

Check the lighting

Good lighting contributes to good communication. For this reason, make sure that the classroom is well lit. Also, avoid standing in front of a light source e.g. a window as it can produce shadows on your face.

Repeat comments and questions from the class where necessary

You may need to repeat/rephrase questions and comments from the class to make sure that all students have heard what is being said. Also, indicate which student is speaking.

Use plain English and concise sentences when you are teaching a Deaf child.

Hearing loss can have a profound impact on language development because English is a spoken language. Deaf children may have a limited vocabulary which could lead to misunderstandings, especially if a word has more than one meaning. Dense textbooks may be very difficult to understand.

Providing Classroom Services

1. Provide handouts such as assignments and lesson plans
2. Write announcements or assignments on the blackboard
3. Write new terms, technical vocabulary etc. on the blackboard
4. Always use captioned/subtitled films or provide a written manuscript
5. Help find seating near the front if requested by a student

Cork Deaf Association

The Cork Deaf Association works hard to promote the rights of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Cork city and county. We aim to see full and equal participation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in all aspects of society. Services include Deaf awareness talks, Sign language classes, adjustment to hearing loss programmes, assistive technology and social work supports.

Our Services

Information Centre

Education

Social Work Service

Hard of Hearing Support

Assistive Technology (Deaftech)

Employment Support

Support Groups and Activities

Outreach Programmes

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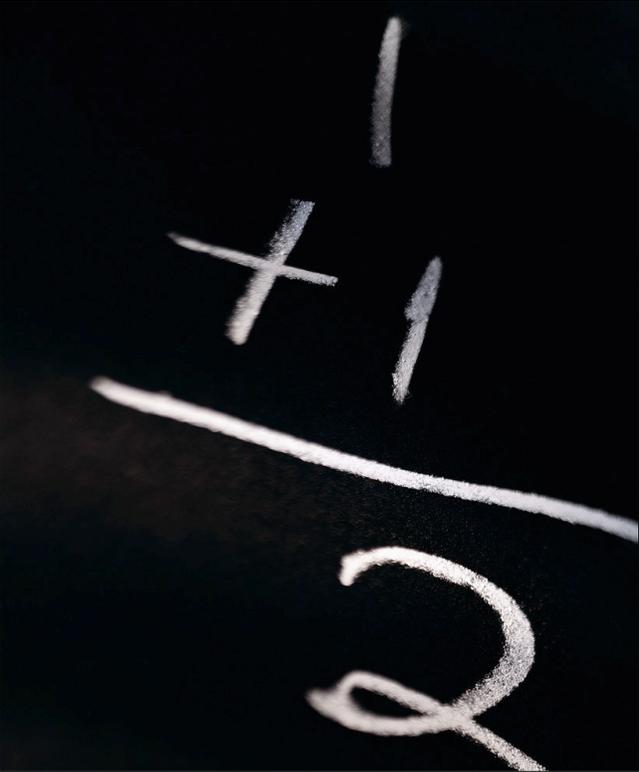
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Communication Tips for Teachers of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

Cork Deaf Association

General Guidelines

The following are some general guidelines which will make life in the classroom more rewarding for both teacher and pupil.

1. *Get to know your students individually.* Learn about their communication preferences and level of hearing loss– is it in one or both ears? Every child will be different.
2. *Talk openly to your students about communication in the classroom.* Ask how it could be improved for them. Ask them regularly and privately if communication is satisfactory for them in the classroom. Be receptive to their feedback.
3. *Meet with the parents/guardians.* They can inform you how to best support the student. Keep the lines of communication open so that they will feel comfortable approaching you if there are any concerns.
4. *Learn about Deaf culture.* If the student is Deaf, they may consider themselves to be a part of the Deaf Community. Learn what this means.
5. *If your student is a Sign Language user, learn Sign Language.* It is important to

know even a few basic phrases. Learn how to work with a Sign Language interpreter. Best practice would suggest addressing the Deaf student directly and not the interpreter.

6. *Become familiar with any hearing devices used by the student.* It is important to know how hearing aids or FM systems work. If the child is very young, they may need assistance, for example with battery changes.

In Your Classroom

Be aware of your speaking voice

It is important to speak clearly and audibly, while maintaining the natural rhythm of speech.

Therefore, teachers should:

- speak loudly, but not shout
- speak slowly, but not too slowly
- speak clearly, but don't over exaggerate

Minimise Background noise

Background noise provides a particular challenge for Hard of Hearing students. A noisy projector, or the clattering of pots and pans in a cookery class can impede hearing. Make sure that you minimise background noise when you are speaking to the class.

It is also worth remembering that smaller rooms with soft furnishings are preferable to bigger rooms with reflective surfaces. The 'echo' effect in large lecture halls can make hearing extra difficult.

Make sure that your mouth is visible

In order to lip-read effectively, your mouth needs to be visible at all times. Remember the following guidelines:

- Do not speak while facing away from the student. For example, do not speak while writing on the board.
- Do not obstruct your mouth by chewing on a pen, covering your mouth with your hands etc.
- Do not speak while you have something in your mouth.
- Keep beards and moustaches trimmed, so that your mouth isn't obstructed.
- Do not assume that your students can lip-read *all* of what you are saying. Even the best lip-reader loses a lot of information as some words look the same e.g. bat, pat

Advice for Best Communication in the Classroom

- Do not pace around the classroom while you lecture. Instead, lecture from the front of the classroom where your students can see you. Do not turn your back on the student while you keep talking.
- Be aware of the importance of your body language to a Deaf child. Use plenty of eye contact, facial expressions and gestures.
- Remember that it can be difficult for the student to concentrate on both the subject and the communication. Communication breaks may be very beneficial.