

How I work with my interpreters (Sophie Lee)

When I am deciding on which interpreter is most suited to my study requirements, I consider three qualities:

1. Flexibility

There are occasions when the terminology is difficult for me to understand via fingerspelling, so I will ask the interpreter to use a sign that I have created for that subject-specific term. So we agree to use that made up sign in place of fingerspelling. This also makes it less taxing on the interpreter, because don't have to fingerspell as much.

2. Willingness to match my personality

Sometimes I can be extremely passionate about a subject so I am very expressive when I sign, and I want the interpreter to reflect this passion in the intonation of their voice. It is disheartening when I am being very expressive, but the interpreter sounds flat and isn't matching my intention. I want someone who can mirror my personality and be my "voice".

3. Communication

It is important for us to work as a team so that the interpreted class runs effortlessly; and to make sure that as a student, I can be involved in the dynamic environment of the classroom.

For instance, if a lecturer is presenting at a rapid pace and the interpreter is having difficulty keeping up with the information, I expect the interpreter to ask the lecturer to slow down or ask them to clarify. This ensures that everything is interpreted completely.

So these are three qualities I believe an interpreter should have.