

# **HCSNet Workshop on Narrative & Communication Disorders**

**13-14 September 2008**

**The University of Melbourne**

**Organisers: Lesley Stirling, Graham Barrington, Susan Douglas & Kerrie Delves**

## **Outcomes and Directions Report: Workshop participants version**

**\* Public component of the report \***

### **1. Workshop topic**

The workshop formed part of the HCSNet Priority Area in Human Communication Disorders.

The aim of the workshop was to bring together Australian and international researchers with an interest in narrative and communication disorders, to consider the current state of research in this area, with particular attention to methodological issues, and to generate fruitful leads and directions for further research. The intention was to take a truly interdisciplinary approach, involving speakers and participants from a range of areas covered by the broad domain of 'cognitive science'. To this end we made a particular effort to advertise and encourage participation from diverse disciplinary backgrounds including: linguistics, psychology, speech pathology, psychiatry, computer science, and cognitive neuroscience. The call for abstracts encouraged researchers to address a broad range of topic areas covering developmental and acquired disorders of both child and adult language, and from the perspective of both production and comprehension.

The background to the workshop was a recognition that the cognitive tasks involved in the production and comprehension of narrative are complex and yet to be fully understood. Much narrative data has been collected and analysed in relation to populations with communication disorders, with the expectation that this genre holds promise in furthering our understanding of language and cognition and informing the development of therapeutic interventions. However it appeared to the organizers that the potential of this approach has yet to be fully realized, and that there is a sense amongst researchers in this area that there is an opportunity to explicitly identify obstacles to progress.

The production and comprehension of narrative includes such cognitive tasks as the negotiation of multi-agent mental state ascriptions, perspective marking and maintenance of higher-level structural coherence. Narrative is thus a rich testing ground for theories of human communication disorder. However much groundwork is yet to be done to correlate deficits identified in the psychological literature based on task performance, with observable characteristics of linguistic performance.

Discourse analytic techniques applied to data from a variety of neurotypical and neuroatypical sources capturing the spectrum of narrative performance provide an exciting domain within which new interdisciplinary approaches and understandings may be stimulated. It provides a fruitful domain for cross-disciplinary research to illuminate a neglected area in our knowledge of human communication disorders lying between the scope of analysis of pragmatics and of social cognition.

The focus on methodological issues involved prompting potential participants in the workshop to consider such specific questions as:

- Is there a need to develop more refined and revealing linguistic analytic tools and metrics of performance?
- To what extent do methodological differences in elicitation of narratives affect the conclusions we can draw - e.g. use of pictures vs verbal stimuli; kind of narrative?
- Are there other methods of collecting or analysing narratives which would be useful?
- How does the type of analysis chosen affect the results – e.g. at a very broad level, quantitative vs. qualitative?
- Do different types of narrative give rise to different pictures of abilities and deficits?
- What do we know about the development of narrative skills over time in typical compared with atypical populations? How can we measure this?
- What insights are derivable for both child language development and language rehabilitation?

The workshop took place across two days with a total of 16 presentations of the work of 36 researchers. Its final format involved a plenary session on each morning including an introductory review of methodologies jointly presented by researchers from the University of Durham and the organizers, and videolinked talks by two prominent researchers from the US representing distinct perspectives on this research domain: Olga Solomon from the University of Southern California taking an ethnographic approach to the study of autism and narrative; and Nan Bernstein Ratner from the University of Maryland presenting an overview of her own recent research linking narrative with other aspects of childhood language disorder. In addition there were four sessions of papers, covering a range of disorders (autism, SLI, Alzheimer's Disease, epilepsy, Landau Kleffner Syndrome), age ranges (children, adolescents, young and aging adults) and theoretical and methodological perspectives (including such diverse topic areas as cross-linguistic/cross-cultural issues in diagnosing language disorder; editing and repair strategies in the narrative writing process; computational modeling of the creation of personal narrative; the neural architecture of narrative comprehension and production; and comparison of oral and written narratives).

