

Hearing Impairments



Communication and Teaching Tips:

NOTE: These tips are for those students with a hearing impairment, but can also be applicable for those with an auditory disability (a disability affecting how information heard is processed by the brain).

- Get the person's attention with a wave of the hand or a gentle tap on the shoulder before speaking.
- Face the person you are addressing and do not turn away while you are speaking. He needs to be able to see your facial expressions and lip movements simultaneously.
- Try to converse in a well-lit area. Do not cover your mouth or chew gum. He needs to be able to see your facial expressions and lip movements simultaneously.
- Ask the person with whom you are speaking if he can understand you, even if he is wearing a hearing aid. Never assume an individual can hear you, even if he seems to comprehend what you are saying.
- Minimize background noise and other distractions whenever possible. Noise can be a huge distraction for a person already struggling to make out your words.
- Speak slowly and distinctly, and use gestures and facial expressions to reinforce what you are saying. For a person with a hearing impairment, words are just one tool out of many for communication.
- Remember that only about one-third of spoken words can be understood by speech reading, so repetition is a useful strategy to ensure that your message is getting across.
- Keep in mind that some individuals who use sign language may not have adequate English reading and writing skills when communicating via written notes.
- Employ visual aids when possible, such as pointing to printed materials.
- Provide information in writing when possible.
- Simplify verbal instructions as much as possible.
- Review key points and encourage them to repeat what you said.
- Encourage them to ask questions about anything you have discussed.
- Be aware of your actions. Your actions and attitudes towards students with disabilities will be observed by all students in class. You have an opportunity to create an atmosphere of classroom support by being understanding.