

Teaching students in VET who have a hearing loss: Glossary of Terms

As is the case with any specialised field, terminology relating to people who are deaf or hard of hearing can appear confusing. A glossary is therefore provided below to assist you in your work with deaf and hard of hearing students.

Glossaries are grouped into five key areas, each of them individually alphabetised:

- Deafness-related terms (page 2)
- Communication and language-related terms (page 3)
- Technology and communication-related terms (pages 4 and 5)
- Interpreting and notetaking-related terms (page 5)
- Deafblind-related terms (page 6)

References to further resources have also been provided (page 6 and 7)

Deafness-related terms

Term	Meaning
audiogram	A graph that plots the degree of hearing loss. It records the threshold of hearing, which means the degree of pure tone required at each frequency before the person can perceive that sound exists.
audiologist	A person specifically trained to measure hearing and diagnose the degree and type of hearing loss.
central deafness	A hearing loss resulting from damage or dysfunction within the brain.
conductive deafness	A hearing loss resulting from damage or dysfunction in the middle ear.
deaf	An audiological term to describe a person who cannot hear. This person may or may not use sign language to communicate. Usually associated with people with a significant hearing loss.
Deaf	A sociological term which is used by people with a hearing loss who communicate in Auslan and who identify as a member of the Deaf community.
Deaf community	A cultural and linguistic minority group of people who have their own language (Auslan) and their own culture and values. Members of the Deaf community do not generally identify as having a disability.
deafness	An audiological measure of a hearing loss.
decibel (dB)	The intensity or loudness of sound.
degree of deafness	The level or extent of the hearing loss; mild (21 to 40 dB), moderate (41 to 55 dB), moderately severe (56 to 70 dB), severe (71 to 90 dB) and profound (90 + dB). For a simulation of what a hearing loss can sound like, go to www.deafconnected.com.au/teachers/#resources .
frequency (Hz)	The pitch of sound (e.g. low, rumbling sound, high, squealing sound)
hard of hearing or hearing impaired	A type of hearing loss which is not total. People who identify in this way can often communicate with most people through personal amplification devices in quiet listening conditions.
hearing impairment	A term to describe deafness usually used by medical practitioners, educationalists and ancillary medical practitioners who deal with hearing loss (e.g. audiologists, speech pathologists).
mute or dumb	Obsolete terms that are now considered very offensive and should not be used (e.g. deaf and dumb, deaf mute).
sensori-neural deafness	A hearing loss resulting from damage or dysfunction in the inner ear or cochlea.

Communication and language-related terms

Term	Meaning
Auslan	A term coined by linguist Trevor Johnston in 1987 while researching the first Auslan dictionary. The term is a contraction of <u>A</u> ustralian <u>S</u> ign <u>L</u> anguage. Auslan is a distinct and separate language with a grammar system that differs from English. It is <u>not</u> based on English nor is it a visual form of English. Auslan does not have a written form.
cued speech	A system of placing fingers near the mouth to indicate the speech sounds. This must be used in conjunction with lipreading. Once used predominantly in schools to teach speech reading, it is not widely used today.
fingerspelling	Movements of the fingers to represent the 26 letters of the English alphabet which allows words to be spelled on the hands. Fingerspelling is used in Auslan predominantly to convey proper nouns or specific English words. Very few people communicate solely through fingerspelling because it is slow.
lipreading	A process whereby spoken English is understood by watching lip patterns, with or without residual hearing. Only about 30% of English speech sounds are visible on the mouth. Lipreading therefore works best when the context is understood and familiar to the person lipreading.
Makaton	A communication approach used with adults or children who can usually hear, but who have a learning or communication difficulty. Spoken English is used in conjunction with key signs.
oral deaf	An informal term used to describe a deaf person who communicates through speech and lipreading but not through sign language.
signed language	A general term for any visual, spatial language used by Deaf people to communicate. Signed languages vary around the world although some signed languages are related. British Sign Language and Auslan are similar, for example, because Auslan evolved from British Sign Language. American Sign Language and Auslan have very different origins however, and are not mutually intelligible.
Signed English	A contrived, manually coded form of English that uses one manual sign for each spoken word in English and follows the English grammar system. It was developed in the 1980s as an educational tool to assist deaf children to read and write in English. It is no longer used.
signing deaf	An informal term used to describe a deaf person who uses sign language to communicate.

Technology and communication-related terms

Term	Meaning
captioned DVD	English captions or subtitles added to a DVD that can be viewed when desired. Not all commercial DVDs are closed captioned. You can usually identify from the case or the DVD menu whether the disc is captioned or not.
cochlear implant	A device surgically implanted into the cochlea of a deaf person. The device uses a limited number of electrodes to convey sound directly to the auditory nerve. The individual must learn to recognise these sounds. It is popularly known as the bionic ear but, unlike what the nickname implies, the sounds conveyed are not the same as the sounds heard by someone with normal hearing. The success of the cochlear implant is very individual and dependent on a number of factors.
FM system	A Frequency Modulated System enables sounds to be transmitted from a microphone worn by the speaker to a transmitter attached to the hearing aid worn by the receiver (the person with a hearing loss).
hearing aid	A device worn by a deaf person that will amplify sound, making it easier to hear. Unlike glasses that correct vision, hearing aids do not correct hearing. Therefore, a hearing aid user may be able to perceive sounds, but may be unable to identify what those sounds are. This means that, like cochlear implants, the success of the hearing aids is very individual and dependent upon a number of factors.
loop system	A magnetic wire placed around a room that enables the sound input to be transmitted to a hearing aid.
National Relay Service (NRS)	The NRS is an Australia-wide, free telephone access service which allows hearing or speech impairment users to make telephone calls using a TTY or a computer connected to the internet. Likewise, anyone who want to contact a person who is deaf or hearing or speech impaired can make a call via the NRS. Tel: 133 677 or 133 NRS.
real-time captions	This is a system of stenographic captioning that occurs in real time, as dialogue occurs. Usually it is done remotely with the stenographer listening through a phone connection and the person with a hearing loss reading the captions on a laptop through a secure website.
real-time chat	Programs such as <i>MSN Messenger</i> have created easier forms of communication for people with a hearing loss. This is particularly useful in the workplace.

