MODIFYING INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES
Adapted from ERECS Handouts 1999 & 2004

The following are strategies for providing information to students who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH).

PRE-TEACHING
Pre-teaching provides students who are deaf or hard of hearing with background information regarding a topic that is introduced in class.

Pre-teaching could include:

- The teaching of vocabulary and key concepts related to the curriculum. Vocabulary unscramble, crosswords and word search (definitions of unit vocabulary provided as clues) are very helpful activities.
- The teaching of strategies that facilitate the comprehension of directions, deductive reasoning, and inferential thinking.

REVIEW
After the student has participated in pre-teaching and classroom instruction, it is crucial to review concepts and vocabulary. In order for the student to gain expertise, the concepts must be experienced repeatedly and in various environments in order for the information to be generalized.

ORAL DISCUSSION
Information presented orally may be difficult for D/HH students to comprehend. The following suggestions may assist communication:

- Verify that the D/HH student is aware of a change in topic, subject or speaker.
• Have the student paraphrase directions to verify their comprehension, or ask “what are you supposed to do?” (It is best not to ask the student, “Do you understand?” as the common response is an unconditional “yes”).

• Chorale response by all students allows the D/HH student to feel part of the class, rather than one who is singled out (either as the only one asked, or the only one not asked), but be sure to allow ample time for the D/HH student to realize there will be a chorale response.

• Oral presentation of information should be reinforced through repetition and visual representation.

• Reduce the negative effects of background noise by encouraging the student to wear the personal FM system (if available). The student should be seated away from pencil sharpeners, hallway noise, fans, etc. since hearing aids amplify what is closest and loudest, making speech difficult to hear.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

It may be difficult for D/HH students to follow discussions. The following suggestions are provided to facilitate participation:

• Allow the student some flexibility in seating for better visual range of the whole room.

• Identify speakers by name.

• Allow the student time to locate the speaker and be sure they can see the speaker’s whole face and body (some students use lip-reading as a strategy to support what they hear. Also, additional meaning is conveyed on a speaker’s face – non-verbal information).

• Encourage students to speak one at a time (if using a FM system, be sure all speakers and students speak into the microphone).

• Write key words on the board.
• Paraphrase each student’s comments. By identifying the name of the student speaking and quickly rephrasing what they said, the D/HH student will be able to follow the flow of the discussion and have an opportunity to participate.

• Announce a change of topic or focus

PRESENTATION OF KEY INFORMATION

• Visual reinforcement is important for the D/HH student. Information such as:
  - key vocabulary
  - homework assignments
  - dates for exams, project deadlines
  - and daily announcements should be reinforced visually, e.g., written on the board.

It helps the student with knowledge of what the class will focus on. As well, visual representation provides verification of what the student hears and is a visual reference in case auditory memory is insufficient.

• Note taking:
  - It would also be helpful to designate a buddy whose notes can be shared with the D/HH student.

This is helpful since when the D/HH student is taking notes, it is difficult to watch the speaker/signer to gain information and look at the paper to take notes. Information is often missed resulting in poor notes to study.

HELPFUL PREPARATION

What can be helpful preparation for interpreters or EA’s?

• Own copy of textbook(s) for the duration of the course

• Unit plans

• Vocabulary list
• Preview videos and DVDs a couple of days before actual viewing in class

* Teachers need to be aware about lag time in the interpreting process. Interpreters require extra time to do lots of fingerspelling that is crucial in the educational settings. Some words do not have signs so interpreters have to fingerspell, which takes more time than just signing the word.

For more information you can view:

Laurent Clerc Center for its innovative instructional practices for CI children using ASL

http://www.gallaudet.edu/Clerc_Center.html

Visual Language and Visual Learning  www.vl2.gallaudet.edu