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## Tips for All Students When Working With an ASL-English Interpreter.

### Students who use Sign Language to Communicate

- Contact the interpreter or contact DSS as soon as you know that you will not be coming to class.
- You are responsible for keeping up with everything relating to class (i.e. due dates, homework, things you missed in class etc.).
- Please refrain from holding conversation with the interpreter during class time.
- The interpreter is not responsible for retaining information from the Instructor if you are not paying attention, you left for the restroom, you were late for class... etc.
- The interpreter is bound by the department to report every time you are either a no call/no show or a no show with less than 24 hour notice.
- The interpreter is bound by a code of ethics that protects all of the parties involved. A detailed description of that is available upon request but it includes things such as:
  1. All information is confidential. However interpreters are viewed as Mandated Reporters for the state and must adhere to reporting situations of abuse or threats of suicide.
  2. The interpreter will deliver the message with the exact spirit and exact intent of the consumer.
  3. The interpreter will interpret everything that is either spoken or signed if the message is intended for everyone to know.
  4. The interpreter will act in a professional manner. (E.g. interpreters will not counsel, advise or interject their opinions. Interpreters will ask for a team member if faced with language or physical challenges...etc.).

5. The interpreter will demonstrate respect for the consumers by encouraging interdependence. For example, the interpreter will support direct interaction between students as well as between the students and the instructor. The interpreter will encourage you to take initiative and ask for things for yourself without using the interpreter to do it for you. The interpreter will also show respect to the consumers by making necessary language adjustments and using the preferred method of communication and by consulting with the consumers before any changes occur in the interpreting situation (e.g. bringing an intern to an assignment, a change in interpreter or an added team).

## Students who use Spoken/Written English to Communicate

- If this is your first experience with a Sign Language interpreter in the classroom, you may need some time to adjust. It may be a temptation to watch the interpreter instead of to pay attention to the instructor for whatever reason. This is natural and in time, hopefully you will become used to it and you will focus your attention where it's needed.
- Please look directly at the student who uses Sign Language when communicating with her/him. Be aware that the student who uses Sign Language will often look at the interpreter to see what you are communicating but do not let this throw you. Eye contact is highly valued in the Deaf community and most often the person using Sign Language needs to peripherally see your face to obtain the spirit of what you wish to convey.
- Understand that when the student who uses Sign Language is not making eye contact (e.g. they are looking down or away) s/he will not be able to take in the message being communicated. To get the student's attention, tapping them gently, waving, or flipping the lights on or off are acceptable ways. When in a small group, please wait for the student to look up before having a conversation. Communicating with one another while the student is looking away is considered rude and discriminatory.
- It is impossible to interpret when more than one person is communicating. Please raise your hands when you wish to speak. The interpreter needs time to establish who is speaking as well as needs time to interpret the message.
- Please refrain from the temptation to ask the interpreter to "Tell him/her...". Instead, communicate directly with the student who uses Sign Language and the interpreter will interpret the conversation.

- Please know that the interpreter will interpret everything that is communicated in the classroom. Exceptions to this will be when it is obvious that the conversation is private (i.e. the instructor leans over to discuss something quietly with a student) in which case the interpreter will not interpret. However, if everyone can hear or see it (including inappropriate language) the interpreter will interpret.
- Please refrain from including the interpreter in discussions unless it relates to communication between you and the student who uses Sign Language. The interpreter is there to facilitate communication, not to be a part of it.
- Please be aware that the interpreter not only will interpret your spoken English to American Sign Language but also will interpret Sign Language into spoken English. This means you will sometimes hear the interpreter's voice when the student who uses Sign Language wishes to communicate. Other times the Sign Language user will use her/his own voice and the interpreter will not need to use his/her voice.
- Please note that the interpreter will not offer opinions, advice or counseling. Again, the interpreter is there to facilitate communication, and not to be a part of it. This means the interpreter will not help you on homework, group activities or tests.
- The interpreter is a professional member of the educational team. This means the interpreter will treat everyone with respect and will expect the same in return.

We look forward to working with you.

Have a great semester.

Susan

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