



香 港 大 學

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

# SUPPORTING TERTIARY STUDENTS WITH SPEECH IMPAIRMENT



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## What is Speech Impairment (SI)?

Speech is how we produce sounds and words. There are three types of speech problems.

**Voice problems** are usually characterized by hoarseness, a limited range in loudness or pitch, chronic sore throat, persistent vocal fatigue, and increased neck muscle tension.

**Articulation problems** are the inaccurate productions, or distortions of speech sounds. For example, some people may have difficulty saying the /th/ sound and hence produced [sank you] instead of /thank you/.

**Fluency problems** are the interruptions of the flow of speech by atypical speaking rate, rhythm, and involuntary repetitions of syllables, words or phrases. For example, people with fluency problems may produce sentences like, "i ... i... i... want to tell you sssssssssomething". The degree of dysfluencies might vary with environments or speaking partners.

# What supports do students with SI need in university life?

Given the above difficulties, reasonable accommodations and support may enhance their learning and adaptation in different aspects of university life, examples of which include:



## LEARNING

- ▶ Allow the student to take up less demanding speaking roles (e.g. as the secretary taking notes instead of the presenter in group work) if necessary



## ASSESSMENT

- ▶ Allow other methods of assessment as an alternative to oral presentation if necessary
- ▶ Allow extra time and other special considerations in oral presentation and preparation



## COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Acknowledge the student's effort and the use of their own communication strategies (e.g. gestures, speech rate adjustment etc.) for his/her speech problems
- ▶ Remain attentive to the student and his/her messages when s/he is experiencing difficulties in speaking





# How could I interact with students with SI?

## TIPS FOR TEACHERS/TUTORS



Give the student time to express



Allow the use of a microphone with an optimal setting to enhance the student's speech volume



Focus on the content of his/her speech rather than its delivery



Encourage the student to practice the correct pronunciations of words which they usually encounter difficulties

## TIPS FOR PEERS



Be patient when listening to the student



Clarify when you do not understand the student



Rehearse with the student before the actual presentation



## Your Support Makes a Difference

Develop a better understanding of people with speech impairment, and be a more supportive communication partner for them.



## Volunteer with us

All HKU students can contribute to building an inclusive campus. Volunteer opportunities include:

- ▶ Offering academic support (e.g. note-taking, study skills coaching)
- ▶ Providing social skills coaching
- ▶ Organizing activities to promote inclusion and diversity
- ▶ Working with people in recovery of mental illness
- ▶ and many more!

Get in touch with us to find out more.



## Available Support for Students with SI

### CEDARS Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support

We are committed to supporting students with disabilities or Special Educational Needs (SEN) in overcoming barriers and achieving successful university education. The support provided is meant to “level the playing field” without undermining academic core requirements of a course.

The listed suggestions are not exhaustive and the support needed by students varies individually. Students with special needs are encouraged to meet with us for needs assessment, advice and referral.

For enquiries, please contact us at:

📍 Room 123, 1/F, Main Building

☎ (852) 3910 3200

✉ cedars-SEN@hku.hk

🌐 <https://www.cedars.hku.hk/cope/sen-support>

To learn more about other types of SEN, or Community Resources available for students with SEN, please visit CEDARS SEN Support website.