

# Working With Interpreters in Your Classroom

Interpreters are:

- Professional service providers who convey spoken or auditory messages from people in a particular environment.
- Responsible for ensuring all parties can communicate with one another
- Expected to “voice” what is signed and “sign” what is spoken
- Bound by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Code of Professional Conduct, which is a strict code of ethics.

Interpreters **DO**:

- Interpret all spoken information and/or conversations for students
- May ask instructor/speaker for clarification, pre-conference with instructor/speaker
- Interpret for the student, the instructor, and classmates

Interpreters **DO NOT**:

- Elaborate or add additional information to spoken messages
- Tutor students or help with class assignments
- Talk with instructors about student performance
- Counsel students and help with problems

**Tips for Instructors:**

When addressing a student using an interpreter, the student may not make eye contact with you, but please speak directly to the student. Interpreters are there for both the instructor and the student(s).

Please use the service as needed and appropriate for your classroom. Interpreters may be a resource for you to answer general questions about interpreting, sign language, and Deaf culture. Avoid asking information directly related to the student receiving the service.

Lecture at a normal pace; there is no need to worry about going too fast for the interpreters.

Be aware of the line of sight between the interpreter and the student (s); they need to see each other to successfully convey information.

Keep in mind light and light sources in your classroom. If your video has no captions and your turn out the lights, communication may be severed between the student and interpreters.

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

**WHY are there two interpreters in my classroom?**

Interpreting is physically & mentally demanding and often taxing on an interpreter. Depending on the course content and length of the class, teams of interpreters may be assigned. Interpreters will devise work shifts to ensure longevity and quality of services.

**How do I know if the interpreter and student are following along in my lecture?**

Interpreters are professionals and abide by a professional code of conduct. By no means will they alter your information. If there is a question or a point either the student or interpreter has missed, the interpreter will voice the question as well as identify from whom the question is being asked.

**The student wants to meet with me during my office hours. How do I get an interpreter?**

The student is responsible for requesting an interpreter for your meeting, however, and alternative to short inquiries may be writing to each other.

**I've never had a Deaf student or worked with an interpreter before, what do I have to do?**

Treat the student(s) the same as any other student taking your course. Communicate with the student as you would with a student to inquire about their performance or participation in the class.

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