



Medical terminology strategies

Parallel texts

As interpreters, we are the doctor's and the patient's voices. The only way to acquire the language register for a doctor's speech is to read what doctors read, such as the Merck Manual.

Summarization and outlining

Interpreters should not summarize, but in order to get the main points of the issue, and be able to know how to organize the details we need to learn this skill. Outlining is a prerequisite for note taking. These techniques benefit participants by finding the main idea in a way that is practical for interpreters. Independent study builds self-confidence in the ability to explore new areas of work.

Flash oral presentations

This helps with *"being the doctor's and the patient's voice."* In class, participants make presentations to the class with 10 minutes of preparation in small teams. Practicing these two-minute speeches makes it easier to speak like a doctor and interpret. It also helps people learn how to access the resources they will need at appointments in a practical way. These presentations are given in both languages.

Debriefing after these sessions is important. We talk about how nervous people felt, how hard it was to do the research and speak, and what made them successful and what could have done better.

Rephrasing

Find three different ways to say something in English without changing the meaning. Interpreting is the art of rephrasing without changing the message. This is exactly what we do when we express the message in a different language. Often, interpreters are hung up by the words, or by the fact that the syntax of the source language does not fit the syntax of the target language. Being in the practice of rephrasing helps participants understand that the message, not the words, is what matters.

Terminology databases

It is important for the interpreters to have a system to organize and validate the terms they learn. For each term, students should research the following information, and log it in a spreadsheet.

- System
- Term
- Context (indicate source) – copy the term in context, don't just write it in context yourself
- Definition (indicate source) – copy the definition from a source; do not just define it yourself.
- For your second language:
- Term
- Context (indicate source) – copy the term in context, do not just write it in context yourself or translate. The idea is to see the way the term is actually used.
- Definition (indicate source) – copy the definition from a source; do not just define it yourself.

Naming sources

- gives interpreters a way to go back to these sources and read more later
- increases the value of the spreadsheet by giving the term extra validation.



Doing this in a spreadsheet allows interpreters to sort and filter by system. This is the way terms are studied and collected for dictionaries such as the Real Academia Española. This is the format of the terminology table we used to add “estadounidismos” to the new edition of the RAE and validate them. This method is a professional way to share information with colleagues so we know our terms are validated.

Interpreting (Translational action)

Start by checking the dialogs for difficult spots and discussing how to do the translational action. (*Sensu* Dr. Nord)

- Challenging syntax
- Terminology
- Start by rephrasing the section three or four ways without losing content.
- Then attempt to do the translational action, writing it on the board in the target language.
- Mark the semantic elements and show how they move around in the structure of the sentence.

Then, discuss other interpreting difficulties, such as needed interruptions.

Demonstrate:

- Interruption for the interpreter to interpret accurately
- Request for a repetition from point x
- Request for clarification

Dialog resources:

<http://blog.gauchatranslations.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Medical-Language-Dialogues-Transcribed-w-permission.pdf>

Rubric for evaluating interpreting:

<http://blog.gauchatranslations.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/evaluations-for-interpreters-GT-20160916.pdf>