## **2. Future directions in this area**

One of the primary comments made by participants at the workshop was the value of interacting with other researchers working on narrative and communication disorders from different disciplinary areas. The final 37 registered participants came from 20 institutions; three Australian states and four overseas countries (the UK, Japan, Germany and the US); and represented clinical

and non-clinical disciplinary homes including Psychology/Neuropsychology/Psychiatry, Linguistics, Speech Pathology, Education, Information/Computer Science and Anthropology. To our knowledge, this is the first time world-wide that a group of researchers from a range of disciplinary approaches has come together to discuss and reflect on research in this area. Participants commented on the opportunities for learning and engaging and developing potential future research collaborations, and it seems that one of the major future directions for research in this area is precisely the further development of cross-disciplinary discussion and approaches.

Two discussion sessions were scheduled, one at the end of each day's presentations, with the aim of reflecting upon future directions and practical suggestions for moving research in this area forwards. The final discussion session in particular, took the form of structured progress towards suggestions involving:

a) commentary by a panel of representative experts

b) individual reflection on the following two key questions:

Q1. If anything were possible, what would be your dream piece of research on narrative and communication disorders (possibly involving a large collaborative group of researchers)?

Q2. What would need to happen for this to come about?

c) group discussion of these questions in the light of individual reflections

d) general discussion and formulation of recommendations

There was a high degree of consensus on desirable future directions for research in narrative and communication disorders. Key points included the following:

(i) The need for large-scale cross-institutional (and possibly cross-country) collaboration in order to achieve sufficient participant numbers, given that many of the disorders under investigation are comparatively rare and participants comparatively difficult to recruit. The value of looking at participants from a range of different population groups and at taking account of cross-cultural differences was also flagged. This brings with it:

a) a need for consensus definition of 'narrative' and related genres

b) a need for broadly shared protocols for participant recruitment and testing

A specific suggestion made was to institute a 'data bank' of narrative data from populations with communication disorders for collaborative research. This could be modeled upon the more general child language data bank 'Childes'. Funding would be needed for such a project to come to fruition, and as there would also be ethical implications, planning would need to be incorporated into projects under development from now.

(ii) The urgent need for longitudinal study of children with communication disorders.

(iii) The value of applying a wide range of analytical techniques and measures to the data (both cognitive and linguistic) and the associated need to properly evaluate these techniques. Comparing

different methods of narrative analysis on the same data was mentioned as a desirable goal. Again, this brings with it:

- a) a need for consensus as to how these techniques should be applied
- b) the necessity for cross-disciplinary collaboration with researchers bringing distinct areas of expertise and understanding to the application of different analyses

(iv) One key suggested area for future research was the development of interactions between computer science and AI modeling and other areas of research in communication disorders.

### **3. Suggestions for supporting and developing this area of research**

The discussion question “*What would need to happen for this [i.e. dream future research projects on narrative and communication disorders] to come about?*” prompted a range of practical suggestions. Unsurprisingly, primary among these was mention of time and money.

Long term goals:

- Development and submission of funding application(s) for large-scale collaborative research

Suggested action to support this goal:

- Constitution of a working group
- A follow-up workshop within the next two years
- Immediate development of an internet-based network of researchers (this has already been instituted with a ‘blackboard’ based community having been set up based at the University of Melbourne)

Other outcomes and follow-up from the workshop (in progress):

- DVD of proceedings
- Special journal issue

**\* Sections from not for publication section \***

## **1. Workshop attendance**

### **1.1. Workshop organisation**

The organising panel for the workshop included Lesley Stirling, Graham Barrington, Susan Douglas and Kerrie Delves from the School of Languages & Linguistics at the University of Melbourne. Administrative support was provided from Chris Cassidy of HCSNet and Amanda Parker of the School of Languages & Linguistics. In addition, two voluntary helpers, Sascha Rixon and Maureen Saclot, both PhD students from the University of Melbourne, assisted with running the workshop. A technical support assistant was employed for the duration of the workshop to assist with equipment, in particular data projection. Specific additional technical support was needed for the two video-linked plenaries.

