

Communication Disorders Program

West Texas A&M University

A Student's View of the Larynx... Literally

The graduate students of the West Texas A&M University Communication Disorders program have been participating as subjects in a voice lab offered by an instructor in the program. The voice lab is an additional opportunity for students to receive hands-on experience using a state-of-the-art technique called videostroboscopy. This technique is an invasive procedure using a scope with a camera at the end that is inserted into the mouth or nose to visualize the vocal folds. The device that is inserted orally is called a rigid scope and the device inserted nasally is called a flexible scope. The picture above demonstrates the use of the flexible scope in an assessment of the vocal folds. The videostroboscopy scope is connected to a



computer monitor where the image is displayed. Once the scope is inserted the patient is asked to vocalize sounds in different manners. The scope uses a halogen light source to initially picture the vocal folds. Once the vocal folds are visualized on the computer screen a strobe light source is used showing the waving pattern of the vocal folds in slow motion.

This invasive technique is used to evaluate voice quality, voice pathology, voice function, and other aspects of voice in the professions of speech-language pathology as

well as otolaryngology (ear, nose, and throat doctors).

Faculty member, Ann Wallace, supervises the graduate students participating in this lab. Ann is a certified Speech-Language Pathologist with extensive experience in the areas of voice and swallowing in the medical setting.

The students participating in this lab have acquired vast knowledge of this technique and have gained confidence in performing and understanding the videostroboscopy.

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Researching the Ringing

The spring 2011 semester has been busy in Dr. Dalton's Audiology suite in WTAMU's Speech and Hearing Clinic. Dr. Dalton is an audiologist and faculty member of the West Texas A&M University Communication Disorders program. Over the years, he has produced multiple publications regarding his extensive research in the area of Tinnitus.

Tinnitus is defined by the American Tinnitus Association as the "perception of sound in the ears or head where no external source is present," in other words it is a ringing in the ears. Many individuals suffer from this constant annoyance.

Dr. Dalton is striving to remediate the problem using modern technology and software that neurologically cancel out the perceived ringing. Dr. Dalton is working with his assistant Shiloh Baker, who carries out the procedure and collects the data that is obtained.

Dr. Dalton has presented this research at many conferences throughout the nation. From this sudden amount of recent publicity, individuals suffering from tinnitus have traveled from as far as Chicago, Illinois to be used as subjects for this research. Dr. Dalton has recently been interviewed by the local newspaper regarding his endeavors to improve the lives of those suffering from tinnitus.

A Trip to H-Town

The Texas Speech and Hearing Association's annual convention was held this year in Houston, Texas. Sixteen of the WT communication disorders graduate students attended the convention. One student said that it was the greatest opportunity of her graduate experience and was so thankful that she was able to attend. When asked the greatest experience of the convention all of the students had the same response, "Getting to network with Speech-Language Pathologists and other students from all over the state of Texas." Being able to talk with other professionals in the field as well as being able to talk to employers looking for

Speech-Language Pathologists. It gave the students an insight on the employment market and also helped them become familiar with the latest treatment approaches and technology that is becoming available to the profession.





Oh the Placements We Will Go

The WT Speech and Hearing Clinic located in the Virgil Henson Activity Center is one of many locations where the graduate students in the communication disorders program go to provide speech services. The students are supervised by faculty members of the program as well as Speech-Language Pathologists who are contracted to solely supervise students at their clinical setting. These placements reach far beyond the WTAMU campus and Canyon city limits. Placements extend to

Guymon, Oklahoma, Texline, and Amarillo Texas. Students travel to these placements weekly to provide services in school systems as well as a private clinic, all affiliated and in contract with WT's communication disorders program.

Rebecca Linke, clinic coordinator works very hard to assure that the graduate students participating in clinical practicum receive the utmost experience while practicing as students.

TBI Camp 2012

The National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) is an organization for students of communication sciences and disorders. At WTAMU, we have had the privilege of working together with communities in the local areas to increase awareness of communication disorders

As NSSLHA has been working to improve the organization as a whole, the West Texas A&M University NSSLHA chapter is improving by the minute. During the past year the other research interests in the field of Speech-Language Pathology

chapter has begun doing more community volunteering as well as social networking to build professional relationships for the members.

During the spring semester of 2011, NSSLHA members including president, Shelbi Miller, traveled to Guthrie, Oklahoma to participate in the 10th annual Traumatic Brain Injury Camp. This camp was held for brain injury victims of all ages. The camps focus was to provide a fun filled weekend of activities and social events. The campers were able to participate in activities that typically they would never be able to take part in because of

their disabilities. One camper in particular had a goal to stand and shoot a basketball. This was no easy task. It took four Physical Therapists to help him stand. He had been confined to a wheelchair for years after an accident causing significant brain damage, which ultimately led him to a life of physical handicap.

The WTAMU NSSLHA chapter was so moved by this camp and the campers that attended that they have decided to provide funds to sponsor campers at the 11th annual Sunrise Camp in 2012.