

Reducing Your Grading Time: Student Self-Assessment Practices That Work

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Abstract

This paper outlines efforts to teach critical thinking skills for students and reduce grading time. Faculty in the educational interpreting program stopped providing direct feedback on their interpreted work and implemented a self-assessment only system of assessment. As part of this process students were taught and then graded on the efficacy of their self-assessment of their own interpreting work. This has fundamentally altered program and course assessments and reduced the amount of time it takes for grading and evaluation. Findings indicate implementing self-assessments throughout each course, improves students' actual interpreting performance as evidenced by higher Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) ratings. This paper details the specific actions taken to implement a system of self-assessment, and what a completely recursive self-assessment curriculum looks like.

Keywords: self-assessment, interpreting pedagogy, grading.

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Reducing Your Grading Time: Student Self-Assessment Practices That Work

I have yet to meet a faculty member who wants to do more grading. But, without grading, how are faculty able to formatively guide students' performance? Our answer to reducing grading time, but *improving* outcomes, was to adopt an entirely student self-assessment paradigm.

The four-year Modern Languages Program in ASL at Clemson University has an optional ASL-English Educational Interpreting specialization. There is some evidence suggesting the field of ASL-English interpreting in America is moving toward more specialized areas of instruction in order to provide appropriate learning opportunities in terms of systems of knowledge, terminology and discourse features for essential domains such as medical, legal or education interpreting (Witter-Merrithew & Nicodemus, 2010). The need for a specialized curriculum in educational interpreting was clearly identified by one public school administrator's remarks, "interpreter training programs tend to focus on producing community interpreters rather than Educational Interpreters" (p. 34) and "the major problem is finding interpreters that can distinguish educational interpreting from community interpreting" (National Center on Deafness, 2007, p. 34).

Within this context, along with general education requirements, the ASL-English Educational Interpreting specialization students engage in 26 credit hours of second language acquisition studies. This coursework is aligned with the Standards for Learning ASL (ASLTA, 2008) and the South Carolina Academic Standards for American Sign Language (2009).

With the foundational language and cultural competencies, students take a series of six courses as part of the educational interpreting curriculum. They include:

ASL 3150 Survey of Educational Interpreting: Presents an overview of the ASL/English Interpreting Profession in public schools. Includes discussions on the role, function, and aptitudes of Educational Interpreters, the bilingual and bicultural context, the history of interpreting, the principles of professional practice, the laws that affect educational interpreting, and the analysis of the impact of classroom variables on accessibility and interpretability.

ASL 3000 Fingerspelling and Numbers in ASL: Advanced development of the manual alphabet (fingerspelling) and the numerical system in American Sign Language, with extensive practice in both expressive and receptive skills.

ASL 3200 Interpreting in Elementary Schools: Introduces students to interpreting in the elementary classroom. Includes analysis of the discursive features of elementary classrooms; translation of materials encountered in elementary classrooms; rendering of interpretations of elementary classroom discourse both consecutively and simultaneously; and assessment of the effectiveness of interpreted products.

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ASL 3250 Interpreting in Secondary Schools I: Introduces students to interpreting in a high school classroom. Includes: analysis of the discursive features of several high school courses; translation of materials encountered in high school classrooms; rendering interpretations both consecutively and simultaneously; and assessment of the effectiveness of interpreted products.

ASL 4200 Interpreting in Elementary Schools II: Continuation of ASL 3200. Advanced analyses of elementary school curricular discourse; rendering interpretations of elementary school classroom discourse simultaneously; preparation and interpretation of presentations; and assessment of the effectiveness of interpreted products.

ASL 4250 Interpreting in Secondary Schools II: A continuation of ASL 3250. Advanced analyses of high school curricular discourse; rendering interpretations of high school classroom discourse simultaneously; preparing and interpreting presentations; and assessment of the effectiveness of interpreted products.

In terms of exit standards, all students take the ASL-PSE version of the EIPA assessment (see Schick & Williams, 2004; Schick, Williams, & Kupermintz, 2005) both at the beginning of their first interpreting course (Elementary Schools I or Interpreting in Secondary Schools I) and in the middle of their last interpreting skills course (Elementary Schools II or Interpreting in Secondary Schools II).

