

Who are we serving?

We serve families who do not speak, listen, write, or read well in English.

We serve students who are learning English

Some of the people we serve did not complete their primary or secondary education.

They also speak many different languages. We serve at least four languages in OUSD meetings.

It is our responsibility to help language interpreters do their important job.

We will discuss the following guidelines for "speaking to be understood" during the DELLS meeting this year.

1. Use simple, everyday words. Do not use jargon.
 - Jargon is "special words that are used by a profession or a group that are difficult for others to understand." If you need to use a special word often, you must explain it.
 - Keep the reading level of your words at no more than a 6th grade level. The lower, the better without sacrificing meaning.
2. Speak at a slow steady pace. Remember that some languages use more words than English when saying the same thing. [about 20% more words in Spanish; about 30% more words in Arabic]. Pause between presentation slides or paragraphs so that interpreters can more easily keep up.
3. Use short sentences and paragraphs.
4. Use an *active voice*. Avoid a *passive voice*. [Say: "The school held a meeting" instead of "A meeting was held by the school."]
5. Avoid *colloquialisms*, *idioms*, and *metaphorical terms*. These are words that do not mean exactly what they say and that are often unique to a culture. [Example: "We are cooking with gas" to mean "We are making fast progress."]
6. Jokes do not translate well into other languages. Keep humor very simple.
7. Use visual presentations and aides to help with understanding language. Fully present the content of all slides; don't simply show them.
8. Invite interpreters to *advocate* for the language needs of their clients. Invite clients to advocate for their own language needs. [To "advocate" means "to publicly defend something."]
9. Make recorded interpretations of presentations available to all participants. It is possible to record the interpreters on Zoom.