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# A Guide for Postsecondary Counselors and Disability Service Providers Working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

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*A PEC Collaborative Project*

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Funded by the Postsecondary Education Consortium at The University of Tennessee College of Education, Center on Deafness through an agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs Grant Number H324A010003. The Postsecondary Education Consortium (PEC) is one of four Regional Postsecondary Education Centers for Individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The Centers strive to create effective technical assistance for educational institutions providing access and accommodation to these students. Together, the Centers comprise the Postsecondary Education Programs Network, or PEPNet.

The Postsecondary Education Consortium (PEC) is one of the four Regional Postsecondary Education Centers for Individuals who are deaf or hard of Hearing. One of the most important goals of the Centers is to create effective technical assistance for educational institutions as they strive to provide access and accommodations for deaf or hard of hearing students. Funded through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education programs, the PEC serves the southern region of the United States through Thirteen State Outreach and Technical Assistance Centers.

For further information, for technical assistance with serving deaf or hard of hearing individuals, or for materials, contact us:

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## An Introduction for Counselors and Disability Service Providers

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Students who are deaf or hard of hearing in the post secondary level sometimes present challenges to disability service providers and counselors. One of the most important aspects of providing appropriate accommodations and services has to do with “knowing who our students are”. Because no two students are alike, we have an ongoing challenge and responsibility to meet each student “where they are”. This publication derived from common issues that are seen at the post secondary level by disability service providers striving to provide optimum support services to their students. Although not a comprehensive publication, it is hopefully one that will be a tool for counselors and disability service providers in their pursuit for appropriate accommodations for all students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

While there are many publications available pertaining to deaf and hard of hearing accommodations at the secondary and post secondary level, information specifically for counselors and disability service providers is minimal. Deaf and hard of hearing students are now entering local colleges and universities with greater ease than before, while at the same time, counselors and disability service providers are finding themselves in unfamiliar territories in providing services to students who are deaf or hard of hearing. This publication has been written for counselors and disability service providers who both want and need information. While some of us are “seasoned” disability providers, not all of us are. We can all benefit from the knowledge and experience of others. Hopefully, this publication will foster the possibility of new ideas, growth, and change in our programs and services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

# Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the College Counseling Setting: A Few Things Counselors Should Know

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People with hearing loss make up a very diverse group. Like other people, they seek counseling for a variety of reasons. Sometimes these reasons relate directly to their hearing loss, but more often they do not. An awareness of some of the psychosocial implications of hearing loss, may be helpful when working with this student population. It would be difficult to provide information about the implications of a hearing loss that would be applicable to all groups without making overgeneralizations. It is more helpful for a counselor to be aware of some of the factors that contribute to the differences in perspective and experience of people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Some of these factors are the hearing status of the parents, the age of onset of the hearing loss, the degree of hearing loss, the communication method, the communication skills of the family members, the type of educational program(s) attended, community identification, and individual differences. Each of these factors will be reviewed in more detail below.

## The hearing status of the parents.

- Deaf parents. Only about 10% of deaf people have deaf parents. In families where the children and the parents are deaf, communication is usually available to the child immediately so development is more parallel to that of hearing children.
- Hearing parents. Hearing parents who have a child that is deaf often go through emotional stages of denial, guilt, and grief before coming to accept their child's deafness. How a parent proceeds through these stages can have a great impact on the child's development. Early communication is very important in the development of language. It is often difficult for parents to make decisions about communication methods while adjusting to the loss they experience.

## The age of onset of the hearing loss.

- Whether a person is born with a hearing loss or loses their hearing later greatly influences the impact the hearing loss has on language development.
- Congenital deafness. A child that is born deaf will learn language visually—whether they learn sign language or speech and speechreading.

- Pre-lingual deafness. A child that is born hearing—even if they lose their hearing before they begin speaking—will have language input at an early age which will help in learning language later.
- Late onset deafness. When a person loses their hearing after language and social identity are established, there is obviously less of a developmental impact. However, they often struggle with stages of grief and loss. They will have to make adjustments in communication strategies and social interactions.

### **The degree of the hearing loss.**

- In general, the more severe a hearing loss, the greater impact it will have on language development. The degree of hearing loss will also influence choices that are made in communication strategies and educational programs, which will in turn influence social development.