The EIPA is a psychometrically valid and reliable instrument, specifically designed to evaluate the bi-directional aspects of interpreting necessary to support language and cognitive development in elementary and secondary classroom settings (Schick & Williams, 2001). Educational Interpreter samples are assessed using a standard Likert scale from zero (no skills) to five (advanced) on 38 specific competencies across four major domain areas including:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| I. Sign to Voice: | Interpreting a series of classroom lectures |
| II. Voice to Sign: | Interpreting an interview with a student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing |
| III. Vocabulary: | Assessment of the vocabulary, fingerspelling, and number production and reception |
| IV. Overall Factors: | Assessment of the overall factors in the interpreted product |

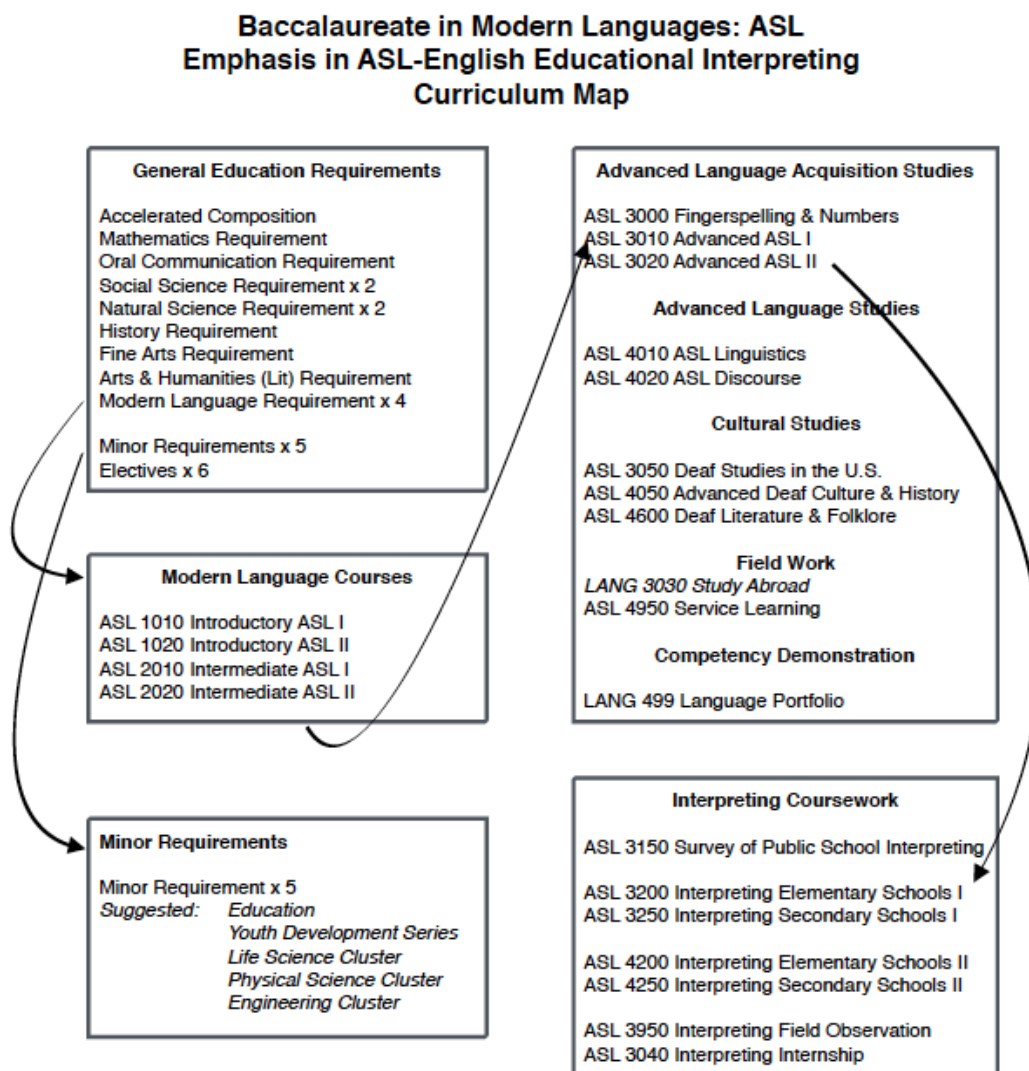
An overview of the program curriculum map can be found in Figure 1. Profiles of performance expectations for Educational Interpreters functioning at various levels can be found in Appendix A.

