

Look who's *Talking*

2013 Speech-Language Pathology
University of Toronto Alumni Association Newsletter

Doctor Who?

An M.H.Sc. Student's Journey into Ph.D. Studies

By Joy Clubine, OTB



Have you ever considered pursuing doctoral studies? Uncertain of how to begin the process? We caught up with a former Alumni Association executive, Sonja Molfenter, to ask her about the process.

Sonja is currently completing her Ph.D. at the department and she took some time from her busy schedule to answer our questions.

Could you tell us a bit about what you have been doing since you graduated from the clinical program?

My pleasure! I graduated from U of T's S-LP program in 2007. I took my first job in Dr. Catriona Steele's Swallowing Rehab and Research Lab (SRRL) at Toronto Rehab Institute working as a research-clinician conducting treatment for swallowing rehabilitation studies. In 2008, I held a part-time position at Toronto General Hospital (TGH) focusing on acute cardiac patients while maintaining my position in the SRRL. I sought out this position at TGH because I was thinking of pursuing my Ph.D. and wanted to experience a clinical position before making that decision.

What made you decide to do a Ph.D.?

I've always been interested in research. During my undergrad at U of T, I worked in the Sociolinguistics Lab under Dr. Sali Tagliamonte. Sali taught me skills like research design, data collection

and database management. I was also included in conferences and publications. At the same time, I knew I wanted to pursue a clinically-oriented career, so when it came time to choose a graduate program, the M.H.Sc. S-LP program was a natural choice for me. During the program, I realized that I wanted to experience clinical work before committing to a Ph.D. When Catriona's SRRL job came up, it seemed like a perfect opportunity to be a clinician while participating in S-LP research. It didn't take long to realize that I was hooked and I knew that doing my Ph.D. was the right move. I started my doctoral studies in September 2009 and will be finished this June.

Tell us what it was like to make the shift from the clinical world to academia.

As you can imagine, my path is not the typical one. I was in the unique position to be working for Catriona and knew that our research interests and working styles matched. The shift was fluid because I was already formulating ideas before being accepted into the program. I was also able to maintain some clinical work in the lab and hold a position as a casual S-LP.

What did you enjoy most about the experience?

Being in the SRRL has allowed me to be involved in many studies, and has provided me with many opportunities to collaborate with other clinicians, scientists and health professionals. I love meeting new people and thinking creatively! Also, going to conferences and scientific meetings to learn about other people's work is one of my favourite things about being in research.

Can you tell us a bit about your research and what your findings mean for clinicians?

My broad research area is dysphagia. My doctoral research has been focused on understanding factors that affect swallowing physiology as measured on videofluoroscopy. For example, the data I've collected have shown that larger people display greater hyoid movement and that barium density influences swallow timing. I hope that my findings will help clinicians develop more meaningful videofluoroscopic swallowing protocols and measurement techniques.

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In November 2012, the Distinguished Service Award was presented to Nancy Thomas-Stonell at the annual Awards Breakfast. Nancy is currently a Scientist with the Bloorview Research Institute. The Alumni Association is pleased to share highlights from Nancy's acceptance speech with our readers:

I am extremely honoured to receive this year's Distinguished Service Award. I wish to thank the U of T S-LP Alumni Association for presenting me with this prestigious award.

The profession of speech-language pathology has led me on an incredible journey. Upon graduation, my journey took me to Alberta where I worked clinically at the Alberta Children's Hospital and the Calgary Board of Education. Returning to Ontario, I worked in a variety of clinical jobs in both the public and private sectors but I kept journeying onwards until I was fortunate to obtain a position that let me combine both research and clinical practice.

My clinical work always fueled the questions that I strove to answer through my research. In order to answer questions like "which therapy technique

works best for which children?" it soon became obvious that what was needed was a tool that could measure the changes associated with treatment. We needed an outcome measure! That started my 14 year journey in outcome measurement that led to the creation of the Focus on the Outcomes of Communication Under Six (FOCUS).