### **The communication method.**

- A decision that is often difficult for parents to make is the communication method that they want their child to use. Although the choice is definitely an important one, the factor that seems to be more important in a child's development is that the decision is made early and that the parents and family are involved as the child learns to communicate with the chosen method. Some of the options are as follows:
  - Sign language—American Sign Language or Signed English.
  - Speech and speechreading.
  - Cued speech.
  - Use of residual hearing.
  - Any combination of the above.

### **The communication skills of family members.**

- Sign language. Only about 15% of parents of deaf children who use sign language learn to sign themselves. This inability to communicate effectively with family members at home has a major impact on the child's development. In many cases, children turn to their peers and to the adults who can sign at school as a surrogate family.
- Speech and speechreading. Even though parents who choose to raise their children using this method do not have to learn another language, they do have to learn and practice strategies that include the child in interactions so the child does not miss out on communication.
- Late onset deafness. When a family member loses their hearing later in life, it has a major effect on the social interactions of the family. The family's willing-

ness to alter social interactions to accommodate the deafened family member can greatly improve his or her adjustment to the hearing loss.

### **The type of educational program(s) attended.**

- Parents of children who are deaf have to make many difficult choices. Among the most difficult is the choice of an educational program. This decision is tied to the method of communication that is chosen, but the decision-making does not end there.
- Signing environment. If the parents decide that they want to use sign language with their child, they still must decide whether the child will attend the state school for the deaf or a public school program.
- State or residential program. At the state school the child will be among other deaf peers, but unless the family lives near the school, he or she will be away from home during the week.
- Public school. In a public school, the child would be provided an interpreter. The child may have other deaf peers, but more commonly, he or she is the only person who is deaf in their classroom.
- Speech and speechreading. If the parents decide that they want to use speech and speechreading with their child, they may choose public school or among a few programs that use this method to teach children that are deaf.

### **Community identification.**

- Hearing community. People who are deaf and grow up speechreading and people who are hard of hearing, usually identify more strongly with hearing people. Their social connections are more likely to be with hearing friends and organizations.
- Deaf community. People who learn to sign are more likely to be connected with the Deaf community. They may participate in clubs and organizations that are made up of Deaf people or those who know sign language.

### **Individual differences.**

- The factors and choices above are not “black and white” but exist on a continuum. Along with the individual differences that exist among this population, this leads to a mosaic of possibilities.

## Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students with Multiple Disabilities

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Students who are deaf or hard of hearing with additional disabilities pose additional challenges for learning. Essentially, it is important that the counselor or disability support coordinator obtain appropriate documentation and assessment of the individual student. Having a true assessment of the individual with varying needs will help to determine the most effective strategy and means of ensuring success for that student. Having the necessary documentation of the various disabilities a student may have will also clarify which disability actually is the primary disability. Often, it is just assumed that deaf student's academic problems are due to his/her lack of hearing.

Students, who are referred to as "low-functioning" (LFD), present specific challenges in the academic setting. Many of these students who may have been diagnosed as LFD, or demonstrate evidence of having underlying cognitive processing problems, behavioral or social problems, learning disabilities or hyperactivity disorders have serious problems with academic learning. These disabilities are often "hidden".

Often students with cognitive process disorders have great difficulty processing and retaining information. What is learned today is forgotten tomorrow, for instance, which creates a frustrating scenario where the deaf learner cannot retain or build onto yesterday's learning. This problem is more widespread than originally understood. Information must be presented repeatedly and in "manageable size" whenever cognitive overload and external factors impede focusing and retaining new information. The abilities of students with learning disabilities vary.

Some students actually may have organic basis for their learning difficulties, such as mental retardation. Again, the depth of the severity of retardation is entirely individual and physical in nature. It is important to maximize what potential the student possesses, taking a practical rather than medical approach in creating an environment for learning that is best for that student.

Other disabilities such as visual disabilities; low vision or deaf-blindness, require specific adaptations to ensure academic access. These may be the use of tactile interpreting, close proximity interpreting, classroom modifications for visual acuity and the use of other technology to enhance readability of signs or reading material. An individual, who is deaf-blind, may also need mobility assistance or a SSP (Support Service Provider).

For some students who are deaf or hard of hearing, having a physical disability creates mobility challenges. It may take the student longer to physically move from one setting or another due to the nature of neuromuscular disorders. Reasonable accommodation may indicate the need for classroom access in close proximity the student's other classes or on the first-floor level. Additional time may be needed for the student to write out his or her responses during testing due to coordination problems. In severe cases where written communication is difficult, utilizing an interpreter and a writer for the student's response may be best.

