The Executive Council works really closely as a team and together. It’s a real passion of mine: working as a team, collaborating. It probably derives from my interest in sports, and just knowing that there’s little that you can do as a solo unit. I don’t think inter-professional education is anything new. But we’re looking at new ways of doing it because the ways we’ve been teaching future graduates to work together haven’t been working. There are pockets nationally and internationally of amazing inter-professional practice, yet I feel as a country we could be doing a lot better. Watch this space.

What are some ways that members can get involved with the NZSTA? The area meetings are a wonderful opportunity to discuss, network, share ideas, and keep up to date with what’s happening. There are often opportunities to either email or post comments or connect by teleconference. Our website and Facebook page are other ways to keep connected and informed. We really do encourage and rely on our members to get involved. It’s not just for those who are in those higher echelon roles. We’re needing a real breadth of experience, and, if anything, it’s those new fresh eyes of our graduates that we’re wanting to hook in, as they’re seeing things for the first time as a new member.

We all have choices in life. We can sit back and find reasons why we shouldn’t be involved, or we can lean in, get stuck in, and make a difference.
COMMUNICATION MATTERS  ISSUE 22

**High-Performing Teams**

WORDS: NINA SCHON, CEO, TRANSFORMED TEAMS

As a Speech-language Therapist who became a management consultant, I have a story to share about what I did and didn’t learn from Speech-language Therapy about high-performing teams.

In January 2015, I began the rather long and indirect journey from New Zealand to St Lucia. Three exhausting flights later, I arrived on the tiny Caribbean Island (minus my luggage until a week later), where I would be the only practising Speech-language Therapist in the country for the next 13 months. I worked for the Child Development and Guidance Centre (CDGC), which is a not-for-profit organisation that provides a national assessment and intervention service for children with disabilities in St Lucia. The director is a Developmental Paediatrician, and permanent Therapy is provided by a Physiotherapist and a Clinical Psychologist, who is also a trained Facetime Therapist. Speech-language Therapists and Occupational Therapists are currently recruited internationally. Being the only centre providing specialist paediatric intervention on the island, the caseload is large and varied, with between 300 and 400 children referred annually. Referrals come from the local health centres, which conduct screening assessments on all children at the ages of 6 months, 18 months, 3 years, and 5 years, as well as from doctors, preschools, and sometimes directly from parents. Typically, CDGC focuses on assessment and therapy, but I believed that, with the building blocks of successful communication and innovation will help you to be part of a better team.

**Speech-language Therapy in St Lucia**

WORDS: NATALIE MYLES, SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPIST

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COMMUNICATION MATTERS ISSUE 22

• TalkLink will be running their next KiwiChat Camp in April.

• The Assistive Technology Alliance New Zealand are running Auckland area meetings continue to be well-attended by Michelle Bonetti is taking private clients again and has taken Nicola Pemberton has moved from the MOE to a part-time area trial currently has an area trial starting on Monday mornings. Very well attended by Kernie Wilson and Tony will be returning to New Zealand in September to start his secondment. 

• Taranaki and Gisborne MOE currently have an area trial trialling this model.

• Bay of Plenty MOE has recently held a very successful Speech-language Therapists depart: Jean de Wet, Billy Hampton-Edwards, and Lyn Barnett.

• Taupo / Rotorua MOE now has a full-time Speech-language Therapist (this was previously 0.5 FTE).

• TalkLink will be running their next KiwiChat Camp in April. This is a fantastic opportunity for families to come together and learn how to use communication devices and support communication and language: Sarah Martin is exploring for work, exploring mostly with ex-

Area Updates

NORTHLAND AREA

Lucy Schumacher

• Video-conferencing with Kaaita worked well at our area meeting. We hope to continue to do this.

• Gay Easterbrook has moved from the MOE to a part-time position in Child Health at the hospital.

• Michelle Bonetti is taking private clients again and has taken on Tonia McCarr as a part-time Speech-language Therapist. Michelle is also working as a Communication Assistant in the courts.

AUCKLAND AREA

Fern Jones

• Auckland area meetings continue to be well-attended by clinicians in person, and many have also contributed by email or phone call regarding the subjects that are being covered. Thank you to everyone for your ongoing contributions. Meetings for the rest of the year will be moving to video-conferencing options to support the wider Auckland area.

