National Educational Interpreting Conference
July 31- August 1, 1999 • Boston, Massachusetts
by Cathy Cogen, IC/TC, Massachusetts, Jane Nunes, CSC, New Hampshire, and Kathy Vesey

For three years now, the National Educational Interpreting Conference (NEIC) has provided a forum for a much-needed dialogue on interpreting in K-12 and postsecondary education. In the tradition of collaboration established by the first and second NEICs, in 1997 and 1998, this third conference was organized by the Gallaudet University Regional Center-Northeast, the Northeastern University Interpreter Education Project for New England (RSA Region 1), and PEPNet, through the Massachusetts Site of the Northeast Technical Assistance Center (NeTAC). Held at Northeastern University, Boston, just prior to the RID Convention, the conference was full to capacity several weeks in advance. It drew 235 registrants from 36 states and territories including Alaska and Guam, and from Ontario and Newfoundland, clear evidence of the serious and widespread concern about the education of deaf children and young adults. Participant feedback points to the need for continuing to offer the NEIC on an annual basis.

The conference theme, “Our Changing Classrooms: Diversity, Technology and Interpreters,” was devised to help interpreters prepare for the fast-advancing technology and anticipated demographic waves of the 21st century. Lecture/discussion sessions and skill development workshops offered a look at information technology, the use of video and computer technology for delivery of sign language interpretation in the classroom, a pilot program offering distance learning options for educational interpreters, distance mentoring, the representation of graphic images in ASL, expression of math concepts in ASL, and the use of ASL classifiers to convey concepts in science and technology. Sunday’s sessions were planned in cooperation with the Mano a Mano Assembly of Interpreters Working in Spanish Speaking Communities. We offered presentations on interpreting foreign language courses, the multicultural Deaf college student, research findings on the cultural fluency of trilingual interpreters, and issues in working with African-American/Black students. Still other sessions during the two-day conference focused on the transition from high school to post-secondary education, the ways in which ASL promotes the process of learning to read English, mental health and medical interpreting with children, the ever-changing roles and responsibilities of educational interpreters, how knowledge of the educational process can enhance the interpreters’ effectiveness as a member of the instructional team, and research findings that question the effectiveness of interpreted education in achieving its goal of enhancing academic achievement. In a lunchtime presentation by RID officers Daniel Burch and Ben Hall, participants were pleased by a promise of more attention and commitment from RID to the concerns of educational interpreters. Malina Lindell, Chair of EdITOR, and members of the board welcomed participation in the activities of this RID Special Interest Group.

The conference planners gratefully acknowledge several organizations whose contributions helped to make the third annual NEIC possible: RID, Inc., EdITOR, the RSA Regional Interpreter Education Projects at La Guardia Community College, Gallaudet University, Waubonsee Community College, Johnson County Community College, Front Range Community College, El Camino Community College, and Western Oregon University, the RSA-funded National Multicultural Interpreters Project at El Paso Community College, and the GURC at Johnson County Community College.

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VIEWs October 1999
Ethical Educational Interpreting: Perspectives of Multiple Team Members

By SueAnne McCreery, Associate Member, AzIQAS V, M.ED; Karen Feldman, MA; Heather Donnel, CI, BA; Kyra Davis, Arizona

As is true with many other K-12 programs across the country, the Southeast Regional (SER) Cooperative is grappling with its definition of the role of the educational interpreter. SER prides itself, however, on its collegial practice of including all educational team members in defining this important function. This article will provide insight into the perspectives of multiple educational team members regarding the progress we are undergoing toward increased adherence to the RID Code of Ethics in the high school setting.

Coordinator’s Perspective

When I was hired two years ago as SER’s first interpreter coordinator, I encountered educational interpreters who regularly engaged in multiple roles with students. As an interpreter, I was uncomfortable with the ethical dilemmas often resulting from multiple roles. As a counselor, I had concerns about excessive student dependency. As a teacher, however, I recognized the significant developmental implications of interpreting with children. I also shared our teachers’ concerns about the Deaf students’ need for any and all linguistic input, given the communication barriers inherent in public school settings.

My perspective began to solidify, however, due to the work of Elizabeth Winston (1998). Winston acknowledged the reality of multiple roles when working in K-12 settings, but emphasized the importance of adherence to the RID Code of Ethics while engaged in the role of interpreting. Winston advocated a pragmatic, yet ethical approach to educational interpreting. As a result of Winston’s influence, I encouraged our educational interpreters to consider the ethical implications of their work.

It became readily apparent that our interpreters had been regularly disregarding two major tenets of the RID Code of Ethics in their efforts to meet the educational needs of their students:

**Tenet 1** - Interpreters/Transliterators shall keep all assignment-related information strictly confidential.

Interpreters and teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing were communicating daily about classroom content, students’ understanding and behavior, and classroom teachers’ objectives, etc.

**Tenet 3** - Interpreters/Transliterators shall not counsel, advise, or interject personal opinions.

Interpreters were interjecting their own opinions daily in their efforts to tutor, reinforce teachers’ lessons, redirect students, and/or meet their students’ social needs.

In response to these concerns about confidentiality and neutrality, the educational team members at one of our high schools have risen to the challenge of creating an increasingly ethical educational interpreter role. After numerous and often painful meetings in which we hashed out the advantages and disadvantages of changing the status quo, the teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing and the educational interpreters have agreed to increase confidentiality and neutrality through changing the role of the interpreter. Confidentiality: Interpreters are no longer expected to communicate with the teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing about academic-related information. The teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing now obtains this information directly from students and/or classroom teachers. Neutrality: While interpreting in the classroom, interpreters will no longer also engage in tutoring or advising students. If and when tutoring is needed, arrangements will be made for this to take place outside of the regular classroom at a time when interpreting is not also required.

Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing’s Perspective

During my first two years teaching Deaf students, I depended heavily on the interpreters that worked directly with my students. I expected the interpreters to facilitate communication in the classroom, to act as the liaison between the classroom teachers and myself, and to fill in on information that I logistically could not obtain directly due to the large numbers of students in my caseload. While asking this of the interpreters conflicted with the confidentiality tenet of the Code of Ethics, I justified it by saying that we were on the same educational team and had a vested interest in our students’ success. Admittedly, depending so much on the interpreters made my job easier.

Fast forward to August 1998. The beginning of my third year of teaching turned out to be one of the most difficult times of my career. I was approached by our interpreter coordinator to start thinking of our educational interpreters as people who solely facilitate communication in the classroom. This request sent a wave of stress through me. This year I would be working with 5 Deaf students, 5 educational interpreters, and approximately 38 classroom teachers. How would I possibly function without the interpreters acting as the liaison between the classroom teachers and me? How would the students succeed in their classes without the...
interpreters acting as the “middle men”? As I discussed this with our interpreter coordinator, we struggled to understand each other’s perspectives. I was bound and determined to continue to have interpreters report to me and make my job easier. As I thought about it, however, I realized that this would be detrimental to the students. It was also a lot to ask of the interpreters to disregard the confidentiality tenet of the Code of Ethics.

Now that we have made it through a semester of change, I realize that everyone has benefited. I have had to arrange more time in my schedule to see classroom teachers on a regular basis. This has provided great opportunities for me to get into the classroom and not only see what’s going on in class, but become more involved with the students, interpreters and classroom teachers. With interpreters no longer acting as liaison, the students have become more accountable for their education.

