

Tips for Working with Deaf Students and Interpreters

Dear Instructor: This document will assist you in working with a student in your class who is Deaf or hard of hearing. The student may be profoundly Deaf or have a moderate hearing loss. The Authorization for Academic Accommodations Letter (AAA) will state which specific accommodations this student will be using.

Instructional Tips

Providing captioning is a legal mandate and allows Deaf students to participate fully in your class. It is important to select media (videos, audio files, podcasts, etc.) that is captioned as you create your course content. Please plan ahead and always develop courses to be accessible. When you learn that a Deaf student will be in your class, double-check to see that all media is accessible. If you have questions about captioning, contact the Distance Education Instructional Accessibility Specialist (527-4699) for online courses, or the Media Librarian (521-7927). If the media is not already captioned, these specialists will assist with the next steps. If Media Services determines that the media is not able to be legally captioned, please locate an alternative product from the resource list below or speak to the Media Librarian. Please note the automatically-generated captions, such as those on YouTube videos, are often not adequately captioned and will need to be interpreted to be fully accessible.

Suggested Resources:

SRJC Library Catalog Smart Search <https://libraries.santarosa.edu/>

SRJC Digital Media Guide <https://libguides.santarosa.edu/digitalmedia>

Films on Demand <https://goo.gl/Y6Hzy4>

TED Talk Videos <https://www.ted.com/talks>

2. Deaf students can't watch the interpreter and also take notes, read, or look at the board at the same time. Because of this, the student may need a note taker for your class. Please assist in recruiting a qualified volunteer note taker. DRD has a [note taker recruitment video](#) available on our website. If you show visual materials, please allow a few moments for students to read or look at the board before you start lecturing. These few extra minutes to digest the material could benefit all the students.
3. Always speak directly to the Deaf student and avoid the common mistake of saying to the interpreter, "Tell the Deaf student that I said . . ."
4. Sign language interpreters are bound by a code of professional conduct and must interpret everything said and signed in class. The interpreters will not edit comments, omit information or interject their own opinions.
5. Provide important information, such as assignments and test dates, in writing.
6. The interpreter will wait 10 minutes for each hour of class for a late student (i.e. 15 minutes for an hour and half class). If the student shows up after that time, he or she should contact the interpreting office.
7. If there is no interpreter available for a private meeting with a student, it is fine to communicate in writing or type your conversation on the computer.
8. Keep in mind that English is a second language for many Deaf students. American Sign Language (ASL) is a visual language that has its own grammar and syntax. For many Deaf students, learning English is difficult because they cannot hear the language but must learn it through visual means.
9. Take the time to check in with your Deaf students periodically to see how things are going for them in your class.

Resources for Working with Deaf Students

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Services: Our program authorizes accommodations such as interpreters, note takers, assistive listening devices, and real-time captioners. We also offer professional training for faculty and staff.

Debbie Ezersky:

Voice: 707-522-2702 VP: 707-623-1634

E-mail: dezersky@santarosa.edu

Interpreting Services: Interpreting for classes and events.

A Dreamer

Voice: 707-527-4487 VP: 707-623-1630

E-mail: adreamer@santarosa.edu

Heidi Brockmann

Voice: 707-527-4487

Hbrockmann@santarosa.edu

Tanya Irvin

VP: 707-623-1630

E-mail: tirvin@santarosa.edu

Contacting Deaf Students: Most Deaf students use email and text to communicate. Ask the Deaf student in your class the best way to make contact. You may also be able to have phone conversations with the Deaf student through a video relay service, where the call will automatically be routed to an interpreter who can interpret the call. See <http://www.sorensonvrs.com/> for more information.

Helpful Internet Sites:

<http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/>

The National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes (NDC) is a technical assistance and dissemination center which supports postsecondary educational outcomes for individuals who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or late deafened.

<https://amphl.org/>

The Association of Medical Professionals with Hearing Losses provides information for individuals with hearing loss interested in health care fields.

<http://asl.ms/>

Dr. Bill Vicars' American Sign Language Finger Spelling Practice: an interactive website to learn about ASL.

<https://drd.santarosa.edu/deaf-and-hard-hearing-program>

On our DRD website there is a link to an informative and practical PowerPoint developed by Ellen Licht, ESL faculty member. Under "Information for Faculty and Staff", click on the link for the: PowerPoint for Working with Deaf Students in the Classroom.