

Tips for Working with Sign Language Interpreters

SDS will schedule and share prep materials with the interpreter

- It is helpful if you have any materials to share with the interpreter to increase accuracy
- Sharing your syllabus and a list of terms, acronyms, and names with a interpreter (or captionist) can help with the accuracy of services.

Be aware of lighting and background

- If lights will be turned off or dimmed (for watching a film short clip) the interpreter needs to be visible
- Backgrounds that are too busy maybe distracting for those who depend on visual messages

Interpreters should be in the D/deaf individual's line of sight

- Know that the interpreter might move around the space to make sure the D/deaf individual can see both you and the interpreter as well as any other visual information.

Speak directly to the D/deaf Individual (not the interpreter)

- Avoid directing comments to the interpreter (such as "tell him/her/them" or "ask him/her/them")
- Maintain eye contact with the D/deaf individual. (the Deaf individual will look at the interpreter for the message)

Speak naturally

- Speak at a normal pace. Interpreters will ask you to slow down or repeat if needed.
- If you remember spell out any new names or complex terms.
- Interpreters are listening for concepts and ideas, not just words.

Realize the complexity of visual language

- Since the individual cannot receive more than one visual message at a time, please do not speak while also asking for individuals to read.
- Be aware if you talk over a film or video that the student is trying to watch two things at once.

Avoid asking the interpreter for opinions or comments about the D/deaf person

- Interpreters follow a code of ethics that requires impartiality and confidentiality.

In the case of exams or tests, it is best to have any spoken instructions also written on a board or written in the exam itself for clarity.