1. Our previous approach to grading

Historically, faculty used to grade student work using several pre-fabricated rubrics or co-created criteria with students. These assessments were external to the student as only faculty used them. Each student would then submit interpreting samples either live or by recording and faculty would spend countless hours reviewing video submissions and providing detailed feedback on portions of the interpretation that were effective and what components needed more development. Students would take that feedback and either redo the interpreted texts or focus on the skills needing development in the next interpreting recording. Often though, students would not, or could not, address the issues faculty had identified and there was only minor improvements in performance. In other words, students had no investment in the discrete skills that needed attention and frankly just ignored the feedback faculty spent hours documenting.

In addition, there were no standardized, consistent criteria for performance, nor much opportunity for students to develop self-assessment skills. Faculty were swamped with grading and students did not have any buy-in to the assessment process. How were we promoting professional interpreters who could think critically?

Figure 1. Curriculum Map



2. Critical thinking

Critical thinking is defined as an “intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action” (Scriven & Paul, 1996, p. 1). From this definition, there can be little doubt that the work of ASL-English interpreters involves significant critical thinking skills.

Higher education has shifted from pedagogical approaches based on teaching to approaches focused on student learning (Fitzmaurice, 2010) with the overall goal “to produce graduates who are critical thinkers, independent learners, and reflective and ethical citizens who are deeply committed to lifelong learning” (Napier, 2011). Learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning (Kiraly, 2000) which requires empowering

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learners as “autonomous thinking individuals whose capacity for meaning-making is no less valuable than that of the instructor” (Varney, 2009, p. 29).

“Often faculty [in general undergraduate education] hold higher-order thinking as a goal, but it is not clear that their instructional practice goes as far as it might to help students develop their higher-order thinking” (Ludwig 2000, Technology Section). For example, Kowalczyk, Hackworth, and Case-Smith (2012) found gaps between the perception of critical thinking and instructors’ ability to promote such in the classroom and note instructors frequently want further professional development in the area of developing critical thinking skills.

Thomas, Martin, and Pleasants (2011) argue that college students in general become disengaged with the assessment process in higher education. Students seem to learn to be “competitive, to seek external approval rather than trust their own creative instincts, and to avoid making mistakes at all costs. Many learn that tests are traps, tricking them into failing” (Fenwick & Parsons, 2009, p. 19). Thomas, Martin, and Pleasants (2011) contend the best way to remedy such disengagement is for all students in all disciplines to practice making judgments about their own learning and direction through self- and peer-assessment activities.

Given “new knowledge and habits of behavior are only incorporated into long-term changes when learners develop strategies and criteria for monitoring their own ongoing performance” (Fenwick & Parsons, 2009, p. 5), Wiggins and McTighe (2005) argue “we need to put students in a position to learn far more, on their own, than they can ever learn from us” (p. 44) through self-assessment.

Toward this notion, McDonald and Boud (2003) trained general education high school students in self-assessment techniques, showing that students’ performance on end-of-semester exams was much better for those who had been trained in self-assessment. In other words, it is possible to learn effective self-assessment skills (Kruger & Dunning, 1999; McDonald & Boud, 2003). Ross (2006) indicates the most effective approach to teach self-assessment and critical thinking is for teachers and students to clearly delineate the standards or criteria beforehand. Thomas, et al. (2011) found that cooperatively determining the criteria is an important factor, with students reporting that providing the assessment metric beforehand was very helpful.

Specific to ASL-English interpreting education, Winston (2005) asserts that it is vital that students develop the “higher order thinking and analysis skills that interpreters need to be competent practitioners” (p. 219). Toward this end, in an analysis of the teaching goals of ASL-English interpreter educators in the United States, Fitzmaurice (2010) found the teaching goals of interpreter educators place far more emphasis on the development of higher order thinking skills than do educators from most other disciplines. These findings echo those of Winston (2005), who found that interpreter educators “valued activities that lead students toward constructing their own knowledge through critical thinking, decision making, and self-assessment” (p. 220).

Stauffer (2011), for example, argues that “an interpreter’s ability to self-assess is a fundamental requirement for determining readiness to accept an assignment and for setting realistic goals for self-guided continuing education” (p. 1). Patrie (2004) also stresses the importance of self-assessment in terms of improving performance, and Winston (2005) reminds us that “interpreting educators have long recognized the need to help students develop competence in self-assessment” (p. 212).

Stauffer (2011) suggests that faculty use self and peer assessment as part of classroom feedback while noting the lack of empirical evidence to support the efficacy of this approach. Examining the accuracy of self-assessment on students’ ASL competency, Stauffer found strong correlations between student and faculty assessments, suggesting that students have a “moderate ability to assess their ASL competency similarly to their instructors” (p. 89). Addressing the issue of calibrating self-assessments with external criteria, Bowen-Bailey, Gordon, Jones and Shaffer (2013) report that teaching focused specifically on specific EIPA competencies tended to improve working educational interpreter’s EIPA score by 0.25.

