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JFK CENTER

MAKING THEATRE CLASS ACCESSIBLE TO DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
STUDENTS

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>> Hello, everyone, thank you for joining us for making theater class accessible to deaf and hard of hearing students.

Today's presentation is an arts and special education webinar of the webinar series which comes to you from the John F. Kennedy Center for the performing arts and addresses topics related to the arts, accessibility, education, and disability. I am Kristin M., assistant manager of special education here at the center. And I will be your webinar moderator. Before we get going I would like to take a brief moment to introduce you to the Zoom webinar platform. Broadcast messages for the webinar team such as links for webinar survey appear in the chatbox which you can select from the control panel along the bottom of your window. If you need to leave the webinar early you leave by clicking the leave webinar button on the bottom corner. A recording will be available afterwards so you can catch up on any parts you missed. The built in audio output is your computer's internal speakers. You may also use your phone to call in if you get disconnected or have trouble hearing the presenter please make sure you click the join audio button. Please mute your audio speakers if you called in. You can submit comments, questions or answers to questions using the Q and A option which you can select from the bottom panel. Please note that this is different than the chatbox and allows moderators to view your questions. I will monitor this screen throughout the webinar today's presentation will be conducted over a screen share. You may adjust your view by selecting view options. From the top panel. You may also expand your view to a full screen. At the end of today's presentation, there will be an opportunity to ask questions of the presenter. During this open-ended question and answer time, please type your questions into the Q and A box. Within the week we will send out a follow up e-mail with a recording of today's presentation and a copy of the webinar transcript. This means you can go back to watch the recording and review supplemental materials anything in addition to any notes you take during the webinar itself. The next VSA International network webinar is lighting the fire, focus on identity, race and equity. The first installment of which will take place Wednesday, February 12th at 3 p.m. eastern standard time. Pretty the next installment of which will take place Wednesday February 19th. If you are active on social media, I invite you to connect with us using hashtag VSA webinar on Facebook we are VSA International. And on twitter, we are VSA INTL. We would love to engage with you. And with that I will hand it over to the webinar presenter.

>> Just a moment, I need to adjust the screen here. Thank you, Kristin. And thank you, so much for your support and to the Kennedy Center of performing arts for giving me this opportunity to disseminate this important information to teachers out there looking for it. So my name is Brian and this is my sign name like this and I teach high a hakeach namr.F3 12 Tf1 0 0 1 72.15220.92 Tm0 g0 G(t)7(h)-6(e)-6(re)-6()704(a)-6(r66

I've been teaching for seven years now and I've been involved in theater for over 20 years. I've run a nonprofit theater company. I've been involved in all the different aspects of theater. And now I've been working to teach -- to take my passion of theater and teaching it to deaf schools here at the Texas School for the Deaf. So thank you, all, for joining this webinar today and I hope you find this information beneficial. In how to make your theater classrooms more accessible for any deaf and hard of hearing students you have. The reason why I did this webinar is because there are many schools that contact me and they say, oh my goodness, we were just told that I'm having a deaf student in the fall. And they're going to be in my theater class. I'm not sure what I can do to make my class accessible to them I want to make sure they feel welcomed and feel they can be a part of the class. So I give feedback, advice, and tips to them on what they can do. VSA contacted me last

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hear, clap clap, they knew they could add clap clap clap and they knew that meant get the attention. You can't do that with a deaf student. Even if you have one hearing -- a whole class of hearing students and one deaf student, you want to change whatever your methods are to a visual cue. You could flash the lights, you could do a sign like this, if you do this, all the students deaf or hearing, would know they could then copy and that would allow everybody to know that you're ready to get their attention and that's a visual cue. You also might need a little more time. Some deaf kids, English is not their first language. They don't read on the same level as some of their peers so they might need a little more time with a printed script or a printed text. So make sure they have a little bit of that time to do some text analysis to change it. They're going to need to memorize the script in a different manner than a hearing student so give them a little more time. The next one is pre-teaching vocabulary words. Maybe you have a PowerPoint you do before a lesson so that a student is ready for the presentation that they're going to have and therefore, your teaching becomes more smooth. If you pre-teach some of those vocabulary words, especially if these are words that are going to come up all the time, for example, maybe you're teaching about blocking on the stage. And you teach them what does blocking mean? What does that word -- blocking? And it gives them an opportunity to understand.

