

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH AUDITORY DIFFICULTIES

Students with hearing impairments face extra challenges learning in a classroom setting. Typically, they can hear the teacher talk, but miss parts of the message or do not hear it clearly, especially if noise is present. Students sometimes do not know what they didn't hear. They often may not know that they "misheard" a message unless they have already had experience with the language and the topic under discussion. The use of amplification (hearing aids) helps but these devices do have limitations and do not provide a perfect substitute for normal hearing. The following items are suggestions for helping students with auditory difficulties learn more effectively in a classroom setting.

1. Seat the student close to the source of directions, instruction and explanations. Try to make sure the student with hearing difficulties is looking at you or attending to the source of the message.
2. Allow the student flexible seating so he/she can move to a better vantage point as classroom activities change (e.g. moving closer to the TV during videos or movies, or moving away from the window if outside noises are present).
3. Make certain that competing sounds (talking, movement, overhead projector fans, etc.) are silenced when directions are being given or announcements are made.
4. Speak slowly and distinctly when giving directions and information.
5. If you repeat directions, try to rephrase them or use different vocabulary.
6. Wait to talk until you are finished writing on the board and are facing the students. Adequate light on the speaker's face also helps. (Light from a window behind you makes seeing your face more difficult).
7. Provide visual cues, written information, and diagrams to supplement verbal instruction whenever possible.
8. During group discussions:
 - Use students' names when calling on them to answer a question. This allows the student with hearing difficulties a chance to turn to face the answering student if possible.
 - Summarize key points given by classmates, especially brief messages like numeric answers, yes/no, etc.
9. When appropriate, ask the student to repeat directions to check for understanding. Encourage the student to question any directions, explanations, instructions he/she does not understand.