

Classroom Communication

Sidney M. Barefoot

Associate Professor

NTID at RIT

Workshop Topics

The Importance of Classroom Communication

Strategies to Prepare for

Classroom Communication Diversity

Strategies for Responding to

Classroom Communication Diversity

Applying Strategies to

Specific Communication Situations

A Professional Development Checklist

The Importance of Classroom Communication



The Communication of Deaf Students Can Be Diverse

- Language
- Modality
- Cultural identity
- Gender
- Emotional influences
- Physical influences

Students value learning with their communication strengths

- ◆ Access to visual information



Students value learning with their communication strengths

- ◆ Opportunity to use their residual hearing



Deaf and hard of hearing students value learning with their communication strengths

- ◆ Use of their strongest language

英語 ABCDEFGHIJ
ギリシャ文字 ΑΒΓ ΔΕΖΗΘ
キリル文字 АБВГДЕЁЖ

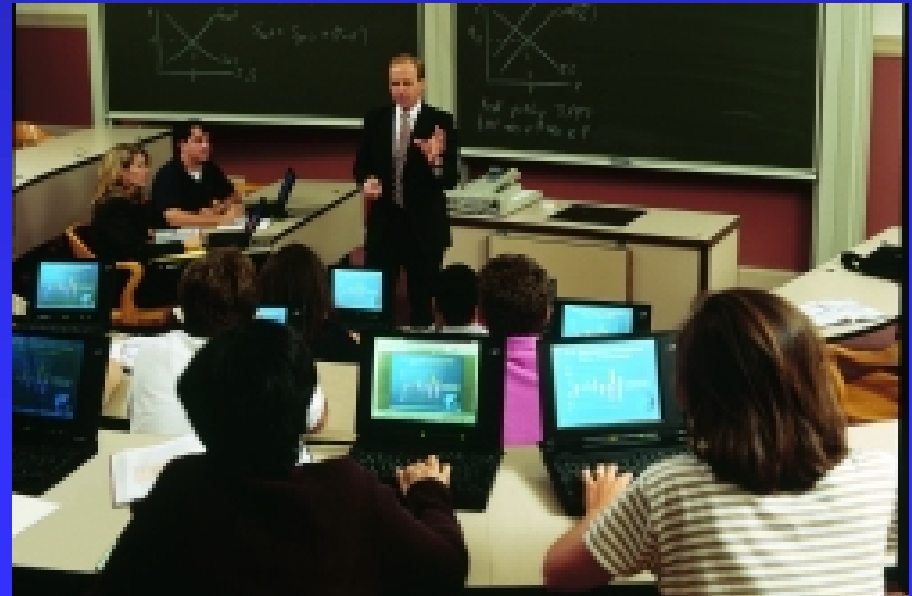


When Communication is Effective...

- Learning is easier
- Goals are more likely to be met
- Opportunities emerge for expanded learning
- Students and faculty connect better
- More positive perceptions influence the overall college experience

The Challenge

- To create a classroom environment where communication issues are openly recognized and managed in a way that promotes learning.



Strategies to Prepare for Classroom Communication Diversity

Strategy 1: Assess and develop your own communication skills and knowledge

- Sign language proficiency
- Spoken language proficiency with deaf and hard of hearing people
- Ability to adapt written language to promote student learning
- Knowledge of cultures and skills in intercultural communication
- Knowledge of hearing aids, cochlear implants, and assistive technology

Strategy 2: Learn more about each student's communication before the course begins.

- Reading and writing characteristics
- Sign language type and proficiency
- Speech and speech reception abilities
- Cultural background
- Hearing aid/cochlear implant use
- Readiness to use assistive technology

Do you need a break?





Strategies for Responding to Classroom Communication Diversity

Factors Seen in Successful Management of Communication Diversity

- Shared understandings of the communication situation while also respecting confidentiality
- Openly discussed descriptions of the value of diversity
- Student-faculty co-participation in the management of communication
- Effective use of college resources
- Trust and respect
- Students who bridge others' communication toward a more effective group process
- Other teamwork among students

Strategy 1: Begin each course with a preliminary plan for communication success

- Base plan on your preliminary knowledge of students' communication skills and needs

Strategy 2: Informally evaluate classroom communication dynamics

- Look for communication similarities and diversity among students
- Determine if your preliminary understandings of students were accurate
- Determine if student patterns appear to be assets and/or challenges

