


Spring 6-14-2017

Exploring professional identity: a study of American Sign Language/English interpreters

Nicole Harwood

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/theses>

 Part of the [Adult and Continuing Education Commons](#), [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Educational Leadership Commons](#), [Educational Psychology Commons](#), [Leadership Studies Commons](#), [Other Education Commons](#), [Other Languages, Societies, and Cultures Commons](#), [Psychology Commons](#), [Sociology Commons](#), and the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Harwood, N. (2017). *Exploring professional identity: a study of American Sign Language/English interpreters* (master's thesis). Western Oregon University, Monmouth, Oregon. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/theses/37>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Interpreting Studies at Digital Commons@WOU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's of Arts in Interpreting Studies (MAIS) Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@WOU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@wou.edu, kundas@mail.wou.edu, bakersc@mail.wou.edu.

Exploring Professional Identity:
A Study of American Sign Language/English Interpreters

By
Nicole Harwood

A thesis submitted to Western Oregon University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:
Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies
June 2017
© 2017 by Nicole Harwood



**WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF
WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY HAVE EXAMINED THE ENCLOSED**

- ☒ Thesis
- ☐ Field Study
- ☐ Professional Project

Titled:

Exploring Professional Identity: A Study of American Sign Language/English Interpreters

Graduate Student: Nicole Harwood

Candidate for the degree of : Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

*and hereby certify that in our opinion it is worthy of acceptance as partial fulfillment
of the requirements of this master's degree.*

Committee Chair:

Signatures Redacted for Privacy

Name: Vicki Darden

Date: May 30th, 2017

Committee Members:

Name: Erin Trine

Date: May 30th, 2017

Name: Ruhama Freeman

Date: May 30th, 2017

Director of Graduate Programs:

Name: Dr. Linda Stonecipher

Date: 6-7-17

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Along this journey to discover my own professional identity, there were a handful of people who either led or supported me, and to them, I will be eternally grateful.

To those who shaped my identity as a student learning the foundations of American Sign Language and Deaf culture, Tom Wills, Shannah Kanet, and Cindy Noble-Frank, you forever changed my life. Tom Wills, you provided the linguistic foundation that sparked my journey. Shannah Kanet and Cindy Noble-Frank, as incredible educators and members of the Deaf community, your push and encouragement to pursue interpreting as a profession truly changed my life.

To the professors of the MAIS program at Western Oregon University who gave me a shot and allowed me the opportunity to not only further my education but truly develop my professional identity, I am grateful. My thesis chair, Vicki Darden, pushed me to raise the standards of my writing, and this project could not have been completed without her. When I compare my first draft to my final draft, I am blown away by what developed, and I am thankful to each committee member for their contributions.

To my fellow cohort who traversed this part of the journey with me, each of you has inspired me. I could not have made it through the program without you. I am thankful for the memories we have shared and look forward to the future moments when we cross paths again.

To my fellow interpreters, whether you are among those who took the time to take this survey, those I work with on a regular basis, or those I hardly see, you are an amazing group of people, and I'm proud to belong to this collective. There are a few that

I feel must be recognized. To Jessica, I appreciate your friendship as I transitioned through this past challenging year, and your constant words of encouragement. To Vanessa, I appreciate your friendship and your eagerness to read the research that kept me focused. To Jean Miller, you came into my life at the exact moment I needed someone to encourage my career change and you have been genuinely significant in shaping my professional identity.

To all of my friends and family that are tired of hearing me talk about professional identity, your support and ears were very useful, and I promise to talk about something else now that I have finished this endeavor. To my mother and father, for absolutely everything you ever did for me and everything you continue to do. To Ama, I would not have finished this without you in my corner.