• Tony Attwood visited Auckland in February and provided a fantastic professional development seminar around autism and alternative learning needs. This was very well-received, and Tony will be returning to New Zealand in September to provide further courses for supporting diagnosis and differential diagnosis.

WAIKATO / BAY OF PLENTY AREA

Annabelle Blue

• Tauringa MOE has recently had three very experienced Speech-language Therapists depart: Jean de Wet, Billy Hampton-Edwards, and Lyn Barnett.

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CENTRAL AREA

Emma Irvine

2016 is now well underway, and we had another wonderful attendance at our meeting this quarter. A number of people called in from across our region and it was great to see so many keeping me company at the central meeting in Palmerston North. Not a lot to update this quarter—it has been a fairly quiet start to the year across the region.

• Taranaki has recently had a new Speech-language Therapist move in to support the centre. 

WELLINGTON

Claire-Ellen Roberts

There have been many changes within the teams since the start of 2016. We would like to wish Christine Musgrave all the best with her retirement as she leaves the Nelson team. We would also like to wish Vicky Ryan, Victoria Singer, and Kate Sutherland all the best with their new positions and career changes. Congratulations to Libby Coates, who is due to head off on maternity leave, and to Natasha Curham, who is currently on maternity leave.

We would like to welcome some new faces to the teams: 

• Larissa Roy has joined the Capital & Coast DHB team along with Liz Messina. 

• TalkLink will be running their next KiwiChat Camp in April. This is a fantastic opportunity for families to come together and learn how to use communication devices and support communication and language: Sarah Martin is exploring for work, exploring mostly with ex-

Kimberley patients (for dysphagia) and providing behaviour support to children and adults with disability. 

At Palmerston North Hospital, we welcome Marie Jardine to the team, and wish Annette Coutler all the best with the imminent arrival of her wee bub. 

Hawkes Bay MOE is running professional learning groups. 

Farhaven School is implementing a transdisciplinary assessment screening, which is going well. 

Hawkes Bay DHB congratulates Alicia Smith and Paul on the arrival of baby Ruby. Megan Pickering is finding her feet as autistic team leader and professional advisor. Nicky Ridley is currently covering Megan’s position.

• Elisa Myrnen at Speechie reports that her caseload continues to get busier and busier.

CANTERBURY / WESTLAND AREA

Ruth Ramsay and Kate Cook

We had a good turnout for the first meeting of 2016, with both members and non-members attending. One topic discussed was the five-year anniversary of the February earthquakes. Speech-language Therapists are noticing a range of differences in the people they work with. One reflection from Nicki Mason of the Christchurch Paediatric Feeding Team was: Since the earthquakes, it’s been clear that anxiety and stress are having a greater impact on the children and parents we see. A number of children between 7-10 years old with the IDT feeding assessment clinic have generalised anxiety alongside feeding issues. They would have been around 2-3 years old during the earthquakes. We are modifying recommendations to fit in with a family’s current living situation, such as for families in temporary housing that does not provide enough space for eating together or a table to eat at.

• Christchurch Public Hospital employed two new graduates: Vivian Campbell and Xanthe O’Carroll.

• TalkLink Trust Christchurch employed new graduate Kenny Ardoin.

• Wendy Fletcher of Christchurch Public Hospital announces the birth of her first child, Lilli Premrose Steel.

• Panja Behnami is due to return to TalkLink Trust following maternity leave.

OTAGO / SOUTHLAND AREA

Eleanor Jackson

• Members in Otago / Southland are already settling into the new and busy year ahead.

• We welcome six new graduate Speech-language Therapists to the area: three at Dunedin MOE, two at Invercargill MOE, and one at Dunedin Public Hospital. It is great to see so many new graduates in our area.

• Meryl Jones (Parlez SLT) is hiring Karen McPherson to assist with support in the Balclutha area. 

• Alison Zani is resigning from her position at Dunedin Public Hospital and moving out of Dunedin to a sunnier climate with her family—we wish her all the best!
Pet Therapy in a Brain Injury Rehabilitation Centre

WORDS: HAYLEY ANSTIS, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST; KERRY BROWN, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST; JESSICA GARDINER, SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPIST; MAEGAN VAN SOLKEMA, SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPIST; LAURA SILCOCK, SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPIST; AND NICK JACOBS, SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPIST, ABI REHABILITATION NEW ZEALAND

Originally presented as a poster at the New Zealand Rehabilitation Association and Australasian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine conference in Wellington in 2015. Pet therapy builds on a natural human-animal bond. Using this natural relationship, it aids progress toward goals in physical, social, emotional, and cognitive functions (American Veterinary Medical Association, 2013). At ABI Rehabilitation, pet therapy is used in many different ways: A pet therapy programme may aim to improve fine motor or cognitive skills, or increase self-esteem, verbal communication, willingness to join in activities, or overall motivation and engagement.

