



VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Stanley C. Mantooth, County Superintendent of Schools

Tips for Teachers of Students with Hearing Loss

1. **Check for consistent use of hearing aids and any hearing assistive technology.** Encourage the student to inform you of any problems with the equipment. Encourage consistent use of personal hearing devices at home.
2. **Control distance.** The greater the distance, the more difficult it will be for the student to understand what is said. Provide seating near the front/side of the classroom with good visual and auditory access to both the teacher and other students. Be mindful to orient the student's better ear toward the source of information.
3. **Minimize background noise.** Noise is extremely unfavorable for students with hearing loss and severely limits comprehension of auditory information. Classmates talking, projectors, music, pencil sharpeners, printers, hall noise, fans, air conditioning, etc., and even minor auditory distractions cause much greater listening difficulty for students with hearing loss. Reduce noise whenever possible, limit multiple simultaneous conversations, move the student to a quieter area, and be aware of the noise level when teachers and students are speaking. Consider how group work can be accomplished in a quieter area. Refrain from shouting instructions over a din of student voices.
4. **Maintain visual access to information.** Write assignments, key concepts, homework, and vocabulary on the board. Maximize the use of visual media, such as white boards and projection systems. Avoid speaking with your back to or behind the student, and blocking your face with hands, books, or papers. Be aware of unfavorable lighting conditions, and situations that cause a shadow over the face of the person speaking.
5. **Timing is important.** First gain the student's attention and state key topics. When using charts, maps, whiteboards/smart boards, handouts, etc., pause to allow the student to look at the material. Understand it is difficult and fatiguing for a student with hearing loss to watch, listen, and take notes at the same time. Give breaks and avoid presenting new material at the end of the school day.
6. **Provide written outlines of discussion topics and key points for movies and videos** before the learning experience. This type of media is very difficult to understand for students with hearing loss and there are limited opportunities to directly see the speaker. Always turn on captioning or subtitles whenever available.
7. **Repeat P.A. messages**, or write them down for the student. Check understanding of key points.
8. **Keep the pace structured in class discussions**, and slow enough for the student with hearing loss to seek out and observe the speaker. Enforce hand-raising rules; point to the student speaking; encourage speaking one at a time.
9. **Restate/rephrase** key information frequently, including questions and comments from peers.
10. **Check comprehension.** Do not rely on a yes/no answer; ask the student to convey relevant information. Establish a non-verbal signal to indicate whether the student is experiencing listening success or struggles.
11. **Preview, pre-teach, review and write new vocabulary and concepts.** Provide opportunity for the student to become familiar with new vocabulary and concepts *in advance of the lesson*, and to review material after the lesson. Distribute vocabulary lists and outlines, or have students compile their own. Verify the student knows the correct pronunciation of difficult words and understands the meaning of idioms, advanced sentence structures, and abstract information. Get parents involved with previewing and reviewing information at home.
12. **Plan occasional one-to-one time** to check comprehension and listening challenges.
13. **Enlist support from classmates.** Seek the help of the class in controlling noise, distance, and discussions. Model and encourage face-to-face communication with good eye contact and access to facial expressions when speaking and listening. Consider selecting a "buddy" to help with note-taking and staying on task. Establish positive attitudes toward the student with hearing loss. Provide modifications as naturally as possible so the student with hearing loss is not singled out.