

**SEE WHAT I MEAN:
Differences between Deaf and Hearing Cultures
Second Edition**

Interpreters' Study Guide

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How to Earn RID CEUs for this Activity

You may earn a total of 0.8 RID CEUs by watching the program, reading and answering the discussion questions in this file, and submitting your answers (see next paragraph). There is a \$15.00 processing fee. Pay the fee and complete the evaluation form **AFTER** you have completed and submitted your answers to these Discussion Questions. To pay the fee and complete the required evaluation form, go to www.treehousevideo.com, select “CEU Processing Payment,” then add the “See What I Mean CEU Processing” product to your shopping cart.

Submitting Your Answers: Create a separate Word document to answer these Discussion Questions. Submit the answers as a Word or PDF attached to an email to ceu@treehousevideo.com. There are 81 questions. Short answers (2 -3 sentences) are expected. Make sure you label each answer with the question number, and make sure your full name and RID Member Number (if applicable) appear on the first line of your document. Your CEUs will not be processed until we have received your processing fee and evaluation form as instructed above. Both RID and Non-RID interpreters will receive a Certificate of Completion no later than 45 days upon receipt of your completed answers to the Discussion Questions, payment and evaluation form. If you are an RID Member, you will be notified that your CEUs were reported to RID along with your Certificate of Completion.

Introduction

While this program was created for a general audience, sign language interpreters can derive several benefits from viewing it. First, it provides an overview of cultural topics that are relevant to anyone who works at the intersection of Deaf and hearing cultures. Second, the questions in this study guide take the material a step further and specifically relate it to your work as an interpreter. Additional questions encourage you to examine your own values and behaviors, and consider whether they have been influenced by your family or cultural/ethnic group.

This second edition of **See What I Mean** highlights scenarios dealing with recent technological innovations that have impacted the Deaf community. One segment focuses on the video relay service. Due to the widespread use of video relay and the great demand for video relay interpreters we have included several questions relating to video relay interpreting. If you do not currently work in a VRS environment, don't just skip these questions. You may still be asked to interpret phone calls, in the traditional way, by being in the same room with the Deaf caller. You could also try to imagine what you might do in a VRS situation because many of these points come up in face-to-face community interpreting as well.

How to Use this Study Guide

There are several ways you can use this program and Study Guide for professional growth:

- 1) You can watch each scene of the program one after the other (it is about an hour and a half total). Then answer the questions. You may need to review certain scenes in order to answer the questions associated with them. All the scenes are clearly labeled on the menu screen so that you can go right to the one you need.
- 2) You can watch the scenes one at a time and stop after each one listed in the study guide and answer the questions while it is still fresh in your mind.

3) Although this study guide is written for individual use, you can do either Option 1 or 2 above with a partner or small group. This is probably the optimal way to benefit from the questions within, as more ideas, viewpoints and options will be generated. The questions that follow do not really have “right” or “wrong” answers. They are a way of getting you to think critically and analyze situations where cultural influences have the potential to derail communication. Also, we realize that it is impossible to generalize about interpreting situations, as each one is unique depending on the people involved and the specifics of their interaction.

4) For additional interpreting practice, you can turn off the sound and captions and try voice interpreting for the narrator’s parts, or any other part.

Now, view the program

The following questions are grouped into 3 sections for each scene:

HOW HEARING ARE YOU? asks you to analyze a bit of your own behavior for some self-awareness.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES encourages you to consider and share how your own family, ethnic or cultural group may have shaped your views and values. In the program, the narrator and the two Miss Manners generalize about “hearing culture” vs. “Deaf culture”, without acknowledging that there are many more other ways that people identify culturally.

YOUR ROLE AS AN INTERPRETER poses some hypothetical questions. We want you to think through ways of handling certain culturally rich situations. Although we cannot anticipate every cultural challenge that will arise in your work, we believe that the technique of analyzing a situation from each culture’s point of view will be an invaluable tool.

After FRIENDS ON THE PHONE: This brief pair of scenes points up the fact that all people are sensitive to perceived instances of impolite behavior. Both the Deaf woman and the hearing woman express irritation when their friend stops paying attention to the conversation. You could say that they share a common value in this regard. Even though both women consider being interrupted in mid-sentence to be rude, however, it doesn't stop them from doing the very behavior they dislike. Deaf people have long complained about how hearing people would drop everything and turn to their phones the instant they rang. Ironically, with the advent of pagers, the tables have turned and Deaf people are guilty of the same behavior they complained about. Now hearing people can get a little sense of what it felt like to be on the other side.