**Educational Interpreter’s Perspective**

I am new to the interpreting profession, but I have seen enormous change occur over the past year where I am currently employed. The majority of this change is in regard to the neutrality tenet of the Code of Ethics. Last year, interpreters were expected to take on the role of tutor on occasion during class time. Because of the multiple roles played by the interpreters, the relationship between the classroom teachers and the students suffered, or worse, did not exist. Teachers were often unaware of their students’ weaknesses because the interpreter was camouflaging or taking care of problems as they arose. The interpreter/tutor role also caused the students to develop a dependency on the interpreters for the “answers.” The interpreter, a non-expert, was then inappropriately teaching the material. As a result, some incorrect information could have been taught.

Presently, tutoring has been taken out of the classroom and is now being provided by the classroom teacher, with the interpreter facilitating communication. This, of course, is an ideal situation and is often not possible. When the classroom teacher is unable to provide individual tutoring, the teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing then reviews the information, with the interpreter serving as a tutoring resource. The last resort is for the interpreter to conduct the tutoring session. All of these situations now clearly occur outside of the regular classroom and this has greatly helped to clarify the role of the educational interpreter. This change toward a more neutral role has been a struggle. As interpreters, we sometimes feel that we know the subject better than the teacher or that we have a more effective way of teaching, but we know that we can not “counsel, advise, or interject our personal opinion.” This can be a strain because none of us want to see our students fail. We’ve had to accept the idea that students sometimes need to fall on their faces in order to become more responsible to learn on their own.

Change has not come easily, but we all realize that a more neutral interpreter role will benefit our students in the long run. It will prepare them for their interactions with interpreters in college and in other adult settings. We recognize that we won’t be there to tutor them, or break their falls, for the rest of their lives.

**Deaf Student’s Perspective**

The situation with my interpreters last year was somewhat chaotic. My interpreter kept my teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing on track about what was going on in my classes. My interpreter told her everything that was going on before I could tell her anything myself. I felt it was really my responsibility to inform my teacher of everything. My interpreter would also tutor me before my tests and if I did bad on them, she’d encourage me to take them again.

This year is much different. The interpreters don’t give information to my teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing anymore. I’m starting to give my teacher more information myself now. My interpreters do not tutor me in class, so I must study by myself or ask for tutoring outside of class. These changes have made me feel more independent—indipendence is a good thing.

These changes with my interpreters have caused me to feel prepared for college. Now I feel more independent and can do anything I set out to do in college and in “the real world.”

**Summary**

Implementing change toward more confidential and neutral educational interpreting practices has required the involvement and commitment of all educational team members. Michael Fullen’s work has helped us understand that change inevitably involves a period of ambivalence, uncertainty, and ambiguity. Conflict and disagreement are fundamental to change. Despite the fact that change is a frustrating, discouraging undertaking, change is inevitable, while growth is optional. Our educational team members have chosen the course which we believe will help our students, and ourselves, grow to our fullest.

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The Implications for Deaf Children of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

By Ruth A. Sandefur, RSC, OIC:V/S, Kentucky

Educational Interpreting

With the advancement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), many Deaf and hard of hearing children in the mainstream public school education system. Many Deaf adults are intensely concerned, including the author of this article, who was educated in both the public school system and a residential school. Why are Deaf adults so concerned? Although we recognize some public school system administrators realize one of their responsibilities to Deaf and hard of hearing children is providing qualified interpreting services, there are still too many Deaf and hard of hearing children who have "interpreters" who can sign, but have been hired by the school administrators as teacher's aides. "Unfortunately, it is common for schools to make use of lesser-trained individuals who can be paid less than professional interpreters" (Marschark, pp. 121-122).

Deaf adults are not only concerned, though, because many school administrators are not hiring qualified interpreters. We are concerned about the information that is lost in the transfer between the teacher and the interpreter. There are numerous reasons for the breakdown in communication. According to Jack Levesque, hearing students only hear about 80% of the information offered them. "The other 20% might have been mispronounced, interrupted by other sounds, or somehow distorted" (DCARA). How about a Deaf or hard of hearing student who has an interpreter with a hearing teacher? According to Levesque again, let's say the interpreter gets 85% of what the teacher says. He then turns around and presents this information to the student in sign language. Studies have shown that Deaf students actually receive less than 60% of what an interpreter signs. Why? There are many reasons. Sometimes the interpreter has misunderstood the teacher, but signs on, even though it doesn't make a lot of sense. Perhaps the light is glaring or the interpreter has on a wild print shirt, or the student in the next chair leans into her view, or the interpreter is not skilled or too slow, or the student stayed up late the night before and can't keep her eyes open. The list can go on and on (DCARA).

A third concern Deaf adults have is the feeling of isolation that many Deaf and hard of hearing children have experienced. This affects their self-esteem among other social deficiencies that frequently occur among Deaf and hard of hearing children who are mainstreamed. At the residential schools, many "lifelong friendships are formed, where language and culture are learned, and where teaching can occur directly without the need for intermediaries such as interpreters" (Marschark, p. 115). Many of the "younger deaf children discover role models and an environment in which they are on an equal footing with their peers" (ibid, p. 115).

This is not to imply "we can all wash our hands and go home." Instead, it shows how much our Deaf and hard of hearing children are missing when they are mainstreamed. It should be a challenge for interpreters in the public school system and considered a "wake-up call" that Deaf and hard of hearing children in mainstreaming programs deserve more than the services of a competent, qualified interpreter to maximize access, integration, equality, and empowerment for everyone in this setting. "The role of an interpreter will vary dramatically depending on whether her/his clientele are children, youth, or adults (Humphrey & Alcorn, p. 299). Humphrey & Alcorn also state that: Minimally, interpreters in this setting should be graduates of an interpreter education program who have some course work in child development and education. Ideally, interpreters in educational settings should hold interpreter certification and a Bachelor's degree. This would generally insure that the individual hired can perform the interpreting/transliterating tasks required, has experience with formal educational (sic) her/himself, and has knowledge of and training in the special area of education.

A fourth concern is that in mainstreamed programs, Deaf and hard of hearing students are frequently viewed from the negative, paternalist view of Deaf people instead of the "positive belief that Deaf people are members of a distinct cultural group" (Humphrey & Alcorn, p. 66). They stated: This understanding leads to the view of Deaf individuals as normal, capable human beings who embrace life in a way different from other normal, capable human beings who are not deaf (ibid, p. 66). Humphrey & Alcorn "encourage interpreters to explore, understand and embrace" (p.67) this view of Deaf and hard of hearing students. They also recognize humor as a tool "used by members of the minority group to fight oppression" (p. 68). They suggest that a sense of humor "will help you in your journey into the culture and community of Deaf people" (p. 73). They give examples of three jokes that Deaf people often use whenever they are referring to people "who have not yet demonstrated awareness or sensitivity to the needs and norms of the Deaf culture and community" (p. 74). According to Lane, Hofmeister, & Bahan, "Deaf humor is
frequently about oppression" (p. 157) and they use the example that Humphrey & Alcorn used about throwing a hearing passenger out the window because in their country there are plenty of hearing people. Humphrey & Alcorn warns interpreters to be aware of the power they have because they will find themselves in a very powerful position. They claim "we (interpreters) are all oppressors to one degree or another" (p. 74). According to Humphrey & Alcorn, interpreters "must determine to what degree you are an oppressor and deal with any oppressive tendencies, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors you have before you are ready to begin interpreting" (pp. 74-75). They claim "the cycle of oppression can be broken" (p. 75) by functioning as allies who "supports, undergirds and foster d/Deaf individuals in their own struggle for liberation" (pp. 75 - 76).