As this literature suggests, educators believe higher order thinking skills such as self-assessment are essential skills to be taught (Cross, 2005; Ludwig, 2000; Kowalczyk, et al., 2012). Within interpreter education, there is an added emphasis on developing higher order thinking skills in future interpreters (Winston, 2005; Fitzmaurice, 2010). More specific to self-assessment skills, there is evidence that self-assessment helps engage higher education students (Thomas, et al., 2011) and can be taught (Kruger & Dunning, 1999; McDonald & Boud, 2003; Srinivasan, et al., 2007; Redwood, et al., 2010) in a variety of academic disciplines.

With the goal of reducing the amount of grading time of faculty and to better prepare students for the autonomy of the interpreting field (Winston, 2005; Stauffer, 2011), we made some significant teaching and assessment revisions.

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3. What changed teaching looked like

With the foundational idea that critical thinking could be evidenced in self-assessment tasks and that interpreting students could learn post-hoc self-assessment skills with guidance from teachers, we changed our teaching and grading approach. In brief, we eliminated the direct teaching of discrete interpreting skills and moved towards the teaching of self-assessment and reducing the amount of grading time.

Using Andreade and Valtcheva (2009) findings to promote learning through self-assessment, we adopted the principles that faculty must: raise awareness of the value of self-assessment; provide access to clear criteria; provide models of self-assessment; provide direct instruction in self-assessment; give opportunities for extensive practice; and, provide opportunities to revise and improve performance. With these principles in mind, students were provided the following descriptions at the beginning of each interpreting skills courses:

The objectives in these interpreting skills courses are to engage interpreting students in reflective practice. Interpreters work in isolation and are ultimately the only person in a given interpreting setting with access to both languages and thus the ability to determine the effectiveness of an interpretation. For this reason, it is critical that interpreting students be well able to *self-assess* their own interpreting work both in vivo and after the fact. The ability to self-assess, reflect, and improve performance are the foundational underpinnings of all interpreting coursework.

Assessment is not about picking out a specific sign or a specific mistake, rather a reflective examination of *patterns of behaviour* with specific examples to support such observations. Then reflecting on those patterns to determine causes, and then revising the interpreting work (aka redoing it) to improve the interpreted product.

My role in this adventure is to provide you with ample opportunities with a variety of different texts to practice but to also guide you as you develop your assessment skills. Thus, when I am examining your interpreted products, I am not looking for areas of strengths or weaknesses in the interpretation per se, rather I am looking for the efficacy of your self-assessment.

As with many interpreter educators we retained Performance Based Assessment (project-based assessments) as both formative and summative evaluations of progress (Price, Pierson & Light, 2011). Students generated six major projects throughout each term. The first and final project focused on English to ASL interpreting and were the same text to serve as a metric of student growth. For each of the remaining projects, two texts focused on ASL-English target interpretations and two texts focused on English-ASL interpreting. Each project text was as close to an authentic representation (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) of classroom interpreting and challenges as possible. In addition to the video recording of their interpretation, students were required to submit a self-assessment reflection paper. Students were provided the following directions:

For each project you are responsible for reviewing your interpretation of the project materials and further submitting a reflective paper outlining your self-assessment of your performance.

Each self-assessment should be non-judgmental and deal with a variety of issues with specific statements supported by evidence. Insights should be of high quality and detailed. For example, to suggest you did well on ‘fingerspelling’ is too broad; you must be specific. A positive tone should be evident throughout the paper and use appropriate academic and linguistic terminology. Each self-assessment paper will adhere to APA format and address the following major headings: Introduction, Areas of Strength, Areas Needing Development, Strategic Plan and Conclusion.

Both Areas of Strength and Areas Needing Development will focus on three aspects each. For each Strength or struggle, your paper will identify patterns of performance – meaning at least three occurrences or examples of a specific features or item. Each example should be accompanied by a time code citation and detail in text what you are seeing. For example, “The palm orientation is

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facing the interpreter when fingerspelling A-B-S-O-L-U-T-E (02:39). An incorrect palm orientation specific to fingerspelling also is evident at time marker 04:20 when....”

The Strategic Plan section should address specific objectives the interpreter aims to achieve.

