Overcoming barriers to classroom engagement for students with hearing loss

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Outline

• Characteristics of today’s students who are deaf or hard of hearing

• What makes a class engaging?

• What aspects of “engaging” classrooms are difficult for students with hearing loss and why?

• What can help?
  • Technology
  • Instructors
  • Classmates
  • Students with hearing loss
Menti.com

- Go to menti.com and enter code
Communication methodology of 53,000 deaf school aged children in the UK

- Speech: 5%
- Speech + sign: 7%
- Sign only (BSL): 21%
- Augmentative communication: 67%

Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (2017)
# Context for the 20%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Then” (1980)</th>
<th>“Now”</th>
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<tr>
<td>Average age of diagnosis of hearing loss was 2 ½ years</td>
<td>Average age of diagnosis is about 4 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cochlear implants not yet available for children in Ontario (first one was approx. 1988)</td>
<td>Goal for bilateral cochlear implantation (both ears at the same time) is &lt; 1 year of age</td>
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<td>Most deaf students attended schools for the deaf or were in congregated classes</td>
<td>Most students attend their local school in the same class as hearing classmates</td>
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<td># of students who went on to college or university was very small</td>
<td>Many more students</td>
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<td>Institutional barriers – many students went to US</td>
<td>Much improved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy barriers (average reading level at high school graduation was grade 4)</td>
<td>No longer true</td>
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What are some characteristics of an engaging class?
What makes a lively classroom discussion difficult for someone with a hearing loss?

The Lost Joke
What makes small group work difficult for someone with a hearing loss?

What do you think?
What makes watching an interesting video difficult for someone with a hearing loss?

What do you think?
What makes watching an interesting video difficult?

Some helpful supplementary videos on neuroscience and anxiety:

- Video 1
- Video 2
- Video 3
- Video 4
What makes learning difficult for someone with a hearing loss??

“We need to factor in the space of the room, the background noise (students chattering, computer hums, light and air conditioning sounds, windows/outdoor noises), as well as their physical self in the classroom (working harder than the “hearing” student in the classroom by physically working our brain to hear the teacher/presenter).”
For individuals who use hearing technology…

- Noise
- Distance
- Echo or reverberation
- Seating arrangements where you can’t see everyone without turning so you can’t use visual cues
- The fast pace of discussions
- More than one person speaking at once
For individuals who use sign language interpreters…

- How can you access other people’s questions or comments?
- The fast pace of discussions
- More than one person speaking at once
- What about video?
What is an accessible classroom?

- **YU Blog**
- **York U Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion**
- **Teaching Commons**
What do you think might help?

• What can technology do?

• What can instructors do?

• What can classmates do?
What can technology do?

• Sound systems

• Personal FM systems
  • Remote microphones
  • Bluetooth

• Captioning apps
  • Ava
What can instructors do?

- Use a sound system if there is one
- Think about seating arrangements
- Put materials on Moodle
- Check captioning before using a video
- Be aware of noise
- If there is an interpreter, speak to the student, not the interpreter
- During discussions:
  - Identify students by name if possible
  - Ask students to stand up
  - Repeat questions from other students
What can classmates do?

• Use a sound system if there is one
• Think about seating arrangements
• Be aware of noise
• If there is an interpreter, speak to the student, not the interpreter
• During small group work:
  • Find a quiet place if possible
  • Think about noise, lighting and seating
• During discussions:
  • One person talks at a time