Humphrey & Alcorn define "normalcy" and give excellent examples of the difference in normalcy between Deaf and hard of hearing individuals and hearing individuals. They mention the implications of cultural differences for interpreters and suggest "individuals can act/interact appropriately only if they have a frame or schema in place for a particular setting" (p. 83). Deaf adults believe as they do that "if you want to become an interpreter you must be fluent in two or more languages" (p. 84). They also mention that an interpreter wishes to work effectively with Deaf people (students) they "must be knowledgeable of and comfortable with the cultures of the language you use" (p. 84). Kirk & Gallagher, in their book Educating Exceptional Children, point out that it is important that Deaf and hard of hearing children "are not deficient or deviant; they are simply children who cannot hear" (p. 311). They claim "it is far more productive to think of deafness as a sociological condition than a disease, to concentrate on the strengths of these children" (p. 311). They note that "cognition and language in dynamic interaction are two important factors in the learning process" (p. 312) for all children. They also note the "problems deaf children have with the English language, then impede their learning across all subject areas" (p. 312). They also mentioned that "most deaf children have difficulty developing linguistic skills because they have fewer opportunities to use English on a daily basis" (p. 312). Since Deaf children, whose parents are usually hearing, do not have models, "they cannot process the spoken word through hearing" (Kirk & Gallagher, p. 312).

It is imperative for interpreters to be conscious of all the problems that Deaf and hard of hearing children will encounter everyday due to all the problems that have been identified thus far. This author recommends that interpreters meet with the teachers a week before classes begin, if humanly possible, so that they can both discuss the problems Deaf and hard of hearing children encounter every day and discuss how they can resolve most of the problems together. All teachers should be aware that they will be the ones who will discipline any behavior problems that occur, but before she will be able to be fair with her Deaf and hard of hearing students she must be aware of the reasons they could occur. Hopefully, by identifying these problems in advance, most of the problems can be avoided. The interpreter might wish to suggest that the Deaf and/or hard of hearing students teach signs once or twice a week. As the Deaf and/or hard of hearing students teach signs, they will most likely feel they have some control over the problem of isolation, because as the hearing classmates learn signs, they will use them with the Deaf and/or hard of hearing students. There is a solution for every problem. The challenge is identifying the problem and solution.

Bibliography

Workshops During Motions Discussion?
As the emphasis for the RID Conventions has evolved in recent years, much of which has been influenced by the development and implementation of the Certification Maintenance Program (CMP) and the Associate Continuing Education Tracking program (ACET), the desire for professional development programs has increased exponentially. With the many activities which are mandatory at RID Conventions, there are fewer and fewer time slots available for more educational programs.

One idea that has been proposed is to have a limited number of workshops during the motions discussion period which is currently scheduled to occur from 2:00 - 6:00 p.m. and from 8:00 - 11:00 p.m., if necessary. Those who are interested in the motions that will be voted on Friday could attend the discussions, but those who were more interested in Continuing Education Units (CEUs) could opt for the workshops.

This has not been done before. However, nothing in the Bylaws precludes scheduling in such a manner. RID is interested in your reaction to this approach. We have begun scheduling the various elements of the Convention. Let us know how you feel by writing, faxing, or e-mailing to the addresses noted on page 2.
Educational Interpreting: Raising the Standards

By Maureen Moose, CT, New York

In the interpreting profession, jobs in the educational setting have traditionally been viewed as entry level positions. They have, by and large, been filled by those just graduating from interpreter training programs or those with little experience who are looking for a "safe" place to start. Highly skilled and qualified interpreters have been a rarity in this setting for several reasons.

1) Educational interpreting has been a politically hot issue within the Deaf and interpreting communities since its inception. The philosophical debate about the appropriateness of these programs awarded associate's or bachelor's degrees in interpreting. As a result, educational interpreters have commonly been hired as aides and paid accordingly low wages. Many interpreters have started out in education only to leave the schools for better paying jobs in the community. Although there have been some recent improvements in wages and benefits, there are still many areas of the country where interpreters cannot make a decent living in the educational setting.

3) There is a belief among interpreters and educators alike that those working with deaf children mainstressing, while important, has kept many skilled interpreters out of the field and deprived those children who are mainstreamed of the quality services they need and deserve. This however, is a topic for another article.

2) Educational interpreters have not been recognized as professionals by most educators and administrators. With the disparity between the educational levels of most interpreters and teachers it is no wonder that administrators have viewed interpreters as paraprofessionals. The field of interpreting was in its infancy when mainstreaming first began in the late 60's and early 70's. Degree programs in interpreting were nonexistent until the government established the three regional interpreter training programs in 1974. Over the next few years several more programs were developed but it was not until some years later that any of need only be able to communicate at a basic level. This belief is one of the reasons that schools continue to hire "interpreters" who have taken only one or two sign classes. This is a misconception that needs to be corrected. Studies of language acquisition in children have clearly shown that for a child to acquire language they must be actively engaged in meaningful communicative exchanges with adults who are fluent in the language. For hearing children the classroom teacher becomes a language model. Teachers use language at a level that challenges the expressive abilities of the children. In so doing they expose the children to new language patterns and vocabulary that assist them in expanding their own developing grammars. For some mainstreamed deaf children the interpreter may be the only language model that is accessible to them. If this model is in some way deficient, where does that leave the student?

Most parents of school-aged children assume that the professionals who educate their children are fluent in their child's language and have a level of expertise in their field. Shouldn't parents of mainstreamed deaf children be able to make the same assumptions of the professionals working with their children? If educational interpreters want to be viewed as professionals (and treated as such) then it is time we raise the standards which we set for ourselves.

- Fluency in the language(s) in which they work; not merely competency.
- Knowledge of Deaf culture and involvement with the Deaf community.
- Knowledge of the interpreting process.
- An understanding of language acquisition in deaf and hearing children.
- Knowledge of child development processes.
- An understanding of the Code of Ethics and its application in the educational setting.
- A working knowledge of course content.
- An ability to explain our role in the educational setting.

This may seem to be a lot to demand of interpreters, but as professionals it should be just the beginning. Each of us, no matter what our educational background, training, or skill level, has room for growth. We should be constantly striving to expand our knowledge base and improve our skill. Educational interpreters have a profound impact on the education of the children with whom we work. Don't they deserve the best that we can give them?
"I'm Only Here To Interpret"

Professional Collaboration in a Post-secondary Setting

By Danette Steelman-Bridges, M.A., IC/TC, North Carolina

Educational Interpreting

Imagine you are the interpreter in the following scenarios:

1. For two and a half months, you've been the regular interpreter in a college class and one day the professor asks you to proctor a test during the next day's class time because his wife will be undergoing surgery. What do you do?

2. After the first major test in a freshman college course, the professor approaches you after class and queries, "I'm concerned about (deaf student's name) performance on this test. As his interpreter, can you tell me how she did in her high school classes?" How do you respond?

3. The professor in a class where you've been interpreting for the past three months calls you to ask, "For next Monday's class, could you start the videotape at the beginning of class? I will only be about 10 minutes late for class. I have a meeting." What is your response?

4. A meeting has been scheduled by a college administrator for approximately 300 prospective students and their parents. The administrator calls you and asks that you interpret for the meeting. You ask, "About how many of the prospective students are deaf?" She replies that none are deaf that she is aware of, but the purpose of providing interpreting services is to highlight the support services offered to deaf and hard-of-hearing students on campus. What do you say or do?