### **1.2. Workshop participants**

42 participants (including the two videolinked speakers) preregistered for the workshop, with a final 37 participants attending for all or part of the two days. 16 talks were presented representing the work of 36 researchers, not all of whom were able to attend in person. All participants agreed to their presentations being videotaped for later inclusion in a DVD of the workshop for distribution to attendees and researchers who had flagged their interest but were not able to attend. Participants represented a mix of researchers from clinical and non-clinical backgrounds and other interested parties (e.g. including a member of the Victorian Department of Education and a proofreader/editor); two papers were presented by postgraduate students, four by recent postdocs and a number of postgraduate students attended the workshop. The participant breakdown was as follows:

*(1) Geographical origin of attendees:*

Melbourne or rural Victoria: 25 participants representing 9 organisations

Other locations in Australia (primarily Sydney & Brisbane): 6 participants, 5 organisations

International participants: 6 participants (2 UK, 2 US, 1 Germany, 1 Japan), 6 organisations

*(2) Disciplinary affiliation of attendees:*

Psychology/Neuropsychology/Psychiatry: 9

Linguistics: 9

Speech Pathology: 9

Education: 3

Information/Computer Science: 3

Anthropology: 1

Other: 3

### **1.3. Invited speakers**

Four invited speakers were provided with support to attend the workshop or, in two cases, to present videolinked plenaries. These were:

**Dr. Olga Solomon**, Research Assistant Professor, University of Southern California Division of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy, Los Angeles. Olga Solomon has a background in anthropology and has conducted collaborative research on the “Ethnography of Autism” with Professor Elinor Ochs through the UCLA Sloan Center on the Everyday Life of Families, looking at social interaction and socialization. A special issue of the journal *Discourse Studies* reported some of the results of this work in 2004. One focus of her own research has been the narrative competence of children with autism compared with typically developing children, looking at everyday narrative activity recorded in naturalistic conversational settings.

**Dr. Nan Bernstein Ratner**, Professor and Chairman, Department of Hearing and Speech Sciences, University of Maryland at College Park. Nan Ratner has a background in Child Study, Speech-Language Pathology and Applied Psycholinguistics. She has published extensively in the area of language acquisition and fluency in children. Her current research focuses on the origins of stuttering in young children, the interactions between fluency and language development in typical and language-impaired children (with Leslie Rescorla of Bryn Mawr College), and predictors of language acquisition in infants (with the late Peter Jusczyk of Johns Hopkins University and HESP colleague Rochelle Newman). Her interest in narrative is focused on narratives produced by children with epilepsy, children with histories of expressive language impairment, and preschool children who were infant participants in speech processing studies.

**Dr. Susan Leekam**, Reader, Department of Psychology and Director, Child Development Research Unit, Durham University. Sue Leekam’s extensive and broadly based research on the cognitive and social development of children with autism spectrum disorders and related conditions is well known. She has a particular interest in social interaction and the development of language. Research with Lucy Carey on narrative in autism has led her to an interest in methodological issues in research on narrative and communication disorders.

**Dr. Wan Ching (Steve) Ho**, Research Fellow, Adaptive Systems Research Group, University of Hertfordshire. Steve Ho’s primary research interest is in modelling the psychological concept of autobiographic memory computationally and integrating it into other existing agent architectures. This involves investigation of agents’ goal structure, emotion and attention processes, and the way in which autobiographic memory allows agents to recognise significant events, remember, recall and learn from these. This work is a key aspect of the European FP6 project **eCIRCUS** (Education through characters with emotional-intelligence and role-playing capabilities that understand social interaction) that funds his current Research Fellow position and on which he collaborates with Principal Investigator Prof. Kerstin Dautenhahn. His research increases the agents’ believability and the interactivity of the software developed in the project which makes the interactions of children with the software more fulfilling for the user. He has specific interests in Emergent Narrative (EN) in virtual storytelling systems and games, and in autism and narrative.

#### **1.4. Discussion panel participants**

Panel 1: Associate Professor Michael Saling, University of Melbourne; Dr Patricia Eadies, Murdoch Children’s Research Institute; Cathy Easton, La Trobe University

Panel 2: Associate Professor Sue Leekam, Durham University; Associate Professor Edith Bavin, La Trobe University; Dr Steve Ho, University of Hertfordshire; Dr Susan Douglas, University of Melbourne

## **2. Workshop structure and program**

### **2.1. Final program**

The final program is given below. As indicated above, the first session each day was a plenary in a separate theatre set up for video-linked presentations, and a panel/discussion session was held at the end of each day. There was a self-funded workshop dinner on the first evening, attended by approx. 15 participants, and providing for fruitful informal continuing discussion. The discussion sessions worked very well and Appendix 2 contains the compiled responses from the final session, summarised in the public component of this report (above).

