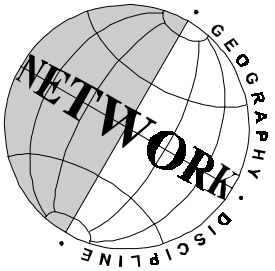

http://www.glos.ac.uk/gdn/

Providing Learning Support for d/Deaf and Hearing Impaired Students Undertaking Fieldwork and Related Activities

Terry Wareham[1], Gordon Clark[1] and Crissie Laugesen[2]

[1]University of Lancaster

[2]University of Central Lancashire

Series edited by Phil Gravestock and Mick Healey
University of Gloucestershire

This work was undertaken as part of the Higher Education Funding Council for England's 'Improving Provision for Disabled Students Funding Programme'.

UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND hefce

© Geography Discipline Network / Authors 2001

Published by:

Geography Discipline Network (GDN)
Geography & Environmental Management Research Unit (GEMRU)
University of Gloucestershire
Francis Close Hall
Swindon Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire, UK
GL50 4AZ

Providing Learning Support for d/Deaf and Hearing Impaired Students Undertaking Fieldwork and Related Activities

ISBN: 1 86174 116 2

ISBN (full series): 1 86174 119 7

The content of this guide has been developed in good faith, but the authors and their institutions cannot be held responsible for actions which readers may take in response to the advice contained herein.

Providing Learning Support for d/Deaf and Hearing Impaired Students Undertaking Fieldwork and Related Activities

Terry Wareham, Gordon Clark and Crissie Laugesen

Table of Contents

About the Authors i
Terry Wareham (University of Lancaster) i
Gordon Clark (University of Lancaster) i
Crissie Laugesen (University of Central Lancashire) i
Editors' Preface ii
Introduction 1
1 What is Deafness? 2
1.1 d/Deaf students in higher education: opening doors 2
1.2 They can lip read, can't they? 2
1.3 Can't I just write it down? 2
1.4 Deaf? deaf? What does it all mean? 2
2 Medical and Social Models of Disability as Applied to Deafness 4
3 Communication and Deafness 5
3.1 The invisible disability 5
3.2 What is British Sign Language (BSL)? 5
3.3 Why do some d/Deaf students use English (or Sign-Supported English [SSE]), and others use BSL? 6
3.4 What is Deaf Culture? 6
4 d/Deaf Etiquette and Hints for Effective Communication 7
4.1 What's in a name? 7
4.2 How can I communicate more effectively? 7
4.2.1 For students who lip read 7
4.2.2 For students who use an interpreter 8
4.2.3 For all d/Deaf or hearing impaired students 8
5 d/Deaf Students Choosing and Embarking on Courses 9
5.1 Selecting courses which involve fieldwork 9
5.2 Course induction 9
6 What d/Deaf Students Say About Fieldwork 11
7 Improving Learning While in the Field 13
7.1 Briefing students in the field 13
7.2 Students interviewing key officials 13
7.3 Students interviewing members of the public 14
7.4 Giving students (emergency) warnings of actually or potentially hazardous conditions while in the field 14
8 Improving Learning Before and After Fieldwork 15
8.1 Briefing students before going into the field 15
8.2 Group work in the field 15
8.3 Post-fieldwork de-briefing and reporting 16
9 Could Good Fieldwork for d/Deaf Students Mean Good Fieldwork for All? 17
10 Some Useful Signs 19
11 References and Links 20

About the Authors

Terry Wareham (University of Lancaster)

Terry is Director of the Higher Education Development Centre at Lancaster University, one of whose main areas of work is support for the development of teaching within the institution. Terry taught English in Italy for two years, after completing a MA in English at Lancaster University, before returning to the UK to do a Cert. Ed. course to teach in further education. She has had experience in teaching in most areas of the post-compulsory education sector in the UK. Since 1982 she has worked extensively in the areas of teaching development in further and higher education. Terry was appointed Staff Development Officer at Lancaster University in 1991, with particular responsibility for academic staff development, and has been Director of the Higher Education Development Centre from 1999.

Gordon Clark (University of Lancaster)

Gordon is an economic geographer with interests in how to teach the subject better in higher education. He graduated from the University of Edinburgh and joined Lancaster University in 1975. He has been a team member of the Geography Discipline Network (GDN) and co-wrote the GDN guide '*Small-group Teaching in Geography*' and was co-author of the student guide '*Geography@University*' for the '*Key Skills in Geography in Higher Education*' GDN project, funded by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE).

Crissie Laugesen (University of Central Lancashire)

Christine is the translator for deaf staff at the University of Central Lancashire, and lectures on the new Year 0 for deaf students. She is also a freelance writer and was previously a lecturer in English and Literacy at Preston College and worked as Development Officer for hearing impairment at the Department of Continuing Education at Lancaster University.

Editors' Preface

Awareness of the need to develop inclusive practices, which provide equal opportunities for disabled students in various parts of their courses, is beginning to spread through Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK. This has been stimulated by the publication of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (2000) *Code of Practice – Students with Disabilities* and the extension of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) to education through the Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2001).