There are other disabilities that may affect the learning of deaf or hard of hearing individuals that are not based on the hearing loss, per se, but rather some other factor(s). The prevalence of secondary disabilities in the deaf and hard of hearing population have long been overlooked. Having the appropriate documentation on hand, or requesting it when it is not readily available, is one way to pinpoint difficulties early in the academic program.

Sometimes in the academic setting educators are unaware of all the facts until the problems begin. If you suspect some other difficulty that is interfering with a specific student's academic progress, your hunch is probably on target. The next step would be to try to get some evaluation done if it has not been done previously. Parents, vocational rehabilitation counselors, high school teachers, vocational evaluators, and at times, psychologist's can be of help in getting to the root of a student's academic problems. The important thing to keep in mind is flexibility and individuality for **each** student.

# Using an Interpreter in the College Counseling Setting

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As counselors, we adopt a method for working with those who seek our services. This method includes specific ways of exploring issues, developing rapport, and addressing problems and relies on a give-and-take process between counselor and consumer. But what if you are working through an interpreter? Counselors who are not fluent in sign language must rely on sign language interpreters when they serve people who are deaf. These counselors often have concerns about their ability to be effective since they are not able to communicate directly with the deaf individual. Your ability to utilize your counseling skills will be improved if you have some prior knowledge of how to use an interpreter and the issues that using an interpreter in a counseling situation presents.

## *Tips for Communicating Through an Interpreter*

Here are some tips that will make the process of using an interpreter more comfortable for you, the client, and the interpreter:

- Arrange the seating so that you are directly across from the deaf student. The interpreter should be seated beside you so that the deaf person can look easily from you to the interpreter. This will allow him or her to see your facial expressions and body language while watching what the interpreter is signing.
- Make sure there is adequate lighting. Good lighting is a must for good communication.
- Avoid having a bright light source behind anyone—the interpreter, yourself, or the student. This causes a silhouetting effect and makes seeing signs and facial details difficult.
- If you use dim lighting for relaxation purposes, make sure it does not interfere with the communication process.
- When you communicate, look at the deaf person, not the interpreter. Even though it is tempting to see how certain words or phrases are signed, it is more important to maintain your focus on the student.
- Speak directly to the deaf person, using first person speech. (Say: “What did you want to talk to me about?” Not: “Ask him what he wants to talk to me about.”)

- Speak naturally at a reasonable, modest pace—the interpreter will let you know if you need to speak slower.
- The interpreter will lag behind you by a few words since interpreters wait for you to complete a thought before signing it. So you may have to wait a bit longer than normal for a response from the deaf individual.
- The interpreter is there to facilitate communication. Do not ask the interpreter to go get the student from the waiting room or to do other tasks. And never ask the interpreter information about the deaf person even if you are aware that they knew the person before this assignment.
- Avoid private conversations with the interpreter or other people in the deaf person’s presence, because the interpreter will interpret everything you say.

### *Choosing an Interpreter*

Many people seeking counseling are concerned about confidentiality and stigma. Deaf people are no different. The addition of a third person only heightens those concerns. Choosing an interpreter carefully may be one of the most important things you do to ensure success of the counseling process.

Here are some considerations when hiring an interpreter:

- Your school or college probably has a procedure for acquiring interpreters. If you are not aware of it, you may want to contact your administrators or the disability support office.
- If possible, involve the deaf student in the process of choosing the interpreter.
- It is ideal to have an interpreter in the counseling session that is different from the interpreter(s) that the student uses in classes. This often makes the student feel more secure about confidentiality and it is also a way of making the counseling session separate from other activities.
- It is important to get an interpreter that is qualified to interpret in counseling settings. Interpreters who hold a national certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf are considered highly qualified. (Other screening mechanisms may be in place in your state. For information about the state levels of interpreters, contact an agency in your state that specializes in providing services to people who are deaf. They should have information about those levels and the corresponding competencies.)

- It is best if the same interpreter is used throughout the counseling process. If the interpreter is not going to be available for a given session, discuss this with the student and see what they prefer. The preference may be to skip the session until that interpreter is available again. Be prepared for the complication of coordinating schedules for three people instead of just two.