Actions outlined, must be detailed and measurable to address each objective. The plan must consider questions such as: How do you plan on reaching your objective? What specific activities will you do? How often? How long? And finally, interpreters must succinctly identify how they will measure their progress or improvement.

All Self-Assessment Reflection papers must adhere to APA format and style. (Note: The latter Strategic Plan section can include first-person references). All papers are to be submitted to Canvas by the beginning of class on the due date.

According to Ross (2006) for self-assessment to be effective, the criteria must be negotiated between teacher and students, students should be taught how to apply the criteria, students must receive feedback on their self-assessment and teachers should help students use assessment data to develop an action plan to improve their performance.

In each interpreting skills course, faculty spent the first four weeks reviewing the EIPA competencies (Schick & Williams, 2004). In the beginning, interpreting courses throughout the first two weeks, faculty modeled self-assessment of their own video-recorded interpretations by reviewing their interpreted work using the EIPA competencies during class time for students to observe. Gradually, students began to peer-assess faculty interpretations using the same competencies. Initially this type of modeling is similar to selective watching (Winston, 2000) to assist students in both recognizing and identifying the individual criterion in the EIPA metric while also modeling how to self-assess.

Using a flipped classroom approach (Knigga-Daugherty, 2014), students were required to submit two hours (120 minutes) of interpreting homework per week and were provided the following directions:

In this course, we meet for 3.0 hours per week. This means you will have approximately 9.0 hours of homework per week. This means you will be required to ***interpret for 120 minutes per week of new material***. The remaining 7.0 hours should be spent reviewing your interpretations, performing back translations, reflecting on your work, fixing specific errors, and reinterpreting material.

All interpreting (homework, classwork, and project interpreting) work was uploaded to GoReact (<http://goreact.com>) in order to allow students to submit recorded interpreting work, review each submission, and leave time-coded observations (figure 2).

Students also self-assessed all interpreting work using the EIPA metric (see Schick & Williams, 2001, 2004), which is available for public use. Figure 3 illustrates the online EIPA rubric students used.

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Figure 2: GoReact Recording

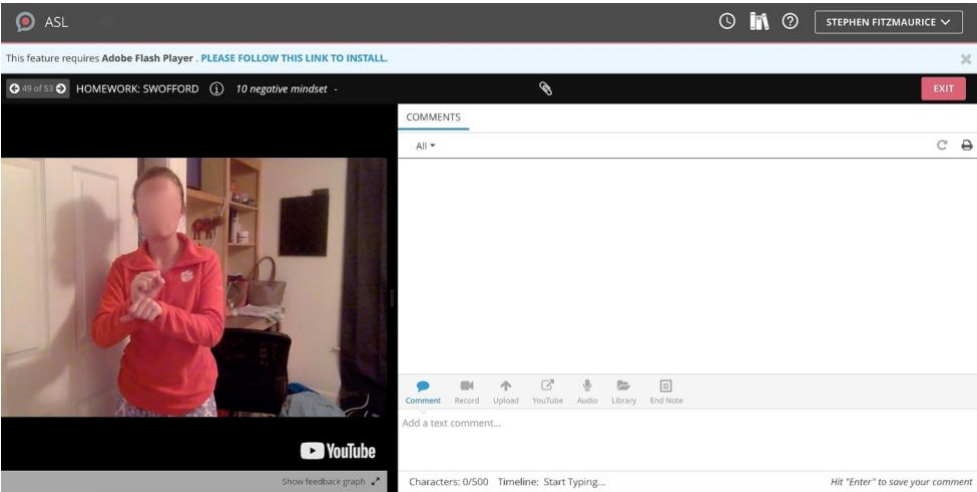


Figure 3: EIPA online rating rubric

3. Roman I: Voice to Sign						
	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
A. Stress/emphasis for important words or phrases	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. Affect/emotions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. Register	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. Sentence boundaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. Sentence types/clausal boundaries indicated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F. Production and use of non-manual adverbial/adj. markers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G. Use of verb directionality/pronominal system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
H. Comparison/contrast, sequence and cause/effect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I. Location/relationship using ASL classifier system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
J. Follows grammar of ASL or PSE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K. XXXXXX Use of Eng. Morphological markers XXXXXXXX	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
L. Clearly mouths speaker's English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Roman II: Sign to Voice						
	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
A. Signs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. Fingerspelling & Numbers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. Register	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. Non-manual behaviors & ASL morphology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. Speech production: rate, rhythm, fluency, volume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F. Sentence/clausal boundaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G. Sentence types	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
H. Emphasize important words, phrases, affect/emotions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I. Correct English word selection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
J. Adds no extraneous words/sounds to message	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Each project was graded by the students' self-assessment reflection submission in terms of the organization, objectivity, evidence the student provides for their self-assessment, their strategic plan to address areas of weakness; and the mechanics of the paper itself. Figure 4 is the rubric used for grading self-assessment reflection papers.

