



October 2021 Newsletter

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Our October meeting will be held October 9th. Our speakers will be: Ann Thomas and Alan Katsura speaking about Emergency Planning for People with Hearing Loss. Safety, Are You prepared? People with hearing loss need to take special precautions during an emergency to ensure their safety. Learn how to be prepared. Living in California we may experience earthquakes, fires, possible floods, volcanic activity, and more. If you have your plan in place and your go-bag ready, you'll have more peace of mind. Come and learn about what you should pack and have ready.

Register for this free event [HERE](https://www.hearinglosseb.org/monthly-meetings-1). Or use this link if you are getting a hard copy of the newsletter: <https://www.hearinglosseb.org/monthly-meetings-1>. After you register, you'll be sent the link to join the meeting. Consider staying after the meeting for AfterWords – a chance to ask more in-depth questions, as well as discuss anything you want with fellow members!

HLAA-EB posts our newsletters to the California State Association webpage and a link on our website. Check out our website at: <http://www.hearinglosseb.org/> Contact us at: info@hearinglosseb.org

MEETING NOTES: *Aural Rehabilitation with Older Adults*

At the September 11, 2021 HLAA-EB meeting, our guest speaker was Laura Gaeta, Ph.D., F-AAA, who is an Assistant Professor and Director of the Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) Program at California State University, Sacramento. Dr. Gaeta is also a Fellow of the American Academy of Audiology (F-AAA), member of the Hearing Loss of Association of America (HLAA) California Board of Trustees, and member of the Accreditation Commission for Audiology Education's Board of Directors.

Aural Rehabilitation for Persons with Hearing Loss

Dr. Gaeta provided an excellent overview of aural rehabilitation (AR) as it applies to older adults experiencing hearing loss. Initially, she outlined for us what exactly aural rehabilitation entails, including communication strategies, technology (hearing aids, cochlear implants, & hearing assistive technology), counseling, environmental modifications, and training (auditory training, communication strategies, lipreading/speechreading, & clear speech). In her presentation, Dr. Gaeta put special focus on strategies for overcoming common communication difficulties, as well as approaches to lipreading and



Dr. Laura Gaeta

clear speech. Throughout her presentation, she intermingled many examples and opportunities to practice some of these useful strategies.

Communication Difficulties

Communication difficulties may arise in any of the four primary elements of the communication process.

Talker

- Mumbles
 - Smiles too much
 - Moves around as talking
 - Shouts
 - Has a high-pitched voice
 - Chews gum/eats food
 - Has an unusual accent
 - Doesn't look at you when talking
- * Has a speech disorder
 - * Uses long complicated sentences
 - * Uses obscure vocabulary words
 - * Has no facial expression
 - * Talks too quickly
 - * Wears dark glasses & mask
 - * Has a mustache and/or beard

Listener

- * Hearing loss type & severity
- * Stress & fatigue levels
- * Lack of attention
- * Anxiety
- * Use of amplification
- * Motivation to understand
- * Language skills
- * Uncorrected visual impairment

Message

- Length
- Complexity
- Frequency of word usage
- Context
- Shared homophones/visemes

Environment

- * Distance
- * Background noise
- * Acoustics
- * Angle
- * Distractions

Lipreading

According to Dr. Gaeta, lipreading is . . . “an approach where a listener uses what he or she sees on a speaker's lips to help understand speech.” Lipreading, sometimes compared to speechreading, means the listener watches the speaker's mouth for clues to what the speaker is saying. Other important visual clues in the conversation may come from many sources, in addition to the lips. For example, watching also the jaw, tongue, and teeth movements of the speaker, as well as facial expressions, gestures, and postures, can assist in conveying a speaker's meaning to the listener. Therefore, telephone conversations and face coverings such as masks make it especially difficult for a hard-of-hearing person to “read” a talker's lips or utilize other visual clues on the speaker's face.

Some sounds are easily visible, such as “p” vs. “k”. However, only 30-40% of speech sounds can be identified in a visual only modality, even under ideal conditions. Therefore, context is particularly important for predicting and filling in the gaps with the appropriate missing word(s). Furthermore, the best environment for lipreading is one that is well-lit (not dim lighting or in the shadows).

There are two formal approaches to learning lipreading: (1) Analytic approach, which focuses on one speech sound at a time, or small units of information; (2) Synthetic approach, which focuses on sentences, everyday conversations and situations. Meanwhile, here are some simple tips for learning or utilizing lipreading:

- Start with a few sounds & use situational cues to fill in the rest.
- Make sure you are relaxed.
- Focus on the speaker.
- Eliminate other distractions.
- Don't be too hard on yourself as you learn a new skill.
- Use context from the rest of the sentence.
- Practice, practice, practice.