During our pet therapy programmes, we completed a thematic analysis, and have identified improvements in verbal short term memory, sustained attention, appropriate use of functional objects, visual engagement, coordination and control of upper limbs, improved mood, and increased engagement in rehabilitation. Pet therapy also promotes communication. Clients reported a significantly positive experience during all pet therapy sessions.

We can not claim that these benefits are due solely to pet therapy, however this mode of treatment can be an effective way of working towards a client’s goals. Pet therapy was seen to be beneficial on multiple levels to clients with traumatic brain injury, and is likely to also be beneficial to people with communication difficulties in other settings.

All dogs involved in pet therapy must be certified by Outreach Therapy Pets, a joint initiative between St John and the SPCA. If you would like to learn more about pet therapy, certify your dog, or have a therapy dog visit your workplace, please contact Outreach Therapy Pets http://www.stjohn.org.nz/What-we-do/Community-programmes/Partnered-programmes/Outreach-Therapy-Pets/ (or http://bto.org/fitk).

Reference:

Twenty Years on in Christchurch

WORDS: SELENA DONALDSON

Many stories, laughs, and memories were shared as those ‘easily tracked’ members of Canterbury University’s Bachelor of Speech and Language Therapy graduates of 1996 reunited in Christchurch to celebrate their 20 year reunion. Christchurch has transformed unrecognisably during the years since we qualified, but we all agreed that the spirit and humour we were lucky to enjoy amongst our group remained unchanged. Catherine Woods, who was our clinic receptionist, but also agony aunt to us as students, joined us as we kicked the weekend off with drinks at the new Dux de Lux. The endless chatter continued through brunch and a walking tour of the central city, and concluded with a wonderful dinner.

As a group which graduated pre-Internet, we have embraced technology to include the many of us who are now in the United Kingdom, and shared photos of our youthful exploits, outfits, and adventures. Our working lives have taken us in so many directions and to so many places, and it was heartening to see how we have drawn on our fantastic training to improve the lives of others. A special glass was raised for Bonnee Harkess, who was lost to us in 2010, and is remembered for the warmth and joy she brought to our endless hours of learning. We departed with promises to stay better in touch, with friendships renewed, and with a great deal of gratitude to this wonderful profession which has helped us so much in our working lives and given us an amazing community to enjoy.

The International Communication Project (ICP) is tracking along steadily. The ICP has two streams: the Strategic Stream and the Working Party Stream. In the Strategic Stream, the NZSTA is represented by Philippa Friary and Annette Rotherham. We are currently engaging a United Kingdom-based marketing and policy company, Weber Shandwick, to investigate how the ICP can make a difference in international policy and have the rights of people with Communication Disability recognised. The Working Party Stream is planning and organising how to have a presence and inform the delegates at the IALP conference in Dublin in 2016. An interactive booth and ICP round table discussion are on the programme.

In New Zealand, Amy Oughton in Canterbury is heading our working party, and is pulling together a team of champions from around the country to help continue to raise awareness in New Zealand. The first activity planned is a video competition. So get out your creative minds and start scheming how you can pull together a short video that represents the themes of the ICP and.awarness raising in Aotearoa. Entries will close July 31, and there will be a prize for the winning team. Please contact Amy at Amy.Oughton@cdhb.health.nz for more information or to get involved!
Interview with
Karen Brewer
R. LUCAS VAN RYN TALKS TO NZSTA MĀORI AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
KAREN BREWER.

How did you first become involved in Speech-language Therapy?
I always liked language and I studied linguistics at university in Wellington. Linguistics and Spanish was my double major. I wanted a job where I could use linguistics to help people, and I thought I’d quite like to have a job that’s on the Immigration New Zealand long-term skill shortages list, which Speech-language Therapists were at the time. I had the experience of learning Spanish as a foreign language. Your mother tongue becomes so much more precious when you have to practise not using it. And I thought, wow, what about the people who can’t even use their mother tongue?