## Therapeutic Issues

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If you follow the guidelines for choosing an interpreter and for using an interpreter, the communication process will be smoother and your experience a more positive one. As counselors, though, we recognize that there are other issues related to using an interpreter that impact the counseling relationship and process. An awareness of some of the issues that may present themselves will make dealing with them effectively easier if they do arise.

- With less eye contact and the lack of direct communication, some counselors begin to feel detached from the counseling process. Remember that you are still the facilitator. Continue to use normal inflection when you speak. The interpreter will interpret that inflection as well as your words.
- Establishing rapport may require additional time. The presence of a language barrier may make it necessary to spend more time making sure that you have connected with the deaf student. Some deaf people who use sign language are a part of the Deaf Culture. In this case, you will be providing cross-cultural counseling and may want to consider the impact this has on the therapeutic relationship.
- Interpreters are often knowledgeable not only about sign language, but also about the issues that affect people who are deaf. This is sometimes intimidating for counselors who have not worked with deaf people before. Do not rely on the interpreter as a consultant about developmental and cultural issues related to deafness. Instead, find a professional in the community that will work with you to clarify any issues that are not clear.
- Sometimes the interpreter and/or the student are unclear about the process. Consider clarifying your role, the interpreter's role, and the responsibilities of the deaf person during the first session. In addition to reducing confusion, this will communicate to the student that you are aware of how to use an interpreter and will, therefore, increase your credibility.

- Students may have concerns about confidentiality. An explanation of your confidentiality policy and the fact that the interpreter is bound to confidentiality may facilitate rapport building and trustworthiness.
- Students may be hesitant to let you know that they did not understand something you said or that the interpreter signed. You may want to take time at the end of the session to ask the deaf student if communication went smoothly and if there are any suggestions for making it go better the next time.
- Students may perceive counselor-interpreter communication as being about him or her. If the interpreter arrives early and is seen talking to the counselor before a session or stays afterwards to talk, the student may think that the discussion is about him or her. This may inhibit the student from sharing openly or may damage the trust that you are trying to develop. If you have business that needs to be taken care of with the interpreter (i.e. billing, logistical discussions) plan a time to communicate by phone or at another time instead of immediately before or following the session.
- If you routinely rely on certain techniques, consider the logistics and appropriateness of those techniques with someone who is deaf. The student may be culturally different and/or may use English as a second language. These factors as well as the fact that the person is a visual communicator instead of auditory, may also influence the effectiveness of certain techniques.

### *Special Considerations with Groups*

The group counseling situation presents some unique logistical concerns for using an interpreter.

- When several people are talking at once or talking back and forth quickly, it is very difficult for the interpreter to keep up. Two interpreters may be needed or rules may need to be established for the group to make it easier for the interpreter to do their job so that the deaf student can participate fully.
- Interpreting in this situation is much more taxing for the interpreter so two interpreters may be needed. In such situations interpreters “team interpret”—taking turns so that they do not become fatigued and lose their ability to interpret effectively.

## Academic Counseling Issues

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Students who are deaf or hard of hearing are just as any student in an academic environment. While enrolled in secondary settings students are covered by regulations and laws to ensure that they receive appropriate services. Parents and teachers are involved with their academic progress. During the post secondary years, students are often unprepared for what awaits them. They are now on their own and expected to advocate for what they need. The same level of parental involvement is not expected at the post secondary level. How well do deaf and hard of hearing students make the transition from secondary to post secondary settings? How well do students adapt to the particulars of college life? What strategies can be used to help students learn how to advocate for themselves?

Often students arrive on campus with limited experience in advocating for themselves. Most of them have never heard of the word itself nor have any understanding of what it entails. Suddenly they are expected to advocate for their needs and may often be unsure about what they need. They may not know where to go to ask for what they need. Usually if the student is directed to the office that serves students with disabilities on campus, then that is the first step in the right direction. However, not all students needing assistance will know first-hand about where to go for help.

Creating a “deaf-friendly” environment is one that is accessible by visual means. Installing signage and creating brochures that pinpoint the key points on campus are essential tools that benefit *everyone*, not just deaf and hard of hearing students. Using visual communication (sign language or other modalities) to assist students in the communication process helps students to learn about programs and services they may need to access.

Deaf or hard of hearing students may present some, or all, of the characteristics below. Bear in mind that these characteristics are just as true for many college students as well:

- Lack of academic preparation
- Lack study skills
- Lack employment skills/ career awareness
- Lack of realistic goals
- Lack of self-advocacy skills

While a part of the experience of college is an opportunity for young adults to mature, many of these issues create problems for the students in college. Where possible, campus resources and programs should be encouraged for student use. Most colleges offer college study skills courses, time management and career education courses that are helpful to students as they begin college. Student career centers may offer counseling and testing that will enable students to learn about their interests and preferences.