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Figure 4. Project Grading Rubric

Organization <i>Reflection is organized for optimal understanding and accurately focuses on observable patterns of the most important elements of the performance being assessed.</i>	3.0 pts Excellent	2.0 pts Proficient	1.0 pts Sufficient	0.0 pts Insufficient	3.0 pts
Objectivity <i>Reflection is non-judgmental in every part and honestly deals with every issue. Examples of three patterns of items done well and three areas needing improvement are identified.</i>	3.0 pts Excellent	2.0 pts Proficient	1.0 pts Sufficient	0.0 pts Insufficient	3.0 pts
Evidence <i>Statements are specific in all cases and always accompanied by strong evidence statements with time codes. All the most important factors are present and each insight is unique and high quality.</i>	9.0 pts Excellent	6.0 pts Proficient	3.0 pts Sufficient	0.0 pts Insufficient	9.0 pts
Strategic Plan <i>A positive tone appears throughout and every area of improvement is provided with focused, high quality suggestions. A clear, action plan with accountability is outlined.</i>	9.0 pts Excellent	6.0 pts Proficient	3.0 pts Sufficient	0.0 pts Insufficient	9.0 pts
Mechanics <i>Style is academic with terminology adequately explained and reading flows. No grammatical errors or spelling or vocabulary errors. Syntax is both simple and complex without causing a reader to pause in order to make sense. Uses mostly active voice, headings, clear transitions and cohesive ties. APA format is followed for all aspects of the paper (citations, headers, numbers, series, quotes, tables/figures, references, etc.).</i>	6.0 pts Excellent	4.0 pts Sufficient	2.0 pts Rating Description	0.0 pts Insufficient	6.0 pts
Total Points: 30.0					

Faculty then read each reflection paper, checked the time stamped citation identified by the individual student and occasionally spot-checked other brief segments of the video submission. This grading process did not take considerable time.

It was the responsibility of each student to enact their strategic plan in their homework interpreting and hold themselves accountable to each explicit step they had outlined. Faculty then guided subsequent classroom discussions about struggles with enacting each students' plan. Student peers supported each other in enacting their own individual plans and offer strategies, support and challenging stimulus materials.

In terms of grading, faculty no longer had to view hours and hours of interpreting samples in each course. Rather, faculty spot-checked each students' interpreting homework submissions, but these infrequent demands greatly reduced grading time. For example, one faculty member elected to view ten minutes of interpreting from each student every week. From there, the faculty member was able to gather a sense of the students' performance and provide formative feedback and guidance on the student's self-assessment of their own interpreted products. This significantly reduced grading time for faculty but also enabled the faculty member to check on the students' progress on their strategic plan.

4. Findings

The 2012-2014 group consisted of 11 students (n=11), and the 2014-2016 group had six students (n=6), all between the ages of 20-24. In the 2012-2014 group, 91% of the students were female and all students in this group

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were Caucasian. In the 2014-2016 classes, 83% of the group were female and 17% male. Eighty-three percent of this latter group were Caucasian and 17% were African-American (n=1). No student in either group had parents who used ASL as their primary language, and all students had entered college with no prior ASL skills. One student from each the 2012-2014 and 2014-2016 groups was a transfer student who had some previous ASL coursework at a two-year institution.

The final mean EIPA score for the 2012-2014 group was 2.7 (n=11). The final EIPA rating for the 2014-2016 group was 3.4 (Table 1).

Table 1: Demographics and EIPA score for each group

		<u>2012-2014</u>	<u>2014-2016</u>
Number of Students		11	6
Gender	Female	91%	83%
	Male	9%	17%
Race/Ethnicity	Caucasian	100%	83%
	African American	0%	17%
Parental Hearing Status	Deaf	0%	0%
	Hearing	100%	100%
Mean EIPA Score		2.9	3.4

Analyses of the differences in the final EIPA scores between the 2012-2014 classes and the 2014-2016 classes found that the results from the T-test $t = -3.56245$, $p = .001418$, $p < .05$ were significant as were those from the ANOVA, $F = 12.69103$, $p = .002836$, $p < .05$. The score of the latter 2014-2016 group was significantly higher.