What motivates you now?
It’s very important to have the input of people who are from your own and applying this knowledge in your practice to work appropriately with people from cultures other than your own, “What is cultural competence?” Most said something along the lines of, “Knowing things about cultures other than your own and applying this knowledge in your practice to work appropriately with people from cultures other than your own,” which I think is fine as a basic definition. But people use the term all the time without really defining it. I think cultural safety is easier to define. The nurses have got it as sorted as any group, and that’s thanks to Inhapateti Ramsden, who is a legend. I’ve read her thesis cover-to-cover. It’s an incredible document. A really important aspect of cultural safety that I think we would do well from adopting is that it recognises power, and it recognises power differences.

Can you tell me about the cultural competence survey you’re working on?
Clare McCann and I are just finishing analysing the results of a nationwide survey of Speech-language Therapists. We asked them, “What is cultural competence?” Most said something along the lines of, “Knowing things about cultures other than your own and applying this knowledge in your practice to work appropriately with people from cultures other than your own,” which I think is fine as a basic definition. But people use the term all the time without really defining it. I think cultural safety is easier to define. The nurses have got it as sorted as any group, and that’s thanks to Inhapateti Ramsden, who is a legend. I’ve read her thesis cover-to-cover. It’s an incredible document. A really important aspect of cultural safety that I think we would do well from adopting is that it recognises power, and it recognises power differences. Cultural safety says that you know your own culture as an individual, but you also need to know the culture of your discipline. It recognises that there’s all these cultures at play, so any interaction between a professional and a client is a cultural difference, even if that professional and client are from the same ethnic group, because they’re not from the same disciplinary culture.

Where do you see Speech-language Therapy in New Zealand being in three years’ time? As a profession, we’ll be more clued up about cultural safety and cultural competence and the Treaty of Waitangi, and how that all relates to our daily work. We’ll see the workforce becoming more reflective of the population it serves. The Speech-language Therapists coming through the University of Auckland are a more and more diverse group every year. Part of achieving this is supporting those students and therapists to work as who they are.
The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative Framework

WORDS: BIANCA JACKSON AND ANNA MILES, SPEECH SCIENCE, THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) has developed global standardised terminology and definitions for texture-modified foods and thickened liquids for individuals with dysphagia of all ages, in all care settings, and of all cultures. The framework has industry support. It provides level descriptors that can be used by food services, catering departments, and kitchens, as well as radiologists, dietitians, and Speech-language Therapists.

In 2007, a Dieticians Association of Australia / Speech Pathology Australia / Nestlé Nutrition initiative published standardised definitions and terminology for texture-modified food and fluids to be used across Australia. The NZSTA and the New Zealand Dietetic Association immediately endorsed these definitions and implemented them nationwide. In 2015, the IDDSI, following extensive consultation with Speech-language Therapists internationally, published the updated framework. The IDDSI, founded in 2013, is an international working group headed by health professionals from Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom, amongst others. Each level descriptor has a name, number, and colour—the colours are chosen to be suitable for those who are colour-blind.

Foods

The international working group surveyed over 3000 professionals about their use of terminology to describe food textures. They found common use of “regular” food plus four to five other levels of food texture modification for the management of swallowing problems across the age spectrum.

The framework is not designed to promote the use of texture modification, but rather to standardize descriptions of it where it is used. The paucity of research into the therapeutic use of food texture modification for dysphagia management means that the recommendations are based on an understanding that food texture modification has demonstrated a therapeutic benefit for reducing the risk of choking. One of the great things about the new framework is the clear equivalence of drinks and food at Levels 3 and 4. Thickness of foods can be readily tested using a fork, and the IDDSI website has well-written resources to guide you through this process. As not everyone uses forks, the tests can also be done with the back of a spoon, although to a lesser extent.

Drinks

In their extensive survey, the working group found common use of thin drinks plus three levels of increasing drink thickness for the management of swallowing problems across the age spectrum. Labels found in previous national terminologies included Nectar / Syrup / Level 150 / Moderately thick, Honey / Custard / Level 400 / Moderately thick, and Pudding / Spoon thick / Level 900 / Extremely thick—terms that are ambiguous, easy to confuse, or difficult to interpret.

