



Accommodating Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

This semester, you have a student in your class who is deaf or hard of hearing! This information sheet contains information on how to make your classroom accessible.

If you have any questions contact Stacy Roe Interpreter Coordinator in Accessibility Services at 303-914-6732 or stacy.roe@rrcc.edu.

You are only responsible for accommodations listed on the student's Accommodation letter issued by Accessibility Services. If you have questions about an approved accommodation, contact Accessibility Services.

Communicating with a Student who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing

It is important to remember that people who are deaf or hard of hearing develop communication abilities differently. Some people use sign language, some do not. Some use speech and/or writing. Others use a combination of sign language, fingerspelling, speech, and writing. The key is finding out which method works best for that individual. It is helpful to look directly at the student and speak clearly. Do not speak overly slow, or exaggerate your mouth movements.

Understand that English may be a second language for a student who is deaf and uses American Sign Language. English language comprehension/fluency is not an indicator of intelligence.

Sign Language Interpreters in the classroom

A sign language interpreter may be provided by Accessibility Services upon request to facilitate communication. When an interpreter is present, speak directly to the deaf or hard of hearing student rather than the interpreter. Avoid using phrases such as "tell him" or "ask her." Speak normally, and understand that there will be a lag time between the spoken/signed message and the interpretation.

Often two interpreters are necessary to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the interpretation and to prevent interpreter fatigue and errors. The interpreters will rotate every 20-30 minutes. Generally, the interpreter will sit at the front of the classroom facing the student. At times, the interpreters may need to reposition themselves to be closer to the person speaking or a visual aid. Interpreters are trained professionals. They are not tutors or notetakers. Interpreters will not participate in the class or in discussions. They are required to keep all information pertaining to the student and the class confidential.

Use Visual Means to Reinforce Information

When appropriate, consider using PowerPoints, diagrams, charts or other visual aids. Presenting assignments/projects in writing and putting terminology on the board is helpful. A student who has an interpreter cannot simultaneously write and "listen" to the speaker. When giving directions/assignments, allow adequate time for the student to watch the interpretation and then respond or begin the assignment.

Use Captioned Media

Videos can be great instructional aids! However, please make certain the media is captioned. If you are uncertain whether the media is captioned, contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible to discuss available options. It is recommended that you try out the media in the classroom prior to the scheduled showing date.

Notetaking Support

It is not possible for a student to watch an interpreter and write notes at the same time. Accessibility Services can provide the student with a notetaking app used on their phone or laptop. Another option is a peer notetaker. Peer notetakers essentially take their own notes on NCR paper and share a copy with the student who is deaf or hard of hearing. Accessibility Services will provide the notetaking paper and will need your help to identify a volunteer peer notetaker from the class.

Real-Time Transcription (Captioning)

A student who does not communicate with sign language may request real-time transcription. The transcriptionist will convert all verbal interaction into a written transcript. The transcriptionist will listen to the class remotely via a microphone and the student will read the transcripts from their laptop/device. It is helpful if the instructor repeats question/comments from students since the microphone will be placed near the front of the classroom and may not pick up voices in the back of the room. Transcriptionists will not participate in the class or in discussions. They are required to keep all information pertaining to the student and the class confidential.

For more information contact
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