## Speech Pathology Transcript

**Text on Screen:**

Speech Pathology  
Dr Susan Block

“Speech Pathology is the study of speech, language, and communication problems of a varied nature. Generally a speech pathologist would work with people who have problems with their voice, or stuttering, or generating language. Sometimes problems because of a hearing problem or intellectual problem, they may have problems because of a car accident. They may have coordination problems because they’re born with problems controlling their motor movement, and they might have problems swallowing. So a huge range of issues, also perhaps people who have problems learning, children who don’t have enough language to learn well at school. It’s a very wide profession, with a huge range of options.

In the speech pathology course at La Trobe we have two campuses, one in Melbourne and one in Bendigo and the students do the same program. They do a common first year, trying to get an understanding of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary practices and what happens in various areas of health sciences. In second year they start to look at some aspects of normal communication, the science behind speech pathology, linguistics, and some general psychology and anatomy. In the third year of our program, which is also where people entering the course do our 2 year masters program if they haven’t come up through the undergraduate program, join the undergraduate students, and then all of the students do a problem based learning year. Where they study different components of speech pathology using clinical examples to problem solve in the course of their learning and they have some introductory clinical experiences as well. In fourth year our students also have some problem based learning curriculum studies where they look at the treatment of these disorders in more detail, and at the same time they are in a wide range of clinical practice areas. They also have a series of seminars looking at advanced issues in speech pathology and they do those in a couple of block placements as a mini conference basically so that they get used to presenting in front of each other and they can study an area they would like to look at in a little more detail.”

“Well I always knew that I wanted to work with kids, and I wanted to help people in some way and I’d just moved down from Sydney to Melbourne at the beginning of my first year at Uni and I knew that La Trobe had a really good Health Sciences Faculty in particular Speech Pathology. I really like how we’ve had so many different opportunities to work with a variety of people. You get to work really closely with the peers in your course but also spend some time with some really specialist speech pathologists .”

“Well originally I started Speech Pathology because I wanted to work with kids and help them with their speech and language but as I’ve gone on throughout the course I’ve realised we can do a lot more than that so I think it was a great choice. I think my favourite thing is the amount of placements we get especially in fourth year. We have here at La Trobe placements that you can actually do on campus as well so I think that’s really handy because this is an environment that we’ve been really comfortable with over the 3 years. So I think that is a really big advantage of La Trobe. It changes from time to time throughout the course, at the moment I’m thinking I’d like to work at a hospital particularly in the area of swallowing for me I know that was something that I never thought I would do coming and learning about what we actually do as speech pathologists, I’ve really found it interesting. That’s where I hope to be.”

“There’s a wide field of choice for our graduates and we have people coming to recruit from interstate and overseas as well as locally. The main people who would employ speech pathologists in Victoria would be the education department and the Catholic Education office. The majority of our students would work with children and generally in an education setting. There are also opportunities for graduates in general hospitals, in specialist rehabilitation centres, in specialist centres like schools that focus on hearing impairment etcetera. People work in community health and in private practice. A very broad range. Graduates go in to consulting in industry looking at enhancing communication and people will often advise people making films, people looking at putting out literature, on language and normative data etcetera. So a big range, but more and more, students are starting to become more interested in private practice and looking at developing career options for themselves within the opportunities that exist now.”