

Faculty Guide **DEAF, DEAFENED AND HARD OF HEARING**

OVERVIEW AND DEFINITIONS

According to Statistics Canada, 10% of Canadians or almost three million people in Canada, have a hearing loss. According to the Canadian Association of the Deaf, students who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing are all very distinct groups. Using appropriate terminology shows respect for their differences.

A **Deaf** person has a profound hearing loss in which there has been damage to the auditory pathway. Most people use some form of sign language to communicate. The earlier the loss, the more serious its implications for a student's education. Students who have acquired American Sign Language (ASL) consider it their first language and it is unlikely that they would have a complete command of the English language, which would be considered their second language. It is important to note that their grasp of the English language is not a reflection of intelligence but is a reflection of their command of their second language due to their inability to hear.

Deafened is both a medical and sociological term referring to persons who have become deaf later in life. Deafened persons cannot hear what you say, but usually respond verbally in a conversation. They sometimes use interpreters, but more often at college, request a computerized notetaker.

Persons who are hard of hearing have hearing losses ranging from mild to profound. These students experience difficulty hearing, and may wear a hearing aid to amplify sound. A hearing aid does not cure the loss, but assists in better communication. Students may request a notetaker in class to ensure vital information is not missed.

An FM system may be used by students who are hard of hearing, to more clearly hear the teacher's voice. A small microphone is worn on the teacher's lapel. The teacher's voice is directly transmitted to the student's ears, combating the effects of distance and background noise.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Some students who are deaf or hard of hearing feel socially isolated from others. It has been found that even a mild hearing loss may result in a profound communication barrier (50% to 60% of communication can be lost). The emphasis should be on visual learning strategies for students who are hard of hearing or deaf. To enhance the learning environment consider the following:

- outline lesson at beginning of class and provide a list of content specific or technical terms to the student and interpreter before each class
- reinforce verbal presentations with written text (overheads allow you to face the front)
- eliminate background noise and other distractions
- use captioned films and videos where available
- if the student relies on lip-reading, repeat comments made by the other students in a discussion to ensure the student understands
- introduce interpreters and computerized notetakers to the class and give them the opportunity to explain their role
- be prepared for interruptions by notetakers and interpreters for clarification, should someone speak inaudibly, several people speak at one time, or a concept not be clear
- do **not** say anything to the interpreter or computerized notetaker during class that you do not want communicated to the student
- typing and interpreting take intense concentration and physical stamina, thereby requiring at least one 10 minute break for every 50 minutes of class time depending on the course content

- avoid movements which will distract or block the student's view of the interpreter or the computer screen
- when speaking, face the students, try to avoid backlighting and remain in one place
- speak at a reasonable pace, clearly and in a normal tone but be aware that interpreting and computerized notetaking requires a few seconds delay
- restate or paraphrase if the student does not seem to understand
- if a class is cancelled or relocated ensure that all parties (student, interpreter and/or notetaker) are notified
- communicating with deaf students at their homes can be done through email, TTY, or Bell Relay. The disability support office in your college can be contacted for more information on these methods of communication.
- be prepared to meet with interpreters and notetakers for consultation and planning
- work closely with the disability support office to ensure a successful learning experience for the student

Specific tips if you have an interpreter in your class:

The interpreter is not a tutor or a teacher. The interpreter is there to facilitate communication between the instructor and the student and is part of the educational team. Interpreters belong to a professional group, bound by a Code of Ethics that stresses confidentiality, impartiality and integrity.

- situate yourself and the interpreter along one sight line so that deaf students can follow any action
- speak directly to the deaf student, not the interpreter
- look at the student not the interpreter when responses are being interpreted
- the interpreter (or student) will be happy to teach you a few ASL signs of greeting and instructions if you are interested

Specific tips if you have a computerized notetaker in your class:

A computerized notetaker records the lecture and class discussion. The notetaker must have passed the College Computerized Notetaking Screening and must type at least 70wpm. The staff of the disability support service regularly monitors the quality of notes for accuracy and thoroughness.

- notetakers are able to transcribe audio materials such as video or audio tapes if given the materials in advance of the class
- notes taken by the computerized notetakers are for the use of the deaf or hard of hearing students **only**

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with disabilities are expected to accomplish the “core competencies” of their programs. To achieve this, accommodations are provided to minimize or eliminate any disadvantage their disability presents. Accommodations are unique to each individual. The disability support office in your college makes these recommendations based on confidential documentation that the student provides to the college. Some of the most commonly provided academic accommodations to students who are deaf or hard of hearing include:

- priority seating for the students and their computerized notetakers and their interpreters
- access to computerized notetaker or an interpreter and manual notetaker
- provision of extended time for tests and exams. The amount of extra time is determined by the disability support office.
- access to an interpreter during tests and exams, to interpret questions
- provide clarification on tests, exams and assignments. If interpreter is not available, ensure the conversation is written down.
- ensure that any last minute changes or errors on tests and exams are provided to the student in writing

- use of sign/oral language interpreters for oral assignments
- access to assistive devices such as captioning devices, FM systems, TTY
- use of computer for completion of test/assignments
- extended time to complete the program and/or reduced course load
- adapted methods of evaluation such as marking on content rather than writing style
- provision of advance reading lists, texts and content specific vocabulary
- provide computerized notetakers and interpreters with copies of reading material and videos at least one week in advance of when it is being taught

RESOURCES

The disability support office in your college will have brochures, books and videos available for loan as well as information about local resources.

Web Sites:

Canadian Association of the Deaf <<http://www.cad.ca>>

Canadian Hearing Society <<http://www.chs.ca>>

Deaf World Web <<http://deafworldweb.org>>

The Interpreters' Network <<http://www.terpsnet.com>>

The Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf <<http://www.connect.ab.ca/~ccsd/>>

Gallaudet University <<http://www.gallaudet.edu>>

National Technical Institute for the Deaf <<http://www.isc.rit.edu/~418www>>

Print Publications:

"What To Do When Your Client Can't Hear You".

J.R. Sinclair

EAP Access Program - CHS, 1998

Hearing the Learning

A Post-Secondary Education Handbook

Ruth Warick

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association , 1997

Deaf Heritage in Canada by Clifton F. Carbin - a project by the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf

Deaf People are Just Like You, But... - edited by the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf

1998 Deafness - Related Resources in Canada - a directory published by The Signers' Network

This document is a compilation of resources from CCDI member colleges.