# Program

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September

TIME	PROGRAM
8.30am	REGISTRATION
9.00am	<p><b>SESSION 1: Introduction &amp; Plenary</b> [Chair: Lesley Stirling]            VENUE: Wood Theatre  <i>The use of narrative in studying clinical populations: a review of methodologies</i>            Sue Leekam<sup>1</sup>, Lesley Stirling<sup>2</sup>, Graham Barrington<sup>2</sup>, Lucy Carey<sup>1</sup> &amp; Susan Douglas<sup>2</sup>            (<sup>1</sup>Durham University, <sup>2</sup>The University of Melbourne)</p>
9.30am	<p>PLENARY &amp; DISCUSSION  <i>The 'Narrative Turn' in Autism Research: A Contribution of Ethnographic Approach to the Study of Autism and Narrative</i>            Olga Solomon            (University of Southern California)</p>
11.00am	<b>Morning tea</b> (Gryphon Gallery)
11.45am	<p><b>SESSION 2: Theoretical approaches</b> [Chair: Susan Douglas]            VENUE: Gryphon Gallery  <i>The Role of Narrative Discourse in Dynamic Assessment and the Diagnosis of Language Disorder in Children learning a Language other than English</i>            Patricia Eadie, Hugh McCusker, Amy Watts, Bronwyn Billimoria, Hamish Coates and Sheena Reilly            (Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne)</p>
12.15pm	<p><i>The importance of linguistic and cultural context in narrative development and the diagnosis of communication disorders</i>            Heather Winskel            (MARCS Auditory Laboratories, University of Western Sydney)</p>
12.45pm	<p><i>Understanding Aging and Alzheimer's Disease through Life Stories</i>            Toshi Hamaguchi            (University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo)</p>
1.15	<b>Lunch</b>
2.30pm	<p><b>SESSION 3: Narrative and Technology</b> [Chair: Graham Barrington]            VENUE: Gryphon Gallery  <i>The developmental profile of editing and repair strategies in narrative structure: a cross-sectional study of primary school children</i>            Lesley Stirling, Graham Barrington, Susan Douglas &amp; Kerrie Delves            (The University of Melbourne)</p>
3.00pm	<p><i>Modelling the Creation of Personal Narrative: A Computational Approach with Autobiographic Agents</i>            Wan Ching Ho, Kerstin Dautenhahn &amp; Megan Davis            (University of Hertfordshire, UK)</p>
3.30pm	<p><i>The neural architecture of discourse compression</i>            Saling, MM, Lillywhite, LM, Demutska, A, Masterton, R, Farquharson, S, Jackson, GD.            (The University of Melbourne)</p>
4.00pm	<b>Afternoon tea</b>
4.30pm	<p><b>SESSION 4: Methodological issues</b> [Chair: Lesley Stirling]            VENUE: Gryphon Gallery            PANEL DISCUSSION – 5.30pm close</p>
Evening	<b>Dinner at Café Italia</b>

## Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September

TIME	PROGRAM
8.45am	INTRODUCTION
9.00am	<p><b>SESSION 5: Plenary</b> [Chair: Lesley Stirling]            VENUE: Wood Theatre            PLENARY</p> <p><i>Looking for frogs in some unusual places</i>            Nan Bernstein Ratner            (University of Maryland)</p>
10.30am	<b>Morning tea</b>
11.00am	<p><b>SESSION 6: Narratives in children</b> [Chair: Kerrie Delves]            VENUE: Gryphon Gallery</p> <p><i>Variation in the properties of narratives of young children with SLI and children with delayed language</i>            Edith L. Bavin<sup>1</sup>, Kristy Dodwell<sup>2</sup> &amp; Nadia Petrucci<sup>1</sup>            (<sup>1</sup> School of Psychological Science, La Trobe University, <sup>2</sup> Northern Mental Health)</p>
11.30pm	<p><i>Impaired Pragmatic Development. A hand puppet narrative experiment for five to six year old SLI-children.</i>            Anja Lehmann            (Johann Wolfgang-Goethe Universität, Frankfurt)</p>
12.00pm	<p><i>Written narratives in children with autism</i>            Sue Leekam &amp; Lucy Carey            (Durham University)</p>
12.30pm	<p><i>Theory of Mind, Language, and The Grammaticalization of Audience Awareness in the narratives of Landau Kleffner Syndrome Adolescents</i>            Bernadette Rigaudeau-McKenna</p>
1.00pm	<b>Lunch</b>
2.00pm	<p><b>SESSION 7: Narratives in adults</b> [Chair: Susan Douglas]            VENUE: Gryphon Gallery</p> <p><i>Telling the Story of Cinderella: Oral and Written Language Skills in Adults with a History of Language Impairment</i>            Karen Smith-Lock, Lyndsey Nichols &amp; Lynne Mortensen            (Macquarie University, Sydney)</p>
2.30pm	<p><i>The role of context in narrative production: Crosslinguistic and Neurolinguistic insights from healthy elderly and Alzheimer's disease patients</i>            Evrim March<sup>1, 2</sup>            (<sup>1</sup> University of Melbourne, <sup>2</sup> La Trobe University, Melbourne)</p>
3.00pm	<p><i>The Stability of Discourse Measures</i>            Maria Berarducci, Lyndsey Nickels and Elizabeth Armstrong            (Macquarie University)</p>
3.30pm	<b>Afternoon tea</b>
4.00pm	<p><b>SESSION 8: Narrative and communication disorders: current themes and future directions</b> [Chair: Lesley Stirling]            VENUE: Gryphon Gallery            PANEL DISCUSSION – 5.00pm close</p>
5.00pm	<b>End Conference</b>

### **3. Evaluation of workshop**

Formal feedback was sought from workshop participants and 10 participants submitted completed questionnaires. Compiled responses from the feedback questionnaire are attached in Appendix 1. In summary, the overwhelming response to the workshop was highly positive, and many participants have asked that a follow up workshop be organised for 2009 (or more likely, given the amount of work involved, 2010).

*Aspects of the workshop that worked well:*

- Participants commented that the pleasant surrounds and very high quality of food at breaks meant that attendees were more likely to stick around and engage in informal discussion, and the opportunities for informal discussion were commented on as one of the most favourable aspects of the workshop.
- The video-linked plenaries were very favourably evaluated by participants and were one of the highlights of the workshop.
- The carefully planned discussion forums were also noted as a highlight.

*Aspects of the workshop identified as potentially improveable:*

- A number of participants commented that they would have preferred the workshop to be held over a Friday-Saturday rather than Saturday-Sunday time slot, in particular participants local to Melbourne.
- Incorporation of video-linked presentations after organisation of the main workshop venue meant that participants needed to move between the videoconference equipped theatre and the main venue. While we organised the scheduling of the sessions carefully so as to involve the minimum of disruption, and paid attention to providing adequate guidance for external participants in finding venues, ideally the entire workshop would have been held in the same place, and a few participants commented on this.
- Despite careful planning and test runs in advance, a few technical hitches arose with respect to the video-linked presentations. On the Sunday, access to the theatre was inexplicably delayed while a security guard was sought to unlock it, despite arrangements having been made in advance. These problems were overcome in all cases and we had allowed sufficient time for such unexpected contingencies. However this would be something to note for future workshops.

### **5. Suggestions as to how HCSNet can better support this kind of activity**

HCSNet support was fantastic and of course made the whole enterprise possible. In particular, although some kind of workshop could and probably would have been organised without it, it would not have been feasible for many of the interstate attendees to come without travel support and a significant fee would have had to be charged to enable the quality of invited speakers and infrastructural support needed. Moreover, HCSNet backing and publicity undoubtedly brought the workshop to the attention of the wide range of

participants from different discipline areas who it was intended to attract. The helpful and efficient administrative support provided by Chris Cassidy was exemplary and very much appreciated.