Strategy 3: Evaluate writing samples

- Collect academic writing and informal writing (e-mail, TTY, etc.)
- Compare written communication clarity with other communication modes
- Determine if writing tutoring or other support is needed

Strategy 4: Ask the students to describe communication

- Use questionnaires for self-description of communication strengths and needs
- Ask students what they are seeing in the classroom dynamics
- Ask students what they would like to do to make communication more effective

Strategy 5: Adjust the classroom environment as needed

- Adjust lighting, seating, acoustics, etc.
- Adapt visual presentation for visually restricted students

Strategy 6: Establish communication rules and guidelines

- Remind everyone that communication is highly valued in the classroom
- Explain how rules can help students learn together
- Use group discussion to develop communication guidelines
- Set limits on rules and accommodations as needed
- Periodically ask students to assess communication and adapt guidelines as needed

Strategy 7: Use technology to support communication

- In-class media
- Computerized interaction (student-student and student-faculty)
 - ◆ E-mail
 - ◆ Online discussions
 - ◆ Online class notes and supplements
 - ◆ Other

Strategy 8: Make other special accommodations

- Allow more time on task
- Meet with students individually
- Refer students to tutoring and other support activities

Need a rest?

You can go out....

but please come back!



Applying Strategies to Specific Communication Situations

NTID Situation 1:

“The Distracter”



A student usually comes into class and takes his seat without speaking to or looking at the professor. During the lecture part of the classes, he frequently initiates conversation with students sitting nearby, using sign without voice. When the professor indicates that that is not acceptable behavior because it distracts attention from the lecture, the student is quiet for a few minutes and then begins to converse again. A few other students do not seem to mind this and often participate in these “private” conversations. By the end of the third week, none of the students has approached the professor to complain and most students’ grades seem to be within the normal range. However, the professor is completely irritated and angered by this student.

Strategies and Techniques for “The Distracter”

- What challenges or problems do you see in this situation?
- In what ways can this student provide a valuable contribution to this course?
- What additional information would help you better understand this situation?
- How would you respond to this situation?

NTID Situation 2:

“The Non-Signer”



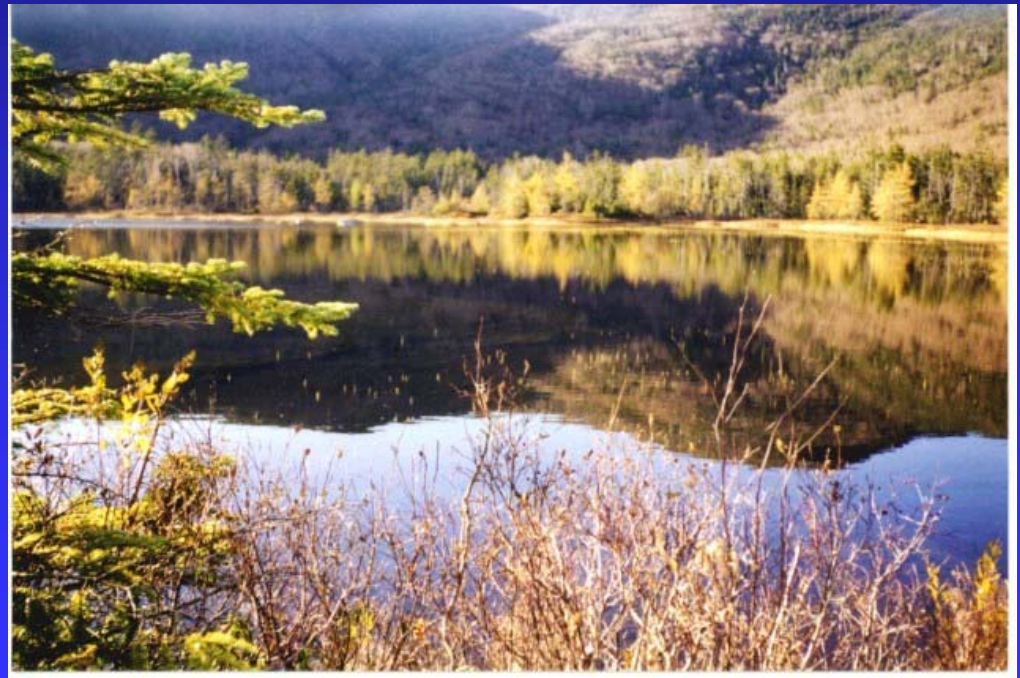
One male student in a class of twenty students uses speech and a little signing that he learned recently. He knows that the professor is a hearing person. As the first class begins, he volunteers information more than anyone in class. He uses speech but also adds some signs and fingerspelling. He takes a lot of time planning his signing and his communication is extremely slow. Several students express appreciation for this man trying to sign, but they also say it's difficult to understand him. The student who is learning to sign says he is not getting his thoughts out when signing and he is not doing very well understanding those who use sign language without voice. He asks the instructor to sign interpret when he speaks and voice interpret for the non-speakers.