How hearing are you?

1. Do you think you are guilty of interrupting a live conversation to answer a phone call? Describe the most recent instance.
2. Do you feel guilty when you do this in front of a hearing person? Do you feel guilty when you do this in front of a Deaf person? Why or why not?
3. Do you let the other person know why you are answering the phone? In general, would you give a different explanation to hearing people than to Deaf people? What are some things you could say/sign?
4. Do you react differently when someone looks down to read/answer an incoming text message as opposed to answering a cell phone? Why or why not?

Cultural Influences:

5. Do you think there are generational differences in politeness when it comes to answering incoming phone calls and text messages? What are they?
6. Can you think of examples of ethnic/cultural differences in politeness when it comes to answering incoming phone calls and text messages?

Your role as an interpreter:

7. In interpreting a face-to-face conversation between a Deaf person and a hearing person, how do you usually handle it if the hearing person answers an incoming phone call? What if the Deaf person looks down to check her text pager?
8. What factors in the situation or relationship would make you more likely to interpret the part of the phone conversation you can hear for the benefit of the Deaf person?
9. What should you do when the Deaf person continues to look down at her pager during the conversation with the hearing person? Should you sign only during the times she looks at you or should you just do continue interpreting even if her eyes are on her text pager?
10. When interpreting VRS calls, do you inform the hearing caller that the Deaf person continually looks at his text pager during the call? What are some ways you can phrase that?

After LATENESS, the classroom scenes:

In these scenes, the Deaf student who arrives late to class is expected to share, in detail, the reasons for his tardiness. The hearing student, by contrast, is expected to just slip quietly into his seat.

How hearing are you?

11. When you arrive late at various events, do you find yourself explaining the reasons for your tardiness? Where would you be more or less apt to do so?
12. How do you usually feel when you see a Deaf person giving detailed information regarding his tardiness? How would it depend on the situation?

Cultural influence?

13. Do you notice any particular expectations within your own cultural/ethnic group regarding lateness? How does that compare with Deaf norms and expected behavior in mainstream American culture?

14. Deaf people sometimes explain or excuse their late arrival by referring to “DST” or “Deaf Standard Time”. Is there a similar name used in your cultural/ethnic group (e.g. Jewish Standard Time, Black Standard Time, etc.) What does it signify?

Your role as an interpreter

15. In the program classroom scene, suppose the hearing student entered the hearing classroom and began to tell everyone about the traffic accident that caused him to be late. How do you think the hearing teacher and students would have reacted?

16. Similarly, in the program scene of the Deaf classroom, suppose the Deaf student had entered with his head down, not looking at teacher or classmates, what do you think their reaction would have been?

17. As an interpreter, you probably will face this potential conflict in a mixed group. Knowing the expectations of the two cultures, suppose you were interpreting a monthly staff meeting at a workplace. There is only one Deaf employee and she arrives 15 minutes late for a meeting that is already in progress. As she enters, she begins a chronological narrative of the events that led up to her late arrival (her alarm clock did not go off, her car did not start, she missed the bus, etc.)
 - a) If you choose to interpret her comments literally, what do you imagine will be the hearing people’s reaction?

 - b) If you decide to do something other than a verbatim translation, what are some options at your disposal? List 3 possible strategies.

- c) Suppose now that the scenario described in #3 occurred, but this time the workplace is an agency that serves the needs of the Deaf community and has a majority of Deaf employees. You are at the meeting to interpret for the hearing bookkeeper. If a Deaf employee arrived late and began a lengthy explanation of the reason, would your strategy be the same or different? Why?
18. Have you ever had this type of cross-cultural transaction dealing with a late arrival happen while you were interpreting? If so, describe the situation and what how you handled it.
19. When a Deaf client arrives late to a class or meeting and begins to explain the reason, how do you determine whether the information being shared is:
- a. Intended for the hearing audience
 - b. For the interpreter only
 - c. Just directed to the Deaf people in the room
20. Have you ever considered that being late may be part of the Deaf person's covert survival technique? By arriving late, he avoids the cumbersome, stressful, and unpleasant experience of the waiting period before the class/meeting starts. In your role as interpreter, would you have any responsibility in this instance?
21. In some cases, the Deaf person may be "clueless" that giving a long explanation about why one is tardy strikes many hearing people as making excuses and not accepting responsibility for being late. Should you ever just interpret the Deaf person's comments literally and then emphasize the hearing people's negative reaction?