Two particular comments:

- Being able to submit a funding application in advance of the usual deadline and receive in principle approval to proceed made a big difference to us in terms of both venue booking and approaching international participants
- We understand that HCSNet is not able to pay speaker fees of the kind we offered to the video-linked speakers, however we felt that this might be something to be considered for the future. The cost was small in comparison to fully funding attendance by an invited international speaker, and the video-linked talks worked extremely well and were very positively evaluated by participants. Obviously the opportunity for on-going involvement and interaction of the speakers during the workshop is lost, but given that the speakers were in the end unable to attend in person this option worked very well.

## **6. Publicity**

The workshop resulted in an article in the University of Melbourne “MUSSE” e-news letter which can be found at <http://blogs.unimelb.edu.au/musse/?p=327>.

## Appendix 1

### Results from feedback questionnaires for HCSNet workshop on NCD

*Number of responses: 10*

#### **1. What is your research area/discipline?**

Speech pathology; neuropsychology; linguistics x 3; computer science & AI; applied linguistics/speechpathology/communication in the sciences; information systems (design) & autism; psychology x 2

#### **2. What do you see as the positive outcomes of this workshop?**

##### **a) for yourself**

- Increased appreciation of the diversity of approaches from different disciplines i.e. the different perspectives on the same topic; meeting new people with similar research interests; greater understanding of HCSNet
- Familiarising with the range of discourse variables and assessment techniques available & shortcomings
- To share ideas about methodological issues and numerous fascinating research findings with other researchers of similar interests
- Building contacts, being exposed to specific papers and methodological approaches and problems which I didn't realise existed
- I have learned a lot from attending this workshop. There are many inspiring talking and discussions. I also made useful contacts from the areas of linguistics and narrative psychology.
- In general, workshop has stimulated and re-energized me; broadened and deepened my understanding and conceptualising of narrative
- A greater understanding of the techniques of narrative analysis and their potential as a research tool; further insight into autism; contact with other researchers
- Re-focus on issues of coding data
- The workshop brought me into contact with a huge range of ideas and methodologies from people across many disciplines.
- Information about approaches to narrative research

##### **b) for narrative research in clinical populations**

- Reflection on methodological issues; cross-pollination re paed to adults and vice versa as well as from different disciplines
- Discussion of methodological issues; understanding of underlying factors in narrative difficulties
- I was able to learn most up-to-date research of diverse communication disorders
- More knowledge of how other disciplines deal with the same problems
- This workshop enhances our understanding of narrative comprehension and discourse of people in specific clinical groups
- ?not sure; not currently working with clinical populations
- N/A
- Raising awareness about measures used and methods that could be relevant for other groups
- The workshop gave the opportunity to rethink perspectives and methods and plan new research and setting up of new collaborations.
- Communication between researchers

### **3. Which aspects of the workshop did you think worked particularly well?**

- Well organised; question time facilitation; good quality food/venue; workshop dinner; linking with overseas key speakers; low cost; travel grant funding; confirming receipt of presentation was reassuring!
- Variety of approaches available to narrative research; small group – good discussion!; collaborative work
- All, but panel discussions were probably what I enjoyed the most
- Lunch :0); the workshop was inspirational and I personally liked Nan Bernstein Ratner's talk
- I think the organisation of the workshop was very well. Also, the discussion session at the end of each day was very productive.
- The traditional plenary in the morning followed by papers for the rest of the day worked fine; N.B. videoconferencing from USA worked well (despite a bit of delay getting started on Saturday, N.B. organisers had allowed time for this so not a problem)
- Video presentations; 30 minute presentation format; in fact, it all worked very well
- The sessions – well grouped; the second plenary
- All worked well – videoconferencing sessions were great.
- Informal discussions

### **4. Which aspects of the workshop could be improved?**

- Real coffee in mornings
- Friday and Saturday (instead of Saturday and Sunday)
- Tech support
- Technical problems but these were unavoidable; having it in two different locations
- NIL x 5
- (1) NOT moving from lecture theatre to another building. Stay in one building. (2) More videoconferencing if people cannot attend from overseas. (3) Not on Saturday and Sunday – I suggest Friday and Saturday.