Just as it does your hearing students. Also, the thing that is most important is your students need your support and your encouragement. They're nervous, especially if they're the only deaf student in that hearing classroom. And to join the theater program on top of that as the only deaf student in it. That's a lot. And so you need to encourage other students to engage with them, show support and guide them. The best thing you can do is for them to gain your trust so they're more willing to participate in the class. So this is kind of what your classroom might look like if you have a deaf student in it. I know many classrooms nowadays in the public school system myou have 20-30-40 students in a class and you set them up in rows and columns.

That's the traditional manner of setting up students. That doesn't work for a deaf student. Deaf people are very visual. They have to be able to see the instructor as well as the interpreter and see each other, see the other -- their classmates. So typically if you ask somebody a question students will raise their hand and then make their statement so then they are -- they need to know who is raising their hand, the interpreter has to see them so the interpreter can then see who's asking the question, point to that student, the student can then look, identify who is talking and then look back at the interpreter. So it's best to have your classroom desks or chairs set up in a C shape or a U shape. Therefore, students are able to use the peripheral to see all of the students in the classroom as well as the teacher and the interpreter if you're using one. Having that visibility is very clear and necessary for a deaf student. And while you're instructing, keep in the back of your mind and make sure that you are aware of where the interpreter is standing. So the interpreter is over here and you tend to be a wanderer while you're teaching and instructing, make sure that you don't stand and stop right at the front of the interpreter. If you walk in front of the interpreter you're creating a barrier and a blockage of where the student can no longer see the interpreter. So if you are a wanderer just make sure you're aware where the interpreter is and avoid that time and space. I'll explain more on how to work with interpreters. There are many people who have never worked with an interpreter, never seen an interpreter, don't though the process of working with an interpreter so I want to take this opportunity to

briefly explain so you understand in the future if you were to have an interpreter in your classroom, what it's like. So a sign language interpreter, this is their job and their role is to facilitate communication between the signing student and the language being presented. That is their role and only role. Interpreters are not representative of the deaf community. Nor are they a source of information pertaining to everything related to a deaf person. Their job is not to answer all of your burning questions about the deaf community or deaf people. If you have those questions, ask a deaf person, deaf people can answer those questions for themselves so it's better to reach out to somebody from the community than the interpreter. An interpreter is not an assistant teacher. Often you'll see the interpreter is there in the classroom and the teacher is oh, they're great, they can be my assistant or they're my co-teacher. The interpreter is not teaching that deaf student.

The interpreter is not teaching anyone. The interpreter's job is merely to facilitate communication between two languages. What is spoken and what is voiced. The interpreter will sign. And vice versa. It is not the interpreter's job to make sure the deaf kid is paying attention, is focused on the material. If the deaf kid does not want to pay attention, or falls asleep during class or has bad behavior, it is your job as the instructor to handle that not the interpreter's job. The interpreter's job is just to signed what is voiced as the instruction and what you say and what the student says back to you. So the interpreter is not there because a person is deaf. The interpreter is there is because you don't know how to sign. When you use an interpreter and you're talking to a deaf person it's very important to look at the deaf person. Don't actually look at the interpreter or don't be like, hey, interpreter, can you tell them that they need to write a five page essay? That's not the correct use of the interpreter. All of your instruction and all of your direction should be first person directly to the student. Hey, Billy, make sure that you're writing that five page essay that's necessary. It's due tomorrow. You look at Billy and talk to them. The student of course is going to be looking at the interpreter but you must look at the student. When the student is signing back to you, don't look at the interpreter where the sound is coming from, continue to look at the student, make that eye contact and make a connection with the student. Just as if you were talking to a hearing student. The interpreter is there to provide access to both you and the student. Most importantly, just be yourself. Speak like you would speak to any other student in the class. Make sure that you're clear, make sure that you're loud, make sure

