Teaching Remotely to Students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing

As schools are implementing remote strategies to provide educational services, it is imperative that accessibility for students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) is addressed as lessons are being planned. Whether instruction is being provided off-line with packets of assignments or online in a virtual environment, lack of accessibility will mean DHH students will not have equal access to instruction, as is required in IDEA. Here are a few tips to keep in mind, as well as specific resources for helping to implement.

1. All videos, real time learning sessions, and pre-recorded learning sessions need to be captioned. To learn more about pre-captioned resources as well as tools and instructions for captioning, visit our collection of captioning information (QR Code). *While sessions and videos must be captioned, it is important to know that this alone may not provide accessibility for all students who are deaf/hard of hearing, especially those whose reading level is below 5th grade.	QR Code to closed captioning information.
2. Students who have interpreting as an accommodation in their IEP have access to interpreters in their school districts. Those interpreters need to provide interpreting for real-time instruction, pre-recorded instruction, and may also provide sight translation assistance for packets of assignments. For how-to resources on creating accessible videos, visit our collection of instructions in written and video formats (QR Code).	QR Code to instructions in written and video formatting.
3. When connecting with students through video conferencing, keep in mind the quality of sound, background noise, lighting, visual distraction, and the placement of the camera, as well as captioning and/or interpreting. To learn more about information about ensuring remote learning is accessible, visit our collection of remote learning accessibility (QR Code).	QR Code to accessibility information.
4. In light of the unprecedented pandemic and the new normal of providing education for the deaf and hard of hearing via digital online platforms, the Statewide Outreach Center at Texas School for the Deaf has developed informational resources via Crossroads, the statewide repository on resources for parents, educators and community partners in Deaf Education which provides COVID-19 resources for educators and families, birth to 3 services, and a lesson plan library.	https://www.texasdeafed.org

5. Due to concerns with the rapid spread of Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, schools and universities across the country are shutting down their campuses and moving to e-learning or virtual learning. In light of this, the following resource information could be helpful as you consider how to provide instruction to your students who are deaf or hard of hearing.	https://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/2020/03/18/e-learning-coronavirus-covid-19/
6. If you need to caption a video or pre-recorded lecture, consider using a combination of both in-house staff or contact a captioning vendor. Staff can follow industry standards and use DIY captioning resources.	https://deaftec.org/teaching-learning/captioning-media/adding-captions-captioning-resources/
7. As colleges and schools scramble to take their teaching online in response to the spread of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), educators must not forget — and must know how to make their instruction accessible to — deaf and hard of hearing students and their peers.	https://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/news/remember-accessibility-rush-online-instruction-10-tips-educators
8. As schools across the country transition to online courses in response to COVID-19, educators are working to ensure students receive the same quality education they received in the classroom. For deaf students, this means all course content must be accessible and equitable. This checklist for teaching deaf students online helps educators meet their needs and ensures compliance with the law. Stay tuned for a new National Deaf Center resource in the coming weeks, which will expand the checklist with more detailed tips and advice.	https://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/news/checklist-teaching-deaf-students-online

Ideas for Connecting with Other educators Serving DHH Students

- Collaborate with deaf ed teachers in your school, district, state through email, social media groups, or communities of practice. If you are a teacher in a general education classroom, it is imperative that you connect with the deaf ed teacher who is serving your student(s)!
- Share resources you find on social media and tag them (e.g., #dcdcec.org #deafed).
- Use your favorite social media app and search for groups.
    - Join the Texas Deaf Ed Teacher group on Facebook. Make sure to answer the questions!
    - Join the DHH Teaching During COVID-19 nation-wide Facebook group.
- Visit the Texas Deaf/Hard of Hearing Services Facebook Page for updated information and additional resources.
- Join the TxSSN Community of Practice for professional development courses, resources,
- and community discussions.

Remote Learning: Using Paraprofessionals Effectively

Life for educators is definitely a different experience right now! As teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing (TODHH), we are not only working on our own lessons, we are working with general education teachers to ensure that their instructional materials are accessible.

Many of us have access to paraprofessionals in our classrooms or interveners assigned to particular students, and districts are struggling to determine how those staff members can best help meet the needs of students in our current reality.

Below are some activities that the paraprofessionals could do that often will make a HUGE difference to the teachers and the families. **All activities should be initiated and guided by the TODHH, especially contact with students and families.**

Accessibility:

- Caption pre-recorded instructional videos from general education teachers
- Coordinate interpreter assignments for live and pre-recorded sessions
- Use Boardmaker or other picture communication symbol systems to provide additional instructions for students and/or parents who need additional help with reading
- Help TODHHs breakdown assignments to meet the needs of specific students
- Provide real-time support during Zoom sessions to help make sure the interpreter is able to be seen by all students, that captioning is working correctly, and to facilitate questions in the chat box

Collaboration:

- Maintain regular communication with teachers and related service providers
- Check-in with students as determined by classroom teacher
- Follow up with parents on assignments, ARDs, etc
- Document progress monitoring

Materials:

- Support classroom teachers with preparing assignments, content, and paper-pencil activities
- Research websites, videos, and links for accessible activities that teachers can incorporate into lessons

Student/Family Support:

- Support families and students in accessing and participating in distance learning
  - Paras can be added to online classes as co-teacher
- Provide review and practice for students
- Provide additional instructions or expansion when necessary
- Provide 1:1 supports as students work on assignments
- Teach sign classes to parents, siblings, and students (if paraprofessional is fluent in sign)

Participating in Training:

- Participate in scheduled school-based professional development regarding online learning
- Participate in professional development modules and community discussions through the Texas Sensory Support Network Community of Practice
- Participate in the Open Hands Open Access learning modules on working with students who are deafblind

Check out the Virtual Activities for Teachers and Families COVID-19 LiveBinder for a compilation of resources.

Information compiled by the Texas Sensory Support Network, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Services. For additional information about providing virtual services to students who are deaf or hard of hearing, contact us.

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