Northeastern University
Center for Atypical Language Interpreting

Assignment: Self-Reflection and Awareness in Interpreting Practice

Course: ASL Interpreting Studies
Assignment Type: Reflective Analysis
Length: 2–3 pages (or 5–7 minute ASL video equivalent)
Total Points: (Instructor-determined)

Purpose

As future professional interpreters, students must develop the ability to critically examine how personal experiences, assumptions, beliefs, and knowledge gaps influence interpreting decisions. This assignment promotes self-awareness and ethical decision-making consistent with professional standards such as the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and its Code of Professional Conduct.

Assignment Overview

After viewing the assigned video featuring an individual from a specific community (e.g., DeafBlind individuals, immigrants, individuals with cerebral palsy, etc.), you will write a reflective analysis examining your internal responses and potential assumptions.

This is not a summary of the video.
This is an analysis of **you as the interpreter**.

Reflection Prompts

Address each of the following in your response:

1. Assumptions

A. What assumptions came up for me while watching this video?
B. When did I notice myself making quick judgments or predictions?

2. Surprise and Disruption

A. What surprised me about this individual?
B. Did anything challenge what I expected?

3. Perceived Knowledge

A. What do I think I know about people who are part of this group (e.g., DeafBlind individuals, immigrants, people with cerebral palsy)?
B. Where did I learn these ideas?

4. Remaining Questions

A. What questions do I still have?
B. What knowledge gaps did this video reveal for me?

5. Assumptions and Interpreting Decisions

A. What assumptions might shape how I interpret this person's language?
B. What assumptions might shape how I describe this person's language based on my observations?
C. How might my background influence word choice, tone, register, pacing, or role-space decisions?
D. What steps can I take to mitigate assumptions in professional practice?

Expectations

Your reflection should:

1. Demonstrate honest self-examination
2. Connect insights to interpreting decision-making
3. Identify potential impact on message equivalence and consumer trust
4. Reference ethical responsibility where relevant
5. Avoid defensiveness and focus on growth

Evaluation Criteria

You will be assessed on:

1. Depth of reflection and critical thinking
2. Ability to identify assumptions and preconceptions
3. Connection to interpreting practice
4. Professional writing or ASL clarity
5. Specificity (avoid vague statements such as "I don't have any assumptions")

Why This Matters

Interpreters serve communities with a wide range of languages and backgrounds. Without intentional reflection, unconscious assumptions can affect accuracy, impartiality, and consumer autonomy. Developing reflective practice is essential to ethical, effective interpreting.

Grading Rubric

Assignment: Self-Reflection & Awareness in Interpreting Practice
Total Points: 100

1. Depth of Self-Reflection (25 points)

Criteria	Excellent (22–25)	Proficient (18–21)	Developing (12–17)	Needs Improvement (0–11)
Honesty & Vulnerability	Demonstrates thoughtful, honest, and nuanced self-examination; clearly identifies assumptions and internal reactions	Identifies assumptions with some reflection	Mentions assumptions but with limited depth or insight	Minimal reflection or defensive responses
Specificity	Provides specific examples from the video and personal reactions	Some specific examples	Few or vague examples	No clear examples provided

2. Identification of Assumptions & Preconceptions (20 points)

Criteria	Excellent (18–20)	Proficient (15–17)	Developing (10–14)	Needs Improvement (0–9)
Awareness of Assumptions	Clearly articulates personal assumptions and where they originated	Identifies assumptions but limited origin analysis	Identifies few assumptions	Does not meaningfully identify assumptions
Recognition of Assumptions	Thoughtfully explores potential implicit assumptions and their impact	Acknowledges assumptions with some explanation	Mentions assumptions without analysis	Denies or fails to recognize possible assumptions

3. Connection to Interpreting Practice (25 points)

Criteria	Excellent (22–25)	Proficient (18–21)	Developing (12–17)	Needs Improvement (0–11)
Impact on Interpretation	Clearly explains how assumptions may influence language choice, register, tone, pacing, or role decisions	Explains some impact on interpreting decisions	Makes limited or unclear connections	Does not connect reflection to interpreting decisions
Ethical Responsibility	References ethical standards (e.g., RID CPC) and applies them meaningfully	References ethics generally	Mentions ethics vaguely	No ethical connection made

4. Critical Thinking & Growth Orientation (15 points)

Criteria	Excellent (13–15)	Proficient (10–12)	Developing (6–9)	Needs Improvement (0–5)
Growth Mindset	Identifies clear steps for mitigating assumptions and continuing professional development	Suggests some growth strategies	Limited or general growth ideas	No strategies for improvement
Engagement with Questions	Fully addresses all reflection prompts thoughtfully	Addresses most prompts adequately	Addresses some prompts	Fails to address prompts thoroughly

5. Professional Presentation (15 points)

For Written Submissions:

A. Organization and logical flow
B. Academic tone
C. Grammar and mechanics

For ASL Video Submissions:

A. Clarity and fluency
B. Organization and structure

C. Professional signing register

Performance Level	Description
Excellent (13–15)	Clear, organized, professional presentation with minimal errors
Proficient (10–12)	Generally clear with minor issues
Developing (6–9)	Some organizational or clarity issues
Needs Improvement (0–5)	Disorganized, unclear, or unprofessional presentation

---

Instructor Notes (Optional Adjustments)

You may:

A. Weight “Connection to Interpreting Practice” more heavily in advanced courses
B. Add a peer-response component
C. Include a self-evaluation section
D. Convert to a 50-point or 25-point version

The contents of this assignment were developed under grant H160D210001 from the U.S. Department of Education (Department). The Department does not mandate or prescribe practices, models, or other activities described or discussed in this document. The contents of this assignment may contain examples of, adaptations of, and links to resources created and maintained by another public or private organization. The Department does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of this outside information. The content of this assignment does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department. This publication is not intended to represent the views or policy of or be an endorsement of any views expressed or materials provided by any Federal agency. (EDGAR 75.620)