Clear Speech

As defined by Dr. Gaeta, clear speech is . . . “a method of speaking in which the speaker makes a concerted effort to precisely and accurately express each word, sentence and idea.” This method is used by the communication partners of a person with hearing loss to help the listener compensate for the “filtered out” speech sounds.

Here are some suggestions offered by Dr. Gaeta for how to encourage the talker to speak clearly:

- Avoid blending neighboring words and sounds together in a sentence.
- Articulate accurately.
- Speak more slowly.
- Slightly increase the volume of your speech.
- Shorten long complicated sentences.
- Pause between phrases and thoughts.
- Practice, practice, practice.

Summary:

As she wrapped up her presentation, Dr. Laura Gaeta reminded us that aural rehabilitation (AR) has multiple components that can help to minimize the communication difficulties often associated with hearing loss. She concluded by recommending that those of us experiencing hearing loss consult with our own audiologist about aural rehabilitation and which communication strategies might work best for us in light of our individual degree and type of hearing impairment. Finally, she urged us to seek out and find ways to regularly practice, practice, practice these important communication skills and strategies.

For More Information or Questions: Contact Dr. Laura Gaeta: Email: l.gaeta@csus.edu; Call: 1-916-278-4701

~ Kathy Fairbanks

Tech Talk

By (Ms.) Dale Davis
October, 2021



Starting this month, we would like to introduce a new column in our Monthly Newsletter to cover snippets from the world of technical advancements in the hearing assistance industry. If you have topics you would enjoy seeing covered, or suggestions for news articles, please let us know. This column will also try to answer any technological questions you might pose.

For input, please contact: info@hearinglosseeb.org

Please Note:

These products and innovations are brought to you for informational purposes only and do not reflect any endorsement by the National Hearing Loss Association of America or the East Bay Chapter. You can follow the links in the column for more in-depth information on the topics presented.

IQbuds Max

The IQbuds² Max won both a [CES \(Consumer Electronics Show\) 2020 Innovation Award](#) in the Health, Wellness and Wearable Technologies categories as well as Time Magazine's [Best Inventions of 2020](#)



These earbuds, designed and developed by [Nuheara](#), are being marketed as the “world’s most intelligent hearing bud that learns and adapts to your hearing profile, delivers real world hearing customization and best-of-class audio listening experience with ANC (Active Noise Canceling) in a true wireless hearing bud.”

IQbuds2 MAX combined with its associated phone app represents the next generation of intelligent hearing tech designed for the underserved consumer with mild to moderate hearing loss and auditory process challenges like Autism and Auditory Processing Disorder. At ~\$399 a pair, they are a lot less expensive than premium hearing aids.

As with all hearing health device decisions, it is always best to consult with a professional Audiologist to find the best solution for your needs.

As a person with Hearing Loss, have you faced any of these scenarios?

- Do hearing people think you might have other issues too? Such as you need help writing or seeing?
- As you know, people with hearing in two good ears can tell where a sound is coming from! They don’t have to look, they just know!
- If they have a mask on, they may say something you can’t hear (because of the mask) or you can’t read their lips (if that is one of your skills) but they will keep repeating it with the mask on!
- Hearing people can talk from anywhere in the house! For instance, if you say something in the kitchen, they may respond from the upstairs bathroom which may be 15 feet up and 10 feet down a hall and around a wall or two. Makes it hard for a hearing loss person to have any privacy when they are muttering to themselves or perhaps burping or farting.
- Hearing people may mumble because that’s the way they talk, not just to irritate you.
- If you direct them to speak directly to you, they may not understand or they may forget.

If you have a hearing friend though, this could be very helpful interpreting when your other hearing friends make any of these mistakes!

East Bay Leadership Team

The chapter is run by a Steering Committee, Leader Dale Davis, ddavis94605@gmail.com, who also oversees the Membership Database.

Outreach, National Chapter Coordinator/Liaison: Susan Jeffries Fitzgerald, susanlj29@gmail.com

Treasurer: Len Bridges, lenbridges3993-hlaa@outlook.com

Programs: Currently recruiting for a volunteer

Technology and AfterWords Small Group: George Chin, Sr., 352-1569, georgechinsr@gmail.com

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Go to this URL to join today: <https://www.hearingloss.org/make-an-impact/become-a-memberrenew/>
OR, if you prefer to pay by check or card thru the mail, Nancy Asmundson has membership forms to send to you, or contact HLAA at 301-657-2248 or e-mail membership@hearingloss.org. Your membership form & payment go to HLAA, 6116 Executive Blvd., Suite 320, Rockville, MD 20852.

COSTS: Regular Membership/year (will receive *Hearing Life* magazine in print and digital format): Individual - \$45; Couple/Family - \$55; Professional - \$80; Nonprofit - \$80;

Online Membership receives *Hearing Life* mag. in digital format only: Individual - \$35; Student - \$25. Veteran Membership: Complimentary one-year Regular Membership & Lifetime Online Membership.