**How to Teach Hearing Impaired Students: Strategies for Success**

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If you need information about how to teach hearing impaired students, you've come to the right place. Providing classroom adaptations and implementing communication strategies will ensure success for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

* While some students may have permanent hearing loss, other students may suffer temporary losses from colds and ear infections, especially in the early grades. Since even temporary losses can have an effect on language development and access to curriculum, the strategies mentioned here are worth a look for every teacher. Following is a guide to help you adapt your classroom, utilize visual aids, create effective communication methods, and monitor student progress throughout the year.

* **Classroom Adaptations**

A few easy steps can be taken to ensure the classroom is suitable for hearing impaired students. When possible, turn off equipment that creates background noises, such as fans and projectors, when not in use. If your portable or classroom has noisy heating or cooling systems, consider requesting a room change. Eliminating extra noise helps students with hearing impairments focus on the class lecture and assignments. Remember that hearing aids amplify every sound, including tapping pencils and air conditioners. Area rugs, heavy curtains and tennis balls on chair bottoms can also eliminate a great deal of extraneous noise.

* **Communication Considerations**

Effective communication is vital with a hearing impaired student to ensure student success. Since many hard of hearing students rely on lip-reading, at least partially, it is important to keep a few points in mind when you are teaching.

Look directly at the student and face him or her when communicating or teaching.

* 1. Say the student’s name or signal their attention in some way before speaking.
* 1. Assign the student a desk near the front of the classroom, or where you plan to deliver most of your lectures.
	2. Speak naturally and clearly. Remember speaking louder won't help.
	3. Do not exaggerate your lip movements, but slowing down a little may help some students.
	4. Use facial expressions, gestures and body language to help convey your message, but don't overdo it.
	5. Some communication may be difficult for the hard of hearing student to understand. Explicitly teach idioms and explain jokes and sarcasm.
	6. Young hearing impaired children often lag in the development of social graces. Consider teaching specific social skills such as joining in to games or conversation, maintaining conversations, and staying on topic.
	7. Male teachers should keep moustaches well groomed.
* Remember some strategies and techniques work for some students while other students are successful using other techniques. Sometimes it takes time to understand one another and to learn each other’s habits, so give the relationship some time. Be patient and find the strategies that work best for your hearing impaired student(s).
* **Visual Strategies and Curriculum Accommodations**

Adjust teaching methods to accommodate your [visual learner](http://www.brighthubeducation.com/teaching-methods-tips/79161-catering-for-visual-learning-style-strengths-in-the-classroom/)'s needs by writing all homework assignments, class instructions and procedural changes on the board. Providing a visual cue eliminates confusion on these topics. Remember not to speak while you have your back to the students. If a student is proficient on the computer, look into providing them with a laptop for notes and communication during class. Arrange desks in a circular pattern if possible so hearing impaired students can see other students. This is especially important if they need to read lips. Consider using a talking stick for group discussions, to help students know who is speaking. Otherwise, repeat other students' comments and questions, acknowledging who made the comment so the hearing impaired student can focus on the speaker. Establish a procedure for emergencies, such as writing the word fire on the board. Provide students with an outline of the daily lesson and printed copies of the notes, allowing them to focus on discussions and questions while you are teaching. Students can then be more engaged in learning and can easily review the notes at a later time. Since vision becomes a hearing impaired student's primary means for receiving information, utilize visual aids whenever you can. Consider using posters, charts, flash cards, pictures, manipulatives, graphic organizers, artifacts or any visual items to illustrate concepts. Try to use captioned videos in class. Some students with hearing loss may require the use of sound amplification equipment. Make sure students are seated near the equipment and can hear the amplified voices. If the teacher usually uses a microphone, it should be passed around during group discussions. Follow all established guidelines within the student’s IEP (Individualized Education Plan), regarding classroom adaptations and aids for hearing impaired students. Don’t be afraid to contact your school district if you need help. Often, itinerant teachers and/or consultants are available to answer questions and provide additional training if needed. Consider using an interpreter if the student knows American Sign Language and feels comfortable using it during class.

**Regular Evaluation of Progress**

It is critical for teachers to monitor the progress and understanding of all students, but especially so for those with special needs. Teachers must be sensitive to the needs of hearing impaired students and follow the IEP as closely as possible. [Monitor student progress](http://www.brighthubeducation.com/special-ed-law/117103-is-a-student-meeting-an-iep-goal-data-collection-forms-can-help/) in daily work and assignments, and ask the student for feedback regarding their understanding or areas where they might be confused. Maintain close contact with parents and other teachers and share ideas and techniques that have been successful. If necessary, establish a system with the parents to monitor student work, participation and progress, such as a daily agenda.

 **Expect Success**

Teaching hearing impaired students doesn't have to be difficult, as long as you are flexible. When you incorporate these strategies into your teaching practice, chances are that you’ll find a number of students who benefit from your efforts.