It is not unusual that a period of adjustment is needed, since college is different from high school, with greater responsibility for academic success being placed on the students themselves. There is no “formula” that will ensure success for each student as each student is different. Each situation must be approached on an individual basis. Individual counseling or group counseling are both helpful ways for students with difficulties to acquire new skills and tools for change.

One of the skills that are crucial to college success for students with any disability is knowing when and how to advocate for what they need. This is a skill that is not taught and rarely modeled to a deaf or hard of hearing individual. Role plays and group work allow students to “practice” in a safe environment before trying it out in the actual classroom. Parents and professionals often hinder growth by doing too much for the student or have not been models for change.

Deaf and hard of hearing students have specific issues that arise due to the nature of their disability. It is important that the student understand his or her own hearing loss and what it means in terms of academic accommodations. Not all students who need accommodations will come to the disability services office, but those that do need to be able to ask for what they need. If a student has never used an assistive listening device before, some instruction would be needed as to how it operates and how to maintain it in good working condition. Often a deaf or hard of hearing student may not be familiar with assistive listening devices and may feel reluctant to try something they have no experience with. It is essential that the counselor ask what the student needs to be successful in the classroom and secondly, what he or she may have used in the past in secondary school. Generally, students will opt for the same things they used in the past if they are unaware of other options that are available at the institution.

Many of these accommodation issues can be discussed during an intake interview or ongoing counseling sessions as needed. It is imperative to involve the student in his or her own academic planning. Well-meaning parents can sometimes hinder the self-advocacy efforts of the student so that the student is no longer an active advocate for themselves. Ease of communication is vital. When the counselor is not able to communicate effectively with the student, obviously some assistance would be needed, whether that is an interpreter, using an assistive listening device, or some other visual means of communication that the student needs. It is hard enough to ask for help. Having to struggle with communication undermines the importance of respectful and equal communication.

## Accommodation Issues

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It is best to keep in mind that accommodations are not a “one size fits all” situation. Hearing loss encompasses various persons including those who are deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened and deaf-blind. Accommodations for each of these groups of persons are very different, so be sure to work with the student in identifying the appropriate accommodations. Some accommodations are obvious, while others are not so clear. Approach each case on an individual basis—determine the needs of the individual: do they have a secondary disability? Is it documented? What is their primary communication mode? Reading level? Were past services/accommodations beneficial? What were they? These types of questions may help to determine if the accommodations are appropriate and reasonable.

### *Obvious accommodations:*

Interpreter-Sign language, oral, tactile, cued speech

Notetaker-utilized in conjunction with an interpreter in most cases. The notetaker could be someone in the class, a volunteer or paid person or could take the form of a copy of the instructor’s notes from the class

Assistive Listening Devices—FM system, loop system, infrared devices, tape recorders

Communication facilitator—Real time captioning, CART (stenographic captioning, C-print captioning)

### *Testing Accommodations:*

Extended-time—allowing a student to have additional time to complete a test—standard practice is time and one half but this is not set in stone. Work with the student, the instructor and the disability service coordinator on what is the best accommodation for the student.

Minimal distraction environment—testing in an area that has little/no distractions (visually or auditory).

Signed test and response—allowing a student to have the questions signed in their language of choice and to respond in that language, in a non-written form. This method is most often utilized when reading or English skills are not the objective of the test.

### *Classroom Accommodations:*

Seating arrangements—Determined by the student themselves with most students preferring seating towards the front with an unobstructed view of the interpreter and the instructor.

Media—Films, videos, and other media should be captioned to provide the best access. A student may still request that an interpreter provide sign language as another way to access the information during the showing of the film/video.

Lab settings—Many postsecondary institutions provide lab times as part of the program curriculum. Equal access should also be provided during this portion of the classroom environment. This may mean that interpreters or notetakers will need to be provided so that the student can have equal access to instruction/discussion that occurs in the lab setting.

Off campus class-related trips—Equal access should be attempted in every instance where possible. Some modifications may be negotiated in this situation. It is important to work with the student, instructor and DSS personnel to schedule an interpreter and or any other requested accommodation.

