10-10:30 Revising the Rossetti Infant-Toddler Language Scale: Going Beyond Speech to Include Sign and Bimodal Communicators

Few language assessments are appropriate for measuring the early communication of young deaf children (0-3 years), particularly language development that is “beyond speech.” Consideration must be given to the “question behind the questions” when assessing language development among children using assigned language or bimodal communication (a signed and a spoken language) [1]. Focusing on linguistic form and structure, most language-based assessments do not necessarily consider language functions and communicative precursors to language. Thus, simply “translating to a signed language” is insufficient and often not possible. Additionally, most existing language and communication assessments do not allow for a comparison of a deaf child’s spoken and signed language, nor consideration of their whole language repertoire [2]. This presentation will highlight work being done to adjust the Rossetti Infant-Toddler Language Scale [3], creating a version that can be appropriate for and used with young deaf children (with the support and encouragement of the originator of the scale, Dr. Louis Rossetti). The revised Rossetti can by used to compare a young child’s development in spoken and signed languages, orto document language development in a sign language communicator or a bilingual-bimodal child.

Bios: Louise de Beuzeville, PhD is Lead Teacher–Research at NextSense and a Conjoint Lecturer with the NextSense Institute. A ToD and linguist, she has morethan 25 years’ experience in deaf education, signed language linguistics and research. Her work focuses on language development and assessment in DHHchildren and the relationship between language and literacy.

Dr Szarkowski trained and taught at Harvard Medical School and worked as a psychologist in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program, Boston Children’s Hospital. Since October 2025, Dr. Szarkowski is a Senior Lecturer in the NextSense Institute in Psychology/Early Intervention (Deaf/Hard of Hearing) and holds an appointment in the Department of Linguistics at Macquarie University.