Introduction

The East Sussex Service for Children with Sensory Needs (SCSN) supports Children and Young People with visual and/or hearing impairments. This booklet refers only to students with a hearing impairment in FE. The booklet uses the terms hearing impaired and deaf interchangeably. Teachers of the Deaf (TOD) employed by SCSN primarily support the audiological and language needs of severely or profoundly deaf students. The main aim in FE is to enable these students to access their chosen courses and to make sure they are included in their chosen FE setting as successfully as possible.

Statements of Special Educational Need do not apply in FE (excepting sixth forms) but each deaf student who had a statement at school should have a Moving On Plan (MOP) which identifies their individual needs. The MOP is written by a Connexions PA but often with advice from a TOD. The FE institution has a responsibility to make reasonable adjustments for deaf students under the Equality Act.

The amount and type of support that a deaf student needs will vary greatly according to individual needs and may be provided from different sources. However, successful FE provision will depend a great deal on the awareness of the teachers and assistants working directly with the deaf students. The aim of this booklet is to help people work successfully with their deaf students.

There is no one right way of dealing with a deaf student in class, but strategies are given here that should be helpful, even for hearing students in the group.

The booklet also attempts to outline the nature of a hearing loss and the difficulties such a loss creates in a college setting.

The kind of support provided will vary according to the needs of the student and should be the result of collaboration between SCSN and a named link person at college.

Measuring hearing

Hearing is measured in terms of loudness (intensity) recorded in decibels (dB) and pitch (frequency) recorded in Hertz (Hz).

Hearing loss is measured in decibels using “normal” hearing as a baseline. The following table gives you some idea of what this means for the deaf student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decibel Level</th>
<th>Classification of loss</th>
<th>Equivalent experience for the normally-hearing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threshold of Turning Point (dB)</td>
<td>“Normal”</td>
<td>A sound can just be detected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 20</td>
<td>Mild loss</td>
<td>A quiet whisper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 40</td>
<td>Moderate loss</td>
<td>Normal conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 – 70</td>
<td>Severe loss</td>
<td>Shouting nearby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71 – 95</td>
<td>Profound loss</td>
<td>Loud club music, jet taking off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95 +</td>
<td></td>
<td>Threshold of pain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People with a severe or profound loss would need amplification to hear normal conversation, but the situation is not so simple.

- They are more likely to have a greater loss at the higher frequencies and are thus less likely to hear unvoiced speech sounds such as “s” or “f”
- These thresholds are measured in a quiet environment and background noise can raise them considerably. The average classroom has a background noise level of about 60dB.
- Classrooms may cause the sounds to reverberate
- The sounds they hear are distorted because the severely or profoundly deaf have a sensory or neural loss.

There may be students in college who have a mild or moderate hearing loss. Such a loss is often the result of middle ear problems which may fluctuate. Work and behaviour can be significantly affected. The suggestions on classroom management given in this booklet should enable teachers to help these students.

There may be students in college who are monaural. They have hearing in only one ear. They can usually follow lessons but it helps if they sit with their good ear towards the sound source. They find it difficult to know where a sound is coming from. This has implications when out of college, for example crossing a road. They find it more difficult than usually to listen in a noisy environment.
Classroom management

Watching Conditions

Understanding of speech is considerably enhanced when residual hearing is supplemented by lipreading / face-watching. All deaf students rely to a greater or lesser extent on this.

- **Try not to speak with your back to the class**
  (common when looking at a whiteboard, etc)
- **Make sure the student can see you**, the board or, for discussion, the rest of the group. For class teaching this might be in the second row where the student can see you without straining eyes or neck.
- **Let the student sit near the window so that the light is on other people’s faces.** It is very difficult to lipread if the speaker is in silhouette or there is a light shining in the student’s eyes.
- **When speaking, try to avoid walking to and fro or addressing the group from behind the deaf student.**
- **If the weather is dull, switch on the lights.**
- **When reading to the class, ensure the book does not obscure your face.**
- **Deaf students cannot write and watch at the same time.** They will need a written summary before the lesson or notes written for them.
- **Be aware of fatigue. Face-watching is very tiring.**
- **If you are teaching outside, try to show rather than tell.** Windy conditions make listening difficult for a hearing aid user. Be aware that hearing aids can be damaged in the wet.

Class Discussion

- **Direct the student’s attention to the speaker**
- **Allow the student to move to see the face of the speaker**
- **Repeat questions asked and summarise answers given by other students**
- **When using a radio aid, the student can only hear the voice of the person wearing the transmitter. In a small group it is helpful to pass round the transmitter if the student is comfortable about this**
- **When students are working in small groups and there is a lot of talking, send the deaf student’s group to work somewhere quiet.**

Checking Understanding

- **Some deaf students suffer from the “nodding head syndrome” i.e. they have learned to appear attentive and to understand when they have not. Asking them questions may reveal the real situation.**
- **Encourage the student to ask for help or explanation when necessary. The TOD will be happy to give reinforcement and further explanation if informed of problem areas.**
- **Give the student time to think before answering a question orally or before giving an oral report.**

Using a Radio Hearing Aid

**Radio aids are not a cure-all. They do not give a deaf student normal hearing.** They are used to overcome the problem of distance and cut down on the amount of background noise received by the student.

Radio aids are used in connection with the student’s own hearing aid or processor with FM receivers attached.

- **Ensure the transmitter is switched on.**
- **Ensure the microphone is fairly near to the mouth by adjusting the boom, clip or neckstrap.**
- **Check the student is receiving the signal**
- **Try not to knock the microphone when in use as this will transmit loud noise. Don’t fiddle with the aerial.**
- **Switch off when no longer talking to the student. They will still hear you if you go to another room, however small!**
- **Return the transmitter to the student at the end of the lesson.**

Using Audio-Visual Aids

- **Films and DVDs present particular problems because voiceover soundtracks are common. Many DVDs now have a subtitled option which will help.** For films or programmes containing vital information, lend the DVD to the support teacher or CSW in advance for pre-teaching or give a written summary to the student.
- **Most deaf students cannot understand speech on an audio tape and “live-voice” presentation is of great benefit to them.**

Speech and language

Your Speech

- **Speak at a normal or slightly slower rate**
- **Avoid speaking slowly, shouting, whispering, mouthing or making exaggerated lip movements because this breaks up the natural rhythm and intonation of speech which provide valuable clues to a deaf student**
- **Speak clearly**
- **Don’t grow a beard!**
- **Speak in phrases rather than single words**
The visible headpiece is attached to the skull by magnet and serves as a microphone. It can fall off without causing damage. Students with CI may be excluded from contact sport because of risk of damage to hearing.

Further information

For further information and support, please contact:

Service for Children with Sensory Needs (SCSN)
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