While there may be factors such as classroom cohesion, prior student language competencies, or other subtle curriculum shifts that had some impact, these findings provide some compelling evidence that the teaching of self-assessment yields much better results for students, with no other factor such as gender, race or whether a transfer student having any significance on the EIPA rating.

In the end of course evaluations, in one of the beginning interpreting courses (ASL 3200: Interpreting in Elementary Schools I), a 2014-2016 student commented “even though it is an important skill to learn how to self-assess our own work, I would like more critique from the professor on our work so I have a clearer set of goals for improvement.” Another student wrote: “Give more feedback. Class was based on more of the student’s feelings. Wish there was more feedback from the instructor.” These data suggest students wanted direct feedback from faculty in early interpreting courses.

When the same question was asked of the 2014-2016 group in later, advanced interpreting classes (ASL 4200: Interpreting in Elementary Schools II), this sense seemed to diminish slightly. For example, one student reflected, “The instructor guides us to answer our own questions, and though it may be aggravating in the moment because we want the answer, I can truly see the difference by practicing working through it [self-assessment] on my own.” Another student commented,

The guidance [the faculty member] gives [is] for students to figure out how to analyze their skills and determine the answers to their own questions. At the time this is very frustrating because students want the answers in the moment, but now looking back I can see the growth I have made, and now I have skills that I can apply to [my] career in the future.

The overarching sense was initially, students wanted direct, external feedback. However, in addition to reduced grading time for faculty, students grew to appreciate and value the development of their self-assessment skills and to recognize the value those skills beyond the classroom.

5. Discussion

Our interpreter program and faculty recognized the importance of teaching critical thinking skills (Fitzmaurice, 2010; Cross, 2005; Winston, 2005) and believed the act of interpreting is, in and of itself, an act of critical thinking. We also recognized the value and need to teach critical thinking skills (Stauffer, 2011; Macnamara, 2008; Winston, 2005; Patrie, 2004; Kiraly, 2004), yet we could not find any authentic support to indicate we were purposefully teaching higher order thinking skills (Ludwig, 2000).

By adopting an overarching self-assessment only protocol for teaching, the initial shift was challenging in that faculty had to consistently remember to not provide direct feedback but encourage students to self-assess their own interpretation and thought process. In addition, students were accustomed to a system where they had little or no input in how they were assessed and were often unaware of assessment criteria. It took some time to overcome these challenges. Initially, students' self-assessments were hyper-stringent and superficial, however, once students calibrated their expectation with that of faculty, we noted students could identify their own gaps in skills, isolate where to focus their attention in learning, set realistic goals, revise their work, and track their own progress in interpreting. Like Andrade and Du (2007) found, students' attitudes toward self-assessment tended to become more positive as they gained experience with it and students could self-assess effectively once they understood the standard expectation. The key was extensive review of the individual competencies on the EIPA and modeling how to self-assess an interpreted product.

We also found students believe there were benefits to self-assessment, particularly the opportunity to reflect on, and revise, performance (Andrade & Du, 2007). We believe this is the crux of reflective practice and self-monitoring done by interpreter practitioners. The self-assessment shift also witnessed students becoming more actively involved and motivated as they assumed responsibility for their learning. Students also seemed to become more deeply engaged with the interpreting process and materials.

Stauffer (2011) found that students were largely unable to provide effective self-assessments without being taught to do so which is quite similar to Lew, Alwis and Schmidt's (2010) findings. Over time, the self-assessment skills of students improved (Redwood, et al., 2010) as did their interpreting performance: So much so, the pedagogical shift toward teaching only self-assessment yielded a significant difference in the final EIPA scores of students. The mean gain between the groups was 0.5, twice that of the marginal gains of 0.25 found by Bowen-Bailey et al. (2013). While we cannot characterize the significant EIPA score gains as causal, the correlational relationship between the pedagogical shift cannot be ignored.

This finding was important in that it avoids what Wiggins and McTighe (2005) illustrated as the twin sins of typical instruction. The first is activity-focused teaching such as a series of disconnected interpreting assignments designed to give students a very broad sampling of many different interpreting settings and scenarios. And the second is coverage-focused teaching consists of marching through interpreting textbooks to cover as many of the books and videos as possible. In both sins of typical instruction, evaluation is nearly always teacher-driven.