Over the years, it has been my experience that a common interpretation of the Code of Ethics as applied to the above situations would be: "facilitate communication/ render the message faithfully ... "—Period. Anything above and beyond that is unacceptable. Perhaps it is a natural occurrence that we have interpreted the Code of Ethics in this manner. We have fought long and hard to establish our role as professionals. We have fought long and hard to dispel the idea of "interpreter" as an equivalent to "helper/volunteer." Thus, when confronted with situations similar to the above, we tend to automatically assume our image as professionals will be diminished if we agree to expand our responsibilities. In regard to educational interpreters, I would argue the contrary.

I offer the premise that a professional educational interpreter's repertoire of skills SHOULD include the art of collaboration. I would also argue that collaboration does not diminish our image as a professional; conversely, prudent collaboration enhances that image.

At the small, private college where I have been employed for the past 15 years, I have witnessed the value of collaboration time and time again between interpreters and faculty/staff/administrators. I have seen skillful, prudent collaboration result in teamwork which positively affects everyone involved, especially the deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

Some examples of collaboration on a college campus can include: offering weekly sign language sessions for colleagues, instruction in TTY usage, leading discussion groups related to deafness, serving as an advisor to a campus organization, and yes, even agreeing to the above occasional requests for assistance (because asking for assistance works on a two-way street).

Many years ago, I attended my first interpreting workshop as a novice interpreter and distinctly remember the description given for the role of the interpreter: "As the interpreter, you are to function as a machine. Your job is to facilitate communication." As interpreters today, while we don't always verbalize our role with these specific words, we still adhere to this definition. As we continue to promote and define our role as educational interpreters, I submit that it is possible to remain well within the limits of the Code of Ethics and still be more than a "machine" and do more than "just facilitate communication." By the very nature of the role of the educational interpreter, the boundaries of the "machine box" must be flexible enough to accommodate special responsibilities which often come with the job.

Today, we still hear the "machine" definition in comments such as, "That's not my job. I'm only here to interpret." And, certainly, there are plenty of times in educational as well as community settings that the boundaries of the box must remain rigid. I would argue, however, that for educational interpreters, the boundaries must be flexible enough to remain within the parameters of the Code of Ethics and yet allow for collaboration.

As we strive for professional collaboration, we must be open to the opportunities that have not been traditionally defined as "our job."

Maybe you are asking "Why do so? What is the purpose?" I would respond by saying that collaboration builds relationships between professionals, increases acceptance of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in a campus community, provides a platform for teamwork, and reduces the "standoffish" perception of interpreters.

I am not advocating a change in the traditional interpreter's role in the classroom or a compromise of the Code of Ethics. I am advocating, however, that we, as professional interpreters in educational settings, be open to the opportunities that prudent collaboration with other professionals can provide. Effective, prudent collaboration is a mark of a true professional.
Providing Access: “New Roles” for Educational Interpreters

By Bernhardt E. Jones, Ed.D., C.S.C., Colorado

Conflicts can, and do, occur when it is unclear as to the educational interpreter’s role at any given time. This role changes during the day, especially in the lower grades. The title “educational interpreter” is too narrow. This position is a multi-faceted responsibility. The question is, “How do we define what it is that we do and when?”

A year ago Winston (VIEWS, February, 1998) did a fine job delineating educational interpreting responsibilities into three roles: interpreting, tutoring and aiding. Since then, Winston has discussed the notion that consulting is also a role that educational interpreters play. In discussions with her, I concur. Consulting may be a new area that you had not considered before. But, think about all the times that you have given your input in the school situation. How many times have you talked to parents? How many times have you explained “deafness” to others in the school? To students? To administrators? To regular education teachers? You may find that this list is long. Go to the dictionary or, better, go to the Web and search the word, “consulting” or “consultant” and see what you find. Do you fit into this definition during part of the time you are working in the school setting?

The public school educational interpreter is viewed quite often as a paraprofessional and, in fact, is categorized that way in many states. However, we can make the case that, although the interpreter does perform many of the duties of the paraprofessional, she/he also performs a duty that is quite different and requires separate and distinct knowledge and skills: interpreting itself. Are we not, then, more than an educational interpreter? Might we be, to use a term that Winston has expressed, “Accessibility Specialists?”

Might we be, to use a term that Winston has expressed, “Accessibility Specialists?” I don’t want to confuse the issue with additional terms for us, but think about the variety of tasks you perform. We are not “just the interpreter.” We are “more than the interpreter.”

Take a look at your day (or week or month, if you would like). Make a list of all the duties you perform. Try to think of everything that happens in your job. What do you do? How long do you do it? Make the list as long and comprehensive as you can. You may be surprised to see that you do quite a bit for the school and the students (both deaf/hard of hearing and hearing).

The Windmill Model

The next step is to draw your own windmill and categorize the duties/tasks that you have listed. Interpreting will include anything you do in the role of an interpreter. Tutoring will include all the tasks you do within that context. Aiding is a large and varied area or responsibility. Think of all the things you do in an aiding capacity. As discussed above, consulting is also an important role of the educational interpreter.

Isn’t this appropriate? A windmill spins in the wind and must be flexible (accommodating) in order to operate effectively and efficiently. If one of the blades is broken or damaged, the windmill will not operate properly. Are we like that?

I suggest that we are. With this model we can delineate our roles. When we are able to do that, we can better understand why dilemmas cause conflict. Conflict arises when we are not sure on which blade to categorize our dilemma. We are better able to handle conflict if we know the rules by which to address the conflict. When conflict arises, we know where it fits and, therefore, we know how to respond (how to “spin” our windmill). [I guess it depends upon who is blowing on our windmill.] The blades of the windmill can be viewed as contexts. When we know the contexts, we know the rules. This is where the Code of Ethics has caused us concerns. When applied to the interpreting blade (role, context) of the model, it is easy to understand the importance of the Code and to adhere to its principles. When we apply those same criteria to the other blades (roles), it becomes cloudy and appears to conflict with the role. The problem is compounded if other professionals do not know our contexts and/or confuse our contexts (roles, blades). We then can apply the “educating others about our role(ies)” principle of the Code by explaining our contexts and the roles to others on the educational team. This is within our consulting role. The other members of the educational team do not realize these many roles. We have a professional obligation to educate our fellow professionals. By doing so, we will be viewed as professionals.

This is only the beginning. When we understand which role we are working within, we can start addressing bigger questions in our field. These issues might involve questions of interpretability in the classroom, accessibility to content, or an interpreted education. These questions impact our windmill and, therefore services to students who are deaf/hard of hearing.
The Educated Fly

By Kathy Gee, CT, Wisconsin

Like a fly on the wall, that's what she is. Watching and listening, but if all goes well, unnoticed. Buzzing from classroom to classroom, down hallways, through the library, many people do not even know who she is, though she has been in their midst for three years. Several times a week, staff members ask if they can help her, thinking she is a visitor.

She may not have a college degree, but she has spent hours in workshops and university classes gaining knowledge. Not focused enough to be used toward graduation, the variety of information is more important than the depth. She must know thousands of words and their meanings. She has read Hemingway, Shakespeare, Homer, Austen, and Dickens. She reads the current best sellers as well as books popular with adolescents. She has taken a variety of classes in natural and social sciences. Classes dealing with fashion, marketing, and home decorating may be among her repertoire. She has taken workshops dealing with the Code of Ethics, cultural differences, stress management, interpersonal relationships, and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. She knows the rules and calls for any number of sports. She has a background in American Sign Language and Deaf Culture. Knowledge from all these classes and hours of study now fit from classroom to classroom with her, and no one realizes how much she needs to know to do her job.

Today while I am visiting that high school, several staff members say, "Hi, Kathy, I haven't seen much of you this year. For which student are you interpreting?"

