

# Working with a Deaf Student

## • Interacting with a Deaf Person

- Make sure to gain the student's attention by a small hand wave or gentle tap on the shoulder before communicating to make sure that they see you.
- Look directly at the deaf person when speaking with him/her.
- It is best to pretend that the interpreter is not there. Address the deaf person directly by saying "you" instead of "please tell her."
- When the deaf person is present, avoid talking about them. For example: "can she lipread?". Instead, ask the student directly.

## • Classroom Environmental Considerations

- Classroom Setting
  - The student needs to sit in the front of the classroom opposite of the interpreter.
- Visual Cues
  - Putting keywords on the board when introducing a new topic will greatly assist the deaf student.
- Equipment Needs
  - When showing a video please use Closed Captioning. This way the student can benefit from the video as well. It is very difficult for a deaf person to watch an interpreted movie as this forces them to choose whether to watch the screen or the interpreter.

## • Potential Difficulties to Keep in Mind

- Notetaker
  - Depending on the format of the class, the student may need a notetaker assigned because they are unable to watch an interpreter and take notes simultaneously.
- Speech Rate
  - Slow down when listing technical terms and extensive lists of names as these will have to be spelled.

- Wait Time
  - Allow a minute or two so that the deaf student can look at a visual aid, chart, etc before you discuss it.
- Supplemental Materials
  - Making an extra copy of handouts for the interpreter is incredibly beneficial. This helps with spelling and following the lecture.
- Response Time
  - Allow a few extra seconds for the deaf student to respond to questions. There is a slight time delay when interpreting between two languages.
  - English is not necessarily the first language of a deaf person because English and American Sign Language are two different languages.

- **Brief Overview of the Interpreter's Role**

- The primary role of the interpreter is to facilitate communication. The interpreter is responsible for conveying everything that is said in the classroom along with auditory information (a door slamming, phone ringing). The following is a basic 3-step model of what an interpreter does:
  - A** The speaker utters a meaningful chunk of information; the interpreter listens.
  - B** The interpreter analyzes “**A**” for meaning (the target language equivalent) while hearing “**B**.”
  - C** The interpreter signs “**A**” while analyzing “**B**” and hearing “**C**.”

**NOTE:** Please do not ask the interpreter to supervise your classroom. This is not proper protocol and a liability since he/she has been trained to interpret, not manage a classroom.