

“ [Be] open to the culture and ... be willing to work with Deaf students to meet their needs.

- interpreter ”

This brochure was prepared as a service learning project by Western Oregon University's Winter 2006 *Introduction to the Profession of Interpreting* class. Service Learning is characterized by students' involvement in their local communities to apply and learn concepts relevant to their discipline.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For interpreting students, service learning is NOT volunteer interpreting. Students are by definition, developing skills and are not yet ready to meet the needs of the community by interpreting.

*“You're not doing more . . . It's not any extra work. It's just recognizing a difference and communicating in a different way.”*

- hearing instructor

## Why D/deaf?

When capital “D” is used, the individual strongly identifies with Deaf culture.

The lower case “d” refers strictly to hearing loss.

## Resources

For more information and suggestions on teaching D/deaf students who use interpreters, visit the RRCD or ODS websites.

Regional Resource Center on Deafness  
<http://www.wou.edu/rrcd>

Office of Disability Services

503 838-8250 V/TTY

503 838-8271 Fax

345 N Monmouth Ave

Monmouth, OR 97361

[ods@wou.edu](mailto:ods@wou.edu)

<http://www.wou.edu/student/disability>

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## An Instructor's Guide to Working with Deaf Students & Sign Language Interpreters



## **The student's perspective:**

*"One time I got a bad grade on a presentation because the interpreter said 'umm' and 'hmm,' but I know for a fact that I never said (signed) that."*

- deaf student

*"When the D/deaf person isn't the one voicing, it's hard to evaluate what's being said, because it's not 'their' voice being heard."*

- hearing student

*"Students can experience an aspect of another culture they are not familiar with."*

- hearing student

*"I'm the same as any other student, the only thing that's different is that I use an interpreter."*

- deaf student

*"I'm not sure how to evaluate a D/deaf presenter who uses an interpreter.*

*What should I do?"*

- hearing instructor

## **Tips for evaluating ASL presentations by D/deaf students**

1. Watch the D/deaf student and listen to the interpreter.
2. Pay attention to the D/deaf student's facial expressions and body language.
3. Notice how signing space (large or small) indicates the public or interpersonal nature of the presentation.
4. Encourage students to wear solid-colored clothes that contrast with their skin tone.
5. Be aware that the interpreter may need to ask for clarification or repetition of information during the presentation.
6. Understand that directional body movement as well as use of space and eye contact are linguistic features in ASL.

## **Tips for teaching D/deaf students effectively**

1. Speak directly to the D/deaf student and not the interpreter.
2. Ask questions of D/deaf students and look at them while listening to the interpreter.
3. Treat D/deaf students as you would hearing students; the only difference is that they use an interpreter to "hear."
4. Avoid blocking the interpreter's or D/deaf student's line of sight.
5. Facilitate eye contact among D/deaf students and interpreters, other students, and visual aides.
6. Pay attention to the interpreter's pacing in order to know when to continue (e.g., with lecture, discussion, and visual aids).

*"During group discussions, the Interpreter's process time can be used to reflect on new information."*

- hearing student