An excellent checklist of possible accommodations deaf and hard of hearing students at the postsecondary level may request, can be found in the publication, *A NUTS AND BOLTS GUIDE: College Success for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students* by Jennie Bourgeois at Louisiana State University. This publication is available through the PEPNet Resource Center: [WWW.pepnet.org](http://WWW.pepnet.org).

## Student Support Issues

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The goal should be to provide each student with equal access and base it on a case by case basis rather than a “one size fits all” approach. Students, parents and counselors will need to be aware of the different processes of receiving services from high school through postsecondary levels. Below is a general overview of the facts affecting students in secondary or postsecondary settings.

### Secondary setting

Services provided under IDEA or 504

Responsibility lies with school district

### Postsecondary setting

Services provided under 504 of the Rehab Act and the ADA

Responsibility lies with student for identifying and evaluating the disability to self-identify and provide documentation of disability

Postsecondary institution responsible for costs associated with accommodations and/or essential auxiliary aids based on documentation of disability

Not legally required to provide special programs with comprehensive support programs

The responsibility changes hand, from the school at the secondary level to the student at the postsecondary level. The student will be responsible to present documentation and then request accommodations that are necessary for him/her to have access to the educational process. Support services usually requested are:

- Interpreter
- Notetaker
- Tutoring
- Academic enrichment/remediation

## Student Transition Issues

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Transition is a ten-letter word that can make a big difference in the lives of young adults as they move from high school to post secondary/career plans. It means change; it means moving from one place to another. Transition is something that everyone will experience in his or her life. Students will need much support and encouragement during this phase of their journey—it is not something that happens magically, but happens with much planning and discussion from all parties involved. The goal of this section is to assist in a smooth transition from high school to post-secondary training—to prepare students for their “journey”.

### *Tips for Counselors (What Students Need)*

#### Independent Living/ Self-determination Skills

Being responsible for yourself, writing checks, managing your time, budgeting your money, handling your own business, taking care of yourself, making choices, problem solving, making decisions, establishing goals and reaching them

#### Communication Skills

Learning to communicate with others—parents, VR counselor, roommate, professors, and disability resource people. Stress the importance of the responsibility to ask for what they need/want. Learning to explain their deafness and accommodations needs with others (DSS staff, professors, and friends).

Areas to work on may include:

- Initial contact/greeting with professor
- Disclosing of disability/deafness
- Suggestions of accommodations including previous strategies that were successful/utilized
- Resource information on accommodations
- Discussion of acceptability of accommodation
- Recapping what has been discussed and agreed on
- Thanking person for their time and the discussion

## *Planning Ahead for Students*

Counselors will need to work with students in planning for their postsecondary education. Some areas to keep in mind are:

- Establishing goals—what do you want? What are your likes and dislikes? What skills and interests do you have?
- Start planning early—during the Junior year of high school if possible—DO NOT WAIT UNTIL AFTER GRADUATION
- Gather as much information on colleges and careers as they can from various sources (library, on-line, professionals)
- Work with high school counselors or your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor—they can help in this process
- Check out various colleges, universities and technical schools to see if they offer programs that you are interested in. A list of schools in your state is available from most high school counselors or VR counselors. (web site?)
- When a few schools have been decided on contact them or visit them and request information on admission requirements, financial aid, housing, and Disability Services office (do they have a deaf program established?).
- The student is responsible for providing documentation of the disability so that services can be received at postsecondary institutions (a copy of the most recent audiogram and any other tests or evaluations related to the disability). Communication or explanation of the disability to the DSS office staff to get the accommodations requested may be necessary.
- Organizing/collecting important paperwork:  
High school diploma,  
ACT/SAT test scores,  
Financial Aid Form/report,  
VR paperwork,  
Social Security number,  
Driver's license or other picture ID.

**One suggestion would be to establish a calendar of items that need to be worked on during the junior and senior years. This would provide a concrete, visual aid in the preparation that will be necessary for a smoother transition.**

### *Foster Inclusion on Campus by:*

- Posting activities occurring on campus
- Advertising club meetings, sports events
- Educating all campus personnel to make all events accessible
- Encouraging students to become involved in extra-curricular activities

## **Language Based Academic Issues**

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\* Many, but not *all* students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing have difficulties with reading and writing. Specifically, this difficulty stems from having a disability where one cannot learn a language in the usual sense (auditory). A severe hearing loss or total deafness creates physical barriers to language acquisition. Because deafness is a physical disability Deaf and hard of hearing students cannot hear English. Their reading and writing difficulties *are not* literacy issues as we traditionally think of literacy.