This series of guides to providing support to disabled students undertaking fieldwork and related activities is the main output from a project funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) *Improving Provision for Disabled Students Funding Programme*.

The advantage of focusing on fieldwork is that many of the issues faced by disabled students in higher education are magnified in this form of teaching and learning. If the barriers to full participation by everyone can be reduced or overcome it is likely that our awareness of the obstacles to their full participation in other learning activities will be heightened and the difficulties of overcoming the barriers will be lessened.

The project has been undertaken by the Geography Discipline Network, a consortium of old and new universities based at the University of Gloucestershire, whose aim is to research, develop and disseminate good learning and teaching practices in geography and related disciplines. This project was undertaken by a group of geographers, earth and environmental scientists working alongside disability advisers and educational developers.

There are six guides in the set. The first '*Issues in Providing Learning Support for Disabled Students Undertaking Fieldwork and Related Activities*' provides an overview to the series, including the role of fieldwork models of disability, barriers and strategies and the legislative and quality assurance frameworks. It also discusses ways of developing an inclusive fieldwork curriculum and the role on institutional disability advisers. The text is peppered with case studies and boxed examples of good practices. Each of the remaining guides addresses the application of these general issues along with the particular circumstances involved in providing support to particular groups of disabled students:

- Providing Learning Support for Students with Mobility Impairments Undertaking Fieldwork and Related Activities
- Providing Learning Support for Blind or Visually Impaired Students Undertaking Fieldwork and Related Activities
- Providing Learning Support for d/Deaf or Hearing Impaired Students Undertaking Fieldwork and Related Activities
- Providing Learning Support for Students with Mental Health Difficulties Undertaking Fieldwork and Related Activities
- Providing Learning Support for Students with Hidden Disabilities and Dyslexia Undertaking Fieldwork and Related Activities

These categories are ones commonly used in providing information, support and analysis of disabilities. Furthermore, many of the obstacles that disabled students face in undertaking fieldwork, and the appropriate methods of overcoming or minimising them, are specific to the kind of disability. Despite using medical categories for describing disabilities we are committed to emphasising a social model to exploring disability, which emphasises the barriers to disabled students which society creates. The distinction between the medical and social model is important because it shifts the responsibility for improving the provision for disabled students from individuals (blaming the victim), to society and the strategies and policies that higher education institutions and their constituent departments develop and enact. The emphasis of this series of guides is on identifying the barriers that disabled students face to participating fully in fieldwork and the ways in which institutions, departments and tutors taking field classes can help to reduce or overcome them.

The net outcome of the quality assurance and legislative changes is that HEIs will need to treat disability issues in a more structured and transparent way. In particular we may expect to see a relative shift of emphasis from issues of recruitment and physical access to issues of parity of the learning experience that disabled students receive. The implication of this shift is that disability issues 'cannot remain closed within a student services arena but must become part of the mainstream learning and teaching debate' (Adams & Brown, 2000, p.8). But there is an opportunity here as well as a challenge. As we become more sensitive to the diversity of student needs we can adjust how we teach and facilitate learning in ways which will benefit all our students.

Phil Gravestock and Mick Healey
University of Gloucestershire
November 2001

References

Adams, M. & Brown, P. (2000) *'The times they are a changing': Developing disability provision in UK Higher Education*, paper presented to Pathways 4 Conference, Canberra, Australia, December 6-8.

All World Wide Web links quoted in this guide were checked in November 2001.

Introduction

This guide is intended to provide information and advice to teaching and support staff in geography, earth and environmental science departments when planning and providing fieldwork experiences for d/Deaf or hearing impaired students. Managers and disability advisers may also find the guide of use in making decisions about resourcing and supporting fieldwork. The authors would like to acknowledge, with thanks, the contributions and comments from a wide range of d/Deaf and hearing impaired colleagues and students and from disability support colleagues.

1 What is Deafness?

1.1 d/Deaf students in higher education: opening doors

Equality of opportunity now means that deafness and hearing impairment need no longer be a barrier to study. With improved access, assistive technology, and "Human Aids to Communication" (HACs), the inability to hear need no longer stand in the way of academic success. Some barriers, however, are difficult to remove, the most stubborn being *lack of awareness of what d/Deafness actually means* in the higher education context. Lecturers may be confused by the mass of technology, amazed by the entourage of HACs accompanying d/Deaf students on field-trips, or puzzled at a d/Deaf student's difficulty with textual material. The attitudes of fellow students may be helpful or even downright hostile. d/Deaf and hearing impaired students may also suffer from low self-esteem and isolation, particularly where they have had to adjust to hearing loss later in life.

1.2 They can lip read, can't they?

While this may be true for some d/Deaf people, for many lip reading is only an aid to communication, and an unreliable and difficult one. Lip reading can help only when the d/Deaf person has full command of English: for many Deaf people English is a second language (see Sections 3.2 and 3.4). Even with full English, lip reading is difficult: many words have the same lip-pattern, and confusion is common. Lip reading is also exceptionally tiring: watching a person's face in order to understand them is a strain, and is not helped if the lecturer moves around, covers his/her face, does not enunciate clearly or turns to point out features of the landscape (see Section 3). It is estimated that a person can lip read only some 30 per cent of what is said.