fine. The famous, you know, first deaf president of Gallaudet University's famous quote is deaf people can do anything except for hear. Deaf people can become doctors, there are deaf CEOs, deaf people can do everything we just can't hear. It's a medical perspective. It's where deaf people feel like they need to be fixed. They need to have a cochlear implant. They need to be fixed to make you hearing so you can be normal. Our cultural perspective is different. We have shared experiences. As deaf people we have different kinds of perception that we dealt with and we cherish our language of ASL. Most deaf people tend to use signed names. If they don't use sign language they don't have a signed name but anyone who does use sign language they have a signed name. If you have a certain gesture or characteristic about you that tends to be your name instead of finger spelling everyone's name. So this is my name signed like this it's the hand of the bee going over my head. Instead of everyone spelling Brian they do this and know they're talking about me. Deaf people are very tactile. We love to hug, we love to touch. Tapping is very appropriate. If you want to tap a deaf student, that would be very appropriate. The personal space is not the same for a deaf person as it is for hearing people. We are visual, we are tactile. That's very important for us. If two people are signing, and you need to, for some reason, walk between the two of

time. Note all deaf people can sign. If you have a hearing aid that helps you hear normally that's not true as well. A majority of deaf people can't speak. That's not true. A cochlear implant cures hearing loss. That is not true. Deaf people can't drive. That's not true. Actually, deaf people have been proven to be better drivers than hearing people because we're not distracted by the sounds and we see everything and we're more attuned to the visual. And our peripheral, we're so used to using that peripheral we have a wider peripheral side to side, up and down so we see more than people hearing do. All deaf people can lip-read. No, they cannot. If you shout really loud, a deaf person will hear you. No that is not true either. And deaf people are not as intelligent as hearing people. That's not true either. All deaf people are completely and totally deaf. No, that's not true. There's a variety. There's a spectrum of what people can hear. All deaf people understand and participate within deaf culture. That's not true either. Deaf people can read braille. No. I can't tell you how many times I get on an airplane and I tell them I'm deaf and they bring me the safety instructions in braille. And I am looking at it going, um, I don't know what this is. I can't read it. No thank you. Deaf people can't have children. That's not true either. And deaf people only have lowly medial jobs and that's not the case either. I don't want to delve too deep into it but I want to talk about what audism is. Audism was established back in 1977 by a man named Dr. Tom Humphreys and it's a mindset. That includes the concept that if you can hear you are therefore better. And deaf people should be pitied because they cannot. That they need to be made normal to be like hearing people there are lots of things that happen that are examples of audism. Things that maybe you might not realize that that's what it is. Sitting in a classroom, or during a rehearsal, and a student makes a joke. And everybody's laughing. And you're trying to get everybody on task and the deaf person says what did they say? Why is everybody laughing? You say it's not important. That's audism. It's oppressive. You're not providing them all the same access all the other students have or if you say, oh, it's okay, I'll tell you later. That's audism. It's oppressive. Always make sure that your student has 100% access to everything that's happening in the classroom as those hearing students have. So here's a really short video. The -- actually I'm going to hold off on this video because there is no captioning on this particular video and I will allow you all to watch it later. You should be getting copies of these PowerPoints so you should have access to it later. We'll skip that video. So this is the best cartoon strip. It's written by a deaf man. Matt Daigle and his wife is an interpreter and he has a son who -- and his son is a CODA which is a child of deaf adults and he writes lots of comics talking about the deaf experience and awareness of deafness. I will give you a moment so the first slide has a kid saying, one poi says, oh, it's cool that you can sign is sign language the same as English? And Matt's son says no, not really the next caption says let me show you the difference between English. This is the word for dragon. And the word dragon is written on the comic strip. Now let me show you, this is the sign language for dragon is the next thing and he make this is big elaborate dragon out of clay and the hearing kid is like oh wow that's the difference between the written word and an image of a dragon.

That's the way to show the difference between ASL and English. It's a very visual language so if I was signing about a dragon you might say the word drag develop but if I was using that word in a story and you say is the word dragon and the person listening is envisioning what a dragon looks like.

However in ASL I would not just spell the word dragon. I would be like, you know, this is something that can happen, a dragon came and he had these

taking your thumb and index finger off your nose and putting your finger on the top and bottom of your nose and going outward. So that is how different accents work in the United States. As far as nonwestern cultural nuances it may not match or apply but every culture has their own things. Hearing culture has their own tendencies just as deaf culture does as do other people from other countries. In that situation, it would be best to incorporate the student if you have a student from another country and allow the student to become the teacher in that moment.

>> Thank you, Brian. So that concludes today's webinar I'd like to ask you, our webinar participants to keep your window open following the webinar where the day's webinar I'd like