

Hearing-Impaired Students

Promising Practices 24

Program Puzzler

A student with an obvious hearing impairment walks into your Aspire program and wishes to take classes. You have never had a sign language class and you've never had a hearing-impaired individual in your program in the past, so you have no experience in dealing with the student's needs.

Peer Perspective

Here are some situations you might face in your classroom and some strategies for handling them.

There are over 40 people in the class.

- Devise a set of hand signals or gestures to get the hearing-impaired student's attention.
- Set up a buddy system pairing a hearing student with the hearing-impaired student to assist with questions and assignments.

Timely Tips

Establish routines for beginning and ending class. For example: first, take attendance; second, check homework; third, share information. This allows everyone in the class to attend to the content and not worry about the circumstances of the environment.

The interpreter doesn't show up.

- Don't panic.
- Arrange for another student to take notes for the hearing-impaired student.
- Show a captioned movie or videotape.
- If possible, change the seating arrangement to allow the hearing-impaired student to sit closer to you.

The hearing-impaired student appears bored.

- Check on the student's understanding of what is going on in the class.
- Check to see if the goals and objectives for participation and learning are clear.
- Check the level of participation. The student may be unsure how to participate in class and may need some direction in order to become more involved.
- Arrange materials and assignments so that all students experience frequent small successes. That will make them eager to be involved in the class.
- Use visual enhancements as much as possible—charts, graphs, overheads, videotapes.
- Arrange chairs to be conducive to class interaction if interaction is part of the course.
- Realize that the student may simply not be interested.

The class is a lab, and you must lecture while students are performing an experiment.

- Request a note taker for the hearing-impaired student.

- Pause more frequently so the hearing-impaired student can look at the interpreter.
- Make an outline or provide additional reading materials for outside the class.

You are giving a written test and you know that English is not the hearing-impaired student's first language.

- Give the test orally.
- Rely on the integrity of the interpreter to sign the test without giving away any of the answers.
- Give the test as a take-home exam to allow sufficient time.

You are using slides as part of a presentation and must turn off the overhead lights.

- Think ahead and obtain a small light on a stand that will illuminate only the interpreter.
- Leave just the back lights on in the class.

You want to make sure that the hearing-impaired student really understands what is going on in class.

- Avoid asking questions that require a simple Yes or No answer. Ask open ended questions like, "What do you think?" or "What is your opinion?" These types of questions allow you to see if the question was accurately understood.
- Rephrase using different words if you think your question was not understood.
- Use as much visual stimulation as possible.
- Provide outlines of what will be covered in class.
- Encourage class participation on the part of the student.

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Added Insights

Computer-Assistive Technology and Computer-Based Instruction

A variety of technology solutions, including computer-based instruction, are available to help meet the needs of hearing-impaired students in your Aspire classroom:

- Computer-aided note taking can allow a hearing typist to take notes on classroom lectures and share them with a hearing-impaired student through a simple local-area network of personal computers (PCs) and software.
- Communication programs convert speech into text and video sign language that can be viewed on a laptop or PC. Two-way programs also convert text into speech read aloud over the PC speakers or into video sign language.
- Visualization and presentation software programs like Inspiration, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Netscape Composer can integrate static or dynamic graphic media and text to help hearing-impaired students organize and present their thoughts in visual format.
- Digital video captioning technologies simplify adding captions to digital web videos that instructor develop or use.

- Teachers can provide technical support via smart phones to help students learn after class and at home.
- Computer-based instruction systems can provide powerful tools to meet the instructional needs of hearing-impaired students, including information activities with text, graphic images, and animations; in-class and out-of-class learning activities with detailed, step-by-step directions to students, adjusted to individual students' actual level of performance.

Information in this Added Insights is taken from the following sources:

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Liu, C.-C., & Hong, Y.-C. (2007, July). Providing hearing-impaired students with learning care after classes through smart phones and the GPRS network. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 38, 4, 727-741.

Stover, D.L., & Pendegraft, N. (2005, November, December). Revisiting computer-aided notetaking technological assistive devices for hearing-impaired students. *Clearing house: A journal of educational strategies, issues, and ideas*, 79, 2, 94-97.

The Central/Southeast Aspire Resource Center, housed at Ohio University's Literacy Center focuses on special needs topics for Aspire students in Ohio. Information and resources for serving hearing-impaired students are available through the Center at <http://www.ouliteracycenter.org/>

Additional resources for serving hearing-impaired adults in Aspire are available through the Ohio Literacy Resource Center at Kent State University at <http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/deaf/>