1.3 Can't I just write it down?

Many d/Deaf students – particularly those whose first language is British Sign Language (BSL) (see Section 3.2) – have difficulty reading and writing English. This is *not* an indication of limited intellect, nor is it dyslexia; rather it is a combination of educational and linguistic factors (see Section 3). It is inappropriate to rely solely on written communication, as well as inconvenient.

1.4 Deaf? deaf? What does it all mean?

The term 'hearing impaired' (see Section 4.1) is used generally to describe all persons with significant hearing loss, although many d/Deaf people feel that it is not an accurate description of them.

The categories in Table 1 should only be used as guidelines as preferred support may be affected by individual circumstances and evolve over time.

Table 1: Information about different categories of d/Deaf people

'Categories' of d/Deaf people	General information
Deaf with capital D is used (after the convention first described by Woodward, 1972) to define people with severe to profound d/Deafness, who regard themselves as belonging to a cultural and linguistic minority.	Most likely born deaf or became deaf in infancy before acquiring language skills; communicate in BSL, using interpreters to facilitate communication with hearing people; may wear hearing aids, but only to raise sound levels generally – they would not help in distinguishing speech or other precise sounds. Profound difficulty in spoken conversation.
deaf with lower-case d refers to people with severe to profound deafness, who choose to speak and lip read (also known as 'Oral deaf').	Probably born deaf or became deaf in infancy; communicate orally; may use Sign-Supported English (SSE – see Section 3.3), interpreters, and hearing aids/loop systems. Extreme difficulty in spoken conversation.
deafened refers to those who experienced severe/profound hearing loss after maturity.	Lost all useful hearing after having grown up as hearing people; use hearing aids/loops; may use Sign Supported English interpreters; extreme difficulty in spoken conversation.
Partially-deaf people have moderate to severe hearing loss.	May benefit from hearing aids/loops; use English and may use BSL/SSE; great difficulty in spoken conversation.
Hard of Hearing means those with mild to moderate hearing loss.	Can benefit from hearing aids/loops; some difficulty in spoken conversation.

2 Medical and Social Models of Disability as Applied to Deafness

The medical and social models of disability are dealt with in detail elsewhere (see Healey *et al.*, 2001). The **Medical Model** emphasises dependency, a focus on the medical condition from which the deafness results and the failure of medicine to rectify it. It focuses on passivity, helplessness and the d/Deaf person being a victim of their 'unfortunate' situation. The **Social Model** of d/Deaf disability, on the other hand, would focus on the integrity of the d/Deaf person, on enhanced self-knowledge, on the fact of belonging to a defined cultural community which has, for some, its own language, norms and identity. This model would see the difficulties that d/Deaf people experience as potentially a form of discrimination and more of an issue of equal opportunities rather than of personal inadequacies. The medical model may be seen as limiting, the social model as liberating.

Most people would not think of themselves as discriminating against particular groups. Indeed in the UK and in many other countries it is illegal to discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation and disabilities. For many academics, having a d/Deaf or hearing impaired student is a rare occurrence. However, a much larger proportion of academics will regularly teach students who are non-native speakers of English. There are many useful parallels that could be made between these two groups. Both may need:

- attention paid to linguistic communication
- more time than speakers of English as a first language to assimilate the spoken word
- more support from interpreters and friends
- some negotiation of tasks
- a recognition that many activities may be more demanding than for other students and that breaks and rests are important
- different, mutually supportive media of communication
- a recognition of the value of their difference as well as acknowledgement of their specific needs
- a feeling of being 'one of the crowd' rather than always feeling they are different and special.

3 Communication and Deafness

3.1 The invisible disability

Deafness has been referred to as 'the invisible disability' – d/Deaf people are not easily identified as disabled, showing no outward signs that they are any different. For them communication, not access or mobility, is the key issue. This is most significant in the case of d/Deaf users of British Sign Language (or any other national sign language), for whom both spoken and written language present formidable barriers.

3.2 What is British Sign Language (BSL)?

BSL is the first or preferred language of more than 70,000 Deaf people in the United Kingdom. Like sign languages used in other parts of the world, it is a full and complete language in its own right, with its own grammar, vocabulary and syntax, and is totally separate from English. It is:

- *not* a way of expressing English with gestures
- *not* an 'aid' created to 'help' Deaf people communicate
- *not* inferior to or less expressive than spoken language.

BSL has been in use amongst the British Deaf community over generations, developing like any other language. It has, however, been under constant attack by those who see it as inferior and would eradicate it. For 100 years, from 1880 to 1980, it was banned in Deaf Schools in the UK and replaced by 'oralism', with pupils forced to speak and lip read English, which most could neither hear nor understand. Consequently, most profoundly deaf children learned very little of *anything*.

