

*We're so thankful for: Our wonderful language, "American Sign Language,"
interpreters to voice and relay messages,
teachers to teach ASL, our Deaf worlds,
and for who we are - Proud to be Deaf!*

~Trix



Why do we need to prepare interpreters for live interpreting?

It's amazing to see so many Deaf presenters and performers everywhere! Perhaps you've noticed that some celebrity Deaf people feature certain preferred interpreters, whereas other presenters may have a different interpreter for each presentation. Which system is better? This question is totally up to each Deaf presenter.

Why is "voice" interpreting important?

- It gives non-signing hearing audiences opportunities to understand Deaf presenters
- It allows for both interpreting from prepared materials and "live"
- It encourages teaming between hearing and Deaf worlds
- It provides a range of professional interpretation services

There are three ways to manage voice interpreting:

- 1) Be prepared by reading, researching and watching the presenter ahead of the event
- 2) Be prepared with a mix of scripted material and readiness to interpret "live"
- 3) Be prepared to interpret "live" (with no script)

When interpreters are able to get scripted materials in advance, and when interpreters with special certifications - such as educational, medical, mental health, and legal – are available, the interpreters' work is made a little easier. However, what if there is no script available?

Interpreting "live" means not relying on prepared materials. Live interpreting may call upon the ability to interpret drama, comedy, and formal presentations. In addition, live interpreting places heavy demands on interpreters to keep pace with live presenters.

From what I've learned from Deaf people, most strongly dislike seeing an interpreter so dependent on a script that he or she seems to be "reading" and signing directly from the printed text. This is so awkward. Once, a Deaf storyteller explained that she felt that the interpreters – by requiring a script before the presentation - were controlling her. This Deaf

person wanted to express directly from her heart at funeral services and other events, using her own language, rather than writing everything out ahead of time in English. Of course, interpreters must respect these choices, and it's best to find interpreters who are comfortable with this type of work.

What are Deaf presenters' preferences?

- It's best to meet in advance to note the presenter's style and make communication adjustments
- Know the audience expectations regarding pacing and responses (re: laughter)
- Make sure that audiences get the point of the signed communication
- Use the correct register (style of informal, semi-formal, or formal expression)

Sometimes, a host will say, "In order to request an interpreter, we are required to get scripted materials." This is not the way it should be. Some presentations are given "live" and allow the presenters to improvise instead of following a script. Naturally, it is easy to understand interpreters' enthusiasm for accuracy with the use of prepared materials. However, it's vital to be prepared to ad-lib, to follow a live presentation that diverges from a script, and to keep up with presentations that have surprise elements.

When I was interviewed on TV, I had no idea what the questions would be. A Deaf community interviewer asked me questions, and I did my best to answer. Naturally, there was no script available in advance. Thankfully, the interpreters understood me pretty easily because I have a lot of practice in live presentation with interpreting. Perhaps I tend to use highly visual-gestural communication along with American Sign Language. This helps some interpreters become less fearful during live interpretation.

When an organization requested interpreters for one of my live presentations, they had a very hard time finding interpreters willing and able to take on the challenge. Finally, they hired two interpreters who were brought in from a distance in order to voice my presentation. It was interesting. I was surprised that it was so difficult to find qualified and willing interpreters to meet the live interpreting challenge.

I love working with interpreters and am grateful for the outstanding work they do! I just want to remind everyone that interpreters need to accept that some situations may require interpreting "live" – without a script. I encourage interpreters to check out YouTube.com videos for practice in voicing "live" presentations. We all need to accept and respect one another as we offer our talent and training in diverse situations.