Reflections

Fifty Years Ago: My Memories of the Speech Department


I took my first course in the Speech Department in 1957. Two years earlier, when I entered Brooklyn College, my goal was to be a history teacher just like my mother. Then a friend of mine introduced me to her mother, who was in a new field: speech therapy. (Speech-language pathology came much later.) I was intrigued, so I decided to take a course to find out more about it. It was taught by a young red-head, a professor recently arrived from the University of Iowa. Professor Oliver Bloodstein told us that there were only 4,000 speech therapists in the whole country and that thousands of others would be needed to help the many children and adults who had been diagnosed as stutterers, aphasics, or as having articulation and voice disorders. I was hooked, and I never turned back.

The Speech Therapy Section of the Speech Department was less than a decade old when I started there. Headed by Professor Robert West, one of the founders of the profession and the first president of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), the department was already considered to be preeminent in the eastern U.S. Professor West came to the field of speech therapy after attending two years of medical school. He demanded a great deal from his students and put together a rigorous program, taught by an outstanding faculty, which produced top notch clinicians.

I remember one course that Professor West taught in which students observed him through a one-way mirror as he conducted a diagnosis. After he reviewed the case history with us, we had one week to figure out the problem. This sent us running to the Downstate Medical School Library to search for the diagnosis.

In another course, we were assigned a weekly topic in which we were to develop expertise. Professor West would start each class by asking a question, beginning with the student in the first seat of the first row. If that student answered correctly, she/he would be asked another question until the student was stumped, and Professor West went on to the student seated behind. If you were able to answer several questions in a row—a very rare event—he put an X next to your name. “You made an IMPACT!” he would say. We attended his classes with great angst, but we loved them, learned an enormous amount, and had great respect for this man. Behind his back, we called him “The Great God West.”

The other outstanding faculty members at that time included Professors Weaver and Temple. Professor John Duffy was our audiologist, and Professor Oliver Bloodstein was our stuttering expert. There were two brilliant professors who taught phonetics, James Abel and Malcolm Coxe. At that time we took phonetics and advanced phonetics.

Speech Therapy was only one section of the much larger Speech Department, which included Discussion and Debate, Theater, Radio and Television, Public Speaking, and Interpretive Reading. As a student in the department, you were expected to become proficient in all these areas.

I was fortunate to have been given a fellowship by the Speech Department for my master’s degree and then an invitation to join the faculty. I left in 1973 when I moved to New Jersey, but I was blessed to have spent so many productive years as a student and as a faculty member in such a wonderful environment.
Greetings from the Program Director

We are pleased to bring you the ninth edition of the annual alumni newsletter, 4/400 Boylan. Having returned last fall from a year on sabbatical, I am pleased to report that things are better than ever in the classrooms, clinical suites, and research labs of Boylan Hall. First and foremost, I must express my sincere appreciation to Renee Fabus, interim executive officer of the doctoral program in speech and hearing sciences at the Graduate Center. Assistant Professor Gianna Leydon is completing a research project in vocal fold physiology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This issue will bring you more specific information about these and other projects as well as reports of faculty and research labs of Boylan Hall. Right from the beginning, I could say, “Nothing without Brooklyn College.” The motto is “Nil sine magnum labore” (Nothing without great labor). My motto is “Nil sine Brooklyn College;” and here’s why.

First of all I would never have gotten a college education without BC. It was a streetcar ride from my home and there was no tuition at that time. My parents were quite poor and there was no way that I could have gone to a private college. I should mention that BC was not entirely free since we did have a $3 student activities fee. (During my stay at BC, when they raised the fee to $6, I was one of the students out there protesting the increase.)

Right from the beginning, I could say, “Nothing without Brooklyn College.” But after a while I could say it with even more conviction. BC reworked me by correcting my auditory skills, and preparing me to move, and while this has taken some of them off-campus for awhile, we are proud to share their talents and know they are making an invaluable contribution to the field. Professor Clara Marton has assumed the position of executive officer of the doctoral program in speech and hearing sciences at the Graduate Center. Assistant Professor Gianna Leydon is completing a research project in vocal fold physiology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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On behalf of my colleagues, I’ll close by thanking you for your continued interest and support of all that goes on in 4/400 Boylan. With a special word of thanks to Diana Rogovin Davidow, it is the generosity of our alumni that makes it possible for us to do what we do in the clinic and to graduate some of the most remarkable clinicians, teachers, and researchers in the field.