Throughout this journey, I have been privileged to hear from 500+ parents of preschool children about the powerful impact that speech-language therapy has had on their children's lives. Here are a just a few of their comments:

1. It is so important for him to be understood so others (both children and adults) don't ignore him. He is now talking slower and more clearly. What a big difference!
2. He is easier to talk to. He doesn't throw fits as much as he used to because of frustration. He now takes part when the family talks at dinner table.
3. All of these changes (in communication skills) enable my child to be more independent. He is more confident. He can express himself more easily. It has opened a whole new world for him.

This research has taught me that we should all be proud of the difference we are making in our clients' lives.

My journey has led me full circle, back to the U of T S-LP program where I get to lecture on my pet topic of outcome measures to being honoured for doing what I love. May you all enjoy your own journey as much as I have.

Know someone deserving of a Distinguished Service Award? Consider nominating your peers! For more information about this award please visit: <http://www.slp.utoronto.ca/alumni/alumni-association/>



Speech-Language Pathology
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Yes! I would like to support the Speech-Language Pathology Alumni Association at the University of Toronto.

The Speech-Language Pathology Alumni Association is constantly striving to improve student life at the Graduate Department of Speech-Language Pathology, University of Toronto. Your financial assistance is invaluable in helping us reach our goals.

If you wish to participate in improving the student experience you can do so by contacting:

Donations Management
J. Robert S. Prichard Alumni House
21 King's College Circle
Toronto, ON M5S 3J3

1-800-463-6048 1-416-978-0811
or by clicking on <https://www.donations.utoronto.ca/medicine/medicine.aspx>

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In general, does doing a Ph.D. mean you have to leave clinical work completely?

Not necessarily. If your Ph.D. research involves data collection from clients, part of your studies will involve clinical time. As well, while some programs restrict Ph.D. students to a limited amount of non-Ph.D. work per week, you may be able to make arrangements with your employer to work these hours clinically. However, having too many 'roles' may distract some people from making progress during the Ph.D. process... so continuing clinical work may not be the best option for everyone! By the way, accepted U

of T Ph.D. students are eligible to receive a 4-year guaranteed funding package, which covers tuition and a yearly stipend.

Do you have any advice for clinicians who may be considering a Ph.D.?

Before taking the plunge, I'd suggest getting your feet wet to see if it's for you. Find a research mentor (at a university or a teaching-hospital) and try getting involved in clinical research. Attend research-based conferences. Participate in the department's research colloquia (these are now available via web-cast). Attend one of the department's Ph.D.

info sessions. If these things get you excited, start narrowing down your research focus and interview potential supervisors. Finally, the best way to know if doing a Ph.D. is right for you might be to get in touch with people like me... so grab a coffee and ask away!

The Alumni Association is going green! If you would prefer to receive your annual newsletter electronically, send an email with the subject 'SLP alum e-newsletter' to address.update@utoronto.ca. Help us make a difference!

Year One Report

By Lynsey Endicott, 1T4 and
Adrienne Miranda, 1T4

Dear Alumni,

It's hard to believe that 7 months have flown by since we first met at the Alumni breakfast. Instead of rambling on about the whirlwind experience of academics, clinical placement, and social outings, we have compiled a list of valuable insights into the real world of an S-LP student.

TOP 5 THINGS WE'VE LEARNED AS S-LP STUDENTS:

1. Graduate students love potlucks, and will invent many excuses to hold one.

"Wow, I feel so famished after finishing that PICO paper, let's have a potluck."

"Haven't gone grocery shopping in two weeks, let's have a potluck."

"The potluck yesterday after Child Language was so good, let's have a potluck."

2. The resource room is a fantastic place for a nap.

We've spent many long nights working on group projects (such as anatomical models of facial muscles and larynges), studying for exams, and practicing the Goldman Fristoe countless times on one another. There was never any judgment when we found one of our classmates curled up in the corner catching on some well-deserved sleep.

