Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing with Learning Disabilities: An Educational Perspective

Advancing educational opportunities for people who are deaf or hard of hearing
Co-occurring Disabilities

Identification and Strategies for Secondary Teachers who work with Deaf or Hard of Hearing Students who may have Co-occurring Disabilities that present an additional challenge to learning.
Co-occurring Disabilities

- Hearing loss combined with another disability.
- Need additional services.
Diversity

A higher percentage of the student population is now:

– Hard-of-hearing.
– From minority racial/ethnic backgrounds.
– Most are integrated into regular school classes.
Differences

• The differences are great.
• Those with differing co-occurring disabilities:
  – May function at different levels.
  – Have different ways of learning.
Age of Identification

Those with moderate co-occurring disabilities:

- Identification tends to be later.
- Often educated several years before additional disabilities are identified.
Distribution

Series 1

- No add 51.1%
- Dev. Dis 19.5%
- Learn 8.5%
- Attn Def 5.6%
Majority of Older Graduates

Large majority of 17-year-old students leaving high school:
  – 81% Have no additional disabilities.

  – Whereas the majority of 22-year-old students leaving high school:
    • 62% have one more additional disabilities.
Challenges for an Educational Program

• A lack of appropriate assessments.
• A shortage of curriculum material and methods.
• A shortage of well-prepared educators.

Academic failure is attributed to:

- Co-occurring disabilities.
- Lack of adequately trained teachers in:
  - etiologies,
  - vision conditions,
  - behavior,
Continued--Academic Failure:

- transition,
- sensory integration,
- seizures,
- alternate assessment,
- and instructional strategies.
Determination of Learning Disability

Conducted by an evaluator who:

• Qualified to evaluate specific learning disabilities.
• Has additional training and experience.

Learning disabilities:

- One means of identifying a deaf or hard of hearing student with a learning disability is to compare his or her function to that of other students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

(Stewart & Kluwin, 2001)
Challenges for Students who have LD:

- Spelling.
- Discourse.
- Spatial/temporal relations.
- Vocabulary.
- Expressive and receptive comprehension of questions.
- Comprehension of pronouns.

(Soukup, M. & Feinstein, S. 2007, citing Samar 1999)
Strategies for Teaching Students with LD

1. Accept slower progress.
2. Use modeling, prompting, and shaping when teaching new skills.
3. Provide practice, review and previously learned skills in a variety of settings.
4. Support and encourage.

Luckner & Carter, 2001; Stewart and Kluwin, 2001
Instructional Strategies

Learning Disabled:

• Get visual attention.
• Emphasize visual cues (body language, pictures).
• Specialize seating arrangements.
• Minimize visual/auditory distractions.
Additional Instructional Strategies

- Utilize comprehension checks.
- Repeat.
- Rephrase.
- Modify complexity of instruction (concepts, structures, amount).
Instructional Strategies Continued

- Shorten or breakdown information.
- Expand contextual information.
- List key vocabulary.
- Provide individualized help.
Educational Goals

A successful program:

• Person-centered curriculum.
• Future-oriented.
• Goal—prepare students:
  – Function independently after leaving school.
One teacher can not do it all, so seek collaborative intervention:

- Coordinates and integrates expertise across disciplines among service providers.
References


Web-based References

- [www.agbell.org](http://www.agbell.org).
- [http://clercenter.gallaudet.edu/](http://clercenter.gallaudet.edu/).
Visit www.pepnet.org for a listing of outreach specialists by state/territory