The status of BSL rose after a damning report on the failure of oralism (Conrad, 1979), with international recognition of the linguistic value of sign languages, and evidence that deaf children learn more effectively through sign language. 95 per cent of deaf children in the UK are now taught in ordinary schools rather than in specialist d/Deaf schools; however, problems of access still arise through:

- the shortage of educational BSL interpreters and communicators
- the ongoing conflict over appropriate methodology: oralism v sign language
- ignorance of the communication needs of d/Deaf children.

Consequently, although more young d/Deaf adults now gain university entrance qualifications, many have experienced restricted educational support, and may have difficulties with literacy in their second language, English.

Students from other countries who use sign language will be unable to communicate with BSL users since all sign languages are languages in their own right and differ in the same way that other languages do.

3.3 Why do some d/Deaf students use English (or Sign-Supported English [SSE]), and others use BSL?

The younger a student became deaf, the less likely s/he is to use English. Those born deaf have **never** heard the spoken word: theirs is a visual world, with visual communication. They cannot relate easily to spoken English, and consequently struggle to understand written English.

Those who lost their hearing *after* they learned to speak (and possibly to read and write) will have less difficulty with English, as it is their first language. They may use Sign Supported English as an aid to communication. SSE is not a language – it is spoken English supported by signs borrowed from BSL.

3.4 What is Deaf Culture?

Deaf Culture cannot easily be defined.

- It is a way of life enjoyed by Britain's Deaf community, centred upon **visuality** and shared experience of **D**eaf-ness.
- It has its own traditions, humour, folklore and art-forms, including wonderfully expressive poetry.
- At its hub is the rich language, BSL.

4 d/Deaf Etiquette and Hints for Effective Communication

4.1 What's in a name?

When referring to students with hearing loss, staff should be aware of certain issues:

- Many deaf people – and almost all **D**eaf people – dislike the term '*hearing impaired*'. It has negative connotations, and focuses on a perceived deficit. Deaf people do not regard themselves as hearing impaired.
- The expression 'The Deaf' is also disliked – say 'Deaf People'.
- 'Hard of Hearing' refers to people with slight or moderate hearing loss – d/Deaf people do not find this term appropriate.

In order to encompass all levels of deafness the terms d/Deaf or hearing impaired people can be used. This will ensure that all groups are covered.

4.2 How can I communicate more effectively?

When you are communicating with d/Deaf students, whether in the classroom, one-to-one or in the field, remember:

4.2.1 For students who lip read

- Make sure you are not standing in front of a window or light: no-one can lip read a silhouette.
- Ensure there is adequate light so the student can see your face.
- The student needs to be able to see your mouth: don't cover it with scarves, whiskers, hands or food.
- Face the student and maintain eye-contact: don't turn away to point at anything when speaking.
- Speak normally – don't exaggerate lip movements or slow down unnaturally; don't gabble; don't *shout*.
- Stick to the point – don't start to talk about one thing then wander off onto another subject: context is an important clue in lip reading.
- Keep at a distance of between 1 and 2 metres for one-to-one communication.
- Don't expect d/Deaf students to lip read at a distance, in group-work or in large lectures.
- Only one person at a time can be lip read – control group discussions so that people speak in sequence. It is useful if people raise their hands before they speak in discussions. The d/Deaf or hearing impaired person can then turn to look at the speaker, rather than trying to locate the sound and then losing the first part of the speaker's comment.

4.2.2 For students who use an interpreter

- When working with a Sign Language Interpreter many of the above points also apply – the student must be able to see your face, the interpreter can only interpret one person at a time, and so on.
- Use a registered qualified Sign Language Interpreter or a registered trainee – relying on the student's pals just will not do.
- Ensure the student can see the interpreter and any visual aids.
- Ensure the interpreter can hear you speak.
- While you are speaking, the student will look at the interpreter; however, if the student is signing and the interpreter is 'voicing' his/her comments, do not look at the interpreter – look at the student. S/he is the one who is commenting.
- When speaking to the student, don't speak **to** the interpreter: look at the student and address your comments to him/her.
- Never say to the interpreter "Tell him…" Always speak directly to the student.
- Remember that the interpreter can only interpret one person at a time: control group discussions so that people speak in sequence.
- Remember that there is a few seconds *lag* or delay in interpreting – allow time to catch up.
- Don't ask the interpreter to comment or participate in discussions – s/he is there to facilitate communication between you and the student/s. S/he will not communicate with you other than to clarify meaning.

4.2.3 For all d/Deaf or hearing impaired students

- Please understand that it is impossible to watch an interpreter or lip read and take notes/read handouts at the same time. Where possible, students should be provided with overhead transparencies and handouts in advance, either from a Web-site or in hard copy. Interpreters should be briefed in advance of what will be required.
- Relax and be natural with d/Deaf or hearing impaired students.