The fall 2009 semester was accompanied by many wonderful changes in the program, most notably the installation of the long-awaited, state-of-the-art video monitoring system, which will allow for expanded clinical training experiences. As always, our faculty are on the move, and while this has taken some of them off-campus for awhile, we are proud to share their talents and know they are making an invaluable contribution to the field. Professor Clara Marton has assumed the position of executive officer of the doctoral program in speech and hearing sciences at the Graduate Center. Assistant Professor Gianna Leydon is completing a research project in vocal fold physiology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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One of the most powerful courses that I have ever taken in college was taught by Professor Malcolm Coxe for phonetics. That was probably the most powerful course that I have ever had. This class not only taught me about an indispensable tool that I use everyday, it was also a great help to me in correcting my own APD.

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name of the person whose voice happened to be most salient at the time. That was over twenty-five years ago and here I am again, after a long hiatus, finding myself in the embrace of 4400, humming my little tune.

I was fortunate to have studied under the very best and highly respected professionals in the field of speech, hearing sciences, and, of course, audiology. With all the excitement and anticipation, I looked forward to meeting Professor Duffy. I knew of him from my very first mentor, Dr. Adolph Wolferman, a world renowned ENT physician/surgeon, one of the early pioneers of middle-ear reconstructive surgery. I absolutely loved Professor Duffy—he was so approachable, patient, and knowledgeable in the science and art of audiology. What I hold dear is his incredible humanity and his generous laughter. Professor Lang was another strong force in my life. What a great listener he was. What a gift he had for drawing out the best in his students. One day after an arduous session, he shared with me the story of one of his students. The young man was not one who shone in the national or world academic arena, but this student was a true gentleman. He was there for his professor, a gentleman who was always there for you, his students. His encouragement, his kindness, and his respect reflected in the lives of the future professionals in this field.

As a graduate fellow, I tutored undergraduates. I learned anatomy and physiology from Professor Perias. I don't think anyone else has taught it with the excitement and detail that Professors Feldman, Bloodstein, and Silman. Mentorship and support I received from the renowned professors, and the support of the department, was a classmate of mine. He has generally eased me back to this world of teaching. How did I get so lucky? I hold all that has been given me by these wonderful, special individuals very near and dear to my heart. It is overwhelming. Now, as I find myself teaching both an undergraduate course and clinic education to the Au.D. students, I want to give as much as I have been given. A new wave of audiology professors appeared in the 1980s and, wow, what an exciting time that was for us. New energy, ideas, focus, and methods appeared. How thrilling for us! Professor Rubinstein is a pillar of strength and dedication. She bends over backwards to find ways to help a student understand a concept. Professor Cherry is the source person. If you have a question, she has the book or article you can borrow. I learned tough love from her which sort of put a flame, you know where, to get me to do what was needed to be done.

Of my first day at Brooklyn College, I was faced with a serious decision: What area of study to pursue? I took the course catalog and headed for the Quad to sit on the beautiful green lawn. I recalled the advice I heard at freshman orientation: Choose a major based on what you like doing or are passionate about. I remembered a six-week community service project in the tenth grade. I had been placed as a teacher’s helper to the speech language pathologist in a program for children with special needs. I had no idea what a speech language pathologist did, but over the six weeks I learned that it was not only important, but rewarding as well. I was inspired by the service provided and by the progress the children made that summer. With that recollection, I realized what I wanted to study.

After I had selected my core classes, I set out to find the Speech Department. On the fourth floor, I walked the halls, looking for 4400. This led to my first encounter with Professor Oliver Bloodstein. After a brief conversation, he suggested that I enroll in some introductory speech classes in my sophomore year. Nearly one and a half years later, I was pleased to see that the same friendly red-haired gentleman was teaching the Introduction to Communication Disorders class. The four years of undergraduate studies went by quickly, and I applied for graduate school.