The principal smiles and asks, "How do you like your new office, Mrs. Gee?" I blanch. The principal wasn't involved when I was hired to interpret for students who are deaf or hard of hearing during the past three years. Still, even I'm surprised that he doesn't know that I am no longer working at the school.

I gather my wits and respond, "I'm sure the two new interpreters love the office. Thanks."

To each person who greets me, I explain, "Oh, I've taken this year off so I can finish my degree."

A look of confusion crosses each face, then a look of relief, "Oh, you mean your Master's Degree."

I answer, "No, my Bachelor's Degree in Education with an emphasis in Interpreting."

The baffled look is back. "What did you have before?"

I respond, "A certificate of completion from an Interpreter Training Program."

Since the two new educational interpreters who have replaced me are about eighteen and twenty years old, it is interesting to me that the staff thinks a degree is necessary to interpret. Well, maybe it is not so odd. The eighteen-year-old interpreter relates, with a smile, that staff members have stopped her in the hall asking to see her pass and her student identification. Maybe many of the staff members think they are both students. Maybe that explains why people still expect to see me.

While I was working at the high school, people wavered between thinking I was a visitor or an aide. Those in the know decided I must not be either since I had access to a personal office and I was granted a paid preparation period. By the third year, the school district was supplying the TV, VCR, and audio equipment in my office.

"Why do you need a prep?" I was asked on a regular basis.

I explained that I read the chapters in the textbooks before the students did. I previewed movies. If they were captioned, I arranged for a decoder. If they were not captioned, I learned the characters, watched for distinguishing attributes that I could use in my interpretation, and made sure I knew the story. I previewed records, audio tapes, and filmstrips. I looked for scripts for filmstrips, but often the strips were so old that the scripts were long gone. During my prep time, I studied the school play and went over signs for other extracurricular activities for which I was expected to interpret. I listened to foreign language tapes and did worksheets, because one student who was deaf took a foreign language for two years. Interpreting from one language to another is tough enough, but imagine trying to spell foreign words—that's what I did for two years—finger-spelled during the foreign language class.

It isn't so surprising that people thought I had a degree, I guess. I have been going to college for years. When I finally graduate with a Bachelor's, I will have racked up about 300 credits. While I started interpreting late in my life, none of my interests or experiences have been wasted. A person cannot interpret if that person does not understand the material being related. A wide range of knowledge is essential.

Every year the new teachers with whom I worked eyed me with suspicion. They were apprehensive about an adult in their classrooms. They worried that I would be judgmental. They worried that their students would be more interested in my interpreting than in their teaching. Students might have watched me for the first few days, but by the second week, accustomed to my presence, they rarely looked my way. There was a meeting at the beginning of each year explaining my role to the teachers. However, most never really "got
it” until the end of the first quarter, or the end of the first semester; and a few never “got it.” Usually fears and apprehensions decreased as they grasped that I could interpret without being disruptive and that I could appreciate their teaching skills. They also realized that I was easy to forget during the classroom experience. When I was at my best, no one except the student with hearing loss noticed me. It was quite amazing. Some of the teachers who never “got it” were those that would look at me and say, “Tell him that...” instead of talking directly to the student. The teachers who never “got it” were more likely to show movies on the spur of the moment. “It doesn’t have much dialogue,” they would say. They never understood that dialogue is not the only thing I interpret. Interpreting is trying to give the essence, the meaning, of the auditory experience. I interpret bells ringing, classmates commenting, wind blowing, dogs barking, wolves howling, sticks snapping, any sounds I hear. If I don’t preview the movie and I’m not familiar with the story, I can’t tell always tell which character is speaking or what the sound is. For example, one movie had five adult male family members. They had very similar voices and shared many of the same opinions. They never called each other by name, and I never knew which one was speaking or to whom he was speaking. While I was trying to figure out the story line, the movie kept rolling. Because I must hear the information before I can interpret it, there is some lag time between what is heard and the output of my interpretation. However, my processing time is decreased the more familiar I am with the story and characters. It’s not easy for the student to follow the story if the interpreter’s processing time is so long that a new scene has started while the interpreter is still only halfway through the first one.

“Oh, Kathy, it’s good to see you,” another staff member says. “I meant to look for you at the assembly on Wednesday, but I forgot. Were you there? What have you been doing?” I smile. During most of the last three years, many of the staff members weren’t sure that I worked here. Now most don’t seem to know that I’m gone. I guess I was a success. There go the two new interpreters buzzing through the school, hurrying to the next lesson, preparing their minds for new information. Off they go to land in the next classroom. If all goes well, in spite of their growing knowledge and their curiosity, they will be unnoticed like flies on the wall.

Since this was written, Kathy Gee has earned her degree, passed the test for her CT and hopes to pass the test for her CI in the Spring. Kathy currently works as a substitute for educational interpreters in her area and does some freelance interpreting.

RID Vice President Ben Hall Announces Bid For Association Presidency

In just over three decades, the interpreting profession has come a long, long way. Think back to our beginnings and to where we are today. Having served on the RID Board of Directors since 1992, I have been part of this transformation. RID has become the largest interpreter organization in the world, larger than any spoken language interpreter association, a feat that is truly remarkable! Think of the combined strength we possess! Think of all of the things we could accomplish if we combined all of our talents. Looking ahead, a key area requiring on-going attention and action is our cooperative efforts to develop a new national testing system that is more conscious of diversity within the profession and among our consumers. Our identity is closely linked to certification—some may say it is too closely related. Thus, the development of a new testing system has the potential to dramatically transform the face of RID and the profession of interpreting. Mindful of this, it is critical we proceed down our traditional path of test development: carefully, cautiously, judiciously, with guidance from the experts and with the support of the membership.

Secondly, if RID is to continue to grow and prosper, we must reach out to ALL interpreters, regardless of credentials or affiliation with the professional organization. We need to look outward and see the image we project to those not affiliated with RID, not only as an association but as individual representatives of RID. These interpreters compete for work in classrooms, in the community and in the courtrooms with those of us who are credentialed and affiliated with RID. They are often in demand by both deaf and hearing consumers. We must shed that tired old baggage and impression of an elitist group and extol the value of RID affiliation; the value of an association whose sole focus is on the best interests of the interpreting profession.

In the years I have served on the Board, I have had the privilege of working with many great leaders that have left an indelible mark on RID. There are new dreams to dream and new challenges to face. I would be honored to be part of that future and, if elected, I will do all in my power to support test development efforts, to promote the value of RID, to be open to new issues that surface during my term, and to serve with you as we move into the 21st Century.
Life is a continuous journey of learning. Each day is filled with new experiences. What better environment to experience this to its fullest than in an educational setting as an educational interpreter?

Educational interpreting can be very rewarding, both professionally and personally. Every day I learn something new or gain a new perspective about something I already knew.

Since my graduation from the St. Paul Technical College in St. Paul Minnesota in 1991, I have worked as an educational interpreter. During that time I have had the opportunity to meet many interesting teachers, support staff and students.

As an educational interpreter, one is constantly exposed to a variety of subject matter and required to have an understanding of that material in order to successfully interpret it. Doing the best job possible requires time to prepare. In some cases, this preparation time may involve reading the classroom textbook, reviewing worksheets, previewing movies or utilizing additional resources such as handouts, the Internet, etc.

In many school districts, an educational interpreter’s schedule does not include preparation time. Without the benefit of a preparation time, the district is prohibiting the educational interpreter from doing their best. Preparation time is also important as it provides the interpreter with some time to allow their hands and wrists to relax and thus reduce the risk of repetitive motion injuries.