5 d/Deaf Students Choosing and Embarking on Courses

5.1 Selecting courses which involve fieldwork

The most successful students are arguably the ones who start by making wise and well-informed choices amongst potential courses. It is even more important for students with additional needs, such as d/Deafness, to make the best choice from amongst the array they are offered so that difficulties at a later stage are minimised. In order to make these choices students will need:

- Opportunities to discuss potential need with tutors before signing up to foresee any needs well in advance and plan for them.
- Clear details of the desired learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods and activities they are likely to encounter on a course, and full details of the fieldwork arrangements particularly where these relate to communication. They will also need to know something about the learning environment (e.g. noisy lecture theatres located on busy main roads) and facilities that will support their disability.
- Different routes to this information: textual in handbooks and on Web sites; visual, diagrammatic and photographic. Clarity of language is paramount since Deaf users of BSL have English as their second language. In designing information presentation it might be helpful to test that your use of language is accessible to a non-native speaker of English of reasonable linguistic competence.
- Access to advice: in person with staff; to Frequently Asked Questions sections of Web pages; to students who have done the course before; to reports of fieldwork activities; and to photographic records.
- Information to be consistent between departmental and institutional material and between various support units.
- Assurance that a degree of flexibility is built into the design of fieldwork – alternative approaches negotiated by groups of students, for example.

5.2 Course induction

Institutions and individual academics make many assumptions about student knowledge and experience. However, there is plenty of evidence that students are not at ease with the conventions of higher education and spend some considerable time learning about the culture, language and norms of their environment. This will be particularly true of students who come from backgrounds where going to university is not the norm. What exactly **is** a lecture supposed to achieve? What should I be doing in a lecture? What are the expectations of me in a seminar group? And, of course, 'What does fieldwork at university entail?'

For d/Deaf students it is much more difficult to pick up the clues and cues as they go along, since little is made explicit and a lot is picked up by overheard remarks, chance comments and so on – precisely the kind of thing that d/Deaf students have difficulty with. It therefore becomes the responsibility of the lecturer to find ways of helping d/Deaf students have access to this information.

A fieldwork handbook will help – with some basic rules and principles of fieldwork, descriptions of the range of fieldwork that they might encounter. It could also provide pictorial records of previous field work and some informal reports of previous students' experience. As well as the explicit discipline-related goals of the fieldwork an explanation could be given of the ancillary learning which the experience will bring: understanding working in groups, appreciating difference and variety of contributions, and concern for others.

6 What d/Deaf Students Say About Fieldwork

Not all d/Deaf students are the same, indeed generalization is dangerous as to their needs and capabilities. As one deaf geography student wrote:

> The needs of each deaf or hard-of-hearing individual will inevitably be different and those who are organising and participating in field trips should be made aware of exactly what those needs are.

So the onus is on staff to find out what the students' abilities and needs are, particularly because fieldwork will present unfamiliar situations to d/Deaf students for which they may not have worked out coping mechanisms.

Students may not know what is expected of them and may be unwilling to ask for help.

> I have to admit that I was quite reluctant initially to discuss any needs I had within the department as regards to fieldwork. This may seem strange because I'm sure that most lecturers would do anything to help, but I wasn't keen on being treated any differently than others doing the same fieldwork and I wasn't sure that there would be much in the way of helping me anyway.

As bad as staff who are unaware of the needs of d/Deaf students are staff who think they know all about d/Deafness.

> There is nothing worse than dealing with people who have very little idea or who have preconceived notions about what should be done to help deaf or hard-of-hearing students to participate fully and equally.

Perhaps the best way round this impasse is to ensure that staff actively seek out d/Deaf students well before the fieldwork starts and talk to them about what is going to happen and check that they are happy with this. If they are not, discuss ways around the situation. The aim is a negotiated and mutually acceptable way of ensuring the fullest possible participation while avoiding d/Deaf students seemingly being singled out for special treatment.

So what aspects of fieldwork do d/Deaf students find particularly problematic? Group work is one tricky area. In a lecture theatre there is one professional speaker who stands more or less in one place (though they may talk to the blackboard or out the window!). In group work people talk from all round the room – the flip side of student participation is not knowing where to look to lip read, particularly if several people are talking at the same time in a heated debate. Students' many regional accents and their different lip-shapes make life difficult for lip readers.

> There also seemed to be an epidemic of turning around and facing the other way when they [staff] were pointing at or showing me something, so that meant I couldn't read their lips.

And the best single thing we can do to help d/Deaf students? Perhaps it is:

> having written information on the field trips, especially the instructions on actually carrying out the work was great because I knew what I was doing and I wasn't panicking about having missed vital information.
>
> All details of the fieldwork should be given to the student in a written form before the field visit so that queries can be sorted out.

A close second in valuable advice from d/Deaf students themselves would be for departmental staff (don't leave it to a disabilities support unit) to seek out the d/Deaf students, explain activities, negotiate actions and generally check that the student is comfortable with the work and following what is going on. After all, you and your colleagues will have been teaching these d/Deaf students for some time before the fieldwork starts so

> staff should […] have already been made aware, or made themselves aware, of how they should communicate with the student according to the student's needs.

7 Improving Learning While in the Field

In this section we describe the aspects of some common fieldwork situations which might be problematic for d/Deaf students (and in many cases also for hearing students). We then suggest measures which staff could take to assist d/Deaf and hearing impaired students. Staff need to be sensitive to the general difficulties which some fieldwork can cause for d/Deaf students, and should be ready to negotiate with each student as to what would suit them best.