Those working with children reported common use of a drink thicker than water but thinner than the start point of thickened liquids commonly used for adults. In the IDDSI Framework, this has become Level 1 – Slightly Thick. This is about as thick as anti-reflux milk formula. As with all other thickened liquids, this level lacks data to determine the exact thickness required for therapeutic benefit.

The thickness of liquids can be tested using a syringe, and the website gives clear instructions on how to do this.

Implementation

The IDDSI group encourages all Speech-language Therapists across the world to use these colour codes and this terminology. The terms are considered to be culture-neutral. This is in the interests of food services, health professionals, and our families. Consistent and distinguishable terminology promotes consistent and accurate use of texture modification.
World Voice Day 2016

WORDS: SYLVIA LEÃO, SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPIST AND PHD CANDIDATE, SPEECH SCIENCE, THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

THIS APRIL 16, IT’S TIME TO CELEBRATE WORLD VOICE DAY!

The global World Voice Day aims to show the general public that voice matters. This year, the slogan is “Explore your voice. Imagine where it will take you.” World Voice Day involves events across the globe, including a multitude of vocal and voice-related events on or around April 16. Events have been held in countries including New Zealand and the United States. As Speech-language Therapists, we can inform the public about the importance of having a healthy voice, the risks of voice problems, and available voice treatments.

A variety of events will take place around the world. In New Zealand, World Voice Day has been celebrated since 2013. Last year, events included a CBR CeleBRation Choir open day at the University of Auckland, a video conference with a music therapy school in Wellington, vocal performances with members of Auckland Youth Choir, a Voice of Leadership Skype group with Sally Mabelle, and vocal hygiene promotion organised by the Speech-language Therapy team at Christchurch Public Hospital.

Our challenge this year is to mark the celebration of World Voice Day in New Zealand in a big way. You could organise activities in your workplace, or contact vocal coaches, musicians, singers, music therapists, and people from music and drama schools, so that they can work with you to promote World Voice Day. It would be wonderful to increase the number of events in New Zealand and raise awareness about voice and vocal health. Voice-related activities that have been organised around the globe include open days at clinics with free voice screening, seminars, distribution of pamphlets with voice care tips and quizzes, vocal performances, open rehearsals, and radio and television interviews.

If you are planning an event, please add its details to the World Voice Day website at http://world-voice-day.org/contact/add-your-event/ (or http://tx0.org/9l). These events can be held on any day in April to promote World Voice Day. For more information, please contact Sylvia Leão, New Zealand World Voice Day National Coordinator at s.leao@auckland.ac.nz.

Further information and materials, including posters, handouts, and videos, may be found on the World Voice Day website http://world-voice-day.org/

Let’s celebrate our voices and raise awareness about vocal health!

Professional Development Opportunity:
Multi-Modal Communication and Learning Strategies

Linda Burkhart
Two-day Workshop in Auckland
26–27 September 2016
Location to be confirmed
Cost:
ATANZ Members: $400
Non-Members: $480

MULTI-MODAL COMMUNICATION AND LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN WHO FACE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES, INCLUDING SEVERE MULTIPLE DISABILITIES AND CHILDREN ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM.

Children who face significant physical and multiple challenges, those with Rett syndrome, and those on the severe end of the autism spectrum often struggle to access communication, interaction, and learning. Some of these children may have very little control of their bodies. Others have difficulty taking in sensory information from their environment and processing it. Many find communication and interaction challenging.

This two day presentation will address questions such as: What are we learning from neurological research that can help us understand how children learn? How do we motivate children and provide opportunities for active learning? What strategies help give these children a sense of control and facilitate interaction and communication? How do children on the severe end of the autism spectrum perceive the world and how does this impact learning and communication? How does cortical visual impairment impact learning? How can you help children develop motor-cognitive learning and teach movements for communication and access?

Come and experience a fast-paced look at creative and practical strategies to enable children who face severe challenges to overcome these complex barriers and access communication and learning.

For more information, please contact ATANZ – Magnus Hammarsal or Jessamy Amm at admin@atanz.org.nz, 09 815 3232, or http://atanz.org.nz/
Welcome to 2016 and our Autumn issue of Communication Matters. I want to share a story with you...

What’s in a joke?
In a conversation with some people with aphasia recently, one said, “I wish I could tell a joke.” Another replied, “Yeah, I wish I could remember the punchline!” We all laughed and I said, with the best of intentions, “You two are a great joke!” We all laughed so hard. “Did you hear the one about the two people with aphasia...”