One of the most rewarding aspects for me as an educational interpreter knowing that I am making a difference in young people’s lives by becoming a channel of communication. The education that youths receive greatly affects their future endeavors. Knowing that I am doing a good job provides me a real sense of satisfaction, as I know that I am contributing to the accessibility of the school and thus providing the students more freedom of choice as to the classes they wish to participate in.

Educational interpreting provides a stability that freelance interpreting does not. It is nice to know that I have a regular paycheck to count on and benefits that would not be afforded to me if I was solely self-employed. For a person who prefers some sense of routine, educational interpreting provides that. However, educational interpreting is not stagnant. Each day poses new challenges and unexpected changes, so one needs flexibility. In addition to classroom lectures, educational interpreting provides additional interpreting situations including sports and other extra curricular activities such as theatre, music programs, assemblies, etc.

One of the biggest drawbacks of educational interpreting is the limited opportunity it offers for utilization, and thus, improvement, of one’s voicing skills. Often the interpreter is isolated and works the entire day with the same student. If the student voices for themselves the interpreter soon begins to feel as if they have lost some of their receptive skills. Then, when the interpreter goes into a freelance setting, they may lack the confidence needed to do the job.

Despite this, there are other ways one can improve those skills and find support. In Southern Minnesota two groups, SWIC (SouthWest Interpreters Coalition) in the southwest and SIGN (Southern Interpreters’ Growth Network) in the southeast, have been established to address those needs. These groups provide interpreters the opportunity to network and work on skill development together. I strongly encourage you to seek out such a group in your area and if none exists consider forming one.

I am very fortunate in my place of employment as we have ten sign language interpreters on staff, including one Deaf interpreter. This provides a support system where one can interact about various issues dealing with our profession.

Our staff serves a variety of students. Thus, during my day I interact with several different deaf/hard of hearing students. One hour I may be transliterating for a student who grew up oral and has recently learned sign language. The next hour I may be interpreting for a student who comes from a strong Deaf background. The day requires me to remain mentally alert and flexible in my style of interpretation.

For several years educational interpreters were viewed by some as “second-class.” I often felt that others viewed educational interpreters as those not skilled enough to be working in the freelance arena. I think this mindset was a result of the fact that many new graduates in the field were encouraged to begin their work in the profession in the educational setting rather than the freelance setting. I am happy to see that many states are now realizing the importance of having skilled interpreters in the educational setting and thus establishing quality assurance measures. As I mentioned earlier, the education youths receive can have a strong impact on their future endeavors. Thus, skilled interpreters are required to assure equal accessibility.

Sign language interpreting offers a variety of settings one can choose to work in. If you want a job that provides you with real satisfaction of making a difference, stability, and the opportunity to interact with the same group of people on a daily basis, you may wish to think about educational interpreting. Check out various schools to see if the setting is something you would enjoy. Educational interpreting may be just for you.
The Educational Interpreting Certificate Program

New Approaches to Educating the Educational Interpreter

By Leilani Johnson, IC/TC, CI, Colorado, and Betsy Winston, TC, Colorado

Educational Interpreting

ost previous interpreter education, whether at the general level or aimed at specific audiences, has required that interpreters and prospective interpreters come to it—be it for a weekend workshop or a two-year full-time program. The Educational Interpreting Certificate Program (EICP) is a unique educational experience that changes the rules. This innovative project has taken the education of interpreters into the field, providing intensive academic and skill development opportunities to working educational interpreters. It is no longer necessary for these interpreters to quit their jobs and leave their homes in order to find the knowledge and training they need to provide improved services to their clients. Instead, the education comes to them.

The EICP is designed for working adults as a professional development program through departments of education. It has adopted current approaches in adult education, cutting edge technology, and the expertise of an international faculty to make interpreter education accessible to a wider audience. The curriculum takes a three-pronged approach:

- Academic content is taught through a combination of written, audio, visual, and web-based materials and makes use of telephone, videoconferencing, and Internet technologies throughout the academic year;
- Intensive skill development is provided during a three-week face-to-face meeting each summer;
- Mentoring is provided during the academic year by video, written, voicemail, and web interactions.

EICP Curriculum

The EICP curriculum is a modified version of the Professional Development Endorsement System (PDES). The PDES is a curriculum developed during a five-year period by the National Interpreter Education Training Project through funds provided by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), U.S. Department of Education, which was disseminated in January 1996. It was an effort to address the widespread concern about educational interpreting (Report from National Task Force on Educational Interpreting, 1991). Based on this report and other studies, specific knowledge and skills have been identified for appropriate interpreting services in the classroom. (Model Standards for the Certification of Educational Interpreters for Deaf Students and Suggested Options for Routes to Certification, 1993).

EICP has modified the PDES by adding courses in language and interpreting skill development, by expanding the mentorship and internship requirements, and by adapting the existing modules to a distance delivery format.

Educational Interpreting Competencies

Beyond the modification of the PDES curriculum, the EICP has needed to develop a more comprehensive set of competencies to define the educational needs of this audience. The competencies describe in detail the areas of competency needed for success as an educational interpreter. These competencies were compiled from the PDES curriculum, the RID/CED Model Competencies, and the CIT National Education Standards; in addition, they incorporated input from a DACUM process (Designing a Curriculum, Ohio State University) which included working educational interpreters and input from regional interpreter educators. They delineate the competencies needed by educational interpreters, detailing the areas of competence and specific details included within those competencies. They cover the following areas:

1. Basic Interpreting (General Knowledge, Interpreting, Language Proficiency);
2. Educational Interpreting (Education, Development, Role and Ethics, Language Analysis, Skills);
3. Educational Tutoring;
4. Educational Aiding.

The EICP is an innovative project designed to serve educational interpreters who are currently working in schools with students. These interpreters have not had the training and education they need to successfully provide access for these students. And, leaving their settings for education would be futile—the students would still be mainstreamed in their settings, and the “interpreting” positions would be filled with less qualified people. The result: even less access than ever for students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This audience is typical of the educational interpreting across the country. The EICP serves a dual population by offering an education at a distance—it serves the people working as interpreters in educational settings, and it serves the Deaf and Hard of Hearing students who are in the classrooms.

References

Educational Interpreting for Deaf Students.

Model Standards for the Certification of Educational Interpreters for Deaf Students. ND. Available through RID, 8630 Fenton St., Suite 324, Silver Spring, MD, 20919 (301) 608-0090.


1This article is a condensed version of a paper published in the CIT Proceedings, 1998. The full version can be found there and/or at the EICP web site.

2A complete copy of these competencies is available at the EICP web site: http://ircc.cccoes.edu/elt.
A Description of A Process for State Educational Interpreting Credentialing

By Marilyn Mitchell, CSC, OIC:V/S, New York
Director, Preparation of Educational Interpreters

Educational Interpreting

The New York State Board of Regents has approved a plan for the training and certification of educational interpreters in K-12 settings. The State Education Department has awarded the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in Rochester, New York and the Monroe County #1 Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) of Fairport, NY, a $3.7M grant over five years to act as the Center for the Preparation of Educational Interpreters. The concept behind this work began back in the 80s with such leaders as Joseph Avery, Dr. Ross Stuckless, Dr. Alan Hurwitz, Jacqueline Bumbalo, Tom Nevedline, Philip Cronlund, Marion Eaton, Larry Forestal, Harry Karpinski, Phyllis Bader-Borel, Stephan Haimowitz, Kathy Hoffman, and David McCloskey. The result of their work was the NY State Guidelines for Educational Interpreting. For any successful certification process, there must be a strong group of dedicated members in and out of the field, and the above mentioned list of people was that group.