Skype	A free online video chat service and instant messenger program that is particularly popular with Auslan users as it allows them to communicate in real time in Auslan.
RF system	A frequency modulated system enabling sounds to be transmitted from a microphone worn by the speaker to the transmitter attached to the hearing aid worn by the receiver (person with a hearing loss).
Teletypewriter (TTY)	A stand-alone, specialised device which is used in conjunction with the public telephone network (in a similar way to a fax or modem). A message is typed on a keyboard, which is then transmitted electronically down the phone line, either to another TTY or to the NRS where it is read on the visual display part of the TTY. TTY communication relies on protocols of taking turns.

Interpreting and notetaking-related terms

Term	Meaning
interpreter	A person who is able to translate (interpret) between two languages in real-time with sensitivity to cultural meaning and the speaker's intent. This enables two or more persons who do not share fluency in each other's languages to communicate. A qualified Auslan/English interpreter will hold accreditation either at NAATI Paraprofessional level or Professional Interpreter level. The higher level indicates the capacity to interpret more complex content.
interpreting time delay OR time lag	The interpreting process requires the interpreter to first see or hear the message in the source language, understand its meaning, reconstruct the meaning in the target language and produce the interpretation. The lag will vary from one to ten seconds depending on the source language and the difficulty in understanding or relaying it into the target language.
notetaker	A person who takes notes in a classroom or other settings. Many deaf and hard of hearing people rely on notetakers in tertiary settings as they are unable to simultaneously take notes and lipread or watch an Auslan interpreter. Notetakers are also employed in other settings such as the workplace (for training and meetings) and in health and legal matters.
tandem OR team interpreting	Two or more interpreters may be required where a booking is lengthy (e.g. more than an hour) or complex. While one interpreter is interpreting, a tandem interpreter will be supporting them for any content they may have missed. Interpreters will swap tasks approximately every 20 minutes.

transliteration	The changing of a message from one mode of a language to another (e.g. from spoken English to signed English). This term has been adapted to describe signing in English and can often be used interchangeably with terms such as visual English, signing in English or manually coded English.
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DeafBlind-related terms

Term	Meaning
deafBlind	A person who has both hearing and vision loss. This could result from a variety of causes. A person may have congenital deafblindness, or be a deaf person or a blind person who then loses the other sense, or a combined vision and hearing loss that occurs through illness, ageing or an accident.
DeafBlind fingerspelling	A method of manually spelling each letter of an English word onto the palm of a person who is deaf and blind. There are a number of shortcuts in this method of communication. This spelling system varies slightly to the fingerspelling system used by the majority of Deaf people in Australia.
tactile or 'hand over hand' signing	A type of communication used by a signing Deaf person who has little or no sight. Sign language is conveyed through touch, with the Deafblind person placing their hands over the hands of the person communicating with them to 'feel' the signs.
Usher's Syndrome (also known as Usher's)	Usher's is a genetic condition with three different types. Type I is the most common in the Deaf community and is characterised by a person being born profoundly deaf, who then progressively loses their sight as a result of retinitis pigmentosa (RP).
visual field or visual frame signing	A type of communication used with a signing deaf person who has a vision loss. People with tunnel vision prefer their communication partner (or interpreter) to stand a certain distance away and sign within a significantly reduced space. This communication method is common amongst people with Usher's who rely on their residual sight.

References

www.hearservice.com.au (Information sheet: Our Ears and How We Hear)

www.hearservice.com.au (fact sheet: What is an Audiogram)

www.hearservice.com.au (fact sheet: Hearing Aids)

www.hearing.com.au/cochlear-implants

www.hearing.com.au/whats-fm-system

www.assistech.com/deaf-communication

www.newcastle.edu.au/research-and-innovation/centre/cseds/programs/key-word-sign-australia/about-us

www.cuedspeech.org

www.aussiedeafkids.org.au/making-choices-about-communication

www.ableaustralia.org.au/images/Documents/resources/deafblind_comm_method_A5.pdf

(all websites current as at April 2014)

More Information

The deafConnectEd website has further information about supporting deaf and hard of hearing students in the VET sector including multimedia resources at:
www.deafconnected.com.au/resources

Alternatively, contact us to discuss your needs. We provide a state-wide service to support the VET sector and to enhance the participation and learning experience of deaf students. We are happy to answer questions by telephone or email or we can visit your institute to provide coaching and advice to teaching staff in your department.

More Information

For the latest news and information about the services and support offered by deafConnectEd, visit our website at:
www.deafconnected.com.au

Our website includes information and resources about:

- deafness and hearing loss
- the education needs of students who are deaf and hard of hearing
- support services for students, including Auslan interpreters and notetakers
- learning Auslan
- research and links to publications

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