As a general point, if a d/Deaf student has a sign language interpreter, that person should be able to accompany the d/Deaf student during all the fieldwork. In the UK the Disabled Students Allowance is available to students via their Local Education Authority to help provide additional support needed for fieldwork (see http://www.dfes.gov.uk/studentsupport/downloads/6144.pdf).

7.1 Briefing students in the field

Because the essence of fieldwork is the practical application of skills, the very detailed advice given in the field is vital to the fullest exploitation of the learning opportunities. Yet, when you have a large group spread around you, even a modest amount of wind, traffic noise or the sound of running water or waves can create acoustic dead-zones around the person speaking to an extent unimaginable in a lecture theatre. Many of the actions suggested below will help all your students:

- write down in a handout as much as you can of what you will say in the field, so the oral briefing is a reminder and not the only medium you use to get across the information
- do as much briefing as you can before you get into the field, in a place where the acoustics will be better, and distribute handouts well in advance
- ensure the d/Deaf students are close to you and in front of you as you speak so that lip reading is as easy as possible
- if necessary, check that the d/Deaf students have understood you and, if not, give them a separate briefing
- wear a transmitter during the briefing if that will help those with hearing aids (as one would in a lecture).

7.2 Students interviewing key officials

You may ask your students to interview key people in the community. Such interviews are often carried out by groups of students within which the tasks of asking the questions and recording the replies are shared out. In a fixed setting (e.g. everyone is sitting down around a table) the d/Deaf student can position him/herself so as to make lip reading or hearing as easy as possible. They should be able to take part in the questioning as normal but may not be able take full and accurate records of what was said. If the interview is on site (e.g. while touring a factory or farm, with people talking while moving around) positioning to allow lip reading and hearing may be very difficulty in practice. If the interview is in a very noisy environment (e.g. a factory) a lip reading student may understand more of what is said than the hearing ones.

- Ensure the d/Deaf student is part of a group of students who will allow him/her to participate as fully as possible in all elements of the interview.
- Ensure the d/Deaf student can position him/herself optimally for the interview.
- Ensure that all the students get a copy of the interview notes.
- Ask the interviewee to wear a transmitter if that will help those with hearing aids.
- Perhaps get the d/Deaf or hearing impaired student to ask the first question, so as to set the agenda and in case they are not able to follow precisely all aspects of the subsequent discussion.

7.3 Students interviewing members of the public

Students are often required to carry out interviews with members of the public in the street, on doorsteps, or in car parks or shopping centres. For BSL users and lip readers this may present a number of difficulties. It would be unacceptable if they were sidelined, watching the hearing students doing the task. Discussing with the students what they can manage will be essential. The aim is for them to do as much as a hearing student can.

- Ensure the d/Deaf student is part of a group of students who will allow him/her to participate as fully as possible in all elements of the interviewing.
- The face-to-face and close-quarters nature of much street interviewing helps lip reading.
- Background noise from passers-by, muzak, wind or traffic may make the use of hearing aids problematic – a quiet venue for the interviewing will help.
- In the UK the Disabled Students Allowance can be used to fund a specially-trained note-taker. In some circumstances it might be appropriate for a fellow student to act as an amanuensis, recording the answers to the questions posed to the interviewees by the d/Deaf student, although care and sensitivity should be used in selecting such a student.

7.4 Giving students (emergency) warnings of actually or potentially hazardous conditions while in the field

It may be necessary to give reminders or emergency warnings of safety-critical information to students while they are carrying out fieldwork. The difficulty is that the information may have to be given immediately and in person; time may not permit pre-prepared handouts. A shouted warning will be ineffective for the wholly d/Deaf and cannot be relied on for those with partial hearing or hearing aids. The wearing of hats or hoods when the weather is bad will further diminish the amount that can be heard and will render some hearing aids ineffectual.

- Ensure the d/Deaf student does not work alone in the field (neither, of course, should any other student).
- Write down the warning on a pad so the student can read it.
- Learn emergency warning signs in your national sign language.
- Arrange for the d/Deaf student's group to be accompanied by a 'watcher' who can alert students to dangers.
- Equipping a d/Deaf student with a vibrating pager is a good back-up for communicating emergency messages.

8 Improving Learning Before and After Fieldwork

In this section we describe generic situations which commonly happen when preparing for fieldwork and after one returns from the field and indicate the aspects of the situation which might be problematic for d/Deaf students (and in many cases also for hearing students). We then suggest measures which staff could take to assist d/Deaf and hearing impaired students. Clearly you need to be sensitive to the general difficulties which some fieldwork can cause for d/Deaf students, and be ready to negotiate with each student as to what would suit them best.

8.1 Briefing students before going into the field

Such briefings are very similar to a lecture and so the d/Deafness issues will be comparable and quite familiar to both staff and d/Deaf students. Coping strategies should already have been worked out. This is much less problematic than being in the field itself. However, it may be that the briefing room is not equipped with an induction-loop system so hearing aids will not operate as effectively as in a purpose-built lecture theatre.