22. Sometimes, the problem associated with tardiness is not the lateness itself but the noise distraction, which is unknown to the Deaf person. As an interpreter, what is your responsibility to make the Deaf person aware of the noises he is making as he gets settled down?
23. Sometimes Deaf people may not be aware that hearing people have a different strategy for politely handling lateness. When a hearing person arrives late, what is your responsibility as an interpreter/cross-cultural mediator to communicate the hearing way of handling tardiness?

After LEAVE-TAKING scene

How hearing are you?

24. In the program, the narrator really emphasized his comment “Wow, that was quick!” after the hearing friends parted. Did it seem that way to you too? Or did it just seem “normal”? Do you think your usual way of parting from hearing friends is more like the hearing couple or more like the Deaf couple?
25. Have you found yourself puzzled by the lengthy leave-taking procedures by Deaf people? Do you notice any differences between social situations and business situations?
26. When you are with a Deaf friend or colleague, do you try to modify your leave-taking to be more consistent with the Deaf way? Why or why not?
27. Hugging is a typical way to end an interaction in the Deaf community, especially when a strong, warm connection has been made. How comfortable are you getting a hug from a Deaf consumer at the end of a job?

Cultural influence?

28. Within your cultural/ethnic group, are there any special leave-taking procedures? How similar or different are they from the Deaf norms and from the mainstream American approach?
29. Do you adjust your behavior when saying goodbye to people from different cultural groups?
30. Does your cultural/ethnic group have certain rules about touching or hugging? Would hugging be a normal way to end an interaction in your cultural/ethnic group, even with someone whom you met for the first time?

Your role as an interpreter

31. Suppose you are interpreting for a meeting with a mixed audience. At the end of the session all the hearing people leave the room. Meanwhile, the Deaf individuals continue chatting away, oblivious to the waiting staff people who want to close or clean the room. What is your responsibility in this situation?
32. Suppose a Deaf person begins a long drawn-out leave-taking with a hearing person who is clearly ready to leave (gathering up their papers, looking at their watch), what should you do?
33. In VRS business calls, you may get a strong sense that the hearing caller is ready to end the conversation, but the Deaf caller keeps saying “one more question” before they ask one of several more questions. The hearing person’s answers get shorter and brusquer. Do you have a responsibility if the hearing person does not directly say they need to hang-up?

After PRIVACY -THE NEIGHBORS:

You saw that in hearing American culture asking people how much they paid for something is often considered rude, while the same question would be expected behavior in Deaf Culture where information-sharing is valued.

How hearing are you?

34. With whom (if anyone) do you feel comfortable discussing the details of your finances? With your parents? Your siblings? With your closest friends?

35. How would you handle it if your Deaf client asked you how much you earned for a particular job? Or your annual income? What about if a Deaf friend asked you the same questions?

36. Which of these would you feel comfortable disclosing when asked by a Deaf client? A Deaf friend?
 - a. How much you paid for your car?
 - b. How much you paid for your house?
 - c. How much you pay for rent?
 - d. How much you paid for your shoes?
 - e. The amount of your last utility bill?

Cultural influence

37. How does your cultural/ethnic group/family compare to Deaf culture and mainstream American culture in terms of comfort or expectations when discussing money?

38. Would you feel more likely to disclose information about your personal finances if asked to do so by someone from your cultural/ethnic group?

Your role as interpreter

39. In hearing American Culture, people sometimes do ask what could be perceived as an “impolite question” about someone’s age or other personal information. One way we mitigate or lessen the imposition of such an inquiry is to introduce the personal question with a phrase such as, “I hate to ask you this, but... (how old are you?)”. What are 3 other “softening phrases” we might use in different situations?

40. Suppose you are interpreting for a Deaf employee and his hearing supervisor. The Deaf employee notices the supervisor’s new watch and signs:
 WOW, THAT R-O-L-E-X? EXPENSIVE! HOW-MUCH YOU PAY?
 How might you phrase your interpretation? Would you let the Deaf client know that this question could be perceived as inappropriate in this situation?

Discuss various options for dealing with this situation and why you might pick one over another depending on the relationship between your Deaf and hearing clients.

41. Now imagine that you are interpreting a meeting at a Deaf agency. One of the Deaf employees asks the hearing employee in a friendly manner how much she paid for her new Blackberry.

OHHH. NICE PAGER! NEW? HOW-MUCH YOU PAY?

Would you translate the question literally? Why or why not?

After FEEDBACK - AFTER THE PRESENTATION:

In the program, Miss Hearing Manners says that if a hearing American has some criticism to give a co-worker, he or she often will begin with a positive comment as an introduction.

How hearing are you?

