

Meet Tina Radichel

Who is the writer behind the witty and informative SLP eNEWS monthly column, The Clinical Café? The columnist is none other than Tina Radichel, a New Product Manager and speech-language pathologist at AGS Publishing.

Tina wears many hats in her professional life, as well as in her personal life. She wins people over with her wide smile and infectious enthusiasm. In November at ASHA, she presented a seminar titled, "Speech Assessment: New Standards in Comprehensive Analysis" with author, Dr. Kathleen Williams.

A behind-the-scenes view of research

The presentation addressed two traditional approaches to speech assessment, articulation and phonology, and how the approaches can be used together. Tina said the evidence from standardization research done by AGS Publishing suggested that the best approach is a comprehensive one. This large standardization sample of over 2,300 children, in which both approaches to speech assessment were used, provided a huge amount of data to examine.

"Think of it as a continuum," Tina explained. "You sample a child's speech wherever you need to on that continuum. Clinicians know how much context they need to identify disorders and get the most useful information."

At the presentation, Tina and Kathleen offered interesting anecdotes about the nuts and bolts of doing research. During the seminar they took participants under the hood of the standardization process. They also showed "where the rubber meets the road," by providing links to the intervention process.

Appreciating her clinical background

Tina's professional roots can be found in clinical work. After she received her M.S. degree in communication disorders from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, she began working as a hospital speech-language pathologist in 1997 at Luther Hospital in Eau Claire. She explains that at Luther, an affiliate of the Mayo Health System, she saw the "whole continuum of care." Tina was responsible for providing clinical interventions to patients who had acute/subacute/chronic neurogenic speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders. A large part of her job involved working with patients' families.

Tina described the unique approach used at Luther. "I was fortunate enough to work with a team who truly lived in a solid interdisciplinary model, and even looked towards a transdisciplinary model. We worked directly with the therapy staff, doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains, and other professionals in the unit."



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Tina, Patrick Rebman, and Suzie Slota, the 3 co-Founders of the Children's Museum of Eau Claire, with a local class of kindergarteners. This photo was on the front page of the Eau Claire Leader-Telegram in December 2000 (photo by Dan Reiland).

She was able to work with patients at each stage of their illness: acute, subacute, rehabilitation, and transition stages. According to Tina, the model allowed for a seamless continuity of care.

One of her most memorable patients was a nine-year-old boy. We'll call him Randy. While rollerblading, Randy was hit by a motorcycle and suffered a moderate head injury. Randy's injury triggered typical head injury symptoms, including memory loss, and attention and emotional difficulties. Tina worked with him for over eight months to help him prepare for returning to school. Although he will never be the same, Randy did make huge strides. Working as Randy's primary advocate or "ring master" as she calls it, Tina not only provided speech therapy, but provided counseling, collaborated with his teachers, and educated his parents.

Tina explains, "The situation is more than tough for a family to deal with. Often they hang on to an illusion that everything will be the same as before. It takes time. When they're ready, they'll let you in and begin to grapple with the road ahead."

All in all, Tina appreciated the many teachable moments that came working one-on-one with people at the hospital. She enjoyed the diversity of patients and the fascinating stories she heard from stroke survivors. Tina reflected, "I was always interested in how patients would enter the next chapter of their lives."

The move to publishing

By 1999, Tina recalled that she was intrigued with educational publishing and its responsibility to the field. At the time she recognized that assessments and intervention materials needed to be "authentic, grounded in research, useful, and make a difference." She added, "At the same time there has to be an ethical framework behind product development. We want to be helpful by providing valuable resources to our profession."

At AGS Publishing, Tina helps manage the development of new speech and language tests and software applications. One exciting project she's working on is an online clinical course on autism. This new course would offer continuing education credits for ASHA members and others.

A born leader

Tina continues to keep in touch with other speech-language professionals and make a difference in her field. Last July the [Wisconsin Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology Association \(WSHA\)](#), a very active and visible chapter of ASHA, welcomed her as their new president. The organization has a current membership of over 1,200 practitioners, researchers, educators, and students and is the professional organization for communication disorders in the state. For the next two years, WSHA's theme will be, "Serving the Professions Through Consensus and Advocacy."

In the months ahead, Tina feels that her most important role will be connecting WSHA to other related organizations in order to work on legislative priorities. She views building consensus as vital for moving forward on issues and making a difference overall. She said, "Perfect solutions in every situation are for Pollyannas and children; the real world of gray areas must be balanced and weighed with real facts, tested methodologies, ethics, and common sense. We must listen to one another and find the commonalities so that we become one voice, one message, and one theme amongst the cacophony of valid opinions and sound, but varied, judgments. Consensus is built with compassion, with trust, and with dialogue."

Focusing on young people

In her spare time Tina enjoys mentoring and offering teachable moments to young people. "They have a lot to give and a zest for life," she explained. According to Tina, working with youth can be "messy," but it's so "real." "At the high school level, young people are looking for mentors, but would rarely ask you directly."

Last spring she volunteered at her alma mater, Immanuel Lutheran High School, and choreographed the production of their musical, Annie. In the past, she has also choreographed their local productions of West Side Story and Meet Me in St. Louis, as well as helping out as a coach and guest speaker. Another program, the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership, sponsors leadership development opportunities and conferences for high school sophomores. Tina was involved with this program for over six years.



Suzie Slota and Tina, 2 of the 3 co-Founders of the Children's Museum of Eau Claire, here at the St. Louis Children's Museum... "The Magic House."

In September 2000, Tina co-founded the Children's Museum of Eau Claire, Inc. She and two other founders traveled around the country visiting different children's museums for inspiration and ideas. Together they learned about various learning styles, including the hands-on learning opportunities of discovery and investigation. What started out as a great idea for kids launched into a whole new world of startup businesses, non-profit development, and business/Board leadership.

While talking about the new museum, Tina said, "When children are ready to learn, they're ready to learn. With the right support and opportunities, they can sail."

From helping establish children's museums to developing speech and language products, Tina plans to keep involved in young people's lives.