The transition from undergraduate to graduate school at Brooklyn College was one full of obstacles and challenges. However, with each hurdle, my drive and determination to be a speech language pathologist grew stronger. I have fond memories of my graduate advisor, Professor Ronald Feldman who challenged me to be a better student and clinician. Professor Feldman provided support and mentorship through the tough times, when the pressures of working full time, studying, completing practicum, and externships overwhelmed me. The determination and drive which were born on the Quad that fall afternoon in my freshman year continued to motivate me beyond graduation. Along with three partners, all speech-language pathologists, MultiLink Group Inc. (MLG) was born. MLG has become an important niche in the treatment of children of multicultural and bilingual families living in gravely underserved areas of New York City. An agency since 1999, MLG now employs one hundred independent contractors, including speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, special educators, and social workers, and an office staff of ten. Our leading contract provides home-based early intervention services to children and families in Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, and the Bronx.

I am eternally grateful to Brooklyn College and 4400 Boylan for the experiences, the renowned professors, and the outstanding education. In the fall of 2008, I was honored to return to Boylan Hall as a mentor. I look forward to providing the kind of mentorship and support I received from Professors Feldman, Bloodstein, and Silman. I am proud to be a speech language pathologist and a Brooklyn College alumna.

A Time of Change: A Lifetime of Gratitude
Andrea Blau, ’71, M.S., ’76, Ph.D. ’96, J.D. ’06

I have many colleagues, I was part of the “Mark Rudd” generation—a time when students rallied to end hunger in Biala and the war in Vietnam. And, in my senior year, we successfully closed college campuses throughout the country. Quite a remarkable feat. Significantly less momentous to society at large, was my discovery, also in my junior year, of the Speech Clinic in Boylan Hall.

Having avoided the compulsory “Public Speaking” class for as long as possible, the course anunciated the class I discovered the Speech Clinic next door. I knew nothing about speech therapy, and had already gone through three majors—Math, Greek Mythology, and Home Economics, the latter by the way being the most difficult—none of which fit. But I had always, as far back as I can recall, been driven (perhaps obsessed) by a desire to help people who needed special care.

The speech department was it. Love at first sight.

I started with an undergrad assignment in the Infants Home in Boro Park, and naturally gravitated toward the nonspeaking preschoolers with autism. This was back in the day when there was no autism spectrum but only infantile autism diagnoses, which came with a laundry list of approximately thirteen criteria, including onset before the age of two, lack of eye contact, little to no language or expressive skills, zero ability to relate to or sustain social contact, and so on. These were the wild children of the era. Few families or professionals knew how to “reach” them and even fewer had the courage to keep trying, often not surviving the compulsory introductory black eye and round of tetanus shots.

Long story short, I quickly found my fit, and with the support of the undergraduates and graduate Speech and Hearing programs at BC, and Ph.D. program at CUNY, was able to fulfill my personal destiny first in the field of autism, then cerebral palsy and developmental disabilities research and teaching, and, ultimately, in customizing habilitation, rehabilitation, educational, vocational, and life span programs for neurologically impaired kids and adults. In recent years, I added law to my portfolio, so that I might play a small role in impacting public policy to give an even more powerful voice to the voiceless.

Enough about me. This reflection is meant to focus on my gratitude to the many people I have had the privilege to work with. The voiceless.
open then, just waiting for us to step up and seize the opportunity to develop interventions, treatment techniques, and academic programs to serve generations to come. We each took that step, many in increasingly innovative ways. And most of us are still doing it! Thank you, Boylan Hall!