Humour is a huge part of social interaction: how we connect with others, how we express our personality. So I can see how being able to tell a joke is a really important skill to acquire and a fantastic therapy goal for anyone with a communication disability.

The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists in the United Kingdom have a large awareness campaign called Giving Voice. They recently ran a school-based competition, the Voice Box, which involves children getting up and telling a joke. Finals are held in each school, and local MPs are invited to be on the judging panel. The aim is to raise awareness of the communication skills needed to tell a joke. This is just one example of an awareness-raising strategy used by the Giving Voice campaign, which began in the United Kingdom in 2010.

Over the past few years, there has been a growth in international campaigns that focus on raising public awareness of communication and swallowing disabilities. The International Communication Project began in 2014, and the NZSTA continues to support and be involved in the biennial NZSTA conference in Auckland. We are pulling together a team of people with innovative and fantastic ideas. We also aim to engage a sponsor to assist with the funding of this campaign, as our annual Awareness Week budget won’t stretch that far. This will be a very exciting project to be involved in and we will need the assistance of our member networks. If you have any contacts in the telecommunications world or any other relevant contacts in media and public relations, then please do contact me.

Our new NZSTA Ambassador award will be introduced this year and presented at the conference award ceremony. The NZSTA would like to recognise the work of a member who epitomises everything that New Zealand Speech-language Therapists value and represent.

The person who receives this award will show high professional integrity and strive to advocate for the profession and for the clients to whom we provide services. They will demonstrate an ability to take the lead on activities that can raise awareness of communication and swallowing disabilities in our communities and within their work environments. They may also demonstrate dynamic and effective ways to deliver Speech-language Therapy services in New Zealand. For more information and for nomination forms please visit the NZSTA website: http://www.speechtherapy.org.nz/

Hold on to your seats, as we are about to embark on a big journey in 2016/2017! Here’s to seeing you all in September, Annette.

Karen Brewer – Māori and Cultural Development

As I write this, I have just returned from Perth, where Edith Cowan University hosted an international roundtable of Speech-language Therapy researchers working with indigenous peoples with acquired communication disorders. The meeting was organised by members of the Missing Voices team at Edith Cowan University: Beth Armstrong, Deborah Hersh, Natalie Ciccone, Erin Goedecke, and Meaghan McAllister, and attended by Claire Penn from South Africa, Barbara Purves from Canada, and myself and Whaawhai Taki from New Zealand.

Over the course of three days, we discussed the issues facing indigenous peoples with communication disorders in our countries, and ways that we might collaborate in our work. The difficulties facing indigenous peoples with acquired communication disorders are similar between the four countries. These include a scarcity of indigenous Speech-language Therapists and Speech-language Therapy researchers, systems that do not accommodate indigenous workforces, a lack of linguistically and culturally appropriate therapy resources, and communication disorders being made lower priority by more pressing poverty-related issues. The time I spent with international colleagues made me appreciate the kaupapa Māori research workforce we have in New Zealand, and our growing number of Māori Speech-language Therapists.

Back in New Zealand, Clare McCann and I have nearly finished analysing the cultural competence survey. Your responses are providing a wealth of information about where our profession is at and where we might be in the future. I will keep you updated as we finish the analysis and write up the findings.

As always, please do get in touch with me if there is anything you would like to discuss.

Ngā mihi nui, Karen Brewer
HAPPY NEW YEAR TO EVERYONE,

I hope you have all been enjoying the beautiful Summer days. We have had a fairly stable period with Area Representatives over the past few months, with just a few changes in the Student Representative positions, which fit in with the academic year. I would like to thank all the Student Representatives for their input over the course of their studies, and I hope that all of you who have held the role have found it enjoyable and beneficial for yourselves as well. You can find the full list of Area and Student Representatives on the inside back cover of Communication Matters.

I will be looking to put together a document outlining the benefits that are available to all NZSTA members over the course of the next few months, and hope to have this ready in time for the next issue of Communication Matters.

We have had excellent attendance at recent area meetings, and I would encourage all of you who attend to add your opinions, comments, and questions. The Executive Council is happy to receive all questions and we try to provide full responses as part of the national collated meeting minutes. The minutes, including responses, are now available on the NZSTA website: http://www.speechtherapy.org.nz/pages-after-login/exec-documents/exec-minutes (login required, or http://tx0.org/lm).

