

University lecturer thankful for Speech and Drama

Dr Samantha Simkin utilises Speech skills regularly at national and international conferences.

Dr Samantha Simkin (nee Watkins) is a graduate of Grade 8 Speech and Drama. Her career is driven by her passion for childhood vision problems – she is a part-time paediatric optometrist and a part-time research fellow at the University of Auckland where she lectures and researches on paediatric visual assessment and causes of impairment. She is often asked to present at national and international conferences, with audiences ranging from non-medical professionals to medical professionals, students, and occasionally the top international individuals in her field.

Emma Carpenter reached out to her to ask her about her experience of the programme, how she came to find out about it, what the benefits have been, and if she has any advice for others

“As my mother, Lee Watkins, was a speech and drama teacher and taught from home, I don’t remember not being involved with Speech NZ. I believe I started having formal lessons with my mother from 5 years old and sat my first exam at 7.”

“I studied the speech and drama syllabus up to grade 8. I thoroughly enjoyed the mix of learnt pieces, impromptu work, and theory that comprised the syllabus. I feel this gave me a wonderful, rounded approach to speaking in public in a range of formats and styles.”

How is the Speech and Drama syllabus serving you today?

“It has been a wonderful tool in my current career. I use many of the tools I learnt when I am speaking with patients about their vision needs. However, I am most thankful for my Speech NZ education when I lecture and present at conferences where I often need to speak at length, improvise, or answer many questions on the spot. To be able to speak confidently, clearly and concisely in high pressure situations has been a key aspect to my career progression. It has also allowed me to enjoy these parts of my role, where I know others find them stressful times.”



Samantha graduating with her PhD in 2018

What is the most important aspect of the course, in your opinion?

“I have particularly found the impromptu aspects of the course hugely beneficial at this stage in my career. However, when I first began University, I remember calling my mother and thanking her for making me take speech and drama and all the memorising I did, as I felt this helped me focus and study well for exams as I was used to memorisation.

Having a great teacher who pushes you out of your comfort zone and teaches you the tools to succeed is essential along with the excellent syllabus that Speech NZ provides.”

What advice would you have to others considering this course or others with Speech NZ?

You will learn lifelong skills that you can apply to both your work and personal life. Being able to speak clearly and confidently is important in many careers and everyday interactions.



Dr Samantha Simkin as a speaker at the APAO International Conference 2019

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- Samantha Simkin

We are always so thrilled to hear how our syllabuses are still useful for our alumni in their lives and careers!

If you have a success story you would like to share with us, or know of someone who does, please get in touch with the National Office at 04 498 9660 or info@speechnz.co.nz