

**Time-Compressed Professionalization:
The Experience of Public School
Sign Language Interpreters in Mountain-Plains States**

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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(ABSTRACT)

Rapid establishment of interpreting skill and knowledge standards for public school sign language interpreters has created a virtual mandate for their immediate, time-compressed, professionalization. A series of federal laws requiring accessibility to communication for deaf people have escalated demand for interpreters far beyond the supply. Thousands of people with varying levels of knowledge, skill, and experience, have been drawn into service in schools without professional preparation. Responding to specialized research, evaluation, technology, and education related to educational interpreting, states have quickly been establishing standards for interpreting skill and knowledge including phased in degree requirements. Educational interpreters have had to find ways of gaining necessary skill and knowledge rapidly, even though they typically work full-time, in isolation, and have little ready access to resources. Few occupations have experienced a juggernaut-like transition of this nature, leaving insufficient information to understand and address the phenomenon. This study was designed to investigate what we can learn from adults absorbing intense pressure of elevating their education and skills unfolding on a daily basis, most of whom are already experiencing “high-demand low-control” work environments. The findings give voice to members of a field of practice at a historic point in the professionalization of their field: sixty five experienced educational interpreters with diverse foundational preparation who completed a specialized, two-year, inservice program delivered at a distance. Online survey research, using a variety of response formats complemented by open-ended questions, generated data which were analyzed using descriptive and analytic statistics as well as coding schemes for themes and patterns that emerged from the qualitative data. The study illuminated a variety of challenges, successes, and, for some, the transformative nature of the experience, which warrants further study. Beyond acquiring

knowledge and skills participants learned how to learn and achieved self-realization of their resilience points. They especially experienced themselves transforming into professionals with abilities to actively contribute to the school environment, reporting themselves to be informed, competent, and confident in all typically expected roles. Challenges typical of the adult distance learner abounded. It is recommended that adult learning principles be incorporated into any such program design, and that the wider interpreting community of practice be expanded as a learning resource. Equally important to recognize are the many people who have the same enthusiasms for the work, and the same professionalizing experiences as their more skilled peers, but who may never become sufficiently skilled to pass interpreting skill exams or their state standards. A follow up study is recommended to learn what emerges next. Is there a place for them in education that fully acknowledges and uses their experience and competencies?

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all who strive to reach beyond a grasp of education, language, and relationships, so that deaf children, and all of us, can better understand and flourish.

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EXTENDED PREFACE: AUTHOR'S ROLE IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE FIELD UNDER STUDY

This dissertation is an outgrowth of my own involvement with the development of standards and certification for the field of educational interpreting. In 1975 Public Law 94-142 established that public schools had to provide deaf children an education in the “least restrictive environment,” which was widely interpreted as meaning the neighborhood school. It did not address where the thousands of necessary skilled interpreters would come from to serve those children who used sign language for communication. Beginning in 1990 I was involved with efforts by the state of Colorado to provide support, skill development, and education to public school educational interpreters. Later those efforts included working to establish standards for the field, and still later, helping interpreters gain the formal education necessary to meet those standards. This dissertation stems from my interest in how the educational interpreters in the Mountain-Plains Region experienced such rapid changes in their field of practice.

Author's Initial Involvement

My involvement with sign language and interpreting began in my first job after high school as I worked as a teacher's aide in a pre-Public Law 94-142 “school for handicapped children” while attending university classes at night. A teacher had a copy of a basic sign language vocabulary book, and because one of the students used some signs, I decided it would be a good idea to learn it. Learning from the book soon lost its attraction, and a series of events led me to gain special permission to join the summer sign class for newly hired hearing teachers at Gallaudet College (now University). Later I participated in Gallaudet's regular sign classes, became a “special student” undergraduate on campus for a semester, participated in their theater (observing teachers work with students translating Shakespeare into American Sign Language), and took interpreting classes. Thus I had the benefit of observing some teachers who are now legends in the field of deaf education. Three years later I passed enough of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) exam to be certified for the first time, primarily in order to document my sign skills on applications for positions as rehabilitation counselor for the deaf, a degree completed in Colorado.

For the next 14 years I worked in and around rehabilitation counseling and interpreting, including a period at the state-run Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) in Colorado Springs. In 1989 I was hired by the school into a role that included interpreting. At about the same time, the need for outreach support to public schools became an issue for the state's deaf education services, and I quickly took on duties as an outreach consultant in support of public school interpreting.

Using a just-developed database of providers of education for the deaf, I surveyed educational interpreters in the state to determine who they were and what services or programs they might want from the Outreach Department under CSDB and its oversight body the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). In addition to providing demographic information, the two most-often requested services were a confidential feedback process on interpreting skills and some kind of correspondence course support in interpreting.

Development of an Assessment Tool

I began a search for an appropriate feedback process for educational interpreters working with children that would accommodate both American Sign Language and Seeing Exact English ("SEE II" – there is a glossary for assistance with unfamiliar terminology), and assess the individuals use of the linguistic and grammatical aspects of language, not just vocabulary production. In 1992 I identified a nascent assessment process at Boys Town National Research Hospital being developed by Dr. Brenda Schick and Kevin Williams. Soon after our initial conversations, Dr. Schick was touring school districts with larger numbers of interpreters in Colorado with me. Two months later Mr. Williams was at CSDB training 17 potential raters of the new Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA)¹ which we piloted in Colorado (for results see Schick, Williams, & Bolster, 1998). CDE/CSDB made the EIPA available for several years as a free feedback process to Colorado educational interpreters.

During this period, I traveled around Colorado as part of CSDB's Outreach Department consulting, offering workshops for interpreters, participating in workshops for teachers and other service providers, and coordinating the ongoing, free, EIPA. This permitted me to see the range of skills and training among interpreters. Most interpreters I observed in classrooms had little exposure to fluent sign language or to skilled interpreting. Many had never met a Deaf adult. I have watched some self-taught interpreters achieve stunning success. I have also watched others

work with their sign vocabulary book open in their laps, and still others whose signs were so idiosyncratic neither I nor the Deaf colleague traveling with me could understand them, and students admitted they understood little. I have listened to interpreters tell of spending hours every night, re-writing lesson plans and materials for the deaf children with whom they worked. They knew only what was necessary to support the child's education, and they were doing it. My CSDB supervisor relayed a story to me of a school district's job description for an interpreter he had seen that included a condition of employment: "must be willing to learn sign language."

Resistance and Standards

Not everyone thought these early efforts to professionalize the field were commendable. Historically the field had been treated like the so-called elephant discovered in the house – the house of education. Professionals in sign language interpreting often viewed the field with horrified awe, not just at its size and general lack of refinement and grace, but at their own inability to do a thing about it. Not looking seemed to be a workable strategy, although not satisfying. A catch-22 developed as some charged that, considering the lack of standards, and the willingness of school districts to hire people without qualifications or skill assessments, any efforts to improve educational interpreters' qualifications could only serve as a bandage over the wound. Such attempts would simply allow parents and people in education to believe that interpreting was happening in schools, or could sometime soon, and anyone so engaged would be selling out the deaf children.

I knew that continuing to ignore and stigmatize educational interpreters would only result in the deaf children in public schools continuing to have poorly prepared interpreters without knowledgeable witnesses. If we did not find a way to appropriately support the skill and knowledge development of educational interpreters, deaf children would continue to receive inferior interpreting service.

Partially as a result of the availability of EIPA, and emerging specialized educational possibilities, Colorado passed a law in 1997 requiring the establishment of a committee to develop standards for educational interpreters. The committee developed requirements not only for interpreting skill levels but also for the knowledge sets necessary to use that skill appropriately in public school environments. Those standards included a modified form of the

EIPA and became effective on July 1, 2000. Other states in the Mountain-Plains Region were exploring and establishing similar standards.

Specialized Education at a Distance

Simultaneous with early development of the EIPA, Dr. Leilani Johnson accepted the challenge offered by Front Range Community College in Denver, of building an Associate's degree for working educational interpreters to be delivered at a distance (the Educational Interpreting Program, EIP). That program was modified into the Educational Interpreting Certificate Program (EICP), a collaborative multi-state, governmentally funded, effort. I had met Dr. Johnson while arranging workshops and summer week-long programs for educational interpreters in the early 1990s. After leaving CSDB in 1999, I joined as a consultant in various roles the many people who contributed to the evolving EICP. When it was time to identify a population for this study, students who had completed the EICP fit the criteria.

Querying the Experience

Colorado's process of raising the bar for educational interpreters is illustrative of what is happening nationally. Educational interpreters in this country, no matter where they live or their circumstances, must find ways to learn to sign sufficiently well, learn to interpret skillfully, learn the professional aspects of interpreting, learn to function as professionals in education settings, and do it all fast enough to satisfy looming state standards. Clearly, I viewed hearing their perceptions of the experience as fundamental and foundational to future research.

CHAPTER 1

Background

Since the 1970s school districts have increasingly hired people to provide sign language interpreting services in schools, allowing deaf children to communicate and participate in classes. Beginning in 1975, with the passing of the Education of All Handicapped Children's Act (Public Law 94-142), a steady increase of deaf children have attended local public schools rather than state residential schools for the deaf. PL 94-142, though not specifically requiring the provision of sign language interpreters, indirectly increased the demand for them by thousands, most of whom were needed in school districts beyond the reach of the few educational programs for interpreters established around the country in larger cities. Schildroth and Hotto (1994, p. 11) cited the Annual Survey of Hearing Impaired Children and Youth, showing an increase of deaf and hard-of-hearing children in public school classrooms increasing from 20% in 1975/76 to 51% in 1992/93. By 1999/2000 the Annual Survey showed 88% of the deaf and hard-of-hearing students being educated in public school settings for at least part of their school day (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2001). Additionally, 38% of those students used sign language for some, or all, of their educational communication (p. 15). Burch (2002) cited multiple sources for an estimate that 4,000 sign language interpreters were working in public schools nationally at that time, and Witter-Merithew and Johnson (in preparation) estimated the figure at 10,000 (p. 106).

Upon passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the reauthorization of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, professional sign language interpreters providing service in communities could be held to the standards of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) and its Code of Ethics, and/or by the expectations of local adult consumers of their services. In public schools, where such knowledge and experience had been unavailable because deaf children had historically attended state residential schools, administrators and special education professionals structured the service and role of interpreters as they perceived the emerging needs and possibilities. Many interpreters hired by educational systems for children were typically self-taught, trained on-the-job, and without knowledgeable supervision or evaluation. The No Child Left Behind legislation required para-professionals working with students to have specific education levels, however, "interpreters" in general were excluded. The intention was to avoid removing fluent users of languages other than English from English as a Second Language

programs, but it also released school districts from having to hire appropriately educated and skilled sign language interpreters.

An Emergent Field of Practice

While providing support to interpreters in public schools I had many and varied opportunities to observe working educational interpreters, and to talk with them at length about their skills, knowledge and roles. Those observations are included here.

People hired to facilitate communication in schools were demonstrably trusting and willing to learn, having risked accepting a job that required they learn sign language enough to help a deaf child participate in school. In general, they were dedicated, learned to sign on their own (perhaps building on a sign class or two from someone in the community or at church), attempting to replicate a three dimensional visual/spatial and moving sign vocabulary by examining books with line drawings, or maybe black and white photographs of a person frozen at some point of sign production. Signers who worked in schools would gather on occasions at workshops offered by distant Interpreter Training Programs (sometimes driving for hours to do so), taught each other more signs, invented signs for words not depicted in the basic sign books, and some took the initiative to collaborate on creating and photocopying handbooks of signs for school subjects which they could share with others. Some worked with their sign language books open in their lap, looking up signs as quickly as possible. Some were mothers drawn into service when no one else was available to serve their children. Rather than send their child to a residential program in some distant town, the mother stepped in to make sure her child could participate in the education program of the local school. (Personal observations of the author, 1989-1999.) Ninety-five percent of the people providing this service in the education environment were women (Jones, Clark & Soltz, 1997).

Communication Function Versus Job Title

It is important to clarify the differences between job titles applied by school administrators to employment positions, versus the labels we use to identify a person's functional skill. When interpreters are employed in schools they typically have other roles and responsibilities, especially in elementary grades, so as to differentiate them from people who are purely "interpreters" they are generally called educational interpreters.²

“Interpreter” is often used as an umbrella term, and does not distinguish interpreting skill level. Schein, Mallory and Greaves (1991) identified four categories of employees in education used to facilitate communication for deaf students: professional interpreters, educational interpreters, communication aides, and signing aides (teachers’ aides who had learned some sign language). Citing the lack of fluent sign language and interpreting skills in most people performing the task, Schein, Mallory and Greaves chose the job title “communication aide” as most generally accurate for this para-professional type of employee.³

Interpreters

In the open market for interpreting services for adult consumers (e.g., medical appointments, business meetings, college courses) interpreters use professional skills developed over years. They may have attended an Interpreter Preparation Program, and many have had their skills certified by RID. They are fluent in both American Sign Language-based communication and English, and knowledgeable about both the Deaf and the non-Deaf, majority, cultures. Their interpreted work includes sufficient contextual and cultural information so both parties in the exchange can comprehend the other’s message accurately, including context and intent.⁴ Without legal standards, however, it is not unusual for interpreters with less than satisfactory skills to work without formal challenge in less sophisticated markets, and in situations in which demand out-strips the supply of skilled professionals.

Communication Aides

Over the years, many interpreters in local public schools are skilled, particularly if they are working within the catchment area of an Interpreter Preparation Program (IPP)⁵, because they are sources for recruitment by schools. The majority, however, are not (Schein, Mallory & Greaves, 1991; Schick, Williams & Bolster, 1999). Many are communication aides, functioning at some level of skill along a continuum of learning, increasing their skills and knowledge primarily by increasing experience, although without benefit of knowledgeable guidance.

This study is primarily related to the professional growth process of communication aides, and to a lesser degree, signing aides. Most people hired to serve in this capacity in schools were not required to demonstrate their sign language skills upon hiring, were rarely evaluated by a professional interpreter, and had no orientation for their interpreting job in the school environment (Hayes, 1992). Their job titles ranged widely, reflecting education administrators’

perceptions of who these people were and what they did: signer, aide, special education aide, interpreter, interpreter/tutor, signing aide, communication aide (Zawolkow & DeFiore, 1986). Regardless of title, they did facilitate communication for the child, and did help the child negotiate the educational environment and its requirements, day to day.

Pay scales reflected public school interpreters' relative status. For example, in Colorado, typically even highly skilled and knowledgeable educational interpreters were paid as teacher's aides, often less than bus drivers and janitors (this is also reported in Yarger, 2001). It was not unusual for interpreters in more rural areas to earn half, or less, than their counterparts in urban areas. Interpreters generally were required to have a high school diploma, but not necessarily. Many did have some college education or degrees (Hayes, 1992; Jones, Clark & Soltz, 1997).

Multiple Roles and Responsibilities

Public school administrators had little preparation for appropriately educating deaf children who entered regular classrooms after the passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975, the Education of all Handicapped Children's Act. Schildroth and Hotto (1994) noted J. Richardson's 1994 statement that the National Education Association had expressed concern about the lack of qualified teachers and other support personnel necessary for implementation of the law. This challenge appeared quickly as an immediate basic need for deaf children—communication.

Interpreting

Education system administrators filled the need for interpreting service however they could, establishing a role for these employees to assist with communication for a particular child. To do that properly required fluency in two languages, one of them visual and the other auditory, and sufficient knowledge and skill to work receptively and expressively between them to convey thoughts as intended. Administrators in education were unprepared to think that way, and, even if they did, they were faced with an increasing national shortage of interpreters highlighted by the laws requiring their provision.

Language Modeling and Instruction

Ninety-five percent of deaf children have parents who can hear⁶ (Mitchell, 2004), and who essentially have no experience with visual communication. With no coherent language

modeling, input, or practice during formative years, such children enter public schools needing considerably more than the schools' entry-level curriculum. Professionals in education knew deaf children arrived in school with gaps in basic knowledge, and that they often needed explanations, tutoring, and overall linguistic and subject matter support beyond, often far beyond, other students. The answer for this additional challenge was what any busy, pressured, bureaucracy on a budget would have done, turn to the first, obvious, solution: The communication aide would help meet the additional language related needs. She was already assigned to the student, could sign, and could follow up on what the teacher said as it applied to the deaf child. Thus, the person hired to facilitate communication explained English vocabulary the deaf student did not understand, including any concepts the student needed to know in order to participate in the class. Shaw and Jamieson (1997) found that the deaf child was receiving most of his education from the interpreter (not just via interpreting), and less instruction from the teacher than the other students in the class. Another aspect of educational interpreting that is under-examined was stated by Bowen-Bailey (1996), "Unfortunately, the history of our profession is in direct denial of the reality that educational interpreters must also serve as language models. In the past two decades, K-12 settings have been, in general, training grounds for inexperienced interpreters..." (p. 16).

Secondary Roles

Along with communication facilitation/interpreting, and language-related instructional roles, most educational interpreters and communication aides held other roles, such as teachers' aide and deafness-related consultant, in addition to a variety of secondary responsibilities, including: making sure that homework was done, school rules were followed, equipment related to audiology was cared for, notes were taken, coaches were assisted, other aide work was done, professionals in the child's life were kept up to date on the child's comprehension and progress, and that the child had a surrogate parent, or confidant, if necessary (variously in Schein, Mallory & Greaves, 1991; Yarger, 2001; Zawolkow & DeFiore, 1986). Seal (1998, p. 49) added, "the educational interpreter is the expert (possibly the sole expert) in the student's language and communication. As such, the interpreter is a necessary link in guiding general education teachers." A true educational interpreter is not simply a facilitator of communication, but fills more roles and responsibilities.

On-the-Job Supervision and Evaluation

In my observation, many educational interpreters never met a deaf person before beginning their position, and never had exposure to fluent sign language or skilled interpreting. They were hired, directed, supervised, and evaluated by people who knew little or nothing about sign language or interpreting. Many people who were functioning in an educational interpreting role were evaluated on the basis of their aide responsibilities (Hayes, 1992). School districts met the letter of the law requiring accommodation of the deaf child's need for someone to sign, held that the interpreter hired was qualified, or referred to the absence of state standards. An additional explanation commonly given in Colorado, was that the district was aware that the interpreter had further skill needs, that the interpreter was working to improve her skills, and nothing further could be reasonably required of the interpreter or the district (personal observation). How the improvement was to occur was a personnel matter that could not be discussed. The budgetary incentive for school districts to maintain this status quo cannot be underestimated. As districts became more informed about the education and experience necessary to develop a professional interpreter, and what skilled interpreters were paid on the open market, it behooved them to maintain the unscrutinized illusion of their own employee's qualifications and the validity of the annual personnel review process. One-to-one teacher's aides are expensive. The cost of truly qualified interpreters can cause budgetary apoplexy.

Interpreters have been supported by RID since 1964, and certified professionally by the organization since 1972. That organization, however, was specifically established in response to the needs of adults. RID was established by skilled professionals, many of whom used ASL as their first language growing up with Deaf parents. The standards of the RID were beyond the reach of the typical school district communication aide. Fluent sign language skill was a given for the early membership and for those applying to take its performance examinations.

Signers isolated in schools, especially in rural schools, had no way to be exposed to, or immersed in, an atmosphere of fluent signing conducive to become skilled at even basic communication levels, much less in advanced, or academic and abstract language proficiency. Many deaf children develop their own "home" sign skills with little exposure to Deaf people or fluent signers, interacting with whomever was in their environment (such as their parents and communication aides) and used non-traditional signs. Interpreting for a younger child, at appropriate language levels, while following the specifics prescribed in an Individual Education

Plan (IEP), is quite different from interpreting for a fluent adult user of American Sign Language. Moreover, there was no way to appropriately evaluate an interpreter whose interpretation was specifically, and even idiosyncratically, modified by a committee on the child's Individual Educational Plan (IEP). Held up to a standardized interpreting evaluation, even those interpreters who were skilled would be penalized for such modifications. No evaluation was available that could accommodate such modifications to language, or additional interactions, explanations, and clarifications that routinely occur in interpreting for children in schools.

Little Skill, No Resources: Not a Solution in Sight

For most communication aides, professional education and skill development has been unavailable, unless she was in the position to quit her job, and relocate to enroll in an Interpreter Preparation Program (IPP). There were IPPs sprinkled about the country, primarily in community colleges in large metropolitan areas (near larger deaf populations), but their classes were almost all during the day, when the communication aides were working, even if they were within a reasonable commute. Moreover, for communication aides in rural areas, there were no avenues to becoming a skilled signer, or interpreter. As appalled as deaf people, deaf educators, and professional interpreters were at the perceived lack of adequate signing and interpreting skills in general in "educational interpreters," literally no one had a single valid, implementable idea for rectifying it. In an era of laws that placed much of the responsibility of children's education squarely on parents, with the accompanying rights and educational program choices, their deaf children would be in the public school by choice. Many of those children, often without fluent sign language models, have inconsistent sign skills. Without other fluent signers in the environment, she-who-would-be-an-interpreter had, literally, no viable resources for gaining linguistic fluency or interpreting skills.

External Factors Emerge and Compel Change

So it continued, until external factors began to emerge and build into a movement that changed the landscape for educational interpreters. These factors, as they appeared in the Mountain-Plains Region were:

- greater research and understanding of the linguistics and grammar of American Sign Language (ASL), the interpreting process, and the roles and responsibilities of educational interpreters;
- development of an appropriate evaluation tool, specialized educational programs, and delivery of those programs at a distance to educational interpreters;
- establishment of skill and knowledge standards for educational interpreters by school districts and states.

Greater Understanding of ASL and Interpreting

Several factors evolved from a greater understanding of the technicalities of American Sign Language and its richness as a language. Research into ASL, and publication of books such as *American Sign Language: A Teacher's Resource Text on Grammar and Culture* (Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 2002/1980) gave professionals a way to talk about sign language, leading to Taylor's (1993, 2002) work on highly specific considerations for diagnostic feedback, in interpreting from ASL to English and English to ASL. The work by pioneers on interpreting process itself, by Betty Colonomos (unpublished "Colonomos Model") and Dennis Cokely (1991) developed diagrams of interpreting process models that allowed teachers to help students understand the cognitive processes of interpreting. A series of researchers and professionals in interpreting and education published findings and thoughts on interpreting and educational interpreting. In 1998 Brenda Seal contributed her book, *Best Practices in Educational Interpreting*. The 2004 second edition addresses published research on the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment, which permits evaluation of an interpreter within the parameters of her specific linguistic guidelines. She also includes an invaluable summarization of research related to educational interpreting.

Development of Evaluation, Educational, and Delivery Processes

An evaluation process was developed in 1992 by Brenda Schick and Kevin Williams that took into consideration the highly individualized circumstances of educational interpreting (see Appendix B). The Educational Interpreting Performance Assessment (EIPA) was adaptable for both diagnostic feedback and for standardized evaluation. Once appropriate diagnostic evaluation was possible, programs to teach interpreters those measurable skills could be

developed. Nevertheless, by 1999 there were 73 interpreter training programs, but only three of them reported offering education for educational interpreters working in public schools (Programs for Training Interpreters, in the *American Annals of the Deaf*, 1999). As of May, 2002, according to an unpublished Distance Learning and Interpreter Education Survey I did, only the Educational Interpreting Certificate Program IEIPA) was offering a post-secondary curriculum at a distance program specifically for working educational interpreters (see Appendix A). As advances in technology paralleling the advances in understanding of sign language's unique visual communication features, it will be more possible for interpreters to participate in specialized educational programs, no matter where they lived and worked. A foundational multi-state collaboration evolved related to funding and reciprocity in recognition of such credentials across states involved with the EICP.

Establishment of Standards

Predictably, once evaluation and education of educational interpreters were possible, school districts and states began establishing standards for interpreting skills, and for the knowledge sets necessary to appropriately apply them in public school classrooms. As of August, 2003⁷ 26 states had standards in place regarding educational interpreters in public schools. Eight used the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) certification as their standard, 11 used the RID or the National Association of the Deaf evaluation (NAD). (The RID and NAD evaluations have since been merged.) Eleven states were using the EIPA in their standards (and 10 using it for other feedback purposes), and two others were considering its use. Eight states used their own state standard alone, 4 of them accepted only that evaluation, and 4 also accepted certification by one of the other processes to meet their standard.

In August, 2003, at its convention, the RID membership passed a motion that was significantly supported by a coalition of several mid-western, largely rural, states. That motion established academic education requirements for applicants who wish to sit for its performance exams in the future. Beginning June 30 2008, applicants to RID's certifying examination process must hold at least an associate's degree, and effective June 30 2012, at least a bachelor's degree (RID VIEWS, 2003, October). At the same time, some states are discussing establishing similar education requirements for the interpreters who work in their public schools (L. Johnson, personal communication, March, 2004⁸).

Once the external factors were aligned, individual educational interpreters in public schools were drawn, perhaps even compelled, into formal professionalization quickly. I am referring to this phenomenon as “time-compressed professionalization.” A broad look at other professions shows us this process is quite different from the traditional professionalization process which has evolved in a more incremental manner.

Professionalization of Occupations

For most professions (medicine, law, and journalism) the process of professionalizing has been a natural incremental unfolding or developmental process, often with internal impetus related to the profession itself, and sometimes with related external factors. For others, however, societal pressures have converged to compress the time span of professionalism with expectation from external forces for rapid professionalization. Compounding matters further, while some occupations are recognized as "professional," others are "sub professional," not well understood, and even stigmatized (such as chiropractors in earlier years [Steinberg, 1969]). Some fields, such as chefs (Oliff, 1998) appear to be following a different path towards professionalization (i.e., being deliberately guided by their union). Child care workers (Daniels, 1997), while not faced with the low incident issues facing educational interpreters, are professionalizing in a fashion the author calls “lattice-like,” a term not difficult to envision as catalytic when combined with the concept of a critical mass facilitated by technology.⁹

Individuals who are sign language interpreters working in local K-12 educational environments have been sub-professional, not well understood, not well organized, and occasionally stigmatized within the broad arena of sign language interpreters. Their professionalization is evolving in ways different from other occupations, rapidly driven by a systemic ratcheting up of external factors (development of appropriate evaluation and the delivery of specialized education at a distance). Now that “qualified” has been more delineated and interpreters’ skills can be held up to a standard, the law is essentially professionalizing educational interpreting.

Time-Compressed Professionalization

In less than 15 years public school interpreters in many states have gone from being self-taught, largely ignored, technically unguided or supervised, poorly paid, sub-professionals whose

sign language and interpreting skills were often stigmatized by the larger interpreting community, to having professionally clarified roles and responsibilities, and required demonstration of minimum interpreting skills and knowledge. For working educational interpreters who do not have access to an IPP because of distance or schedules, specialized, educational interpreting programs offered at a distance are their option, in order to keep up in the new world in which they find themselves. There are signs that this might be a continually shifting world. In the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf monthly publication Winston (2004) addressed the Educational Interpreting Performance Assessment standard being used by many states when she referred to a rating level of 4.0, which is higher than almost all states are using:

educational interpreters "... at this level would be able to convey much of the classroom content, but may have difficulty with complex topics or rapid turn-taking." [Schick & Williams, 1998]. ... Given the descriptors for 4.0, is "much of the classroom content" enough? Would it be enough if your child's education were at stake? If your education were at stake?" (p. 16)

The interpreters and communication aides who have been working in schools all through this process respond to the changes in different ways. I have heard some simply state that they will be gone, retired, or quit before the new rules affect them. Others continue as is, and see what happens. Some, undoubtedly, grasp the scope of the coming changes, and respond as Daloz (1988) summarized, "Especially for women... change demands a complex kind of renegotiation of relationships... Sometimes it is just plain simpler to stay right where they are, or at least to appear that way" (p. 7). Some, however, take advantage of the emerging educational opportunities states are making available and attempt to gain skills and knowledge. For some educational interpreters increasing standards catalyze changes they have been waiting for – a series of events leading to the creation of *accessible* professionalizing educational and skill development programs.

Problem Statement

It is time to learn from educational interpreters what the experience of time-compressed professionalization has been like for them. Not many professions progressed from being essentially unregulated and ignored, to being forced by external forces to upgrade to technical proficiency and knowledge within so compressed a time span. There has been no research done

to date specifically examining educational interpreters' experience of an intense professionalizing process, consequently the related literature is sparse.

Many sign language interpreters working in local public schools have witnessed a remarkable time in the development of educational interpreting, and it is both timely, and important, to learn from their perspectives of this time. What is it like to move from being essentially self-taught and technically self-directed, with no informed standards for skills and knowledge, to being required to demonstrate interpreting skills, knowledge, and education, up through obtaining national certification in interpreting skills and bachelors degrees? The interpreters, being at the bottom of the academic hierarchy in public schools, as well as within the arena of professional interpreting, were well outside the discussions and decision-making arenas. For systemic reasons explored later in this paper (related to both education and interpreting fields) most of the interpreters were not in a position to participate, with sufficient knowledge and expertise, in policy discussions even if invited. Capturing their perceptions of their experience is essential for both historical purposes, and critical as a resource for future program and policy development.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to learn what we can about the experience of time-compressed professionalization from a pivotal group of people who have experienced it first hand. Their perspectives can help us understand lessons learned for how things unfolded for them, how things could have been done, and what they can teach us as we move into the future. The inquiry offers a study of people who have had the experience of:

- (1) functioning in a local public school as an interpreters, or communication aide, without formal preparation for the position; and then
- (2) (while continuing to work) becoming aware of, applying to, enrolling in, and completing a post-secondary program offering a curriculum of interpreting skill development and knowledge base necessary to apply such skills in an educational setting with children.

This study has a global, over-arching, question: What are educational interpreters' perceptions of their trajectory through an intense, time-compressed, educational program and professionalization process?

Structure of the Document

This document has five chapters. This first one has introduced the topic and need for the study. Subsequent chapters are the Literature Review, Methods, Results, and Conclusions, Cautions, and Recommendations. Chapter Two, Related Literature, explores professions and the professionalization process, the historical backdrop of deaf education, the federal laws which created demands for interpreters for adults and children, how public school communication aides/educational interpreters typically gain their skills and knowledge, the constellation of factors within which communication aides and educational interpreters work, and the external factors converging upon them resulting in time-compressed professionalization.

Chapter Three, Methods, explains the study itself, who participated, and how data were collected and analyzed. A discussion of findings follow in the Results, Chapter Four. A summary, additional thoughts, and recommendations are in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

While approaching this study I began using a key phrase that assisted my thinking—“time-compressed professionalization”—around which the study has revolved and upon which it is based. It conveys the notion of people, comprising a field of practice, that experiences “professionalization” very quickly. In many states educational interpreters, actually the not-yet qualified people, or “communication aides,” in public schools have experienced exactly that phenomenon as external forces of appropriate evaluation of their skills and knowledge led to the development of specialized education.¹⁰ Programs capable of delivering that specialized education to any and all educational interpreters-communication aide/students with phone lines have been developed, and multi-state collaborations emerged to fund it. That all dovetailed into rapid establishment of state standards in the late 1990s and is ongoing.

This chapter provides a tour of the professionalization of public school educational interpreting to date, culminating with a proposal for this study of a group of people who are at the very cutting edge of that developmental process. It begins with an overview of the typical process of occupational professionalization, and the status of sign language interpreting as a profession as it emerges with the broader field of language interpreting. Next, the path proceeds through an historical emergence of deaf education and American Sign Language in the United States, and federal laws requiring the provision of interpreting service in education. A more complete examination of public schools’ attempts to facilitate communication for deaf students follows, including discussion about what those communication providers were to be required to know, be, and do, culminating in the emergence of the field of educational interpreting. It concludes with a review related adult learning theory.

This study was undertaken to learn what we could from educational interpreters and communication aides, especially from rural schools, who participated in an educational program that was research and theory based, designed to support their development into at least entry level educational interpreting. This type of educational process has been available to larger numbers of potential students only since the mid-1990s and no research has focused specifically on the educational interpreters’ experience of their education or professionalization. It is hoped

that by doing so guidance may be provided to future educational interpreting students, school administrators, educational interpreting educators, and policy decision-makers.

Professions and the Professionalization Process

Theories of how occupations become professionalized are presented followed by an examination of the status of sign language interpreting as an emerging profession.

Theories of Occupational Professionalization

Models of the professionalization of occupations will be introduced, the last three of which are discussed as related to interpreting languages: Wilensky's sequential steps, Houle's 14 characteristics, Mikkelson's presentation of Tseng's model regarding language interpreters (from Taiwan), and Witter-Merithew and Johnson's examination of the status of sign language interpreting as a profession.

Wilensky's (1964) states "... the degree of professionalization is measured not just by the degree of success in the claim to exclusive technical competence, but also by the degree of adherence to the service ideal and its supporting norms of professional conduct" (p. 141). Educational interpreters quite clearly do not meet either of those criteria, although they are farther along the continuum as more agreement emerges about the applicable technical competencies of the occupation. His work specifies a set of steps towards professionalization that are typically consistent across occupations. The people involved in the occupation, as a whole, take the following steps:

- Those who are doing the work of the occupation "start doing full time the thing that needs doing" (p. 142).
- Training is established, generally led by "enthusiastic leaders" (p. 142).
- Eventually universities become involved with the training and a sub-group of teachers is created
- Standards begin to rise, and education must begin earlier and becomes more costly.
- The standard bearers for training, and those who have become trained, come together, and a professional association is established.
- Grey areas of occupational jurisdiction, necessary training specifications, and hierarchical issues are worked out over time.

- “... persistent political agitation” (p. 145) leads to legal requirements for use of the job title, and for some professions (e.g., medicine) criminal ramifications for misrepresentation are established.
- A code of ethics is established

Reflecting on the process of professionalization of sign language interpreters, almost the first order of business for the fledgling Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf in 1964 was the establishment of a Code of Ethics. Now as the National Association for the Deaf and RID merge their interpreting evaluation processes, and as educational interpreting has emerged as a majority presence in the field of practice, a revised Code of Ethics is being examined by RID members. The field as a whole is progressing toward professionalizing.

Houle (1980) presented a “dynamic” concept of 14 characteristics of the professionalization process. He stated these characteristics could serve as goals for any occupation desiring to professionalize, and could be improved upon as appropriate for the members of the occupation and its circumstances. Those characteristics, as presented, were:

- conceptual—or concerned with clarifying the occupation’s defining function or functions;
- performance—including mastery of theoretical knowledge, capacity to solve problems, use of practical knowledge, and seeking self-enhancement;
- collective identity—created by formal training, credentialing, creation of a subculture, legal reinforcement, public acceptance, and ethical practice, penalties for incompetence or ethical violations, and establishment of relations to other vocations and to users of the service.

He also reviewed the Classic Model of Professional Education (p. 4) in which formal education typically occurs, as pre-service, followed by an induction process, with subsequent continuing education. In the classic model standards would serve to assure minimum competencies, and no follow up oversight or adjustment for a changing profession. Educational interpreters have no induction process. On a state-by-state basis, many working educational interpreters are facing standards they will have to meet via inservice specialized education, rather than pre-service.

Models Linked to Language Interpreters

The larger field of practice of language interpreting in general, between any two languages, is gaining momentum in its developmental process. Critical Link is an international organization focused on interpreting in the community (as opposed to conference or legal interpreting). Demonstrating the recognition given to sign language interpreters as colleagues and peers within the larger field, Cynthia Roy, a long time teacher and researcher of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting, was selected to serve as the American representative to the Critical Link's nine person Scientific Advisory Committee (Tolk-och översättarinstitutet, 2004). At their conference in Sweden in May, 2004, entitled "Professionalisation of Interpreting in the Community," 25% of the presentations were related to sign language interpreting research (Davis, 2004).

Mikkelson (1996) addressed the trait theory professionalization process, in which the more characteristics are fully present, the more professionalized the occupation is. Theory of control examines how much control the profession has over the work its members do and the market in which they practice. She offered examples of how the legal profession controls its own arena, and then how it controls that of related fields, assuring them little autonomy and the opportunity to professionalize. She then presented a model directly related to interpreting, Tseng's.

While Tseng's (1992) Sociological Model of professionalization is for interpreters who work between spoken languages, the first phase could serve as a description of educational interpreting as it was for years, although now steps within Phases II and III are emerging. This section is included largely verbatim from Mikkelson (1996) because of the applicability to the current discussion.

