



Center for Accessible Resources

Tips for Working with Students with Hearing Impairments Center for Accessible Resources (CAR)

Students with hearing impairments may experience unique challenges in the classroom. It is important to find strategies that work for both the faculty member, and the student when working together in the classroom. This handout helps to outline some of those strategies.

Classroom Strategies:

- Include a statement in your course syllabus regarding accommodation issues for students with disabilities. See [COPPS for the course syllabi accessibility statement](#).
- Make sure that your face is visible when speaking, and try to face the person with hearing loss as much as possible. If an interpreter is present, make sure the student can see both you and the interpreter.
- Provide context and repetition, which is helpful not only to students with hearing loss, but to other students as well: announce what's about to happen and recap what's just taken place.
- Keep instructions brief and uncomplicated as much as possible. When repeating instructions, repeat exactly without paraphrasing.
- Use more than one way to demonstrate or explain information.
- Allow several moments extra for oral responses in class discussions.
- In small group discussions, allow for participation by students with hearing impairments. Circular seating arrangements offer students who are deaf or hard of hearing the best advantage for seeing all class participants.
- It is important that only one person speak or sign at a time. The interpreting process only allows one person to communicate at a time. Therefore, encourage students to wait before speaking or signing until you recognize or call on them.
- If there is a break in the class, get the attention of the student who is deaf or hard of hearing before resuming class.
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing often use vision as a primary means of receiving information. Captioned videos, overheads, diagrams, and other visual aids are useful instructional tools for students with hearing impairments as well as students with various types of learning styles.

- Allow ample time for reading! The student cannot read and watch the interpreter at the same time. Avoid talking while students are focused on written work or overhead projections/multimedia presentations.
- Avoid lecturing or giving out procedural information while handing out papers. Losing eye contact with the student may also mean the loss of information for the student.
- Provide lists of the subject-specific jargon and technical terms which students will need to acquire early in the course. If interpreters are being used, make this list available to the professionals providing the service as early as possible.

Communication one-on-one:

- Look at and speak directly to the person who is hearing impaired. They may need to look more at an interpreter but it is important to direct all communication to the individual with hearing impairment.
- Be yourself! Speak clearly and at your natural pace. Be aware that an interpreter may wait to hear and understand a complete thought before beginning to interpret. They will let you know if you need to repeat or slow down.
- Try not to mumble, shout, or over-enunciate words.
- Ask the person with hearing impairment to explain something if you do not understand it or ask them how the interpreting process works. Try not to engage the interpreter or ask them to explain what the person means. Remember that when the interpreter speaks, he/she is voicing the words of the individual who is deaf. The interpreter is not a participant in the interaction.

To request this information in an alternate format please contact the Center for Accessible Resources at (541) 463-5150 or accessibleresources@lanecc.edu.

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