

Teaching and Learning With Masks On



Listening with masks on can be very challenging - increasing the effort we must expend & decreasing what we actually hear.

This problem is significantly worse for people that are *deaf and/or hard-of-hearing* & for people listening in their *non-native language*. Background noise & reverberation worsen the problem.

Significant concerns include:

- 1) **reduced intelligibility** (the listener actually doesn't hear what is being said)
- 2) **increased listener fatigue** (more mental effort is required to listen, therefore causing the listener to be tired)
- 3) **decreased memory of degraded speech** (it is harder to remember what you hear when the signal is poorer)

What we can do to facilitate good teaching & learning while wearing a mask:

Students

1. **Advocate** for yourself! **Communicate** with your instructor if you are having difficulty hearing or understanding them with their mask on. Politely tell them what you think they can do to help.
2. If you are deaf or hard-of-hearing, be sure to register with **Disability Resources** so that we can support your learning appropriately. This is your right.
3. If you benefit from an **assistive listening device** such as a remote mic system, please use it!
4. If you don't have difficulty hearing in class, take good notes and offer to **share** them with your classmates that may be struggling.
5. Be mindful of your **mental health** – learning can be exhausting under ideal circumstances. If you are tired & need a break, **rest**. We will get through this.

Instructors

1. **Ask** your students (during every lecture) if they can hear you ok. You can use an app, a Google form, or Zoom poll to allow students to answer anonymously.
2. If a student indicates that something was hard to hear, don't repeat it verbatim. **Rephrase, slow down, speak up, and mic up** if possible!
3. **Talk slower**. Allowing students more time to process what you are saying will help them understand & remember more of what you are saying.
4. Be aware of the **additional mental energy** required to listen to speech that isn't clear and support your students with **additional resources & compassion**.



For questions or concerns,
scan the QR code