- As good practice for all students, you should provide all important aspects of the briefing in a handout and take the students through this document during the briefing, allowing time for them to read it and ask questions; interpreters must be briefed beforehand.
- Ensure that d/Deaf students who lip read are sitting in the optimal position for this.
- Check after the briefing that all the students are clear on what is happening and perhaps go over the key points separately for the d/Deaf students, if they want this.
- Wear a transmitter during the briefing if that will help those with hearing aids (as one would in any lecture for them).
- Check the positioning of any interpreter.

8.2 Group work in the field

Nearly all fieldwork is done in groups – safety concerns alone will ensure this, reinforced perhaps by a lack of equipment, the need for many hands to do the task (e.g. land surveying) and a belief in the educational value of experiencing team work. The supervision of students in the field may be easier if they work in groups.

Particularly in physical geography and earth/environmental science the success of the fieldwork may depend on communication among the group of students. Examples of such communication would include discussing where to take environmental samples or measurements, how to operate equipment, carry out field measurements and recording the results, and discussing what the field measurements and observations mean. Such discussions will be an integral part of, for example, geological field mapping, botanical surveying, till-fabric analysis, taking stream-flow measurements, and soil coring. It is easy for staff to overlook just how much informal but vital inter-group communication there is in such activities. The hearing students in the group need to be briefed to ensure that the d/Deaf student

(and his/her interpreter) can understand all that is going on, are fully involved in the discussions and can participate in the work of the group. The only exceptions would be in special cases where a deaf student could not be expected to operate as a hearing one would, e.g. a lip reading student working with equipment which has only audible warning signals or response modes, or taking *verbatim* notes of an interview.

8.3 Post-fieldwork de-briefing and reporting

After you have returned with your students from the field, you will want to de-brief them and get them to report back on what they did and have discovered. In part this is a similar situation to the pre-fieldwork briefing, but it goes beyond that. First, the centre of attention is unlikely to be just the member of staff; students all round the de-briefing room will be reporting back on their fieldwork results. This makes it more difficult for lip reading students to place themselves correctly to see clearly all the interventions. You may want most of the students to speak during the de-briefing but they cannot all wear transmitters for those with certain hearing aids. Reporting back may also take more elaborate and structured formats such as mock public enquiries or other forms of role-play and debates.

- Wear a transmitter during the de-briefing if that will help those with hearing aids.
- Ensure that d/Deaf students who lip read place themselves in the optimal position for this in the room.
- Allow the d/Deaf student to start off the debriefing so that their contribution does not get overtaken by the flow of the discussion.
- If d/Deaf students are working with others in reporting groups or role-play teams, ensure their group includes them fully and they are not sidelined.
- Find a way of providing a summary on paper or online of the results from the debate or role-play – this will help d/Deaf students to catch up with anything they have missed, and equally will help all the students to understand the full results and deeper conclusions from the field exercise.
- Check the positioning of any interpreter.
- Require all students to raise their hand or make some other appropriate visual signal before they speak so that lip readers can turn to face them.

9 Could Good Fieldwork for d/Deaf Students Mean Good Fieldwork for All?

In the social model of disability the issues focus on equal opportunities for disabled students. But what of the 'equal opportunities' of the other students in the group? Non-disabled students might argue that changes made to accommodate the needs of a d/Deaf or hearing impaired student might adversely affect their own learning opportunities. However, there are strong arguments that would suggest that following principles of good fieldwork for d/Deaf students will bring tangible benefits to all students:

- Clear and effective information-giving and advice helps all students select courses appropriate to their interests and needs.
- Good induction into courses clarifies requirements, terms, culture and responds to students' learning needs.
- Verbal and written communication should be good between academic staff and all students, where the staff are as sensitive to 'message received' as they are to 'message sent'; where a variety of media is used to communicate with students and where the communication is respectful of students and their differences.
- Fieldwork situations are carefully thought-through occasions for creative learning with attention paid to all students' learning needs, interests and abilities, and to important key skills such as supportive and co-operative groupwork.
- The design of fieldwork may well be a collaborative, problem-based experience for staff and students together.

Principles of good teaching from the general literature on learning and teaching in higher education support this idea that good learning for d/Deaf students is to a large extent a sub-set of good learning for all. Take Ramsden's 'important properties of good teaching' (1992, p.89):

- A desire to share your love of the subject with students.
- An ability to make the material being taught stimulating and interesting.
- A capacity to explain the material plainly.
- A commitment to encouraging student independence.
- An ability to improvise and adapt to new demands.
- Using teaching methods and academic tasks that require students to learn actively, responsibly and co-operatively.
- Using valid assessment methods.
- A focus on key concepts, and students' misunderstandings of them, rather than covering the ground.
- Giving the highest quality feedback on student work.
- A desire to learn from students and other sources about the effects of teaching and how they can be improved.