42. Do you often use “the sandwich approach” in providing feedback to other people? Is there a difference in social situations compared to business situations?
43. Have you had the experience of someone (not necessarily a Deaf person) giving you some negative feedback without starting with a positive comment? How did this make you feel? Were you able to get past any bad feeling from the direct approach and really “hear” the criticism?
44. Do you ever find yourself confused when the criticism you receive is surrounded by positive comments?

Cultural influence?

45. How is criticism handled in your cultural/ethnic community? Is “softening the blow” more appreciated than being direct?
46. Do you modify your manner of giving feedback depending on the cultural expectations of the person you are talking with?
47. Do you feel that each cultural group’s norms should be respected or that since we are all in America, everyone should learn to adapt to the American approach?

Your role as interpreter:

48. Suppose you are interpreting a work meeting and the hearing supervisor is giving feedback to the Deaf employee in a manner that is vague and potentially confusing, probably in an attempt not to hurt her feelings. Do you think it is your responsibility to “emphasize” the specifics of the problem areas the supervisor has alluded to? How would you do that? Are there any other options for dealing with this kind of situation?
49. Suppose now that the supervisor is Deaf and giving feedback to a hearing employee in a very direct manner. Do you think it is your responsibility to rephrase the comment to match hearing culture norms? Would you discuss this with the Deaf supervisor to see if they are aware of this potential conflict or if this is part of their strategy?
50. Would you ever initiate a conversation with your Deaf client after a difficult situation to process the differing communication styles of hearing and Deaf people? When and how?
51. Going back to the scene in the program, you can see that the 2 co-workers have misinterpreted each other’s comments. Imagine you were interpreting the conversation between these co-workers. What strategies could you use to make their underlying points come across more clearly?

After APPEARANCE - ARE YOU OKAY?**How hearing are you?**

52. If someone made a direct comment about your weight how would you feel?
Would you react differently if the comment came from a Deaf person or a hearing person?
53. Suppose you see your Deaf friend who drastically changed her hair (died it pink or chopped it off) and you don't think it looks good at all, would you tell her?
Would it be easy or hard? What if this happened with a hearing friend, would you say the same thing? In the same way?

Cultural influence?

54. How do you view your ethnic/cultural community's expectations of directness?
Is it more similar to the Deaf approach or more similar to the mainstream American way?
55. If your cultural group's expectations of directness differ from either Deaf norms or mainstream American norms, do you ever inform someone from whom you receive regular feedback (such as a teacher, boss or mentor) that you would prefer to receive feedback from them in a certain way?

Your role as an interpreter

56. The scene in the program goes by very fast. If you were interpreting this exchange between the student and her teacher, do you think it is your responsibility to pick an interpreting strategy so that the 2 people would understand each other better?
Why or why not? If so, what could you do?

57. Suppose you are interpreting an appointment between a Deaf client and her male social worker. They have not seen each other in 6 months. The first thing the Deaf client signs is WOW YOU BALD FAST. What are your options as an interpreter? Why would you choose one option over another?

After VRS scene – NOT THE BEST CONNECTION

How hearing are you?

58. Suppose you are calling your best friend, before launching into the latest development in your love life the moment she answers the phone, do you ask if she “has time to talk?” Are there any other ways you try make sure that you are not imposing on your friends’ time on the phone?
59. What clues do you pick up on to notice that your friend wants to get off the phone but is not coming out and saying so?
60. Do you ever use the phrase “I better let you go now” in phone conversations? What percent of the time are you thinking of the other person’s time versus wanting to end the call yourself in a polite way?
61. In what business situations are you conscious of trying to keep your calls short? (Examples: pizza parlor on a Friday night, doctor’s office at 4:58pm,) what other places?

Cultural influence?

62. In your cultural/ethnic group are there any specific rules or expectations when it comes to phone calls, either business or personal?
63. If you had extremely sensitive news to tell someone in your family, would you rather do so in person or on the phone?

Your role as interpreter:

64. To review the program scene: the travel agent and the Deaf man both become frustrated during this call. Can you take each person's point of view and describe the moments that you find frustrating.

The travel agent:

The Deaf caller:

65. It is impossible to generalize about all VRS calls. As an interpreter you make decisions based on the specifics of each situation and the callers involved. How do you think the interpreter in this scene handled the situation? Can you think of any other strategies she could have used?
66. Have you experienced VRS calls where the Deaf caller has been distracted and their attention has been drawn away from the VP screen and the interpreter? How do you usually handle it if the Deaf caller:
- Gets up and leaves the room suddenly?
 - Signs to someone else in the room?
 - Appears to be looking for a pen?
 - Keeps looking down at their pager?
67. We saw in the program scene that the Deaf caller did not seem to share the feeling of time pressure felt by the travel agent. Do you think the interpreter has some responsibility to share some information in order to bridge the cultural gap here?