Phase I

- competition of practitioners
- practitioners cannot keep unskilled outsiders out (the practitioners themselves may have entered the field without skills)
- consumers do not understand the service and have little confidence in it
- decisions are made based on lowest price for the service

- consumers think they know what interpreters do, but they do not; however, rather than mystifying the occupation it devalues it
- there is little incentive for improving skills and knowledge
- training itself is so varied in standards it complicates the scene
- there is a “vicious cycle of unprofessional behavior and mistrust of practitioners” (p. 4 of 10)
- the highly skilled practitioners eventually develop some cohesion and begin to professionalize

Phase II

- profession consolidates
- goals for training become more clear
- educational programs deliver more quality and support the development of professional organizations

Phase III – professionals work with colleagues to influence:

- job descriptions
- colleagues’ behavior
- admission to the occupation
- public recognition of the profession

Phase IV – professional organizations:

- establish ethical standards
- gain control over who is admitted to the profession
- work with society to achieve market control and influence legislation and licensure (p. 4-5 of 10)

Obstacles to professionalization proposed by Tseng and listed by Mikkelson include:

- confusion about the title of the job (e.g., interpreter vs. translator)
- lack of a body of knowledge
- consumers not knowing how to find qualified practitioners, and hiring people to fill the supply

Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2004) used Wilensky’s trait theory to analyze the status of sign language interpreting as a profession, noting its progress in the following traits as indicated.

- Low emergence: authority, induction, community sanction

- Moderate emergence: systematic theory, credentials (“except in educational settings”), compensation
- High emergence: Code of Ethics, continuing professional development, culture (“for other than K-12 interpreters”) (p. 41)

They make recommendations for moving the field forward in professionalization, including the need to:

- Establish communities of inquiry and practice
- Distinguish between paraprofessional and professional practitioner competence
- Education standards, specifically with a bachelor’s degree as the entry level
- Educating the community at large (pp. 44-48)

Having a general background of the professionalization of occupations and interpreting, a more in-depth examination is now presented of sign language interpreting, and the emergence of interpreting in public schools.

Sign Language Interpreting as an Emerging Profession

Sign language interpreting emerged from the need of deaf people and their friends to communicate with society at large, and their children provided the communication link. Children of deaf adults (CODAs) were the original sign language interpreters in the United States, working voluntarily for family and friends. In 1964, the Rehabilitation Services Administration funded a national meeting of interpreters at Ball State Teachers College in Muncie, Indiana which resulted in the establishment of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). RID was, and is, the only professional organization strictly for sign language interpreters in the United States. Its initial work was to professionalize the work interpreters do.

RID changed interpreting from an activity provided by CODAs for family and friends for free with no standards or code of conduct, to a profession with a Code of Ethics and, beginning in 1972, a certification examination process. The Code of Ethics addressed issues of great concern to both skilled interpreters and deaf consumers, such as assurance of confidentiality within a small community, appropriate physical appearance and behavior, financial remuneration, and acceptance of only that interpreting work for which one was sufficiently skilled. A certification of skills was needed urgently, perhaps more so than for people using spoken language interpreting services. Siegel (1995) noted that Sharon Neuman-Solow (1991), a

pioneer in the professionalization and education of interpreters, observed that while people communicating via a spoken language interpreter can guess, with some accuracy, about the accuracy of an interpreted transmission, deaf people cannot. They cannot hear anything about their own communication as interpreted to the other person, and cannot judge, on the spot, about the quality of the interpreted message. Certification by RID gave consumers of ASL/spoken English interpreting services assurance of essential skills and, by affiliation, conduct.

Since then the RID has been a resource for recruitment, information for interpreters and consumers, professional certification, and support for education of interpreters. According to the website, the organization's mission is "... to provide international, national, regional, state, and local forums and an organizational structure for the continued growth and development of the professions of interpretation and transliteration of American Sign Language and English" (RID, 2004).

Educational interpreters in public schools had quite a different experience from people in other fields of practice, with different results, as noted by Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2004), shown above. For the most part the interpreters themselves were isolated from the larger profession both geographically and professionally. Their work situation, qualifications, roles, and responsibilities were very different from interpreters who worked with adults. Because of the way in which many of them entered the profession they had little or no knowledge of the larger profession, and neither did anyone around them. In the Mountain-Plains Region they did not establish educational requirements for themselves or certifying processes within higher education facilities.

RID has offered a Special Interest Group for educational interpreters, and it supported efforts in the states to establish RID's certification evaluations as state standards. When faced with increasing encouragement to create an evaluation method appropriate for the highly individualized kind of work required of people responsible for assuring deaf children's ability to participate in schools, RID stepped away. It took other professionals in interpreting and education to examine more deeply just what it was that educational interpreters in public schools were actually doing, what was necessary to evaluate and support them appropriately, and ultimately, make recommendations to school administrators about performance and knowledge standards.

As researchers sought out those who were facilitating the sign communication of deaf children in schools across the United States and Canada to learn who they were, how they arrived at their occupation, and what they needed to perform to acceptable standards, the pieces fell into place—appropriate evaluation of educational interpreters, specialized education for them, distance delivery of that education (to reach interpreters working in widely dispersed locations depending on the presence of a deaf child), and collaboration among states to offer such education—school districts and state legislatures began establishing standards for skills, knowledge, and education for interpreters within special education laws. In reality, in many states, from initial availability of an evaluation process in a state, to the state’s establishment of performance and knowledge standards, the process took about five to 10 years. It took the form of “time-compressed professionalization.”

This study was designed to capture the story of educational interpreters’ and communication aides’ experience of rapid change in occupational standards. It was not an immediate change in what they did, but a change in what suddenly could be, and was, expected of them and how they responded. It is a story of an urgent demand, in the face of the appalling failure in the education of deaf children, to professional maturity and competence, not only for people who would be educational interpreters but also for deaf education. It is the rest of a story, one that began with the best intentions 30 years ago.

Historical Backdrop

To situate educational interpreters in the landscape of professions and professional development, a review of the broad contexts of deaf education and sign language is necessary.

Deaf Education and Sign in the United States

It used to be (thousands, hundreds, and even tens of years ago) deaf people were lumped together with others who could not communicate or interact in the standard fashion and disposed of, left to the most menial of lives, or perhaps revered as something beyond the norm. Many authors provide this history in writing, and Marschark and Spencer (2003) provide an especially concise description of deaf people in context throughout the ages, with specificity of names and dates. Bypassing the earliest years, we pick up the story in 1760, and Charles Michael Abbé de L’Epée’s development of education of deaf students in France using signs and writing. In 1770

Thomas Braidwood opened a school in Scotland, and in 1778 his contemporary educator, Samuel Heinicke established a school in Germany aspiring to teach deaf children through spoken language (all the better for abstraction, he believed). The sign language versus oral debate began and continues today, heightened by both greater understanding of the rich linguistic power of American Sign Language and neurological processing of language, and of technological advances that can deliver auditory signals directly into brains in such a fashion that the person can, upon learning to interpret the signals of a cochlear implant, “hear.”

Continuing the telling of history, the legendary story—a story resonating with profound meaning as it is signed or spoken, it is the story of freedom and enlightenment of an entire People—eventually we come to Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, the teacher of deaf Alice Cogswell. He was sent in 1812 to Europe to learn from the schools that taught deaf children. Unable to come to an agreement with educators at the widely known Braidwood school regarding the sharing of their techniques, Gallaudet went to de L’Epée’s school in France, met Laurent Clerc, a deaf teacher, whom he persuaded to travel to America and establish a school. The story goes that on the boat trip to America Clerc taught Gallaudet to sign and Gallaudet taught Clerc English.¹¹ The outcome of this encounter was the school now known as the American School for the Deaf. That school was the source of many deaf teachers and deaf administrators for other schools for the deaf in America, including one in Washington, D.C. The superintendent of that school was Thomas’s son, Edward Miner Gallaudet, and it eventually evolved into what is now called Gallaudet University.

In the latter part of the 1800s the oral approaches to education of deaf children, meaning only speech and lip-reading, were used; they gained powerful supporters in many countries, including Thomas Mann and Alexander Graham Bell in the United States. In 1880, at the Congress of Milan, the superiority of spoken language for instruction of deaf children was proclaimed and the use of “Sign” disparaged. Users and supporters of “Sign” had largely been unable to attend the conference, deaf people in attendance were not permitted to vote, and the Congress set the world, and America, on a path resulting in deaf teachers being removed from teaching positions because they could not teach with speech and hearing as required. Sign was banned from classrooms and stories about what it was like for deaf children struggling to learn to talk, and not sign, during those decades abound. The National Theater for the Deaf ultimately

traveled extensively with a play entitled “My Third Eye,” which clearly exhibited the experiences shared by many.

American Sign Language and Manually Coded English

William Stokoe was an English teacher at Gallaudet College in the 1950s who noticed that there seemed to be more to the “Sign” that the deaf people were using than simple “gesturing.” He proceeded to research what it was deaf people were doing as they used “Sign” (in an era before videotape), recognized patterns emerging, and ultimately published his work “Sign Language Structure: An Outline of the Visual Communication Systems of the American Deaf” (Stokoe, 1960). This research continued, capped by more recent brain research that clearly showed sign language being processed as language, rather than just visual input (Petitto, Zatorre, Gauna, Nikelski, Dostie, & Evans, 2000).

In the early 1970s some deaf educators, responding to challenges deaf children face in learning an auditory language they cannot hear, theorized that making that language visible, and using it as the language of instruction and home, would result in the internalization of the otherwise auditory language’s structure, grammar, vocabulary, idiosyncrasies, etc. They set about developing such a visualized form of English, one of which continues to be used in many school systems: “Seeing Exact English” (SEE II) was originally published in the early 1970s as an alternative for people communicating with children (Gustason, Pftzing & Zowolkow, 1980). The authors assumed the people who would use it would have a working foundation of ASL, to be expanded by the use of their English-based signs. Unfortunately, most of the people who ultimately learned and used SEE had no American Sign Language (ASL) foundation, and used the SEE signs in a linear, English-like fashion, rather than following rules of visual languages and incorporating visual language grammar, especially related to the use of space, presentation of tenses, and types of sentences. These signers had no knowledge of any of this, nor any awareness of the aspects of ASL for which there are no direct auditory equivalents, such as classifiers.

Access to Communication: Civil Rights and Federal Laws

While Moss (1990) stated the rationale for mainstreaming deaf and hard of hearing children into public schools was documented in 1815, finding information about the introduction

and presence of interpreters in early years is more of a challenge. Witter-Merithew and Dirst (1982) reported that the interpreters' values, as well as the lack of competent interpreters, were recognized as early as the 1950s. By 1964, the Civil Rights movement in the United States created a climate in which the Deaf Community and its culture gained "voice." A series of laws methodically expanded the civil rights of people with disabilities, requiring access to services by vocational rehabilitation services, government agencies, federally supported schools and organizations, and, finally, public services in general, within certain parameters.¹² For Deaf people "access" meant access to information and communication, including interpreting services.

After 100 years of having only Gallaudet College provide college level educational opportunities to deaf people, five programs for deaf students were created in colleges around the country during the 1960s.¹³ The programs needed quantities of interpreters, driving the creation of parallel interpreter training, the first formal interpreting education. If the 1965 Vocational Rehabilitation Act, authorizing sign language interpreting as a rehabilitation service, spurred the expansion of both the programs for deaf college students and for interpreting education. The 1973 Rehabilitation Act, specifically, Section 504, mandating equal access to services for handicapped people and clarifying the role of interpreting, increased it logarithmically. Dozens of programs, and interpreter training programs, followed (for more information see Witter-Merithew & Dirst, 1982). They were, however, focused on interpreters for adults as the primary concern of the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

The law that required services for children in grade school, the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act, PL 94-142, did not provide corollary mandatory formal interpreting education. The consumers of interpreting in k-12 schools were adults who had no precedent or means to assess the quality of such a service, and deaf children, who had a diverse background in sign language acquisition, little formal orientation in using interpreters, and could not be expected to formally assess or question an adult's interpreting skills.

That access to information in schools is not just law, but was proposed by Siegel (2002) as Constitutional right. In his "The Argument for a Constitutional Right to Communication and Language" he cited earlier Supreme Court decisions affirming the Constitutional right of non-English speaking students' to comprehension and learning language in school.¹⁴ He stated "It requires little imagination to substitute deaf and hard of hearing student for the African-American or Chinese-American students..." (p. 264). Beyond that, the difference between

students' right to access to minority points of view, and deaf children's access to any information is highlighted:

the contrast between the right to access minority points of view and the right to access any information/communication is startling. The student who is denied the right to receive information from a revolutionary Marxist is denied much; the [deaf] student who cannot access any information, whether at that night's basketball game or a debate about Nazis marching in Skokie, is denied everything. (p. 261)

Constellation of Factors and People in the Public School Deaf Education Environment

Interpreters working in public schools have always decried the imposition of interpreting standards for adults on them, without consideration of what they are required to do working with children. While few would argue that fluency in ASL and knowledge of the professional aspects of interpreting for adults is not helpful in establishing a strong foundation for public school interpreters, the fact is that working with children in a public school environment is different than working with adults. The school environment is all about helping children learn and grow, and become responsible, independent, citizens capable of participating in society, however they choose. The appearance of a deaf child who uses sign language in any given rural school district is a low incident occurrence, meaning schools have little precedent for working with such students and interpreters. If the school has had another deaf child the odds are very high that it was not a child of this same age, grade, sign language or system, capabilities, etc. The school environment, especially in the special education realm, is full of specialists who rotate through depending on needs identified on Individual Educational Plans: speech-language pathologists, educational audiologists, resource teachers, physical and occupational therapists, teachers of the hearing-impaired, and an assortment of possible aides, and even specialist aides (e.g., for students who need one to one, or mobility, assistance). Yet few of these people, even the teachers and teachers of the deaf, are likely to have preparation for working with interpreters. The interpreters themselves introduce their own set of variables—knowledge, skills, and philosophies.

Deaf Students and Communication

Traditionally it has been reported that approximately 90% of deaf children have parents who can hear, however a more recent study shows it closer to 95% (Mitchell, 2004). This is an

important point to note. Except for the few parents who have had previous experience with deafness in other family members or parents, essentially none of them had useful experience with deaf people and how to communicate with someone who cannot hear and has no language. If they live somewhere that has newborn infant hearing screening they may be assisted quickly by people who do know something about these issues. It has been common, however, for deaf children to enter school with little intact language. Multiple authors point out that simply putting an “interpreter” in class with the child does not assure the child has full access to the educational communication environment (Schein et al., 1991; Stinson & Lang, 1994; Winston, 2004). If the child’s family has learned some sign there is no guarantee about the quality or accuracy of their instructional source. Many well-meaning people in education have passed along their own versions of sign language to parents of deaf children.

Teachers Unprepared to Work with Interpreters

Teachers in classrooms with interpreters present have generally had little or no instruction on working with interpreters as part of their own education. Schein, et al. (1991) found that teachers in their study in Canada were concerned about the communication aides’ skills, could not evaluate them, thought they could not function with the deaf child without the aide, but were not sure what information the student was getting. Hayes (1992) found similar results in Pennsylvania where 60% of the interpreters reported that teachers did not understand the interpreter’s role, yet when inservices were offered on the subject attendance was poor.

Mertens (1991) found that teachers and interpreters needed to work together, and without sufficient preparation, teachers develop inaccurate assumptions about deaf students and about the role of the interpreter. Not surprisingly, teachers in younger grades prefer interpreters to be participants in the classroom, as in the full-participant model of interpreting (Antia & Kriemeyer, 2001; Siegel, 1995), and not functioning strictly, and only, as interpreters.

A survey of teachers who worked with interpreters (over two-thirds of whom had less than three years experience in the classroom) found that if teachers had had an inservice about working with interpreters they were more comfortable in doing so (Beaver, Hayes, Luetke-Stahlman, 1995). Nevertheless, two thirds of the respondents had had no related inservice in the last two years, the most desired topic for inservice (79%) was the teacher’s role in working with the interpreters, and 59% wanted more information on the roles and responsibilities of

interpreters. It was also found that the provision of inservices was unrelated to the size of the program serving deaf children—meaning teachers in large program were no more likely to be prepared to work with interpreters than in a program with one deaf child. It would seem that even in large programs formal consideration and deliberate management of professional relationships between critical players was deferred to assumptions made about the deaf education’s power of osmosis.

Educational Interpreters: Toward an Understanding of an Emerging Profession

Formal education of interpreters began inauspiciously, almost as an afterthought to the mandates for educational access for deaf college students during the 1960s and 1970s. As post-secondary programs for the deaf were developed in colleges around the country they met their own increasing needs for interpreters by establishing sign language and interpreting classes and practica in-house. Such programs evolved into full-scale Interpreter Training Programs as the government, realizing the need, began funding them (Witter-Merithew & Dirst, 1982).

In 1979 interpreter trainers met for the first time, establishing the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT). According to Witter-Merithew and Dirst (1982) “The purpose of this collective effort is [was] the sharing of materials and resources, professional growth opportunities for trainers and to upgrade the teaching standards within the profession” (p. 398). CIT’s purpose is essentially the same now (CIT By-Laws as amended, 2002).

Qualifications and Professionalism

In a brief article published in 1984 Moores summarized challenges for the field of educational interpreting which are still largely true. In an offset graphic box entitled “Interpreters in the Public Schools: Challenges to Face and Resolve” (p. 14) he stated:

- “School administrators and state-level special education administrators” needed to make decisions regarding: qualifications for educational interpreters, appropriate pay scales that would also encourage skill improvement, evaluation criteria, determination regarding roles and responsibilities.
- “Interpreters, interpreter trainers, and the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf” needed to address: ethics as applied in schools, appropriate training, credentialing for educational interpreters.

He was following the thinking of the day when he assigned control and decision-making to administrators outside of the field of practice itself. In light of Tseng's explanation, this article also serves as a summary of the indirect challenges of the field.

Zawolkow and DeFiore (1986) stated "If fully recognized by their colleagues as members of the educational team, they [interpreters] are likely to respond in kind" (p. 27). Likewise, if educational interpreters are not treated as professionals, and do not see themselves as professionals, the resulting attitude and behaviors can affect the students.

The findings of Schein, et al. (1991) from their study of the perceptions held by administrators, teachers, and interpreters in Alberta, Canada revealed the following list of qualifications:

... ability to work with children, signing skills, interest in professional development, and such personal attributes as flexibility, warmth, empathy, fondness for children, attentiveness to detail, self-directedness, and the ability to foster independence... knowledge of child development and deafness, ... and it is also considered important for the interpreter to be able to fit into the educational team and get along with parents. (p. 5)

The administrators admitted the pay for interpreters was too low to attract skilled people, and they, themselves, were not satisfied with the pay scale. Nevertheless, they found no shortage of willing applicants. Being willing to "work with what you have, especially in rural areas" (p. 6) administrators hired people as interpreters (or whatever that district called them), occasionally assisted in the process by parents, and if the applicants were willing to learn to sign they could be hired. Ultimately, the communication aides were not included in the group considered professional in their school. They were also not seen as peers by those in the professional interpreting organizations, due to differences in approaches to ethics (especially confidentiality), the perception of their skills, and the interpreting organizations' standards. They were effectively isolated professionally and geographically.

Roles and Responsibilities Over Time

The roles and responsibilities documented by early observers of interpreters working in public schools clearly demonstrate the diversity of perceptions those in authority had of the position. It also demonstrates the clear thinking that was available to those determined to find it (in the days of no-internet or computers).

To help with context, a clarification of the role(s) and responsibilities of people in most interpreting positions is necessary. They interpret between spoken and signed languages as requested and/or required by the situation. If accuracy demands cultural mediation or consultation, that may be done, depending on the situation, and with full understanding of all participants that at the moment the interpreter is the source of information rather than a conduit between others. Beyond that they are a professional in the area, not liable to be assigned additional duties by anyone any more than one would assign work to a visiting attorney waiting in a hall.

In 1985, three articles from very different authorities commented on the state of educational interpreting in public schools. From her survey of programs training interpreters Gustason (1985) reported that half the responding programs expressed a need for greater clarity from public schools regarding interpreter roles and responsibilities, one-fourth indicated a need for public school personnel to have better understanding of the role of interpreters, and another fourth reported that the variety of communication philosophies present in schools increased the challenge for training programs. The programs estimated a third of their graduates obtained employment in public schools, affording a rather significant possibility for confusion.

In Arizona a school district examined what they termed a “new breed” of interpreter, educational interpreters who “have become professionally and personally involved in the total education of hearing impaired students. They are an integral part of the teaching team” (Morgan & Irwin, 1985, p. 13). Differentiated roles, and pay scales, were described at the elementary and high school levels. People involved with communication facilitation were categorized based on their interpreting skills and additional roles for fully qualified interpreters included being a liaison between programs. This perspective, with supporting documents, was presented at the annual convention of the council for Exceptional Children in California in 1985.

The same year Winston (1985) challenged the overall interpreting profession itself with a piece in RID’s *Journal of Interpretation* entitled “Mainstreaming: Like it or not,” stating “Professional interpreters and educators can no longer ignore mainstreaming as not requiring ‘real interpreting,’ nor can they continue to regard educational interpreters as non-professional and non-ethical semi-signers”(p. 117). The article addressed ethical concerns of the day and spelled out the requirements of educational interpreters, including dual-roles of interpreting AND secondary roles such as: tutor, aide, resource specialist, media specialist.

Zawolkow and DeFiore (1986) advanced the argument with greater specificity, stating that the situation is different for educational interpreters in that they often work one-to-one with a student with no support, in the same location every day, and while they are probably hired by the district, some are hired by the parent or an outside agency. Additionally, depending on the individual student's needs and what the grade level might be, roles for interpreters in public schools could include: being a parent figure; providing tutoring or interpret for tutoring; being a teacher's aide; informing the resource teacher of the child's progress (as a member of the educational team); informing teachers about the child's comprehension of course content, language, and interpreting; and, being an assistant coach.

A framework for determining interpreter roles and responsibilities and the amount of time devoted to them was proposed in 1988 by Stewart, acknowledging that they can change depending on the individual student's needs. The framework offered for consideration included the following roles, and the approximate percent of the work day devoted to them: interpreting (52%), tutoring and aide work (13% each), and public relations, liaison work, and miscellaneous activities (7% each). Clarifying "liaison work" he stated that interpreters' "extensive contact with students could be used to help monitor students educational and social progress, evaluate appropriateness of placement with respect to teacher and class room characteristics, and for advocating the rights of hearing impaired children" (p. 278). Later Stewart and Kluwin (1996) asked "... how might interpreters resolve conflicts that might arise with the code of ethics if they are expected to report on a student behavior in their role on that student's educational team?" (p. 38).

Shortly after that the deaf education scene was rocked by the publication of "*Unlocking the Curriculum: Principles for Achieving Access in Deaf Education*" by educators at Gallaudet University (Johnson, Liddell & Erting, 1989), the opening heading of which was "The Failure of Deaf Education" (p. 1) and the next was "The Reasons for Failure" (p. 3). While it proposed a "Model Program for Education of Deaf Children" a major impact was its proposal that "Total Communication" (which had come to mean people speaking English while signing at the same time, intending to make the English visible) was not providing deaf children with access to language. An example of such failure was provided in a transcription of a teacher's communication to a child in which the teacher said "bunny" but signed HORSE and later signed said "bunny" but signed DEVIL; the teacher said "want" but signed FREEZE; and, a spoken

negative is switched to a positive in the signed communication. The spoken message was clear, but the signed communication made no sense (p. 6). I mention all this here because although that publication, and the follow up publication of a responding panel discussion (Johnson, R.C. 1989), were not about interpreting and interpreters were not mentioned, the essential issue is the same. Except for the very few educational interpreters who know ASL and are instructed to use it in their interpreting work, most educational interpreters in the country are using forms of Manually Coded English (MCE, discussed elsewhere in this paper). The errors above are beginner level errors of sign production. Errors of tense, number, negation, subject-object are not at all uncommon as the signer, or interpreter, inadvertently maintains the integrity of only their primary language, English, but the visual communication is insufficiently monitored.

The sign skills of deaf educators and parents of deaf children were discussed at a conference in Washington, D.C., where Brackett (published in 1990) suggested that interpreters in schools, who are expected to be knowledgeable about sign communication issues, should be part of the Individual Education Plan process. It appears this would be particularly true for the districts, especially in rural areas that have no specialized staff knowledgeable about deaf children and their needs, no teacher of the deaf—only a person, such as a speech-language therapist who might cover 150 square miles a week, dropping by to work with any particular child a couple times a week. The importance of the interpreter, and her/his knowledge and experience, becomes apparent in these situations.

At that point in the chronology a series of research studies related to educational interpreters began to put pieces of the “what do they actually do” puzzle in place. Schein, et al. (1991), again working in Canada, collected perceptions from administrators, and teachers and communication aides (their label, chosen after realizing that “interpreter” was rarely used and probably not appropriate), and also observed the communication aides at work, and analyzed their interpreting. They found that no interpreter in the elementary level was strictly an interpreter. Additional expectations of them included: sign language instruction, speech-language instruction, teaching the teacher “special skills,” personal attendant, social support, care of amplification equipment, carry out the IEP, act as liaison with parents, assist with behavior management, and help the deaf child negotiate the classroom environment. The communication aides reported that in addition to interpreting for the deaf student they also did other work with

that student, assisted as a classroom aide, worked with non-deaf children, and worked with other adults in the area.

Schein, et al. (1991), also expressed concern about the high-level decisions being made by interpreters for which they had no education or qualifications. For example, they asked, in the rush of classroom activities, presentations, discussions, and questions and answers, along with the social and other interactions—should interpreters be deciding on their own what should be interpreted, and what ignored? That raises many questions related to what should be left out of the communication convey, and how is that decided? People tend to believe that academic information is highest priority, but that may not be the case for a given student. They stated that interpreters are gatekeepers of the information and communication that is accessible to deaf children.

Shortly after Schein, Mallory, & Greaves' publication, Hayes (1992) published the results of a similar inquiry done in Pennsylvania, also beginning with setting the context with administrative perceptions. Administrators reported that interpreter applicants' interpreting skills were rarely evaluated prior to hire, or at all, and sometimes they were hired over the phone. They admitted to having concerns about recruiting qualified interpreters and substitutes. Surveying the interpreters she found the interpreters themselves were unclear about their roles and responsibilities. She referred to the National Task Force Guidelines (1989) which recommended that roles and responsibilities be clarified as part of the interpreter's position so everyone involved, including administrators, teachers, and parents, would know what to expect (p. 19).

In 1993, different philosophies of interpreting, as they affected educational interpreting, took center stage in a court case from Arizona—Zobrest versus Catalina Foothills School District (1993). The case resulted from the local school district's refusal to pay for interpreters for Zobrest in a parochial school. The Supreme Court ruled against the district and allowed a public school employee to be paid to work in a religious school. In his piece about the Supreme Court decision regarding the Zobrest case, Siegal (1995) gave a full description of the mechanical interpreting model versus the full-participant model. The mechanical model refers to a philosophy of interpreting in which the interpreter is considered to be a piece of equipment provided to make up for the deaf person's deficient hearing. In this model the task is simply to directly pass along what either party says, or signs, to the other with no mediation of language, culture, or higher realization of, for example, misunderstandings forming. The full-participant

model acknowledges that the interpreter is an additional party in any interpreted communication and the environment, providing such additional language and cultural mediation.

Morris (1995) pointed out similar concerns about the legal profession's perception of interpreting and interpreters. While she was discussing the presence of interpreters of spoken and sign languages working with adults in legal proceedings, her list of "challenges to interpreting" gives pause:

- unreliability of communication processes in general
- physical and psychological factors
- differences in cultures and factors shaping thought patterns and perceptions
- linguistic elements
- "other elements related to speakers' and listeners' worlds of knowledge" (p. 27).

When one considers these, in conjunction with an interpreter using a visual language with children, what is actually being required of educational interpreters simply as interpreters, without including secondary roles, comes more clearly into focus.

Shaw and Jamieson published a study in 1997 that revealed what many people were suspecting, that most of the student's interactions, and instruction, were with the interpreter. The interpreter was making the decisions about which classroom communications were interpreted and which were not. Furthermore, the teacher's perceptions of her relationship with the student, and the quality of communication with the student, were quite different from reality. While the study was thorough, it was of only one representation of interpreting arrangement (one student, his teacher, and interpreter), and clearly needs replication. Calvert (1996), who was Indiana's liaison to RID's educational interpreting special interest group, suggested that the need for standardization educational interpreters' roles and responsibilities was sufficient to warrant RID's becoming involved with that effort. Discussing role confusion Yarger (2001) provided an example quote from a study participant who had little preparation for such responsibilities and had said "I was tutoring all morning, one on one...I did all the planning...And I set up the goal. The language goals, math goals, and reading goals and all that science. I set up the goals for that." (p. 22).

Greater clarification of the "full-participant" model of educational interpreting was provided by Antia and Kriemeyer (2001) after a study of the interactions of three interpreters, two special educators, three regular education teachers and students, spread over three grades.

They found a variety of perceptions of the interpreters' roles, even among the interpreters, and that roles can change over time. The full-participant role, preferred by the teachers and two of the interpreters, included the interpreter being additionally responsible for: bringing in deafness-related resources; teaming with the teacher to plan visual presentations; modifications of materials, often on their own; facilitation of sign language learning of others in the environment; and assisting other students. Teachers' preference for the stability of a full-time interpreter was also clear, as they found the coming and going of part-time interpreters disruptive. The administrator, and the professionally educated interpreter, however, preferred the "mechanical" model of interpreting, whereby the interpreter was in the room strictly to interpret, and interpreters were interchangeable service-providers to be moved about as necessary. It was also noted that hiring a person with nominal skills as "interpreter/aide" affected everyone's perception of that person and her role. Pros and cons for both models were suggested: the full participant model tended to result in greater dependence on the interpreter and communication between the student and teacher decreased. The mechanical, part-time model created a situation in which the interpreter was not perceived as part of the educational team.

Many educators and educational interpreters have cited conflicts between RID's Code of Ethics, requiring confidentiality, and the realities of working in educational environments with children, as a reason for not aligning with RID. In 1998 Winston suggested that educational interpreters were actually hired to be the "accessibility expert," and are responsible for informing others in the setting about related roles and responsibilities. She clarified that for educational interpreters working in k-12 schools the RID Code of Ethics applied to them in the role of interpreter, and the usual codes of conduct for adults in educational environments applied to their other roles. When in the role of interpreter, accessibility experts should "provide input that is related to interpreting—how interpreting provides access to an education, how interpreting is affecting the classroom, how and when interpreting provides access and how and when it poses barriers to access" (p. 32).

Subsequent to the above article, according to Jones (1999), Winston realized that a fourth role was also present, consulting: educating others in the environment about deafness, communication, sign language and interpreting. In his 1999 article, Jones proposed a windmill model for educational interpreters in which the four roles were vanes of the windmill:

interpreting, tutor, aiding, and consulting. The “accessibility expert’s” function within each role depended on the breezes of the moment.

Sign Skill and Professional Knowledge Acquisition: Genesis and Trajectory

This section shows the historical progression of studies related to educational interpreting. Studies tended to gradually refine an understanding of who were the people doing educational interpreting, their background and qualifications, and the nature of their work environments. As pointed out by Davis (2004) a major difference between the professional development of sign language interpreters and spoken language interpreters is that sign language interpreters typically are not native signers. People working in spoken languages typically first work with written translations, which can provide a basis for developing skills at consecutive spoken interpretation, which can provide the basis for simultaneous spoken translation. Sign language interpreters typically are not native signers and there is no equivalent written translation for sign language. Interpreting Preparation Programs for sign language interpreters generally also include instruction in sign language, delivered as the interpreting student is learning to interpret. Davis emphasizes “the importance of linguistic and cultural immersion for interpreter preparation cannot be understated...” (p. 24).

Cokely (1981), who surveyed 160 interpreters, primarily from participants at the annual RID convention in Cincinnati, Ohio, found that most of the interpreters were well educated, though not in interpreting. Over a third had learned to sign at home (certainly meaning someone in the close family was deaf), and that a half or more of the interpreters whose parents were hearing reported being uncomfortable in sign language interactions. Cokely speculated that if many of them were willing to report insufficient sign skill levels, the accuracy of their interpreting was of concern.

A clarification of the difference between “interpreting” and “transliterating” was made in 1982. Witter-Merithew & Dirst stated that “interpreting” required changing the language and the mode in which it is delivered, while “transliterating” involved changing only the mode.

Gustason (1985) found that over a third of the graduates of interpreting training programs were moving into public schools, many of them had “minimal or no training related to child development, educational aide or tutoring skills, or the sign systems used by the schools” (p. 266). There is also the additional complicating factor facing interpreters who have deaf children

with different levels and communication in same class (Zawolkow & DeFiore, 1986), for which such interpreters would have even less preparation.

Stewart (1988) commended the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada for addressing the increasing demand for interpreters in schools, as well as in general, as educational interpreters have received little education for their occupation and “lax or nonexistent” certification standards, but still have a goal of fluency in sign language (p. 275). He also made a point that has profound impact—“an interpreter is a major source of linguistic input” (p. 276). Children must have exposure to language in order to learn it and Deaf children who enter school from homes with little language available to them know neither a spoken nor a signed language. Regardless of fluency or skill level, the interpreter is the model of whatever s/he is using.

The 95% return rate on a survey of directors of 50 Interpreter Training Programs (ITPs) (Dahl & Wilcox, 1990) revealed intense interest in the issue of the educational interpreters education and credentialing, and the results reflect the uncoalesced thinking happening in the training programs themselves. Remembering that the ITPs had been established to educate people to interpret for adults, and that this study was done almost 15 years after PL 94-142, the findings are enlightening. Thirty-one percent of the programs offered a course in educational interpreting, and roughly half of those programs (i.e. about 11 ITPs in the United States) were offering an additional course related to working with children. Graduates had little preparation in either Seeing Exact English (the Manually Coded English system developed by Gustason, Pftzing & Zawolkow (1989) most widely used in schools at the time) or tutoring. Half the directors supported the “interpreter/tutor” concept, but the information provided in the article does not reveal if that was the philosophy of the program. Graduates, including those who went into educational interpreting, quite likely reflected the philosophy of their own alma mater, cooperating with, or resisting, secondary roles (e.g. tutoring). Additionally, few more than half of the directors supported the concept of an educational interpreting certification offered by RID.

During 1990 I surveyed educational interpreters in Colorado that showed: “The majority were in the position without benefit of formal interpreter training and had received no assessment of their interpreting abilities or language skills. On inservice day, the interpreters stayed home without pay because they were not invited to the staff development and there was nothing provided for their specialty” (Johnson, 1994, p. 11). Not only were they without professional or

skill requirements, but they were deliberately excluded from participation in potentially informative inservice activities, due to the administrative perception that such information was not applicable to them. Participants in that survey expressed that their two major needs for support from the Department of Education were a confidential feedback system regarding interpreting skills and a resource for correspondence course materials. Those two requests later formed the base for the piloting of the Educational Interpreting Performance Assessment in Colorado, as a confidential feedback system, and the creation of materials and educational efforts throughout the state. Many of the educational efforts were done in collaboration with the Interpreter Preparation Program at Front Range Community College in Denver and the federal regional Interpreter Training Programs, which were precursors of the Educational Interpreting Certificate Program (personal observation).

Of the interpreters in a survey in Pennsylvania (Hayes, 1992) 65% were found to have some amount of college education, 31% of whom held an Associates degree. Sixty-five percent had learned to sign in classes, and 43% had learned to sign to communicate with friends (amount of overlap is unclear). Forty-four percent had attended an Interpreter Preparation Program, five held teaching certificates, and three were certified by RID. On the average they had less than three years experience. Hayes referred to Hull and Dilka (1984), who proposed that “three to four years of training is necessary to prepare an entry-level interpreter” (p. 20), and to the National Task Force on Educational Interpreting (1988) for further guidance on the subject of hiring qualified interpreters. The interpreters themselves said the classes they thought should be included in preparation of educational interpreters were: additional classes, especially in educational interpreting; practica at each educational level; classes in diplomacy and public speaking. They also offered a list of recommended classes, such as child development, psychosocial development of deaf children, teacher education, and lesson plans. Witter-Merithew and Johnson (in preparation) include an interview with Teresa Smith in which she addressed the issue of ownership of the “gap” between the education interpreters receive in IPPs and what they need to know to become certified. Indeed, if no one claims ownership of that “gap” in interpreters’ overall education progression in skills and knowledge is problematic.