3. Speech Physiology is hard.

The helpful 'Pascowl', which acted as an adorable marker on the lecture slides of importance, quickly metamorphosed into a scary reminder that, in fact, all of the slides were important. This course, along with many others, challenged us but we all rose to the occasion and gained a new appreciation for fundamental frequencies, shimmer and jitter, and using Praat for acoustic analysis.

4. We know more than we think we know.

It is safe to say that everyone was a little nervous going into the Unit 3 clinical placement. It would be our first time in the field working with clients, and applying everything we had learned up until that point. Although we didn't always get everything right on the first try, we all experienced tremendous growth as we developed our skills to become more confident as future clinicians.

5. Making 48 new friends is the greatest!

The only thing S-LP students like more than focused stimulation are social outings! Between classes, readings, and placement, we always made time to go out in the city. Outings included book swaps, clothing swaps (we like to swap things), secret buddies, brunch dates, and pub nights. We continue to learn and grow with this wonderful group of intelligent and caring people, our future colleagues and lifelong friends.

Sincerely,

The S-LP class of 2014



Year Two Report

By Amanda Indovina, 1T3

"We're in Speech-Language Pathology... we'll teach you how to swallow or pronounce your 'b'...." sung the choir of S-LP students, The Jitters & The Shimmers. The group's performance at the department's annual Awards Breakfast can be viewed here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGqKljgvsIM

This was one of many events that we participated in alongside our academic endeavours. We received invaluable information during our classes, worked hard during exams and gained new experiences during our placements. We facilitated additional learning by attending continuing education events such as a literacy conference, a training session at the Aphasia Institute and more recently, an upcoming dysphagia conference. We were also involved in charity initiatives. We walked at the Autism Speaks Walk, danced salsa for Operation Smile,

sported moustaches for Movember, tested our limits at the CN Tower stair climb and participated in a food drive competition with the Year One class, collecting 364lbs of food. We continued our tradition of potlucks and tested our expert chefs with food challenges, where contestants battled for bragging rights proclaiming whose dish reigned supreme. We kept active by playing on the Vocal Spasms or Glottal Fries volleyball teams and flashed our creative side wearing outrageously colourful outfits as "The Rainbow Passage" for Halloween. A group of 23 of us brought back sunshine from our trip to the Dominican Republic, setting the long-term forecast of "warmth" for our final weeks, when we'll exchange "warm fuzzies" - sweet messages for each other. With graduation fast-approaching, we



are excited and nervous with the prospect of beginning our careers. We are grateful that the Alumni Association organized the annual Info Social to help us prepare for our interviews. We will always hold the memories of our time with the U of T S-LP Department near to us. We would like to thank our professors, departmental staff, clinical educators and Alumni Association for their support and guidance throughout our journey and we look forward to being able to contribute to this exciting field.

Daffydil 2013

Dreaming Nights Under Hospital Lights

By Amanda Indovina, 1T3, Adrienne Miranda, 1T4 and Lynsey Endicott, 1T4

"Where are those S-LPs when you need them?" yelled the frazzled medical resident Dr. Sally Banks. Oh, they were there. This year's production of Daffydil featured five of our own U of T S-LP students; the largest representation to date! Students Mary Bowden, Hadar Kaidar, Amanda Indovina, Adrienne Miranda, and Lynsey Endicott lit up the cast, chorus, and dance crew for an enthusiastic audience at Hart House Theatre. The show ran from February 20 -23, 2013 and showcased the incredible talents of students from Speech-Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Medicine. The annual Faculty of Medicine event, which has supported the Canadian Cancer Society for over 100 years, raised over \$25,000 for cancer research this year.



