

# TEACHER NOTES

## Topic content

### A. Features of successful communication

**Learning outcome:** Be able to arrange and manage environmental and other factors to optimise successful communication with a deafblind person.

- Some electrical equipment can interfere with hearing aids and cochlear implants due to electromagnetic field interference. Candidate's ability to control this may be limited, but should be aware of possible interference/malfunction.
- Other background noise, echo, etc in the vicinity. Candidate may be able to request noise is stopped during assessment, and should ensure doors and windows are closed where this can prevent noise disturbance.
- Making best use of (a) natural light and (b) artificial light. Candidate should take whatever steps are possible to maximise lighting conditions for the assessment.
- Background – candidate should ensure that they have a plain background behind them if possible.
- Proximity – candidate should place chairs between 1 and 2 metres apart. Candidate should be ready to move their chair when asked to communicate using Block, so as to deliver the message appropriately for a deafblind person.
- Candidate should be able to explain to the assessor why they made decisions relating to all the above factors prior to the assessment.
- Use of the communication methods themselves is assessed in B. The candidate is expected to be able to use all of the methods listed, separately or together, in an appropriate manner to sustain a conversation.
- Candidate should manage turn-taking in the conversation, being aware of clues for when the assessor wishes to contribute. Candidate should not be too quick to repeat or re-phrase, allowing time for their own message to be received.



- Candidate should manage eye contact to check that dialogue is successful, and that turn-taking is appropriate.
- Use of a range of methods to support spoken conversation should not unduly disrupt the natural pace and flow of the conversation.
- Candidate should be alert to communication breakdowns, and take appropriate action.
- Where clarification is needed, this should be sought in an appropriate manner, using facial expression where necessary.

## B. Using communication methods and tactics

**Learning outcome:** Be able to use a given range of communication methods and tactics to optimise successful communication with a deafblind person.

Clear speech criteria include:

- mouth not covered by hand
- tongue remains within mouth
- top lip moves during speech
- eye contact is maintained
- head is kept still
- facial expression should reflect content of speech/conversation
- there should be awareness of speech movements that cannot be seen (e.g. g, k)
- there should be awareness of homophones, homophenes and substitutions
- pace of conversation should be natural – not too slow
- mouth movement, tone/pitch and volume of voice should not be exaggerated
- where the message does not appear to be conveyed successfully, the candidate should be ready to repeat or rephrase.
- Gesture, mime and facial expression to support the spoken message in a conversation should all be natural and not over-exaggerated. In a one-to-one conversation there is no room for dramatic sweeping gesture, but gestures must be clear, firm and illustrative. BSL is not permissible except where the mime for a word or phrase is also a BSL sign.



- 'Writing in the air' can be used for short words or initial letters, especially where there is a lipreadability problem. It is not intended for lengthy communication, and the user should be aware of the view of the letters seen by the receiver.
- Some numbers cannot be distinguished on the lips (e.g. 18 and 80). Simple, two-handed ways of showing the number should be used to clarify. BSL number systems should not be used.
- The Manual alphabet (fingerspelling) should only be used for initial letters of difficult-to-lipread words, or for a proper name. The user should be aware of the view of the letters seen by the receiver.
- As this is a conversation, candidates should not write lengthy pieces of text. Note-writing is used here to convey key items in the message, where the deafblind person is unable to receive the full message from the spoken word. It is important that the candidate can organise thoughts in a concise way, and then express them in note form, avoiding unnecessary descriptive words and adjectives, so as to sustain the flow of the conversation.
- Most candidates will hand-write notes during the assessment. In this case, handwriting must be clear and readable by the assessor. Whilst there may be an occasional spelling mistake, spelling should be sufficiently accurate to convey the message successfully.
- When asked to do so by the assessor, the candidate should be able to demonstrate use of the Block alphabet to sustain conversation. The candidate should know the conventions for forming each letter using Block, and how to position themselves to deliver Block in the most comfortable way for the assessor to receive it on the hand. This may involve changing their seating position for this part of the assessment.

