

Tips for Working with Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) Students: Classroom Accessibility Checklist

- ✓ **Captioned media:** all videos and Zoom recordings must be accurately captioned (auto captions do not suffice). Contact Aaron French (french_aaron@smc.edu) for assistance.
- ✓ **Classroom setup:** For small discussion based classes, U-shape rows of desks to maximize ability to see everyone in the classroom. DHH students usually require seating at the front of the classroom to allow a clear view of the instructor, Interpreter and board.
- ✓ **Working with sign language interpreter or captioner:** speak at your natural pace and do not involve interpreter/captioner in classroom discussion. Refrain from saying things like, “don’t interpret that.”
- ✓ **Speaking to your DHH student:** Speak to your DHH student directly instead of saying things like “ask him,” or “tell her.”
- ✓ **Communication Style:** Be specific. Instead of saying “this” or “that,” say what you are referring to specifically. When one on one with DHH student, avoid talking while they are writing something down or looking away. Pause and wait for them to finish before continuing conversation.
- ✓ **Class Participation:** Allow your DHH student equal opportunity to participate. This may mean allowing more time for questions or comments since there may be a slight lag time for the DHH student to receive all information.
- ✓ **Student Comments/Questions:** Repeat/rephrase students’ questions or comments so the interpreter/captioner is able to hear and relay classmates’ comments.
- ✓ **PowerPoints/Blackboard/Whiteboard/Visual Aids:** Be sure you are not blocking your visual material when presenting to the class. Stand to the side of the screen or board, instead of in front of it, so you are not covering the information and it can be clearly seen.
- ✓ **Lecturing Position:** Face the class and your students when lecturing and presenting material. Avoid speaking when your back is turned to the class.
- ✓ **Mask policy and DHH individuals:** If a DHH student asks you to remove your mask so they can see your face/lips, offer to wear a clear mask or face shield. The face shield will allow your entire face to be seen. Contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) for clear masks. Please note they are limited in quantity. Face shields can be ordered online via the PPE request form in Adobe Sign.
- ✓ **Hearing status of individuals:** Do not make assumptions about a person’s hearing status or methods of communication. Everyone’s situation is unique. For example, some people may speak clearly but have hearing loss that hinders understanding, or someone may be deaf or hard of hearing and not use or know American Sign Language (ASL).
- ✓ **American Sign Language (ASL):** ASL is not equivalent to English; it is a visual-spatial language and has its own syntax and grammatical structure.