This year's production was a musical, portraying the hectic lives of a health care team in their quest to help save the life of a young patient with a mysterious and deadly condition. The show explored the highs and lows of patient care and the importance of interprofessional collaboration. The show included creative song rewrites such as "Good Morning Hospital" (Good Morning Baltimore from Hairspray), "Don't Call Them Crazy" (Call Me Maybe by Carly Rae Jepsen), and "Surgeon's Paradise" (Gangster's Paradise by Coolio). The entire production was student run: from fundraising to orchestration, writing to set design, this dedicated group pulled the show together in less than four months.

Being a part of Daffydil presented a great opportunity to work with other professional students in a non-academic context. Additionally, it gave the Year One and Year Two S-LP students a chance to bond as both participants in the show and audience members. Both classes rose to the occasion in supporting the cause through their attendance and ongoing encouragement. One of the highlights included a pre-show ritual where the Rehab Science students formed an "Allied Health huddle" to energize and support one another each night.

So why did these students choose to get involved? Aside from being a fun experience and a chance to perform on stage, participating in Daffydil held a deeper meaning for students. Everyone has been affected directly or indirectly by cancer. This show not only supported but celebrated the fight against cancer through music, art, and theatre. It provided the opportunity to honour our friends and family who have faced cancer, and have shown the kind of bravery and fearlessness to which we should all aspire to.

Interview with Joy Clubine

Our New Alumni Association President!

By Anna Rupert, 1T0



It has definitely been an exciting year for the Alumni Association. We are happy to announce that we have a new Alumni Association President! In the summer of 2012, Joy Clubine was nominated and elected to be our new fearless leader. Since accepting the role of President, Joy has been doing an incredible job overseeing and handling the many presidential responsibilities of the Alumni Association. We are thrilled to introduce her to the rest of the Alumni community! Read on as we find out more about our new President.

A.R.: To start off, why don't you tell me a bit about yourself and your career so far as an S-LP.

J.C.: Well, I graduated from U of T class of 2008 in the M.H.Sc. program. After that I worked part-time at Trillium Health Centre and part-time with Closing the Gap Healthcare Group. After several months I switched to full-time with Closing the Gap and I was there until September 2012, which was when I started back at OISE doing an M.A. in child study and education.

A.R.: How are you liking the move from being a full-time S-LP back to being a student?

J.C.: It's been a really great shift for me! I've found that the things I'm learning at OISE are very complementary to my clinical background. My hope is to bring the knowledge I'm gaining in education back to the world of speech pathology and use that knowledge to help bridge gaps between the education system and the field of speech pathology.

A.R.: So moving on to your other new role – as President of the Alumni Association, how did you react to your nomination?

J.C.: I was surprised and very honoured that people would think of me and pleased to be able to represent our group to the broader university and alumni community.

A.R.: Well we've been lucky to have you! How have you enjoyed the role so far?

J.C.: It's been a lot of fun! There have been a lot of great opportunities to start some new initiatives, like the new J.F. Walker lecture format. It's been exciting to see that evolve into what it is and I'm excited to see how that will continue to grow over the next few years. It's been fun to continue to network and work together with everyone on the association.

A.R.: What do you hope to accomplish in your new role as President?

J.C.: One of the things I see as a big goal for us is to increase alumni engagement. That means, having more dialogue with alumni and helping alumni get involved and connected with the department and the Alumni Association in more meaningful ways. We hope that expanding our J.F. Walker event to a half-day format will be one step towards facilitating that engagement. **If you are interested in joining the Alumni Association, you can get in touch with us through our new email address: slp.alumni@utoronto.ca. We hope to hear from you!**



Like us on Facebook! The Alumni Association is on Facebook! Find and join us by searching for the "U of T SLP Alumni" group, and clicking "join". It's that easy to stay in touch!

MENTAL HEALTH AND COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

This event will feature the clinical perspectives of mental health professionals working with both adult and pediatric populations, and will include case based presentations along with opportunities for interactive small group discussion. This event is open to students, professionals, and others working in the field of mental health and/or communication.