68. Suppose you are interpreting for a Deaf person calling to order pizza. When the hearing worker at the pizza restaurant answers the phone, you hear: lots of noise in the background, other phones ringing, people hurriedly yelling orders to each other. The hearing person says quickly,
 “HellothankyouforcallingABCPizzaholdplease!”

Knowing that you cannot generalize, what factors would lead you to convey some of the auditory information that you received? What are 3 different options for doing so? In what situations would you decide not to communicate this information? Why not?

After PAGER scene - WHAT’S COOKIN’???

How Hearing are you?

69. Do you call your communication device, a “cell phone”, “text pager” or “pager”?
70. Do you say, “page me” or “text me”? Do you find yourself using different phrases with Deaf people than with hearing people?
71. Do you use your cell phone as your primary source of email?
72. Are you puzzled when people text you with a series of non-urgent, detailed messages?

Cultural influence?

73. Do you see any difference within your cultural/ethnic group when it comes to the use of cell phones or pagers?
74. Are there certain phrases that are typically used by the members of your cultural/ethnic group when sending text messages?

Your role as an interpreter:

75. Suppose you are interpreting a VRS conversation and the Deaf caller signs YOU P-A-G-E ME LATER TONIGHT, OK? What would you say? Suppose you voiced the word “page” and the hearing person said, “Huh?” then what would you do?
76. If a hearing caller said, please text me, how would you sign the message?

After EMAIL Scene - THANKS FOR THE FAVOR:**How Hearing are you?**

77. Have you ever had an email/text message exchange like the one in the program scene where a Deaf person typed a phrase that seemed inappropriate?
78. Would you ever end a business email with a rather intimate phrase such as huggies or xoxo? Why or why not?

Cultural influence?

79. Have you ever misjudged the intentions of a person from another culture because of some communication difference, with embarrassing results? What happened?
80. Do you consider your ethnic/cultural to be more affectionate and demonstrative than mainstream American culture? If so, explain how.

Your role as an interpreter:

Although this scene deals with two different perceptions of the phrase “XOXO HUGS” in an email exchange, a similar misunderstanding can occur in a common exchange in interpreted VRS calls. In winding up conversations on the phone, Deaf callers often utilize the ASL hand shape that is termed “the I Love You” hand. This is often used with intimates but may also be used in business situations. There are different types of movements that can lend emphasis or modify the meaning (e.g., a strong coming forward motion may mean literally “I love you”, while a slight shaking back and forth may carry more of a feeling of generic “warm closing” to the conversation).

There is a danger of miscommunication if the interpreter always literally translates the hand shape by saying, “I love you,” Sometimes that is not at all the message that the signer intends.

If you think about it, hearing people who have been conversing on the telephone for their entire lives have developed a repertoire of “winding down phrases” to utilize with different people depending on the relationship and situation. For example, 2 teenage boys winding up a phone conversation may use a slangy phrase, such as “Later, dude.” While in a business situation a phrase such as, “ Thank you so much. I really appreciate your helpfulness and patience” might be used. In these instances a feeling of “warm closing” is expressed using completely different sets of words.

Deaf people have only been conversing with hearing people on the telephone through VRS for a relatively short time. Many Deaf callers are unaware of the range of different closing expressions that hearing people utilize on the phone to express many shades of meaning. ASL has not yet developed a similar range of signs to express a “warm closing” on the phone.

81. Imagine that a Deaf caller is winding up a call and uses a shaking “I love you” hand shape in the following situations. What appropriate English phrase could you utilize?
- a. A middle-aged Deaf female customer to a hearing gas company employee who has gone out of her way to be helpful.
 - b. A young Deaf male video-gamer to a hearing tech support person who did trouble-shooting and solved his problem after an hour on the phone.
 - c. A Deaf high school girl who has been out sick to her hearing friend who called to see how she was doing.
 - d. A Deaf construction worker whose hearing boss tells him that he needs him to work next week.
 - e. A Deaf young woman who has a job interview on the phone with a hearing woman in an agency.

Thank you for taking the time to watch and answer all of the questions.

Make sure your Word doc has your name and RID number (if applicable) clearly indicated at the beginning. Submit your Word doc to ceu@treehousevideo.com.

After submitting your answers, make sure to submit your payment and evaluation form:

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