Reviewing the minutes is a good way to catch up with what is happening around the country and what others think about the topics raised. Please continue to engage with your Area Representatives and area meetings—it really does help the whole association. I look forward to interacting with you all again soon.

Ngā mihi,
Jodi

KIA ORA KOUTOU,

As I write to you from sunny, windless Wellington, it’s hard to believe Autumn is here! At least we have something to look forward to over the upcoming Winter months: It’s only six months until our conference! Registration opens on June 20, 2016. Keep an eye on the website for updates about accommodation, the programme, and early bird rates: http://www.speechtherapy.org.nz/page/conference/ (or http://tx0.org/ln).

Online Learning

We are now offering the following online course through CLAD: Constructing and Delivering a Team Plan – Catherine Epps

This course is designed for any leader. Whether you are working as a solo practitioner, or have a large team reporting to you, these principles of sound planning will be relevant. For more details, see http://onlinecpd.co.nz/course-providers/speech-language-therapists/show/15 (or http://tx0.org/ko).

If you haven’t already done so, I encourage you to have a look at the online courses available through CLAD. We are looking to expand our opportunities for e-learning, so if you have any suggestions for topics, or would be interested in putting together a course yourself, please let me know. CLAD takes care of the technical side, so you just need to provide the content!

Expert Advisors

You will have seen the biographies of our Expert Advisors in the previous two issues of Communication Matters, and I’m sure many of you will be contacting them to utilise their expertise. We are keen to add to this pool, and would especially like to hear from anyone working in child speech and language. It’s sometimes difficult to put ourselves forward as ‘experts’—what we are looking for is someone with experience and a particular interest in any aspect of child speech and language, probably someone who is used to being asked for advice by their colleagues or seen as a ‘go to’ person within their team. If this sounds like you, please do get in touch—all we are asking is for you to make your expertise available to a wider audience! I’m happy to talk this through with anyone who might be interested.

Resource Room

Thank you to those of you who have contacted me with your opinions and ideas on the subject of refreshing the resource room. I am pleased to announce that the original resource room committee has passed the residual funding on to the NZSTA, and given us the responsibility of using this funding to refresh the current resource room. Many thanks go to Linda Hand, Elaine Tasker, and Anne Cooney! I have already been in contact with several people about how to best use this funding, and am also looking into how we can use Social Media and online resources to bring the resource room into the 21st century. If anyone would like to be included in these discussions, please get in touch.

Finally, a reminder that the closing date for NZSTA funding grants is now May 31—this has been changed to fit in with the date of AGM at this year’s conference.

Hei konā mai i roto i ngā mihi,
Claire
I HOPE EVERYONE IS ENJOYING 2016 SO FAR. My role on the Executive Council involves qualification approval including the international Mutual Recognition Agreement, programme accreditation, parliamentary submissions, position papers, research approval, ethics inquiries, and being scientific programme chair for the NZSTA conference. Each issue, I will try to keep members informed of my work under each of these roles.

Submissions
Thank you to Sally Kedge for writing a joint NZSTA / Talking Trouble Aotearoa NZ submission to the Ministry of Health on the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Action Plan.

Research Approvals
One of my roles is to assess research projects if researchers request approval for circulation through the NZSTA. There has been a substantial increase in requests for the circulation of national and international surveys over the last year. This is a great opportunity for members to participate in research and is well worth adding to your Continuing Professional Development log. With the increase in requests, we have formalised the assessment process and dissemination plan. Approval is granted to scientifically sound research studies that are relevant to the Speech-Language Therapy community. Circulation of approved research conducted by NZSTA members is free and involves circulation through Social Media (Facebook and Twitter) as well as inclusion in the Exec Update emailed to all members. Circulation of approved research conducted by those who are not NZSTA members is offered for a $50 administration fee.

Position Papers
A working party is currently being formed to develop an NZSTA paediatric dysphagia position paper. The working group is being provided with support and guidance from NZSTA Professional Standards.

Next issue, I will focus on programme accreditation and the incredible work of the Programme Accreditation Committee. I look forward to working with you throughout 2016.

Anna

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SUBMISSION DEADLINES FOR COMMUNICATION MATTERS

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