FEATURING:



Dr. A. Sniderman – MD FRCP(C)

Director of Psychiatry
Toronto Rehabilitation Institute

Dr. Sniderman is a Psychiatrist with a specialist designation in Neuropsychiatry, both from the University of Toronto. He is the director of the Neuropsychiatry Clinic at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, Neuro-rehabilitation Program where he has worked for the past 16 years. His expertise is in the areas of the cognitive, emotional and behavioural effects of neurological problems such as multiple sclerosis, stroke, severe traumatic brain injury, seizure disorders and others.



Dr. Jeff St. Pierre – C. Psych.

Psychology Professional Practice Lead
Child and Parent Resource
Institute - London, ON

Dr. Jeff St. Pierre is the lead psychologist at CPRI in London, a large tertiary mental health centre serving Southern Ontario. Over the past 20 years he has worked in both inpatient and outpatient child and youth mental health, focussing on clinical and research work with children experiencing complex social-emotional-behavioural symptoms, significant learning and communication deficits, and families with multiple high needs.

Date: June 14, 2013 - 8:00am to 12:30pm

Location: William Doo Auditorium,
University of Toronto
45 Willcocks St., Toronto, ON
M5S 1C7

Cost: GENERAL - \$100

DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY FACULTY & CLINICAL EDUCATORS - \$75

STUDENTS – FREE (space is limited for non-speech-language pathology students)

Schedule:

8:00-8:45 Breakfast/registration
8:45-9:00 Welcome
9:00-9:50 Speaker 1 - Dr. Jeff St. Pierre (pediatric focus)
9:50-10:25 Case discussion (small and large group)
10:25-10:45 Coffee break
10:45-11:35 Speaker 2 -Dr. Abraham Sniderman (adult focus)
11:35-12:10 Case discussion (small and large group)
12:10-12:30 Final questions, closing remarks

Registration: http://my.alumni.utoronto.ca/2013_walker

Questions? slp.alumni@utoronto.ca



Seeking Past AWCT Scholarship Recipients!

The American Women's Club of Toronto will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary in 2017. They hope to compile a historical follow up of their AWCT Scholarship recipients over the years. They are asking any alumni who were recipients to contact Pat Mearns, Chair of the Scholarship Committee at thekids96@rogers.com with a brief update on their lives and careers following the S-LP program. The AWCT also hopes to host a reception for their recipients sometime during their centennial year and would like to stay in touch as they plan this event. All replies will be confirmed. Thank you for your cooperation!

ALUMNI EXECUTIVE 2012-13

Joy Clubine, President, 0T8	Ruth Levin, 1T1
Stefanie Haws, Treasurer, 1T0	Rachel Bryan, 1T1
Kelly Wark, Secretary, 0T9	Jessica Davenport, 1T1
Angela Fong, Newsletter Editor, 0T9	Anna Rupert 1T0
Tim Bressman, Faculty Liaison	Emily Begley, 0T9
Lynsey Endicott, 1T4	Ayla Alcorn, 0T9
Adrienne Miranda, 1T4	Sonja Molfenter, 0T7
Amanda Indovina, 1T3	Pamela Rahn 0T6
Eva Sikora, 1T3	Janice Waugh Bennett, 0T4
	Ian Roth, 0T0

Research Corner

Large Scale Motor Speech Control Project!

By Janice Waugh Bennett, OT4

DR. ARAVIND KUMAR NAMASIVAYAM IS A WELL-KNOWN FACE around the U of T Department of Speech-Language Pathology. He completed his Ph.D. in the Oral Dynamics Lab (ODL) under the supervision of Dr. Pascal van Lieshout, served as the ODL's Research Officer, and currently teaches in the M.H.Sc. program. In May 2010 he joined the Speech and Stuttering Institute, where he conducted a large scale treatment effectiveness study entitled "Exploring the Relationship Between Treatment Intensity and Treatment Outcomes for Children with Motor Speech Disorders."

