



Avril Nicoll

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What does your current role involve?

Developing a theory about practice change in speech and language therapy for a PhD using qualitative methods. I hope it will help therapists and services reflect critically on their situation and make more informed decisions.

What was your first role after graduating?

A community generalist. I had my own community clinic, ran groups with a senior therapist, and did 3 month rotations at a rehabilitation unit, a child development centre and a special needs school. A fantastic start.

At what stage did you decide which area of the profession you wanted to work in?

I thought I wanted to work just with people with aphasia, but ended up loving the variety and responsibility of mixed community posts.

How did you progress from your first role to your current job?

Luck more than design. I've been a community generalist in rural and city settings, Councillor for Student Affairs and Golden Jubilee Coordinator for RCSLT, publisher and editor of Speech & Language Therapy in Practice magazine, a user representative, a research assistant and a PhD student. I wonder what's next?!

How have you used CPD to help you progress in your career?

By being endlessly curious rather than strategic. SIGs (now CENs), travel bursary for parent child interaction therapy, diploma in public relations and news writing courses. A Masters by Research was vital for the PhD, and there is always more reading / twitter / webinars / study groups than time allows.

My advice to students looking to get into my current area of work:

A PhD can be disorientating and lonely, so get good people around you.
A clinical academic route might be more secure than a full-time PhD.
It's never too soon to start writing.

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