\* Course content, information, concepts, and facts that are ordinarily learned through printed and auditory means can be learned by a visual method, most often, sign language. American Sign Language (ASL) is a visual language and one that is capable of relaying whole images, thoughts and concepts in a visual mode. It may often be the most appropriate language that a sign language interpreter uses to interpret English. ASL is a rich and complex language that is very capable of expressing academic concepts and complex thoughts.

\* Printed tests, exams, quizzes, inventories, and assessment instruments given for academic placement, to measure mastery of a course, to ascertain psychological information, or to determine aptitudes, may in fact, actually measure one's English abilities rather than the content, skills, and concepts that they are intended to measure. The use of an interpreter in administering assessment instruments *may* be appropriate to insure that an assessment is valid and credible.

\* It may be appropriate for an academic counselor to pair a student who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing with an instructor who uses a variety of methods and strategies that are more visually oriented and 'hands-on'. An instructor,

for example, who gives multiple choice tests rather than essay tests may insure that English, which is *not* the academic focus of the test itself does not impede accurate assessment of what the student *does know* of the subject matter. An instructor who incorporates hands-on demonstration, discussion, and modeling strategies rather than emphasizing reading of the English text more likely will insure an environment where the requirement of English does not impede learning.

\* A counselor or instructor and a student who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing may communicate by writing notes back and forth. The student may, however, have difficulties writing and understanding communication in this way. The counselor or instructor should be aware that reading and writing might not be the most efficient way to communicate with *all* students who are Deaf or hard of Hearing. An interpreter should be used if reading and writing is not an efficient way to communicate. The individual needs of the student should always be considered, and the student should be consulted.

## Technology Issues

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Technology has made great advancements over the last decade. Many of these advancements have been of tremendous help to persons with disabilities. Technology has made it possible for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to enjoy TV, through the use of closed captioning. Regulations now require that all televisions come equipped with a decoding device built in instead of having to purchase a separate device. The TTY allows Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to access the telephone and communicate with hearing people who also have a TTY or through a relay operator if the individual does not have a TTY.

However, caution must be used in viewing technology as a one size fits all panacea. While closed captioning makes many television programs accessible there are still many other programs that are not captioned. Movies are rarely captioned which forces Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to wait to view popular movies until they are released on video. TTY's allow Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to use the phone but communication through the TTY and through a relay operator takes more time than traditional voice conversations. Many hearing individuals who are not used to working with Deaf and hard of hearing individuals may find it frustrating to communicate in this fashion.

Technology can help a person with a disability to gain the same level of accessibility as a non-disabled person but we must recognize that different disabilities require different modes of accessibility. Web sites that contain sound may be very helpful to blind individuals but are prohibitive to Deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Those seeking to use technology in making environments accessible should take into account all the populations they will be serving.

Deaf and hard of hearing individuals benefit from technology which puts information into a visual mode. All sound should also be translated into a visual format. Computers with spell check and grammar check can help Deaf and hard of hearing individuals compensate for weaknesses in English skills, but grammar check is only helpful if one understands the nature of the grammatical mistakes the computer detects.

Some helpful technology websites are listed below:

Adaptive Technology Web Sites:

<http://www.abledata.com/>

Adaptive technology site

<http://www.cast.org/bobby/>

Bobby: Web site to evaluate accessibility of web pages

<http://www.apple.com/education/k12/disability/>

Apple Disability Resources

<http://www.kansas.net/~cbaslock/assist.html>

Adaptive Technology Resource Center

<http://www.rit.edu/~easi/easisem/handbk1.html>

EASI Street to Science, Engineering and Mathematics: an EASI guide to adaptive computing technology

<http://snow.utoronto.ca/resources/tecforhi.html>

Adaptive Technology for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Speech Impairment

<http://www.peersupportdb.com/adaptive.html>

Adaptive Technology

<http://www.samizdat.com/pac2.html>

Making the web accessible for the Deaf, Hearing and mobility impaired

<http://www.rit.edu/~easi/>

EASI - Equal Access to Software and Information

## Glossary

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Acoustic feedback - Howl or whine caused by the recirculation of acoustic output of an amplifying system. In a hearing aid the sound emanating from the receiver may reach (or feed back into) the microphone and be reamplified until it builds up into a high-pitched whistle.