The Project Team for the grant, Marty Nelson-Nasca, Director of the Monroe County #1 BOCES, Dr. Laurie Brewer, Director of the NTID Center for Arts and Sciences, and Marilyn Mitchell, Director of the Center for the Preparation of Educational Interpreters, are pleased and proud of the work that went into writing the grant. Although many states already have state certification requirements, or are in the process of establishing these requirements, we are hopeful that the work in New York State can be helpful and insightful to readers of this article.

Writing a grant requires an incredible amount of work and will not be described in this article. Suffice it to say, the work that goes into grant writing is worth it when the outcome, in this case, means that the education of our future young deaf and hard-of-hearing students in mainstream environments will improve with the knowledge that the interpreter is qualified to do the job.

There are two important components of this grant, and should be considered when seeking any grant with this outcome in mind. Public schools cannot afford to be without the “interpreters” (regardless of their title or qualifications), so one component is to establish four Regional Training Sites in the state that will be accessible to all of the working educational interpreters. These sites will be responsible to identify all of the working interpreters, provide an assessment of their work with a prescriptive plan for improving in the areas of weakness (skill or knowledge), provide the necessary training, and then identify the competencies which will comprise the standard for eventual certification. The prescriptive plan will be determined through the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (skill) and a knowledge assessment. This process will be completed within five years. The interpreters will all have provisional certification because they are working and will hold that certification until the end of the time when they will need to take the permanent certification test and pass. Those who do not pass will be out of work.

The other component of the grant is the establishment of two new interpreter education pre-service programs in areas of New York State that currently are not being served. These programs must establish an associate or baccalaureate degree program and must be accessible to students desiring to become professional interpreters in the K-12 educational settings, and upon graduation, will meet provisional certification requirements. Although New York State has approximately 400 identified working interpreters, there are not enough to meet the demand, as is the case in many other states. Although the grant Center will provide technical assistance, the pre-service programs must be able to support all of the requirements of the degree, such as institute commitment, expertise in interpreting education, budget, etc.

There will need to be a lot of work put into the success of this state project, and the partnership of the two organizations, NTID and Monroe County #1 BOCES, provides the resources and strength to make sure New York State has some of the most qualified working interpreters possible. It is hoped that, learning some of the basic components of the New York State process, other states will realize that they, too, need to work to ensure that the students in their public schools are being served with more and better qualified interpreters.

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National Office Closings

The National Office will be closed Monday, February 15 in observance of President’s Day.

In addition, the National Office will be closed for staff training on our new office computer system. This date will be announced as soon as possible.
Educational Interpreting Mentoring: A Student’s Story

By Lori Hartshorn

Lori Hartshorn graduated from the Interpreter Preparation Program at Phoenix College in December 1998. She participated in an educational interpreter mentorship program in her last semester in the IPP. The mentorship was set up through her educational instructor, Deb Pahl, CT.

Educational Interpreting

I have been mentoring with an educational interpreter in the public schools since September 8, 1998. I cannot even begin to express how much I have learned from this program. The very idea of graduating and jumping right into a job without a mentorship seems unimaginable to me now. There is much to say about the “real world” experience because, as I have learned, it is a far cry from studying about it in the classroom. This has been the most important experience and the wisest decision of my career and I would recommend every student get involved in some form of mentoring before accepting a job as an interpreter.

I began my first four and a half weeks just by observing. In this stage, I became familiar with the classes, the schedule, the teachers and their teaching styles, how the interpreter interacts with the student and teachers, the school’s philosophy and the student.

It was during this time that I began to notice how an interpreter in an educational setting must take on various roles which are sometimes conflicting with what the Code of Ethics states. For example, the Code of Ethics states you must maintain confidentiality. But in an educational K-12 setting, you are part of an IEP team and there are people that you can discuss your student with. But within the team, you must only speak from the role of an interpreter.

There is also an issue about remaining professional and not developing a personal relationship with your client. This is especially true in an educational setting. But in all reality, this is a child and you cannot simply ignore that child if he/she tries to talk with you. This is one of those gray areas. You do not want to encourage a relationship and you need to educate the child about the appropriate use of an interpreter, but at the same time you are interpreting for a human child who has feelings and needs. Slowly, over the weeks, I have thought about this issue extensively and decided that I feel it is OK to acknowledge the fact that the child is talking to you but not to encourage discussion or personal information.

During my second week, a boy became ill and started vomiting in the middle of class. There was no teacher around and the kids were making
remarks "What to do?". My mentor came out of the interpreter role and into the "adult" role and went to find the nurse. My mentor explained to me that there are times when that is appropriate such as the incident above or if a fight broke out. These circumstances are perfect examples of the many roles of educational interpreters.

After the first four and a half weeks, I was ready to begin team interpreting with my mentor. Four and a half weeks of observing is a long time, and by then I had decided that educational interpreting was not so bad. It actually looked pretty easy after that length of time. HA! Was I in for it? I'm sure I did much better than I thought but I was so overwhelmed by everything that I couldn't keep my head clear. The teacher would talk and then a student would make a comment and the teacher would interrupt herself to reprimand that student. Then announcements came over the intercom system and the teacher was still talking and kids were chatting all at the same time! It was auditory overload. I wasn't sure what to sign, what to leave out. I wasn't sure if it would seem more confusing to sign certain things as they were interjected or it was wrong to leave it out. My hands wouldn't move the right way and my mind couldn't think quickly enough. My first day was mass confusion and I realized just how difficult interpreting is for the very first time.

The one thing I did not expect was a negative reaction from the student. Granted I was nervous and unsure of myself the first week or so but I certainly did not expect any eye rolling or looks of dismay when it was my turn to interpret. The first time this happened, I wanted to walk out and cry. My feelings were actually hurt! I was surprised by my own reaction. The more I thought about it, the more I decided I wouldn't want me interpreting either. My mentor is a very skilled interpreter and now this student interpreter is fumbling her way through everything. Then it changed to, "I'll show that I can do this!" The student finally stopped rolling eyes at me. Success!

As the weeks continued, I began to feel more comfortable when I took the interpreting chair. If I began to feel overwhelmed or tired, I was able to switch with my mentor and watch how the mentor handled the situation. That was one of the benefits of working with a mentor. A situation comes up but you are not alone, you have a safety net. By the time I entered into the last part of the mentoring program, interpreting by myself, I felt I was ready for it.

My first two days went fairly well. My first Thursday was the most difficult day of the entire week. On that day, I interpreted for almost four hours with hardly any down time. And on that day, my class had a guest speaker who talked very fast. I felt that day with aching shoulders.

I have interpreted a music class dealing with sounds of notes and rhythm patterns; tutoring and buddies where it is necessary to say he said/she said to prevent confusion; reprimanding of my student where I had no idea what was going on and the teacher was telling my student not to look at me; speech class; spelling tests where there is only one sign for several different words and they are all on the test (but in speech class you have to tell the meaning, but if I sign it, I give the answer); oral reports where you have to set it up ahead of time—will you use your voice, will you sign, should I stand behind you and voice, should I sit in front of you and voice what you are signing with one hand as you hold the paper with the other.

There have been situations that arose where I was uncertain about what to do. For example, a guest speaker saying, "and they flip you off" but I did not see what the speaker did: a classmate "buddy" saying "I did do it but she can't hear me;" my student making rude comments as a remark to me but where other interpreters may voice out loud; a guest speaker giving instructions for the students to work in a workbook but then continuing to talk as they work; a teacher not giving clear directions to the class and reprimanding the deaf student. All of these situations were difficult for me and I was glad to have someone to consult immediately, sometimes as it was occurring. Sometimes I would react, do the best I knew how and then discuss what I did compared to my other options with my mentor—yet another benefit of mentoring. If I were to graduate and be hired by a school district I would be going by my own knowledge and gut instinct with no one to consult. With mentoring, I am drawing upon the knowledge of a skilled interpreter who has been in the field for several years and has learned through trial and error.

