

SUPPORTING DEAF LEARNERS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

FL = foreign language

L1 = language of instruction (source language); L2 = foreign language being taught (target language)

SW = support worker (any person working to support student's foreign language learning)

FLA = foreign language assistant

SLT = speech and language therapist

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	<p style="text-align: center;">Factors to take into account <i>Characteristics of d/Deaf learners which can affect learning in general</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Effects of these on FL learning <i>D/deaf learners may have difficulties with the following</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">What the tutor can do <i>Teaching/learning strategies that can be incorporated into classroom practice</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Possible support strategies</p>
A	<p>Student has difficulty understanding what the tutor is saying.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanations in L1 may not be fully understood. • Tutor's utterances in L2 may be difficult to understand • L2 may contain sounds and/or letters that are different from sounds/letters in L1. • Some speech sounds are not lip readable as they are invisible. • Some lip patterns may be indistinguishable from other lip patterns (e.g. 'b', 'm', 'p') • Depending on frequency loss, the student may find some languages 'easier' to hear than others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to use whatever amplification best suits the student's hearing loss. • Always face the deaf student when pronouncing key phrases, and make sure your face is not in shadow. • Write on the board any proper names that occur, as these are difficult to work out from context. • Provide lots of repetition and opportunities for consolidation. • Indicate clearly when you are switching between L1 and L2. • Use flash cards and other visuals which can be shown or pointed to as an aid to comprehension. • Use mime, gesture and facial expression to illuminate meaning. • Arrange for extra 1-to-1 tutorials so that the student has a better environment and more time in which to practise listening/lipreading in L2. • Consider learning which speech sounds are not lip readable so as to become more aware of which words may need to be written on the board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible, employ an electronic or manual note-taker who is bilingual and who can write or wordprocess in either language. • Electronic note-taker may need access to alternative font sets and/or keyboard layouts. • Consider with the student whether support s/he uses in L1 would be helpful in L2 (e.g. cued speech, lipspeaking, transliteration, signed interpretation). • Student and support worker may need to agree on additional ways to represent unusual sounds, for example, using a phonetic alphabet; writing a representation of an L2 word as it would be pronounced in L1; using (jointly agreed) signs; using the fingerspelling system of the appropriate SL, if known. • Arrange for extra 1-to-1 tutorials so that the student has a better environment and more time in which to practise listening/lipreading. • Stand next to the board if possible, so that you can point to words on the board and to refer to phonetic charts, images and maps on the wall, etc.

B	Student has difficulty understanding what fellow learners are saying.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work can present particular problems for deaf students. By the time they have seen who is speaking they may have missed the beginning of the contribution. • Fellow students may have different pronunciation and therefore different lip patterns to the tutor/FLA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge contributions from students by discreetly pointing. • Try to place deaf students with a suitable partner when undertaking pair work. That is a student with good pronunciation and good communication skills. • Allow for the pace of the group work to take into consideration the needs of the deaf learner. • Before undertaking a task ensure that all students have understood the instructions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SW should negotiate with the tutor who will point out who is speaking at any given time. • Right at the beginning of the course, run a session on deaf awareness and make clear to the hearing members of the class how they can support the deaf student. Some older deaf students may wish to run a deaf awareness session themselves; other students may ask a SW to run the sessions.
C	Student has difficulty screening out unwanted environmental noise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sounds from outside the classroom can make it difficult to hear the spoken language. • Paired speaking activities can generate noise which obscures what the learner's partner is saying. • Classroom furniture and equipment can generate noise which interferes with listening activities. • Sound equipment (e.g. videos) used by other groups can be distracting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible, put deaf learner's class in a quiet room, not overlooking road, loading bay, etc. • Avoid open-plan classrooms. • Find a quiet place nearby where deaf learner and partner can work. It helps if classroom is curtained and carpeted. • Pad equipment that causes clatter. • Provide earphones for individual or group; even if the deaf learner can't use these, noise from the rest of the class will be reduced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the arrangements may need to be negotiated with school/college management; tutor may need help in making the case. • Ask the learner what sounds s/he finds most intrusive; they may be sounds which are unnoticed by the teacher (e.g. hum from heating or lighting). • If appropriate, discuss with the learner whether s/he can/wishes to use a radio aid, with cassette recorder and conference microphone attachments where necessary.
D	Student has difficulty understanding recorded voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology used by deaf students to aid hearing may not be compatible with language learning technology. • This may reduce learner's exposure to native voices. • Particular problems associated with listening assessments normally presented on tape. • Depending on frequency loss, the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure recordings and playback equipment are of high sound quality and well maintained. • Provide options which increase the number of channels of communication open to students e.g. transcripts, videos, CDs which provide text as well as sound and vision. • Make sure learner has access to a written list of proper names; these are difficult to work out from context. • Try to arrange for deaf learner to have extra time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore 'connective' technology which gives a better sound quality; try to bring together lab technician and audio technicians so they can combine skills and see what the possibilities are. • FLA may need some training in deaf awareness and communication strategies. • If appropriate, use a radio aid, with cassette recorder attachment. • Consider lipspeaking the content of the tape so the student has visual backup for residual hearing.