Lastly, to my sons, Wyatt and Killian, and my husband, Michael: you each sacrificed a lot for me to achieve this dream and I am thankful for that as well as the opportunity to spend more time with you now that this specific journey is over.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	ix
ABSTRACT.....	x
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Background	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Research Questions and Hypotheses	7
Purpose of the Study	7
Theoretical Bases and Organization	8
Strengths and Limitations of the Study.....	9
Definition of Terms.....	10
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	11
Professional Identity	11
Collective Professional Identity.....	12
Individual Professional Identity and Self-Concept Clarity.....	16
Professional Identity Development.....	20
The Interpreting Perspective	28
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	32
Participants.....	32
Design	33
Data Collection	44
Data Analysis	46
Methodological Strengths	47
Methodological Limitations.....	47
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	49
Participants.....	49
Validity of Professional Identity Scale in Interpreting	58
Professional Identity of the Profession as a Whole	59
Individual Professional Identity and Self-Concept Clarity.....	77
Professional Identity Development.....	85
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	96
Collective Professional Identity.....	97
Individual Professional Identity and Self-Concept Clarity.....	101
Professional Identity Development.....	104
Implications for Future Research.....	107
Conclusion	108
References.....	111

Appendix A: Consent Form.....	119
Appendix B: Survey Questions.....	121
Appendix C: Scale Reliability Statistical Detail.....	128

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Knowledge of the Profession Subscale Question Comparison.....	35
Table 2	Philosophy of the Profession Subscale Question Comparison	36
Table 3	Professional Roles & Expertise Subscale Question Comparison	37
Table 4	Attitude Subscale Question Comparison	39
Table 5	Engagement Behaviors Subscale Question Comparison	40
Table 6	Interaction Subscale Question Comparison	41
Table 7	Survey Respondent Demographics	51
Table 8	Respondent Certifications and Credentials.....	56
Table 9	Scale Reliability	58
Table 10	Mean SCC Score by Certifications	80
Table 11	ANOVA Table Based on Certifications	80
Table 12	Mean SCC Score by Years of Experience	81
Table 13	ANOVA Table Based on Years of Experience	82
Table 14	Mean SCC score by NIC Certification	82
Table 15	ANOVA Table based on NIC Certification.....	83
Table 16	Mean SCC Score by CI Certification	83
Table 17	ANOVA Table Based on CI Certification.....	83
Table 18	Mean SCC Score by CT Certification	84
Table 19	ANOVA Table Based on CT Certification.....	84

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Gender demographics of respondents	52
Figure 2. Age demographics of respondents.....	52
Figure 3. Race and ethnicity demographics of respondents	53
Figure 4. Highest level of education obtained by respondents	54
Figure 5. Deaf/Hearing identity of respondents.....	55
Figure 6. Years of Experience of Respondents.....	55
Figure 7. Certifications Held by Respondents	57
Figure 8. Respondent Answers to Knowledge of the Profession Subscale	61
Figure 9. Respondent Answers to Philosophy of the Profession Subscale.....	64
Figure 10. Respondent Answers to Professional Role and Expertise Subscale.....	67
Figure 11. Respondent Answers to Attitude Subscale.....	70
Figure 12. Respondent Answers to Engagement Behaviors Subscale.....	73
Figure 13. Respondent Answers to Interaction Subscale.....	76
Figure 14. Respondent Answers to Self-Concept Clarity Scale	79
Figure 15. Themes Identified: What does being an interpreter mean to you?	86
Figure 16. Themes Identified: At what point in your career did you identify as an interpreter?	87
Figure 17. Themes Identified: What contributed to the development of your professional identity as an interpreter?.....	89
Figure 18. Themes Identified: Please describe any positive experiences related to your professional identity as an interpreter	90
Figure 19. Themes Identified: Describe any negative experiences related to your professional identity as an interpreter	92
Figure 20. Links between Professional Identity and Other Elements.....	103

Figure 21. Developmental Process for ASL/English Interpreter Professional Identity.. 106

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASL	American Sign Language
BEI	Board of Evaluation of Interpreters
CI	Certificate of Interpretation
CT	Certificate of Transliteration
CODA	Children (or Child) of Deaf Adult(s)
EIPA	Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment
Ed:K-12	Primary and Secondary Education Interpreter Certification
IEP	Interpreter Education Program
ITP	Interpreter Training Program
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
NAD	National Association of the Deaf
NIC	National Interpreter Certification
PISC	Professional Identity Scale in Counseling
PISI	Professional Identity Scale in Interpreting
RID	Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
SCC	Self-Concept Clarity
SC:L	Specialist Certificate: Legal

ABSTRACT

Exploring Professional Identity: A Study of American Sign Language/English Interpreters

By

Nicole Harwood

Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

Western Oregon University

June 2017

© Nicole Harwood 2017

Professional identity is a complex and multi-faceted concept that encompasses definitions pertaining to the professional identity of the collective, the professional identity of the individual practitioner, and the process of developing a professional identity. Individuals start with a fundamental concept of self and then layer on a variety of identities, including a professional identity, thereby forming the answer to the question: who are you?

