### Literacy Challenges and Strategies for the Deaf Student

#### Reading

**Difficulty reading the questions/ text**
- Check the readability of the text.
- Highlight difficult words. These words can be written on the board/flashcards and taught explicitly.
- Graphic and picture cues can assist comprehension and aid word prediction. Pupils to scan the problem for unknown words. Highlight and discuss and define with teacher/peer.
- Reading pen.
- Reading buddy.

**Comprehension difficulties**
- Word walls. Teach the pupil to find key words that give the clue to the meaning.
- Encourage the pupil to draw a simple sketch of word problems, turn the problem into pictures not words.
- Highlight nouns/ verbs in one colour, vocabulary in another etc. Encourage repeated reading. Allow the pupil to use a ruler/reading ruler if the pupil loses their place.
- If the teacher is reading the questions/giving instructions/explaining concepts be aware of the speed used, important to be at a pace that allows pupils to process the information.
- Teachers preview the story/ passage and summarises content and main points with Mindmaps.

**Word comprehension**
- Tactile demonstrations and activities
- Use pictures/ video/ other media to reinforce and review vocabulary taught. (Google images)
- High light multiple word meanings- especially in subject specific contexts, e.g many meaning of the word note
- Use all sources available- computer/ tv/ video
- Cloze tests, blank every nth word to have random mix of structural and lexical words
- Materials without words- comic’s picture stories too be completed
- RAP- read the text, ask yourself what does it mean, put the text into own words

**New vocabulary**
- Students may need to be taught- word meanings/ syntax/ figurative language/ idioms/ inferences
- Word web. Similar to mind maps, link as many words to one in the centre, e.g ice-cream-cold-hard/ soft- chocolate-cone...
- Use all sources available- computer/ tv/ video
- Highlight difficult words. These words can be written on the board/flashcards and taught explicitly.
- Graphic and picture cues can assist comprehension and aid word prediction. Pupils to scan the problem for unknown words. Highlight and discuss and define with teacher/peer.
## Memory

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<th>Situational Deficit</th>
<th>Suggested Strategies</th>
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| Forgetting verbal instructions | - One step rule, give one instruction at a time. Chunk information.  
- Highlighting of information.  
- Accompany instructions with visual/concrete cues where possible.  
- Teach internal rehearsal techniques, mind-mapping, give the pupils extra time etc |
| Poor visual memory and difficulties copying information from the board/book | - More time. Consider giving the pupil a handout |
| Difficulties remembering the sequencing of events involved in a piece of writing or structure of an answer | - Checklists (sequence checklist).  
- Teacher should model the steps of the problem aloud (self talk), encourage pupils to do same.  
- Story retell (where possible if the student can)  
- Visual/picture retell - allow students to draw to illustrate what they have read  
- Use prepared pictures to improve sequencing/structure/verbal use  
- Teacher prompts with information filled questions ("what happened when Jonny saw the green car at his house?")  
- Digital material/ use of digital camera to make a book of the students day |
| Can't remember multiple word meanings | - Colour coding, memory cards.  
- Method cards  
- Charts to illustrate possible meanings  
- Multisensory approach, colour coding  
- Provide support when completing reading/writing comprehensions.  
- Make links between different uses of the same vocabulary in different subject areas. |
| Language processing difficulty | - Write clear instructions for pupils  
- Use visual cues to assist in information recall  
- Mind Maps/Flow charts to link new learning to prior knowledge  
- Internal rehearsal |
### Finding/ Using required information

| Teaching Left to right directional words | • Pupils may need a personal strategy for remembering this, some ideas may be to mark left and right on the corners of their desk show that their left hand can make the letter L by holding the left fingers together and the thumb horizontal.  
• Incorporate the teaching of left to right in all day-to-day activities.  
• If the pupil has difficulties knowing where to begin on their copy the teacher may mark a point in marker where they can begin |
| --- | --- |
| Prepositions (above, below) | • Play games that incorporate these words in PE for example cross curricular reinforcement needed at PP level  
• Cue cards |
| Difficult directional words e.g. horizontal, vertical, diagonal | • Use PE/ other subjects as a way to introduce these words.  
• Use concrete objects and allow pupils to arrange them horizontally/ diagonally etc, Maps can work really well here |
| Difficulties reading questions/ structuring answers | • Colour code headings etc  
• Use squared paper or lined paper turned sideways to create columns  
• Start work with title/ date  
• Colour code answers  
• Underline key requirement of question (who, what, where, how)  
• Standardise question formats where possible across subjects  
• Teach explicitly exam vocabulary (illustrate with aid of a diagram= draw a picture) |
| Copying from blackboard | • Use different coloured chalk to assist the child in following from one line to another  
• Reduce amount of information to be copied  
• Provide copy of information |
### Organisation

| Locating books/equipment difficulties | • Colour code books and copies.  
• Have a separate pencil case for maths to include ruler, pencil, protractor etc.  
• Have a folder (as distinct as possible) for each subjects handouts, loose leaf pages etc.  
• Consider a home school -wallet for home/school work  
• E-mailing of homework where possible to encourage computer literacy, use of spell check etc |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Writing, organisation / where to begin on the page | • Clear margin, page / work title  
• Teach pupils to underline key words in answer.  
• Organisational Check list / Task Management Board  
• Class prizes for most improved copy/ neatest work of the week  
• Ensure correct use of pens/ pencils  
• Avoid fountain pens |
| Writing down homework | • Consider a buddy system/Allow time specifically for this to be taken down at the end of the maths lesson.  
• Consider the use of colour-coded homework sheets |
| Copying from blackboard | • Use different coloured chalk to assist the child in following from one line to another  
• Reduce amount of formation to be copied  
• Allow the student to have a copy of information from a peer  
• Use of ‘white boards’ and technology means many notes can be mailed to the class  
• Get students to complete ‘cloze- tests’ based on the blackboard notes |
## Language