A. G. Bell Association - Association that focuses on those with hearing disabilities that emphasizes speech and audition. Supports the publication of the Volta Review.

American Sign Language - (ASL) sophisticated visual/gestural language (syntax, grammar and body of literature). It is unrelated to English.

Assistive listening device - (ALD) auditory equipment used to enhance speech that is of a group nature rather than a personal hearing aid.

Audiogram - A graphic illustration of a person's hearing threshold.

Audiologist - Person trained in audiology - a specialist in the problems of hearing loss - in America and Canada excluding the field of medicine.

Auditory-Verbal - A type of communication which emphasizes the use of residual hearing in order to learn spoken communication. Key components are early identification and immediate fitting with appropriate amplification.

Behind-the-ear (BTE) - hearing aids fit comfortably behind the ear and are attached to a custom earmold.

Captions - Visual text displayed on a video, movie, or projected video.

Cochlea implant - A type of amplification that implants electrodes directly into the cochlea.

Computer Assisted Real Time - (CART) A system of captions that uses a steno machine (courtroom stenographer) attached to a computer to generate the captions. The captions can then be displayed on a monitor for an individual student or project for a group. This system also makes possible a verbatim of the session.

Conductive hearing loss - A depressed ability to hear due to problems of the middle ear.

Cued Speech - A system of communication which allows access to spoken English through a system of eight handshapes made in four locations near the face to assist in lip-reading. The “cues” are phonemically based. That is, based on the sounds the letters make rather than on the actual letters.

Deaf/deaf - Deaf (upper case D) denotes cultural deafness where deaf (lower case D) represent a lifestyle still based on a “hearing world” concept.

Deaf Culture - To be in the Deaf World, one does not actually have to be deaf but have similarities to the culturally Deaf. Components of the “Deaf” world/culture can include: audio, linguistics, social, political, and attitudinal domains.

Deafened - An umbrella term that can be used to refer to any individual with a depressed ability to use audition.

Decibel - One-tenth of a bel. Commonly noted as dB. A decibel is a unit of measurement used to express logarithmic ratios of intensity, power, pressure, etc.

Frequency - Number of double vibrations or cycles per second of a sound wave train, typically referred to as hertz (Hz). For example, 256 Hz has the same pitch as middle C on the piano.

Hard of Hearing - A depressed ability to use audition that may disrupt everyday activities though generally not bad enough to halt such activity.

Helen Keller National Center - This organization provides services and information for youths and adults who are Deaf-Blind.

Interpreter - One who facilitates through-the-air communication for individuals who are deaf. One who works to convey a concept from one mode to another (i.e. from a person who is Deaf to a person who is hearing) is said to be interpreting. The person who is doing a literal word-for-word transference is said to be transliterating. There are different types of “interpreting” such as Oral, ASL, and Cued Speech. Merely signing is not considered interpreting.

In-the-ear hearing aid (ITE) - A hearing aid with all components encased in the earmold or in a case designed to fit entirely in the ear.

Late-Deafened - This indicates individuals who had at one time, normal hearing and language development. At a later age, often after one is already in the labor force, losses the ability to use normal audition.

Lip-read - To understand by close observation of the speaker’s lips. It is now more commonly known as speechreading, since facial expression and gestures enter into communication.

Mixed hearing loss - One which contains elements of both conductive and sensorineural hearing loss.

National Association of the Deaf (NAD) - This national organization has state chapters that support the use of signed communications. It has instituted its own Interpreter evaluation, the IAP. The NAD publishes the *NAD Broadcaster* and the *American Annals of the Deaf*.

Relay - A tele-communication system that allows a TTY user and a person without a TTY to communicate via a third party over the telephone lines.

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf - (RID) This is a national organization for Interpreters for the Deaf that provides training, evaluation, certification and oversight. The R.I.D. Views is their major publication.

Sensori-neural hearing loss - A depressed ability to use audition due to problems that exist in the inner ear, path ways to the brain, or in the brain.

Total Communication - In this method of communication the child 's environment contains access to a full range of communication methods. It provides auditory and visual information in combination by providing appropriate amplification, and utilizing speechreading and sign language simultaneously. The signing used corresponds to the words spoken by the speaker.

TTY/TDD/TT - TeleType/Tele-communication Device for the Deaf/Text Telephone all refer to the same type of device used to communicate using visual text over the telephone lines in real time.