

Using Zoom with a sign language interpreter

Click to edit Master text styles

Second level

Third level

Fourth level

Fifth level

Before watching this video...

Please review the video on “Making Zoom classes accessible for deaf and hard of hearing students” so that you are familiar with recommendations for:

- Video quality, including lighting and use of virtual backgrounds
- Audio quality
- Using the Annotate feature

This information is also important when using a sign language interpreter

General information

- There will always be 2 sign language interpreters
- They will typically need to switch every 15 minutes or so (they will discuss this with you ahead of time)
- As a general rule, it takes a little longer to translate spoken language into sign language
- Remember: if the sign language interpreter is translating into ASL, they are translating from English into a different language – sometimes clarification by the interpreter is needed

Before the first class...

- Touch base with the interpreters to see what review materials they would like and to confirm break times and procedures
- Interpreters typically request material to review before class – this is particularly important for material with technical or unfamiliar vocabulary or concepts
- clarify process for making sure the interpreters have the Zoom link

Before the first class...

- Clarify procedures to be used during class - e.g. If the student has a question, often the interpreter will break in to say “Susan has a question”; they will need to be able to unmute their microphone – how do you want to manage this during class?
- OR would you prefer the student ask their question in the chat box or raise their hand?
- Remember: students who do not use voice won’t be able to “break in” by talking

Tips: At the beginning of class

- Make sure you have the most up to date version of Zoom
- May want to ask the interpreters to sign in to the Zoom class a few minutes early
- You will need to click on their videos (interpreters and student), and choose “allow to multi-pin”
- Give interpreters and the student some time once they are all logged in to organize the multipin feature

Tips: At the beginning of class

- Students will want to “pin” the interpreter to the top of the screen so that they are always visible (rather than disappearing into the second page of the gallery)
- “Multipin” allows the student to pin both interpreters so that identifying the interpreter after a switch will be more seamless
- Remember: the “voice activation” feature of Zoom that highlights the current speaker will not be applicable

Tips: During class

- Be cognizant of muting microphones and reducing background noise as much as possible – interpreters need to be able to hear everyone very clearly
- During class, speak to the student directly, not the interpreter. The interpreter’s role is to be “invisible”

i.e. “Susan, do you have a question about the midterm?
NOT (to the interpreter) “ask Susan if she has a question
about the midterm”

Tips: During class

- It is impossible for the student to watch the sign language interpreter and take notes at the same time, so access to notetaking is crucial
- There aren't corresponding ASL signs for all English words, so for some vocabulary words, the interpreter may need to fingerspell, define or describe the concept, which takes longer

Tips: During class

- It is difficult for a student to watch the interpreter AND look at you/other students and material on the screen
- In a real classroom, if you are referring to something on a screen, the interpreter would stand beside the screen so as to be able to reference anything you are pointing at or talking about – this is very difficult on Zoom
- Use the “annotate” feature as much as possible (described in the video “Making Zoom classes accessible for deaf and hard of hearing students”)

Resources

[ZOOM tutorial for ASL Interpreters](#)

This is a YouTube video designed for interpreters, but it gives you a clear indication of how things will look on Zoom for the student. You may want to share this video with your student if they are new to using an interpreter on Zoom