

DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED STUDENTS

Deafness affects the way a person takes in and expresses information. The teaching of the hearing impaired student, for the most part, is the same as teaching a student with normal hearing. However, there are some facts you should be aware of in order to gain a better understanding of the hearing impaired student in the classroom.

The first consideration you will notice is the mode of communication used. The mode may vary from student to student depending on the age when the hearing loss occurred, the educational background, and/or the degree of hearing loss.

Some deaf students will use their own voice but rely on an interpreter for the receptive element of communication; they find speech reading inadequate because only 25-35% of the English language is visible on the mouth. Other deaf students will rely on the interpreter for both receptive and expressive communication. Other students may not use an interpreter at all.

The second consideration the instructor will face is the student's competency with the English language. The English language is based on oral-auditory stimuli, making it impossible for hearing impaired people to acquire language as other people do. English is considered a foreign language for deaf people, and is taught as a second language.

American Sign Language (ASL) has its own syntax and grammar which varies greatly from English. Articles and prepositions are not used in ASL, and the sentence structure is arranged differently. For this reason, the hearing impaired student's writing may seem awkward. It is important to remember that the deaf student is dealing with two completely different languages, English and American Sign Language.