Strategies and Techniques for “The Non-Signer”

- What challenges or problems do you see in this situation?
- In what ways can this student provide a valuable contribution to this course?
- What additional information would help you better understand this situation?
- How would you respond to this situation?

NTID Situation 3:

“The Quiet One”



In a technical course, students are expected to contribute to class problem-solving tasks. A female student who moved from Japan to the U.S. to study at NTID has an excellent attendance record but almost never participates voluntarily. Her replies to direct questions are always very brief. Her language abilities seem to the professor to be similar to the other students. When the class is asked to divide into small work teams for an out-of-class follow-up project, one student points toward the Japanese student and says to the entire class, “I’m not going to be on a team with her. The rest of us will have to do all the work.”

Strategies and Techniques for “The Quiet One”

- What challenges or problems do you see in this situation?
- In what ways can this student provide a valuable contribution to this course?
- What additional information would help you better understand this situation?
- How would you respond to this situation?

NTID Situation 4:

“The Overlooked ASL User”



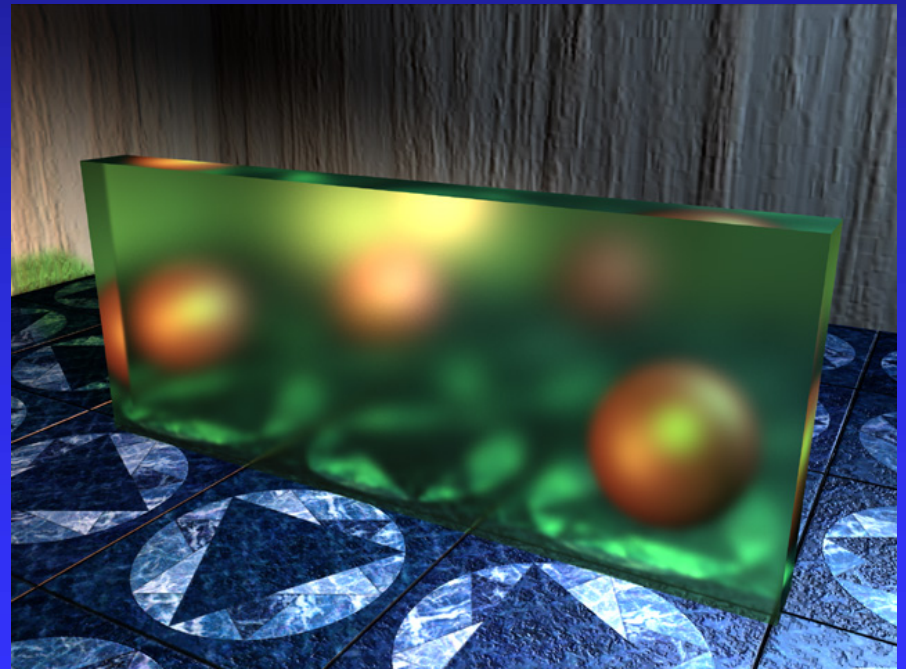
A student raises her hand in the second week of classes and says to the professor, “I am concerned that you are ignoring my need for ASL.” She says that ASL is her first language and asks why the professor and a few of the students are not more skilled in using the language of Deaf people in a college for Deaf people. It is the professor’s belief that the class consists of several students who are long-term ASL users but most of the students have been using English-based signing during class. The professor knows that two students strongly prefer spoken English but they all are able to use English-based signing fairly well. None of the students responds to the woman who asked for ASL to be used in class. They wait to see how the professor will handle her question and her concern.

Strategies and Techniques for “The Overlooked ASL User”

- What challenges or problems do you see in this situation?
- In what ways can this student provide a valuable contribution to this course?
- What additional information would help you better understand this situation?
- How would you respond to this situation?