Utilizing the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) directories and online social media resources to survey interpreters, this study attempts to explore the professional identity for ASL/English interpreters. In order to explore the collective identity of ASL/English interpreters, the Professional Identity Scale in Counseling developed by Woo (2013) was adapted to fit the interpreting profession. This adapted scale is an instrument intended to measure the professional identity of ASL/English interpreters. Survey participants also took the Campbell et al. (1996) Self-Concept Clarity scale to

assess the individual interpreter professional identity and impact of self-concept clarity on professional identity. Finally, survey participants answered optional open-ended questions to evaluate the process of professional identity development for ASL/English interpreters. The mixed-methods approach allowed this research study to begin the exploration of the broad and intricate topic, and the resulting data is a foundation for future research. While credentials alone may not hold the key to understanding the professional identity of ASL/English interpreters, the experiences of the collective profession and individual professionals present a glimpse into the possible connections between professional identity, self-concept clarity, professional confidence, and ultimately, professional competence.

Keywords: professional identity, self-concept clarity, ASL/English Interpreters

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Becoming a professional requires a unique combination of skills and experiences. According to a government report from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement on the professional identity development of graduate students, based on research by Moore and Rosenbloom (1970, as cited in Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001), professionals adhere to the following criteria: full-time occupation as the primary source of income; meeting the normative and behavioral expectations of the calling; identify through specific signs and symbols that also identify peers; possesses a unique set of skills and knowledge that requires extensive training and education; competent practice of the occupation serving clients; and “autonomy restrained by responsibility” (Weidman et al., 2001, p. 3). Currently, most ASL/English interpreters meet the stated criteria for professionals, from the skills required to the specialized training. Historically, interpreters may have worked on a volunteer basis in churches or did not go through specialized educational trainings; however, as the occupation grew and formalized, professionalization occurred (Ball, 2013; Mikkelsen, 1996). Now, there is a need to explore what this means for the ASL/English interpreter’s professional identity. Who are ASL/English interpreting professionals and what does that mean for the future of the profession?

Background

When meeting new people or catching up with family and friends, a common conversational ritual is the question: “What do you do?” A few years ago, when I was

asked this seemingly simple question, I did not respond with any variation indicating I was an American Sign Language/English interpreter, even though I had passed a number of credentialing exams and had begun working as an interpreter. Since this pivotal moment happened, I have often thought about the question and—more importantly—my inability to identify as an interpreting professional. Why did I avoid identifying myself as an interpreter? What things contribute to obtaining a professional identity, specifically as an interpreter? Did other new interpreters struggle with their professional identity? At what point did I start identifying as an interpreter? What does it mean to be an interpreter? Unfortunately, while there is information about the skills needed to be an interpreter, such as the Entry to Practice Competencies (Witter-Merithew, Johnson, & Taylor, 2004), there is very little information about the overall identity of the profession and those individuals working in the profession, beyond demographic information.

One possible explanation for failing to identify as an interpreter may be to avoid the initial confusion of those that have had no prior experience with ASL/English interpreters and the need to further explain the specifics of the job. When someone identifies himself or herself as a doctor, lawyer, teacher, plumber, or as a professional in most other occupations, there is a mental image of what that professional potentially looks like and a general understanding of their professional expectations. In a study comparing professional interpreters and family interpreters in medical settings, Rosenberg, Seller, and Leanza (2008) found that the professional interpreters acknowledged a tension between expectations and commented on a “lack of respect for their capacities or status” and were often relegated as tools instead of an integral part of the interaction (p. 92). Recent research from Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (2013) has shifted

the concept of an ideal interpreter toward recognition of their active participation in the interaction. Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (2013) thoroughly discuss role-space and ultimately determine that what occurs in the actual interpreting interaction determines the scope of the interpreter's role. Based on this research on interpreters' role-space (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2013) and the idea that the interaction determines role, there are innumerable possibilities for how an interpreter can approach their vocational expectations and, therefore, innumerable expectations of an interpreter's job by those outside of the profession. Being an ASL/English interpreter does not necessarily conjure implicit understandings and often the role may need to be explicitly explained, as in the example of Video Relay Interpreters announcing their presence and role at the beginning of a call. It is possible that this confusion over job functions and lack of respect or understanding by those outside the profession could lead to an individual avoiding the interpreting professional identity.

