

Equal Access to Communication: Teaching Self-Advocacy and Communication Repair

Gail Wright

Objectives By the end of this session you will:

- 1) Understand why it is important to teach students self-advocacy skills
- 2) Describe hierarchies of expectations for skill development self-advocacy
- 3) Have some examples of activities to use to teach self-advocacy skill

This topic is so important Karen Anderson and I created a 128 page guide on this topic! *Building Skills for Independence in the Mainstream*. No purchase is necessary to benefit from this presentation.

Steps to building Self Advocacy: Areas to focus on

- Student Knowledge of Hearing Loss
- Student Identification of Listening Challenges
- Recognition of Causes of Listening Challenges
 - Being a Responsible Communication Partner
- Use of Specific Self-Advocacy Strategies
- Independence and Responsibility for Hearing Devices - Role as "Technology Specialist"

From the Office of Civil Rights: We need to encourage students to understand their disabilities.

- need to know the functional limitations that result from their disabilities
- understand their strengths and weaknesses
- be able to explain their disabilities to others
- be able to explain where they have had difficulty in the past, as well as what has helped them overcome such problems
- what specific adjustments might work in specific situations
- practice explaining their disabilities, as well as why they need certain services

Assessment: Knowledge of Hearing Loss

- Audiology Self-Advocacy Checklist - Elementary, Middle and HS versions www.skwhl/advocacy
- Learning about your hearing loss – Building Skills for Success book, homemade spiral flip book
- Steps to Success: Scope & Sequence Curriculum
- COACH: Self-Advocacy & Transition Skills for Secondary Students who are DHH

Identifying Listening Challenges

How does my hearing loss affect me? Socially? What's my listening bubble? What sounds can I hear? What am I missing? How much can I understand in a conversation? What does background noise do to my listening comprehension?

- Functional Listening Evaluation www.skwhl/recorded-file
- SEAM: Student Expectations for Advocacy

Teaching Self Advocacy - Empower Students!!

Confidence with Technology + Strong Advocacy Skills = Access to the Mainstream Classroom; Access = Academic Success

- Teacher LIFE-R Checklist: Self-Advocacy and Instructional Access; useful to raise teacher **awareness**, as a **baseline measure** and to **measure progress** in student use of self-advocacy activities www.skwhl/life-r
- After LIFE Questions – a measure of self-awareness and self-advocacy. REPORT RESULTS : Self-Advocacy Activities Based on Student Report of Strategies Currently Used and Recommendations for Improved Self-Advocacy

How to Achieve Independence

ECH-8th Grade the responsibility shifts from parent/teacher driven in early childhood to student driven in gr 5-8.

Limited Menu of Self-Advocacy Strategies

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13 Tools Approach: 3 Reasons Communication Breaks Down: Speaker, Listener, Environment

Circle of Learning: Detect/Name the Tool – Know/Define the Tool – Use the Tool – Apply the Tool in a Unique Way

13 Tools =

- HA vs FM
- Proper Lighting
- Reduce Background Noise
- Check School/ Teacher Websites
- Look at the Person Speaking: brain in/body in
- Get Close – overcomes noise, allows for speechreading
- Look for Clues: What are other students doing? Teacher: gestures. Board?
- Closed Captions for Videos
- Check the Board
- Ask for Clarification - Must have the language to know they didn't understand message
- Buddy/ Teacher Notes
- Tell People What You Need

Mainstream Teacher Training

Teachers need support to understand the impact of hearing loss, technology, social/ emotional issues and how to ensure their classroom is accessible to the child with hearing loss.

Hearing-Listening-Understanding

Hearing: getting sound to the brain

Listening: Actively engaging the brain

Understanding: Having the language to process the message heard

How to teach SEAM Skills

Listening is my Responsibility Sheet: K-1 Listening is My Responsibility; 2-5 Listening is My Responsibility

Communication Breakdown

Student Created Tutorials: [Create tutorial videos \(educreations\)](#)

ThingLink.com Projects

Student Created Materials: Brochures emailed or presented to teachers

Gail's Favorite Materials

- What's the Problem?
- Monkey Talk
- HiFi
- FM Bingo by Rule-The-School
- Advocacy app by Rule-The-School
- LIFE-R

Communication Repair

What is Communication? Communication takes 2! Speaker, Listener AND the message has to be understood correctly!

Communication Must Be Taught: Communication repair must be specifically taught to children with

- Hearing Loss
- Auditory based learning issues
- Autism

These children don't typically spontaneously learn communication skills. (Blaylock, Scudder, and Wynne 1995)

Typical Communication Repair Development

Age 3: **repetition, inappropriate responses**

As linguistic abilities increase: **revise** and **clarify** and **simple addition** of information increase

Age 8-9 **Addition** (define or add background information)

Atypical Development of CR Skills

Communication Repair is learned experientially. Students with hearing loss: Miss experiential language development; have delayed language development; slower processing of conversation. Leading to: Being ignored, left out of conversation and increased sensitivity about being asked for clarification!

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Assessing Communication Repair Skills

SCRIPT: Student Communication Repair Inventory and Practical Training

Administer the SCRIPT Inventory to obtain a baseline of a student's communication repair skills.

Familiarization: Expose students to all 13 Strategies

- **Repetition:** slowly, clearly, louder, key words
- **Revision:** two sentences, different words, different form
- **Addition:** simple addition, define terms, background context
- **Non-Verbal:** sign/ spell, show express, write/ draw

Random Practice

The student would demonstrate the ability to use different strategies spontaneously!

Key: You must communicate/ educate Mainstream Teachers and other team members as to skills you are looking for!

But first....

In order to repair communication, a student must:

- Accept they have communication breakdowns
- Know WHEN communication breakdowns occur
- Be willing to work at repairing the communication

Why Does Communication Breakdown? Distance from speaker; Background noise; Room acoustics; Speaker covers face; Rate of speech; Accents; Hearing ability

Applying Strategies - Ties back to 13 Tools Advocacy: Asking for Clarification

Ways to teach and practice

- Educreations
- HiFi – Hear It, Fix It
- Following Direction Activities
- Role Plays
- Natural Conversations
- Monkey Talk
- Share strategies with classroom teacher so they can model and sabotage communication.