NTID Situation 5:

“The Visually Impaired”



A female student with very restricted vision is enrolled in a course that uses a lot of visual media. The professor and other students do not know her vision is restricted. In the first class, the professor hands out the course description. It includes NTID's policy on providing special accommodations for students in the classroom. The policy says that it is each student's responsibility to inform the professor if there are any special visual, auditory or other needs that require accommodation. At the end of the fifth week, the student is handed her exam with a failing grade. She approaches the instructor privately and asks, "How can you fail me when I can't read small print, I couldn't tell who was talking in class, you moved around too much and the room was too bright for me to see the board?"

Strategies and Techniques for “The Visually Impaired”

- What challenges or problems do you see in this situation?
- In what ways can this student provide a valuable contribution to this course?
- What additional information would help you better understand this situation?
- How would you respond to this situation?

What is life like where *you* live?

A discussion about our own classes



Discussion Question 1

- List 4 ways in which communication diversity is seen in your classrooms. Describe how this diversity can be both a value and a challenge.

◆ 1 _____ Value? Challenge?

◆ 2

◆ 3

◆ 4

Discussion Question 2

- Describe 2 things you do (or would like to do) in the management of communication in your courses.
 - ◆ 1
 - ◆ 2

Discussion Question 3

- Describe 2 ways you can develop yourself professionally to become more skilled with communication diversity in the classroom?
 - ◆ 1
 - ◆ 2

Professional Development Checklist:

I. Reflecting on Diversity

- I have listed some examples of communication diversity I have seen in my courses.
- I have described how this diversity was valuable in the learning process.
- I have described how this diversity was a challenge or an obstacle to learning.

Professional Development Checklist:

II. Thinking about Improvements

- I have described some changes I would like to make in my own communication in the classroom.
- I have described some changes I would like to see students make in their communication in the classroom.

Professional Development Checklist:

III. Deciding What I Need to Learn

- To improve communication in my courses, I have decided what I need to learn from:
 - ◆ Students
 - ◆ The literature
 - ◆ Other faculty
 - ◆ My administration
 - ◆ Others, including _____

Professional Development Checklist:

IV. Choosing My Resources

- To improve communication in my courses, I know what I need for:
 - ◆ Budget
 - ◆ Materials
 - ◆ Expertise from others
 - ◆ Other _____

Professional Development Checklist:

V. Implementing Improvements

- I have received the support I need from my college and others.
- I have applied in the classroom the new communication skills and strategies I have learned.

Professional Development Checklist:

VI. Evaluating

- I have evaluated the effectiveness of the changes my students and I have made in classroom communication.
- I have communicated the outcomes of my professional development to others.

I wish you great success in your
future classroom communication.

Thank you for learning
with me in this workshop.

Sidney M. Barefoot
NTID Speech-Language Department
smbncs@rit.edu

Photo Credits

- Slide 3 Classroom1 - <http://www.comm.cornell.edu/newsletter/Rimg0026.jpg>
- Slide 5a Classroom2 - <http://www.northcentral.tec.wi.us/wonder/sysdesc/Wwtc.jpg>
- Slide 5b Mouth - <http://www.thebigholistic.com/images/mouth.jpg>
- Slide 5c Hand - <http://www.palatineinc.com/images/sign.jpg>
- Slide 6a Converse - <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-aiia/hypocrisy.html>
- Slide 6b Implant - <http://www.oraldeafed.org/schools/cid/images/implant.jpg>
- Slide 6c Aid - http://www.hearingtests.ca/hearing_aids.htm
- Slide 7a Alphabets - <http://www.p-word.com/images/russian-script.gif>
- Slide 7b Teacher - www.spedlawyer.com/sign-language.jpg

Photo Credits (2)

- Slide 9 Classroom3 - <http://www.mba.wfu.edu/images/classroom.jpg>
- Slide 13 Fatigue - http://www.1001cartes.com/perso/images_perso/fatigue.jpg
- Slide 24 Island - www.northernwoodtravel.com/cruises/january_2001/57929a1.jpg
- Slide 25 Distracter - <http://www.shc.uiowa.edu/asl/asl5.gif>
- Slide 29 Non-Signer - <http://www.educause.edu/pub/ce/cem98/graphics/cem983-toc.gif>
- Slide 32 Quiet One - <http://www.jonh.net/~jonh/photos/small/chi-lonesome-lake-2.jpg>
- Slide 35 ASL- http://www.nysd.k12.ny.us/Images_Fall2000/ASLClass.gif
- Slide 38 Vision - <http://www.3dluvr.com/jamine/r7/blurry-transparency.jpg>
- Slide 41 Discuss – <http://baharna.com/cmythos/strange1.jpg>