



Working with Interpreters in the Classroom

The following is a list of suggestions that will facilitate the participation of deaf and hard of hearing students in and out of the classroom.

- The interpreter's role is to facilitate communication. Please remember to direct your communication to the deaf student, not the interpreter. Avoid phrases such as "ask her..." or "tell him..."
- The interpreter solely translates what you say. He/she does not explain, expand on, or comment on your lecture. He/she is not a teacher's aide, participant in the class or tutor.
- Interpreters normally interpret one or two sentences behind the speaker. Speak naturally at a reasonable, moderate pace, and keeping in mind that the interpreter must listen and understand a concept before signing it.
- Familiarity with the subject matter will enhance the quality of the interpreted message. It would be helpful if you could share outlines, texts, class syllabus, and any other information you feel pertinent to the situation with the interpreter.
- Allow time during class discussions for the student to raise his/her hand, be recognized and ask questions or make comments through the interpreter. The interpreter may voice for the student or the student may voice for him/herself. Remember to allow only one person to speak at a time.
- Keep lines of sight free for visual access to information. In class, the interpreter will attempt to stand or sit in direct line with you, the student, and any visual aids.
- For interactive situations, semi-circles or circles work best for deaf and hard- of-hearing students.
- Try to avoid talking while students are focused on written class work. The student cannot read and watch the interpreter at the same time.
- Inform the interpreter in advance if there is an audiovisual element in a presentation, so arrangements can be made for lighting and positioning.
- When particularly important information is being covered, be sure to convey it very clearly. Notices of class cancellations, assignments, etc. can be put on the chalkboard to insure understanding.

If you have any additional problems or concerns, please feel free to contact the Disability Support Service office at 443-518-4606, or stop by the RCF Student Services Hall, Room 302, and we will be happy to assist you.