# Differentiated Instructional Strategies - Deaf and Hard of Hearing (History/Social Studies)

Team members working with students who are deaf and hard of hearing need to carefully consider each student's unique needs and learning style, as well as the demands of the task. Strategies are offered to provide a starting point for thinking about possible adaptations. It is important to remember that all team members should have input into decisions regarding instructional strategies.

### Possible effects of hearing loss on skill development in History

Children who are deaf and hard of hearing can learn about history in the same sequence and manner as their hearing peers. However, various factors may prevent children who are deaf and hard of hearing from successfully constructing historical knowledge, including the following:

| Vocabulary | Communication | Cognitive Development |
|---|---|---|
| **They may lack general vocabulary and the specific vocabulary needed to discuss the concepts of time, past, present, and future. Hearing children are exposed to language from birth and understand everyday language. It is more difficult for children who are deaf and hard of hearing to acquire language and learning from their environment incidentally (from overhearing conversations of others in their environment, on TV, on the radio). Without this incidental learning, a child who is deaf and hard of hearing may not develop even beginning concepts of time, such as "last week," "two decades ago," or "in the twentieth century" without being formally taught them.** | Communication with others may be difficult. If the child and others in the environment cannot communicate with each other effectively, they may not have had the benefit of engaging in discussions regarding current events and concepts important to history such as "independence," "freedom of religion," and "exploration and discovery." Problem solving is especially difficult for children who are deaf, as a sound language base is necessary for putting observations into words or making predictions. Without communication skills, the child can be isolated in the learning environment and unable to participate in group activities and discovery (Ray, 2001). | For normal cognitive development to occur, a child must be introduced to diverse experiences and exposed to a rich language base (Ray, 2001). This does not always occur in the home and/or in the educational setting for a child who is dhh. Time concepts are abstract and may be more difficult to understand without experience and language. |

Updated by Lindsay Watkins, PhD student, George Mason University, 2019

**Instructional and Environmental Strategies –**
**Ways to help students who are deaf and hard of hearing succeed in History**

The following strategies are designed to promote access to History content based on the Standards of Learning for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. *It is important to remember that each child has unique needs* and that decisions regarding instructional strategies should be based upon current and accurate information about the child's sensory functioning and on team input.

| Vocabulary | Learning Environment | Instructional Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| **Pre-teach vocabulary** for coming History lessons in context. Collaboration with the speech/language pathologist in this effort can be beneficial. Remember, many children who are deaf and hard of hearing do not learn words incidentally. | Be sure that there is someone for students to interact with in the learning environment who can effectively provide not only the vocabulary to label objects but also a **language model for expressing concepts and ideas,** using the child's mode of communication. | Use **more than one mode of presentation for time concepts and historic events**. These may include **manipulatives** (puppets, action figures), **verbal** (role playing, debates), **pictorial** (time lines), and **symbolic modes** (graphic organizers). Encourage students to translate between sign language and English, and to make connections between all modes presented. Students can also use pictures, drawing sets, and visualizing or pantomiming of action to move from the concrete to more abstract representations. |
| **Partner with parents.** Maintain ongoing communication between the home and teachers so that **vocabulary and concepts related with History are reflected and reinforced in as many different situations as possible.** Make families aware of the limitless opportunities in the home for exploring and discussing current events and historical concepts during daily routines, and make sure that the parents are able to communicate effectively in the child's chosen mode. | Use **multimedia approaches for visual representation of course content.** Interactive whiteboards and/or PowerPoint presentations are preferable to traditional chalkboards, as the teacher does not need to turn his or her back to the students. This is **especially important for students who are relying on speechreading, signing, cuing, and/or use of residual hearing for receptive communication.** | When using visuals**, allow time for students to view the board, slides, or objects, then to watch explanation/instruction given by the teacher or interpreter**, and only then, allow students to offer responses. A hearing person can view visuals and listen at the same time. Children who are deaf and hard of hearing and rely on visual communication through sign language, cued speech, or speechreading must process information sequentially rather than simultaneously. |
| For students who sign, ensure that all involved are consistent in the signs being used. **Use conceptually based signs** and | Provide an **enriched learning environment** that promotes a wide range of meaningful experiences with opportunities | Relate events in history with students' personal experiences through a **dialogic process.**  Start a blog or vlog about a given topic and |

