

## **Advanced Speech and Language**

**Department:** Speech and Language

**Priority:** High priority core class

**Overall purpose of class:**

This class is designed to assist students in increasing attention and concentration as well as interpret, organize, integrate, recall and appropriately respond in discussion situations. Using a variety of topics such as current events, personal emergency procedures etc., focusing on cognitive pragmatics, students learn recall strategies and compensatory techniques chosen to enhance long and short term memory.

Students are given the opportunity to increase skills in:

- Thought organization for communication needs.
- Cognitive reasoning tasks involving functional problem solving and verbal reasoning
- Retention and orientation of information strategies
- Listening and speaking in a social group context, taking turns, sharing ideas and expressing opinions about current relevant topics

Advanced Speech and Language incorporates and integrates three classes that used to be taught separately but now combined to provide a supportive group environment for cognitive pragmatics and language practice. The curricula from Current Events, Memory and Emergency Procedures have blended into a powerful learning platform to facilitate language practice in a real life, real time setting.

**Number of classes held per week:**

Class is held daily.

**Optimum class time:**

Morning is preferred because of fatigue factor.

**Instructor requirements:**

One instructor.

**Number of students:**

This class can accommodate up to 20 students.

**Student ability range and limitations:**

Most students at the Center can benefit from this class. Discussion methods and a skilled speech therapist can accommodate and integrate a wide range of linguistic and cognitive abilities.

**Space and Equipment requirements:**

Adequate comfortable seating, white board and good lighting.

**Student Needs to be met from the perspective of the instructor:**

Instructors suggest that students take this class who have a need to improve any of the following:

- Short or long term memory
- Cognitive flexibility
- Problem solving and making judgments
- Sequencing and reasoning
- Critical thinking
- Inference skills.
- Social awareness skills including:
  - Verbal appropriateness
  - Reading people's faces and situation,
  - Engaging in dialogue and discourse

**Typical Student Goals that lead to placement in the class:**

Because age and trauma frequently affect memory, most students when undergoing their evaluation at the Center complain at some point about memory loss, especially for people's names. When they are told about the memory class, they usually state that improved memory is one of their goals.

**Suggested Lessons and Activities:**

Map reading

Lessons describing compensatory strategies and creation of compensatory materials such as laminated reminder lists and simple forms and devices for calendar functions

Description and practice of using:

- Keywords
- Pictures
- Chunking

Lessons focusing on orientation to time, place, events and purposes by responding to questions and recalling other's answers such as:

Why are you here?

What's your name and where did it come from?

What's happening today?

What's happening in the world of note at this time?

What happened in 1941? 1929? etc.

Discussions of current events, focusing on how to disagree and conduct appropriate dialogue:

Oral History exercises.

Discussing and practicing procedures for dealing with personal and home emergencies. This topic is used to acquaint students with health and safety awareness at home, in the community and while traveling. Students work on establishing effective communication skills and strategies to use when under stress. Topics for class discussions include managing medications, community resources, neighborhood look-out, power outage, use of telephone and monitoring devices, and 911 emergency systems.

Discussion of cognitive events—using the class as a forum for practicing pragmatics of language and speech and conversation. For example, have students make a presentation to the whole class and then have student's observe and discuss individual responses. Who is falling asleep? Who is engaging in respectful discussion? How are they doing that? Etc.