		student may find some languages 'easier' to hear than others.	<p>with a foreign language assistant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language lab equipment is often the worse for wear; find out if the student has access to better equipment at home or in a resource base; be flexible about allowing student to use the software in an alternative location. • Consider discussion with the student if they find male or female voices easier to hear, and if possible offer tapes with 'easier' voices for the student to listen to at home. • Advise the student to purchase the tutor's book, as well as the student's course book, as this will often contain additional useful information and transcripts of tape exercises. 	
E	Student finds it difficult to monitor own speech output.	Student may have difficulty developing pronunciation which would be understood by a native speaker of L2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach the phonetic system of L2 early on in the course. • Where both tutor and student are familiar with International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), use this to supplement the teaching of phonics. • Provide student with list of words which change their meaning if pronunciation changes. • Arrange for student to have extra time for 1-to-1 work on pronunciation, with tutor or FLA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use cued speech so that student can check and verify pronunciation. • Arrange for phonetic chart/map to be available for student and tutor; they may need some training in order to use it effectively. • Try to get hold of software that records a student's voice and produces a graph of the output; student can then compare this with a 'model' graph, and so monitor and improve own output. • Where student has input from SLT who knows L2 some time might be spent on L2; SLT may need to be provided with exemplar materials.
F	Student has difficulty understanding unusual names, the effect of rhyme, play on words, idioms, jokes, etc.	Difficulties intensified in L2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of the problem and make explanations as explicit as possible. 	Cued speech can often be quicker than fingerspelling to point out these features in L2, but both student and SW need to be very familiar with cued speech to be able to exploit the resource it offers. As a resource, see www.cuedspeech.org.uk
G	Student's first language is Sign Language, and/or student's home language is not L1 and/or student has gaps in their understanding of L1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutors explanations of word order or grammar in L2 are often based on comparison with L1; these explanations may not make much sense to the student, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information (e.g. notes, videos) for student & SW to work on in advance. • Where examples crop up in the course of teaching, be aware of the problem and be as clear as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SW should get information in advance; tries to think of meaningful equivalent examples which will make sense to the student. (Note that student often gains a better understanding of L1 from the comparisons with L2.)

		<p>especially when interpreted through Sign.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many deaf students have not been taught the grammar of Sign Language; this student may not be able to draw useful comparisons between SL and L2. 	<p>possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a 1-to-1 setting you may be able to find alternative ways of explaining points a student is having problems with. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tutor may need an awareness session as an aid to understanding student's difficulties. SW and student use agreed signs for grammar labels. Use of cued speech may throw light on some points.
H	Student's first language is Sign; s/he sometimes makes mistakes with word order in L1.	How does SW deal with L1 word order explanations when interpreting through medium of Sign, which uses a different system?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide lots of examples for comparison. Write examples on the board so they can be studied. Use technology to create animations showing how word order changes between L1 and L2. (it is not unusual for student to gain insight into word order in both L1 and L2 using this approach.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some cases, Sign is used to convey the meaning only of what is said in L1, not L2. Where associated Sign Language is known by students and SW, use of some of the foreign SL can help. If student is interested, investigate possibility of student learning the foreign sign language instead of foreign oral languages. (Not many opportunities for this at present, but ICT and online glossaries etc. may make it a plausible option the future.)
I	Student has little or no residual hearing. Listening and speaking cause problems.	Assessment regulations often insist of evidence of attainment in all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore possibility of waivers for oral/aural sections of the exam, allowing student to concentrate on the visual forms of L2 (reading, writing). Sometimes alternatives can be negotiated, eg. reading a transcript instead of listening; cueing or fingerspelling a reply which is then voiced by SW. Conduct listening and speaking assessments in a room apart from other pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide alternative modes of communication where they are allowed. For speaking assessments, see if transliteration is permitted. It may be possible to record speaking activities (eg. role-play) via a computer programme so that student can see how his/her speech is recording.
J	Student can do only one visual task at a time (e.g. cannot lipread or watch SW at the same time as writing).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty taking notes while tutor is speaking. Particular problems during listening assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of the problem and allow extra time for writing. Make sure student has finished writing before beginning to speak again. Request extra time during formal assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW may need to prepare the case for application for extra time and/or separate room.

K	Student communicates with hearing people using sign language interpretation.	How is this student to understand the tutor when the tutor is explaining or giving instructions in L1?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face the student (face not in shadow). • Speak distinctly at slow but normal speed. • Watch for signs of incomprehension and be prepared to repeat if necessary. • Use visuals and written form of the language whenever possible; try not to rely on speech alone. 	Interpret in the usual way, using additional supports as required.
		How is this student to understand the tutor when the tutor is using L2?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write on the board or OHP: instructions, unfamiliar words, important points. • Provide handouts to confirm and consolidate important points; provide these in advance if possible. • Arrange additional tutorials when student can raise points not understood. 	SW's task is to convey the SOUND of the foreign language, not the meaning, so lipspeaking, cued speech and transliteration will follow L2 word order.
		How is this student to gain experience of L2 speech from other native speakers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for foreign films with captioning so that student can follow sound and vision supported by text. • Allow student to make use of these at home or in language lab so that he/she can work at a suitable pace, review as necessary etc. • Try to arrange additional 1-to-1 sessions with FLA. 	FLA may need deaf awareness training,
L+	Student uses residual hearing together with amplification and other supports.	How is this student to understand the tutor when the tutor is explaining or giving instructions in L1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to use whatever amplification best suits student's pattern of hearing loss. • Face the student (face not I shadow). • Speak distinctly at slow but normal speed. • Watch for signs of incomprehension and be prepared to repeat if necessary. 	Provide supports agreed with student, which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • amplification • lipspeaking, with or without cueing • electronic or manual note-taking • fingerspelling
		How is this student to understand the tutor when the tutor is using L2?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use visuals and written form of the language whenever possible; try not to rely on speech alone. • Write on the board or OHP: instructions, unfamiliar words, important points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of amplification to maximise exposure to sounds of L2. • Support this with lipspeaking, cueing, transliteration, following L2 word order, according to what student finds most helpful; this will be easier if SW has some knowledge of L2.

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