Working Without Sufficient Skill Assessment

Classroom observations of two communication aides by Schein, et al. (1991), done as part of their study, revealed gaps in the information flow at both elementary and high school levels. The elementary level communication aide was working to support the student's tracking of the auditory environment, but the student appeared to be unable to do that from what was conveyed. The high school level interpreter was to provide simultaneous interpreting of classroom communication, but from reading the transcripts of what was said and what was signed the student could not have understood the lecture or participated in conversation about it. Both of these aides "unhesitatingly express[ed] concern about their own preparation for their positions" (p. 14). They both also expressed a desire for more interaction with experienced interpreters. The authors stated that without technical support, and without evaluation and feedback they were not likely to grow professionally.

In general, it appears a majority of educational interpreters are hired with little evaluation of their skills, and not supported in improving those skills by the school district. In Hayes' (1992) study in Pennsylvania, interpreters reported little evaluation of their interpreting skills, agreeing with the administrators' report that little evaluation was done pre-hire. Sixty percent had been evaluated at some point years before but few received any feedback. Jones, Clark and Stolz (1997), looking at educational interpreters in Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri, and Yarger (2001) working in Wyoming and Montana, found most educational interpreters had been hired without evaluation of their skills, and were not subsequently evaluated, not provided with feedback, or further skill development.

That RID's certification testing has raised the overall standards for interpreting, and raised society's awareness of the field and its requirements as acknowledged by Monikowski and Winston (2003). That fact, however, is offset by their observation that:

... many environments, most notably the public education system, have failed to move toward recognition of certified interpreters. For many years, the common practice has been to place those not yet ready to interpret for adults in the schools with deaf children. The schools, unwilling to pay for professional, skilled interpreters and often unable to find skilled interpreters, have allowed these unskilled people to work without certification or evaluation of any kind. It is encouraging that within the last 3-5 years, more and more states are addressing the need for skilled interpreters, establishing active requirements for interpreting skills for those working with children. (p. 354)

Recommendations for Education and Credentialing

The need for more training and education for educational interpreters has been documented over at least the last two decades. Zawolkow and DeFiore (1986) demonstrated a need for more attention to the education and certification of educational interpreters. They also stated that in the absence of national guidance, school districts and individual programs develop their own, with whatever limited information and expertise they have.

Stewart (1988) recommended that interpreters in schools should receive special training and that Interpreting Training Programs should include educational interpreting components, workshops addressing educational interpreting should be offered, and inservices should be offered for currently employed educational interpreters. In addition, Stewart suggested that guidelines for hiring qualified interpreters need to be developed to assist school personnel and teacher education programs need to include information on how teachers can use interpreters most effectively.

The role the Individual Education Plan (IEP) could play in resolving role confusion was highlighted by Northcott (1990), suggesting the IEP include specifics about what a particular interpreter is to do as part of the educational team. Northcott also proposed that educational interpreters should hold both interpreting certification and professional certification as a teacher or tutor. Directors of ITPs were about evenly mixed in their position about the concept of RID offering a new certification for educational interpreters, with the slight nod going to the positive (Dahl & Wilcox, 1990).

In the midst of the discussions and research, the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration funded *Professional Development Endorsement System for Educational Interpreters* (PDES, 1995) was developed by the National Interpreter Education Training Project, and distributed by Northwestern Connecticut Community-Technical College and the University of Tennessee. The PDES was a specialized curriculum that could be used, or incorporated, by interpreter education programs as an intact educational process for educational interpreters. It was used as the foundation for Educational Interpreting Program AAS degree offered for one cohort by Front Range Community College, and then for the Educational Interpreter Certificate Program (Johnson & Winston, 1999). Modifications included academic expansion, and the addition of mentoring and internships.

Jones, Clark and Stolz's 1997 study of educational interpreters in three mid-western states revealed that they were generally under-qualified regarding their interpreting skills. Sixty-one said they were "not proficient" or "somewhat proficient" at interpreting when they were hired, and 56% said their interpreting skills were not assessed prior to being hired (p. 263). The range of respondents' experience was 2 – 5 years (p. 261).

These findings were echoed by Yarger (2001) with a survey of rural educational interpreters in Wyoming and Montana, finding they had been hired with limited sign skills and no professional knowledge pertinent for their jobs. This resulted in a lack of communication access for the deaf students. She found that educational interpreters in rural schools did more tutoring, needed more knowledge in all content areas, and quite likely need broader preparation than those in larger public school programs.

Daniel Burch (1999) attempted to determine the "'essentialness' of the competencies, responsibilities, and education levels" of educational interpreters on a national scale by surveying stakeholders (e.g., interpreters, teachers, parents of deaf children) (p. xviii). His survey resulted in a finding that the stakeholders as a whole think inservice training is essential for educational interpreters, and that educational interpreters should not have to use SEE (a Manually Coded English System), be aides, or do note-taking; and, that education above a bachelor's degree was not perceived as being essential. Burch suggested more research be done, particularly regarding the prioritization of competencies for training, pre-service and inservice. In 2004 Jones listed 14 bachelor degree level interpreting programs, two of which were geared towards educational interpreting.

Applying Karasek's (1979) demand-control theory to sign language, Dean and Pollard (2001) suggested that interpreters experience "high-strain" due to the high-demand low-control nature of their work:

The decision latitude conveyed by the RID guidelines [Code of Ethics] seems to leave interpreters with few options for responding to many of the demands presented in their occupation, especially those that arise from environmental, interpersonal, and intrapersonal factors. Traditionally, interpreters have been taught that thoughts, information, commentary, and feelings are to be suppressed, as well as all behavior not directly related to responding to the linguistic demands of the translation task. (p. 8)

They cite several sources building a case that the education of interpreters is inadequate for the variability of demands of the job, that traditional classroom education will be unable to fill the need for preparation, and many interpreters not only function less than adequately but many also leave the field because of the strain. They suggest that interpreter education include “an extended period of supervised practice” similar to other demanding professions, and including all actual demand factors of the work noted in the above quote, as performed within ethical constraints (p. 13). While Dean and Pollard’s focus is community interpreters rather than those in public schools, the implications are clear.

The current study was necessary as a natural next step as I knew the EICP was delivering a curriculum at a distance to working educational interpreters that was based on recommendations from earlier researchers and theorists in educational interpreting, interpreting and adult learning delivery. It was crafted in a conscious manner based on pertinent literature and principles, using highly qualified staff, and pervasive communication modes for student assistance. As I analyzed the results of the study I became increasingly aware of the impact of this programmatic preparation, based on the findings. Participants were exhibiting behaviors and expressing thoughts that resonated with additional aspects of adult learning literature as well. The theories are reviewed here, and discussed further in Chapter 5.

Pertinent Adult Learning Theories

A natural place to begin is with the theories referred to by the director of the Educational Interpreting Certificate Program (EICP), those that shaped not only the program curriculum and delivery, but are pre-requisite systemic requirements, and levels of personal support and responsiveness to students throughout.

Philosophical Underpinnings of the EICP

In personal conversations in early 2003 the director of the EICP, Leilani Johnson, explained to me the philosophical concepts that guided the planning and development of the program. It was informed by adult learning theory as expressed by Malcolm Knowles’ andragogical model (1989, pp. 83-85) and Patricia Cross’ Chain-of-Response (COR) Model (1982, pp. 124-131); as well as by the philosophical perspectives of instructional design summarized by Patricia L. Smith and Tillman J. Ragan in their preface (1999, pp. 13-26).

Knowles emphasized that, as opposed to children, adult learners learn based on a “need to know” and when they are ready (especially matching developmental stages to real life needs), have a self concept of being self-directing responsible adults (yet, who may revert to being non-self-directed in educational situations), bring a lifetime of knowledge and experience (meaning adult educational situations are more diverse than those of children), and are more intrinsically motivated.

Cross’ COR Model emphasized how important it is for designers of educational programs for adults to consider the potential participants’ life situation, expectations, goals, opportunities and barriers. Johnson clarified that, for example, earlier research about educational interpreters indicated that most of them were women, many of whom had children, and (especially in the earlier years of the program) they did not necessarily have technological savvy or access to it. Participation in the program, therefore, would require the design of a program that was manageable for people working full-time and taking care of families, on-demand communication about the situations that arise in real life, and a guarantee of technological support. The EICP’s academic coursework is delivered in 1 or 2 credit hour six-week classes, they constantly emphasize the multiple communication methods (e.g., toll-free phone number, several email contacts), and the funding state departments of education must guarantee access to, and support for appropriate technology.

In terms of instructional design, the EICP incorporated a collaborative, constructivist, design which allowed students to use reading as a guide, build from and on what they knew, discuss and learn from each other, relate new information to earlier learning, and establish methods for supporting on-going self-directed education after program completion (Dick & Carey, 1996; Seels & Richey, 1994).

Additional Adult Learning Theories

People who are working full-time in education settings, engaging in the various activities of life, perhaps taking care of families, perhaps providing care-giving to other adults, and participating in a distance education program experience varying types and degrees of stress, and receive varying types and amounts of support. McClusky’s Theory of Margin (1970) appears relevant. Simply, he explains that people have a combination of Load (essentially, stressors that require attention and energy) and Power (essentially, resources that support). He suggests a way

of calculating an individual's Load and Power status to determine the Margin, or, the "extra" Power available for additional, or increased, demands ($M=Load/Power$). If an individual's Load greatly outweighs her Power, she may not have the Margin necessary for engaging in a distance education program unless she can make some changes, either reducing Load, or increasing Power. At the least, this offers a structure for potential, or actual, students to assess their status related to challenges and resources/supports.

An important intention of the EICP is inclusion of students' own experience in their learning process. Learning from experience is a well recognized and documented concept in adult learning, including Eduard Lindeman's (1926, in Knowles, 1989) statement that experience was the most valuable resource to adult students. Knowles clearly stated that how adults view themselves, how they construct their identity, is based largely on the various aspects of their experiences (1989). The EICP courses incorporate repeated reflection on experience and building on it via reading, discussion with peers, critical reflection, collaboration with peers in developing new approaches, exchanging feedback with peers, and formally documenting current knowledge and skills (for immediate validation, for incorporation in their portfolio, as well as for future work-related purposes). It brings to mind Bateson's (1994) concept of the spiraling of complex learning through new learning, becoming more familiar, and comprehensible, with each re-exposure, or reflection. The EICP's weaving of familiar, previously studied concepts, through new material, takes advantage of that concept, that the familiar, even if not yet fully grasped, is still familiar, and becomes incrementally more grasped, ultimately to mastery level, with each review, while supporting the new learning.

Boud and Walker's (1990) "Framework for Reflective Practice" includes that cycling, or spiraling, of experience with current learning and formally includes reflection on feelings as part of the whole experience. Foundational to their framework is learners' gaining the ability to "notice" aspects of the milieu of the experience, and to "intervene," taking some sort of action on one's own, perhaps as basic as asking a question. The assistance of a more experienced, or knowledgeable, person in detecting what is pertinent for notice, or opportunities for intervening, suggests the presence of a teacher/guide/mentor/supervisor who is participating in the learning process.

The literature on situated learning describes learning that occurs and evolves as a person observes, comes to understand, tries and develops some mastery, within a "real life" situation. If

such a learning situation includes a more knowledgeable, teacher, or mentor, it becomes a cognitive apprenticeship, in which the student is guided through experiences that arise in the authentic situation. In many fields (medicine, for example) individuals complete formal educational processes and then begin a period of an apprenticeship, though it may have other labels (e.g., “resident,” “extended practica”). The relationship implies a transfer of responsibility from the more learned to the apprentice until she can function effectively and independently. Upon completion of the period of working with a supervisor engaged in the learning process, the former student is formally recognized as a member of the profession and granted the rights and privileges that accompany that status (Rogoff & Lave, 1984; Lave, 1988; Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Kirshner & Whitson, 1997).

No research of a group such as educational interpreters would be complete without consideration of Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1995/1970). Freire believed that education must be democratic or the people out of power, the poor and minorities, will be kept powerless. He addresses the no-power status of those who lack the major, valued, resources of a society, and the means, often subtle, by which the power relationships in a society are maintained, including by the educational institutions and processes. Democratic education, a true sharing of knowledge among people all along the power/socio-economic spectrum, is by definition revolutionary as it shifts the power balance. Educators are complicit in maintaining the status quo, and for expansive and oppressive patterns of interactions, knowingly or not. Everyone involved in the education of deaf children by how they interact and behave towards each other participate in how deaf children learn to participate in education and society.

Educational interpreters serve as the communication link between deaf children who sign and the educational environment – classes, exchanges with related professionals, extra-curricular activities, and even social interactions. Their ability provide accurate interpreting service, to do so in a manner appropriate to the educational environment, and to fulfill secondary roles as necessary, is essential to the educational process. It is also essential for the cultural and linguistic life of deaf children. External factors have now led to the establishment of interpreting skill and professional knowledge standards in many states, with more to come. While they face quickly rising standards, many educational interpreters, or potential interpreters, have little access to resources to help themselves meet those standards. When a technically appropriate program does

become available the logistics of participating in a specialized, visually-based, inservice education at a distance can be tremendously challenging.

Intent for Current Study

Research related to educational interpreting has largely been focused on ascertaining their backgrounds and interpreting skill levels, roles and responsibilities, and the nature of jobs within K-12 environments. This study is designed to take the next step and learn what we can from a group of adult learners who participated in professionalizing education. Their perceptions of the time-compressed professionalizing experience has much to teach us and can inform future educational program development, potential students, public school administrators, and policy developers.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD

The purpose of this research process was to discover what we can learn from the professionalization experience educational interpreters in mid-western, rural states have had over the last few years. The field of educational interpreting is undergoing sweeping change as evaluation, education, and standards have been implemented, facilitated by advances in technology. There has been a great deal of fervor as this movement has gained momentum during the last fifteen years or so. Such time-compressed professionalization will only increase in intensity, reflected in the move towards requiring interpreters to hold bachelors degrees, and challenges to the sufficiency of the newly established interpreting skill standards. Educational interpreters have faced rapidly increasing demands for skills and education with few resources to meet those demands. Interpreters in rural areas have been essentially on their own. A program designed specifically to deliver education to these interpreters at a distance, considering the realities and constraints of busy working adult lives, was the Educational Interpreting Certificate Program (EICP). Students who complete the EICP represented the cutting edge of the field of practice as they take the professional education leap necessary to maintain their place in their field.

Collecting the perceptions of a widely dispersed group whose common denominator was their participation in web-based courses lent itself to web-based survey research. An online questionnaire was used, and several of the questions were open-ended, allowing individual reflections and thoughts to be expressed. Some demographic and descriptive questions were drawn from earlier, related, studies, as well as some questions which permitted comparison of perceptions, allowing this study to be more securely grounded in the body of knowledge about the field of practice.

Participants

The participants were educational interpreters who have worked in local public schools in several largely rural mid-western states, and who went through the Educational Interpreting Certificate Program between 1997 and 2003.

Identification

Educational interpreting students who had completed the EICP (offered at a distance from Front Range Community College, in Colorado¹⁵) were identified as an ideal population for the study, for reasons mentioned above. One hundred eighty-nine educational interpreters had completed the program in three groups: the Pilot Cohort (who completed the program in 1999), Cohort 1 (completed in 2001), and Cohort 2 (completed in 2003). Applicants to the program who could demonstrate sufficient interpreting skills to pass the program's exit exam in interpreting at the time they applied, were required to take only the knowledge-based courses. For this study, the students who took the full EICP course of study, including both interpreting skill development and knowledge-based classes, are referred to as Track 1. The group of students taking only the knowledge-based courses is referred to as Track 2. Students who successfully completed the coursework and passed the interpreting skill exit exam graduated. Those who successfully completed the coursework but could not pass the exit exam are program "completers." Table 3.1 shows the potential population for the study by cohort, tract, and completion/graduation status. For this study educational interpreters who had completed the EICP were ideal. They had:

- (1) been functioning as educational interpreters for at least part of their job (regardless of actual job title) in public schools and continued to do so while enrolled in the program;
- (2) demonstrated eligibility for the EICP, including deficiencies in professional educational interpreting knowledge and/or interpreting skills;
- (3) completed the formal, post-secondary, course of study designed to prepare them for entry-level qualification in educational interpreting;
- (4) received that education at a distance—assuring representation from rural areas and reducing geographical location and distance from the program as a variable.
- (5) a single point of contact for the initial communication with participants, the EICP.

Recruitment

A letter inviting all of the 189 students who had completed the EICP to participate in the study was sent by the program director asking them to send their email addresses to me for further contact (Appendices A and B). I drafted the letter and worked with the director to finalize it. Observing the need for confidentiality, EICP staff members sent the letter out on program

letterhead, via both email attachment and regular mail. While it was expected that the potential participants would essentially all have email connections, the EICP’s regular use of postal addresses for a newsletter meant those addresses were kept more up to date. To assure highest possible return we used both methods to recruit participants.

After two weeks a follow up letter from me, including a copy of the original invitation letter, was forwarded to the population by the EICP staff via both email and postal mail (see Appendices D and C). Over the next two weeks, and for a week into the survey period, individuals sent their contact information directly to me via email.

Table 3.1

Potential EICP Participants by Track and Completion Status¹⁶

	Program Status	
	Completer	Graduate
Track 1: Needed interpreting skill development and professional coursework	Pilot – 6 Cohort 1 – 32 Cohort 2 – 13	Pilot – 25 Cohort 1 – 36 Cohort 2 – 22
Track 2: Interpreting skills met or exceeded criteria for EICP graduation – needed professional coursework only	[NA – by definition they all graduate]	Cohort 1 – 40 Cohort 2 – 15

Sub-groups

Sub-groups were quickly apparent for study: three cohorts completing the program in 1999, 2001, and 2003; tracks 1 and 2; and those who passed the EICP’s interpreting skills exit exam and graduated, versus those who did not and received certificates of completion¹⁷; and, those who were educational interpreters at the time of the survey versus those who were engaged otherwise. For a truly complete picture of the experience of educational interpreters coping with rapid professionalization by engaging in specialized education, people who withdrew prior to completion would have been included. That would require a different process, however, with

broad qualitative considerations beyond the parameters of this study. I hope someone will do that study and complete the set.

The Instrument

The questionnaire was designed specifically for this study. It was developed primarily from my professional experience, and includes some items from the research of others, as elaborated below.

Development

For a population of participants who live far and wide, and who are all familiar with communicating and learning via the web, an online questionnaire made sense. The fact that the population was clearly defined by its completion of the same educational program and process within a span of five years meant they shared a common language and references. Because the process would be largely reflective, the questions provided some context to make sure participants recalled and responded to the same events and processes. This particular type of study had not been done previously, so many of the forced choice questions included an “other” option, which actually provided valuable information in some cases. The questionnaire also included open-ended questions to allow participants to pass along thoughts that did not fit elsewhere or needed further explanation. The survey was an anonymous process, unless participants provided their names and contact information, allowing follow up for additional information, clarification, or more in-depth elucidation if indicated. For those people the process was confidential, and, to assure that confidentiality, separating individual identification information from the individual’s responses was the first step in the data processing.

Design and construction of the questionnaire was guided initially by Rea and Parker’s (1997) *Designing and Conducting Survey Research: A Comprehensive Guide*. Once a web-based delivery became the focus, Dillman’s (2000), *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*, provided guidance.

Instrument Structure and Content

The initial structure of the instrument was created around a timeline:

- (1) Prior to beginning first educational interpreting position [This section was ultimately not included due to length and reasons stated below.];
- (2) After beginning educational interpreting work and prior to engaging in a professionalizing education program;
- (3) During the formal professionalizing education program;
- (4) Since completion of the formal educational program.

As I developed the instrument, it became apparent that the first section of questions mentioned above had been sufficiently documented by earlier researchers, and the people in the Pilot Cohort actually were the population for Yarger's (2001) work, *Educational Interpreting: Understanding the Rural Experience*. Concerns had arisen about the length of the instrument so the section regarding participants' early interpreting experience was removed, although foundational sign language and interpreting experience were kept. Another section that was removed due to considerations of length was ethics. (At the time this survey was being developed ethics was being intensely discussed as the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf was merging its Code of Ethics with that of the National Association for the Deaf and was, therefore, changing. Ethics is also a very dense topic requiring more thought than I believed could be afforded it in this context. Rather than skim over it, with results of questionable value, it was removed, and left for another study.) Some questions deemed less critical were placed towards the end, as were items that might be emotionally charged. The types of questions were mixed to ease the potential of cumulative emotional intensity of some of the questions.

An overview of the sections and sub-sections follows. It is important to note that the formatting of the online questionnaire was influenced in part by the mechanics of that delivery method (e.g., limiting the amount of scrolling necessary), what made sense visually, and ease of movement through the questionnaire. (For reference see Appendix I for the questionnaire itself.)

Opening pages/screens. The opening screen of the website included a greeting, some descriptive information, instructions for participation, a confidentiality statement, a statement regarding consent to participate, and Institutional Review Board information. The second screen included additional details for reference, for example a re-stating of dates during which the website to the questionnaire would be accessible (it was open from Friday, October 15, 2005 – Monday, November 1, 2004), and that participants could leave and re-enter the questionnaire.

Section 1: Foundational sign language and interpreting information. Questions were related to reasons and sources of sign language and interpreting skill and knowledge acquisition, pathways into educational interpreting, previous formal interpreting education, and motivations for applying to the EICP. The questions were all forced choice with some opportunities to add “other” information.

Section 2: Interpreting experience before entering the educational interpreting program. Questions in this section asked participants to reflect upon the nature and amount of interpreting experience and skill they had prior to beginning their educational interpreting program. Included were number of years interpreting in different capacities in schools, amount of experience with adults, a reflective assessment of interpreting proficiency, and what kinds of sign language or systems they used with children and adults. The questions requested textbox entering of numbers of years, or forced choice with an “other,” including text box options.

Section 3: Perceptions of experiences during the EICP. The next section of the questionnaire included subsections of questions aimed at documenting participants’ perceptions of the experience they had during their educational program. The quantitative questions used five point Likert scales (the labels for which changed as appropriate, as shown below) and the subsections included perceptions of:

- levels of support from various groups of people for their participation in the program (“encouraging and helpful” to “actively resistant”)
- types of challenges faced and how much they were actually a problem (“huge problem” to “not a problem”)
- amount of value derived from various sources of learning, beyond curriculum subject matter (“great value to me” to “no value to me”)
- the receptivity of their school environment to their new learning (“strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”)

In addition, there were two open-ended questions. One asked for thoughts on what was learned that has turned out to be the most helpful on the job, and the other for suggestions they would emphasize for future interpreting students entering such a distance learning program.

Section 4: Competencies, professional affiliations, leadership activities. These questions included a five point Likert scale self-assessment of current professional competencies (“strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”) and two forced choice questions, with “other” as an option.

Section 5: Circumstances of current educational interpreting job. The first question of the section asked participants how many schools they had worked in as an interpreter since completing the EICP, in order to ascertain the breadth of contact they would have as a group. The next question (#29) selected out those who were at that time working as educational interpreters in order to ask them questions related to the current job. Answering “no” to question #29 caused the participant to automatically skip questions 30-44, which would be irrelevant.

Questions about current educational interpreting jobs included forced choice profiling questions about the interpreter’s school, the nature of the employment, the primary type of sign communication used with students if the IEP stated to “meet the communication needs of the student,” as well as for the participant to indicate what other educators would think they were using, support received as a member of the educational team, and the nature of participant’s involvement in IEP meetings. The item questioning the percent of time spent in various roles allowed respondents to enter actual percent figures in text boxes, that had a “Total” showing accumulating points until their entries totaled 100%. Using five point Likert scales (“strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”) a subsection asked about working relationships with teachers, and what kinds of items were on annual reviews. The section ended with open-ended questions about what in the school setting contributed to a feeling of being respected, or not, and what the participants had done to help their schools/districts to expand understanding and use of interpreting services.

Section 6: Positive aspects of being an educational interpreter. The section included twelve aspects of educational interpreting for which people indicated the degree to which they feel the aspect is positive for them, using five point Likert scales and an open-ended opportunity for additional reasons they like being an educational interpreter.

Section 7: Continuing education needs, direction, and satisfaction. A question about continuing education needs asked for participants to rank order their top three needs (1, highest, to 3). The status of participants’ formal college education was asked with a forced choice format, offering options to include additional information as necessary, such as their major, and if they had begun or completed a degree program since completing the EICP. Two subsections used five point Likert scales, labeled “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”: Reasons for leaving educational interpreting included 12 items, plus “other,” and Satisfaction included 8 items, which also queried intention to leave educational interpreting, feelings of self-assurance, and

professional pride. The section ended with two open ended questions, one asking what the participant sees her or himself doing five years from now, and the other asking people who are not currently educational interpreters about their primary employment.

Section 8: Attributes necessary for educational interpreters. Beginning with a question to identify grade level groupings for which participants were responding, the section used an open-ended question to explore this groups' thoughts on what attributes are necessary for educational interpreters working at the different levels.

Section 9: Important specifics. This section was a bit more varied, asking about demographics (age, racial/ethnic identity, sex, highest level of formal education, state of residence when they applied for the EICP, which cohort they were in, and if they took both knowledge and interpreting skills courses or just knowledge), pay scales (relative to their local economy), opinion on whether educational interpreters should be required to hold bachelor's degrees in interpreting or in an education-related field, and the scores received on formal EIPA's (Educational Interpreting Performance Assessments). It closed with two open ended questions: additional comments, and if there were any questions they wished had been asked, they could enter them with an answer.

Section 10: Contact information. Two items at the end requested contact information. Names, phone numbers, and email addresses were requested from people willing to be contacted for follow up discussion for clarification purposes; and, email addresses were requested from participants who wanted to receive a summary report of results. Of the 65 participants, 48 provided contact information for follow up clarification.

Sources of Questions

Many questions are common among studies about interpreting, such as those about demographics, sign language learning foundations, types of sign language or systems used, and formal education, and will not be cited as specific to any one researcher. Specific sources and questions from earlier research included:

From Hayes (1992) – Large concepts were drawn from Hayes' work: concerning aspects of educational interpreting work that were viewed positively or not, and perceptions of additional educational needs.

From Yarger (2001) – For ease and consistency of demographic and other foundational questions, many such questions were directly drawn from Yarger’s work, and readers comparing the two will quickly see the contribution to this study. Contribution is also recognized to questions about concepts related to participants’ relationship with the educational team, and positive and negative aspects of the occupation.

From Holton (1991) – The following questions from Holton’s study were modified and used in “School Environment” and “Current Position” sections. They are from his section III, items 5, 8, 9, 15, and 17.

- “The organization seemed to value the experience and skills I brought to the job.”
- “The organization went out of its way to make me feel welcome in the beginning.”
- “I felt my organization had appropriate expectations of me in the beginning.”
- “My organization was willing to adjust things to fit my needs.”
- “I wish my organization had done more to help me get adjusted.”

The following questions related to the characteristics of a job, came from his section IV (items 3 and 4) and section VI (items 1 and 21).

- “My job gives me the opportunity to grow professionally.
- “Given my education and training, this job is appropriate for my abilities and skills.
- “Overall, I am satisfied with my current job.”
- “I expect to begin searching for another job in the next year.”

From Cokely (1981) – A question was used from this study as the foundation of one asking for the participants’ own estimation of their interpreting proficiency prior to entering the EICP.

From Seal (1998) – I used a question which asked for participants’ perception of attributes necessary for educational interpreters working in three grade levels; however, I modified it, allowing participants to select one grade level and state their thoughts on that level alone in an open-ended fashion.

From Sternberg (1969) – This study of chiropractor students (a then stigmatized sub-profession not unlike educational interpreters) significantly helped me formulate my early thinking, and I used one question from his study. That one question, regarding the change in student chiropractors’ perception of respect for their own field, became two questions in this

study related to change in perceived respect for the fields of interpreting and educational interpreting.

The EICP leadership requested inclusion of queries to learn the current occupational status of their former students, and how the students perceive their EICP education and experience was playing out in their lives and work.

All other questions were derived from my repeated professional observations and experience, as well as having heard some people speak of the notion that their work served a higher purpose. The final questionnaire resulted in 179 quantitatively oriented items, 26 open ended “Other” text opportunities, and a total of 17 open-ended items. Question response formats included 5-point Likert scales, single forced-choice, multiple choices, recording of numerical data, one item that summed percentages, and one item requesting a ranking of the top three.

Instrument Refinement

Refinement of the questionnaire was done in stages with counsel from people knowledgeable about: (a) sign language and interpreting instruction, (b) educational interpreting as it occurs in public schools, (c) the external forces that have had a cumulative impact on the field of educational interpreting, (d) the EICP’s specialized program for educational interpreters and its educational delivery methods, and (e) survey research. Initial reviewers all held doctorates, had experience with educational interpreting and distance education, and one was also certified by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). After the first draft of the questionnaire was scrutinized by those reviewers, and suggestions incorporated, two people with first hand experience as educational interpreters, who had graduated with an associate’s degree in educational interpreting from a distance learning program¹⁸, carefully reviewed the questionnaire. They were provided with a review form stating the goal and contents of each questionnaire section, asked if the section had included and accomplished what was intended, and to judge each item for clarity and relevance. They were also asked if there were necessary additions or clarifications, and to identify any oddities that need rectification. Upon receipt of their thoughts, corrections and adjustments were made.

At that point the questionnaire was moved to the online environment, at SurveyMonkey.com, where all further revisions were made. SurveyMonkey.com is a web-based survey development and delivery service. It offers a secure delivery option, provided 13 different

question formats (including three one answer styles, multiple answers, matrices, and open-ended), compiles individual question data, exports to Excel, appears easy for respondents to use, and permits respondents to exit and re-enter the questionnaire, a criterion of mine. The subscription cost of SurveyMonkey.com was \$30 a month.

A group of eight graduates of the Educational Interpreting Program (EIP, an associate's degree precursor of the Educational Interpreting Certificate Program which ended after one cohort graduated) were invited to take the questionnaire as a pilot and to provide feedback on its ease of use, clarity, efficacy, consistency of screen color for participants, and actual time necessary to complete it. Five of them participated in the pilot, including two earlier reviewers and three people who had not seen it before. Two of the three new participants were interviewed about the experience. By all standards the questionnaire was very long and at that point I was most concerned about the pilot group's experience and if they felt it was an engaging, satisfactory experience, and that others would complete it. Individual sections and questions were discussed, the participants reported that it did not feel long to them and they enjoyed completing it. Their expressions about the value of doing the questionnaire, and reflecting on their educational program and path, as well as the ease of and relative quickness of doing the questionnaire, provided testimonials for the invitation to potential participants. A few modifications were made to the questionnaire based on their feedback, primarily related to wording. A final content and process review was done by a leading researcher and scholar in the field of educational interpreting, who holds a doctorate in Communication Science and Disorders, has been certified by the Registration of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) for close to 30 years, and had not previously been involved with the study or the EICP. She went through the items as if taking it, making evaluative comments in real time. Additional minor revisions were made. Final reviews were done with my dissertation advisors and an outside individual who holds a doctorate in Educational Research and Evaluation. Final refinements were completed and the process for delivery of the instrument began.

Procedures

Delivery of the Questionnaire

Once the final refinement was completed notice was sent to potential participants informing them that the questionnaire website was open and would be for a little over two weeks. The email notice sent to participants on Friday, October 15, 2004 also offered them the website address, URL, to the questionnaire. All correspondence emails are included in the Appendices, in chronological order of dates sent. Because I wanted the site available to all participants for two weeks, including two full weekends, the closure date and time was designated as Monday, at 6:00 AM Mountain Time, a little over two weeks later. Several email addresses I received were school addresses, and that amount and structure of time was considered important in reaching people at school in order to allow them sufficient response time. Mountain Time was used for consistency, the time reference used by the EICP, with which they would all be familiar.

During the two weeks and three days the questionnaire website was open, reminder emails were sent encouraging not only participation but completion of the questionnaire. A final reminder was sent on the Friday before the site closed, simply saying “Three more days!” Each reminder included the URL and my telephone number.

Follow-up Interviews

Of the 65 respondents, 48 provided email and telephone contact information for additional elaboration on responses if it were needed.

Institutional Review Board

Virginia Tech’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study authorization prior to the pilot. Participants who requested inclusion in the study, and provided their email addresses, were offered the website URL in order to voluntarily enter the website and complete the questionnaire. The opening screen of the online questionnaire provided information regarding the IRB approval and also stated that taking the questionnaire indicated consent to participate. (For reference see Appendix I, Section 1 - Welcome.)

Data Analysis

Preliminary preparation processes began as data were downloaded from SurveyMonkey.com into Excel. Four duplications that caused multiple entries into the website were handled individually. The ability of participants to re-enter the questionnaire depended upon SurveyMonkey being able to leave “cookies” (computer generated and recognizable identifiers) on the computer being used by the participant, allowing user recognition on their subsequent entrances into the questionnaire website using the same computer. During the process four people contacted me via email saying they had been unable to re-enter the site, one because her school had swapped out the old computer she was using, two probably because of firewalls on school computers, and a fourth for unknown reasons. All four eventually completed the questionnaire and a single, complete, set of question responses could be compiled for each of them. Two participants offered verbatim text box quotes which could be used to identify their earlier, incomplete sets of entries, in order to delete them. One participant simply began her second attempt at the question number she had stopped on the earlier entry, so the two could be matched up later. And the fourth person’s multiple attempts were easily identified and assembled into one complete set, and the duplicates deleted. Sorting first by the IPP addresses made this process particularly easy. All identifying contact information for follow up interviews was separated from the responses so no responses could be matched with individuals from that data.

All responses marked “other” were examined individually and reassigned to an established response when possible (e.g., “I interpret in one school in the morning and another in the afternoon” was changed from “other” to “Yes – Full time educational interpreter”). All text entries for “other” and open-ended questions were compiled as separate documents, and deleted from the Excel spread sheet. Finally, the data were transferred from Excel to SPSS 11. Data in Likert scales were recoded as necessary so the highest rating for scales was 5, thus the scale direction reported in the Results is opposite from the scale on the questionnaire itself for those questions. A cross-tabulation of Cohorts and Tracks revealed three people in an impossible combination (Pilot Cohort had no Track 2). Examination of their state and EIPA scores clearly pinpointed the response selection error made in each case, and their responses recoded to reflect correct placement.

Descriptive statistics were run including frequencies, percentages, and means. Content analysis was done on the open-ended responses. Group comparisons were done on statistically

viable groups. Further statistical opportunities were identified from the instrument and collected data.

Some major categories were:

- track, or the level of interpreting skill upon enrollment in the EICP, which determined the type of programming the student received. Broader levels of program requirements included additional course requirements, time, energy, possible stress.
- cohort, and the year of completion.
- status of the program at completion, and the ability to demonstrate sufficient interpreting skill level at program completion to graduate, or not.
- whether or not the participant was an educational interpreter at the time of the survey.

Sub-groups, as possible, were analyzed using ANOVA and Pearson r to reveal relationships. Factor analysis, with Varimax rotation, was used with several sets of questions to determine the presence of valid scales. Scales with reliability of greater than .60 (using Cronbach alpha) were used in the final correlation matrix using Pearson r.

Analysis of open-ended questions were reported in proximity to the topic of the question as it occurred in the overall time-line of the interpreting students' experience. For each open-ended question raw data were systematically delineated, coded, and distilled into clear patterns through a methodical review and re-review process. Patterns were sorted into categories and themes emerged. Raw data were then re-sorted into those themes.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in this chapter, including response rate, demographics, and compilation of findings from the major sections of the questionnaire. The participants in this study were all working as educational interpreters when they had enrolled in the EICP, a 30 credit hour vocational certificate program with an inservice curriculum specifically designed for a blended delivery of inservice education to widely dispersed, working educational interpreters. The program included both interpreting skill development and professional knowledge-based coursework. A modification was available in that applicants who could demonstrate a specific interpreting skill level at application could be waived from the interpreting skill development classes and take only the knowledge-based coursework. For ease of reference in this paper, the group of students who completed the standard EICP program is called “Track 1.” “Track 2” refers to the smaller group of students who took only knowledge-based courses. For students in Track 2, their pre-test interpreting skills rating was also used as their exit-exam interpreting skills rating. The three cohorts of interpreting students who completed this program were the first to receive this specific type of professionalizing education. Learning about their experience of an intense in-service professionalizing process provides important information for those who would develop education programs for people in this field of practice, for those who would fund such programs, for public school administrators at both state and local levels, and for educational interpreters considering participating in specialized distance learning.

