

Ways to support international students' speech and pronunciation

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A Speaking Problem?

How to say it appropriately (social skill)?

or How to form a sentence (language skill)?

Is their accent the problem?

or Is there poor grammar and sentences?

Is the student shy?

or Do they lack knowledge?

Writing to Speech

- spelling ≠ sound
- read many times but not heard much
- long words
 - many letters
 - knowledge of word parts
- abbreviations and variations on them
 - CABG/'cabbage'/coronary artery bypass graft

Backward chaining

Start the word from the end syllable. Work your way back to the front. Here's one way to break up hyperparathyroidism:

hy per pa ra thy roid ism

Familiar with word parts? Do it this way:

hyper para thyroid ism

Backward chaining

This word is difficult for local speakers:

sphyg mo ma no me ter

The more proficient speaker might do this:

sphygmo manometer

Word Stress

Is your student's individual sounds are good but the word is wrong? Think of word stress:

NAsal → naSAL

Suffixes change word stress:

SUper → suPERior (-ior suffix)

Stress goes backwards through a word in an on/off pattern.

Educator's Speech

Students report difficulty with speed of speech, accent, and individual variation:

- Slow down your speech (a bit)
- Move your mouth and articulate more (and ask students to do this too)
- Ask for paraphrasing from students

Tips for Students

- Know your weaknesses and fix them
- Revise medical terms beforehand
 - CDs in medical terminology books,
Australian or UK online resources, not USA
- Practise reading out loud
 - Extend clinical classes by reading sample charts, notes, and drug names out loud
- Practise explaining things to others

Final points

Educators faced with speech difficulties:

- is it pronunciation of individual sounds?
- is it whole word stress?
- is it a communication problem (social)?
- am I speaking clearly (move the mouth)?
- is the student familiar with the words in speech (i.e. need to prepare better)?

These are starting points for help.

Question time



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