

Playing with Form

Goal: To hone skills in conveying the same meaning various ways.

Rationale:

Although every situation is different and every consumer (both hearing and Deaf) is unique, it is easy for interpreters to find one way of conveying a message in English or ASL that feel comfortable and then find it challenging to break out of that go-to form. We know that the more we have practiced options outside of an interpreting assignment the more flexible we can be while interpreting in live interactions with the myriad demands each situation brings for consideration.

Taking time to brainstorm different forms and consider the impact they have on a message develops our linguistic skills in both languages as well as our ability to make moment-to-moment decisions while interpreting. Additionally, this task requires conscious attention to choices which puts an additional mental load on the practitioner, and over time this can increase our mental capacity while working.

Prep for the Activity:

- Find a video to use as a source text. It is recommended to do this activity several times, alternating an English video and an ASL video so you can practice form in both languages (if you are trilingual, also include practice in your third language).
 - If you do not know where to find videos like this, attend a Deaf or interpreting event and ask people who their favorite Deaf Vloggers are, favorite go-to sites are for English source texts, etc..
- Make sure you have enough memory on your camera/phone to record yourself three or four times interpreting the video.
- If you are using your phone to record yourself, put it on airplane mode so it will not be interrupted by incoming messages.

Practice Activity:

- Videotape yourself interpreting the source text. This can be done “cold,” without previously watching the video, or “warm,” having reviewed the full video to ensure full comprehension and focus only on this activity’s particular task. Additionally, this can be done consecutively (pause the video each chunk while you interpret it), or simultaneously (let the video run as you interpret).
- After you interpret the text once, you may watch the video of yourself interpreting, or skip this and continue onto the next step.
- Rewind the source text and interpret it two more times (at least). Each time you interpret it, try to use only words/signs that you did not use in any previous interpretation in this activity. This is likely to impact the message in a variety of ways (language style, register, word-choice, depiction, etc). It may help to visualize a different consumer each time.
- After you have repeated this enough times that you feel you cannot come up with additional ways to interpret it, watch each video and make notes as to how the message was conveyed differently by each target text.

After activity (follow-up):

DO NOT SKIP THIS PART! Learning through action without reflection is fleeting.

- Write a journal entry/blog post/reflection paper/letter-to-a-friend-or-classmate about what you noticed, what you learned, and what you still want to work on.
- Use your reflections to inspire the next activity you will choose.
- Be sure to complete at least two activities a week, one way or another (one every day would truly indicate deep commitment). Be sure to document this on your activity log.

(This is rich ground for your excuses to rear up. Don't let them win!! Find a way.)