There was a span of five years from entry of the first cohort of educational interpreting students in 1997 to the third cohort’s completion date in 2002. The survey was done in October, 2004, meaning all participants had: a) worked as educational interpreters in public schools without specialized educational interpreting preparation, b) participated in the 2+ year long EICP, and 3) were two to five years post-completion. It is important to mention that the EIPC effectively has two forms of “program completion.” One is formal graduation, meaning the student has met or exceeded the competency requirements in all areas of both interpreting skills and knowledge-based coursework. The other is a status of “completer,” for students who have not yet demonstrated the interpreting skill requirement for graduation. Students are permitted to

return to retake the exit exam once within a year of program completion, and at their own expense.¹⁹ “Graduate” or “completer” is determined by the student’s EIPA-based exit exam rating (the requirement for graduation is demonstration of skills rated by external examiners at a level of 3.5 or above on a 5 point scale).

The questionnaire was structured to gather as much information as possible from as many people as possible, leaving some less critical questions, and some that might be more emotionally-charged, until the end. The results are organized to reflect the time-related process as much as possible, and questions from which the data under discussion were derived are indicated either in the table or text, as appropriate. Data from open-ended questions are presented within the same time-related phases, and if they are particularly relevant to a quantitative question they are presented in proximity to that question. Quoted texts are quoted verbatim—their authenticity is absolute. We also must recognize that the focus was entirely on expression of thoughts and feelings, with no expectation of editing within text boxes. Within both additional comment fields and open-ended question data, tiny minority results are occasionally reported in order to not lose that information from the profile as it may have importance as an emerging presence in the field (for example, three job titles including the word “specialist”). Some demographic and text information provided in the beginning of the chapter is discussed in more depth in a later part of the chapter in keeping with the time related process used as a structure for discussing derived data. Also discussed later in the chapter is the professional trajectory of the 25% of the participants who were not working as educational interpreters at the time of the survey. The demographic information related to that discussion appears later.

The results of the questionnaire are addressed as they unfold related to the timeline: (a) background information regarding sign language and interpreting; (b) Educational Interpreting Certificate Program (EICP) cohorts and tracks; (c) experiences related to being an EICP student; (d) experiences after completion of the EICP, including professional trajectory; and (e) additional reflections about the experience. For reference, question numbers are shown on tables and in text in this fashion: (Q14). Percentages are rounded in text reporting; however, they are left as actual on tables to avoid the issue of rounded totals potentially not equaling 100%.

Participants

Response Rate

All 189 people who had completed the Educational Interpreting Certificate Program to date were contacted by letter (See Appendices A and B). Four of those letters were returned as undeliverable, resulting in 185 potential respondents. Additionally, 147 of the 189 were also contacted via email. Seventy-three of the 185 responded that they were willing to participate. Of the 73, however, 8 never entered the questionnaire website, resulting in 65 viable returns, yielding a 35% response rate.

Profile Characteristics

Ninety-seven percent of the participants were women (Table 4.1), 92% of whom identified themselves as white, 5% as Hispanic, and 3% as Native American or Asian American. Their average age was 43.7 years, ranging between 28 and 66 years, with most between 35 and 55 years. Figure 4.1 displays the data grouped by age in five-year increments.

Many of the participants had family responsibilities, 47% had school age children in the home while they were participating in their educational program, and 34% had two or more children. In addition, 35% of the participants reported being responsible for the care of one or more adults, including aging parents (an issue for people of this age) and adult children with disabilities or other special needs (Q66).

Table 4.1

***Demographic Characteristics* N=62**

		N	Percent
Sex (Q60)	Female	60	97
	Male	3	3
Race (Q59)	White	57	92
	Hispanic	3	5
	Asian American	1	1.6
	Native American	1	1.6
		RANGE	MEAN
Age (Q58)	28 to 66	43.7 years	SD 8 years

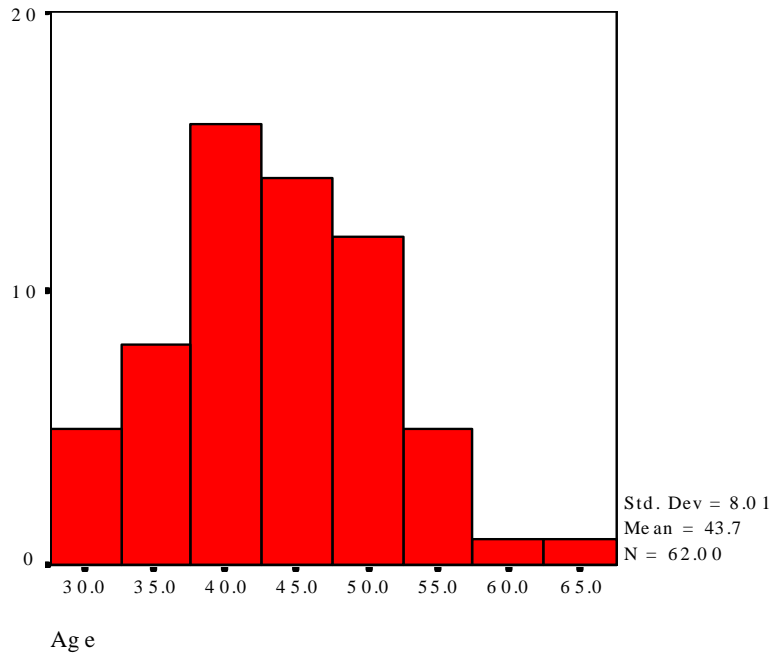


Figure 4.1. Number of participants by age N=62

The educational interpreter participants came from 13 states, with heaviest participation from Colorado, Kansas, Montana and Nebraska (see Table 4.2). Two respondents included information that they had applied while in one state but then soon moved to another. Those responses were recoded as being from the second state.

Table 4.2

Home State of Participants at Enrollment in EICP (Q65) N=63

	N
Nebraska	11
Montana	10
Colorado, Kansas	9 each
Utah	5
North Dakota	4
Alaska, Arizona, South Dakota, Wyoming	3 each
Minnesota, Iowa	1 each

Table 4.3 shows the distribution of participants across EICP tracks, cohorts, and completion/graduation status. Almost 75% of the participants were in Track 1. The majority (58%) were in Cohort 1, half that many in Cohort 2, and just less than half that number in the

Pilot cohort. While 74% of the participants had graduated from the EICP, 26% had successfully completed the coursework, but not the interpreting skills exit exam.

Table 4.3

Participant Profile: EICP Program Specifics N=62

Item	Response	N	%
EICP Track ^a (Q68)	Track 1: Knowledge & Skills	46	74
	Track 2: Knowledge Only	16	26
Year completed EICP (Q67)	1999/Pilot	8	13
	2001/Cohort 1	36	58
	2002/Cohort 2	18	29
Status at program completion (Q71)	Program Completer	15	24
	Program Graduate	47	76

^a Explored in more detail in a later section.

Sign Language and Interpreting Background

Sign Language and Interpreting Foundation

The items in the questionnaire which revealed information about participants' sign language and interpreting included: impetus for learning sign language and interpreting; types of sign language and systems learned initially; type of sign communication primarily used with children and with adults; the nature and amount of interpreting experience they had prior to entering the educational interpreting program; how they came to be an educational interpreter; their recollection of their pre-program interpreting skill level, and their current employment status. The data are represented in Tables 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6.

Learning to sign. By far the most common reason people reported for being drawn to learn to sign was that they saw it and wanted to learn it (29%) (see Table 4.4). Having a child of one's own who uses sign language was also a major impetus for learning (14%). Responses had been left broad, however, additional categories arose from participants' making a qualitative distinction between the categories provided and their own experience. Text comments led to the creation of the categories "Had a deaf child," "Had a deaf relative," "Deaf person in the

environment,” and “Hired into a job that required signing with children.” In-text comments from 18% of the participants told of having a relative who was deaf, even if there was no real involvement with the person, or of a deaf person who was in the environment at some point during their life (e.g., a deaf child in the neighborhood, or a co-worker of a parent) that had sufficient effect on them to the point that they later were drawn to learn to sign. Eight percent provided text explanations of experiences such as being invited to apply for a job in a school and needing to learn to sign for that job. (In no case did they specify, or imply, the position was related to interpreting.)

When asked how they actually first learned to sign 62% of the participants reported learning in classes (32% in college and 29% in the community), 23% by signing with family and friends, including Deaf friends, and 11% learned on the job working with deaf children.

First sign language or system. American Sign Language (ASL) was the first sign language or system learned by 37% of the participants, Pidgin Signed English (PSE) was first learned by 31%, and Signing Exact English (SEE II) by 19%, Signed English by 8%. A further computation (not shown) revealed that PSE was learned first by 29% of those in urban areas, 19% of those in suburban areas, and 41% of participants in rural areas.

Learning to interpret. As shown in Table 4.4, thresholds into the interpreting field of practice were crossed largely for reasons related to work: 41% learned to interpret related to their job working with children (the 41% total includes both that statement, and the last item in the section, “applied for a job that was, or evolved into, interpreting”), and evidence of this is given in the responses to Q05, as well as additional text clarification under “other” by five participants. The additional text comments are all variations of this compilation: “I was encouraged, or invited, to apply for a job working with a particular deaf or hard-of-hearing child in a school. In retrospect I realize it actually required, or evolved into, interpreting.” Another 34% made a career decision to become an interpreter.

Over a third of the participants learned interpreting on the job working with children (35%) (Q05). This information seems redundant, but it clarifies that this encounter with the field was how and where they learned to sign and interpret. Another 15% learned by informally assisting deaf people in the community. Interpreting Training Programs (ITPs), or Interpreting Preparation Programs (IPPs), accounted for the interpreting skill foundation of 20% (see Table 4.4). Also on Table 4.4 (Q07), 23% of the participants reported they had completed an

Interpreting Preparation Program (IPP) or Interpreter Training Program (ITP) prior to attending the EICP, and 77% reported having received an Associates degree from an IPP. Interestingly, 43% of the people who had completed an earlier IPP/ITP could not demonstrate sufficient interpreting skills for Track 2 eligibility. College and community interpreting classes and workshops were the source of interpreting instruction for 17%.

Table 4.4

Background on Primary Paths of Learning to Sign and Interpret N=65

	N ^a	Percent ^a
What led you to learn to SIGN? (Q01)		
Saw it and wanted to learn it	19	29.2
Had a deaf child ^b	9	13.8
Had a deaf relative ^b	6	9.2
Presence of deaf person in environment had an impact ^b	6	9.2
Hired into a job that required signing with children ^b	5	7.7
Grew up around signers	5	7.7
How did you first learn to sign? (Q02)		
Sign classes in college	21	32.3
Sign classes in the community	19	29.2
Grew up signing with family or friends	9	13.8
On the job working with deaf children	7	10.8
From deaf acquaintance or friend	6	9.2
What sign communication did you learn initially? (Q03)		
American Sign Language (ASL)	24	36.9
Pidgin Signed English (PSE)	20	30.8
Signing Exact English (SEE II)	12	18.5
Signed English	5	7.7
What initially led you to learn to INTERPRET? (Q04)		
Learned it as part of my job working with children	22	33.8
Made a career decision to become an interpreter	22	33.8
To informally assist a deaf acquaintance or friend	8	12.3
Applied for a job that was, or evolved into, interpreting ^b	5	7.7
How did you FIRST learn to interpret? (Q05)		
On the job experience with deaf children	23	35.4
2 year ITP/IPP program	13	20.0
Interpreting classes (college and community), and workshops	11	16.9
Informally assisting deaf people in the community	10	15.4
Prior to the EICP, had you completed an IPP/ITP? (Q07)		
Yes	15	23.0
No	50	77.0
Path of entrance into the field of educational interpreting (Q06) (N=64) ^c		
I happened into it	38	58.5
I chose the field of educational interpreting	13	20.0
Educational interpreting called me	13	20.0

^a Response categories with fewer than five respondents have been removed so some items do not total to the total N or 100%

^b Created from text comments.

^c Modifications of the N for any chart will be noted as it is here. If there is no overall N given for a chart, that information is included for each item within the chart.

A separate question asked how they came into the field of educational interpreting. Fifty eight percent said they “happened into it,” and 40% chose the field, either by choice, or by feeling it called them once they became aware of it (see Table 4.4).

These questions were investigated using a χ^2 analysis to determine if, for participants who were currently educational interpreters, there were any statistically significant differences related to their location (rural-suburban-urban) (Q33), Track (Q68), or if they graduated from the program or not (based on their reported interpreting exit exam score, Q70). Statistically significant differences were found between those in Track 1 and Track 2 on the first sign language or system learned ($\chi^2 = 15.341$ with 6 df, $p = .018$). Track 1 participants were mainly distributed among ASL, PSE, and SEE II, while Track 2 interpreters were more likely to use ASL (12 of 16). Track 1 and Track 2 differences were also found for how participants first learned to interpret ($\chi^2 = 14.698$ with 7 df, $p = .040$). Track 1 participants primarily learned through on the job experience with deaf children, while Track 2 primarily learned from 2-year ITP/IPP programs. People who learned on the job with children appeared to use a wider variety of sign language/systems than people who participated in the 2-year post-secondary programs and who primarily used ASL.

A further comparison of exit exam scores and how the participants learned to interpret (shown in Table 4.5) appears to indicate that the interpreting skills of people who learned from more formal or traditional methods (such as interaction with Deaf adults and Interpreting Training Programs/Interpreter Preparation Programs) are more standardized and intact. Participants who learned to interpret on the job from a variety of sources demonstrated lower interpreting skills exit exam scores.

Table 4.5***Average Reported Exit-Exam Scores by How Learned to Interpret^a N=54***

	N	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
2 year ITP/IPP program	9	4.16	3.20	4.90
On the job experience with deaf adults	4	4.01	3.60	4.40
Informally assisting deaf people in the community	6	3.85	3.40	4.80
College interpreting classes	4	3.75	3.50	4.00
On the job experience with deaf children	21	3.73	2.85	4.80
Interpreting workshops	6	3.45	2.60	4.10
EICP	3	3.27	2.80	3.80
Interpreting classes in the community	1	2.90	2.90	2.90
Total	54	3.77	2.60	4.90

^a Track 2's reported pre-test score also, by definition, served as its exit exam score.

Exploring the amount of progress Track 1 participants, who had learned their skills on the job working with children, could make in the EICP compared to Track 2 students who had acquired skills through formal, more traditional processes, a comparison was done. Track 1 participants who learned through on the job experience with children were compared with Track 2 participants who learned from 2-year ITP/IPP programs was done using a one-way ANOVA. A statistically significant difference was yielded in their exit exam scores ($F [1, 28]= 4.379$ $p = .046$). Track 2 participants, who had learned interpreting skills via a 2-year ITP/IPP registered higher scores on the exit exam. This finding is of particular note because Track 2 students' pre-test application scores also serve as their exit-exam scores (establishing that at application they demonstrated that they met or exceeded the interpreting skill requirement for graduation).

Interpreting Experience and Skill Evaluations

Participants were asked how many years they had worked as an educational interpreter in full-time, part-time, and substitute capacities. During an individual's interpreting career s/he could have worked full-time, and also have worked part-time, and also have done substitute interpreting. Technically, they could have overlapped service statuses, although that cannot be

determined from these data. It primarily demonstrates the variability of their work experiences as educational interpreters. Sixty percent of the participants had worked full-time as educational interpreters between one and five years before entering the educational interpreting program (see Table 4.6). Another 20% had worked from six to ten years, and the final 20% distributed fairly evenly from 11 to 26 years. Ninety percent had worked part time as an educational interpreter 1 to 3 years, one person had done so for 16 years and another for 26 years. Almost all of the participants had done substitute interpreting in schools. Eighty-one percent had “subbed” for a total of a year and 16% for up to three years.

Generally, fluent adult signers are more discerning consumers of interpreting service, offering a different experience for interpreters than children. The amount of experience participants had working with adults was queried, and, as shown in Table 4.6, 19% said they had “a lot” of experience interpreting with adults, and 37% said they had done very little or none. A cross-tabulation how participants learned to interpret (Q05) and their amount of experience interpreting with adults (Q14) showed that 52% of those who had learned to interpret on the job working with children had “very little, or no, experience interpreting for adults,” and 39% had “some.” There were no statistically significant relationships between these variables and whether or not the participants were current educational interpreters, were in rural-suburban-urban locations, were in Track 1 or 2, or if they graduated from the program or not (based on their reported interpreting exit exam score).

An examination of the average number of years of interpreting experience in schools, using a one-way ANOVA, revealed a statistically significant difference between people in Track 1 (5.15 years) and Track 2 (10.25 years) ($F [1, 60] = 12.316$ $p = .001$). People in Track 2 tended to have more experience interpreting for adults than people in Track 1 ($\chi^2 (2) = 10.475$, $p = .005$). The greater experience interpreting with adults of people in Track 2 may have enabled them to score sufficiently high on the program pre-test to be waived from the interpreting skills development requirement.

Sixty-six percent of the participants reported currently working in educational interpreting full-time, 3.1% part time, and 6.2% as substitutes. Twenty-five percent were outside of educational interpreting at the time of the survey. (The change in careers of the latter group is explored in the Professional Trajectory section towards the end of this chapter.)

Table 4.6***Interpreting Experience N=65***

	Minimum # years	Maximum # years	Mean	SD
Number of years worked as an educational interpreter in the following capacities				
Years worked full time (Q11)	1	26	6.42	5.376
Years worked part time (Q12)	1	26	2.23	3.787
Years worked as a substitute (Q13)	1	6	1.33	.856
	Frequency		Percent	
Amount of experience interpreting for adults (Q14)				
A lot		12		18.5
Some		29		44.6
Very little, or none		24		36.9
Currently an Educational Interpreter (Q29) ^a				
Yes – Full time		43		66.0
No		16		25.0

^aResponse numbers smaller than 5 have been removed, resulting in a total of less than 100%

Close to half of the respondents reported using PSE when interpreting for children (45%) and adults (46%) (see Table 4.7). The three forms of signing English (CASE, SEE II, and Signed English) were used by 43% of the participants with children, and 17% with adults. Twenty percent of the respondents had not interpreted enough for adults to be able to respond.

Table 4.7***Sign Language/System Used by Participants While Interpreting with Children in Education Versus Interpreting with Adults N=64***

	Interpreting with Children (Q16)		Interpreting with Adults (Q17)	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
PSE	29	44.6	30	46.2
CASE	13	20.0	8	12.3
SEE II	10	15.4	2	3.1
ASL	5	7.7	10	15.4
Signed English	5	7.7	1	1.5
NA	0	0	13	20.0

Cohorts and Tracks

Respondents progressed through their educational program in cohorts. All three cohorts that had completed the EICP at the time of the study were represented: 18% were from the Pilot Cohort (completed in 1999), 53.2% from Cohort 1 (completed in 2001), and 29% from Cohort 2 (completed in 2002).

Table 4.8 provides information on the representation of who participated, and the distribution across Tracks and Cohorts, compared to the actual number of students who had been in those tracks and cohorts. Twenty-six percent of the earlier Pilot Cohort and roughly one-third of Cohorts 1 and 2, participated in the study. Additionally, a cross-tabulation revealed that 50% of the Track 2 participants had completed an earlier IPP, and 13% of the Track 1 students had completed an earlier IPP (but had insufficient interpreting skills to be eligible for Track 2).

Table 4.8

Crosstab of Number of Participants in Each EICP Track by Year/Cohort Compared with Actual EICP Student Counts N=62

Track (Q68)	1999-Pilot Study vs Actual ^a	2001-Cohort 1 Study vs Actual	2002-Cohort 2 Study / Actual	Totals Study vs Actual
Track 1: Knowledge and Skills	8 / 31	25 / 68	13 / 35	46 / 118 39% of Actual
Track 2: Knowledge only	NA	11 / 40	5 / 15	16 / 55 29% of Actual
Totals: Study/Actual	8 / 31	36 / 108	18 / 50	62 / 189 32% of Actual
Percent of Actual in Study	26%	33%	36%	

^aThe Actual figures are from the EICP and are the same as in Table 3.1.

Path of Interpreting Skill Development

Potentially, participants’ interpreting skill development as documented here could include up to four benchmarks: (a) Their own reflective, educated and informed assessment of their relative skill prior to engaging in the educational interpreting program; (b) results of the EICP pre-test (only for Cohorts 1 and 2); (c) results of the EICP post-test; and (d) subsequent EIPA-based assessments taken at the EICP or elsewhere (see Table 4.9).

When asked to reflect upon their interpreting skill proficiency prior to beginning the EICP and rate it from 1 (“essentially no proficiency”) to 5 (“highly proficient”), 26% of the participants selected skill levels 4 or 5, 68% claimed moderate skills, 26% the level 2, and 6% stated they had “essentially no proficiency” in interpreting when they began the EICP. Considering that 26% of the participants reported they were in the Knowledge Only track (see Figure 4.4), and they knew the EIPA (Educational Interpreting Performance Assessment) rating necessary to be eligible for that track, the high end of the self-assessment data makes perfect sense. The specific statistics are summarized in Table 4.9.

Beyond the reflective self-assessment, participants were asked to provide the actual scores they had received on the EIPA-based pre-test and exit exams, as well as for any such assessment they had taken elsewhere since completing the EICP. All participants took the pre-test as part of their application process, but only 45 reported their rating. One person recorded a pre-test score that was impossibly high for her reported track, and could not be re-interpreted with any confidence, so it was removed. Several people stated that they never had known their exact score, only that they were eligible for the Knowledge track, meaning they had received a rating of 3.5 or higher; however, those are also left out of the computations, as missing data. Four others reported that they were awaiting scores on written or performance tests they had taken more recently.

Table 4.9
Interpreting Skill Assessment and Scores, by Track

	Track 1 Knowledge and Interpreting Skills Track				Track 2 Knowledge Track Scores			
	N	%	Mean Score ^a	SD	N	%	Mean Score	SD
Reflective self-assessment (Q15)(N=62)	46	.74	2.63	.88	16	.26	3.81	.66
EICP pre-test (Q69) (N=45 ^b)	35	.79	2.59	.71	10	.22	4.07	.46
EICP exit exam (Q71) (N=44)	44	na	3.66	.51	na	na	na	na
Subsequent EIPA ratings (Q72)	18	na	3.74	.49	4	[Too few to include statistical information.]		

^aThe Educational Interpreting Performance Assessment (EIPA) uses a 1 - 5 rating scale, with 1 being “beginner” and 5 being “advanced.” The EICP requires demonstration of interpreting skills at the 3.5 level, or better, to graduate.

^b These pre-test figures include only Cohort 1 and 2. The Pilot Cohort’s pre-test included only the Voice-to-Sign measurement of the EIPA-based assessment. Subsequent application pre-tests included full EIPAs.

Referring to Table 4.9, the self-assessed interpreting skill of those in Track 1 (eligible for the Interpreting Skills portion of the program) showed scores similar to their pre-test scores (Likert self-assessment mean = 2.63, EICP pre-test, actual scores as reported = 2.59). These two questions were positioned far apart in the questionnaire, as shown by the question numbers, probably a half hour apart in time. The self-assessed interpreting skills question, with both word descriptions with associated number rating scale, was closer to the beginning, and the request for the participants' formal interpreting pre-test rating was at the end of the questionnaire. There is virtually no difference between the means of the two ratings. In retrospect, as a group, participants could accurately assess their own sign skills in the broad fashion requested, separate from the formal structure of an externally determined rating. The respondents from the same group increased those scores by over one full level during the program, to 3.66. The standard deviation of .51 also would indicate that many of them did not pass the 3.5 rating required for graduation, and so received certificates of completion rather than the vocational certificate. Subsequent EIPAs, show further improvement to a mean of 3.74, although, again for some, at the lower end of the range, not high enough to pass the program exit exam. These scores also show lower standard deviations. Participants in Track 2 (who took only the Knowledge coursework) and reported their pre-test scores, tended to rate themselves slightly lower on the self-assessment than their actual pre-test scores (3.81 to 4.07).

Perceptions of Experiences During the EICP

Motivation to Enroll in Specialized Education

Participants' motivations for pursuing further specialized education were explored. Referring to Table 4.10, the data revealed that, even in the face of rising pressure for greater skills and knowledge, the primary reasons given were to learn and grow (46%) and to benefit the students (26%). When a second reason was combined with the first selection, a total of 74% of the participants mentioned the former and 62% the latter. Assistance with funding played a major role in the decision of a total 29% of the participants. External encouragement or pressure from rising standards and from work-related representatives contributed to the decision of 25% of the participants. Major reasons for attending specialized education were consistently the same across cohorts, and tracks. For participants who were working as educational interpreters the finding

was equally consistent across rural-suburban-urban locations and regardless of the number of interpreters who worked in their building.

Table 4.10

Strongest Motivations for Applying for Specialized Education N=65

	Strongest motivation (Q9)		2 nd strongest motivation (Q10)		Total % of both
	N	%	N	%	
To learn and grow	30	46.2	18	27.7	73.9
To benefit students I work with	17	26.2	23	35.4	61.6
Funding (free education)	9	13.8	10	15.4	29.2
Compliance with rising standards and laws	4	6.2	7	10.8	17.0
Pressure/encouragement from state/district/school representatives	2	3.1	3	4.6	7.7
To participate with interpreting colleagues	1	1.5	4	6.2	7.7
Other	2	3.1	0	0	3.1

Challenges and Opportunities

The entire milieu of an individual’s life affects a person’s education program, and the impact, positive or otherwise, is experienced differently by everyone. Explored in this section are: the support received from school associates, family, and friends; challenges faced; and, the value of extra sources of learning.

Support from people. Participants were asked to report on the relative level of support received from their school associates, family, and friends. For the most part, the participants were surrounded by people whom they perceived were largely supportive of their engagement in the educational program, or neutral about it (see Table 4.11). For clarity here the top and bottom two ratings levels are combined on the chart. Families head the list of people who were “encouraging and helpful” or “supportive,” (92%), followed by friends (82%). Some participants experienced little support, and even active resistance, such as from other interpreters (12%) and

school district faculty and staff (9%). A surprising figure is that 42% of the participants perceived the deaf student(s) with whom they were working as not supporting, or actively resisting, their participation in the educational interpreting program.

Table 4.11

Perceived Level of Support from Different Groups (Q18) N=65

	Percentage Responses			Median
	Encouraging and helpful or Supportive 5 - 4	Neutral 3	Not supportive or Actively resistant 2 - 1	
Family	92	2	6	5
Friends	82	12	3	4
Other Interpreters	72.3	15.4	12	4
School district faculty and staff	68	19	9	4
School administrators	65	26	5	4
Deaf students	15	39	42	3

The six support items were subjected to a factor analysis with Verimax rotation. Two components were extracted, one with the requisite reliability higher than .60. Institutional support (school district faculty and staff, administrators, and interpreting colleagues) had a reliability of .73, and will be used in further analyses. There were no significant differences among the categories of cohorts, tracks, or graduate/completer status. For the 49 participants currently working as educational interpreters in public schools there was a positive, but weak, relationship between the number of interpreters working in a school building and the amount of support the participant perceives (Pearson $r = .37$, $p = .009$).

Challenges faced. The pressure of balancing work, managing a home, and progressing through a distance learning program are reflected in the results on Table 4.10. For 32–42% of the participants, on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being “huge problem,” all issues related to home and time were perceived as level 4 problems or 5, with “fatigue” being at the high end. Issues related to the technical aspects of the online environment tended to be ranked that high by 21% of the

participants for both technology and adjusting to the online environment. “Isolation” was reported to be problem by 16% of the participants. Another issue reported by 22% of the participants involved, a potential ramification of such educational efforts, was outgrowing the work environment. Those reporting this experience indicated that it was a serious problem.

Participants were asked if there were any other huge problems that needed to be mentioned (Q20). Additional responses were posted by 22 participants that centered around specific interpersonal relationships, issues related to distance learning, and the pressure for quality within the educational program. Interpersonal issues arose with instructors, facilitators, other students, and co-workers. Also mentioned were concerns such as having to deal with “strong resistance from the Teacher of the Deaf,” and having to “beg for support” from school administrators. The major problem with distance learning for some was, literally, distance, and having to report to Denver for the three week on-site program in the summer, with its inherent challenges for some of child care and lost income. Other related issues included not having a computer at home, writing collaborative projects with team members who have different work styles, slow responses from instructors, and travel to required workshops (e.g. video conferences). Pressure for quality included the all-encompassing nature of the program expressed by one individual as “Sometimes an attitude existed that the EICP was to be THE most important part of our lives and that all other family and ‘real life’ activities were to be viewed as very secondary,” and another, “I seriously felt like I had lost a year of my life....” Other concerns related to the demand for quality were reflected by comments about uncertainty about individual instructors’ expectations, insufficient experience coming into the program, and the perception that the work required was appropriate for a masters’ degree. Major family disruptions, positive and negative, were also mentioned, including pregnancy, events related to 9/11, illness, and spousal job transfers.

Table 4.12***Degree to Which Challenges Were Problems (Q19) N=65***

Challenges ^a	Huge problem 5	4	Moderate problem 3	2	Not a problem 1
Home Life Demands ($\alpha=.91$)					
• Daily demands of home & family	12.3	20	32.3	30.8	4.6
• Sacrifice of social/family/volunteering	15.4	21.5	32.3	24.6	4.6
• Juggling “must do” activities	15.4	16.9	43.1	20	4.6
• Time necessary for homework	12.3	24.6	40	20	3.1
• Fatigue	15.4	26.2	30.8	20	7.7
Personal Disengagement ($\alpha=.67$)					
• Outgrowing work situation	6.2	15.4	12.3	26.2	40
• Isolation	4.6	10.8	23.1	24.6	36.9
• Time necessary for online relationships	6.2	15.4	33.8	30.8	13.8
Technology ($\alpha=.66$)					
• Problems related to technology	7.7	13.8	27.7	38.5	12.3
• Adjusting to online environment	1.5	10.8	23.1	43.1	21.5

^a The 10 challenges are grouped according to results of a factor analysis. Cronbach alpha reliabilities for the subscales are given.

Factor analysis yielded three subscales with reliability above .60. The challenge items are grouped by these sub-scales on Table 4.12. The scales will be used in further analyses later in this study.

Value of sources of learning. While 92% of the students said they received much, or “great value,” from the content of their course of study, they also learned from several sources other than curriculum and course content, as shown in Table 4.13. Similar levels of benefit were derived from almost every aspect queried. In most instances, well over half the participants

reported having derived “great value” from those sources. Involvement with deaf professionals (94%) and their fellow interpreting student colleagues (85%) were seen as most beneficial followed by involvement with instructors and facilitators (73%), and the technological learning itself (74%). Experiences with mentors were slightly more bi-modal, either of “great value” (63%) or of little value, as 11% reported lesser (level 2) value received. Interactions with program staff would be expected to be lower as those communications are primarily related to program administration and logistics.

Table 4.13

Perceived Value to Learning from Different Sources by Percent (Q21) N=65

	Great value	4	Moderate value	2	No value
Course contents ^a	69.2	23.1	7.7	0	0
Involvement w/interpreting students	60	24.6	12.3	0	1.5
Involvement w/Deaf professionals	71.4	12.7	12.7	0	0
Technological learning	50.8	23.1	18.5	6.2	1.5
Involvement w/instructors & facilitators	60.9	12.5	21.9	3.1	1.6
Involvement w/mentors	63.1	4.6	6.2	10.8	1.5
Interaction w/program staff	43.1	20	30.8	6.2	0

^a Items are ranked in order of the Great Value + 4 total percentages.

A factor analysis revealed two scales, one of which has a reliability higher than .60: Sources of Learning: Formal Program Personnel (including involvement with instructional staff and facilitators, program staff, mentors, and Deaf professionals) $\alpha = .84$. This scale will be used in further analyses in this study.

An examination of the sources of learning, using a one-way ANOVA, revealed a statistically significant difference in the perceived value received from instructors and facilitators by participants in the Pilot Cohort (4.55 rating), Cohort 1 (4.52 rating), and Cohort 2 (3.78

rating) ($F [2, 59] = 3.733, p = .03$). There was no statistically significant difference related to track or completion versus graduation.

Suggestions to future educational interpreting students. Participants were also asked for two suggestions they would make to other educational interpreters considering enrolling in such a distance learning program (Q23). All 65 participants responded, 64 of them with two suggestions, yielding 129 total responses. To attempt to find meaning in these data, key concepts were identified and categorized; and individual responses re-examined and tallied into categories as possible. Four major themes arose, each with two sub-sections: Support (26% of the responses), Organization (26%), Commitment (22%), and Balance (16%). A variety of other suggestions made up the remaining 10%. Noteworthy is the observation that many of the suggestions were made with emphatic language and exclamation points.

1. The theme Support had “before program” and “during program” components. In the “before” component were suggestions to make sure one had the support from family and employer, as well as sufficient technological expertise or resources. Examples include: “Be sure you have 100% backing from your family...” “Make sure your district supports you before you begin...” “Have a good computer with high speed internet connection.”

Once a student was engaged in the program, development of relationships and using them as support was emphasized. This included making in-program friends, building rapport with instructional staff, using mentors to full benefit, interacting with Deaf people as much as possible, and asking questions freely. Individual comments include: “Develop relationships with new friends...” “Communicate, communicate, communicate – with other students and staff members!...” “Find study partners...” “Enjoy every minute of having a mentor...” “Take advantage of the professional staff all [you] can...” “Socialize all you can with deaf individuals – not worrying about your own inadequacies...” “Ask questions if you don’t understand, don’t pretend you understand everything.”

2. The theme Organization centered on “organization of time” and “organization of materials”: “Make sure you have time [or do not enroll in the program]...” “Pace yourself, do not try to cram everything in when the assignment is due ...” “Technology will fail you ...” “DON’T PROCRASTINATE!!!!...” “Start your work early and follow the roadmaps [course schedules]...” “Always be looking ahead to the next week in terms of due dates and work load...” “Give yourself time to check your videotapes prior to sending to mentor...” “Stay on

track!...” “Make copies of everything...” “Save everything...” “Have a good organizational system for keeping track of completed work for the portfolio...”

3. Commitment, the third largest theme, also had a “before program” and “during program” delineation. The “before” suggestions emphasized knowing what you are getting into and being ready to make that commitment. They included comments such as: “Know exactly what is involved...” “Expect to spend a lot of time on the program and less time with your family...” “Have a better understanding of the time commitment BEFORE starting a program like the EICP (I didn’t truly realize the time that would be required for this program.)...”

The “during” comments emphatically emphasized perseverance: “Make sure that the program is a priority for you, you only get out of the venture what you put into it...” “Always remember it is a commitment and there are sacrifices that you need to make but it is totally worth it!...” “IT IS COLLEGE!!! don’t complain about the homework load. Expect it to be heavy and hard...” “Keep your eye on the goal...” “Make it YOUR education – own it and give 100% to it and it will pay off in the end...”

4. Balance included many suggestions for “taking care of oneself,” as well as “staying open to new information, ideas and perspectives.” Examples of taking care of oneself included: “Sleep, exercise, vitamins...” “Put yourself first as the work is intense. If you need a break or a nap announce it and take it, then return renewed...” “Find something that relaxes you when juggling things gets you stressed out...”

The suggestions to “stay open” are represented by: “open yourself up to different learning styles. They may not always match your style, but broadening your horizons is a good thing... Keep an open mind relative to signing styles, preferences, modes...” “Keep an open mind to what is being taught. Remember the road to success is ALWAYS under construction...” “Keep in mind that professionals can differ in opinions – learn what you can from them all...”

5. The “miscellaneous” group included a variety of suggestions, such as: “Work hard, read everything – twice. You must be a self starter...” “Be a practicing interpreter while in the program...” “Don’t take criticism personally...” “Enjoy your own learning process...”

