7.9 billion is the world population as at 2021. That is quite a huge number. I tried counting it but I got lost and stumbled on hundreds and thousands. Yet, this massive figure made me stop and reflect. We often look up at the sky at night and stare at the stars. We feel engulfed by the hugeness of the sky, that black sheet that covers the whole planet cradling those tiny shiny stars.

Who knows if at the other side of the globe they are gazing at the same sky? A sense of monotony tends to conquer and surround our inner energy. It nails us down and does not let us see beyond us. We feel like a shadow that cannot be distinguished from the rest. It’s like we cannot fight it back and we just make up one digit from that huge sum. Sometimes it is the fear of being different that makes us hide.

It is more comfortable to be just like the rest. Yet, different is diversity, different is uniqueness, different does not mean less, different is colourful.

Different makes up what you and me are made of. No piece must go missing. What you are good at will fill the gap were I’m lacking. It is a chain reaction.

All the differences put up together makes an exceptional piece of art which may only be glorified if put under the limelight to exalt its value. It takes courage to stand out and risk it all.

So Let’s be Vivid and brave to step into the light and be different because different is beautiful!
CPLOL (Comité Permanent de Liaison des Orthophonistes/Logopedes de l’UE), the mother organization of all European Speech and Language Therapy Association welcomed 2021 with a fresh mind set and was fully prepared for change and innovation.

6th March 1988, CPLOL was founded, 33 years later it was rebranded to ESLA, European Speech and Language Therapy Association. ESLA is the leading organisation representing the interests of the Speech and Language Therapy profession in Europe. ESLA’s mission is to have an authoritative voice of the Speech and Language Therapy profession across Europe and supports the common interests of its member associations. Moreover, ESLA aims to increase the visibility and awareness of Speech Language Therapy in Europe and beyond, by actively promoting the profession and safeguarding professional and educational standards.

The launch took place online and in conjunction with the European Speech Language Therapy Day. Norma Camilleri, chair of ESLA, also ASLP president, addressed all those present. Follow the link here to view this address, followed by a short video of ESLA launch here.
Remote Learning for Children with Autism

Remote learning has nowadays became an essential part of our everyday lives. We have all accepted this new reality and we are getting more in tuned to it. It was not an easy adjustment and many are the families who are still struggling to access this new world of technologies. In this article, Ron Malcolm, EdD, highlights 10 different tips that parents of a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder might find useful in adapting to remote learning.

My story being diagnosed with autism as an adult

A diagnosis does not define a person, but many are those who state that they literally felt relieved after they were given the diagnosis. This is due to many factors, but one common comment is that the person could finally explain and associate certain behaviours. It was April 2013 when Samantha Ranaghan, was told that she is on the spectrum at the age of 34! In this article, she highlights how such a news was literally a life changer for her.
BEPPE CARUANA is a 9 year old boy with Autism Spectrum Disorder. He attends to Theresa Nuzzo School, Marsa and is currently in Grade 5. Beppe is non-verbal but he travels a lot with his imagination and loves to write. At the age of 9 he published his first book!

Il-Mawra tiegħi fl-Ispazju is his first book. Beppe enjoys to write in Maltese and has other stories in the pipeline. Let’s Be Vivid and Jamie Said met Beppe and asked him to share with us his experience and aspirations.

Beppe was also lately interviewed by a local newspaper were he narrated his experience, fears and ambitions into more detail here.
Describe yourself in 3 words
A. Smart, kind and a teaser.

What are your hobbies?
A. Watching youtube, swimming and nature walks.

What are you good at?
A. School work and writing

What would you like to be when you grow up?
A. I want to be a writer.

What inspired you to write your book?
A. I used to feel trapped before I started to communicate. Once I was able to to express myself in spelling out words, I had to share my feelings. I wanted to share my experience and my mum encouraged me to write. The world around me inspires me, anything that makes me feel free.

What's your favourite quote/page/line from the book?
A. I do not have a favourite quote/page or line. Every single word is an expression of who I am.
Our voice is a unique tool. It is different to each and one of us and hence it makes part of who we are. We really appreciate the power and usefulness of this tool when something happens to. Young and old, we all need to take care of our voice as it is an essential part of our communication skills. Little did we know that during the past year and for the coming months, the changes that were brought up by the pandemic were going to affect our voice as well! With the wearing of face masks professionals observed more vocal abuse as many thought that one needs to raise one’s voice to be properly heard. In this article, the British Voice Association provides advice on vocal hygiene and tips to take care of it.
Let’s meet…
Martina Zarb

Name: Martina
Status: In a relationship

Q. When did you graduate and how long have you been involved in ASLP?
A. I graduated in 2016 and have been involved in ASLP for the last year and a half.

Q. What is/were your roles in ASLP?
A. My first and current role in ASLP is of Assistant Secretary.

Q. What is ASLP for you or what drew you to ASLP?
A. ASLP gave me the opportunity to learn new skills and meet other SLP members through organised ASLP events. It also gives me the opportunity to work with a team of great women in the committee who are constantly striving to push the profession forward.

Q. What is your area of special interest in SLP?
A. AAC and literacy, I quite like those areas.

Q. What do you like most about being a SLP?
A. Being an SLP gives me great satisfaction. Giving children a voice through AAC and empowering their families is very rewarding and motivates me to keep going.

Q. What are your non-SLP skills?
A. I like to experiment with cooking and baking.

IA. Love going on long trekking tracks, swimming and reading (wish I could find more time to do this though)
Social stories are short descriptions of a particular situation, event or activity presented in a specific and ‘concrete’ way which can help individuals with autism develop greater social understanding. They can help individuals develop self-care skills, understand other’s feelings, cope with changes in routine, amongst others.

Find out how you can make a tailor made social story here

or, you can find some social stories on:
https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/social-stories-for-autistic-children/#Social_story_examples_and_videos_for_children_with_special_needs

VOICE CARE TIPS
Take action if you feel your voice does not sound right – a very practical leaflet full of tips and advice provided by the British Voice Association.

Other handy Vocal Hygiene tips

General advice:
• Sit and stand with correct posture
• Breathe through your nose and practise diaphragmatic breathing
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mg2ar-7_HfA
• Hydrate yourself – drink 8-10 glasses of water a day
• Your voice reflects your health and wellbeing, so ensure adequate sleep and exercise
• “Warm up” your voice through humming before talking for a long period of time
• Give your voice a rest after long periods of talking
• Use a humidifier to moisten the air or drink plenty of water when in dry atmospheres
• Use amplification to avoid voice strain when possible

Avoid:
• A slouched posture
• Breathing through your mouth
• Using a voice that is too loud
• Whispering
• Smoking and smoky environments
• Chemical irritants
• Dusty conditions
• Dry atmospheres and prolonged use of air conditioner and central heating.
• Drinking alcohol and caffeine
• Eating foods that cause indigestion, spicy foods and eating late at night – heartburn can lead to irritation of the vocal cords
• Lozenges which have mint or methanol
• Throat clearing – have a sip of water or perform a dry swallow instead

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE
‘If you’ve met one individual with autism, you’ve met one individual with autism’ - Stephen Shore