While that explanation has merit, it is also possible that an individual may avoid the professional identification because they do not yet feel like an interpreter. Research on the imposter phenomenon addresses the idea that an individual will be exposed as a fraud or that their success is not due to their abilities (Clance, 1985; Harvey & Katz, 1985). It is possible for novice interpreters to initially feel like an imposter. After time and experience in the occupational role, eventually that individual may feel ready to identify as an ASL/English interpreter to the outside world. Meadows (2013) found that interpreters felt the need to "prove oneself" to overcome the transition shock upon entering the profession (p. 54). One day, as I was reflecting on this internal dilemma, I decided that perhaps if I started voicing my professional identity to the outside world, I

would start believing it myself. At this point in my life, I had several personal identities as a wife, mother, daughter, sister, student, retail manager, but I had not committed to the professional identity I was pursuing. As I dug into research on professional identity, I came across Campbell et al. (1996) and realized that perhaps my self-doubt was connected to a lack of self-concept clarity at the time. Transitioning into a new role as an interpreter meant I needed to reassess how I defined myself.

Recently, a dissertation by Hunt (2015) was published on the topic of professional identity development of ASL/English interpreters. One of the researcher's personal stories shared in their research paralleled my own experience:

When people asked me about my work, I would often state that I was a student who worked as a signed language interpreter. I was still a student at that time pursuing a second degree, and it was obvious that I saw myself as a student first. Even when functioning as an interpreter, I had the sense of doing the work as a school project rather than as a real job for which I was earning money. I maintained a professional demeanor, but something had not shifted within me to move past the student label. I would like to report that this was because of humility, but it really had more to do with a lack of confidence in my skills.

(Hunt, 2015, p. 23)

This shared and possibly common experience of hesitation to identify as a member of the profession made me curious to explore ASL/English interpreter professional identity further.

Statement of the Problem

There is limited information about the professional identity of interpreters within the field. Hunt (2015) specifically explored the professional identity development of a limited population from homogenous demographics. While this information is a significant starting point for the field, further research is necessary. Wiles (2013) researched social workers, a practice profession that shares some similarities to interpreting, and the study included an “analysis [that] showed students constructing their professional identity in relation to desired traits, or through developing a sense of shared identity with other social workers; alternatively it was portrayed as a process of individual development” (p. 857). These three approaches are ways of defining professional identity; as the collective identity of the profession, or as the actual skills and traits that the individual professional possesses, or as an individual’s process of developing into a professional.

Collective professional identity for ASL/English interpreters has been shaped based on the expectations of the professional organization, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), the Entry-to-Practice Competencies identified by Witter-Merithew et al. (2004), and research focused primarily on the skills and actual occupational practices of ASL/English interpreters such as the work of Cokely (2005). The current body of work concerning ASL/English interpreters is strongly founded in the skills and competencies expected of professionals. According to Adams, Hean, Sturgis, and Clark (2006), a collective professional identity requires an understanding of shared “attitudes, values, knowledge, beliefs, and skills” (p. 5). This definition, which acknowledges more than just

occupational skills, allows for a more dynamic and thorough approach to the concept of the collective professional identity that could be helpful to the future of the profession.

An individual's professional identity has to do with how the individual calibrates the desired traits for the collective of ideal professionals with their personal characteristics to define their own self-concept clarity (Campbell et al., 1996; Wiles, 2013). A personal professional identity begins with an understanding of the traits, characteristics, roles, and expectations of the professionals an individual eventually wants to call colleagues, and then is internalized. For ASL/English interpreters in a practice profession, competency and confidence contribute to self-esteem and, therefore, a more clearly defined concept of self within their professional role (Bontempo, Goswell, Levitzke-Gray, Napier, & Warby, 2014; Campbell et al., 1996; Holland, Middleton, & Uys, 2012; Schwartz et al., 2011). Understanding how ASL/English interpreters perceive their own self-concept clarity allows for insight into their individual professional identity.