From the Sidewalks of Brooklyn to the Sands of Long Beach

Ludi Jankeloff, B.A., W.S., ’82

I t all starts in Brooklyn. I am a Brooklyn girl, born and raised, and naturally I attended Brooklyn College. Originally was a psychology major and then I returned after marriage to pursue a career as a speech-language pathologist. There were the Sigma Alpha Eta meetings, comedy skits and celebrations. We introduced the staff to “Rosa Mandibular Fossa” and “Mr. Bill Gets a Hearing Test.” Shh. Don’t tell Professor Cherry that we filmed it in the audiology suite on a Saturday! As a graduate fellow, I had an auspicious ensemble of my professors and supervisors and others mentors at Brooklyn College; some were my professors and supervisors and others were my peers. I studied under Professors Bloodstein, Gurland, Lang, Duffy, Cherry, Pierac, Chapay, and Rubinstein, and many others. I was proud to be a part of the Brooklyn College community and the Graduate Center to launch a Doctor of Audiology Program (Au.D.). This program reached a new milestone on May 27, 2009, when it held a graduation ceremony for the first cohort of students to graduate from the program: Ilana P. Cellum, Jessica B. Gordon, Karen M. Greer, Michelle L. Kraskin, Rhee B. Rosenman-Nesson, Allison D. Shapiro, and Rivka Strom. In recognition of the clinical component of their doctorate and as part of the ceremony, Au.D. faculty members handed each student a white coat to don when working professionally. This “white coat” ceremony has been adopted by Au.D. programs nationally; the white coat symbolizes the initiation of the students into the practice of audiology, acknowledging their role as health-care professionals. The ceremony was also an opportunity for fellow students, family, and friends of the graduates to come together to celebrate the candidates’ accomplishments.

The ceremony was the culmination of the hard work and efforts of both faculty and students. Members of the faculty and the student body had an opportunity to speak. Students acknowledged the assistance and contributions to their success made by faculty, family, and friends, as well as their excitement about the prospect of beginning their careers in the field. As one of the commencement speakers, I shared with the audience the sentiments of one of the graduates, Rivka Strom, who described the enthusiasm with which she went to her audiology residency every day never knowing what interesting case she would find. One example she noted was a young child with a new cochlear implant who had said her first word during a previous visit and several follow-up sessions later was singing “The Wheels of the Bus.”

Graduate Center President William Kelly spoke to the attendees, acknowledging the importance of the day for the Graduate Center: this being the first time that the Graduate Center had conferred a clinical doctoral degree. He spoke eloquently about the importance of clinical education and its contribution to society. Those attending were inspired by his remarks.

In addition to a residency year, each graduate completed a capstone project. Some of the projects involved a meta-analysis of previous research whereas others consisted of empirical research. Examples of capstone project titles include: “The Prevalence of Auditory Neuropathy: Dys-synchrony in Children with Hearing Loss;” “Hearing Impairment, Cognitive Status, and Quality-of-Life in the Elderly;” “Reliability and Validity of the Hearing Aid Evaluation Questionnaire (HAEQ);” “The Relationship Between the Magnitude of Distortion Product Otoacoustic Emissions and Acoustic Reflex Thresholds for Broadband Noise in Older Adults.”

The Diana Rogovin Davidow Speech and Hearing Center—What’s New?

Michael Bergen, M.S., ’94, clinic director, and Susan Bobe, assistant clinic director

Occasionally we are asked: “What’s new at the Center?” We never quite know where to begin. Frankly, we are a bit biased, because we truly believe ourselves to be fortunate to work in one of the greatest speech and hearing centers. Why do we feel that way? We oversee clinical services in The Diana Rogovin Davidow Speech and Hearing Center at Brooklyn College. As products of the CUNY educational system, one of us an audiologist, the other a speech-language pathologist, we complement each other in many ways. We also share a vision for the future of the Center and are proud to be making strides toward many of our goals. Our ultimate mission remains the same: to provide a comprehensive clinical education to our students while affording the highest level of quality care to the Center’s clients. Two ingredients routinely help us achieve those objectives: a fine mix of excellent faculty, and staff members and a pool of committed students.

The past year has seen significant technological advances. The grandest has been the installation of a large-scale video recording monitoring and recording system. Our programs will soon surpass the limitations of the one-way mirror by allowing clinical instructors and students to access and review sessions. Instructors will be able to select and incorporate a specific session of particular educational value into a class, providing greater “observational” capability than in the past. This new system creates additional opportunities to include clients and their families in the therapeutic process.