Accommodating the differing needs of all students is an obligation on all teachers. Teaching and learning can be enriched for all concerned when this is done creatively and in partnership with students. d/Deaf and hearing impaired students are one group amongst many with distinctive needs, but they are not the only such group. Any group of fieldwork students will include people with a range of abilities and disabilities and with particular needs. The best teaching of fieldwork will seek to find out and work with those needs.

10 Some Useful Signs

British Sign Language is a rich and versatile language and takes a while to learn, like any language. We do not suggest that it is either appropriate or feasible for teachers to become fluent in the language in order to be able to teach effectively. However, it may be useful to have a repertoire of a few useful signs in order to be able swiftly and effectively to communicate instructions or indications, particularly where there is danger involved.

The following signs, which may be useful whilst on fieldwork, are available as mpeg files from http://www.glos.ac.uk/gdn/disabil/deaf/ch10.htm.

- Check what you are doing (with the implication that the person is doing the wrong thing or taking a wrong turn)
- Check what you are doing, and pause to take stock of what is going on
- Come here
- Danger (life threatening)
- Danger (risk of damage or injury)
- Good
- Let's get back to the minibus
- Please
- Read the handout
- Stop, don't move
- Stop, wait a minute
- Stop what you are doing now
- Stop, wind up what you are doing

Information about the British Sign Language alphabet can be found at http://www.foot-print.demon.co.uk/bslsite/bslindex.html.

11 References and Links

Conrad, R. (1979) *The Deaf School Child* (London: Harper Row)

Healey, M., Jenkins, A., Leach, J. & Roberts, C. (2001) *Issues in Providing Learning Support for Disabled Students Undertaking Fieldwork and Related Activities* (Cheltenham: Geography Discipline Network). Available at http://www.glos.ac.uk/gdn/disabil/overview/index.htm.

Ramsden, P. (1992) *Learning to Teaching in Higher Education* (London: Routledge).

Sutherland, J. (no date) Guidelines for working with deaf and hearing impaired students (Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University).

A guide to good practice when teaching d/Deaf and hearing impaired students. It includes some background information on d/Deaf history and sign language and, although initially aimed at lecturers working at Sheffield Hallam University, it can be adapted for use in other institution. (HEFCE funded project).

Woodward, J. (1972) Implications for sociolinguistics research among the deaf, *Sign Language Studies*, 1, pp.1-7.

Handbook for staff on deaf issues, Access Summit, University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology

Welcome pack for deaf students, Staffordshire University. E-mail l.lewis@staffs.ac.uk

Breakthrough Trust – Deaf-Hearing Integration

Alan Geale House, The Close, Westhill Campus, Bristol Rd, Birmingham, B29 6LN
Tel/min: +44 (0)121 472 6447. Fax: +44 (0)121 415 2323
E-mail: bkthudhi@aol.com

British Deaf Association (BDA)

1-3 Worship Street, London, EC2A 2AB
Tel: +44 (0)207 588 3520. Min: +44 (0)207 588 3529. Fax: +44 (0)207 588 3527
E-mail: info@bda.org.uk
Website: http://www.bda.org.uk/
Information and advice.

Hearing Concern

7-11 Armstrong Road, London, W3 7JL
Tel: +44 (0)208 743 1110. Min: +44 (0)208 742 9151. Fax: +44 (0)208 742 9043
Helpline: +44 (0)1245 344 600
Website: http://www.hearingconcern.com/
A national organisation for people who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing. Publishes rates of pay of lip speakers.

National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)

15 Dufferin Street, London, EC1Y 8UR
Tel: +44 (0)207 490 8656. Fax: +44 (0)207 251 5020
Tel/Min/Helpline: +44 (0)207 250 0123
E-mail: ndcs@ndcs.org.uk
Information on all aspects of childhood deafness, including advice on equipment and education. Runs family support groups. There is also a youth officer.

Royal National Institute for Deaf People

19-23 Featherstone Street, London, EC1Y 8SL
Tel: +44 (0)207 296 8000. Min: +44 (0)207 296 8001. Fax: +44 (0)207 296 8199
RNID Scotland (tel/min): 0+44 (0)141 332 0343
RNID Northern Ireland (tel/min): +44 (0)2890 239 619
E-mail: helpline@rnid.org.uk
Website: http://www.rnid.org.uk/
Deaf awareness training, information on equipment, where to get interpreters etc.

The City Literary Institute

FHE Support Unit, Keeley House, Keeley Street, London, WC2B 5LJ
Tel: +44 (0)207 430 0548. Fax: +44 (0)207 405 3347
Provides support for d/Deaf and hard of hearing students in London.

Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People (CACDP)

Durham University Science Park, Block 4, Stockton Road, Durham, DH1 3UZ
Tel/min: +44 (0)191 383 1155. Fax: +44 (0)191 383 7914
E-mail: durham@cacdp.demon.co.uk
Website: http://www.cacdp.demon.co.uk
Keeps a register of trained sign language interpreters.

CHESS (Consortium of Higher Education Support Services for Deaf Students)

Tel: +44 (0)115 968 6163
Website: http://www.shu.ac.uk/services/ssc/disability/chess.htm