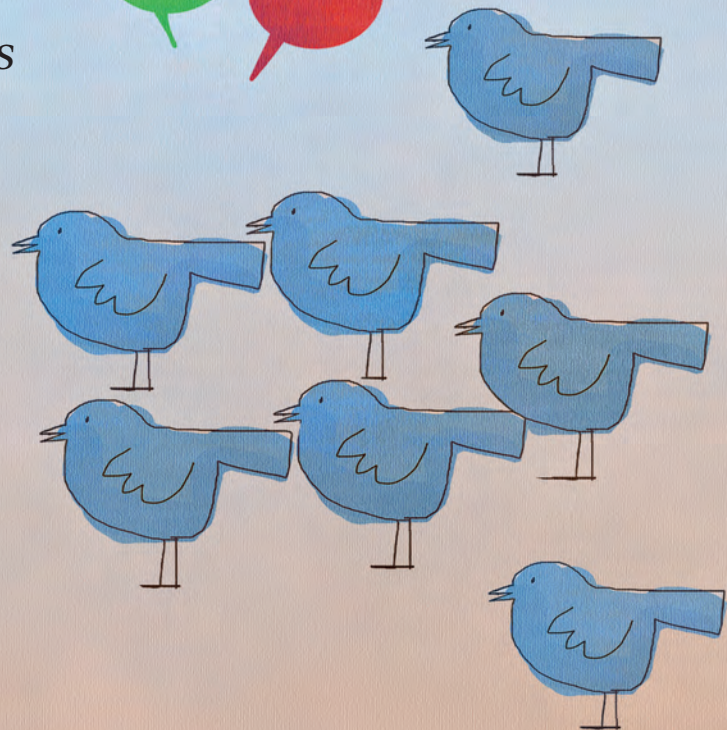
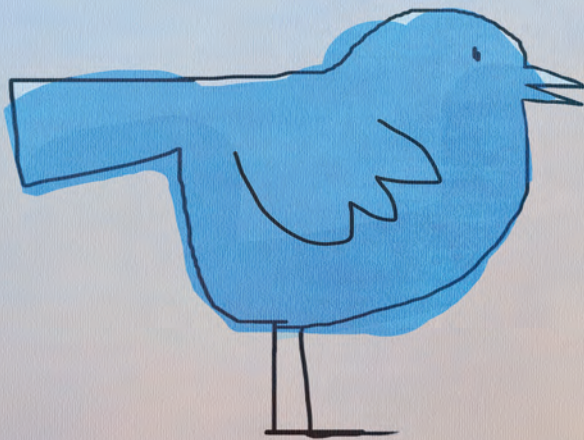
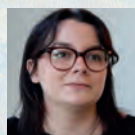




A conversation to remember

Today's student SLTs rely upon the mighty contribution of previous RCSLT members who created the knowledge base over decades of clinical practice and research. Here a group of first-year student SLTs **Emilye, Evan, Hannah and Lily** meet up with retired member **Dr Carol Stow**, who qualified in 1980, for a chance to swap notes





Emily:

This might be like me asking what your favourite child is, but was there any particular role during your career that stood out to you as your favourite? Or one where you think “I really feel like I made a difference there”?



Carol:

So yes, there have always been some that I can remember really clearly – that you will go through life thinking: “I made a real difference to that child’s life, but they and their family will never realize it because they never quite got what the difference is.” And that’s kind of frustrating, but it’s rather nice to know that inside yourself.

So sometimes you will do things and nobody will appreciate what you’ve done, but you know. I think there are always some that stay with you and some things that you think, oh, that’s a light bulb moment... that’s what makes this all so worthwhile.



Evan:

I just want to make a difference – some sort of positive change. For me, I love talking – it’s so hard to realise that it could be difficult for someone to be able to communicate at a basic level. I feel it’s so important that we’re able to communicate because, realistically, we are each other’s lifelines as human beings.

Carol:

I think it’s interesting because right at the beginning, I think people like you who are coming into the profession tend to have just this idea of wanting to do something with helping people to talk and giving them their dignity. I mean, there’s this idea, quite rightly, that it’s about humanity.

Evan:

In terms of different professions, I’ve heard that you work in prisons, which I found really interesting. I didn’t realize that that was a branch of it. So I think it might be interesting to look into that, to see what type of work they do?

Carol:

Absolutely, yes – you can work in prisons, and statistically the prison population has a very high incidence of speech problems. There is at least one prison governor out there that has gone on record saying that the one member of staff he would never get rid of is his speech therapist, because that’s an important part of the prison’s work.



Hannah:

I’m the same as Evan. I have my words, I love to speak, so imagining not being able to communicate in that kind of way, is scary – like really, really scary. I don’t even know how I would translate what I want or what I need. This must be especially so in healthcare, this danger that if you have a need for a certain thing and you’re not able to express it, that must be terrifying.



doing, I don’t know, statistics, and then the next minute you’re doing speech sounds and then you’re doing about child development and so many different things.

Hannah:

All the biomed stuff we are doing: it will be interesting to see how that goes. I didn’t realize how much science goes on when you’re doing all of this. I’m excited about it because I want to know, but it’s just having to get my head around it, which will be interesting.

Emily:

I don’t think I fully realized until I started researching how much there was to do with swallowing difficulties as well. I did just think it was going to be speech. And actually, after researching it, I’m very interested in that aspect of giving someone back that dignity, being able to go out for meals with their family and have that kind of normality.



Lily:

Maybe when I first began down this path, I was quite naive about – even within paediatrics and adults – how many different options there are. So I guess I’m most looking forward to just sort of putting myself out there and find what fits me. I’m definitely making sure that I’m not closed up to anything.

Carol:

Some of it is difficult, you know, and you sit there thinking, how can you think this is easy? This is rock solid, hard. But you just have to kind of keep going because and remember why you want to do it, which is it’s a great profession. It’s a great career, helping people and it doesn’t matter which particular niche you end up in. There are niches and professions that exist now that didn’t exist back in my day. So go out and find a bit that particularly works and appeals to you. **B**

EVAN MORRISON, EMILYE CARROL-NICHOLS, LILY PACE and HANNAH MOORE, first year speech and language therapy students at Manchester University
DR CAROL STOW, retired SLT