In addition to the video upgrade, our programs were able to secure funding for a new audiometer, a new otoacoustic emissions system, and for equipment that will allow speech and voice analysis. These devices, in conjunction with recent upgrades to all computers in clinical suites and student study areas, help to enhance service provision to our students and clients. We are thankful that thousands of dollars have been made available to our students via scholarships, fellowships, and tuition waivers in the past year, continuing a recent trend. The 2009 Diana Rogovin Davidow Scholarships were awarded to Irene Frommovich and Danielle Lipman, and the Mel Silverman Scholarship was awarded to Aimee Sidi; this competitive process provided each student with $2,000 in tuition fees. Vocal Fold and Trench research, led by Assistant Professor Justin Calleja was honored for Excellence in Audiology. An additional sum of $1,000 in departmental tuition waivers was distributed among several other students of our clinical programs. So, that’s what’s new at the Center.

We are excited about our additions. They will help to support the clinical education of the many undergraduate students, graduate speech-language pathology students, and doctoral audiology students who regularly make use of our facilities and services. We’re proud to be a part of the rich history of our programs, and are excited to guide the Diana Rogovin Davidow Speech and Hearing Center into the future.

Exploring the Function of the Epithelium

Claire Lefevre, assistant professor

At the end of July 2009, I came to the University of Wisconsin-Madison to take a visiting position in the Department of Surgery. Over the past several months, I have had the great fortune to become immersed in research in voice biology. Here, I am working with a team of scientists headed by Dr. Susan Thibeault, a pioneering researcher in the field. Our shared objectives are to better understand why voice disorders occur and to identify optimal intervention strategies to treat these disorders. My role on the team is to continue the work I began at Brooklyn College to examine the organization and function of vocal fold epithelium, the layers of cells covering the vocal folds, when the epithelium is healthy and after an injury.

As a team, we hope to achieve two main goals through our collaborative work. First we are to build a bench model that will allow examination of vocal fold epithelium in the laboratory setting. This model will help us to examine complex...
In the morning, Dr. Pitman showed videos and slides of the anatomy and physiology of the vocal folds, the various vocal fold disorders, associated dysphonias (voice disorders), operations, and results. The audio-visuals were very compelling and increased everyone’s understanding of the anatomy and function of the larynx and vocal folds. Since many of the clinicians in our audience provide therapy to clients with voice disorders, this lecture was extremely informative.

In the afternoon, Simeon Blitman showed slides and videos of clients with voice disorders and discussed assessment (including instrumentation and informal measures) and therapeutic strategies, including various demonstrations. His information reinforced the material presented by Dr. Pitman, creating a dynamic, informative, and exciting symposium for all who attended.

Faculty Achievements

Isabelle Barrière was invited to present her work on the acquisition of Yiddish at a conference sponsored by the Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Jerusalem. She also published “Comprehension of infrequent subject-verb agreement forms: Evidence from French-learning children” in the peer-reviewed journal Child Development, and “Globalization, Technology, and the Education of Young Children: Understanding the World in Two Languages” in Globalization, Technology and Curriculum, S.A. O’Connor-Petruzo & F. Girelli-Carasi (eds) (Pearsons). Recipient of a PSC-CUNY grant for “Identifying Developmental Phases in the Acquisition of Yiddish as an L1,” Barrière is currently working on the development of a bilingual extension program at Brooklyn College.

Michael Bergen serves as president-elect of the New York State Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NYSSHLA), 2010, and participates on committees of NYSSHLA, ASHA, the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders, and the Metropolitan NY Council of University Clinic Directors.

Susan Bohne completed a diversity grant entitled “Development of a Mentoring Program to Increase Recruitment of Graduate Students from Underrepresented Populations in Communication Sciences and Disorders” with Renee Fabus and Michael Bergen. She is chairing the Professional Issues Planning Committee for the 2010 NYSSHLA Convention.

Michele Emmer and Shlomo Silman submitted a grant application to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for nearly $2,000,000, entitled “Nonsurgical intervention for the elimination of middle ear effusion and associated hearing loss in toddlers 2.0–3.11 years of age.”

