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SOUND

continued from page 1

really tough," he said, adding that it's not always easy to find a seat at the front of the class.

King said he normally uses hearing aids, though he spent the past week without them because they needed to be repaired.

"They look really dorky, but they help me a lot," he said. He added that even if he can't get full word recognition, the aids let him know which direction the sound is coming from.

"If I'm able to hear what's going on around me, mentally it's a lot easier for me to function day to day," he said.

King said he has also used an FM loop in class, a device provided by the University that has a microphone, which the teacher wears, while King wears the receiver so he can hear more clearly.

"Last term ... I had to use it in two of my classes, or I would have failed miserably," he said.

Yet, even with these tools King still struggles sometimes to get information. If students start to mumble or have side conversations, the ambient noise washes out the professor's voice, he said.

"If I'm in a class where that's going on too much, I'll turn around and tell people to shut up," he said.

Being unable to hear clearly makes King a little reluctant to participate in class.

"Back in the '80s ... I was very engaged, I challenged a lot, I really wanted to make sure I understood topics," he said, adding that he's now afraid to raise his hand in case he missed something. "It's a lot tougher when you're not sure you're in alignment."

He said he will often write down questions and go talk to the teacher after class. But this means he misses out on an important part of the instruction, he said.

"A lot of where education takes place is in the dialogue during class,"

he said.

Graduate Teaching Fellow Lars Schmitz, who teaches a geology lab, said he goes over questions with King after class whenever necessary.

"He's really into the topic and he's trying hard to catch everything," he said.

He said he really appreciates that King approached him at the beginning of the term and told him about his hearing.

"I knew what I should consider when I'm teaching," he said.

King said Disability Services has been integral in facilitating his time in class.

"They will bend over backwards to have any disability taken care off," he said.

Disability Services Director Steve Pickett said the center serves 15 people with hearing impairments. However, not all students with hearing disabilities register with the department, he said.

Through Disability Services, students have access to various services, including interpreters and note-takers. "It's very individualized based on the degree of hearing loss and what they've found to be useful in their previous educational experience," Pickett said.

He added that students with a hearing disability face different challenges. For instance, in some classes teachers show movies that do not have closed-captioning. In such cases, the office would work with the professor and media services to find alternatives and provide the student with a transcript of the film, he said.

"Another obstacle is some professors aren't aware of how to utilize interpreters in their classes," he said. Currently, three students use interpreters for class.

King said he also credits his adjustment to school to the Nontraditional Student Union, of which he is an active member. He said he can identify with many of the members who understand the struggles of returning students.

"The support there is just tremendous," he said. "I didn't know about them fall term and I struggled really hard."

Junior Jeannie Hall, a member of

the Nontraditional Student Union, said King has been a real asset to the union by going to all the group's events and helping out.

"He found a resource he didn't have, but now he's a resource to the Nontraditional Student Union," she said.

She said King is really positive even as he deals with his hearing disability. "I think it's a challenge for him, but it's not something he ever complains about," she said.

King, who has three children, said he came back in the fall to find that the education system had greatly evolved. When he first started school in 1980, students would stand in line at McArthur Court where available classes were listed on the wall. Now, students have to juggle e-mail accounts, Blackboard and course Web sites.

"It's a difference of Earth to Pluto," he said.

While most times he feels he's on an even playing field, King said he doesn't always feel he fits in the campus environment.

"I really feel invisible on this campus," he said. "I feel like a ghost."

But even as he speaks about some of his tougher days at school, King keeps his sense of humor.

"I'd like to see them have La-Z-Boy recliners with speakers set up (in class)," he said.

He jokes about his new-found struggles with technology and having to memorize several passwords.

"I was hoping to die before I had to learn the technology," he said.

And his love for rock and roll.

"That's part of the reason I'm deaf," he said. "I went to too many concerts in the '70s."

King, who eventually wants to get a masters in vocational rehabilitation, said he doesn't regret coming back.

"The energy of youth is invigorating," he said. "Being in an environment where you're challenged to learn, you're challenged to stretch, to look at old ideas and beliefs and see how they hold up to new information, it's just really good."

Contact the news editor at ayishayahya@dailymerald.com.

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- Architecture Design Studio Exhibition "Architecture of Difference," today-June 9, EMU Concourse.
- Registration for EMU Craft Center Summer Workshops, today-July 30,

EMU Craft Center, 10 a.m.

- Public Safety Advisory Group meeting, EMU Umpqua Room, 3:30-5 p.m.
- Oregon Quarterly's fifth-annual Northwest Perspectives Essay Contest reading, Alumni Lounge, Gerlinger Hall, 7 p.m.

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Contact Susan Hardwick: susanh@uoregon.edu

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U of O's pre health clubs

Annual Spring Reception

TONIGHT
at 7:00 p.m.
in the
Willamette Hall Atrium

Students, faculty, doctors, dentists, pharmacists and community members are welcome. Special Guest Speaker Sister Monica.

Join us for food and fun.

Oregon Daily Emerald
P.O. Box 3159, Eugene OR 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices in Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

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