“Aha” moments. An open-ended question intended to reveal a watershed moment in the participants’ educational process asked if they had such a memorable experience, an “aha” moment, and what they had realized (Q64). Thirty three people responded, and three major themes became apparent. The moments they remembered tended to be experiences in which they

realized the impact of deafness on language and the implications for educational interpreters (24%); realized their improvement in their sign language or interpreting skill (33% of responses); or, the validity of their own abilities and knowledge (including some from informal learning) and that they can effectively apply their learning (43%). Representative comments of the themes include:

1. Impact of deafness on language: “The Aha was that no matter how well I signed, if the student didn’t have the language to comprehend what was being interpreted I was just flapping my hands...” “The lack of language mastery had really affected the students with whom I worked...” “Learning about the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, now I understood why some students needed more from me than others...” “How vital the interpreter’s input is for the IEP...”

2. One’s own skills: “The first moment I could understand everything that was being signed in ASL. I danced around for quite awhile!...” “Towards the end of the program, everything seemed to finally fit together – I could see that I was capable of interpreting the information clearly...” “During the third Summer Institute [I interpreted successfully in front of the class and] I knew I had become ‘an interpreter’...” “I could exactly identify my weakness – from self-analysis (writing) and feedback from peers and instructors.”

3. Application of learning: “[I could] analyze student’s learning style and adjust mine to fit theirs...” “When I realized [my instincts] regarding the best way to educate deaf/hard-of-hearing students was actually backed up by research. This happened in an early knowledge class...” “After the program I realized that I did actually learn something, and that I could use that experience with the classes I’ve taken since – I have made my education my own...” “[I can trace my student’s successes to what I learned and applied...]”

Experiences Related to the Worksite While an Educational Interpreting Student

Perception of the school’s receptivity to new learning was queried through a series of items (within Q24) about participants’ perceptions of the school environment’s response to the learning and skills they brought in from their education. To gain some baseline context about how they felt about the school’s initial expectation of them, that was asked first. The items followed a chronologically logical order of experience as can be seen in Table 4.14.

While 46% of the respondents thought their schools had appropriate expectations of them when they were hired, 25% indicated ambiguity about expectations, and 29% disagreed or disagreed strongly (see Table 4.14). Forty three percent felt their school was willing to make changes to fit their needs while they were engaged in their education program, and 29% disagreed. Thirty nine percent felt their school had adjusted its expectations of them as they gained knowledge and skills, and close to the same number, 37%, disagreed. Well over half (59%) felt their school seemed to value what they brought in from their education. Thirty-nine percent wished their school had helped them make the adjustment in using their new knowledge and skills on the job, while 31% did not.

Table 4.14

Perception of School Expectations and Receptivity to New Learning (Q24) N=65

	Percentage Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	50/50	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My school had appropriate expectations of me when they first hired me as an interpreter. ^a	18.5	27.7	24.6	13.8	15.4
My school was willing to make changes to fit my needs while I was in the EICP.	12.3	30.8	27.7	23.1	6.2
I feel my school adjusted its expectations of me as I gained more knowledge and skills.	15.4	23.1	24.6	30.8	6.2
My school seemed to value the new knowledge and skills I brought to the job from the EICP.	24.6	29.2	20	21.5	4.6
I wish my school had done more to help me get adjusted in using my new knowledge and skills on the job.	26.2	12.3	30.8	27.7	3.1
I felt pressured by colleagues in my school/district to continue being the same as I was before participating in the EICP.	9.2	10.8	18.5	43.1	18.5
I felt pressured by educators in my school/district to assume roles or responsibilities beyond my EICP education (for example, teaching, early childhood intervention).	10.8	4.6	6.2	49.2	29.2

^a Items are ranked in order of the sums of Strongly Agree + Agree percentages.

Concerns that were sometimes voiced related to raising an individual's professional knowledge and skill in isolation are (a) the relationships around them will limit the degree to which they are permitted to change, restricting their ability to apply what they have learned, or conversely, (b) they will be elevated to "expert" by virtue of that specialized education, and be given responsibilities beyond their abilities. Of participants in this study, 20% reported feeling pressured to stay the same, and 15% said they felt pressured to take on roles or responsibilities beyond their education.

Factor analysis revealed a six-item School Receptivity scale ($\alpha = .80$, $N=65$). The first item on the list, "My school had appropriate expectations of me when they first hired me as an interpreter," is distinctly different from the others so was removed prior to the factor analysis. Further examination of the relationships between the School Receptivity scale score and categorical variables of current status as an educational interpreter, location (rural, suburban, urban), and track reveals a statistically significant correlation between School Receptivity and EICP track ($N=62$, $p = .005$). People in Track 1 reported lesser receptivity by their school to their new learning. This may be due to, for example, the greater demands of their program, that they began with less experience, or they are making larger changes.

Job Related Experiences of Participants Working as Educational Interpreters

The discussion to this point was of the demographics and experience all of the participants shared. While 75% of the participants were educational interpreters at the time of the survey (referring back to Table 4.3) others had continued on different paths since completing their educational program. Twelve others responded that they were not currently working as educational interpreters, and an additional four indicated current roles which were not educational interpreting, resulting in a total of 16 respondents, 25%, who are not currently working as educational interpreters. Their trajectories will be explored further later.

Regarding the 75% who were working as public school educational interpreters at the time of the survey, and referring to Table 4.15, the respondents were relatively evenly distributed across types of locations (rural, suburban, and urban). Close to half of them (47%) worked in schools of 101 to 500 students, 18% in schools of 501–1000, and 14% in schools of fewer than 50 students. In 39% of their schools they reported working alone and one-third reported working in buildings in which there are five or more interpreters. When asked what grade level(s) of

student(s) they worked with at least weekly for the last year, responses revealed movement between and among grade levels: 47% had been in elementary schools, 31% had worked with students in grades 6 – 8, and 51% in high schools. Only 2 people had worked with pre-schoolers. Ninety four percent worked in general education classrooms, and 6.1% in college settings with high school students. Other, more situation specific sites were mentioned by one or two people each.

Table 4.15

Summary Profile of Respondents Who are Currently Educational Interpreters N=49

	Frequency	Percent
Location of school (Q33)		
Rural	16	32.7
Suburban	15	30.6
Urban	18	36.7
Number of students in school building (Q32)		
Less than 50	7	14.3
50 – 100	1	2.0
101 – 500	23	46.9
501 – 1000	9	18.4
More than 1000	1	2
Number of interpreters in school building (Q34)		
1	19	38.8
2	6	12.2
3	6	12.2
4	2	4.1
5 or more	16	32.7
Grade level(s) of students for whom interpreted regularly within the last year ^a (Q35)		
Pre-school	2	4.1
K – 5	23	46.9
6 – 8	15	30.6
9 – 12	25	51.0
Settings in which interpret most of the time ^a (Q31)		
General education classrooms	46	94
College sites with high school students	3	6.1

^a Respondents could indicate more than one answer, resulting in totals more than N (response groups of less than 3 were removed. The total of 49 in the category is coincidental).

The remainder of this section is used to fully describe current job-related experiences of the working educational interpreters. The following topics are discussed:

- Job titles
- Roles and responsibilities
- Nature of annual reviews
- Relationships with teachers
- Perceptions of respect and disrespect
- Support for membership on the educational team
- Level of involvement in IEP (Individual Education Plan) meetings
- Support given to the school and district by the participants
- Type of sign language used if the IEP specifies, for example, “meet the communication needs of the student,” and what sign language participants surmise other educators believe is being used in that circumstance

Job titles. Variety in job titles for people serving as educational interpreters has been a well documented issue over the years. As shown in Table 4.16, job titles reported by this group show some reduced variety. The identification of their role as an interpreter is clearly made in the job title for 90% of the respondents. The additional category of “specialist” was added from “other” text information. The concept arising in more recent writings in the field, suggesting educational interpreters are actually “accessibility specialists,” may be entering use in some school districts. Another title-identity issue arose related to the “special education aide” choice. Of the five people who reported titles of aide or paraprofessional, only one selected “special education aide,” and the other four specified in “other” text their title was “aide,” or “paraprofessional.” The special education aide reported spending 90% of her time interpreting (more than the others) and 10% tutoring.

Table 4.16***Job Titles, Roles and Responsibilities N=49***

	N	Percent		
Job titles reported (Q30)				
Educational interpreter	26	53.1		
Interpreter/tutor	7	14.3		
Interpreter	5	10.2		
Aide/paraprofessional (incl. special education aide)	5	10.2		
Access, sign language, or communication specialist	3	6.1		
Administrator/coordinator of interpreting services	3	6.1		
	Average Weekly % of Time	SD	Minimum %	Maximum %
Roles/responsibilities (Q36)				
Interpreting	74.31	23.0	20	100
Tutoring	13.43	17.1	0	65
Interpreting services support	6.36	2.5	0	50
Meetings (e.g., IEP)	2.33	5.3	0	20
Aide work	2.06	5.5	0	25
Job coach	1.47	7.4	0	50
Teaching sign language	1.20	2.8	0	10
Other	2.00	7.8	0	50

Roles –interpreting and secondary. Participants were requested to indicate which roles they played during their work week, and the percentage of their time they spend each of the selected roles or activities. Because of the small numbers of people with job titles such as aide, specialist, and service coordinator, all 49 respondents are grouped together for a profile of the group, shown at the bottom of Table 4.16. On average, this group of participants reported spending almost 75% of its time interpreting, and 13% of it tutoring. If we consider one hour as almost 3% of a 35 hour work week (e.g., an 8:00 – 3:00 school day, acknowledging that there are variations on this), some of the figures take on new meaning. Obviously, looking at the

additional statistical information, a wide disparity of actual use of time is clear. When future research produces a survey including more participants who are “specialists” and “administrator/coordinators” perhaps we can look deeper into the actual nature of their work. The evolution of the “aide/ paraprofessional” category is something to watch, as the work done by this handful of people showed wide differences. Their reluctance to be called “special education” could mean they are working with deaf children who would not be considered “special education” students within the Deaf community. Yet the one person with a title of special education aide reported spending 90% of her time interpreting, and 10% tutoring – evolution, or incorrect job title?

Nature of annual review (Q38). Historically, educational interpreters were hired without consideration of their signing and interpreting skills, and evaluated based on generic employee performance categories. They did not have professional development plans as part of their review process. Among the participants, 36% reported having an interpreting skill improvement plan as part of their annual review, and 33% did not. Also, 40% had Continuing Education Unit (CEU) types of items included in their annual review, and 36% did not. The high number of “not applicable” responses (23% for skill improvement and 19% for CEUs) are open to interpretation as there was no opportunity provided for clarification. It could mean those people have no annual reviews at all, that they do but it does not include that concept, or, perhaps, that they have met their specific skill and/or knowledge requirements for the position and have no further requirements.

Relationships with teachers. Overall, participants’ working relationships with teachers are seen as positive (see Table 4.17). Seventy three percent of the participants who are working as educational interpreters reported that the teachers with whom they work understand how to work with interpreters. An almost unanimous 96% stated their relationships with classroom teachers were positive, while relationships with teachers of the deaf were positive for 79%. Eighty-one percent of the participants reported feeling respected in their school.

Table 4.17***Relationships with Teachers N=48***

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The classroom teachers with whom I work understand how to work with interpreters.	12.5	60.4	12.5	14.6	0
In general, my working relationships with regular classroom teachers are positive.	41.7	54.2	4.2	0	0
In general, my working relationship(s) with the teacher(s) of the deaf are positive.	45.8	33.3	8.3	4.2	2.1
I feel respected in my school.	29	52.1	12.5	6.3	0

Factor analysis indicated that the four items from the Relationships with Teachers section formed a uni-dimensional scale. The reliability of the scale was decent ($\alpha = .66$). This scale will be used in later analyses for the sub-group of participants who were working as educational interpreters at the time of the survey.

Exploring Relationships with Teachers and the categorical variables of program cohort, track, completion status, state, number of interpreters in the building, and location (rural-suburban-urban) revealed a statistically significant relationship only with the program track: a one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference between people in Track 1 (3.94) and Track 2 (4.29) ($F[1, 45] = 4.234, p = .045$). Participants in Track 2, those with greater interpreting skills at application, appear to perceive their relationships with teachers more positively. (It may also be that their skills and more positive relationships are due to longer tenure, or that their greater skills gave them more professional credibility and acceptance.)

Respect. Respect is a broad topic, touching upon an individual’s personal and professional status being acknowledged by colleagues, and interaction engaged in as credible and valid. On the question posed in Table 4.17, 81% of the participants said they “feel respected in

my school.” Earlier research has shown that respect is sometimes an issue in the field of educational interpretation. Participants were asked for sentence completions to the two statements “I feel respected at my school when...” and “I do NOT feel respected when...” (Q43). Because of the structure of the questionnaire, a total of 51 participants who reported working in schools at the time of the questionnaire (not just as interpreters) were presented with this question. Respondents who identified themselves as not being educational interpreters were not asked this question. Forty people responded to both aspects of the question, 9 to only the first part (about feeling respected), and 2 to only to the second (about not feeling respected). A wide spectrum of relationships are represented in the responses.

For 25% of the respondents respect began with being recognized as a member of the staff who works in the school, called by name, and introduced as a staff member at inservices and meetings: “People greet me... Teachers know who I am and why I am there... Supervisors and the Director mention my name at staff meetings... Classroom teachers and building supervisors treat me as a co-worker.”

Another basic, but very interpreter-sensitive, issue is summed up by: “I have time to prepare, stretch and have my own office space to do so”—all activities so fundamental for people who interpret and tutor a variety of subjects all day.

The majority of responses, 75%, centered around the broad spectrum of issues related to being treated as a professional co-worker by teachers and administrators. For example, respondents mentioned the importance of being given consideration when issues of schedules and resources arise, and being consulted about, and even informed of, changes before they happen. For the majority, being consulted as someone with expertise about issues related to deaf students’ communication, and being deliberately sought out for ideas and feedback that are used, demonstrated respect. The following comments are representative:

- “I have a discussion where both views are listened to and ideas are shared and implemented.”
- “Someone asks for my opinion on how to handle an interpreting situation.”
- “My opinion is trusted on what I observe in the classroom and the level of comprehension of the student.”
- “I am looked upon as a professional wanting to provide the best services possible in order for the student I am working with to succeed.”

- “The classroom teachers listen to my input and give me their feelings and feedback.”

Disrespect was experienced from four major reasons (N=42): feeling invisible, being treated as an unskilled aide, disrespectful attitudes towards deaf children and deafness, and not being consulted when communication-related decisions are made regarding the deaf student. Invisibility was described in ways such as, not being greeted, not being introduced to new staff, being treated like a visitor, and being refused room keys because one is not recognized as a staff member. Being treated like an unskilled aide included being treated like “just another adult body in the room,” called “para,” or being assigned “babysitting.” For one interpreter, being assigned recess duty while the deaf student was in an academic class, highlights not only the attitude towards her, but the lack of consideration given to the deaf student, the third area that affected some participants. Interpreters taking as personal the attitudes or behaviors of others towards deaf students is a topic beyond the scope of this paper, but it is the theme of the final example of what contributes to some educational interpreters feeling a lack of respect. Examples given under “I do NOT feel respected when...” included: teachers insisting a deaf student communicate with speech (as in the teacher’s past interactions with the child) rather than using the interpreter (permitting more fluency for the student), pitying the deaf student, communicating a belief that the interpreting service is a crutch, or that learning is not a priority as long as the student has fun, and repeated lack of sensitivity towards deaf students, such as lights being turned off.

Not being consulted about issues and decision-making related to the deaf student, or being “pumped for ideas” and those ideas not being credited to the interpreter, is the fourth, distinct, area of disrespect. Other, assorted, reasons included being treated like a physical obstacle in the room, being told how to do their jobs by teachers, and being refused any training time.

Educational team membership. The types of support given to activities of professional development and participation give some insight into the educational interpreter’s status as a member of the educational team. Referring to Table 4.18, approximately two-thirds of the participants reported having a basic “home base” work space (69%), receiving lesson plans and lecture notes ahead of time (67%), and being given time off to attend workshops (65%), and being given monetary support for such efforts (61%)

In the more professional realms of educational team membership, 57% said they were “invited to IEP meetings as a participant/contributor,” and 33% report being “involved in student

planning meetings.” Providing informed input to student planning is an area of concern for educational interpreters, so actual levels of participation in the process was probed further (see the bottom part of Table 4.18). In addition to the 57% who were invited to participate in the meetings, another 13% reported being invited to provide either written or verbal input to the meeting in advance, meaning 70% of the participants actually were contributing their observations and expertise to the IEP process to some degree. Historically, educational interpreters reported that their role in IEP meetings was frequently only as the interpreter of the meeting, yet of these participants, 18% claimed that was true.

Table 4.18

Support for Membership on the Educational Team N=49

	N	Percent
Types of support received as a member of the educational team (indicate “all that apply) (Q41)		
Provided with a permanent “home base” work space	34	69.4
Given lesson plans/lecture notes ahead of time	33	67.3
Provided with time off to attend workshops	32	65.3
Provided with monetary support to attend workshops or classes	30	61.2
Invited to IEP meetings as a participant/contributor	28	57.1
Provided or supported with mentoring opportunities	18	36.7
Involved in student planning meetings	16	32.7
I am not supported as an educational team member	1	2.0
Level of involvement in IEP meetings (“select the one, most accurate”) (Q42)		
Included in IEP meetings and feel my input is valued	24	54.5
Included in IEP meetings and feel input is not valued	1	2.3
Not included in IEP meetings, however, invited to provide input to IEP meetings in advance, verbally or in writing	6	13.6
Involved in IEP meetings solely as the interpreter for the meeting	8	18.2
Not involved in IEP meetings	5	11.4

Support given to the school/district by the participants. Professionalism and working relationships are two-way, so the participants were also asked for up to three examples of what they had done to help their school/district expand their understanding and use of interpreting services (Q44). All 49 possible participants responded: 29 provided three examples, 14 gave two, and six gave one.

The major examples of support given to schools and districts were: provision of inservices and workshops (78%); one-to-one explanations and discussions about interpreting and deafness with administrators, faculty, and staff members (53%); providing resources and specially made informational handouts or letters (29%); showing up and working with others in meetings, on teams, collaborative efforts, supporting interpreters, and “doing the best job professionally I can” (27%). Also mentioned were teaching sign language and advocating for deaf students, interpreters, and working with outreach efforts. Beyond the generic lists of inservices, resources, and printed materials, provided, other examples included:

- “Visited with the new teachers in the building about things that could be expected when working with a deaf or hard of hearing student.”
- “Providing information to other interpreters regarding roles/responsibilities/ ethics.”
- “Met with next year’s staff in May, and new staff again at beginning of new school year.”
- “Encouraged administrators to have inservices and require teachers that have deaf/hard of hearing students in their class to participate at the beginning of the school year.”
- “While I was going through the EICP, I was able to show staff what I was learning.”
- “Politely ask for lesson plans, materials as many times as I need to, with utmost patience and friendliness.”
- “Clearly stated and supported that you cannot hire an unskilled interpreter and expect the student ... to show progress with their education.”
- “Worked with my supervisor to develop inservices to other school districts.”

Two, in particular, stand out as bookends:

- “[Provided an] Inservice on educational interpreters in the classroom....but nobody came.”

- “Provide yearly hands on in-services to train [teachers] how to use the interpreter. This year the general education teachers did the inservice ... and taught the new teachers how to work with an interpreter. ... and they got it!”

Type of sign language used. In the past, it was not unusual for an educational team writing an IEP to address the sign language needs of a student by stating the interpreter was to “meet the communication needs of the student,” without further detail.

Asked what they do in that situation, 40% of the participants reported they use Pidgin Signed English (PSE) (see Table 4.19). Twenty-five percent wrote text comments that can be summarized as some version of “whatever the student uses, wants, or understands,” and 19% reported they would use Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE).

Asked what other educators would think they were using, the responses were more varied, and almost evenly distributed. The interpreters predicted that if told to “meet the communication needs of the student” that educators in their environments would say the interpreter was using: PSE (23%), American Sign Language (21%), or CASE (19%). A second category of responses compiled from text comments can be grouped as “the teachers don’t know what I’m doing.” Some version of this response was mentioned by 15% of the participants, all of whom were from Track 1 (the only circumstance that is appears different between the two tracks).

Table 4.19

Sign Language Most Likely Used if IEP Specifies “Meet the Communication Needs of the Student” N=47 (Track 1 N=32 and Track 2 N=15)

	N	Percent
Most likely used if IEP specifies “meet the communication needs of the student” (Q39)		
PSE	19	39.6
Whatever student uses/wants/understands ^a	12	25.0
CASE	9	18.7
SEE II	4	8.3
ASL	2	4.1
Whatever is on the IEP	2	4.1
What other school educators think is being used in that situation (Q40)		
PSE	11	22.9
ASL	10	20.8
CASE	9	18.8
Teachers don’t know ^a	7	14.6
SEE II	5	10.4
Whatever the student uses ^a	3	6.3

^a Compiled from text comments

Perceptions of Professional Experiences and Path

This final section presents the results related to various aspects of all of the participants’ experiences post-program completion, from perceptions of their professional educational interpreting-related competencies to education needs and aspirations. It includes professional and leadership activities as well as their professional trajectory.

Perceptions of Work Related Abilities, Continuing Education Needs, and Direction

All of the participants were asked their thoughts on all of the following topics: an assessment of their own competencies and education needs, and what they think are necessary attributes for educational interpreters working at the various grade levels in schools. The responses from these participants demonstrate they believe they know what they can do, need to learn, and are doing about gaining further education.

Current professional abilities. Specific major area of competencies have been identified as present in some combination for many interpreters in educational settings: interpreting for children, tutoring, responding to questions related to deafness, teaching sign language, providing

input regarding interpreting and communication to Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and providing inservices regarding interpreting. As a group, participants clearly perceived themselves as competent in all of these areas, shown in Table 4.20. Adding together the “Strongly agree” and “agree” response choices revealed the following totals: Ninety to ninety-four percent of the participants reported they were competent to provide interpreting, respond to questions about deafness, and provide communication-related input to IEPs. Eighty-seven to eighty-eight percent agreed they were competent to provide tutoring to deaf children, teach sign language in the school setting, and provide inservices regarding interpreting.

Table 4.20
Competencies and Continuing Education Needs

	Strongly Agree	Agree	50/50	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Perceived Competency in Major Roles ^a (Q25) N=65					
Provide communication related information and input to the IEP	49.2	46.2	4.6	0	0
Respond to basic questions about deafness that come up in public schools	60	33.8	3.1	1.5	0
Interpret in a K-12 educational setting	50.8	40	6.2	3.1	0
Teach basic sign language to children and staff	44.6	43.1	9.2	3.1	0
Provide inservices about educational interpreting to educators	53.8	33.8	10.8	1.5	0
Provide tutoring to deaf students	40	44.6	12.3	1.5	1.5
	N	Mean ^b	N who ranked item #1 greatest	% who ranked item as #1	
Areas ranked as greatest need (Q47) (N=62)					
Interpreting skills	48	2.3	21	32.3	
Sign language skills	33	2.3	14	21.5	
Specific academic subject matter mastery	31	2.2	12	18.5	

^a Ranked in order of Strongly Agree + Agree totals.

^b Note: Computation of the means includes only those who selected the item as one of their top three Greatest Needs. 3 = Greatest Need, 2 = Next Greatest Need, 1 = 3rd Greatest Need

Factor analysis indicated the six items from the Competency section above formed a single-component Competencies scale. The reliability was good ($\alpha = .79$) and the scale will be used for further analyses later in this study.

Greatest needs for continuing education. As shown in the bottom part of Table 4.20, the greatest areas of need for continuing education were interpreting skills, sign language skills, and mastery of specific academic subject matter (as one person pointed out, if you do not understand the subject you cannot interpret or tutor it). This information was collected by asking participants to select their top three most important continuing education needs from a list, and then rank them, highest to lowest. The computed scoring of selection and weighting determined the top three. Additional information in the table shows that almost a third of the participants selected interpreting skills as their area of highest need.

Application of learning - what has turned out to be most useful on the job. Sixty participants responded when asked what they learned that has turned out to be most useful on the job (Q22). Many people provided multiple responses, so the percentages here are relative to the 80 responses identified. Responses revealed two primary themes, broadly termed “Communication and Language Knowledge and Analysis” (34%) and “Professional Presentation” (24%) and two lesser themes, “Formal Interpreting Knowledge” (14%) and “Self-Directed Continuing Education” (10%). An additional 15% of the responses were provided by one to three people.

1. Communication and Language Knowledge and Analysis responses were primarily about the ability to analyze communication specific to an individual’s skills or needs (either a student’s or one’s own), and the communication accessibility of a situation or environment (especially the communication environment of a classroom for a deaf child). This category included learning related to knowledge of language development and learning of deaf children, and, to a lesser degree, child development. Examples include:

- “The ability to look at my own skills and that of the communication competence of the student and understand how to best meet the student’s communication needs.”
- “How to analyze the classrooms for accessibility, ...”
- “Doing the student profile and adjusting my signing style to his needs.”
- “How deaf students learn, and the ways that I can help them achieve their goals...”

- “A deeper understanding of the deaf child’s experience in the mainstream (social, linguistic, developmental) and the impact of an interpreted education both positive and negative.”
- “Self-analysis and how to provide feedback to others.”
- “The importance of preparing prior to entering the classroom, and the strategies to use to aid in preparing...”
- “Child and language development, BICS [Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills] and CALPS [Cognitive Academic Proficiency Skills]...”
- “... a variety of approaches for different groups and classrooms.”

2. Professional Presentation, especially related to communication and confidence, included professional presentation and the ability to participate in conversations with colleagues in education, with the academic knowledge necessary to express oneself professionally. Comments related to this occurred sprinkled through the text boxes of the entire questionnaire. As expressed here examples included:

- “I learned professionalism...”
- “I learned to talk about my job in a professional way... using words I wouldn’t have used in the past. Feeling more confident and more professional about my job.”
- “... how to talk to the general education teachers about my job in the school, how to discuss with the Deaf Education teacher the language needs of the student, how to present an inservice to the school staff, how to think critically about an interpreter’s role in the school.”
- “Learning how to be a professional. Without the EICP input I think I would agree with most of the staff at my job that I am a paraprofessional. Now that I know better I am able to prove my professionalism to others on the job also.”
- “To rely on my intuitions that are well founded in my life experiences and trust in what I have learned through the EICP experience. In a word ‘Confidence!’”
- “Being able to appreciate and benefit [from] working with others.”
- “When put to the test, I can produce some high caliber work, ... and the ability to put that on paper. (I surprised myself.)”

- “The knowledge of the laws, code of ethics and overall responsibility of an interpreter that I knew ... but couldn’t support myself with due to that lack of [formal] knowledge. Now I am able to state my concern or response and support it.”
- “Patience and understanding of the distance learning, which also helped professionally. The most important experience was the flexibility that is needed.”
- “[My] ability to interact professionally with the mainstream teachers as well as the Teacher of the Deaf has greatly improved. I can easily communicate on their level using their jargon and am capable of expressing ideas more clearly. I feel that I am more accepted as part of the educational team as a result...”

3. Formal Interpreting Knowledge included expansion of sign language and interpreting skills, technical knowledge, and greater focus on conveying meaning rather than language forms. For example:

- “The realization of how complex interpreting really is... The great need to know your limits as an interpreter and abide by them.”
- “... watching my own videos and glossing the content better helped me to see my own weaknesses...”
- “Being able to use lag time to interpret at the pragmatic/prosodic level.”
- “My skills in interpreting improved. The clients noticed a big difference and made comments about it.”
- “Learning the interpreting skills to do my job, like use of space, classifiers, processing, more knowledge rich items.”
- “... I challenged myself to be involved with ASL [American Sign Language] since most of my previous experience was with Signing Exact English. I did not feel I improved my ASL skills as much as I would have liked, but the ASL principles that I learned to use with my SEE signs has been invaluable.”

4. Self-directed Continuing Education included comments indicating ongoing educational focus and abilities, for example:

- “How to educate myself to improve my skills and to problem solve situations that pop up...”

- "... the PDP [Professional Development Plan] is a valuable and helpful tool."
- "That 'the more you know...the more you realize what you don't know!' In other words, interpreting is a continual and lifelong learning process. ... learn from others."
- "I can and must continually seek new interpreting knowledge from a variety of sources; Deaf community, Professional organizations, working interpreter peers, classes & workshops, video, books and the internet."
- "[EICP] gave me tools to improve [my] own skills after the classes had ended."

5. Other comments of note include:

- "I have the ability and strength to be stretched cognitively and that growth comes from that."
- "A better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of an educational interpreter-accessibility specialist."
- "... the opportunity to learn and master a great deal about technology – I feel more comfortable with my tech skills and abilities."
- "Stamina! To work through the stressful situations, meet the deadlines and take a deep breath! It is so rewarding in the end."
- "I learned to be bolder...."

Formal college education – activity to date, and since completing the EICP.

Information about participants' educational status reflects continuing professional development along a trajectory since they completed their education program. For this reason the analysis is included here in the reporting process rather than with demographic data. Referring to Table 4.21, almost half of the participants (48%) reported holding an Associate's degree or higher, which is significant because the EICP terminates at most in a Vocational Certificate. Since completing the EICP 25% of the participants report having begun or completed either an Associate's or Bachelor's degree program, and 8% are involved in Master's degrees, or have completed it. A quarter of the respondents indicated they were preparing to enter either an Associate's (12.5%) or Bachelor's (12.5%) degree course of study within the next two years. Of the entire group, 22% have no plans for further formal college education.

Table 4.21***Current Status of Formal Education (2 – 5 Years Post-EICP)***

	N	Percent
Highest education level to date (Q62) (N=62)		
High school	6	9.7
Vocational, or other, certificate	18	29.0
Associate's degree	18	29.0
Bachelor's degree	10	16.1
Master's degree	2	3.2
Other	8	13.6
College activity since completing the EICP (Q49) (N=64)		
Have entered, not yet completed an associate's degree program	6	9.4
Have completed an associate's degree program	3	4.6
Have entered, not yet completed a bachelor's degree program	6	9.4
Have completed a bachelor's degree	1	1.6
Have begun or completed a master's degree	5	7.8
Intend to begin an associate's degree program within 2 yrs.	8	12.5
Intend to begin a bachelor's degree program within 2 yrs.	8	12.5
Other (e.g., college coursework)	13	20.3
No plans for further formal college education	14	21.9

Fields of study for degrees mentioned as completed or being pursued since completing the EICP (Q50) include: General Studies (Associates degree) (5 respondents), English (2 respondents), Business/Management (2), Psychology (2), Deaf Education, Communication, Child Development, Elementary Education, Educational Interpreting, and Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling.

Attributes necessary for an educational interpreter, by grade level. This group of people, having years of experience, as well as academic coursework specifically related to the work they do, could have valuable input on the attributes necessary for educational interpreters. To keep the question manageable, it was posed as an open-ended request for the attributes specific to the

grade-level they chose (pre-school, K-5, 6-8, and 9-12). While these interpreters all went through the same program, they had a diversity of responses with regard to what they believe is important for educational interpreters. Much of these data are compiled from that variety of specific responses; however, quotes are used as appropriate. Many respondents gave multiple, or long, responses. Many of the responses overlapped topics. The following are summaries of major categories, with representative quotes.

Only one person responded for the pre-school level, doing so in a manner warranting inclusion as representative: “Child development knowledge. A strong signing base. Highly skilled professional who understands language and child development. Someone who understands deaf children specifically and how they learn language.”

Twenty-six people responded at the elementary, K-5, level. The focus was on knowing about language development and flexibility. Attributes most often cited were (approximately in order of frequency):

- Be able to discern student abilities and needs related to language: “Able to meet student language needs at his level,” “recognize student’s capabilities,” “take advantage of strengths,” “know child and language development,” “turn weaknesses into strengths.”
- Stay clear on roles, and be flexible, able to work with a variety of people and situations: “...work with the teacher to help make the education experience successful for the student.” “Give tools to other students so that they can communicate with the student you work with.” “Be willing to help the student with things if the classroom teacher is busy with another student...” “You often times are tutoring.” “Professionalism with the entire IEP team.” “Willingness to know that you have to teach signs and their meaning to the students.”
- Continue one’s own education and understanding: “staying up to date on age-related media.” “Skill/knowledge building is never ending.”
- Be patient.
- Be caring – specifically “without becoming a ‘helper.’ ” “You must have [the student’s] best interest at heart by doing what you can to make them more INdependent (NOT dependent).”

- Be a positive, dependable, force in the environment: Creative, animated, resourceful, calm, sense of humor, insightful, intuitive, “expect great things,” persistent, consistent.

At the middle school level, grades 6-8, 12 people responded with thoughts again on developmental issues pervaded by the ability to be flexible, such as “easygoing” and “ability to wing it.”

- Like and understand the age group in general, understand the developmental changes that are occurring, and be supportive of increasing needs for independence, for example, possess “...knowledge about ... social/emotional/physical developmental of students at this age.” “Open-mindedness and acceptance of students...” “GOOD HUMOR, flexibility, strong personal boundaries.”
- Personal competence and confidence, professionally, academically, and interpersonally, such as “Knowledge of the curriculum and content for the various subjects in which students are enrolled.” “Above average interpersonal skills.” “Confidence in yourself as an interpreter. Middle school is a difficult level.”
- Be able to support students’ change towards independence - “... your role as an interpreter needs to reflect that [support].” “... allow [the students] to think problems through on their own.” “[The students’] growth depends on the interpreter’s ability to back off.” “Teachers are expecting the students to start sharing their opinions and ask questions.” “Knowing when to step in and interpret and knowing when to ‘back off’...” “...encourage the students to become independent self-advocates.”

At the high school level focus shifted to subject matter knowledge, followed at some distance by understanding teenagers’ developmental needs, one’s own professionalism, and, the ever present, flexibility. In order, with comments, responses grouped thusly:

- “Knowing the subject matter... I always make sure I know how to do the homework to make sure I understand the subjects.” “...a good world knowledge base. You must understand the material in order to interpret it, such as Calculus or other challenging course material.” “Knowledge, sometimes in depth, of a wide variety of topics.” “A broad base of knowledge of several different subjects (for example, geometry, biology, driver’s ed.)...” “A good working knowledge of the vocabulary and

- concepts... Creative, clear ways of communicating these aspects of education...”
- “Be willing to learn new curriculum.” “Willing to prep after school on own time.”
- Developmental issues, and respect for Deaf students – “Have some understanding of teenagers.” “Ethics...The ethical educational interpreter worries less about their own power struggle or influence and worries more about the Deaf student becoming independent.” “You must foster independence and begin the transition to adulthood and/or college related to interpreting and use of interpreters in the ‘real’ world.”
 - “Knowing our roles and being a team player with the students, classroom teachers and the Deaf Ed teachers.” “Rapport with all staff and other students.” “Present yourself as a professional, and always have pride in what you do.” “Willing to share your experiences with others.” “... ability to draw the line between interpreter requirements and personal feelings...” “Above all, be professional, but keep your sense of humor ☺”
 - Flexibility - “Being able to blend into a variety of settings and maintain a professional comfort level.”

Educational Interpreting as an Occupation

The following items are related to an overall perception of the educational interpreting field of practice as an occupation: positive aspects, reasons for leaving, and professional and personal relationship with the field.

Positive aspects of educational interpreting. For the participants, working in educational interpreting has many positive aspects, which were explored with several questions within Q46. The reasons participants virtually all agreed upon as positive aspects were “Working with children in an educational setting,” and “Getting to watch students learn and grow” (see Table 4.22). Having the opportunity to use sign language on the job is another strong positive (91%, combining the Strongly Agree and Agree percentages), which is consistent with the prominent role sign language was reported to have played in their career path. The mechanical aspects of a steady income (91%) and summers and holidays off (89%) were reported as attractive. While the steady income was a positive, the pay scale itself was not necessarily (38% agreed it was and 43% disagreed, 16% strongly disagreed). The remaining three professional items were also reported as positive: being part of an educational team (81%), opportunities for growth (81%),

and a variety of responsibilities (77%). Involvement with parents was seen as a positive aspect of the work by 31%, but 20% reported that involvement as a negative aspect. Participating in classroom behavior management was also a negative, as reported by 47% of the participants (positive by 19%).