That is not to say that there won't be trial and error for me. That part is already apparent. I try things one way and if it doesn't work, I try another way and my mentor gives me the freedom to make mistakes and correct myself.

Another thing I learned was about being proactive in the classroom. There have been times when I missed something the teacher said and had to ask her to repeat the answers to questions 4, 5, and 6. This was a little uncomfortable at first. But when the information is missed and the student needs that information, what other choice is there? And after a while I no longer felt uncomfortable. Another situation arose which I have already mentioned. A guest speaker asked the student to work in their book and then continued to talk as they did so. I spoke with my mentor about how to approach that one. The mentor told me to stop the speaker as soon as I was giving the presentation and tactfully state that I didn't want the deaf student to miss anything and could he/she hold on just for a moment? I'm finding it's all about tact—stating things in a way as not to offend the instructor or to say that you, as the interpreter, can't keep up or are having a hard time. Another example of being proactive is if you notice a teaching style that is not effective to the learning of the deaf student, you can say something. The teacher usually reads a chapter of a book out loud during class every day. One day the instructor announced that the class would be required to write a summary of the chapter that day. My mentor promptly asked the teacher for a copy of the book and gave it to the student eliminating any misunderstandings and giving the deaf student a fair chance to write a decent summary.

There has been so much I have learned during my mentoring with the public schools. Every day has brought new and different challenges as I have faced situations both familiar and unknown. I feel I have been fortunate to take part in the mentoring program. I know it will not be easy to enter the work force, but the knowledge and pool of resources I have gained will give me the advantage I need to face the challenges to come.
VOCABULARY:

STATE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF; INSTITUTION FOR THE DEAF; INSTITUTE; RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF--

These terms refer to residential schools that were established beginning in the 1880's to handle the educational need of deaf children. (After 1975 many of these schools have either shut down or are threatened with closure due to lack of support. Since the passing of PL: 94-142, most parents have opted to send their children to a local school in an integrated setting with further option of mainstreaming.) This refers to a 24 hour "placement" of deaf children, with a dormitory living arrangement. The school was run in much the same arrangement as any large school, having superintendents, principals, vice principals, and classrooms. Schools had a extremely strong vocational track. (Nearly 100 percent of student body left schools employed or employable). Typically while not in the classroom, the schools provided a variety of activities including: team sports, swimming, bowling, pool, Ping-Pong, outside playground and open-captioned movies etc. Most schools had an Olympic size pool and a 1 or 2 lane bowling alley. A "day room" where "family" type activities could take place such as games etc. Each school had a fully equipped and functional "kitchen" and cafeteria as well as an infirmary staffed with nurses. A doctor made periodic as needed visits. The schools were essentially the entire community. Dorms were supervised with "house-parents", "dorm supervisors", or "dorm counselors". Up until recent times, (probably in large part to distance from home and lack of transportation--USA has changed over the past 100 years from rural farming communities to industrialized cities and urban areas) it was not unusual for the children to remain at the schools for an entire term, only returning home during extended school vacations ie: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and summertime, or a rare weekend visit home.

MAINSTREAM-- An education setting where the deaf child (or the child with other "handicapping" conditions) spend all or part of their school day with children who society deem as "normal".

INTEGRATION-- An education setting where a program for the education of the deaf child (or the child with other "handicapping" conditions), has been placed on a general public school campus where other children who society deem as "normal" go to school. Classes are referred to as "special day" classes.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM (IEP)-- A mandatory legal process set up and regulated by the state to ensure that the child with a handicapping condition receives services they need in order to be successfully educated. Excepting the 3rd year review IEP, the typical IEP meeting takes between 1 hour to 1 1/2 hours and covers the following: 1. Establishes the rationale for certification of a child into a special education placement. 2. Determines child's present level of academic performance. 3. Determines needs of whole child (educational, social, emotional, psychological and physical). 4. Establishes objectives and goals to be met by the child within the next calendar year. 5. Each year, last year's IEP is re-visited to make a determination if the child has in fact met or exceeded the specific goals that were set out. 6. If the child had not yet met the goals, the educational team would determine whether those goals were reasonable for the child to attain at some future time. 7. Every 3rd year, the educational team is required to re-assess/re-certify the child. This would be a much longer meeting typically at least 2 hours usually 2.5 hours. The educational team consists of but is not limited to: The child's parent(s), a parental advocate or family counselor or other support person for the family, the child's DPSS Social Worker, or Regional Center Social Worker, the case manager (typically the teacher who see the child the most), the school nurse, an administrator, Speech teacher, Audiologist, Adaptive PE teacher, school counselor.

PL: 94-142 "EDUCATION FOR ALL HANDICAPPED CHILDREN" ACT OF 1975-- This law mandates that children with disabilities be educated in the "least restrictive environment". This has led to the wide-spread integration of disabled children within regular classrooms and has resulted in a proliferation of interpreting jobs within elementary, secondary, and post secondary institutions.

LOW INCIDENT DISABILITY-- Any disability that is currently served within a K-12 setting where the total number of students with the disability represent less than 1% of the total student population.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Interpreters</th>
<th>Instructors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role:</strong> Deaf &amp; hard-of-hearing students are as much a part of a class as hearing students. Deaf &amp; hard-of-hearing students should meet class assignment &amp; attendance requirements &amp; should contribute to &amp; share in class discussions.</td>
<td><strong>Role:</strong> The interpreter's role is to facilitate communication.</td>
<td><strong>Role:</strong> The instructor is the content expert &amp; guides the class through the subject material. The instructor sets the general rules for the classroom. S/he is the person in charge.</td>
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<td>Responsibilities:</td>
<td><strong>Responsibilities:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Responsibilities:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Contact the appropriate person or office if an interpreter is needed.</td>
<td>1. Be in class on time.</td>
<td>1. If possible, arrive 15 minutes early for first class in order to meet the interpreter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Be in class on time</td>
<td>2. If possible, arrive at the first class 15 minutes early in order to meet the instructor &amp; student(s) &amp; explain your role as an interpreter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. If possible, arrive at the first class 10 minutes early in order to meet the interpreter.</td>
<td>3. If the student is not in class when it begins, remain 15 minutes before leaving.</td>
<td>3. Direct questions to students, not to the interpreter.</td>
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<td>4. Sit in a place that provides the best distance, lighting, background, &amp; angle for looking at the interpreter.</td>
<td>4. Be in a place that provides the best distance, lighting, background, &amp; angle for student viewing. Consult with students &amp; instructors regarding this.</td>
<td>4. Notify the student(s) &amp; interpreter in advance when a caption film is to be shown in class.</td>
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<td>5. Finish assignments &amp; write down questions before class.</td>
<td>5. Interpret lecture material as accurately as possible.</td>
<td>5. Notify the student(s) &amp; interpreter in advance when materials that require special lighting (movies, slides, etc.) are to be shown.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Notify the interpreter or interpreting office ahead of time if you cannot attend a class.</td>
<td>6. Voice interpret student responses as accurately as possible.</td>
<td>6. Notify appropriate manager or office if a problem arises regarding interpreting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Contact the appropriate person or office if a notetaker is needed.</td>
<td>7. Direct student questions to the instructor &amp; instructor questions to the student(s).</td>
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<td>8. Bring notetaking paper if needed.</td>
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