Developing a professional identity is a process. Current literature discusses the professional identity development process primarily from the perspective of students transitioning into their role as professionals (Dall'Alba, 2009; Holland et al., 2013; Light & Visser, 2013; Meadows, 2013; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008; Stern & Papadakis, 2006; Weidman et al., 2001; Walker et al., 2014; Wiles, 2013). Students gain knowledge in the classroom, as well as expectations for their future profession, build their skills and competency, graduate, and eventually become members of their chosen profession. However, there is limited research beyond Hunt (2015) that addresses ASL/English interpreter professional identity development from the perspective of the professional.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This research is designed to explore the following three approaches to professional identity and answer the following questions:

1. What is the professional identity of ASL/English interpreting professionals as a whole?
2. What is the professional identity of individual ASL/English interpreters, in relation to their Self-Concept Clarity?
 - a. Hypothesis: ASL/English Interpreters with certifications will have higher Self-Concept Clarity scores and therefore a more clearly defined concept of self.
 - b. Null Hypothesis: Certification will not impact the Self-Concept Clarity scores of ASL/English interpreters.
3. How do ASL/English interpreters develop their professional identity?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory mixed-method survey study is to examine the professional identity of ASL/English interpreters by seeking to understand the three acknowledged domains of professional identity: the identity of the profession as a whole, the individual interpreter's identity, and the process of professional identity development among interpreters. Additional research on professional identity of ASL/English interpreters is needed for the continued professionalization of the field, as is the development of an instrument to assess ASL/English interpreter professional identity. This research will contribute to the current but limited body of research, and act as a foundation for future research.

Theoretical Bases and Organization

Since there has not been a significant amount of research on the topic of ASL/English interpreter professional identity, research from the counseling profession was used as a basis for the theoretical approach in this research study. To explore the identity of the counseling profession, Woo (2013) constructed an instrument called the Professional Identity Scale in Counseling, described as “a 62-item instrument designed to measure professional identity in counseling professionals across all counseling sub-specialties and sub-populations” (p. 1). With permission of the primary researcher in that study, the questionnaire was adapted to fit the interpreting profession to explore the ASL/English interpreting profession’s identity as a whole.

In order to examine an individual’s ASL/English interpreter professional identity, participants took the Campbell et al. (1996) Self-Concept Clarity (SCC) scale. Campbell et al. (1996) determined that “the SCC scale was substantially correlated with the measures of self-esteem [and] people higher in clarity were higher in self-esteem” (p. 146). The hypothesis for this research study is that there are significant differences in self-concept clarity based on categorical demographic information regarding credentials for ASL/English interpreters.

Finally, the research explores the development of professional identity for ASL/English interpreters. Through the use of open-ended questions allowing respondents to share their own experiences that can then be coded and analyzed, the developmental process is evaluated. This study is designed to seek understanding of shared elements and milestones that contribute to the development of an ASL/English interpreter’s professional identity.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Utilizing an exploratory mixed-method approach to evaluate three aspects of professional identity represents both the strengths and limitations of this study. The mixed method approach, relying on previously validated instruments and open ended questions, allowed for analysis across domains and comparison of respondent answers. By breaking the topic down into the three elements, a more comprehensive understanding of professional identity was obtained. While the sample size was smaller, at only 87 respondents, the demographics of respondents mirrored the demographics of the population of professional ASL/English interpreters as determined in the RID 2016 annual report (RID, 2016).

Even though the demographics of the sample reflect the overall population (ASL/English interpreters within the United States), these demographics show underrepresented voices within the profession that contribute to sample bias. Furthermore, the population of sign language interpreters in countries outside of the United States was not included in the sample; therefore, the results of the study do not speak to the entire population of sign language interpreters. Reliance on technology to distribute the survey limits the sample size, since interpreters without access to the social media distribution method were not able to participate.

The topic of professional identity is expansive, and therefore, definitive answers are difficult to obtain. By breaking the topic of professional identity down into three aspects—the collective, the individual, and the developmental process—the strength of the study will be found in results that will provide a well-rounded exploration of the topic related to ASL/English interpreters and perhaps act as a catalyst for further research.