The study's co-investigators included Dr. Ben Maasen of the University of Groningen in The Netherlands, Dr. Pascal van Lieshout of U of T, Dr. Frank Rudzicz, Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, and Dr. Robert Kroll and Margit Pukonen of the Speech and Stuttering Institute. The Clinical Team was headed by Ms. Pukonen and Debra Goshulak, both alumna of the U of T S-LP Program. Funding was provided by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) and a competitive grant from the Childhood Apraxia of Speech Association of North America (CASANA) awarded to Dr. Namasivayam in 2011-12.

To begin, the team identified the best treatment protocol for childhood motor speech disorders by considering the ideal frequency of treatment, the best way to provide home training to parents, and developing a means of measuring both the parent-child interaction and clinician skills during treatment delivery. The treatment selected was the Motor Speech Treatment Protocol (MSTP), which Dr. Namasivayam describes as a hybrid of PROMPT (developed by Deborah Hayden) and the Mayo Clinic's Dynamic Tactile Temporal Cuing (DTTC), (developed by Edythe Strand), with several key motor learning principles built into it.

The scale of the project was huge, and the time frame short – 40+ separate ethics approvals had to be obtained from different sites, and the research team, including 14 Research Assistants and 6 S-LPs, had only 18 months to complete the project (which included both a comprehensive training protocol and the research study).

60 S-LP clinicians were drawn from the 31 Pre-

school Speech and Language (PSL) Program regions in the province, and brought to Toronto for a 30 hour intensive training program. It was expected that these clinicians would train other clinicians in their PSL region in the future, as well as participate in the study. Ultimately, 31 clinicians participated in the study, providing therapy to a minimum of 3 children each, for a client cohort of approximately 100 children between the ages of 3 and 5 years.

Children underwent either a high (2x week) or low (1x week) intensity treatment for a 10-week treatment block at 45 minutes per session. Outcome measures included speech intelligibility tests at the single word and sentence level, a functional outcome measure, an articulation test and a phonological processes assessment.

Since pilot data analysis revealed the possibility of some children having childhood apraxia of speech (CAS), a screening tool was developed to retrospectively identify children with and without CAS.

Outcomes showed that for the CAS group, significant post-treatment change was demonstrated only in the high intensity (2x/week/10-weeks) condition. Significant effects at both treatment intensities were also found for the group without CAS, with larger improvements with twice per week therapy. Interestingly, the CAS group's post-treatment scores were close to the pre-treatment scores for the group without CAS. The researchers therefore recommend that children with CAS may benefit from an additional treatment block.

Dr. Namasivayam is proud that the study resulted in the formalization of MSTP-Based In-



tervention, which includes a criterion-referenced protocol and sets thresholds of success to indicate when to progress to the next level in treatment. The research study has also contributed to and formalized the means to measure the quality of parent-child interactions, the fidelity of motor speech intervention delivered, a CAS screening tool and, importantly, a comprehensive motor speech training protocol to train new clinicians.

"This treatment protocol was proven to result in a one to two standard deviation change when there is 85% fidelity in delivering the treatment, and when treatment intensity is twice per week, except in cases of severe apraxia," Dr. Namasivayam concluded.

Today, Dr. Namasivayam is looking forward to taking on the roles of Adjunct Scientist at Toronto Western Hospital working on projects in neuroplasticity, Clinical Research Scientist at the PROMPT Institute (Santa Fe, New Mexico) and Research Associate at the Oral Dynamics Lab, U of T. We look forward to hearing more about the exciting research of this alumnus of the U of T S-LP Department, and congratulate him on the success of this study, which will inform and help improve the provision of quality, evidence-based speech services to children with motor speech disorders.

Our annual newsletter just received a facelift!
Let us know what you think of our new look at:
slp.alumni@utoronto.ca

Newsletter layout by Steven Janovsky