### **5. What suggestions do you have for future workshops?**

- Keep up your good work
- Repeat! Great workshop!
- I look forward to the next one in a near future! Thank you!
- It was a bit full on – 2 full days. Perhaps we could make it more 'exclusive' but one of the benefits was bringing together people from different disciplines. I wonder if having a stricter definition of 'narrative' would be advantageous or not? It's kind of a tight line between being too broad and being too specific. I have no answers!
- I wish I have more time for my presentation next time, but that's not extremely important.
- Have another one of the same format at a similar time of year in 2009; keep the weekend scheduling.
- More data.
- NIL x 3

### **Other comments:**

- Well done!
- Well done! I really liked the diversity of perspectives. N.B. I was too tired to stay for the 4-5 session scheduled for Sunday.

**There were also a number of subsequent positive emails from participants including the following comment which we single out for special note:**

“the presents displayed an empathy or warmth for their participants that is altogether too rare in my experience”

## Appendix 2

### Compiled responses from final discussion session brainstorming sheet

*Number of responses: 6*

Participants were asked to reflect on and brainstorm the following two questions:

1. If anything were possible, what would be your dream piece of research on narrative and communication disorders? (possibly involving a large collaborative group of researchers)
2. What would need to happen for this to come about?

Responses:

<i>1. If anything were possible, what would be your dream piece of research on narrative and communication disorders? (possibly involving a large collaborative group of researchers)</i>	<i>2. What would need to happen for this to come about?</i>
Mine would be focused on personal narratives (because I basically work in discourse), it would involve many countries (because I work with autism a rare disorder) and specialists from very different backgrounds working towards a common goal. It would involve very large samples and longitudinal data collection. And we would be testing a vast range of cognitive and linguistic abilities.	More discussion between experts in different disciplines and more tolerance of different methodologies. More cross-institutional research...and of course money being no object.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large pool of kids; not grouped; longitudinal; range of analyses</li> <li>• Compare different methods of narrative analysis on same data</li> <li>• <u>Crosscultural</u> language disorders x narrative styles</li> </ul>	1 <sup>st</sup> : money; access; time; expertise 2 <sup>nd</sup> : more modest (?)
It would be longitudinal. It would balance/map linguistic/cognitive analysis. It would start with a conceptual analysis – and consensus about objectives. Might aim to develop agreed measures with clear psychometric properties. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theory of mind as an example of an interdisciplinary endeavour (started in philosophy).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A working group represented by each of the disciplines and researchers/clinicians.</li> <li>• A communication network (email group).</li> <li>• Data donations.</li> </ul>
To have an interactive “intelligent” software agent (from interactive narrative storytelling systems) guiding autistic children in story telling / re-telling tasks. Thus we can discover a wide range of ToM and social interaction problems from autistic (ASD).	I would need specialists in different research areas (linguistic, cognitive science, narrative/psychology) to guide the research in creating such kind of agents.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How genre influences production?</li> <li>• Therapy for impaired discourse? To allow people to participate in life, reduce common barriers and prevent social isolation.</li> <li>• Higher subject numbers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need lots of time, \$\$ and participants.</li> <li>• Language / story bank would help with speeding up process of studying discourse (need ethical clearance -&gt; ? similar to how the Childe's data bank works) -&gt; foster research</li> <li>• Definitions of narrative &amp; other genres. Universal agreement on narrative -&gt; some say it is any story, some say you need particular generic structure / elements to be a narrative &amp; class a personal recount as different e.g. Butt et al, Rothery.</li> <li>• Classification of elicitation universally e.g. retell, generation etc. etc. -&gt; describing all methods as sometimes it is not clear -&gt; may not be feasible</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLI children and adults – across variety of populations?</li> <li>• Track development of a variety of narrative measures and how they interact</li> <li>• Large number of measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cognitive</li> <li>- linguistic</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interdisciplinary co-operation</li> <li>• large N study – multicentred to increase numbers</li> <li>• agreed set of measures</li> <li>• each participant analyses the section interested in with the ability to consider across disciplines and populations due to same tasks</li> <li>• our individual studies are pilots for collaborative large grant?</li> </ul>