

LITERACY-SPEECH PATHOLOGISTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE !

A Teacher and a Speech Pathologist will look at the same child, with the intention of improving their level of literacy, but from a different perspective. How and why is it different?

A teacher, when seeking to help a student with literacy problems will naturally focus on teaching strategies that they are familiar with, however because of the specialist training that a Speech Pathologist has, they will address literacy from their unique perspective.

A Speech Pathologist looks at communication, language development, sound production and oromuscular actions (movements of the mouth, tongue and throat) for things as basic as swallowing and feeding in infants, to being able to identify and assist with a 2 year old child who isn't even babbling.

As such, when a Speech Pathologist looks to assess and then treat a person with a literacy problem, the assessment tools will go back to the very beginning of acquiring language. This includes the point at which the person is just hearing and *conceptualizing what they hear* (something that an infant does in their first years).

With this difference in mind, the Speech Pathologist will now look to teach (from a "sound based" perspective) the fundamentals of literacy . Skills which may be taught could have been missed when the person was as young as 4 or 5!

Results of this technique are well documented with statistical evidence supporting the results available. (contact UQ or www.tyquin.com.au or Education Queensland Speech Pathology.)

Speech Pathology is not the answer to all literacy problems, but it is very effective in helping those people with a sound based problem – a Phonological Awareness Disorder!

Phonological Awareness is a metalinguistic skill which relates to an awareness that words can be segmented into syllables and phonemes (sounds) which can then be manipulated and blended to create new words. This includes knowledge regarding rhyme and alliteration (recognizing and creating words that begin with the same sound), the ability to use language to learn about language and the ability to think about what makes up our language (eg. sounds, words, sentences etc).

Children with these phonological awareness deficits experience difficulty, therefore, in segmenting, manipulating and blending the words, syllables and sounds of both spoken and written language. These abilities are necessary if the child is to be able to recognise sound structures in order to read aloud, and sound out unfamiliar words in order to spell them.

Due to this close relationship between these skills and literacy, difficulties in phonological awareness have been reliably linked to early reading and spelling difficulties.