

CLD Corner: Q&A for the CLD Experts

The CLD Corner is a regular column written by members of the TSHA Task Force on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity.

The CLD Corner was created in an effort to respond to questions on cultural and linguistic diversity. Questions are answered by members of the TSHA Task Force on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity. Members for the 2006-2007 year include **Lynette Austin, Gina Glover, Becky Gonzalez, Dolores Castor, Marie Belgodere, Gail Goodrich-Totten, Cynthia Garcia, Katsura Aoyama, Roxanna Ruiz-Felter and Michele Albornóz**. Submit your questions to slaustin@cebridge.net. Look for responses from the CLD Task Force on the TSHA's website and in the *Communicologist*.

The CLD Task Force is now offering half and full day trainings for school districts, Education Service Centers, university programs, and other agencies on *Assessment and Intervention with CLD Populations*. For additional information, contact **Lynette Austin** at slaustin@cebridge.net.

QUESTION: What are some suggestions for conducting a speech and language assessment for a bilingual student who will not speak if s/he does not perceive the speech-language pathologist to be a speaker of his/her native language?

ANSWER: Assessment and evaluation for the culturally diverse population of students is far from standard, and usually requires additional time. Because some students may be hesitant to speak during the first session, Hedge and Davis (1999) state that it may be necessary to test on more than one occasion, and in a variety of settings, in order to get a good sample of communication behaviors. Students may begin to feel more comfortable after several meetings.

It may be most effective to greet and begin interaction with the student in his native language and delay English interaction and

assessment for later. In fact, Hedge and Davis (1999) suggest administering tests in one language at a time.

When planning assessment sessions, the speech-language pathologist should keep in mind various cultural and linguistic factors that may affect evaluations. For example, knowing the client's cultural background and attempting to understand the client's expectations and values will aid you in establishing rapport (Hedge and Davis, 1999). Know that cultural differences between a speech-language pathologist and his/her client can influence communication behaviors during interaction, and can be significant during speech and language assessment (Kayser, 1995). Also, the level of rapport between the speech-language pathologist and his/her client, the client's attitude, and the client's physical being can be factors that influence performance. Each client is unique, and many differences are present within cultures. Therefore, assessment should be individualized. Speech-language pathologists can avoid misinterpreting communication behaviors by familiarizing themselves with communication behaviors of specific cultural groups (Hedge and Davis, 1999).

In addition to cultural sensitivity, speech-language pathologists should possess appropriate assessment and evaluation skills, including reviewing all data gathered from a variety of sources, good interviewing skills, appropriate observation skills, and good test administration skills. As speech-language pathologists attempt to learn more about cultural differences and individual communication behaviors during interactions, they will improve their abilities to modify procedures and conduct appropriate assessments.

Hegde, M. N., & Davis, D. (1999). *Clinical methods and practicum in speech-language pathology* (3rd ed.). San Diego, CA: Singular Publishing Group.

Kayser, H. (1995). Assessment of speech and language impairments in bilingual children. In H. Kayser (Ed.), *Bilingual speech-language pathology: An Hispanic focus*. San Diego, CA: Singular Publishing Group.

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month



Better Hearing and Speech Month (BHSM) began in 1927 as a way for audiologists and speech-language pathologists to raise public awareness of hearing, speech and language disorders that affect people across the country.

This annual event provides opportunities for you to raise awareness about communication disorders and to promote intervention that can improve the quality of life for those who experience problems with speaking, understanding, or hearing. Remember, there are over 42 million Americans with speech, voice, language, and/or hearing impairments.

The TSHA has many resources to help you celebrate BHSM every day. Visit Shoppe TSHA on the TSHA website, www.txsha.org, and check out all the products the TSHA has to offer!