### Language fluency difficulty
- Awareness of key areas of difficulty – use of definite and indefinite article ‘the’ & ‘a’
- Teach, teach and teach again the use of ‘s’
- Self talk, pupil to read aloud as they work so they can hear the language and method that they are using, teacher should model this method. (only in a supportive class environment)
- Chunk the information – speak in short, clear sentences
- Allow ‘thinking time’ and ‘response time’
- Use mindmaps to outline the lesson, to teach and to summarise
- Encourage pupils to create personal mindmaps to clarify the lesson for themselves and to facilitate processing of information
- Support ‘teacher talk’ with visual cues
- Provide concrete materials and resources

### Vocabulary
- Use accessible language appropriate to students comprehension
- Introduce new vocabulary in a concrete way e.g Wave (verb) also has a different meaning in science/ geography (use of multi-media/ internet invaluable)
- Visual Cues
- Pre-teach the key subject/ class vocabulary- key word list on the board
- Access and proper use of Dictionary, basic picture one may be most accessible for a time
- Online Dictionary/ word games
- Verbal instructions to be accompanied by visuals and/ or practical demonstration
- Use word games/ build alphabet knowledge
- Easier to teach words with primary lexical meaning-verbs, nouns, adjectives etc., than structure/ function words- prepositions etc
- Teaching of multiple meanings use of pictures
- Demonstrate structure words- on/ in/ who
- Use of story maps/ illustration to assess students understanding of literature
- Dictation of or writing of students own stories- language experience method- keep a diary/ journal
- Dialogue journals, each student starts a dialogue and another continues
### Attention

#### Avoiding student frustration

- Break tasks into a series of small steps
- Give information in more than one modality
- Keep instructions short – CHUNK
- Demonstrate instructions with diagram or picture
- Provide students with a scribble pad
- Allow thinking time – revision picture / mind map
- Checklists / Adhesive notes
- Seat students close to where teacher usually stands
- Transparent zip wallet/folder – urgent tasks
- Teacher should face student, and windows should be located at rear of class
- Ensure appropriate use of hearing aids
- Utilise technological aids where possible and practicable FM systems/ sound field systems etc
- Check the seating position of the student away from sources of noise (projectors/ open doors/ computers etc)
- Ensure the student knows what is happening
- Teach communication strategies to express anger/ frustration - (Tucker Turtle series)

#### Social skills/ well being (a ‘happy’ secure student is more likely to improve academically, when they feel they are amongst a supportive peer group)

- Board games and computers may be utilised for turn-taking, communication and social interaction
- Utilise friendship building tasks - buddy system etc
- May require direct teaching if social skills/ language
- Be aware of difficulties for students in less structured times of the school day - play/ yard time
- Directly teach organisational skills
- Co-operative learning can assist understanding of materials
- Sign language classes for the class where appropriate
- Ensure student is aware of who is speaking at a given time
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<td>• Allow adequate time for the student to process and respond</td>
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<td>• Work closely with speech and language therapist/ family/ principal carer to establish primary means of communication</td>
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<td>• Provide clear and unambiguous instruction with regard to home/ class work and expectations.</td>
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<td>• Be consistent with language, where possible pre-teach new vocabulary</td>
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<td>• Place emphasis on key words/ instructions/ concepts. (Underline/ colour coded as well as in speech etc)</td>
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<td>• Pace oral instructions</td>
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<td>• Use of all media should have subtitles</td>
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<td>• Supply photocopied handouts rather than lots of dictation</td>
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<td>• Avoid over pronunciation</td>
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<td>• Avoid beards/ over obtrusive glasses etc</td>
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<td>• Awareness of audiological reports to ensure comprehensive use of all available hearing</td>
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<td>• Ask student ‘what do they think?’ encourage longer responses</td>
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<td>• Teach an understanding of words through use of actual objects where possible and move concrete to abstract</td>
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<td>• Check understanding</td>
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<td>• Write the title of new work on the board to prepare the student</td>
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<td>• Encourage questioning/ advocacy and perhaps develop cues for ‘I do not understand’</td>
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<td>• Surround students in literacy environment</td>
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<td>• Encourage a positive sense of reading within the school- JCSP programmes/ reading week/ use of libraries/ Readathon</td>
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<td>• Guided homework- clear, understood and home involvement ideally</td>
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<td>• Use a consistent system of marks for correcting (cross curricular if possible at PP)</td>
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<td>• Focus on one aspect of literacy to correct at a time- school ‘comma’ week/ language boards</td>
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