

Make A Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing¹

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Abstract

Teaching college students who are deaf or hard of hearing can be a unique challenge, especially for faculty who have little or no experience in this area. A strategy for training faculty efficiently and effectively is the focus of a video “Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing,” covering topics such as classroom setup, interpreters, technology, academics, communication, and specific teaching methods and strategies that other faculty have found successful. This video is now accompanied by a handbook designed to be used during training sessions with the video. Both the video and handbook are available on the PEPNet Resource Center.

Make A Difference

Project PEC (Arkansas’ Statewide Outreach and Technical Assistance Center) at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock has developed a 15-minute teacher training video for faculty entitled “Make A Difference: Tips for Teaching Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.” This video is an integral part of a strategy to train faculty members who are teaching these students at the postsecondary level and who have little or no experience working with this

population. Although this video was intended for postsecondary institutions, it could be used effectively at the secondary level as well. It is an efficient and effective training tool for faculty who are already inundated with students, classes, and departmental responsibilities. Faculty may have little time to concentrate on the unique challenges of teaching college students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Because the success of these students is based not only on appropriate support services but also on effective instruction techniques, innovative training tools for faculty are critical.

Using a mock classroom and a host who brings expertise and experience to the role (she is deaf, a teacher for deaf students, and attended mainstream schools), this clear and concise video incorporates a comprehensive range of topics and situations related to teaching students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Topics include physical aspects of the classroom, communication, using interpreters, using assistive listening devices, notetaking, reading materials in the classroom, technology, visual aids, difficulties students may have with reading and writing, teaching math courses, and helpful tips from other faculty members.

This video was written and produced after surveying secondary and postsecondary faculty of deaf and hard of hearing students. Several skilled deaf educators reviewed the script before production.

Through the development and dissemination of this video nationally and internationally, it became apparent that written guidelines supporting the information provided in the video would be a useful tool for faculty as well

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as those using the video to present inservices and workshops. A detailed "Make A Difference" handbook has been developed that supplements the video. The handbook provides more in-depth information and includes additional resources available nationwide. The video and handbook combination provides training that should enhance the classroom experience and improve opportunities for success of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Not only are the video and handbook helpful for teachers, but they are also an excellent tool for inservice presenters. The video is divided into six major categories with a place to pause the video after each one. The script from the video is provided at the end of the handbook, and it includes information on where the tape can be paused. By

being structured in this manner, the video and handbook complement each other and can be readily used to provide outreach and technical assistance in at least three ways:

1. Individual faculty members can use them autonomously,
2. School administration can use them during departmental meetings, or
3. The video and handbook can be used as part of an inservice training, permitting discussion and question/answer time after each major topic.

The handbook and video are available for distribution nation-wide on the PEPNet Resource Center web page located at <www.pepnet.org>.