These results were essentially the same for both participants who are currently educational interpreters, and for those who are not. The observable difference is that a higher percentage of the participants who are not currently educational interpreters reported more negative scores on pay scale (44%), and doing behavior management (69%); and slightly more positively for summers and holidays off (88%), variety of responsibilities (81%), and ease of finding jobs (63%).

Other aspects mentioned as positives by more than 3 to 7 participants in additional narratives (in order of frequency): the awe of watching the learning process in children; building relationships and working with others—in the education environment, community, and in the greater community of practice; daily opportunities for personal learning related to academics and cultures (“I just LOVE learning”); and, an enthusiasm for educating the educators and local communities about deafness and the needs of deaf children, as well as teaching the children to advocate for themselves.

Table 4.22***Positive Aspects of Educational Interpreting (Q46) N=64***

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Median
Working in Deaf Education^a ($\alpha=.58^b$)						
Working with children in an educational setting	82.8	17.2	0	0	0	5
Getting to watch students learn and grow	73.4	25	1.6	0	0	5
Opportunity to use sign language	54	36.5	7.9	1.6	0	5
Professional in Education ($\alpha=.73$)						
Being part of an educational team	53.2	28.1	12.5	3.1	3.1	5
Summers and holidays off	46.9	42.2	7.8	1.6	1.6	4
Opportunities for growth	48.4	32.8	10.9	6.3	1.6	4
Steady income	57.8	32.8	1.6	6.3	1.6	5
Variety of responsibilities	21.9	54.7	20.3	0	3.1	4
Ease of finding jobs	16.4	27.9	41	4.9	6.6	3
Involvement with parents	7.8	23.4	45.3	14.1	6.3	3
Participating in classroom behavior management	1.6	17.2	32.8	28.1	18.8	3
Pay scale	12.5	25	20.3	26.6	15.6	3

^a Items are ranked in order of the totals of the Strongly Agree + Agree percentages.

^b The reliability of the scale when used with participants who were working educational interpreters was .66.

Factor analysis yielded two scales with reliability at or close to the requisite .60: Working in Deaf Education (.58) and Professional in Education (.73). These scales will be used in further analyses later in this study.

Reasons for leaving the field of educational interpreting. Tending to one's own family needs came at the top of the list of reasons people offered for leaving the field (56%, see Table 4.23, Q51). Half would leave for higher pay. Half would remain in the field even if there were no position available at the time (which sounds contradictory until one considers that educational

interpreter's employment in their own field depends upon the presence of a student whose IEP requires interpreting). Professional growth in another area was reported as a reason for 46% to leave, and 43% would consider leaving to return to school.

There are several areas of disagreement. A lack of respect by educators and others was a reason for 35% to leave, but not for another 35%. Non-acceptance of interpreting related learning were reasons for 37% to consider leaving, and not for another 43% (27% disagree strongly). A third of the participants would consider leaving in order to interpret with deaf adults (33%), or because of conflicts about sign language or sign systems (32%), conflicts over classroom behavior management (30%) (though 35% disagree, 22% strongly). Thirty percent would consider leaving because of isolation and 48% disagree.

Acceptance of professional jobs (especially teaching positions) and "better" jobs, including in related fields, were mentioned by 7 respondents in additional text clarifications (Q52). Three others mentioned "health" reasons. Physical wear and tear clearly should have been included in the initial list of reasons to leave the field. Almost 10% of the participants specifically mentioned active concerns related to overuse syndrome or repetitive motion injury as a reason to leave the field, one writing "Physical problems from interpreting long periods without a break." Retirement was stated by 3 others (one of whom said she would continue to "sub"). Other reasons mentioned included: a need for a year round job, school politics, aging parents, burnout, and "constant oppression by teachers of the Deaf who believe they know more about my job than I do."

Participants who were educational interpreters at the time of the survey were asked to assess their pay scale relative to the economy in their areas (Q61). Of the 44 who responded, 40% judged their pay to be "low," 30% as "about right," 18% as "high," and two people as "very high."

Table 4.23***Reasons for Leaving Educational Interpreting (Q51) N=64***

	Strongly Agree	4	Neutral	2	Strongly Disagree	Median
To tend to my own family's needs ^a	32.8	23.4	23.4	9.4	10.9	4
For a higher pay scale	29.7	20.3	21.9	10.9	17.2	3.5
No position available	28.1	21.9	12.5	15.6	20.3	4
Professional growth in another area	25.4	20.9	31.7	7.9	12.7	3
To return to school	23.4	20.3	29.7	9.4	14.1	3
School system's non-acceptance of my interpreting-	19	17.5	17.5	15.9	27	3
Lack of respect from educators, or others, in the	25.4	9.5	27	14.3	20.6	3
To interpret with adults	10.9	21.9	35.9	15.6	14.1	3
Conflicts about sign language or sign systems	11.1	20.6	19	27	20.6	3
Doing behavior management	9.4	21.9	28.1	14.1	21.9	3
Isolation	12.7	17.5	22.2	14.3	33.3	3
Parent related issues	9.7	11.3	37.1	21	17.7	3

^aItems are ranked in order of the totals of Strongly Agree + Agree percentages.

Satisfaction with the occupation of educational interpreting. Referring to Table 4.24, and combining the Strongly Agree and Agree ratings: 81% of the participants report they would pursue educational interpreting again (50% strongly agree), 83% reported that their education and experience helps them carry out a higher purpose (over half strongly agree), and 86% say they would encourage others to be educational interpreters. In response to a question about their current, overall, satisfaction with their educational interpreting position 49% agreed they are satisfied, 34% were non-committal, and 17% said they are not satisfied. The results for participants who were working as educational interpreters at the time of the survey indicated 79% of them agree, or strongly agree, that they are satisfied with their educational interpreting position (as shown in parenthesis in Table 4.25).

Table 4.24***Professional and Personal Relationship with Educational Interpreting***

	Response Percentages				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Satisfaction with the Field of Educational Interpreting (Q53)					
(N=64)					
If I had to do it over, I would still be an educational interpreter	50.0	31.3	12.5	1.6	3.1
I would encourage others to become educational interpreters	35.9	50	7.8	4.7	1.6
I believe the knowledge and skill I have gained help me carry out a higher purpose in life	51.6	31.3	12.5	4.7	0
Overall, I am satisfied with my educational interpreting position	14.1	34.4	34.4	10.9	6.3
(Current educational interpreters only ^a) (N=48)	(43.8)	(35.4)	(12.5)	(6.3)	(0)
	Much Higher	Higher	Same as Before	Lower	Much Lower
Since enrolling in the EICP my own: (Q72)					
Respect for field of educational interpreting (N=61)	62.3	31.1	6.6	0	0
Respect for field of interpreting (N=62)	41.9	32.3	24.2	1.6	0
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Perception of Self as Educational Interpreter (Q53)					
Completing the EICP helped change me into a more self assured and capable person (N=64)	48.4	35.9	6.3	4.7	4.7
Am a professional sign language interpreter (N=64)	62.5	31.3	3.1	3.6	0
When meeting other interpreters I am proud to introduce myself as an educational interpreter (N=48 ^a)	56.3	35.4	4.2	4.2	0
I expect to leave educational interpreting within the next year or two (N=48 ^a)	6.3	6.3	15.6	31.3	39.6

^aResults reported for participants who are currently educational interpreters.

Factor analysis indicated four items from the Satisfaction section above formed a single component Satisfaction with Professional Path and Position In Educational Interpreting Scale for people currently working as educational interpreters. The reliability is moderately strong ($\alpha = .73$, $N=47$). Removing the final question, which was not asked of non-educational interpreting participants, the three remaining items form a single component Satisfaction with Path of Educational Interpreting Scale with decent reliability ($\alpha = .6495$, $N=63$).

Levels of respect for interpreting. It is important to note that this question is about relative change in levels of respect, and not about overall levels of respect. In general, levels of respect were reported to increase during and after participation in the educational program, especially for the specialized field of educational interpreting (see the middle section of Table 4.24). While we have no baseline, and this is not a measurement of how much respect the participants hold, 74% said their own respect for the field of interpreting was higher than it was prior to entering their education program, and 93% report that their respect for educational interpreting was higher than before, 62% said “much higher.”

Overall attitude and professional confidence. Participants reported feeling more self-assured and capable since completing their specialized education (84%), and identify themselves as professional interpreters (94%) (see the bottom section of Table 4.24, items from within Q53). Nine percent disagreed that completing their educational program helped change them. From this measurement there is no way to discern from this data if they already felt self-assured and capable, or if their experience had a detrimental effect on those feelings for them.

Those who are currently educational interpreters said that when meeting other interpreters they are proud to introduce themselves as educational interpreters (92%). Thirteen percent of the current educational interpreters reported they are expecting to leave the field within the next two years (see bottom of Table 4.24).

Professional Trajectory and Leadership Activities

Educational interpreting would seem to have the same issue with professional advancement as many professions in that to “advance” often means leaving the practice itself. Sixteen of the 65 participants reported that they were working outside of educational interpreting. The activities of those people will be explored in this section, as well as all

respondents' participation in professional, or profession-related, organizations and activities, and leadership activities.

Employment of participants currently NOT in educational interpreting. An initial point of discussion related to professional trajectory is the question of what the 16 participants who are not currently in educational interpreting are doing (Q55). Their responses are reported in only broad forms here. Five were teachers, all in specialized areas, and not necessarily with deaf students. Three were full-time interpreters outside of public schools. Two were caring for families, two were students (both of whom reported doing “some interpreting”), two were college instructors in related fields, two were program/agency directors. One was working in an unrelated private business.

As shown in Table 4.25, the participants who were working outside of educational interpreting employment were recipients of the most comprehensive educational intervention, including both Interpreting Skills and professional knowledge coursework. People who participated only in the professional knowledge coursework are almost all currently educational interpreters. (Caution must be offered regarding this result. People who have moved out of the field may have been less likely to participate in the survey, and, so may be greatly under-represented.)

Table 4.25

Identification of Current Educational Interpreters: By Cohort and Track

	1999-Pilot Curr. Ed. Int. / All ^a	2001-Cohort 1 Curr.Ed.Int. / All ^a	2002-Cohort 2 Curr.Ed.Int. / All ^a	Totals Curr.Ed.Int./All ^a
Track 1: Knowledge and Skills	5 / 11	20 / 25	10 / 13	35 / 49 71% ^b
Track 2: Knowledge only	NA	7 / 8	5 / 5	12 / 13 92% ^b
Totals	5 / 11	27 / 33	15 / 18	47 / 62 76% ^b

^aCurrently an Educational Interpreter / All participants

^b Percent of track or total who were educational interpreters at the time of the survey

Interpreting is an educational service used in direct support of deaf children, which means it is not at all uncommon for educational interpreters to move from school to school. They may move with the same child advancing to the next grade level. They may be reassigned by the

district to work with a different child, or children. Or, they may find they need to change districts to continue working. As they work in different schools, it is assumed the participants take their learning and experience with them, educating colleagues and modeling professional educational interpreting roles and standards as they go. When asked how many schools they had worked in since completing the EICP (see Table 4. 26), 36% of the participants reported staying in a single school building, close to another third (29%) worked in two schools since completing their program, and 18% worked in three. The flexibility of people in leadership roles must be recalled, and that people who were not interpreting in classrooms may be highly mobile in states and regions, actually having contact with many, many schools during a school year. All participants are included here because the issue is that they carry their education and experience everywhere they go, and, potentially, offer it to every school in which they do business. This group of interpreters report having had contact with over 155 school buildings since completing their education programs. It is possible that some of them have worked in the same buildings, providing more contact and depth of learning to those sites.

Table 4.26

Number of Schools Worked in Since Completing Educational Program (Q28) N=65

	N	Percent	Number of Schools
1 school	23	35.4	23
2 schools	19	29.2	38
3 schools	12	18.2	36
4 schools	2	3.1	8
5 schools	2	3.1	8
6 or more schools	7	10.8	42+
Total # School Buildings			155+

Five year professional projection. Participants were asked to project their professional situation in five years and 64 people responded (Q54). Almost two-thirds (63%) indicated they intended to be working in a position such as the one they have now, or in an interpreting service support position (e.g., coordination, mentoring, interpreter education). Of the people projecting they would be continuing in the same capacity as now, 22% provided an enhanced statement saying essentially “the same as now, but even better,” such as: “Doing what I’m doing now, with more experience and education and self knowledge...” “Doing what I am right now. Working

with young deaf students helping them to be successful in life, both professionally and socially...” “In the same position interpreting for elementary kids, but gaining more knowledge each year about interpreting... holding a suitable skill level...” “Improved even more in my skills. I will continue to take advantage of opportunities where I can improve and gain more knowledge of my field...” Others clarified that they would stay, in spite of obstacles: “Hopefully, if my body holds out, I plan to still be interpreting...” “I will still be an Educational Interpreter because I love my job. There are several aspects of my job I don’t agree with, one being my wages and raises every year. But, I love what I do. I love working with the kids and watching them grow and learn.”

Additionally, 17% indicated they would be in a non-interpreting professional position in public education (e.g., teaching), 8% will be in another profession, and 4% will be retired or making that transition, depending on circumstances (e.g., physical condition).

Participation in professional organizations and leadership activities. A total of 85% of the participants are involved in an organization related to interpreting. Sixty three percent of the participants indicated membership in professional interpreting organizations, and 48% belong to local interpreting organizations. Twenty three percent participate in Deaf organizations, and 17% are members of professional organizations other than interpreting (see Table 4.27).

In addition, 71% of the participants are engaged in various forms of leadership activities related to interpreting, having an impact at both state and local levels. Others mention involvement in specific regional or national projects which are too specific to state here. Twenty nine percent participate in state RID affiliate activities, and on task forces (11%). Some support their local areas specifically by providing leadership to local interpreting organizations (40%), providing inservices to educators (37%) and consultation (26%). They also provide support to other interpreters—mentoring (29%), arranging training and workshops (23%), and doing interpreting skill evaluation and feedback (21%). Participation in school district collective bargaining/ negotiation activities was also mentioned.

Table 4.27***Participation in Professional Organizations and Leadership Activities N=65***

	N	Percent
Membership in professional organization (Q26)		
Professional organization for interpreters such as RID	41	63.1
Local organization or club focused on interpreting skill and/or knowledge development	31	47.7
Deaf organization (such as NAD) or club	15	23.1
Professional organization related to another field	11	16.9
None	10	15.4
Leadership activities in which participate (Listed here in order of most to fewest responses) (Q27)		
Local interpreting organization activities	26	40.0
Providing inservices to educators about interpreting	24	36.9
State RID affiliate activities	19	29.2
Providing interpreting mentoring	19	29.2
Consulting about interpreting	17	26.2
Arranging local training/workshops for interpreters	15	23.1
Providing interpreting skill evaluation and feedback to interpreters	14	21.5
Participating on an interpreting-related task force	7	10.8
Writing for funds/grants	4	6.2
None	19	29.2

Analyses Using Scales

In the process of analyzing descriptive data, certain sets of questions lent themselves to being combined into scales. Those sets of questions were factor analyzed (Varimax rotation). Items which could be combined into single components were identified and their reliability checked with Cronbach's alpha. Information about scales with an alpha of .60 or higher have already been reported earlier in this chapter, immediately following the reporting descriptive data for those questions. Scales identified for use in the following analyses, as well as some done earlier in the chapter, are presented on Table 4.28.

Table 4.28***Scales Used For ANOVA and Correlations***

Name of Scale	Questions Included	N	Cronbach alpha	Used for Whom ^a
Formal School Support	Q School faculty and staff Q Other interpreters Q School and district administrators	56	.73	All
School Environment Support	Q Other interpreters Q Deaf students Q School faculty and staff Q School and district admin.	45	.70	All (N=45 is correct, due to scattered missing data.)
Challenges: Life and home demands	Q Juggling “must do” responsibilities Q Time for homework Q Fatigue Q Sacrificing – no time for social/family/vol. Q Demands of home and family	64	.91	All
Challenges: Personal disengagement	Q Challenge of online relationships Q Isolation Q Outgrowing position at work	65	.67	All
Challenges: Problems with technology	Q Problems with technology Q Adjusting to online environment	65	.66	All
Sources of Learning: Formal Personnel	Q Instructors and facilitators Q Deaf professionals Q Mentors Q Program staff	53	.84	All
School Receptivity	Q School adjusted its expectations Q School valued new knowledge and skills Q Wish school helped me apply new knowledge and skills more Q Felt pressured to stay the same as before Q School made changes to fit my needs Q Felt pressured to do roles beyond my preparation	65	.80	All

(Continued from previous page.)

Professional competencies	64	.79	All
Q Can interpret for k-12			
Q Can tutor deaf students			
Q Can answer questions about deafness that arise in a school			
Q Can teach basic sign language in school setting			
Q Can provide input			
Q Can provide inservice regarding educational interpreting			
Positive Aspects: Professional in Education	64	.73	All
	42	.72	Ed. Interp.
Q Member of Professional Team			
Q Summers and holidays off			
Q Opportunities to learn and grow			
Positive Aspects: Working in Deaf Education	64	.58	All
	42	.66	Ed. Interp.
Q Working in educational setting with children			
Q Watching students learn and grow			
Q Opportunity to use sign language			
Relationships with Teachers	47	.66	Ed. Interp.
Q Classroom teachers understand how to work with an interpreter			
Q Relationships with classroom teachers are positive			
Q Relationships with teachers of the deaf are positive			
Q Feel respected in school			
Satisfaction With Path and Position in Educ. Interpreting	47	.73	Ed. Interp.
Q I would do it again			
Q Would encourage others			
Q Feel it serves a higher purpose			
Q Satisfied with educational interpreting position			
Satisfaction With Path of Educational Interpreting	63	.65	All
	48	.70	Ed. Interp.
Q I would do it again			
Q Would encourage others			
Q Feel it serves a higher purpose			

^a All = All participants Educ. Interp.= Those employed as educational interpreters at time of survey

Group Comparisons of Scale Means

Using ANOVA, scale mean scores were compared for different groupings based on track membership, cohort, and responses to categorical items. For the most part there were no appreciable differences regardless of how participants responded to questionnaire items. The few exceptions are described below. Table 4.29 encapsulates the categorical variables use in these analyses.

Track differences. A statistically significant relationship was yielded between Track and the Source of Learning Scale ($F [1, 60] = 13.749, p \leq .01$). The Track 1 people (those who received both knowledge-based courses and interpreting skill development) reported greater value received from the program curriculum and extra sources of learning, which makes sense given their more intense involvement with the program. The opposite is the case with the School Receptivity Scale ($F [1, 60] = 9.544, p = .003$) in which participants who were members of Track 2 (who received only knowledge-based coursework) reported their schools were more receptive to their new learning overall.

In addition, a comparison of only those participants who were educational interpreters at the time of the survey yielded a statistically significant relationship between track and the Positive Working Relationships scale ($F[1, 45]=4.234, p=.045$), in which those participants who were members of Track 2 reported more positive relationships with teachers.

Experience with adults. Comparing the relative amount of experience with adults reported by participants with the Competency Scale resulted in a statistically significant relationship ($F[2, 62]=3.847, p=.027$). Participants who reported they have “A lot of experience” interpreting with adults rated their overall competency higher.

Number of interpreters in the school building. For participants who were working as educational interpreters a statistically significant relationship was shown between the number of interpreters working in a school building, and the Support they perceived receiving from the formal relationships in the school and district ($F[1,47]=10.463, p=.002$). Participants who worked in situations in which there were 3 or more interpreters in a school building rated their perception of Support higher than those working with no, or only one, other interpreter. The number of interpreters working in a building was statistically significantly related to participants’ perceptions of themselves. Those who worked with more interpreters in the vicinity rated the Positive Aspects: Professional in Education scale higher ($F[1, 46]=4.348, p=.043$). This could be a matter of collegiality, or that more interpreters may indicate the school has a larger deaf education program and, therefore, may be more sophisticated in its perception and treatment of interpreters.

Table 4.29***Categorical Variables Used in Analysis***

Categories for All Participants	Additional Categories for Educational Interpreters
Age (by groups of five years)	Location (urban, suburban, rural)
Program cohort/completion year	Number of interpreters in school building
Program track	Level of involvement in the IEP
Program completer or graduate	
State	
First sign language/system learned	
How learned to interpret	
How entered the field	
Participation in prior IPP	
Years full-time interpreting	
Experience with adults	
Perception of relative pay	

Correlations of Scales

Correlation of most of the scales on Table 4.28 were computed. As is evident on Table 4.30, these correlations show that Institutional Support (refer to Table 4.28 for the specific questions which create the scales) has a strong association with School Receptivity, which is not surprising as many of the individuals involved are the same, or approximately so. A participant who perceives herself, or himself, as a Professional in Education probably also rates working in the deaf education milieu highly as a reason for being an educational interpreter, and rates satisfaction with that field highly. Satisfaction with the field as an occupation is also correlated with School Receptivity. Viewing this deaf education milieu positively correlates with a perception of oneself as competent in the roles typically expected of educational interpreters. Perceptions of institutional support (related to formal work-related colleagues and superiors) is also correlated to Sources of Learning (related to the formal staff and instructors in the educational program).

The three Challenge scales, which also reflected experiences during the educational program, related to each other and to nothing else (the sole exception being a relationship occurring for the sub-group discussed later). It may be that the experience of challenges can be holistic and pervasive. It may also be that “Problems With Technology,” with distinctly higher

reliability, may serve as a signal in that if someone is reporting problems with technology broader difficulties may emerge. It could also be that other problems are projected onto problems with technology.

For the sub-group of participants who were working as educational interpreters at the time of the survey, the challenge scale Personal Disengagement is negatively correlated with Positive Relationships with Teachers. Interpreters working in a school who experience less positive relationships with teachers with whom they work are more likely to experience less engagement, and vice versa. Having positive Relationships With Teachers is correlated with both School Receptivity and Professional Competence for working educational interpreters.

Table 4.30***Correlation and Reliability of Scales***

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 - Support: Institutional	.73										
2 - Challenges: Home & Family Demands	-.170	.91									
3 - Challenges: Personal Disengagement	-.121	.371**	.67								
4 - Challenges: Problems with Tech.	.014	.343**	.436**	.66							
5 - Sources of Learning: Formal Program	.261*	.011	-.111	-.177	.84						
6 - School Receptivity	.574**	-.026	-.210	.012	.079	.80					
7 - Professional Competency	-.043	.014	-.004	.000	.073	.149	.79				
8 - Positive Aspects: Professional in Education	.318**	-.147	-.103	.088	.201	.191	.122	.73			
9 - Positive Aspects: Working in Deaf Education	.168	.026	-.004	.021	.203	.156	.333**	.320**	.58^a		
10 - Interpreter Satisfaction	.094	-.095	-.044	.124	.018	.253*	.091	.288*	.319**	.65	.
11 - Positive Relationships with Teachers ^b	.183	-.178	-.323*	-.081	-.011	.414**	.326*	.184	.280	.129	.66^b

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ N=64 or 65 for all correlations except "Positive Relationships with Teachers," as noted.

^a This is the only place a reliability of lower than .60 was used. The reliability on this scale for participants who were working as educational interpreters at the time of the survey was .66.

^b Questions for this scale were asked only of participants who were working as educational interpreters, about their present day experience.

Last Comments

At the end of the questionnaire participants were asked “Do you have any additional comments you would like to add? (Perhaps related to educational interpreting, professionalization, the EICP, your life course...)” Thirty-eight participants took the opportunity to respond, some at length, almost all comments were about the educational program they had experienced. To take the time and energy to write such comments at that point it is clear that these are the thoughts that were pressing on them as meaningful. They wanted to close with these words.

Some insipient patterns that offer insights with regard to future research and time-compressed professionalization which will be discussed further in Chapter 5. Three of the patterns are familiar to readers of earlier findings in this chapter, and two look forward.

1. Such professionalizing education was tremendously challenging and required great sacrifice, represented by:
 - “The EICP was so difficult, it took a great deal of time away from my family and it put so much stress on my life it was almost not worth it. ...”
 - “Although the process of completing the homework and other assignments was extremely time consuming, I am glad I was able to complete this program ...”
 - “[It] was pure hell for me.”
 - “The toll on a person’s personal life is tremendous. ... (3-4) [people] in my Cohort ... became divorced or separated during this time. ...”
2. Knowledge and interpreting skills increased, shown by:
 - “I gained a great deal of information on lang./child development, learning styles etc., that help me in my job.”
 - “We were able to use the information that we were learning at the time and apply it to the job we were already doing...”
 - “My [interpreting skills] scores increased tremendously...”
3. Persona as a professional emerged, including confidence:
 - “The EICP gave me definitions, and ways to articulate [what I felt and knew] but did not have the knowledge to back it up. Now I am able to sound professional with

teachers/professors that I work with and have more knowledge about the resources available to me.”

- “I changed school districts the Fall after completing the EICP.... The district I am working in now has more respect for interpreters.”
- “... most importantly, the EICP gave me a lot of confidence, both in sharing my opinions with my peers and in speaking in front of groups of people. Increased confidence and the knowledge that I have what it takes to continue my education to higher levels were both extra benefits from the program.”
- “The EICP was far from perfect, but it did give me to the opportunity to see many different perspectives and the value of different ways to sign (ASL/PSE/MCE) – something missing in my small community. I also now spend a lot of time analyzing (informally) my work.”

The next two categories move beyond what we have heard before. One is practical, and provide guidance for educational programs and the field of practice. The other is effusive in its expression of satisfaction, acknowledgement, pride, and gratitude for opportunity and learning. When reading such comments it is important to remember that the program these participants completed was the vehicle that help transport them through their time-compressed professionalization process, and they naturally relate their experience and aftermath to that program. As colleges and universities develop and deliver similar opportunities their students can reflect similarly about those programs.

4. Reflections on value of the experience:

- “The EICP was an opportunity of a lifetime.”
- “I am very grateful to have had the chance to attend...”
- “...the EICP has changed my life! [I had left the field and missed it.] Here I am! Back in the schools!!! ...and lovin’ it!”
- “The EICP was awesome. We all complained while we were in it and doing the work, but it was great. It took a while to understand that, but it was great.”
- “It had a far greater impact than one would think at first glance. I learned an immense amount and grew immensely.... [My high level position] is due to the program. I am forever in debt ...”

- “Not only did my interpreting improve, but many other things improved ... my ability to talk about interpreting ... [I could understand] higher level ASL ... I was able to KNOW I had grown ...”
5. The individual, the EICP and/or the field needs improvement, such as:
- “I am disappointed in my own progression.”
 - “... it muddied up a lot of my signing... I am not signing Exact English anymore, and it is not as smooth as it was before... ...I am more conceptually accurate, and ASL features have helped my English signs..., I don’t feel that I do either ASL or English as well as I had hoped.”
 - “I thought more deaf instructors were needed.”
 - “...[the effort] was worth more than the credential received.”
 - “I wish all educational interpreters could have the experience and support...”
 - “If there were more people to reach out to be follow through coaches, ed. interpreting would grow as a recognized profession...”
 - “... one of my direct supervisors [in my school district said] ‘Face it, you don’t have a degree and there is nothing you can do about that.’ I got a 29 cent raise...”
 - “I wish [my state] accepted the adjusted EIPA score.... It was not fair.”
 - “Educational interpreting is underrated, misunderstood and under appreciated.”
 - “We, as a professional field, need to recognize that if we want to be treated as professionals we need to go through the ranks of education.”
 - “I wish the standards/requirements were consistent throughout the 50 states. It would help to stabilize the profession.”
 - “My learning style now includes distance learning and independent study. I kinda like it! 😊”

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The question guiding this research was “What are educational interpreters’ perceptions of their trajectory through an intense, time-compressed, educational intervention and professionalization process?” A broad summary of the study and findings, conclusions, and recommendations are included in this chapter.

Educational interpreters working in public schools have experienced increasing requirements for greater interpreting skill as well as the knowledge necessary to use those skills appropriately in classrooms. The presence of an educational interpreter in a school is dictated by the enrollment of a deaf or hard-of-hearing child who uses interpreting to gain access to aspects of education. Most educational interpreters working in public school classrooms did not arrive there via a conscious career path that included formal education and preparation. The result is that, as a group, public school educational interpreters’ work has been shaped and supervised by people who know little about sign language interpreting, or about educational interpreting as a formal field of practice. Over the last 15 years advancements in several areas have led to the establishment by many states of specific standards for educational interpreters. Those areas of advancements include: knowledge about educational interpreters and their communication and interpreting roles, evaluation of their interpreting skills, knowledge and skill needs, appropriate educational curricula, and technological and collaborative developments that permit delivery of specialized education to them regardless of location.

In many states working educational interpreters face standards for skills and knowledge that they must meet quickly, and many need education and skill development to succeed. To learn about the experience individuals have had of this process of time-compressed professionalization, a population of working educational interpreters (who met a set of criteria, including completion of an inservice educational interpreting program at a distance) was surveyed using an online questionnaire process. One hundred eighty-nine such individuals were invited to participate, that is everyone who had completed the Educational Interpreting Certificate Program, a 30 credit hour vocational program delivered to educational interpreters sponsored by 10 states and the federal government via blended delivery at a distance. Sixty-five respondents participated in the study.

Reflective Summary

It is important to remember that this study reports on the memories, reflections, and perceptions of people who completed their educational programs in cohorts in 1999, 2001, and 2002. It also included only 65 members of 189 potential participants, and it is not possible to know just how representative that 65 actually is. There is some confidence provided by knowing that approximately one third of the members of each cohort participated; however, not having the perceptions of those who did not participate is still of concern. The findings are informative and, partly because they are supported by open-ended expressions that echo the quantitative data, provide insights and guidance about the respondents, which were then re-emphasized by participants when asked for last comments. While this study was not comparative in intent, its incorporation of questions used in earlier studies of educational interpreters, especially Hayes (1992) and Yarger (2001), lends itself to observations of similarities and differences of findings.

The participants had all completed the same 30 credit hour vocational certificate program, although 25% had been waived out of the interpreting skill development requirements due to sufficiently high interpreting pre-test scores. The other 75% of the group had a more rigorous program as they were participating in interpreting skills classes and mentoring at the same time as academic coursework, and were required to attend the two-week Summer Institute programs in Denver for three summers.

Adding to the historical documentation regarding who is doing K-12 educational interpreting, a fair representative of this group is a white, 46 year old woman with children at home who may also be caring for an additional adult with special needs. Her engagement with sign language quite likely was the result of a chance encounter with sign language or with a deaf person, perhaps when she was a child, which left an impression on her. She learned to sign in sign classes, although approximately 11% learned on the job working with children. These results are similar to earlier findings (Hayes, 1992; Jones, Clark, & Soltz, 1997; Yarger, 2001). The sign language or system claimed to have been learned first by the majority of the educational interpreters was American Sign Language or Pidgin Signed English.²⁰ Participants came into contact with the activity of interpreting primarily by working in a school and learning it as part of their job working with children, or to a slightly lesser degree, making a career decision to be an interpreter. Over half of the people who learned their interpreting skills on the job were from rural areas. The people who made a career decision to be an interpreter were disproportionately

from urban and suburban areas and over half of those had completed a previous Interpreter Preparation Program.

In spite of the increasing demands for demonstration of skills and credentials the motivation for participants' enrolling in their specialized education program were for the opportunities to learn and grow, and to benefit the students with whom they worked, which resonates with Hayes' (1992) finding. It is further supported by the large majority who are continuing their college education. This seems to demonstrate the previously unfilled systemic demand among working educational interpreters for pertinent education and interpreting skills development. Once such education was offered in an accessible and affordable manner, this group of respondents appears to have taken full and continuing advantage of it. Three of the most cited benefits of participating in such an education program was to learn to communicate professionally with people in the education environment and function as a professional member of the educational team, and to assess sign language skills and provide feedback, for oneself or another. Additionally, in conjunction with academic knowledge about language and child development, the latter allows assessment and accommodation of communication needs of deaf children.

Responses to both closed and open-ended comments indicated the intense pressure many participants experienced during their educational program. Most participants were supported by those around them, but some were not, and some experienced "active resistance" from people one would have expected to support them, such as educational team members, and other interpreters.²¹ Additional challenges faced are common among distance learners, especially those who have jobs and families. Personal sacrifice was enormous for some educational interpreting participants, and that was what made it all the harder for some participants to accept that after so much work they had not yet gained sufficient interpreting skills to pass the exit exam, and could not graduate. Even though they accomplished the "to learn and grow, and benefit the students with whom I work," and had become a knowledgeable professional, their interpreting skills were still too weak. Yet, somehow, the formal documentation of the educational accomplishment, the part one has placed in a personnel file, is important to a feeling of formal legitimacy. As one person, who quite likely represents others in the same situation, said "I can't even say I've been to an IPP [Interpreting Preparation Program]. [School district officials] say prove it, and I can't." The program she had completed was a 30 hour inservice

vocational education certificate program delivered at a distance, and, while she had completed it, she had not *graduated*.

While participants acknowledged the value of the program content, their actual learning also came from all aspects of the program and its various personnel. Meaningful interactions with Deaf professionals and other educational interpreters who were progressing along the same path, were great additional sources of learning. Based on the data, participants who had the benefit of the interpreting skill development aspect of the program continued to increase interpreting skills, and it appears they continued to improve after completing the program. One individual stated she now knows how to continue to learn on her own, and similar comments by others suggest that it was true for them as well. Based on the data, there was also evidence that these participants could assess their own sign language and interpreting skills more accurately than people without such education. For the tiny subgroup of people who only took knowledge-based courses, and then took subsequent Educational Interpreting Performance Assessments post-graduation, there is no evidence in this study to indicate skill improvement beyond the level they had when they entered, which is a topic for further research.

Receptivity of schools and districts to the educational interpreting students' needs and changes while in their educational program is vital. While state departments of education agreed to assure sufficient and specific supports to make certain students had opportunities for success, one third of the participants reported their own schools did not make adjustments, modify expectations of them as they gained knowledge and skills (37%), or valued what they brought in from their education (26%). There is no way here to know all the factors that played into students' perceptions, although, history, personalities, and habit can set up working relations and situations that can be difficult to change. One respondent represented those feelings, saying she had to leave her original school, starting anew elsewhere where she feels respected for the knowledge and skills she brings in. Organizations learn and grow as they need to. When an organization has a specified role and job description, and then an individual changes dramatically due to an educational, or other experience, the arising creative tension can challenge everyone. Perception of School Receptivity was found to correlate with perceptions of institutionally-based Support.

Approximately 90% of this group of educational interpreters agreed or strongly agreed, that they know how to perform the roles and responsibilities most often expected of educational

interpreters: interpreting, tutoring, responding to basic school-environment questions about deafness, teaching basic sign language to staff and students, providing communication-related input to IEPs and providing inservices about educational interpreting. Most of these were roles have been noted by earlier researchers as areas in which educational interpreters indicate they had educational needs (Hayes, 1992; Yarger, 2001). For each area of competency only one or two different people disagreed that they were competent to provide the service, and no one indicated more than one area in which they perceived they were less than competent. Beyond these professional competency areas additional clusters of competencies were revealed. A major area that was mentioned in various open-ended questions is that of being able to confidently function as a professional in education with information, resources, and communication skills necessary to participate fully in discussions with teachers and others. Another group of abilities was related to personally realizing one has what it takes to do whatever is necessary, perhaps boldly, while being humble; to back up intuition with knowledge; and, maintain professional detachment rather than taking things personally. Antia and Kreimeyer (2001) presented the dichotomy of the need for interpreters for younger children to strictly interpret, as deaf students learn to function independently and communicate directly with their teacher, and for the interpreter and teacher to have a close working relationship in order to best serve the deaf student who needs a visually oriented educational experience. It may be that appropriately educated and skilled educational interpreters who are able to communicate as professionals are more able to find that balance with classroom teachers.

