

# Teaching languages to students with a hearing loss

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**Hearing is the basis of our human existence.**



# **HEARING LOSS - IMPACT**

# Hearing loss - impact

- producing speech sounds



# Hearing loss - impact

- hearing and understanding language



# Hearing loss - impact

- producing **oral language**



# Hearing loss - impact

- acquiring and using **background knowledge**



# Hearing loss - impact

- accessing information presented in the classroom





# Hearing loss - impact

- understanding **new concepts** –  
particularly **language-based**  
**concepts**



# Hearing loss - impact

- interacting with others



# **DEAFNESS - TYPES**

# Deafness

- pre-lingual
- post-lingual



# **PRE-LINGUAL DEAFNESS**

# Pre-lingual deafness

- More than 90% of prelingually deaf children are unlikely to:
  - **ever develop good speech**
  - **and good speech-reception skills**



# Pre-lingual deafness

- despite being fitted with hearing aids
- and provided with oral instruction and speech therapy at a young age



# Pre-lingual deafness

- Without developing a strong language base before age 10 years, deaf people are unlikely:
  - to develop
  - and use **abstract concepts**





# Pre-lingual deafness

- Deaf children who were most likely to attain high reading levels and graduate from college
  - children whose **parents were themselves deaf**



# **POST-LINGUAL DEAFNESS**

# Post-lingual deafness

- develops **after** the **acquisition** of **speech** and **language**



# Post-lingual deafness

- can occur **gradually**
- or with **sudden** onset hearing loss



# Post-lingual deafness

- **communicative ability** not necessarily affected by hearing loss



# Post-lingual deafness

- alterations in voice tone and modulation



# Post-lingual deafness

- **Students might have to:**
  - adapt to using hearing aids or a cochlear implant



# Post-lingual deafness

- **Students might have to:**
  - develop speech-reading skills





# Post-lingual deafness

- **Students might have to:**
  - and/or learn sign language



# Post-lingual deafness

- **Loneliness and depression** - a result of:
  - isolation (the inability to communicate)



# Post-lingual deafness

- and difficulty in accepting their disability



# Post-lingual deafness

- The challenge is made greater by the need for those around them to adapt to the person's hearing loss.



# Post-lingual deafness

- Communication difficulties and adjustments may lead to a level of **anxiety about performing in front of others.**



# Post-lingual deafness

- This may **affect participation** in lessons, particularly for students whose **speech development has been impacted by their hearing loss.**



- **Talk to parents and students to learn as much as you can about the student's needs and concerns.**



# **CLASSROOM ARRANGEMENTS**



# Seating

- Seat the pupil for **optimal listening and visual cues** within the classroom



# Seating



# Seating

- seated **one third ( $1/3$ )** of the distance of the room from the teacher



# Seating

- **not in the front row** directly beneath the teacher





# Hearing loss - types

- **Unilateral** — there is a hearing loss in one ear.
- **Bilateral** — there is a hearing loss in both ears.

# Seating

- Seat chatty or easily-distracted students far away from hearing impaired learner.



# Seating

- Some students **may not be comfortable** with these suggestion or have **alternate strategies**.





# Seating

- Respect their choices.



# Lighting

- No bright lights shining directly in the child's face.



# Lighting

- Back-lighting is ideal



# Teacher's behaviour

- Be aware that every child is an individual with his/her own strengths and limitations.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Thus it is important not to have a preconceived notion of function based on the degree of hearing loss.



# Teacher's behaviour



- <http://www.lifeprint.com/>

# Teacher's behaviour

- Request in-service instruction to learn how to check your pupil's hearing aids (**Make sure Ss and parents are comfortable with that!**)





# Teacher's behaviour

- Keep extra batteries at hand.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Encourage **independence** in students, especially when it comes to **taking responsibility** for their own **assistive hearing technologies**.

# Teacher's behaviour

- If students are taught to make equipment checks, this will help avoid **unexpected setbacks** in their learning caused by **preventable issues** such as flat batteries.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Face the class, not the blackboard, when speaking.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Don't walk around the classroom while speaking.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Ensure that you are clearly visible to the student at all times.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Don't stand in front of the window.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Keep your hands and other objects away from your face while speaking.





