Access & Accommodations Center
Classroom Tips for Instructing Students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

While working at Georgia State University, you may have the opportunity to instruct students who have hearing loss. It is our hope that the information provided below will assist you in effectively communicating class information to these students and allow you to facilitate an environment in which they can participate equally in class discussions and activities.

1. **Speak in an ordinary tone.** Raising our voices can distort our mouths and inhibits understanding for those who augment communication with lip reading. However, do not assume a student with hearing loss reads lips; some do to varying degrees of efficacy while others do not.

2. **Avoid speaking when your back is turned to the class** (i.e. when you write on the board). This not only distorts sound for all students, but may also impair clarity for interpreters and captionists who are working to relay information.

3. Similarly, **background noise and cross-talk should be kept to a minimum.**

4. When referring to items on the board and around the room, **be specific about the object you are making reference to by pointing directly to it** (as opposed to using vague pronouns like *this* or *that*). Students with hearing loss rely more heavily on visual cues like body language and facial expressions to gather information than hearing students.

5. **Repeat questions and comments from students in the class** before responding.

6. **Address your student directly when conversing with them,** using their name or *you.* Avoid telling captionists or interpreters to relay messages to the student when the student is present (i.e. avoid “tell her” or “ask them”).

7. **Material presented orally must be available in written format.**

8. **Ensure that any media that contains speech or sound is captioned,** whether instructor-created or otherwise.
   a. Research shows that captions are a Universal Design feature that aid in attention, comprehension, and memory.
   b. University library professionals may be able to help instructors locate appropriate videos that are already captioned.
   c. Consult with GSU’s Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) for assistance in properly captioning media; captioning of classroom media is not a service that AACE provides.

9. **Be open to suggestions from the student.** They know what has worked and what has not worked for them in past classroom settings.

10. **Students who use interpreting and/or real-time captioning services for communication access will arrange these services directly with AACE.**

Please contact your campus AACE office with any questions or concerns: access.gsu.edu/about-us/contact-us/.

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