The attributes that the participants suggest are necessary at various grade levels appear to be grounded in their awareness of, and sensitivity towards, developmental issues. At the elementary level most often mentioned attributes were: being able to discern and strengthen the student's abilities and needs related to language; staying clear on roles, being flexible and able to work with a variety of people and situations; continuing one's own education; being patient; being caring, without becoming a "helper;" supporting students' independence; and being a positive, dependable, presence in the educational environment. At the middle school level: like the age group and understand the changes that are occurring, particularly related to independence, and be able to support them; and be personally and professionally competent and confident. At the high school level necessary attributes presented were: subject matter expertise, including a broad knowledge base; an understanding of the developmental issues arising for

students and respecting them; fostering independence and minding one's ethics; being clear about one's roles and being an educational team player; and being flexible. Considering that the question about attributes was open-ended, these broad themes, and the individual responses, augments Seals' (1998) "Attributes Critical to Educational Interpreters," (p. 225) by the additional perception and descriptive ability of a group of experienced educational interpreting respondents informed by classes in child and language development.

The greatest perceived needs for continuing education were interpreting skills, sign language skills, and specific academic subject matter mastery. The group as a whole was oriented towards college education. Since completing the EICP 38% have begun or completed degree programs, 25% planned to begin a degree program within two years, and 20% had taken further college coursework. They also stepped up in participation in professional organizations and leadership activities. Eighty-five percent of the participants are involved in an interpreting-related organization and 71% are involved in some kind of leadership activity.

Skills and knowledge gained that have turned out to be the most useful on the job fell into four broad categories:

- knowledge about communication and language - which includes the ability to analyze sign language and interpreting, and the ability to analyze communication accessibility of a situation.
- professionalism – including presentation, academic knowledge, communication skills, and confidence.
- formal knowledge about interpreting.
- ability to be a self-directed learner.

As these participants reflected on their specialized educational path, done at a distance, they offered suggestions to future educational interpreting students:

- confirm family and employer support for the educational process, both before and during the educational process.
- organize time and materials.
- understand the demands of such a program before entering it, commit to your educational program, and persevere in that commitment.
- maintain balance in your life, taking care of yourself and staying open to new ideas and perspectives.

To this point the discussion has included all of the participants. Seventy five percent of the participants were working as public school educational interpreters at the time of the survey, almost all of whom were interpreting in regular classrooms. Their experiences since completion of the EICP provides an update to the field, and presages experiences for hundreds and thousands to follow. They also allow opportunities for strategic preparations and changes in schools and in interpreting education.

The large majority of the working educational interpreters had job titles that indicated they were interpreters, few had titles including “aide” or “paraprofessional.” In addition to the people doing lead interpreter, or interpreting service coordination, there is a tiny category of titles that incorporate the term “specialist,” such as “communication specialist,” and “accessibility specialist” that appears to indicate an evolution of the field. In the past “specialist” might have indicated awareness of that person’s contribution being different from other aides, but my impression now is that “communication specialist,” “accessibility specialist,” and “sign language specialist” have been created from an informed perspective.

In general, participants spend about 75% of their time interpreting, 13% tutoring, and the remaining 12% engaged in an assortment of other activities, in part related to job title. Based on the data, as much as “aide work” is discussed, it occupied less than an hour a week, on average, except for the few participants whose job title included the word “aide,” in which case it averaged about an hour and a half. It may be that the context and nature of aide work may be more important than its presence in the day. For example, a participant in the current study reported great frustration and objection to being assigned playground monitoring duty while the deaf student attended an academic class without an interpreter. These findings are difficult to compare to earlier studies (Hayes, 1992; Jones, et al., 1997) because of design differences in that this study focused on participants’ estimates of how much time they spend per week on various activities rather than frequency of occurrence. It does show a shift from Stewart’s (1988) framework of interpreting for 52% of the time, and performing aide work for 13%, although his estimate of 13% of the time being devoted to tutoring is consistent with these data.

The large majority of current educational interpreters report having positive working relationships with the regular classroom teachers with whom they work and close to three-fourths said those teachers understand how to work with interpreters. This represents an increase compared to Hayes’ (1992) finding of 40%. Roughly two thirds were granted “home base” work

space and given lesson plans and lecture notes in advance, as well as time off to attend workshops. Slightly fewer were also provided monetary support to attend workshops and classes.

A large majority of this group had input into the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) verbally or in writing, and 57% reported they were invited to attend IEPs as a participant/contributor. Respect has been a major issue for educational interpreters, and of an uncomfortable variety in part due to a lack of credentials, and even actual skills and knowledge, in an educationally oriented environment. In Hayes' (1992) a major finding was that educational interpreters were not treated as professionals. Respect was perceived very basically as common courtesies and acknowledgement as a member of the school staff. Broader, professional respect was perceived as being treated like a member of the educational team who could reliably be consulted, especially about communication issues related to the deaf child's education. This group identified specific levels of respect afforded them, or not: basic acknowledgement as a legitimate member of the educational staff, consideration as a person to be consulted and informed when schedules and resources are being allocated or changed, and being consulted and sought out as a professional with expertise related to communication and interpreting. Disrespect was perceived as versions of feeling invisible, having their expertise ignored and used as an unskilled aide, and, by proxy, when educators are disrespectful, or condescending, towards deaf students.

Membership on educational teams includes an expectation of professional contribution, and this group is very active in that regard. Beaver, Hayes, and Luetke-Stahlman (1995) had reported that teachers who have attended inservices related to working with interpreters benefit from those inservices. Over three fourths of the participants in the current study reported providing inservices or workshops in their schools, and over half reported making a point of engaging in one-to-one discussions with staff and faculty member with the intention of providing information and suggestions related to working with deaf students and with interpreters. They passed along the learning they had gained from their educational programs, and in general helped educate school administrators and faculty regarding the types of activities that most support the successful integration of deaf students into classrooms. Combined with the large majority of participants reporting competence at providing inservices about educational interpreting, this appears to indicate progress from Seal's (1998) "Guidelines for Inservicing Teachers to Teach

with Educational Interpreters,” addressing educational interpreters’ general “lack of confidence in designing and conducting an effective inservice” (pg. 14).

Educational interpreting students who perceive themselves as supported by their professional colleagues also tend to derive greater value from a variety of learning sources, and tend to perceive their worksite school as more receptive regarding the new knowledge and skills they introduce. Relationships with the teachers with whom educational interpreters work are a critical focus, as for some people the nature of those relationships matter very much in terms of how engaged the interpreter is in the overall education situation. Participants in this study felt gratified as professionals in the deaf education environment, competent in their various roles, more able to discuss the technical and academic aspects of their professional roles in a knowledgeable fashion, and satisfied with their career path. Noteworthy are the two scales derived from the Positive Aspects set of questions: being a Professional in Education, and Working in Deaf Education. If they experienced challenges in their educational process those challenges ultimately did not deter them. Comments indicated that for many of the participants the demands of the educational path itself contributed to their current professional and personal capabilities. The willingness shown to provide thoughtful suggestions to future students, as well as formal and informal sharing of expertise with professional colleagues, appears to show that this group of people will help inform and shape perceptions of educational interpreters in their schools.

Concerns About the Study

An area of potential concern for this study is my own involvement in various stages and aspects of the EICP. It appeared to me its development followed the best guidance from education interpreting educators (the Professional Development Endorsement System for Educational Interpreting), incorporation of adult learning theory, design based on systems theory (including extensive resource and contracting staff development), realistic use of technology, and integrating skills necessary for post-program self-directed learning. I have attempted to be objective, and have occasionally deliberately “erred” in the direction of assuring minority, less positive comments were represented. This decision was important because it may be that those minority comments gave voice to people who did not participate, perhaps related to those kinds of experiences. That form of “error” also appears in a different form in various tables in which

groups are included that, from a statistical viewpoint, are too small to be presented. Readers commented that it appeared I was trying to make a point by including those groups. The point was simply to not inadvertently skew the reporting of descriptive information of this study of the experience of rapid professionalization simply by removal of smaller numbers.

There are also some mechanical problems with the questionnaire. The question regarding participants' views on requiring educational interpreters to hold bachelors degrees was inadvertently constructed in such way that it created an artificially limited decision process, largely based on one's response to the first question. Those results were so uninterpretable they were removed entirely. Other questions were situated or worded in a way that limited them to participants who were educational interpreters at the time of the survey, and they would have served the study better if they had been general questions (e.g., location, relative pay scale, and regarding leaving educational interpreting within two years). It unnecessarily reduced the number of responses and had an impact on statistical usefulness. The questions about annual reviews should have led with a general question about the presence of any annual review, for without it the results are ambiguous.

Experiences related to Repetitive Motion Injury (RMI) should have been specifically explored. It was mentioned by 10% of the respondents in "additional comments" as a reason to leave the field. That topic warranted a more complete querying of the current level of injury people are experiencing and their concerns. Almost all educational interpreters in public schools work alone, without benefit of team interpreting and the physical relief it affords, and have almost no control over their interpreting schedule. They may, therefore, be at higher risk for RMIs. If this is the case it could force many interpreters out of the field prematurely, a devastating loss for the those individuals' careers, for the field, and for education.

Recommendations

Potential Educational Interpreting Students

If one is considering participating in a professionalizing educational experience, especially if it is at a distance, data here suggest:

1. Start early to develop connections with work-related individuals and personal relationships.

If people from the school and district are more invested in the educational interpreter, they

may be more likely to support educational efforts, and be more likely to accept and make adjustments to integrate learning. The data reveal such relationships to be important to application of learning and satisfaction in the field.

2. There are many suggestions provided for future students which the data indicate made a difference in the experiences of many people. Those suggestions warrant consideration by future students.
3. Strengthen sign language skills prior to entering an educational interpreting program, especially those related to aspects of visual grammar.
4. Begin the educational process sooner rather than later. The requirement for knowledge and skills will only become more urgent over time.

School Districts and Schools

The shortage of skilled interpreters is historic and there is no sign of it diminishing, especially in the face of rising use of Video Relay Services.²² The most skilled educational interpreters, the ones carefully and professionally educated, will likely be the first to move on – unless they see themselves as *educational* interpreters, members of a professional educational team who are paid appropriately, and choose to stay in the schools. School districts that are proactive in their planning and pay-scales can develop strong, knowledgeable, experienced educational teams. Cultivating and keeping knowledgeable, skilled, educational interpreters will require a shift in the paradigm.

Data support the emergence of two forms of educational interpreters. One who is first and foremost an interpreter, and who is applying those skills in an educational setting. The other is increasingly education-oriented, sees herself as a professional in education, and would stay working in education if that is professionally and financially feasible. Supporting and demonstrating professional respect for educational interpreters as the field of practice changes and its requirements rise rapidly will surely have an impact on the nature of the interpreting service available to a school district. For the foreseeable future the field will be in transition. For educational interpreters engaged in professionalizing education, having their additional professional knowledge and skill recognized and integrated on the job is essential, and it would be expected that schools developing plans with the interpreter to do so will benefit. To appropriately serve deaf children, the most qualified educational interpreter must be hired. To

keep that person may require a balance of professional respect; job descriptions, and actual practice, which assure use of their knowledge and skill; and appropriate compensation.

Field of Interpreting

Dynamic support is needed for educational interpreters who are engaged in professionalizing courses of study and practice. Special prizes for events and materials, facilitation of locating mentors, scholarships to retreats, any deliberate creative method for supporting this entire section of the field is encouraged. The next few years will be challenging. Anything the general field can do to support those who desire to work with children to succeed in staying on course and meeting the standards is encouraged. In addition:

1. Open-minded dialogue about issues pertinent to K-12 interpreting and the roles people play is encouraged. As educational interpreters gain greater education in their field and in education they will challenge the traditional views of what interpreters are and do. The best benefit of the children must be foremost as expectations, roles, and guidelines evolve.
2. Continue the dialogue that is unfolding regarding an appropriate Code of Ethics for interpreters who work in schools. Appropriate guidance for them, depending on their actual role(s), needs to be available. The field of K-12 educational interpreting will continue to evolve, so a continuing venue for such dialogue is necessary even with the acceptance of a new NAD/RID Code of Ethics.

Educational Interpreting Educators

The EICP was designed built on recognized adult learning principles, particularly those of Malcolm Knowles and Patricia Cross, and the challenges to students by the demands of work and home are still clearly evident. The data from this study demonstrated that those students who reported challenges, reported them pervasively. Yet those same students did complete the program. Consideration of adults' real life issues is critical to successful program design, particularly for inservice programs and particularly for programs delivered at a distance.

Implications for Further Research

Implications for further research emerged related to educational interpreters, the field of practice, interpreter education, and for those who make decisions which impact policy and interpreter education. Standards for educational interpreters are being put into place by one state after another, in rapid succession. The field and requirements change so quickly now that it would require a separate and meticulous study to determine the status at the moment. Beyond that, there are questions that arise from this study. Some of those questions follow.

Educational Interpreters and Education

Issues of support, especially from the hierarchical structure within the school and school district, and challenges were clarified. While the EICP was designed incorporating adult learning theories related to support for adult students and minimizing stressors and challenges for working students who had family responsibilities (Cross, 1992; Knowles, 1989) it is clear the topics are still rich for further study. Specifically, a follow-up study of participants from rural areas who were in the full EICP program (Track 1) is suggested, specifically related to exploring issues of institutional support within their schools and program challenges. On a larger scale, if Dean and Pollard's (2001) assessment is correct regarding the situation interpreters face related to insufficient preparation and high-demand low-control, educational interpreters could already be seriously challenged, and adding on an intense educational program could be exacerbating their challenges and strain beyond what anyone imagined. Taking the high-demand low-control theory into consideration, an exploration of applying a decision supporting process such as McClusky's (1970) Theory of Margin, to potential educational interpreting students could prove informative. It could assist both the student and the interpreting program to be clear about what is necessary to gain more assurance for a given student's successful participation.

A relatively large number of participants reported the deaf student with whom they worked was not supportive of their participation in the educational interpreting program. What is behind that? It could be that the deaf students are the recipients of changes in their interpreters' sign language or professional conduct, and that the change itself is uncomfortable. It could be that transitional skills and behaviors are less accurate, or appropriate, or coherent to the students and trigger resistance.

Participants stated their third most needed area for continuing education was “subject matter mastery.” What is the actual nature of that issue? Once identified, what are some possible responses to it, formally or otherwise, especially considering electronic means?

The issue of some educational interpreters feeling disrespected because of how others treat a deaf child warrants further attention. Being empathetic with a child is meaningful; however, if a professional interpreter is disempowered by other people’s lack of sensitivity or respect for a child, it would seem that the interpreter would be less capable of being helpful. This concern is reinforced by Witter-Merithew and Johnson (in preparation), which conveyed the concerns of deaf consumers that many newer interpreters have an insufficiently developed sense of their own identities and over-identify with deaf people. Weak boundaries and expectations for both the interpreters and the deaf people can result. If, as indicated by the current study, this level of such identification is occurring in professionally educated interpreters, to what extent is this occurring in the field in general, and what is the impact on the children? Professional education may address and resolve some of it, but what about the more entrenched psychological or emotional entanglement?

A sub-category of useful skills learned arose from text comments that indicated students had learned to maintain their own continuing education and skill development post-completion. Indeed, the subsequent interpreting skill rating for Track 1 students as a group increased. For the scant number of Track 2 students who took subsequent interpreting evaluations, however, the overall rating for the group went down. Although conclusions cannot be derived from this, because the numbers are really too few to mention, a study of the subsequent interpreting skill improvement of Track 1 students, versus Track 2 students, is indicated. To what degree are completers and graduates of the EICP able to further their own interpreting skills and knowledge post-program? Do the skills they learned related to this professional activity transfer to the “real world” and result in self-directed continuing education and continued learning and growth?

A study of the apparent trail leading from Institutional Support to School Receptivity on through to Satisfaction is in order to explore contributing factors (for example, personality or length of tenure). Data from this study show no relationship between the scales for challenges and for positive aspects. A more in depth analysis of these scales is called for to discover if there is a relationship between them. It would be interesting to investigate the relationship between the

people who experienced more challenges and those who experienced more positives aspects of the occupation, working relationships, and satisfaction.

Field of Practice and Decision-Making

The evolution of the position itself is a prime topic for further study. The concepts of communication accessibility specialist, educational team member, and communication aide are all changing. Perceptions of the role of the interpreter as strictly to provide interpreting, versus the concept of the interpreter as a full educational team member, are clarifying. An additional consideration is the role of para-professionals, those who may be knowledgeable and experienced but who are unable to demonstrate all the interpreting skills and professional knowledge necessary to meet district or state standards for educational interpreting. Data from this study indicate that participants, including those who could not pass the EICP exit exam, have perceptions of themselves as possessing skills and knowledge (they did successfully complete all their knowledge coursework), and joy in working with deaf children in education. An appropriate role for them may become clear, and in conjunction with further educational support, it may allow them to ultimately pass the standards required of them.

This study produced a scale indicating some educational interpreters are more ready and willing to participate in types of activities such as behavior management/ tutoring/working with parents types of activities (closer to Antia and Kreimeyer's "full-participation" concept), while others prefer to focus on interpreting. It was also demonstrated that perception of competencies, only one of which was "interpreting," was correlated with a relationship with teachers. It is expected that as more professionally educated educational interpreters enter employment their roles will be less shaped by the perceived needs and preferences of other educators in the environment and more by the standards of the field of practice. Referring to Dean and Pollard's (2001) demand-control theory, the full-participation model of educational interpreting would seem to provide interpreters with more satisfying high-demand high(er)-control opportunities, leading to greater satisfaction and lower job-strain. That would seem to be a strong incentive for knowledgeable, experienced interpreters who are attracted to the positive aspects of being a professional in education working with deaf children, to support such role re-visioning. Regular studies measuring similar types of experiences might provide glimpses of such shifts over time.

Especially, as educational interpreting education moves into four year college and university settings, further examination of educational interpreters as team members is recommended. As more educational interpreters have standardized professionalizing education, studies of the impact of the various interpreting-related roles and service delivery on student outcomes, self-image, confidence, and achievement is more possible. The discussion to date for interpreters in schools has primarily been focused on what other activities they could reasonably be expected to do as part of their job. The inappropriateness of some expectations, in the face of not being educated for those responsibilities, is now addressed by various programs, including the EICP, a 30 hour blended vocational certificate program. When educational interpreters hold bachelor's degrees in educational interpreting, what is reasonable to expect of them? The original Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Code of Ethics emphasized that interpreters were strictly present as interpreters and did not have the education and preparation to participate in situations beyond that role. Now, as interpreters gain greater professional and college education, it may be appropriate for schools to explore and research the potential of tiered job descriptions for educational interpreters, expecting and benefiting more from those with greater ability to contribute to educational teams and missions, and compensating people appropriately.

It is also time for the field to face the need for interpreters to have lengthy apprenticeships, or internships. As it is, that additional time for situative learning is occurring by default, without supervision and at the expense of consumers of interpreting services and of the interpreters themselves. According to Dean and Pollard (2001), Witter-Merithew (1992) recommended that interpreter education include an learning application period involving feedback from multiple sources and the opportunity to integrate it immediately. I suggest that Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of "legitimate peripheral participation" within a community of practice may be a starting point. This concept is not one of informal learning or osmosis from simply being in the environment with skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced practitioners. "It crucially involves *participation* as a way of learning – of both absorbing and being absorbed in – the 'culture of practice. An extended period of legitimate peripherality provides learners with opportunities to make the culture of practice theirs." (p. 95). For years a diagram has been used by educational interpreting educators that shows two triangles, one upside down and fitted together side-by-side, to demonstrate the lessening supports necessary from the educational interpreter paired with the increasing capabilities and independence of the deaf student.²³ It is

this same concept that is learning in legitimate peripherality within a community of practice, as the newer interpreter is guided and supervised as s/he increasingly participates in the work. The linguistic and cultural immersion spoken of by many in this field can occur within a deliberate learning environment. Gradually newer practitioners become fully capable, the field renews itself, and the strains presented by Dean and Pollard (2001) related to insufficient preparation and low-control are lessened.

Interpreting requires deep and broad cultural and linguistic knowledge. That the communication being used is visual and visually-based (with the exceptions of invented signs that indicate specific English-related linguistic information) means the child is functioning in culture and language different from most of society. The interpreter must be technically proficient as well as professionally knowledgeable about sign language, natural visual language, and the culture that arises with them. Johnson and Witter-Merithew (in preparation) cite Schick's (in press) study related to graduation-to-competent-practice disparity of educational interpreters in 35 states and Canadian provinces. Of 2,100 interpreters 38% were able to demonstrate a 3.5 rating on the Educational Interpreting Performance Assessment, and 17% achieved a 4.0. Of the 2,100 interpreters, 46% had completed an Interpreter Training Program. They go on to quote Schick and I shall use part of it here as well:

about a quarter [of the interpreters] had also completed a B.A. degree. ... In fact, the average score of ITP graduates was below the common 3.5 standard, meaning that more than half of the ITP graduates do not meet states' minimal standards. As a group, these interpreters had seven years of experience, which indicates that students who have just completed an ITP might score even lower. (pp. 17-18)

Beyond the ITP curricula, mentoring has become an recognized need within the interpreting field in general. It is becoming more common within interpreting contracting agencies as they must help interpreters gain sufficient skills to function in the community. There is also the online project Teaching Interpreting Educators and Mentors' program from Northeastern University in Boston which offers a Master's degree and a four course mentoring program (see <http://www.asl.neu.edu/tiem.online/index.html>). This all appears to be an attempt to provide sign language and professional education that could more readily learned situatively. There has also been ongoing discussion and controversy regarding the applicability of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Code of Ethics for educational interpreting. Again, newer interpreters are challenged by understanding and integrating the professional knowledge it takes

years of experience to acquire. Yet a failure to do so can impact people and programs in ways that are slight to the more devastating violations of communication accuracy and ethics. It seems to make sense for interpreting education programs to take advantage of the thinking already available related to situated learning, such as Lave and Wenger's legitimate peripheral participation, and deliberately apply them to educational interpreting educational processes.

A first step along this path might be a study of the community of practice as it exists for educational interpreters: with which resources are they in contact (people or otherwise), what is the nature of the relationships, how often and for how long are they in contact. The types of relationships with people might include "question/answer," formal observation and discussion, consultative, and informal "hang out with." With this information a profile of the community of practice as created informally by educational interpreters can be more understood, explored, and incorporated into learning. It may be that the most appropriate focus for interpreting education at this time is actually the clarification, formalization, and accessibility of the community of practice.

Further exploration of the long-term impact of the professional participation and leadership contribution made by professionally educated educational interpreters is necessary. The entire field will expand into four-year institutions of higher learning. Historically, educational interpreters have not had the education to be teachers and guides of educational interpreters. Considering the number of them pursuing college educations, within an environment of rising standards, this group of people may be the edge of the field that changes that.

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GLOSSARY AND USAGE

American Sign Language (ASL) – The natural visual language used by members of the Deaf Community and Culture. Linguistic studies of ASL began in the late 1950s as Stokoe, an English teacher at (then) Gallaudet College notice that patterns within signing that caused him to believe it was a language, and not just useful gestures. His research revolutionized perceptions of Sign, and was the foundation of people’s understanding of the profound richness of ASL, and allowed instructional methods to be developed for teaching a visual language, which includes aspects that are not part of auditory language.

“deaf” versus “Deaf” – There is a body of literature developing related to people who identify themselves as part of the culture of people who identify themselves as member of the Deaf Community and Culture, those whose communication is visually-based, especially American Sign Language. It has become standard practice to capitalize “Deaf” when referring to a person who is a member of the Deaf Community.

“Deaf people” and “deaf student” versus “people who are deaf” and “students who are deaf” – While recognizing and respecting the full range of cultural and educational issues of culturally identified Deaf people, medical deafness, the presence of hearing-impaired and hard-of-hearing signers, and users of cochlear implants who also sign, for ease of reference “Deaf people” and “deaf student” is used in this paper. It is my experience that this linguistic structure (deaf student, Deaf people) is widely used within the Deaf Community and in deaf education circles.

Educational interpreter – In the larger context this term applies to an interpreter working in any educational setting, including post-secondary. In this paper, however, “educational interpreter” is exclusively used to mean interpreters in public educational settings.

Interpreter – One who does interpreting. It is also widely used as an umbrella term for the person who engages in the process of moving communication between people using ASL, or any sign system, and spoken English. Hence, there are many “interpreters” who cannot interpret.

Interpreting – The act of receiving a language, auditorily or visually, comprehending what the speaker intended to have be understood, determining the best manner in which to convey that meaning in a second language, and conveying that meaning in the second language in such a way that the recipient understands it as closely to the speaker’s intention as

possible. For RID's certification purposes "interpreting" means working between American Sign Language and spoken English. In common usage it has come to be an umbrella term for mediating between not only ASL and spoken English, but between any ASL-based sign language, or Manually Coded English system, and spoken English.

Local public school – As used here, the school children attend as designated by their local school district, no matter how far geographically.

Manually Coded English (MCE) – MCE is an umbrella term for invented sign systems. In the United States they are built upon the use of ASL sign vocabulary to represent specific English words. Generally they include signing in English word order, generally with the simultaneous mouthing of English, expanded with additional signs created to represent the vast array of parts of speech, tenses, prefixes and suffixes, and assorted words which either do not exist as separate vocabulary in ASL. Manually Coded English (MCE) systems are widely used in public schools based on the theory that if a deaf student has routine and pervasive access to English as it is spoken, via the use of MCE, they will learn it.

Pidgin Signed English (PSE) – Is a contact "language" which essentially uses American Sign Language vocabulary and grammar in more-or-less-like-English structure. PSE is largely a result of many hearing people learning less than intact forms of ASL, and Deaf people accommodating that form of "language" by using it. It is widely used, including by professionals, and is also decried by some as a "non-language" that provides a poor model for children learning ASL or English.

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) – The professional organization for sign language interpreters in the United States. It was established in 1964 at a Rehabilitation Services Administration sponsored national meeting at Ball State University. Development of a Code of Ethics soon followed, and certification of interpreters' skills began with the establishment of examinations in 1972.

Seeing Exact English (SEE II, more recently called SEE. A slighter earlier, phonemically-based "Seeing Essential English" has fallen out of use.) – In the late 1960s and early 1970s a group of educators, Gustason, Pretzing, and Zawolkow (1980) created English-based signs to use in combination with ASL to clarify the exact forms of English being spoken simultaneously with signed communication (for example, the word "walked" would use

the ASL sign for “walk” and the SEE indicator to show “-ed”.) The intention was for deaf children to be able to see the otherwise non-visible spoken English and learn English as hearing children do through routine use. The reality was that most people (especially parents of deaf children, interpreters in schools, and teachers of the deaf) learned SEE II without learning ASL, so it was widely used without the visual grammar and other prosodic and linguistic information that was to be part of its foundation. SEE II has been used almost exclusively in schools, primarily at lower grade levels. There was no appropriate way to evaluate an interpretation using SEE II until the development of the Educational Interpreting Performance Assessment.

Transliterating – The act of receiving a form of a language and conveying it in another form of that same language (e.g., listening to spoken English and interpreting into MCE). It often is used as a catch-all term for signing that uses ASL vocabulary in English word order, typically with mouthed English, and frequently with indicators of specific English. In its most English-like presentation, accompanied by mouthed English, it can enhance comprehensibility of spoken English for those who speech-read and know sufficient sign language. RID certifies transliteration by examination.

APPENDIX A

OVERVIEW OF THE EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETING

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

[The following was provided by Dr. Leilani Johnson on 4/12/05.]

The Educational Interpreting Certificate Program (EICP) is a unique distance learning opportunity, providing intensive academic and skill development experiences 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 enhance their services to K-12 students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Unlike traditional onsite sign language interpreter training programs, EICP takes the education to the interpreters.

EICP is a 30-semester hour program designed for working educational interpreters. It has adopted current approaches in adult education, cutting edge instructional 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 designed for a blended-technology delivery system making use of audioconferencing, videoconferencing, and Internet technologies throughout the academic year; and
- Intensive interpreting skill development is provided during a three-week face-to-face Summer Institute each summer of the three year program; and
- Mentors from throughout North America support the skill development during the academic year by video, print, and web-based interactions.

As a basis of the curriculum for educational interpreters, EICP adapted the national curriculum, the *Professional Development Endorsement System* (PDES), creating comprehensive, self-contained one- and two-credit hour courses. These self-contained courses are facilitated by subject matter experts, skills specialists, and language mentors. Participants who successfully satisfy EICP exit competencies receive a Vocational Certificate in Educational Interpreting from Front Range Community College, which was approved by the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System. More information is available at <http://frcc.cccoes.edu/~doit>.

APPENDIX B

INTRODUCTION TO THE EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETING PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

[The following is excerpted with appreciation from a manuscript of Schick & Williams (2004)
per communication with Dr. Schick, 4/13/05.]

The Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment, or IEPA, is a process that is designed to evaluate the interpreting skills of educational interpreters in a classroom setting (Shick & Williams, 1992). The IEPA is not limited to any one sign language or system, which is essential given the diversity of sign language used in the public schools. The tool can be used to evaluate interpreters who use Manually-Coded English, or MCE (English-like-signing), American Sign Language (ASL), typically viewed as the sign language of the adult deaf community, or Pidgin Signed English (PSE, often referred to as Contact Signing, Lucas & Valli, 1989), the type of English signing found among the adult deaf community (Bornstein, 1990; Lucas & Valli, 1989). There are also different versions of the EIPA for interpreters who work in an elementary school vs. as secondary setting. Videotaped stimulus materials are used to collect two samples of the interpreter's work. One sample is of the interpreter's Voice-to-Sign skill; translating or transliterating spoken English in the classroom environment into sign communication. The second sample is of the interpreter's Sign-to-Voice skills, translating or transliterating what a deaf child signs into spoken English. A specially-trained evaluation team, using an EIPA rating form, evaluates both samples on. ... (p.3)

The EIPA was designed to evaluate, and weigh during assessment, those aspects of interpreting that are necessary to support language and cognitive development. ... the classroom is using language and discourse in a manner that scaffolds language and cognitive development in the hearing students. It is very important that a tool used to evaluate educational interpreters assesses how well this special adult-to-child register and discourse is represented in the interpreting product on. ... (p. 7)

Each interpreter receives extensive feedback from the evaluation. They receive a copy of the rating form, with the averaged score for each rated item, as well as an average overall score. They receive written feedback concerning strengths and areas of need. Finally, they receive

suggestions about which overall areas are in need of development, focusing on those areas that would help them improve their abilities the most. ... (p. 14-15)

[For more information please see <http://www.classroominterpreting.org/EIPA/index.asp>]

APPENDIX C

FIRST EMAIL COVER LETTER, WITH ATTACHED INVITATION LETTER

Subject: Laurie Bolster's Project
Date: Monday, September 20, 2004 4:31 PM
From:
To:
Cc:

Dear former EICP students,

Attached is a special invitation by Laurie Bolster to you as an EICP Pilot, Cohort 1 or Cohort 2 completer. Please read the letter in it's entirety and respond prior to the October 4th deadline.

Thank you,

, Adm. Asst. III
Distance Opportunities for Interpreter Training Center
FRCC @ Lowry Campus
1059 Alton Way Box 7
Denver, CO 80230
303-365-4604 (TDD)

Check out our website: <http://frcc.ccoes.edu/~doit>

APPENDIX D

INVITATION LETTER



Distance Opportunities for
Interpreter Training Center
FRCC @ Lowry Campus
1059 Alton Way – Box 7
Denver, Colorado 80230
1-866-885-6087

September 20, 2004

Dear Educational Interpreting Colleague:

I hope all is well with you as you continue to use the skills and knowledge learned while a student at the DO IT Center. I am writing to tell you about an exciting opportunity!

Laurie Bolster, currently in Virginia, has designed a research project to study the experiences educational interpreters have with the increasingly urgent professionalization process unfolding nationally. Her research focuses on the perceptions – the entire range of experiences – of Educational Interpreting Certificate Program (EICP) students. What was it like to progress from working as an educational interpreter, going through an intense educational experience at a distance, and then moving on in your personal and professional lives?

From 1996 – 2003, almost two hundred students from about a dozen states completed the EICP. Nowhere else is there a group like you who can offer such an array of individual reflections on such an experience. All EICP Pilot, Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 members have been invited to be a part of this research. You can be part of making a difference for the field!

I know of no other occupation that has experienced such an intense, rapid, professionalization process as yours. School district administrators, program and policy developers, and legislators need to hear from you. This study will take about 45 minutes to complete, and the educational interpreters who piloted it said it was fun and easy. Come join me in getting your thoughts, suggestions, blood, sweat, and tears documented. –Laurie

Laurie has developed a questionnaire to be used for the research and is ready to begin the next stage of collecting data. To participate, please send an email message to Laurie at lifesgrand@earthlink.net no later than Monday, October 4th. She will correspond directly with you, filling you in on the project and your participation in it. If you would like to talk directly to her, please call her at (703) 534-2748.

There are just a couple things I want to make sure you understand. Laurie's research is part of her doctoral work at Virginia Tech and is independent of the DO IT Center's activities. She is not doing an "EICP Program evaluation." To protect your privacy, I have not given Laurie your personal contact information –*you must follow up with her directly*. I am only providing the opportunity for your involvement. Once you have made the connection, I believe you will be involved in changing the future. I hope you will consider being a part of the research project.

Sincerely,

Dr. Leilani J. Johnson, Director

PS: This letter is a follow-up to an email attachment that was sent Monday, September 20th to the address we currently have on file for you.



APPENDIX E

SECOND INVITATION EMAIL

Subject: From Laurie Bolster
Date: Saturday, October 2, 2004 7:33 PM
From: Laurie Bolster <lifesgrand@earthlink.net>
To: Leilani Johnson <Leilani.Johnson@frontrange.edu>

Dear Folks:

Two weeks ago Leilani sent you a letter introducing a study I am doing, and inviting you to participate (it's included below for reference). I am still refining the questionnaire, so the response date can be extended.

To participate, please send your email address to me by Monday, October 11th so I can send the information and URL to you: Lifesgrand@earthlink.net

THIS STUDY IS ABOUT ALL OF YOU, NO MATTER WHAT YOU ARE DOING NOW. Please don't let anything stop you from participating (even if you're really tired of the EICP... Leilani... me... distance education... the EIPA... computers... educational interpreting... whatever...).

I am trying to show the picture including you all, with as few holes as possible. Each of you, with your own experience over the last several years, is a unique part of the whole picture. If you are doing something now that is completely different from educational interpreting it doesn't matter.

The Educational Interpreter Professionalization study is intended to give you the opportunity to tell people about your experience of being an educational interpreter, participating in a specialized educational program, and what you've done since then. I have designed an online questionnaire that should take you about 45 minutes or so to complete, and you might really enjoy.

Here are some comments about the questionnaire from educational interpreters who have taken it:

-- "I have always hoped some one would ask us these questions... The questionnaire was easy and complete. I can't think of anything else to add."

-- "It gave me a chance to vent, and I needed to. We went through a LOT."

-- "I'm so glad you [Laurie] are doing this study and not some stranger. You'll understand what we tell you."

-- "It was easy and fun. I didn't notice the time and was surprised when I was finished!"

Please, send your email to me so I can send you the information, and you can participate. If you have any questions I'd be happy to talk with you.

Thank you for helping with this important study.

Warmly,
Laurie

Laurie Bolster
510 Greenwich St. Falls Church, VA 22046 (703) 534-2748

ATTACHMENT: Original Invitation Letter

APPENDIX F

EMAIL RESPONSE TO RECEIPT OF PARTICIPANT'S EMAIL ADDRESS

Subject: Re: EICP research project
Date: Monday, September 20, 2004 7:14 PM
From: Laurie Bolster <lifesgrandlb@earthlink.net>

Thank you for responding! I'll add your name to the distribution list for the study, and will be sending more information soon. Do encourage anyone else you know who completed the EICP to join in. This should be fun.

Laurie

(703) 534-2748

APPENDIX G

EMAIL ANNOUNCING QUESTIONNAIRE IS OPEN

Subject: Educ Interp Study
Date: Friday, October 15, 2004 12:53 PM [EST]
From: Laurie Bolster <lifesgrandlb@earthlink.net>
To:

Dear Educational Interpreting Study Participants,

It's time! The Educational Interpreters' Experience Questionnaire is NOW OPEN!

From now UNTIL MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1st at 6:00 AM you can use the website address below to respond. It is a rather comprehensive questionnaire but that allows plenty of time to complete it and even add thoughts later.

THANK YOU, each of you, for participating and completing the questionnaire. Your contribution matters a great deal to this work. If you are not doing educational interpreting now, please participate anyway - everyone's experience is part of the whole picture.

