ETIQUETTE WHEN USING A SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

• Look at the student when signing/speaking to them, not at the interpreter
• Look at the student who is signing/speaking to you, even though this may feel awkward since the message is coming through an interpreter
• Address the student directly: Appropriate communication: "Where were you born?" Inappropriate communication: "Ask him where he was born"
• When possible, please share any notes, outlines, or handouts with the interpreter in advance, or at the very least, provide a copy of these items to the interpreter during the assignment
• The interpreter and student may ask for specific seating/positioning to facilitate the best viewing angles for the interpreter and for the student
• Depending on the length of the lecture/meeting, there may be more than one interpreter present. They will switch off throughout the session
• If, during the assignment, you plan to turn down the lights, remember to leave enough lighting on the interpreter so the student can clearly see them
• Sign/speak in your normal tone of voice at a moderate pace. The interpreter will tell you if you need to pause, slow down or repeat the information
• People sometimes read aloud in a different manner than they typically sign or speak. When reading extensively from written materials, consider supplying a copy to the audience and the interpreter. Be aware of the pace of your signing/speech, especially when reading aloud
• Be aware that the interpreter should interpret everything that is said in the room, including during class discussions. Even if you are speaking directly to the interpreter, if the deaf student is present this conversation will be interpreted too
• When separated from the person you are communicating with, avoid giving messages to the interpreter to relay at a later time to the individual
• Relax. If you are unsure of the appropriate way to proceed in a particular situation, just ask!

Questions? Please call Accessibility Resources at 645-2608