

Faculty Information 11/02/2019

**STUDENTS WHO ARE HARD OF HEARING**

**OVERVIEW**

Hearing loss varies greatly in how it impacts an individual, depending on a variety of factors. These factors include ***age of onset of hearing loss, type of hearing loss, and extent of hearing loss.***

The single most critical factors are the degree of loss and age on onset of the hearing loss. Individuals with prelingual hearing loss are less likely to use lip reading and speech because, depending on the extent of hearing loss these individuals may not have developed language. An individual with prelingual hearing loss whose hearing loss is profound at an early age is more inclined to use American Sign Language to communicate. However, the majority of students who are Hard of Hearing are able to use aids and/or residual hearing well enough to communicate verbally. A person who is Hard of Hearing is unlikely to be considered a part of the Deaf Community, unless there is a multi-generation history of hearing loss and the individual communicates primarily in American Sign Language.

 The type of hearing loss also impacts the communication style of an individual. There are three types of hearing loss: ***Conductive Hearing Loss; Sensorineural Hearing Loss; and Combined Type of Hearing Loss.***

Conductive Hearing Loss occurs when there is a lack of vibrations in the middle ear. It typically involve either the middle ear, the outer ear, or both. It is caused by the inability of sound waves from the outer ear to connect with the bone within the middle ear. Individuals with Conductive Hearing Loss may benefit from hearing aids, personal amplification systems, and/or a cochlear implant. Often, with these aids, the individual’s hearing is able to be restored to a useable level. While not all individuals with Conductive Hearing Loss will use and/or benefit from the available aids, many will benefit and will use spoken language as the primary mode of communication, supported by the aids, use of residual hearing amplified by the aids, lip-reading, contextual cues (body language, facial expressions).

Sensorineural Hearing Loss is more complex than Conductive Hearing Loss and poses more challenges. Sensorineural Hearing Loss can occur suddenly or over time. It is caused by complications of the inner ear’s cochlea, which are the nerves that carry the hearing impulse to the part of the brain that interprets hearing. It impacts both the volume of sound and the clarity of sound, much like radio static. The aids that may help an individual with Conductive Hearing Loss are probably not going to help an individual with Sensorineural Hearing Loss.

As one might infer, Combined Type of Hearing Loss is a combination of both Conductive Hearing Loss and Sensorineural Hearing Loss. Because the combination includes Sensorineural Hearing Loss, the aids that may help an individual with a pure Conductive Hearing Loss may not benefit an individual with Combined Type of Hearing Loss.

Students who are Hard of Hearing may or may not hear well enough to hear spoken language, with correction. With corrective aids, the use of Real Time captioning and/or interpreting and a qualified note taker, students who are Hard of Hearing are likely to function independently within the classroom environment.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FACULTY**

* Include a statement in your syllabus inviting students with disabilities who may have special needs to meet with you privately so that you may confidentially discuss the student‘s needs and reasonable accommodations. Also, at the beginning of each semester, verbally invite students with disabilities and to meet with you privately to discuss their individual and unique needs. Talk about the requirements of the class, special needs of each student (on a case-by-case basis, as each student’s needs are unique), and strategize as to how to implement the reasonable accommodations defined by the Student Disability Resources and Services Director. Never make an assumption about an individual’s abilities. Each individual is unique, and his/her disability impacts him/her in varying ways. If you have concerns, contact the Director of the Student Disability Resources and Services (SDRS).
* Most students who are Hard of Hearing will require the use of a note taker as a reasonable accommodation. Please assist the student in obtaining a note taker by either announcing to the class that SDRS is hiring note takers, or by singling out good students and asking if they would be interested in the job. Never disclose who the notes are for in order to preserve the confidentiality of the students. SDRS will provide NCR paper to the note taker who is hired and establish how the notes are to be delivered to the student. Additionally, the student may use a digital recorder to supplement notes from the note taker.
* Additionally, a student who is hard of hearing may use either an Interpreter for the Deaf or a captionist in order to access what is said in class. The interpreter signs in American Sign Language what is said in class, and may voice for the student who is hard of hearing. The captionist types what is said in class and the student reads the captions on a laptop or personal electronic device. Typically, a student who uses a captionist will voice for himself/herself. The service providers may be present in class, or may provide services remotely, with the student using a strong microphone and internet in order for the captionist to hear what is said in class and caption it.
* Allow preferential seating, so that the student who is hard of hearing may select a seat near the front, on the side of the room where vision is best for following the facial expressions of the professor, watching the board and/or PowerPoints, and watching, when applicable, the Interpreter.
* Face the class when speaking. Read what you have written on the board. Don’t stand in front of a backlight such as a bright window, which makes your face difficult to see.
* Provide the student with a copy of your handouts and PowerPoints in advance, so that the student may have a copy to supplement the notes from the note taker.
* Post handouts, PowerPoints, assignments, and notes on the class website. Make sure that any videos that are used are captioned, as this is the only way that a student who is Deaf will have access to the content. If you have questions about how to make material accessible or how to get captions, please contact the Director of SDRS for additional support and information.
* When possible, use multiple modalities when teaching. Once again, the entire class benefits and it is a good Universal Design for Instruction strategy. Use visual presentations when possible. Periodically throughout class, ask whether you need to repeat or clarify what you just said, particularly if it is critical information. This helps prevent the student from possibly missing critical information.
* Please honor the privacy and confidentiality of students using accommodations and do not comment in class or call attention to the fact that these students are using accommodations.
* As a matter of courtesy, **ALWAYS** speak directly to the student, not to the interpreter or captionist. The Interpreter and captionist are only there to provide the student Real-Time access to what is said in class. It is the student with whom you should communicate.
* Always let the student know if you don’t understand what is said. Conversely, if you are not sure if a student has understood what you have said, repeat and/or rephrase what was said. If meeting privately with a student, it is acceptable to ask the student to share what he/she understood.
* Be sure that, at all times, you maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the student. If you need to discuss issues or accommodation arrangements with the student, do so privately.

**Texas A&M University Commerce Student Disability Resources and Services**

Gee Library, Suite 162

903-886-5150

E-mail: StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

**Texas A&M University-Commerce at Frisco – 9700 Wade Blvd, University Hall 105, Frisco TX**

Frisco@tamuc.edu

(972) 377-1665

**Universities Center at Dallas – 801 Main Street, Suite C340, Dallas TX**

Dallas@tamuc.edu

(214) 954-3600

**Collin Higher Education Center – 3452 Spur 399, Mckinney, TX 75069**

CHEC@tamuc.edu

972-599-3122

**Mesquite Metroplex Center – 2600 Motley Drive, Suite 100, Mesquite, TX 75150**

Russell.blanchett@tamuc.edu

972-882-7520

**Navarro Partnership – 3200W 7th Avenue, Corsicana, TX 75110**

Virginia.monk@tamuc.edu

903-875-7619

***REMEMBER****:*

***ALL*** *students must meet the same academic standards for credit in your class. Standards should NOT be lowered. Students with disabilities may use reasonable accommodations, but they are held to the same academic and Code of Conduct standards as any other student.*