

# TIPS FOR INSTRUCTORS WITH DEAF STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM

Interpreters are part of the educational team. They are in your classroom to convey all spoken and signed information so that deaf and hearing participants can communicate with equality and ease.

## CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

- The interpreter and Deaf student will choose the best seating arrangement. Best practices will allow the Deaf student to see both the interpreter and teacher simultaneously.
- Don't stand between the Deaf student and the interpreter. Walking between them is fine.
- Encourage students to talk one at a time. Overlapping conversations make it difficult to provide a thorough interpretation.
- When using videotapes or films, always request captioned media. It allows the Deaf students direct access to the information.
- Check that the captions are accurate as some online captioning, (e.g. automatic captions) may be inaccurate.
- Deaf students lose access to communication when it is dark. If the lights must be out for any reason, try to keep one light on for the student to see the interpreter.
- It is helpful if you inform the interpreter coordinator when class is canceled.

## TEACHING DEAF STUDENTS

- When speaking to a Deaf student, look directly at them and use the first person "I" and "you". Avoid using the third person.
- Allow time for Deaf students to receive and answer questions. Interpreters are on average one to two sentences behind the speaker.
- Since Deaf students can't work and watch the interpreter at the same time, avoid talking while students are asked to work independently.
- When meeting with a Deaf student outside of class, decide who will request an interpreter.

## WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS

- Speak clearly at your normal pace. The interpreter will request clarification if needed.
- Interpreters generally have their back to the speaker so when making visual references; it helps to say what you are pointing at.
- Don't ask the interpreter to participate in activities, proctor tests, nor function as a teacher's aide.
- Provide outlines, texts, agendas, technical vocabulary, handouts, syllabus and access to the class Canvas account to the interpreter. Familiarity with the subject matter will enhance the quality of the interpreted message.
- Refrain from asking interpreters questions during class. If you have any questions or concerns about the interpreting process, talk with the interpreter outside of class time when they are not interpreting.
- If a film or video does not include captions, giving interpreters access to the media ahead of time will help them better prepare for in class interpretation.
- Interpreters often work in teams to assist each other during the interpreting process.

## NOTES FROM THE AUTHOR

- Capital 'D' Deaf refers to a cultural group. This category includes hard-of-hearing students.
- Culturally Deaf people do not use the term hearing impaired.
- Please contact me with any questions.
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To Request Interpreters, go to the [Interpreter Request Form](#). The link is on the sidebar of the ARC web site.