Baila Epstein received her Ph.D. in Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences from the CUNY Graduate Center in September 2009. She presented at the International Congress on “Event-Related Potentials of the Brain” in April 2009, and on electrophysiological evidence of deficient cognitive control in children with specific language impairment at the Annual Symposium on Research in Child Language Disorders in June 2009.

Renee Fabus serves as the director of Speech, Universities and Labs for NYSSHLA and vice-president of the Long Island Speech and Hearing Association (LISHA). She is co-leader of a National Stuttering Association NSA-Kids Chapter at Brooklyn College. Fabus is co-authoring a diagnostic resource manual with Cyndi Stein which will be published by Delmar Cengage Learning. She presented a talk on the assessment of speech and language skills in preschool children for doctoral students in school psychology at Fordham University. She is currently organizing a research laboratory in the Neuropsychology Program at Queens College to investigate lateralized readiness potentials in children who stutter.


Clara Leydon was invited to attend ASHA’s Annual Conference on Research in Communication Sciences and Disorders: Lessons for Success: Developing the Emerging Scientist in Washington, D.C., in April 2009. She presented a poster in May 2009, “Clinical outcomes of vocal fold surface hydration: A meta-analysis” at The Voice Foundation’s Annual Symposium. A paper on this study was recently accepted for publication in the Journal of Voice.

The 2010 Spring Symposium, entitled “Cleft Palate/Craniofacial Disorders: Intervention,” is scheduled for March 5, 2010. The featured speaker is Etolie M. Le Blanc, a craniofacial speech physiologist.

Klara Marton was appointed executive officer of the Ph.D. Program in Speech-Language Hearing Sciences at the Graduate Center, CUNY. She is the editor of a book, Assessment and Intervention in Neurocognitive Disorders: Examples from Evidence Based Practice (published in Hungarian). Her paper on “Imitation of body postures and hand movements in children with specific language impairment” was published in the Journal of Experimental Child Psychology. She has co-authored two chapters, one with Richard G. Schwartz, “Articulatory and phonologial Disorders,” the second with Gail B. Gurland, “Assessment of Language Disorders in School-Age Children,” and she has also published a chapter, “Interaction between flexible cognition and language comprehension in children with and without language impairment,” in Children and Language Development, Impairment and Training, M. A. Reed (Ed.).

Adrienne Rubinstein, along with her co-investigators, Arteene Neuman, Marcin Wroblewski, and Joshua Hajicek, presented a paper, “Effects of reverberation on speech recognition of children with cochlear implants,” at the Conference on Implantable Auditory Prostheses in Lake Tahoe, in July 2009, and had a paper accepted for publication in Ear and Hearing, entitled, “Combined effects of noise and reverberation on speech recognition performance of normal hearing children and adults.”

Natalie Schaeffer published an article in the Journal of Voice entitled “Toward a more quantitative measure to assess severity of dysphonia: Preliminary observations.” She also had two diagnostic book chapters (one on voice and one on aphasia) accepted by Cengage Learning. She presented a poster session at Faculty Day, 2009, which included instrumentation illustrations of normal and abnormal voice production. She also coordinated the annual spring 2009 symposium for the Department of Speech Communication Arts and Sciences.

Cyndi Stein was the recipient of the 2009 Brooklyn College award for teaching excellence. She co-authored The Guide To Diagnostic Assessment and Clinical Report Writing in Speech-Langauge Pathology with Renee Fabus, to be published by Cengage Learning. She has facilitated workshops and conducts interactional keynote presentations on utilizing a strength-based approach in student advisement and in the classroom. She has presented this work to Brooklyn College’s Center for Teaching as well as many other community and professional groups.

The Program in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology wishes to thank the following contributors for their generous 2009–2010 donations.

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Gail Olenick
Susan Lee Rein
Mel Silverman
Lydia Soifer
Henry Tabin
Rosalie Unterman
Suzanne Wertheim

Adjunct Professor Susan Longtin presents her work on autism spectrum disorders.
Faculty members focused on long-term curriculum planning at their annual retreat in August.

4400 Boylan would like to hear from you.

Let us have news of your professional accomplishments for the next issue of 4400 Boylan.
Please include your phone number and your e-mail address.

Send tales of your triumphs to:
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