# Teacher's behaviour

- moustaches
- beards
- hands
- books



in front of your face can **add to the difficulties of lip-readers**

# Teacher's behaviour

- Students who lip-read cannot function in darkened rooms.



# Teacher's behaviour

- You may need to adjust the lighting in your teaching environment.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Don't make any sudden head movements.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Your face should be clearly visible at all times.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Talk to your students facing them and keeping an eye contact.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Don't encroach students' „intimate / personal zone”.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Don't suddnely touch your students.





# Teacher's behaviour

- Approach your students from the front.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Speak:
  - in an ordinary tone of voice,
  - without exaggerated lip movements,
  - and at a normal rate of speaking.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Check with pupils **periodically** to be certain that they can hear you well.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Use **age appropriate** vocabulary and sentence structure.



# Teacher's behaviour

- Avoid:
  - idioms,
  - sarcasm,
  - slang (if you use them, explain).



# Acoustics

- Ensure that any background noise is minimised.



# Acoustics

- For a pupil with a hearing loss, choose a classroom located away from traffic and noisy areas.



# Acoustics

- Avoid areas where groups of children congregate.





# Acoustics

- Even simple things like shrubbery just outside the classroom windows can help reduce external noise.



# Acoustics

- Evaluate and monitor internal classroom noises on an ongoing basis.



# Acoustics

- air conditioners, heating systems,
  - computers, projectors and light fixtures
- can all contribute to **internal background noise**, making hearing difficult.



# Acoustics

- **Have equipment serviced regularly to eliminate noise created by malfunction.**



# Acoustics

- acoustically-treated low ceilings
- carpeting (floors, and even parts of walls)
- well-fitting doors



# Acoustics

- thick curtains;
- acoustic panelling
- use of absorptive materials on hard reflective surfaces (cork bulletin boards etc.)



# Acoustics

- Close doors and windows, and also turn off any unused electrical equipment.



# Addressing students / instructions

- When addressing the pupil say his/her name first.





# Addressing students / instructions

- Gain a Deaf student's attention before speaking to him/her:
  - stand on a chair,
  - stomp on the ground,
  - wave your hand in their line of sight
  - or turn the lights off and back on



# Addressing students / instructions

- Use a focusing phrase e.g. “listen to this question”.



# Addressing students / instructions

- You should also **model good listening habits** by **really listening** to what your pupils are saying and showing interest.



# Addressing students / instructions

- Schedule specific times for sharing information / asking questions and give your full attention.



# Addressing students / instructions

- Repeat and rephrase when necessary.  
Emphasise key words.



# Addressing students / instructions

- Sometimes ask other pupils if they have heard or understood rather than always focusing on the child with hearing loss.



# Addressing students / instructions

- Use buddies to help relay and rephrase information.



# Addressing students / instructions

- Repeat classmates' answers





# Addressing students / instructions

- Support your verbal instructions with visuals.



# Addressing students / instructions

- Write instructions up on a board, so there is a point of reference for the student.



# Addressing students / instructions

- Provide an outline of what is to be learnt.



# Addressing students / instructions

- Teach routines, expectations of behaviour and consequences explicitly.



# Addressing students / instructions

- Explain (sudden) changes of routine/activities so students know what is going on around them.



# Addressing students / instructions

- Write classroom transitions on the board



# Addressing students / instructions

- Change the nature of the task (more emphasis on writing)
- Vary the conditions for a task



# Addressing students / instructions

- Allow students to record lessons / take pictures of the board.





# Addressing students / instructions

- Any videos or films used should, where possible, be captioned.



# Addressing students / instructions

- Be flexible with assignment deadlines.



# Addressing students / instructions

- When this is not possible, you will need to consider alternative ways for students with hearing impairment to access the information.



- <https://downsub.com/>

- <https://www.ai-media.tv/the-best-free-captioning-and-subtitling-tools/>

# Addressing students / instructions

- When their range of literacy is an issue, students may require the use of a thesaurus or dictionary during exams. A personal computer with spelling and grammar functions may be required.



# Addressing students / instructions

- Provide extra time in examinations, particularly extra time for reading questions. Some students will prefer to have questions and instructions 'signed' to them.



- Remember that no instructional strategy, however differentiated, will be effective if the student does not comprehend a speaker's communication attempts.



Thank you for your attention!

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