Definition of Terms

Professional Identity – This study will address the following three definitions of professional identity:

Collective Professional Identity – professional identity occurs when an individual becomes a member of the collective profession and it:

consists of knowledge of the profession and its philosophy, expertise required of its members of the profession, understanding of members' professional roles, attitudes towards the profession and oneself, engagement behaviors expected of its members and interaction with other professionals. (Woo, 2013, p. 9)

Individual Professional Identity – “the subjective self-conceptualization associated with the work role adopted” (Adams et al. 2006, p. 5).

Professional Identity Development – “the process through which individuals gain the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for successful entry into a professional career” (Weidman et al., 2001, p. iii).

Self-Concept Clarity – an individual's clearly and confidently defined perceived personal attributes (Campbell et al., 1996).

Practice Profession – “a profession requiring academic preparation and skills development precede[ing] a career in human services” (Dean & Pollard, 2004, p. 27).

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

With the purpose of exploring the professional identity of ASL/English interpreters, existing literature on a variety of skill-based and service professions was examined. Information pertaining to a collective professional identity, an individual's professional identity, and professional identity development are each relevant in providing a foundation for discussing ASL/English interpreter professional identity. Additionally, literature focused on the interpreting profession anchors the literature review. Currently, scarce research exists regarding professional identity among ASL/English interpreters. Therefore, primarily literature from other fields and similar practice professions, where a human services career requiring unique knowledge and skills are at focus (Dean & Pollard, 2014), such as counseling and nursing, are discussed as a foundation for this research.

Professional Identity

Professional identity must first be defined. Since there are varying perspectives concerning the definition of professional identity, the complexity of the topic is apparent. Across research from varying fields, three themes are often highlighted: self-identification as a professional, the skills and attitudes required of the professional, and the community of professionals (Gibson, Dollarhide, & Moss, 2010; Hunt, 2015; Wiles, 2013). A study of social workers (Wiles, 2013) emphasized professional identity as the desired traits of a professional, a shared identity among the collective of professionals, and the actual developmental process to form a professional identity(p. 857). This touches on a few of the distinct ways of defining professional identity: professional identity of the profession as a whole and the shared identity

among the collective profession, or a professional identity related to desired traits and skills the individual possesses, or the actual professional identity development process experienced by the individual. Additionally, Wiles (2013) stated, “a recurring pattern in my data was that students presented their professional identities as a source of contention in their personal relationships” (p.861). This insight from Wiles (2013) addresses the individual roles that personal and professional identities have in an individual's life. Furthermore, Rodgers and Scott (2008), directly discussed the interaction between external forces such as one’s professional identity and internal forces, such as sense of self, and concluded that the literature is vague. However they determined that:

Self will subsume identity(ies) and will be understood as an evolving yet coherent being, that consciously and unconsciously constructs and is constructed, reconstructs and is reconstructed, in interaction with the cultural contexts, institutions, and people with which the self lives, learns, and functions. (p. 739)

While Wiles (2013) addressed how one’s professional identity can impact one’s personal life outside of the profession, Rodgers and Scott (2008) addressed how one’s personal identity or “self” is an underlying influencer. The literature seems to indicate the two, personal identity and professional identity, are linked and yet there does not appear to be a consensus as to how they truly influence each other.

Collective Professional Identity

There are professions with distinctive collective professional identities. As Swick (2000) pointed out, “certain common characteristics distinguish all professions” (p. 613) and outsiders to the profession can immediately recognize individuals who belong to these professions based on the collective expectations the professionals have determined based on these common

characteristics, including things such as attire, demeanor, behaviors, knowledge, and vocabulary. For example, the collective professional identity for teachers is based on the accepted ideas of what “teachers should know and be able to do, or what kinds of persons they should be or be willing to become” (Tickle, 2000, p. 9). These accepted ideas are still being developed for ASL/English interpreters. Kasher (2005) discussed in depth professional acts and professional practices emphasizing the point that a profession is not determined by what the professionals do; rather, the professionals are individuals participating in the professional practice of that vocation. Based on this explanation, interpreting is not what interpreters do. Interpreters are those people who participate in the professional practice of interpreting; they belong to a community of professional interpreters. In an emerging profession, leadership is vital to the developing community of professionals and the development of norms within the profession (Kruse & Louis, 1993). Furthermore, Kasher (2005) discussed how the collective professional identity can be shaped as components are changed through a process by those participating in the profession as professional autonomy is gained. Adams et al. (2006) reviewed literature on collective professional identities and determined that:

It can be described as the attitudes, values, knowledge, beliefs and skills that are shared with others within a professional group and relates to the professional role being undertaken by the individual, and thus is a matter of the subjective self-conceptualization associated with the work role adopted. (p. 56)

When these elements are clearly defined, those outside the profession better understand the function of the professional, as do the practitioners themselves.

