

Classroom Tips for Instructing Students with Hearing Impairments

While working at Winthrop University, you may have the opportunity to instruct students who have hearing impairments. It is our hope that the information provided below will assist you in effectively communicating class information to these students and allow you to facilitate an environment in which they can participate equally in class discussions and activities.

1. It is okay to speak in an ordinary tone. Raising our voices can distort our mouths and inhibits lip reading. If the student has an issue hearing something you said, s/he will ask you to repeat yourself.
2. Avoid speaking when your back is turned to the class (i.e. when you write on the board). This is especially important for students who rely on lip reading to follow along with lectures/conversations.
3. When referring to items on a board, be specific about the word or phrase you are making reference to by pointing directly to it. Students with hearing impairments rely on visual cues, body language, and expressions to gather information.
4. Though some students have assistive hearing devices and may be skillful at lip reading, they may still need you to repeat some things. Also, remember to repeat questions and comments from the class before responding.
5. Make sure Voice-over PowerPoint presentations, YouTube clips, videos, audio clips, etc., are closed captioned or have an accompanying transcript.
 - a. Winthrop's Dacus Library offers resources to help faculty locate appropriate videos that are already captioned.
 - b. The Office of Online Learning is able to assist with providing instructions on properly captioning YouTube videos that are stored on your own YouTube channel.
 - c. Some items may need to be sent out for captioning or to generate a transcript. Please communicate with the Office of Online Learning as soon as possible, for assistance with this process.
6. Material presented orally, either in class or online, will need to be available in written format for these students. Using visual aids and materials during your instruction is beneficial for those with a hearing loss, as vision is their primary means of receiving information.
7. Be aware of noise level. These students may be very sensitive to environmental (background) sounds, which tend to 'mask' speech. Background noise should be kept to a minimum.
8. Be open to suggestions from the student. They know what has worked and what has not worked for them in past classroom settings.

Please contact the Office of Accessibility at 803.323.3290 or accessibility@winthrop.edu if you have questions about the information given above or have concerns about a student.