

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH DEAF/HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS

CLASSROOM TIPS:

- Several things would be helpful for the students and interpreters/captionists (also known as service providers) to see ahead of time:
 - A brief course outline or syllabus early in the semester;
 - A list of new vocabulary or specialized terminology before it comes up in class;
 - Copy of the instructor's lecture notes if available, and;
 - A list of visual and auditory media that will be shown in class before it is presented.
- Be conscious of your actions – your attitudes towards students with disabilities will be observed by all students in the classroom. This is your opportunity to create an atmosphere of support and understanding.
- We encourage students to arrive early on the first day to introduce themselves to you and also the service provider(s). Being early will assist with opening up lines of communication regarding the students' support services.
- Keep a clear line of sight in the classroom between you and the student. Deaf/HOH students will need to see you clearly. Some students will request appropriate seating areas prior to class. Allow the student to be seated in a spot where he/she can maintain eye contact.
- Try to avoid standing in front of windows or other light sources. The glare from behind you makes it difficult to read your lips and your expressions. When another student speaks and is not in the Deaf/HOH student's direct line of vision, repeat the comment or question and point or motion to show who is speaking. This makes it easier for the student to follow the discussion.
- Allow the service provider(s) to sit or stand on one side of you, where the student may maintain eye contact with both the interpreter and you. The service provider(s) may also need to sit where he/she can hear you clearly, away from loud noises such as a fan or busy hallway. Often the student and the service provider(s) will determine the most appropriate seating location in the classroom.
- In question-and-answer periods, the student may raise his/her hand, be recognized, and sign the question to the interpreter. The interpreter will voice the question to the instructor and the class, and then sign the response back to the student. For a student using speech-to-text services, the provider will need time to finish typing the text to the student. Be sure to allow time for this to occur to ensure the student has an opportunity to participate in class.
- Be sure to allow extra time in science or computer labs for the student to find things that you are pointing out. She/he may need to get instructions from the service provider(s), locate the materials, and then focus again on the service provider for the rest of the discussion.

- Assist the student in finding a notetaker in the classroom. It is impossible to watch you, the service provider(s), and take notes at the same time.
- Make important information (like an assignment or a change in schedule) especially clear by writing it on the board. You should also have a system to notify the student if you cancel a class, so that she/he can cancel with the service provider.

COMMUNICATION TIPS:

- Each student has their own unique approach to communication, communicating in a way they are comfortable. Allow the student to communicate with you regarding their communication preferences. Not every Deaf/HOH student communicates in the same way.
- When communicating with the student, speak directly to him/her and not through the service provider(s). For instance, you'll want to ask, "Do you?" to the student instead of "Tell him/her" or "Does he/she?" through the interpreter/CART writer.
- Speak clearly and naturally, do not over-enunciate, and talk loudly or with exaggerated mouth movements. This makes it more difficult to speech-read. Also, please refrain from blocking your mouth with your hands or other objects. Body language, facial expressions, gestures and writing things out may help get your message across effectively.
- Try to avoid long periods facing away from the students or toward the chalkboard while you speak. If you pace around the room you make it difficult for the Deaf/HOH students to see your face.

GENERAL AWARENESS TIPS:

- Be objective about evaluating materials written by Deaf/HOH students. If there are problems with grammar, syntax, or fluency of expression, you can advise the student about such remedial services as tutoring, language development labs, or other resources, which are available on campus for all students.
- Deaf/HOH students are expected to be treated like any other student without a disability in the classroom. The same University policies and conduct guidelines apply to students with a disability as well. If you have concerns about the student's academic progress, please address your concerns with the student directly.
- The first day of class may be stressful or feel awkward for you, the student and support service people (such as interpreters, captionists and notetakers). Be patient and flexible! Issues can be resolved smoothly and timely with open communication and creative solutions.

Don't Panic! Remain Calm! Breathe! If you have never had any experience with a person who has a disability then it is easy to feel uncertain, intimidated or frightened. It's OK to have these feelings; it's not OK to do nothing about them. Talk to people, people with disabilities, parents or siblings of people with disabilities, people who work with people with disabilities, read, look on the internet, go back and talk to people to make sure that your internet info is accurate, get in touch with organizations, community groups, etc.