If individual practitioners make decisions regarding attitudes, values, knowledge, beliefs, and skills, while other individual practitioners make different choices regarding these ideas, it

becomes difficult to create a cohesive collective professional identity. Gazzola and Smith (2007) stated that “a collective identity within a profession is required to promote a sense of cohesion among the associated professional members” (as cited in Woo, 2013, p. 17). How can individual practitioners develop their individual professional identity if a collective professional identity is inconsistent? Ultimately, as Blocher, Tennyson, and Johnson (1963) pointed out, “the absence of a professional self-image toward a profession among the implicated members can lead to a lack of unity and harmony within the profession” and potentially cause further implications “which may result in insecurity and inconsistency on the part of its professional members” (as cited in Woo, 2013, p. 18). For more than 60 years, then, it has been clear that for a profession to thrive through unity and harmony and for the individual members to thrive through consistency, a collective identity is imperative (Woo, 2013). Mikkelsen (1996) described the professionalization of community interpreting specifically and noted that consensus among practitioners concerning expectations needs to be sorted out first, followed by the education of clientele (p. 11).

For the ASL/English interpreting profession, as Hunt (2015) pointed out, “the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), the professional organization of American Sign Language-English interpreters, projects an image of an interpreter as being a white, hearing female as is often the case with ‘pink-collar’ helping professions” (p. 8). While a number of ASL/English interpreters may fit this profile, there are plenty of underrepresented voices that could have a say in changing the collective professional identity. Witter-Merithew et al. (2004) identified a series of domains that entry level interpreters should hold competency in and they are:

- Domain 1: Theory and Knowledge Competencies. This cluster of competencies embodies the academic foundation and world knowledge essential to effective interpretation.
- Domain 2: Human Relations Competencies. This cluster of interpersonal competencies fosters effective communication and productive collaboration with colleagues, consumers, and employers.
- Domain 3: Language Skills Competencies. This cluster of competencies relates to the use of American Sign Language and English.
- Domain 4: Interpreting Skills Competencies. This cluster of technical competencies are related to effective ASL-English interpretation of a range of subject matter in a variety of settings.
- Domain 5: Professionalism Competencies. This cluster of competencies are associated with professional standards and practices.

Unfortunately, beyond these basic competencies necessary to professionally practice as an interpreter, there is limited research on the collective professional identity of interpreters.

Currently, there are no instruments available to measure and identify elements of the interpreting professional identity. In order to identify which elements are shared among members of the collective interpreting profession, this research will rely on an instrument developed by Woo (2013) to measure professional identity for counselors. Woo (2013) described elements impacting the counseling profession and the development of that professional identity.

Interestingly, there are parallels for the interpreting profession, such as the relatively new development of the profession and sub-specialties within the profession and ultimately the

practice profession foundation (Dean & Pollard, 2004). Woo (2013) defined professional identity as:

A state of mind that categorizes an individual as a member of a selected profession and develops over time. [Professional Identity,] as derived from the literature, consists of knowledge of the profession and its philosophy, expertise required of its members of the profession, understanding of members' professional roles, attitudes towards the profession and oneself, engagement behaviors expected of its members, and interactions with other professionals. (p. 9)

This comprehensive definition of professional identity categorizes important elements of the collective profession—those things that individual practitioners would need to exhibit in order to be considered a professional—and recognizes that professional identity develops over time. The current research study relies on this comprehensive definition of professional identity and has adapted the instrument Woo (2013) developed, the Professional Identity Scale in Counseling (PISC), to reflect the ASL/English interpreting profession and covers the categorized domains from the above definition: knowledge of the profession, philosophy of the profession, professional roles and expertise, attitudes towards the profession, expected engagement behaviors, and interactions with professionals (Woo, 2013). This approach provides an understanding of the professional identity of the interpreting profession as a collective with shared experiences and expectations.