| Vocabulary | Learning Environment | Instructional Strategies |
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| fingerspelling, and avoid inventing new signs for new vocabulary. | for reading about and discussion of historic events, past and present. | have students extend it through group discussion (Luckner, Slike, & Johnson, 2012). |
| Encourage students to process information at a deeper level through **questioning**. | **Create a shared digital learning space** in a learning management system (LMS) like Edmodo, Google Classroom, Schoology, or WikiSpaces.  Compile electronic resources in this space like teacher lectures in ASL, class discussions, student projects, and digital images that students can access independently (Von Bitter & Turley, 2016).<br><br>DCMP.org has a wide selection of videos captioned for educational use. | **Emphasize the role of deaf individuals** in various events in history. |
|  | Increase background knowledge by **making a range of conceptually related books and reading materials available** at multiple reading levels.  Allow students to use these materials independently. (Luckner, Slike, & Johnson, 2012). | Introduce new topics with the use of **graphic organizers** to show how concepts and topics are related (Luckner, Slike, & Johnson, 2012). |
|  | Dostal, Gabriel, and Weir (2017) outline two general guiding principles designed to make learning environments more accessible to students who are deaf and hard of hearing:<br><br>1. **Optimize access to content and conversation**<br><br>• Inquire about student's language history and communication preference.<br>• Set a classroom expectation of one speaker at a time | **Use active reading strategies** like RAP, RCRC, and PARS to help students retrieve and store information through reading (Luckner, Slike, & Johnson, 2012). |

| Vocabulary | Learning Environment | Instructional Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| | with a brief pause between speakers.<br>• Repeat comments and questions verbatim when there is overlapping or rapid classroom talk.<br>• Understand the purpose of each student's accommodations and supportive technology.<br>• A "preferential seating" accommodation refers to whole group and small group instruction.<br><br>2. **Make content and thinking visible**<br><br>• Create visual clues for word learning<br>• Create visual representations for oral explanations<br>• Construct written records of think-alouds and verbal discussion<br>• Invest in extended conversation to enhance word knowledge | |

**Links and Resources**

Dostal, H., Gabriel, R., & Weir, J. (2017). Supporting the literacy development of students who are deaf/hard of hearing in inclusive classrooms. *The Reading Teacher, 71*(3), 327-334.

Gannon, J.R. (1989). *The week the world heard Gallaudet.* Washington, DD: Gallaudet University Press.

Gannon, J.R. (2012). *Deaf heritage: A narrative history of deaf America.* Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.

Luckner, J.L., Slike, S.B., & Johnson, H. (2012). Helping students who are deaf or hard of hearing succeed. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 44*(4), 58-67.

Marschark, M, Lang, H, & Albertini, J. (2002). *Educating deaf students: From research to practice.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

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Ray, E. (2001, November). Discovering mathematics: The challenges that deaf/hearing-impaired children encounter. *ACE Papers*, *11*(6), 62-75.

Success for Children with Hearing Loss (2019). *Supporting success for children with hearing loss.* Retrieved from https://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/

Von Bitter, M., & Turley, K. (2016). Deaf history, digital technology, and content- area literacy: Instructional strategies for secondary classrooms. *Sign Language Studies*, *17*(1), 78-84.

**The Described and Captioned Media Program**: The DCMP is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and provides a free-loan media program (DVD and direct streaming). It is a valuable resource for educational materials to supplement and enhance academics and sign language learning. www.dcmp.org

**NTID Social Science Signs Lexicon**: An online sign glossary developed at the National Technical Institute of the Deaf of signs for use in social studies classes including geography, U.S and world history, government and more. https://wiki.rit.edu/display/SSSL/Social+Science+Signs+Lexicon+Home

**Center for Accessible Technology in Sign** (CATS): A comprehensive website through the Georgia Institute of Technology with sign language learning resources (SMARTSignDictionary), literature (CATS Library) which includes Deaf History, Deaf Culture, Deaf Sports and more for all ages and interests. http://www.cats.gatech.edu/