

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENTS

- Repeat mispronounced phrases as a question so it does not seem like criticism (i.e. do you mean...?)
- Encourage one-on-one communication. This will help the student feel more at ease in the classroom setting.
- Keep lectures clear, simple, pronounced, and in proper syntax (no slang).

All services for students with disabilities are coordinated through Disability Services (located on the second floor of the Campbell Learning Resource Center, C-218). For further information or assistance, please contact Disability Services at (734) 384-4167.

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Overview of Speech and Language Impairments

Speech and Language impairments include a variety of conditions that interfere with communication. These problems range from simple sound substitutions to the inability to understand and organize language.

Causes of speech and language impairments include hearing loss, neurological disorders, traumatic brain injury, cognitive disorders, and physical disabilities. Frequently the cause is unknown.

Many speech or language impairments are subtle in appearance. The individual often lacks visible abnormalities which masks the fact he/she even has a speech and/or language impairment.

Speech Impairment

Students with speech impairments have difficulty producing speech sounds or problems with voice quality.

Speech Impairment may include:

- Stuttering (repeating syllables or words, interruption of flow)
- Prolonging sounds
- Phonological or articulation problems (inability to say sounds properly)
- Abnormal speech due to hearing impairment; speech that is difficult to understand (nasal

sounding, unusual in pitch or rhythm)

- Apraxia (facial grimaces or unusual movement that accompany speech; groping to produce sounds, syllables, or words or difficulty in planning or sequencing words)

Language Impairment

Language Impairment affects the understanding of language. Language is made up of socially shared rules that include: what a word means, how to make new words, putting words together, or what word combinations are best in which situations. Language impairment can involve both receptive and/or expressive language skills. In receptive language impairment, the person has difficulty understanding what others say. In expressive language impairment, the person has difficulty sharing thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Receptive and expressive abilities also may be impaired together as in a disorder called developmental language delay or language learning disability.

Characteristics of Language

Impairment include:

- Improper use of words and their meanings
- Inability to express ideas
- Inappropriate grammatical patterns

- Reduced vocabulary
- Inability to follow directions
- Inability to process and understand the content of what is spoken; hearing what is spoken, but not understanding its meaning

Speech and Language Impairments carry the potential to isolate individuals both socially and educationally.

Students with speech and language impairments may avoid participation or become easily frustrated because their "invisible disability" is often not understood or accepted by others.

Suggestions for Helping Students with Speech and Language Impairments in a College Classroom Setting

- Do not point out communication disorders to others in the class.
- Show understanding, patience, and acceptance.
- Provide extra time to answer questions. Avoid urges to interrupt or complete the student's train of thought.
- Make eye contact with student when listening and speaking.
- Do not become upset if you misunderstand what the impaired student is trying to say; ask the student to repeat words or phrases. If necessary, ask the student to write down what he is trying to communicate.