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Audrey Weiss (right) critiques broadcast journalism student Heather Maahs' enunciation Thursday afternoon in a speech therapy clinic for students of "Oregon News."

## Speaking of journalism...

The Communication Disorders and Science Program offers free oral tests for broadcast students

By Amy Palanuk  
Higher Education Reporter

**"Zzzzzz...."**  
"I feel like I'm deflating," broadcast news student Betty Ann Boeving said.

"Take a deep breath, and try again," said Audrey Weiss, a graduate student in the Communication Disorders and Sciences Program.

Boeving and four other broadcast news students sounded out "ohs" and "ahs" for speech therapy student Audrey Weiss Thursday afternoon. The "oral exams" highlighted a partnership between the School of Journalism and Communication's broadcast news sequence and the Communication Disorders and Sciences Program. Both departments specialize in speech delivery, one in the actual delivery and the other in how it is delivered.

The CDS program, part of the Speech-Language-Hearing Center, trains graduate students in speech therapy and hearing disorders. The center is housed in the same building as the Child Development and Rehabilitation center on the first floor of the Clinical Services building, and serves both students and community members.

From hearing tests to speech therapy, students can receive treatment at the center at sliding scale rates. However, for the broadcast journalism students, the voice assessments were conducted for free, providing practice for both parties involved.

"To be a unique broadcaster you want to have good enunciation and you want to sound good to listeners," Boeving said.

And the necessary attributes of a broadcaster are some of the necessary attributes in good speech, said Jane McDonald, director of the Speech-Language-Hearing Center and the CDS program.

Which is why Weiss spent the afternoon with the students of Oregon News, the live news program produced by the journalism students.

Weiss gained practice in evaluating speech habits, while the students gained practice in reading aloud to a handful of strangers.

"Because of my desired profession, I have to have a mature voice," said broadcast student Heather Maahs between flushes of embarrassment at having to say "ahhhh..." for as long as her breath would allow.

The center recently went through a national accreditation, where professionals from across the nation observed the clinic, went through files and worked with the students.

The preliminary results said the center was 100 percent compliant in every standard, McDonald said.

"It's a pretty intense program," McDonald said.

The center is one of three on the West Coast that trains students in the science of speech and hearing disorders, and the opportunity to study in the program is limited.



Weiss, a graduate student in the CDS program, gave voice assessments to broadcast students interested in improving their speaking habits.

"We may get 100 applicants but we can only take 25," McDonald said.

And as with most departments on campus, the speech and hearing center has been affected by budgeting constraints. The accreditation report affirmed what McDonald was already aware of — the need for more space and better funding for faculty.

"Space is really tight," McDonald said.

The center is located in a building built to deliver service with only one large classroom, and because of this many classes for the center are taught in other buildings on campus.

But most of the learning is done in practicums outside the classroom.

Students in the program are required to serve internships with professionals in the fields they plan to specialize in. Students currently intern at Oregon Health Sciences and the Veterans Hospital in Portland, there are also interns in public schools throughout the state.

But with schools cutting back on staffing for budgeting reasons, the ease in which grad students in the program can work with professionals in public schools has been limited.

"It's always hard to tell the direction with budgeting cutbacks," McDonald said. "But so far this year students have been placed in good internships."

Monday evening the center held a reception for professionals who help students with internships in the communication disorders and sciences field.

"In the practicums, students work with people directly," McDonald said. "It's a wonderful combination of using the community with the University."