

## **Guidelines for communicating with a student teacher with hearing loss**

### **Overview**

Teaching is a challenging job, and student teachers who have a hearing loss will have thought seriously before choosing this career path. In most cases, student teachers will have considered all the barriers to being able to teach effectively, and have solutions in mind for how to overcome these barriers.

Students who have a teacher with a hearing loss will learn novel ways of sharing their thoughts and intentions, and they may gain more patience and understanding as a result of non-traditional approaches to learning and communicating.

Over 400,000 people in New Zealand identify as having hearing loss. It is important that you develop strategies to communicate with a person who is hard of hearing as communication works both ways.

All people with hearing loss have different needs. Don't be afraid to discuss with them which way of communicating works best for them.

Remember that hearing aids/cochlear implants do not mean that the person's hearing loss has been "cured"; they may still have some hearing challenges.

### **Tips for talking with your student teacher.**

- Face the person directly, in good lighting.
- Speak clearly, slowly, distinctly, but naturally, without shouting or exaggerating mouth movements.
- Avoid talking too rapidly or using sentences that are too complex.
- Keep your hands away from your face while talking.
- If the student hears better in one ear than the other, try to make a point of remembering which ear is better so that you will know where to position yourself.
- Be aware of possible distortion of sounds for the person with hearing loss. They may hear your voice, but still may have difficulty understanding some words.
- Try to minimize background noise when talking.
- Some people with hearing loss are very sensitive to loud sounds. This reduced tolerance for loud sounds is not uncommon. When possible, avoid situations where there will be loud sounds will be present. In the classroom this may be difficult. Make a time to talk at the end of the day when there will be less noise.
- If the person with hearing loss has difficulty understanding a particular phrase or word, try to find a different way of saying the same thing, rather than repeating the original words.

- If you are giving specific information have the student teacher repeat the specifics back to you.
- Whenever possible, provide pertinent information in writing.
- Take turns speaking and avoid interrupting other speakers.
- Always use a written agenda for meetings.
- Learn how to use any technology that the hearing impaired person may use eg, FM system.

### **How will student teachers with hearing loss ensure they are teaching effectively?**

Students' strategies for succeeding academically at University are often the same as being effective student teachers. Student teachers with hearing loss will also need to consider:

- Classroom management: including layout of room, noise control and lighting. If the student teacher asks the students to sit at the front of the classrooms s/he will not only be able to hear better but also lip-read.
- Written communication: ask students to write key ideas on the board as well as saying them aloud.
- Communication preferences: at the beginning of the year (or practicum) student teachers will speak to the class about their hearing loss and discuss their preferred methods of communication.
- Resources: utilise technology and funding available to student teachers with hearing loss, eg, FM system and sender microphone that can be passed around the class when a student wishes to speak.
- Effective speaking: ensure they are projecting their voice clearly.
- Focus: ensure students are paying attention before speaking (eg, ask them to raise their hands).

### **CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION OR SUPPORT**

#### **Student Disability Services**

**Brian Stanney, SDS Manager**

Ph: 09 373 7599 ext 82936

[www.eo.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.eo.auckland.ac.nz)

[www.disability.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.disability.auckland.ac.nz)

[disabilities@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:disabilities@auckland.ac.nz)