IMPORTANT: To leave the questionnaire and return to it, you must continue on the same computer you started on.

Also, for this, NO SHARING A COMPUTER with another participant. If two of you use the same computer to do the questionnaire, the program thinks it's the same person.

Here is the website address to the questionnaire:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=12049673961>

If you would like to receive results, please give me your email address at the very end.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Have fun!

Best wishes,
Laurie

(703) 534-2748

APPENDIX H

EMAIL RESPONSE TO PARTICIPANTS CATCHING UP TO GROUP

Subject: Educ Interp Study

Hi ,

How good to hear from you! I'm glad you got whichever communication finally worked so you can jump into this study and be heard. You bring an additional perspective to the process.

I sent the email below to the whole group last Friday afternoon, so you are fine for time. The URL for the questionnaire is towards the bottom.

Thank you for participating!

Enjoy,
Laurie

~~~~~

Dear Educational Interpreting Study Participants,

It's time! The Educational Interpreters' Experience Questionnaire is NOW OPEN!

From now UNTIL MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1st at 6:00 AM you can use the website address below to respond. It is a rather comprehensive questionnaire but that allows plenty of time to complete it and even add thoughts later.

THANK YOU, each of you, for participating and completing the questionnaire. Your contribution matters a great deal to this work. If you are not doing educational interpreting now, please participate anyway - everyone's experience is part of the whole picture.

IMPORTANT: To leave the questionnaire and return to it, you must continue on the same computer you started on.

Also, for this, NO SHARING A COMPUTER with another participant. If two of you use the same computer to do the questionnaire, the program thinks it's the same person.

Here is the website address to the questionnaire:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=12049673961>

If you would like to receive results, please give me your email address at the very end. Let me know if you have any questions.

Have fun!

Best wishes,  
Laurie  
(703) 534-2748

**APPENDIX I**  
**EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETER**  
**PROFESSIONALIZATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

[Delivered via SurveyMonkey.com    October 15 – November 1, 2005]

**1. WELCOME!**

If you are here, you are among the sign language interpreters who have worked in public education settings and have experienced an intense professionalization process involving education over the last few years. Even if you are doing something different now, YOUR experience is important to include.

This study is about your experience - it is not specifically about distance learning or about the EICP itself. Your participation allows others to more fully understand the experience you and your colleagues have had.

There are different methods for recording your responses on the following questionnaire so please note instructions for each response (for example, selecting one response versus "click all that apply"). The process is fairly straight-forward, just click in the circles or squares, click arrows on pull-down menus, or, when called for, type your responses in text boxes. At the bottom of pages click on the NEXT to move on.

The survey is anonymous, and there is no way for anyone to know what any single person said. If you provide contact information for further discussion at the end it will only be available to me, and not used for any other reason. Results will only be reported in groupings large enough to provide confidentiality.

This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of Virginia Tech. Your participation demonstrates your willingness and consent to be included in the study.

Thank you.  
Respectfully,  
Laurie Bolster

**2. Details for Reference**

The questionnaire is open to you from now until Monday, November 1st at 6:00 AM, Mountain Time. PLEASE, finish it. Every question is important.

There are 76 numbered items, that tend to take about 50 minutes, depending on individual differences.

YOU MAY LOG OUT AND RETURN to add more, or revisit, responses, but to do this you must use the SAME COMPUTER. If you use another computer it will start you over.

Please: ONE PARTICIPANT PER COMPUTER. If two people use the same computer the questionnaire program thinks it is the same person logging in and out, in and out.

THANK YOU! To go way back to the beginning of your journey ..... click NEXT.

**Sign Language and Interpreting Foundational Information**

This section includes questions related to the foundations of your involvement with sign language and interpreting, both informally and formally.

For each question, please select the answer that is most correct for you.

1. **What led you to learn to SIGN?** (Select one of the following)
  - Grew up around signers
  - Saw it and wanted to learn it
  - Learned in grade school
  - Met a deaf person socially
  - Worked with a deaf person
  - Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. **How did you first learn to sign?** (Select one of the following)
  - Grew up signing with family or friends
  - The grade school I attended taught sign language
  - Sign class(es) in the community
  - College sign class(es)
  - Learned from deaf acquaintance or friend
  - On the job working with deaf children
  - On the job working with deaf adults
  - Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. **What sign communication did you learn initially?** (Select one of the following)
  - ASL
  - PSE
  - MCE
  - Seeing Essential English
  - Signing Exact English (SEE II)
  - Signed English
  - Conceptually Accurate Signed English
  - Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. **What initially led you to learn to INTERPRET?** (Select one of the following)
  - Growing up around signers I learned to interpret
  - Saw it and wanted to learn more
  - To informally assist a deaf acquaintance or friend
  - Learned it as part of my job working with adults
  - Learned it as part of my job working with children
  - Made a career decision to become an interpreter
  - Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

5. **How did you FIRST learn to interpret?** (Select one of the following)
- Informally assisting deaf people in the community
  - Interpreting workshops
  - Interpreting classes in the community
  - College interpreting classes
  - 2 year ITP/IPP program
  - On the job experience with deaf adults
  - On the job experience with deaf children
  - Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
6. **Some interpreters say they "chose" the field of educational interpreting, others say the field "called" them, and others just found themselves doing it. How would you describe your own entrance into this field?** (Select one of the following)
- I chose the field of educational interpreting.
  - Educational interpreting called me.
  - I happened into it.
  - Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
7. **Before you enrolled in the Educational Interpreter Certificate Program (EICP), had you already completed an Interpreter Training Program (ITP) or Interpreter Preparation Program (IPP)?** (Select one of the following)
- No [Skip to #8]
  - Began an ITP/IPP but did not complete it [Skip to #8]
  - Yes
8. **What credential did you receive upon completion of that earlier ITP/IPP program?** (Select one of the following)
- Certificate of Completion
  - Vocational Certificate
  - AA/AAS degree
  - BA/BS degree
  - MA/MS degree
  - NA
  - Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
9. **Originally, what was your strongest motivation for applying to the EICP?** (Select one of the following)
- Compliance with rising standards and laws
  - To benefit the students I work with
  - To learn and grow
  - Opportunity to participate along with interpreting colleagues(s)
  - Pressure/encouragement from state/district/school representatives
  - Funding (free education)
  - Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

10. **What was your next strongest motivation for applying to the EICP?** (Select one of the following)

- Compliance with rising standards and laws
- To benefit the students I work with
- To learn and grow
- Opportunity to participate along with interpreting colleagues(s)
- Pressure/encouragement from state/district/school representatives
- Funding (free education)
- N/A
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

11. **BEFORE you began the EICP, how many years did you interpret FULL-time in educational settings for children?** (Select one of the following.) [Electronic version used a pull-down menu]

- |                         |                          |                               |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 10 | <input type="radio"/> 19      |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 11 | <input type="radio"/> 20      |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 12 | <input type="radio"/> 21      |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 13 | <input type="radio"/> 22      |
| <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 14 | <input type="radio"/> 23      |
| <input type="radio"/> 6 | <input type="radio"/> 15 | <input type="radio"/> 24      |
| <input type="radio"/> 7 | <input type="radio"/> 16 | <input type="radio"/> 25      |
| <input type="radio"/> 8 | <input type="radio"/> 17 | <input type="radio"/> Over 25 |
| <input type="radio"/> 9 | <input type="radio"/> 18 |                               |

12. **How many years did you interpret PART-time in educational settings for children?** (Select one of the following.) [Electronic version used a pull-down menu]

- |                         |                          |                               |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 10 | <input type="radio"/> 19      |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 11 | <input type="radio"/> 20      |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 12 | <input type="radio"/> 21      |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 13 | <input type="radio"/> 22      |
| <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 14 | <input type="radio"/> 23      |
| <input type="radio"/> 6 | <input type="radio"/> 15 | <input type="radio"/> 24      |
| <input type="radio"/> 7 | <input type="radio"/> 16 | <input type="radio"/> 25      |
| <input type="radio"/> 8 | <input type="radio"/> 17 | <input type="radio"/> Over 25 |
| <input type="radio"/> 9 | <input type="radio"/> 18 |                               |

13. **How many years did you provide solely SUBSTITUTE interpreting in educational settings for children?** (Select one of the following.) [Electronic version used a pull-down menu]

- |                         |                          |                               |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 10 | <input type="radio"/> 19      |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 11 | <input type="radio"/> 20      |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 12 | <input type="radio"/> 21      |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 13 | <input type="radio"/> 22      |
| <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 14 | <input type="radio"/> 23      |
| <input type="radio"/> 6 | <input type="radio"/> 15 | <input type="radio"/> 24      |
| <input type="radio"/> 7 | <input type="radio"/> 16 | <input type="radio"/> 25      |
| <input type="radio"/> 8 | <input type="radio"/> 17 | <input type="radio"/> Over 25 |
| <input type="radio"/> 9 | <input type="radio"/> 18 |                               |

14. Which of the following most closely describes how much experience you had interpreting for deaf adults? (Select one of the following)

- Very little, or no, experience interpreting for adults
- Some experience
- A lot of experience

15. How would you describe your overall interpreting proficiency prior to entering the EICP (including sign to voice and voice to sign)?

- |                                  |                       |                          |                       |                       |                       |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1                                | 2                     | 3                        | 4                     | 5                     |                       |
| Essentially<br>no<br>proficiency |                       | Moderately<br>proficient |                       | Highly<br>proficient  | Don't know            |
| <input type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

16. Which of one these did you PRIMARILY use when you were interpreting for children in an educational setting? (Select one of the following)

- ASL
- PSE
- MCE
- Seeing Essential English
- Signing Exact English (SEE II)
- Signed English
- Conceptually Accurate Signed English
- Don't know
- Not applicable
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

17. When you were interpreting for adults which one of these did you PRIMARILY use? (Select one of the following)

- ASL
- PSE
- MCE
- Seeing Essential English
- Signing Exact English (SEE II)
- Signed English
- Conceptually Accurate Signed English
- Don't know
- Not applicable
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**18. In general, how did each of the following respond to your participation in an online college program in educational interpreting?**

|                                                      | Encouraging and helpful | Supportive            | Neutral               | Not supportive        | Actively resistant    | Don't know            | N/A                   |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Family                                               | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Friends                                              | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other interpreters                                   | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Deaf student(s)                                      | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| School district faculty and staff (not interpreters) | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| School administrators                                | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**19. Here are some challenges working adults might experience with education, especially online and distance instruction.**

**For each statement, please indicate the degree to which each of the following was a problem for you.**

|                                                                            | 1<br>Not a problem    | 2                     | 3<br>Moderate problem | 4                     | 5<br>Huge problem     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Juggling other "must do" responsibilities (family, parents, 2nd job, etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The large amount of time necessary for homework                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Problems with technology, equipment, and software                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Adjusting to the online environment and requirements                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The amount of time and attention necessary to develop online relationships | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Isolation                                                                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Fatigue                                                                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The sacrifices of having no time for social/family/volunteer activities    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dealing with daily demands of home and family                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Outgrowing work situation                                                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**20. If there were any other huge problems not mentioned above what were they?**

---



21. **People in any educational programs often benefit from a variety of sources, including those "above and beyond" the planned course content.**

**With respect to the EICP, please rate the overall value to you for each of the following. 1 = NO value to 5 = Great value**

|                                                                                               | 1<br>No value<br>to me | 2                     | 3<br>Moderate<br>value to me | 4                     | 5<br>Great<br>value to<br>me | N/A                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Subject matter itself, course contents overall                                                | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/> |
| Interactions with program staff                                                               | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/> |
| Involvement with instructors/facilitators                                                     | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/> |
| Involvement with deaf professionals                                                           | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/> |
| Involvement with other interpreting students                                                  | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/> |
| Involvement with mentors                                                                      | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/> |
| Technological learning (for example, learning to use the web, software, online relationships) | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/> |

22. **During the EICP experience what did you learn along the way that has turned out to be the most helpful to you on the job? \_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

23. **What are two suggestions you would emphasize for future interpreting students participating in a distance learning program?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Adult learners have various experiences when they attempt to apply new skills and knowledge to their work environments. In the following situations, "My School" refers to the school in which you were working while you were in the EICP.**

**24. Please rate to what degree you agree, or disagree, with the following statements as they relate to your experience.**

|                                                                                                                                                                         | Strongly agree        | Agree                 | 50/50                 | Disagree              | Strongly disagree     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I feel my school had appropriate expectations of me when they first hired me as an interpreter.                                                                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My school seemed to value the new knowledge and skills I brought to the job from the EICP.                                                                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel my school adjusted its expectations of me as I gained more knowledge and skills.                                                                                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My school was willing to make changes to fit my needs while I was in the EICP.                                                                                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I wish my school had done more to help me get adjusted in using my new knowledge and skills on the job.                                                                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I felt pressured by colleagues in my school/district to continue being the same as I was before participating in the EICP.                                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I felt pressured by educators in my school/district to assume roles or responsibilities beyond my EICP education (for example, teaching, early childhood intervention). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**25. Rate the degree to which you agree, or disagree, with each of the following phrases completing the sentence:**

**I am sufficiently skilled and knowledgeable to:**

|                                                                           | Strongly agree        | Agree                 | 50/50                 | Disagree              | Strongly disagree     | Don't know            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Interpret in a K-12 educational setting.                                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Provide tutoring to deaf students.                                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Respond to basic questions about deafness that come up in public schools. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Teach basic sign language to children and staff.                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Provide communication-related information and input to the IEP.           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Provide inservices about educational interpreting to educators.           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

26. **I belong to the following: (Click all that apply. If an organization is in more than one, only click one category for it.)**

- A professional organization for interpreters such as RID
- Local organization or club focused on interpreting skill and/or knowledge development
- Deaf organization (such as NAD) or club
- Professional organization related to other field
- None
- Other (please explain)\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

27. **I participate in leadership activities such as: (Click all that apply.)**

- State RID affiliate activities
- Local interpreting organization activities
- Providing inservices to educators about interpreting
- Arranging local training/workshops for interpreters
- Providing interpreting mentoring
- Providing interpreting skill evaluation and feedback to interpreters
- Participating on an interpreting-related task force
- Writing for funds/grants
- Consulting about interpreting
- None
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

28. **How many different schools have you worked in as an interpreter since completing the EICP?**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Did not interpret in a school after completing the EICP
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

29. **Are you now working as an interpreter in a public school?**

- Yes - Full time
  - Yes - Part time
  - Yes - As a sub
  - No [**“No” respondents automatically skipped to question #45.**]
  - Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
- [“Other” respondents were sorted into Yes or No.]**

30. **What is your job title? [Questions from here through #45 were answered only by participants who were educational interpreters at the time of the survey.]**
- Interpreter
  - Educational Interpreter
  - Interpreter/tutor
  - Communication Aide
  - Special Education Aide
  - Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
31. **In which of the following settings do you interpret MOST of the time?**
- General education classrooms
  - Resource room
  - Special day school
  - Center-based program
  - Residential school
  - College classrooms (with high school students)
  - Community worksites (with high school students)
  - Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
- 
- 
32. **How many students are in your school building?**
- |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Less than 50          | 50 - 100              | 101 - 500             | 501 - 1000            | More than 1000        |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
33. **How would you describe your location?**
- |                       |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Urban                 | Suburban              | Rural                 |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
34. **How many interpreters are in your school building?**
- |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5 or more             |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
35. **Within the last year, what grade level student have you worked with regularly (at least weekly)? (Click all that apply.)**
- Pre-school
  - K - 5
  - 6 - 8
  - 9 - 12
  - Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

36. **Approximately what percent of your week is spent in these roles (you do not need to use them all, but the grand total needs to be 100%).**

- \_\_\_% Interpreting
- \_\_\_% Tutoring deaf student(s)
- \_\_\_% Job coaching with deaf high school students
- \_\_\_% Aide work
- \_\_\_% Clerical duties
- \_\_\_% Teaching sign language
- \_\_\_% Participating in meetings (IEPs, planning, etc.)
- \_\_\_% Interpreting support services (such as scheduling, observing, evaluating, etc.)
- \_\_\_% Other (Please specify in the question below.)
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ % [Automatically Computed Total]

37. **Other significant role(s) performed not included above:**

---

38. **Please indicate to what extent you agree with these statements.**

|                                                                                            | Strongly agree        | Agree                 | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree              | Strongly disagree     | Don't know            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| The classroom teachers with whom I work understand how to work with interpreters.          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| In general, my working relationships with regular classroom teachers are positive.         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| In general, my working relationship(s) with the teacher(s) of the deaf are positive.       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Part of my annual review includes an interpreting skills improvement plan.                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Part of my annual review includes an item related to knowledge/Continuing Education Units. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel respected in my school                                                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

39. **If an IEP instructs you to "meet the communication needs of the student," what are you MOST LIKELY to use? (Select one of the following)**

- ASL
- PSE
- MCE
- Signing Exact English (SEE II)
- Conceptually Accurate Signed English
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

40. **In that same situation, what sign communication would you guess the other school educators think you are using?** (Select one of the following)
- ASL
  - PSE
  - MCE
  - Signing Exact English (SEE II)
  - Conceptually Accurate Signed English
  - Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
41. **In what specific ways are you supported as a member of the educational team by the school system? (Click all that apply.)**
- Invited to IEP meetings as a participant/contributor
  - Provided with time off to attend workshops
  - Provided with monetary support to attend workshops or classes
  - Involved in student planning meetings
  - Provided with a permanent "home base" work space
  - Given lesson plans/lecture notes ahead of time
  - Provided or supported with mentoring opportunities
  - I am not supported as a educational team member
  - Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
42. **What is your involvement in the student's IEP? (Select the one, most accurate, response.)**
- I am included in IEP meetings and feel my input is valued.
  - I am included in IEP meetings and feel my input is NOT valued.
  - I am not included in IEP meetings, however, I am invited to provide input to IEP meetings in advance, either verbally or in writing.
  - I am involved in IEP meetings solely as the interpreter for the meeting.
  - I am not involved in IEP meetings.
  - Other (please explain)\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
43. **Examples of how my school makes me feel respected, and/or does not make me feel respected, are:**
- I feel respected at my school when:\_\_\_\_\_
- I do NOT feel respected at my school when:\_\_\_\_\_
44. **Examples of what I have done to help my school/district expand their understanding and use of interpreting services include:**
1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_

45. To what extent do you agree, or disagree, that each of the following is a **POSITIVE** aspect of being an educational interpreter?

|                                                 | Strongly agree        | Agree                 | Neutral               | Disagree              | Strongly disagree     | Don't know            |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Working with children in an educational setting | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Opportunities for growth                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Being part of a professional team               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Steady income                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Pay scale                                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Summers and holidays off                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Variety of responsibilities                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Participating in classroom behavior management  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Getting to watch students learn and grow        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Involvement with parents                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ease of finding jobs                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Opportunity to use sign language                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

46. Is there another reason you **LIKE** being an educational interpreter that needs to be mentioned? If yes, please do:

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**You are over half-way through!**

The next sections of the questionnaire relate to your current situation, professional development, and your perspectives.

Remember, this program allows you to log out, and return on the same computer to add more, right up until the website closes on Monday, November 1st, at 6:00 AM, Mountain Time.

47. **Need for Continuing Education**

Indicate one, two, or three areas of your **GREATEST** need for continuing education by putting a 1, 2, or 3 in the square (1 = Greatest Need, 2 = Second greatest, 3 =Third).

(If you have no further need for education, leave them all blank. If there is something else you greatly need that is not listed, there is space for that below.)

- Sign language skill
- Interpreting skill
- Deaf culture
- Child development
- Child language development
- Tutoring and instructional methods
- Mastery of specific academic subject matter
- Professional communication with educators
- Education systems and processes
- Additional supervised practicum

48. **Do you have any other great needs for education not listed above?**  
 If yes, please note it/them here: \_\_\_\_\_

49. **What is the status of your formal college education since completing the EICP?**
- Have completed a Bachelor's degree
  - Have completed an Associate's degree
  - Have entered, but not completed, a Bachelor's degree program
  - Have entered, but not completed, an Associate's degree program
  - Intend to begin a Bachelor's degree program within two years
  - Intend to begin an Associate's degree program within two years
  - Have no plans for further formal college education
  - Other (please specify)

50. **If you have begun, or completed, a degree program since the EICP, what was your major?**  
 \_\_\_\_\_

51. **People often train for an occupation and then, for a variety of reasons, do not work in it.**

**To what extent do you agree, or disagree, that each of the following is, or could become, a major reason for you to leave educational interpreting?**

|                                                                     | Strongly agree        | Neutral               | Strongly disagree     | Don't know            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| No position available (e.g., no deaf student in the school)         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To tend to my own family's needs                                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To return to school                                                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Isolation                                                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Professional growth in another area                                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| School system's non-acceptance of my interpreting-related education | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Conflicts about sign language or sign systems                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Doing behavior management                                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Parent related issues                                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Lack of respect from educators, or others, in the school or system  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To interpret with adults                                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| For a higher pay scale                                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

52. **If there is another strong reason you might leave educational interpreting, what is it?**  
 \_\_\_\_\_



**53. Please indicate how strongly you agree, or disagree, with the following statements.**

|                                                                                               | Strongly agree        | Agree                 | Undecided             | Disagree              | Strongly disagree     | N/A                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| If I had to do it over, I would still be an educational interpreter.                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I would encourage others to become educational interpreters.                                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I believe the knowledge and skill I have gained help me carry out a higher purpose in life.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I expect to leave educational interpreting within the next year or two.                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Completing the EICP helped change me into a more self assured and capable person.             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| When meeting other interpreters I am proud to introduce myself as an educational interpreter. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am a professional sign language interpreter.                                                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Overall, I am satisfied with my educational interpreting position.                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**54. Please write a brief ending for the following sentence, relating it to your professional and personal direction.**

**Based on my professional education, experience, and knowledge of myself, five years from now I expect to be....**

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**55. If you are NOT an interpreter in a public school now what is your primary employment?**

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**Attributes Necessary**

For the educational level at which you feel most knowledgeable, what attributes are most critical for interpreters working at that level?

56. For which level are you responding?

- Pre-school
- Elementary
- Middle school
- High school

57. What attributes are necessary for educational interpreters working at that level?

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**Important Specifics**

Your responses to these questions help build the picture of who all participated in this study. Results will be reported only in groups large enough to assure the confidentiality of individuals.

58. What is your age?

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59. What would you consider to be your identity?

- African American/Black
- Asian American
- Hispanic
- Native American
- White
- Other or Mixed (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

60. Please indicate your gender.

- Female      Male
- -

61. Relative to the economy in the area where you live, indicate how your current pay scale as an educational interpreter ranks in the community. "My pay scale is...."

- Very low      Low      About right      High      Very High      Don't know      N/A  
Not in educ.  
interp.
- - 
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - 
  -

62. Overall, what is your highest level of formal education (not just related to interpreting)?

- High school
- Vocational, or other certificate
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

63. How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements?

|                                                                                                        | Strongly agree        | Agree                 | Undecided             | Disagree              | Strongly disagree     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Educational interpreters should be required to hold a bachelor's degree in interpreting.               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Educational interpreters should be required to hold a bachelor's degree in an education-related field. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

64. Sometimes participants in educational programs have an "aha" moment when they realize they really are making progress in their program. If you had such a memorable experience, what were the circumstances and what was it you realized?

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65. In what state were you living when you applied for the EICP?

- Alaska
- Arizona
- Colorado
- Kansas
- Montana
- North Dakota
- Nebraska
- New Mexico
- South Dakota
- Utah
- Wyoming
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Just a Few More - You're almost through.**

Thank you for hanging in.

**66. Personal demands can make a big difference in the experience people have in educational programs. Please indicate, while you were in the EICP:**

|                                                                                                                                     | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | More than 4           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| How many children, ages infant through high school ages, lived with you in your home most of the time?                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| For how many adults with special needs did you have major responsibility (such as aging parents, adult children with disabilities)? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| How many other adults lived in your home with you most or all of the time (NOT including those counted above)?                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**67. What year did you complete the EICP?**  
 1999/Pilot    2001/Cohort 1    2002/Cohort 2  
                                           

**68. In which of these "tracks" did you participate?**  
 Knowledge and Skills (included Summer Institutes)  
 Knowledge only (no skill development classes)

**Continuing Growth of Interpreting Skills**

The role of interpreting skill development is a critical issue in the professionalization process. (For example, the EICP itself was designed to support people in gaining up to 1.5 levels on the EIPA over the course of the program.)

Knowing this is a sensitive issue for some people, and knowing it is kept in absolute confidence, please share the specifics of your own progress in skill development during and since the EICP. (If you did NOT take the exit exam at all, and/or you did NOT take another EIPA from somewhere else, please put an NA in the space.)

**69. As part of the EICP APPLICATION process you took an Educational Interpreting Performance Assessment (EIPA) pre-test. What rating did you receive on that assessment?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**70. When you completed the EICP you took an EIPA-based EXIT EXAM. What was your rating on that assessment? (NA = Did not take the exit exam.)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**71. If you have taken an EIPA from somewhere else, since completing the EICP, what rating did you receive on that assessment? (NA = Have not taken an EIPA elsewhere.)**

\_\_\_\_\_

72. Please indicate your completion to these sentences:

"Since enrolling in the EICP my own respect for:

|                                             | Much<br>lower than<br>before | Lower<br>than<br>before | About the<br>same as<br>before | Higher than<br>before | Much<br>Higher than<br>before |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| the field of Interpreting is                | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>         |
| the field of EDUCATIONAL<br>Interpreting is | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>         |

73. Do you have any additional comments you would like to add? (Perhaps related to educational interpreting, professionalization, the EICP, your life course....)

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74. Is there any question you wished had been asked but was not? If so, please write that question here and answer it. Thank you.

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**THANK YOU**

75. If you are willing to be contacted to discuss this survey for further clarification purposes, please provide the following information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

76. If you would like to receive a summary report of the results please enter your email address here (if you did it above I need it again). Please watch for the report after the beginning of the new year.

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

SK SK [<sup>24</sup>]

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<sup>1</sup> See B. Schick and K. Williams (1998), "Evaluating Educational Interpreters Using Classroom Performance" in B. Seal, (1998), *Best Practices in Educational Interpreting*, for a complete explanation of the assessment tool and process.

<sup>2</sup> When "educational interpreter" is used in this paper applied to a position, it means the position requires skilled interpreting and performance of additional duties related to working with children in the public school educational environment.

<sup>3</sup> In this study, public school employees with less than entry level interpreting skills who provide interpreting-like communication facilitation for a deaf child in a school are called "communication aides," regardless of their job title.

<sup>4</sup> The classic example of such cross-cultural interpreting is about the concept "state school for the deaf." Hearing such a term, people not familiar with Deaf culture might think of such a place in terms of cold institutions, for thrown away children whose parents did not want them, with mean house parents. A skilled interpreter can convey the concept in a way to convey the Deaf Community's actual relationship to the state schools – a feeling they are a warm home, where everyone could communicate—an oasis.

A skilled interpreter knows how to deal with the range of idioms that occur in English. Depending on the Deaf person's preference, interpreters can sign them to convey the meaning (e.g., "a horse of a different color" meaning whatever what just said is different from what was previously being discussed), or sign them so the Deaf person will know exactly what was said in English. Some people want to grasp the speaker's point, others want to know how the point was made in the speaker's language, and skilled interpreters accommodate both. Less skilled interpreters tend to focus more on the presented language and vocabulary and less on discerning and matching the larger realms of speaker and listener contextual frameworks and intentions. The less fluency in either language, the more focus on the words.

Sign language is a spatial, visual language. It has nothing to do with English. It developed from very different communication needs, much of which is related to the receptors, the eyes, being muscles rather than nerves, as in the ears. Eyes fatigue, ears do not. Eyes must be directed to receive information, ears far less so. Visual languages emerge in ways conducive to effective visual communication.

Sign language modifies the meanings of vocabulary by changing the shape of the sign itself, by changing where in space the sign is made, the speed with which it is made, and by changing the relationships to the signs associated with it. English changes meaning by changing the word itself or adding adjectives and adverbs. ASL can change meaning by changing the sign itself, the size of the sign, and the accompanying adjectival or adverbial *facial expression*. English changes the content of its words to make grammar, and adds more words, or different words (e.g., will go, will be going, went, gone, was going, was gone, was gone a long time ago, has been ..... etc.). ASL modifies the sign itself, where it is placed, and the speed of the production; and facial expression. English adds words to ask questions, sign language indicates different kinds of questions with different facial expressions. ASL has a category of visual communication that can convey entire conversations, classifiers, for which there are no English equivalents. Indeed, sign language students can watch a conversation including classifiers and not even "see" them because their minds have no reference for such "information." Classifiers are created by using the hands to show shapes, sizes, movement and relationship of things. A conversation about a garbage disposal repair, or how to do needlepoint or build a bookshelf would be rich with classifiers. On and on, the list goes, of what ASL does, can do, that signing students must learn from someone fluent. Tenses are presented primarily spatially. Negations can be so subtle that missing them is a common error for less skilled interpreters. Discussions about people, places, things, and concepts are not linked by words but by relationships established in space. ASL would never have any confusion such as "Jack told John Tim was going to the garage. First, he needed to stop by the store," in which we do not know who is going to the store.

In the entire discussion above, learning sign vocabulary was not mentioned. Learning sign vocabulary, and producing it in English word order, is what most interpreters functioning in public schools did. They did not have access to the rest of the language.

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<sup>5</sup> Per a survey of educational interpreters I did in Colorado in the fall of 1990, there were no IPP graduates working in schools beyond a 30 mile radius of the school which was northeast of Denver.

<sup>6</sup> A figure of 90% has been the figure used; however, Mitchell's 2004 work, based on the Annual Survey of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children and Youth (1999-2000), shows differently.

<sup>7</sup> Per documentation provided by C.L. Napier, Administrative Assistant for the EICP (February, 2004), from research she had done (July, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> Leilani, Johnson, Ed.D., was originally the director of the Educational Interpreting Program A.A.S program at Front Range Community College. She modified that program into the Educational Interpreting Certificate Program, a vocational certificate program. She has also researched and published regarding educational interpreters.

<sup>9</sup> The reader interested in further information about professionalizing of occupations is referred to Silva, M.K. (2000), *Accreditation, Knowledge, and Strategies of Professionalizing Occupations*, doctoral dissertation which appears very thoroughly researched at the Pennsylvania State University Graduate School of Education Policy Studies.

<sup>10</sup> Some states established goal standards for interpreting skill early, and attempted through traditional means (Interpreter Preparation Programs and weekend workshops) to meet the standards. One example is Virginia. The first time a grant was issued from a State Department of Education to upgrade educational interpreting occurred in Virginia in 1989. (Personal communication from Brenda Seal, January 2005). Virginia expected 100% compliance with the standards for educational interpreters by 1995. By September, 2003 24% of Virginia's public school interpreters had met the standard (Author's conference notes: B. Seal, presenter, "Psychological Profiles of Sign Language Interpreters," at the Virginia Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Conference, 9/13/03.)

<sup>11</sup> American Sign Language is, therefore, based on French Sign Language and has nothing at all to do with English. Further demonstration of the independence of signed languages from spoken language is that British Sign Language, even though its users are from an English speaking country and probably also use English for reading and writing, and for communication with non-signers (the same as do Deaf American signers), is no more comprehensible to ASL users from the United States than Japanese Sign Language.

<sup>12</sup> In the order of reference, the laws were: 1965 Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendments (Public Law 8-333); 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act, Section 504; 1975 Education of All Handicapped Children Act; 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II and III.

<sup>13</sup> The programs were the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (at the Rochester Institute of Technology), California State University at Northridge, St. Paul Technical Vocational Institute, Delgado Community College, and Seattle Community College.

<sup>14</sup> *Martin Luther King Jr. v Ann Arbor Sch. Dist.*, 473 F.Supp 1371 (E.D. Mich. 1979), and *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1973).

<sup>15</sup> Front Range Community College, in Aurora, Colorado, used instructors from across the United States and Canada to offer the EICP for in-state tuition to working educational interpreting students from 14 states. The last two cohorts will complete the 30 credit hour vocational certificate program in the summer of 2005. In the fall of 2005 the reconfigured program will move to the University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado, and be reconfigured as a bachelor's degree.

<sup>16</sup> Per email from C. Napier, EICP Administrative Assistant, 4/20/04, as updated via email from L. Johnson, 3/7/05.

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<sup>17</sup> According to the EICP records at Front Range Community College in Denver, Colorado, 138 of the 189 students in the first three cohorts passed the interpreting skills exit exam and graduated (73%). The breakdown by cohorts is: 81% of the Pilot cohort, 71% of Cohort 1, and 74% of Cohort 2 graduated.

<sup>18</sup> These two people had graduated from the Educational Interpreting Program at Front Range Community College, an AAS predecessor of the EICP that had one cohort.

<sup>19</sup> According to Dr. Leilani Johnson, less than half of the students who do not graduate take advantage of the opportunity to retake the exit exam, and, of those who do, about half pass it.

<sup>20</sup> An analysis of subgroups of participants' first sign language by location (urban, suburban, rural) yields subgroups too small to use statistically, though it does seem a higher percentage of people in rural areas claim PSE. It also seems to me that people who actually have weak ASL skills may be unwilling to say they are using ASL and are more willing to claim use of PSE. It may be that people may think signed language is not ASL unless it is accurate and fluent, or, perhaps they think it would be offensive to Deaf people to claim one is using ASL when one's skills are less developed.

<sup>21</sup> The phenomenon of "trashing," or dragging one's successful colleague back down, is often used in parlance among professionals in work related to feminism and minority groups. Perhaps that is what some of the participants experienced.

<sup>22</sup> As this study is completed an expanding consumer of skilled interpreters is emerging, Video Relay Services (VRS). Historically, educational interpreting has served almost as an apprenticeship for interpreters as most new IPP graduates enter the field via educational interpreting and as they gained skills many moved on to better paid positions with adults (Bowen-Bailey, 1996). In 2001, the Federal Commerce Commission' Video Relay Services began, and now, in 2005 is expanding rapidly. VRS requires interpreting of the highest skill levels and creating enormous demand for interpreters.

<sup>23</sup> While many have used this diagram, my best information is the first use of the diagram and explanation was by Lindsey Antle, long time interpreting educator in Colorado.

<sup>24</sup> "sk" is the closing used by deaf and hearing people signing off from an interactive typed verbal communication, historically conducted over phone lines using a TTY (teletypewriter), now also done with computers. I have heard it reported to mean "signal kill," "send kill," or the more user friendly, "sealed with a kiss." It means "nothing more will follow—this communication is complete." It seemed appropriate for the end of this questionnaire.



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## VITAE

### LAURIE A. BOLSTER

**lbolster@vt.edu**

#### **Education**

Ph.D. in Adult Learning and Human Resource Development

Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, May, 2005

M.P.A. in Public Administration, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs

M.A. in Rehabilitation Counseling, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley

#### **Professional Experience**

Course Developer, Instructor, Facilitator and Mentor for On-line Post-Secondary Program

Educational Interpreting Certificate Program/Front Range Community College at Lowry Campus Denver, Colorado 80030 (Contracted part-time, July 1999 – present)

Certified Sign Language Interpreter

Contracting with interpreting agencies off and on for many years, currently in the Washington, D.C. area.

Senior Consultant

Colorado Department of Education / Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB)

33 N. Institute St. Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903 (October, 1989 to June, 1999)

Responsibilities included:

Implement state law requiring all public school sign language interpreters to demonstrate minimum qualifications, including management of interpreting skills via videotaped assessment and all documentation/data. Arrange or provide training of evaluators, maintain high validity and reliability. Collect and maintain results and collaborate with research efforts.

Assess training needs for sign language and interpreting throughout Colorado public schools and collaborate with post-secondary programs to provide a continuum of education.

Coordinate, promote, and oversee the sign language evaluation (Sign Communication Proficiency Interview) required of CSDB employees and offered to public school teachers. Arrange or provide training of evaluators.

Develop and provide inservices to school district service providers in cooperation with school district administrators.

#### **Peer-reviewed Publication**

Schick, B., Williams, K., & Bolster, L. (1999). Skill levels of educational interpreters working in public schools. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 4(2), 144-155.

#### **Professional Affiliations**

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf – Certificate of Interpreting/Certificate of Transliterating

*Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, a peer-reviewed journal – Assistant Editor

Phi Delta Kappa, professional association for educators