

# Making Music Education Accessible for Students with Hearing Loss

Andrew Strutz and Alexis Lamb

## Communication Modalities

Meet with the student beforehand to understand which communication modality/modalities they prefer. A student may use multiple modalities fluidly to adapt to a changing environment. **The student's chosen communication modality does not necessarily equate to the severity of their hearing loss.**

- Hearing
  - May include non-assisted residual hearing, hearing aids, cochlear implants, and assistive devices e.g. FM-radio/Bluetooth
- Visual language/communication
  - American Sign Language (ASL), Signed Exact English (SEE), Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE)
- Lip reading
  - Involves comprehending spoken speech by interpreting lip movements (visemes)

## General Guidance

- Understand that the student has a reduced, disproportionate access to communication
- Always face towards students
  - Allows for lipreading/reading body language cues
- Speak at your normal volume and pace
- Minimize room noise
- Lighting
  - Individuals with hearing loss are more visually dependant
- Visual aids
  - Written access to lesson goals/assignments/feedback reduces miscommunication
- Any videos with spoken language needs to be captioned

## Accommodations

### Individual education

Musicians with hearing loss should be exposed to a variety of ways to listen. Individuals with any level of hearing loss can still develop musical skills including; pitch, rhythm, dynamics and articulation. The student should be encouraged to explore these concepts as methods to listen.

- Visual information
- Vibrotactile sense - feeling vibrations through touch
- Residual hearing (if any)

### Classroom education

- Try to refrain from talking while writing on board
- Manage unneeded classroom noise
- If the student uses a sign language interpreter allow for extra time
- Consider writing lesson goals and piece/sections on board
- Supplementary material needs to be captioned