In other words, we found the self-assessment process not only served as a performance measure but it also encouraged the life-long learning skills interpreters need in the professional community.

When asked, an alumna from the latter 2014-2016 group responded

hated it [self-assessment], but now it is my 'superpower.' I know how to look for things I need to work on; I don't feel helpless or desperate for someone to tell me what I need to fix. I can figure that out on my own and go and do it. My after graduation EIPA scores are even better and my interpreting is better. I know how to become awesome [personal communication, October, 2016].

The benefit of this pedagogical approach is that it was not an additional thing to add or do in the classroom. Instead, it is replacing one assessment philosophy with another. While some additional time was taken engaging the students in the assessment process and the rationale supporting self-assessment; the rewards appeared to make it worthwhile. And, as an ancillary benefit, it significantly reduced faculty grading time.

Empowering students to accurately self-assess their work (Fenwick & Parsons, 2009) allowed them to relinquish total reliance on teacher opinions (Blanch, 1988) and better prepares them for the autonomy of the interpreting field (Stauffer, 2011). Such autonomy only serves to empower interpreting students to become better interpreters and "to become full-fledged members of the communities in which they live and will work: we are

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helping them to build character and trustworthiness; we are promoting a culture of expertise and professionalism in our future colleagues and successors. This is empowerment for all of us: teachers, students and administrators alike” (Kiraly, 2000, p. 194).

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Appendix A: EIPA Profiles

Scores on each competency are used to determine the mean score for each of the four domains, which are then averaged for the mean total score. The profile of abilities for each total score as provided by Schick & Williams (2004) are as follows.

Level 1: Beginner. Demonstrates very limited sign vocabulary with frequent errors in production. At times, production may be incomprehensible. Grammatical structure tends to be nonexistent. Individual is only able to communicate very simple ideas and demonstrates great difficulty comprehending signed communication. Sign production lacks prosody and use of space for the vast majority of the interpreted message.

An individual at this level is not recommended for classroom interpreting.

Level 2: Advanced Beginner. Demonstrates only basic sign vocabulary and these limitations interfere with communication. Lack of fluency and sign production errors are typical and often interfere with communication. The interpreter often hesitates in signing, as if searching for vocabulary. Frequent errors in grammar are apparent, although basic signed sentences appear intact. More complex grammatical structures are typically difficult. Individual is able to read signs at the word level and simple sentence level but complete or complex sentences often require repetitions and repairs. Some use of prosody and space, but use is inconsistent and often incorrect.

An individual at this level is not recommended for classroom interpreting.

Level 3: Intermediate. Demonstrates knowledge of basic vocabulary, but will lack vocabulary for more technical, complex, or academic topics. Individual is able to sign in a fairly fluent manner using some consistent prosody, but pacing is still slow with infrequent pauses for vocabulary or complex structures. Sign production may show some errors but generally will not interfere with communication. Grammatical production may still be incorrect, especially for complex structures, but is in general intact for routine and simple language. Comprehends signed messages but may need repetition and assistance. Voiced translation often lacks depth and subtleties of the original message. An individual at this level would be able to communicate very basic classroom content, but may incorrectly interpret complex information resulting in a message that is not always clear.

An interpreter at this level needs continued supervision and should be required to participate in continuing education in interpreting.

Level 4: Advanced Intermediate. Demonstrates broad use of vocabulary with sign production that is generally correct. Demonstrates good strategies for conveying information when a specific sign is not in her/his vocabulary. Grammatical constructions are generally clear and consistent, but complex information may still pose occasional problems. Prosody is good, with appropriate facial expression most of the time. May still have difficulty with the use of facial expression in complex sentences and adverbial non-manual markers. Fluency may deteriorate when rate or complexity of communication increases. Uses space consistently most of the time, but complex constructions or extended use of discourse cohesion may still pose problems.

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Comprehension of most signed messages at a normal rate is good but translation may lack some complexity of the original message.

An individual at this level would be able to convey much of the classroom content but may have difficulty with complex topics or rapid turn taking.

Level 5: Advanced. Demonstrates broad and fluent use of vocabulary, with a broad range of strategies for communicating new words and concepts. Sign production errors are minimal and never interfere with comprehension. Prosody is correct for grammatical, non-manual markers, and affective purposes. Complex grammatical constructions are typically not a problem. Comprehension of sign messages is very good, communicating all details of the original message.

An individual at this level is capable of clearly and accurately conveying the majority of interactions within the classroom (Schick et al., 2005, p. 15-16).