Individual Professional Identity and Self-Concept Clarity

Identity is a valuable element within our everyday lives. As Hunt (2015) pointed out, “the performance of identity allows for the formation of self because identity is not something that people are, but rather what they do” (p. 5). Our identities are faceted and layered. We can

identify based on a variety of elements, and most identities are strongly related to roles and active behaviors, such as being a mother, a student, an artist, or a professional, among others. An individual can have several identity layers at the same time, and “professional identity is only one part of many identities that develop and change over time as people construct them” (Hunt, 2015, p. 6). Identity is dynamic and changes over time.

As the key piece of research to date on ASL/English professional identity, Hunt (2015) looked to discover more “about ‘what does it mean to be me,’ not as a participant in the interpreted interaction, but as a person possessing a professional identity based in the work that she does” (p. 11). The individual’s professional identity is crucial because for many professionals, a majority of time each week is spent devoted to their profession. Additionally, without a clearly defined professional identity, practitioners may struggle with confidence and competency as Holland et al. (2012) claimed. They suggested that with regard to the occupational therapists they researched, “professional confidence underpins competence and is inextricably linked to professional identity” (p. 20). As a practice profession relying on a unique set of skills and competencies, any opportunity to bolster competence could be beneficial. For the occupational therapists researched, it was found that through professional confidence, “if a clinician believes that he or she has the skills to assess a patient’s concerns and that the outcome of this assessment will lead to improved quality for the patient, it is more likely that the clinician will engage” (Holland et al., 2012, p. 20). Extrapolating these results from one practice profession to another, it is possible to hypothesize that better and more effective interpreting outcomes for Deaf and hearing consumers are possible by addressing interpreting professional confidence and interpreting professional identity. It is worth noting that Bontempo, Napier, Hayes, and Brashear (2014), in an international study of 2,193 signed language interpreters,

determined “that high self-esteem is the single biggest predictor of competence among signed language interpreters” across all nationalities (p. 34). By improving professional confidence, and clarifying professional identity, an interpreter’s self-esteem could be impacted, and therefore, their competence. Furthermore, in exploring the topic of self-confidence among occupational therapists, the researchers were unable to find direct references to professional confidence relying on a review of the literature, but they did conclude that “it was at times described as being part of, integral to, or related to a number of other concepts including self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-concept” with self-efficacy being defined as “an all-inclusive personal judgment of perceived ability to perform a defined task, it has a dynamic nature, changing as new information and experiences are added” (Holland et al., 2012, p. 24). Self-efficacy is crucial to ASL/English interpreters and its importance is emphasized in the RID Code of Professional Conduct, under tenet 3.2, which recommends that the interpreter “decline assignments or withdraw from the interpreting profession when not competent due to physical, mental, or emotional factors” (RID, 2005). ASL/English interpreters must regularly assess whether they are competent to perform the task of interpreting in a given situation. Based on the literature discussed, it can be inferred that professional confidence (impacted by self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-concept) is a foundational aspect of the individual ASL/English interpreter professional identity (Bontempo, Napier et al., 2014; Holland et al., 2012).

For many years, researchers have been studying identity and elements linked to identity, specifically, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-concept. Campbell et al. (1996) developed the Self-Concept Clarity scale that measures “the extent to which the contents of an individual’s self-concept (e.g., perceived personal attributes) are clearly and confidently defined, internally consistent, and temporally stable” through exploring both “knowledge components--Who/What

am I?--and evaluative components--How do I feel about myself?" (p. 141). These personal identity components are the foundation for an individual's professional identity. In an earlier study, Campbell (1990) reviewed years of literature and concluded that higher levels of identity are associated with higher levels of self-esteem, and their own study results corroborated this conclusion. In a study a few years later, researchers found that "people higher in clarity were higher in self-esteem" (Campbell et al., 1996, p. 146). These studies indicate that there is an overlap between identity, self-concept clarity, and self-esteem. Additionally, Campbell et al. explored the link between confused self-concept and sensitivity to evaluation by others. If someone is lacking a clearly defined concept of self, they are more likely to take criticism to heart (Campbell et al., 1996). This claim was further substantiated by a 2014 study on self-concept clarity that found that those with unclear self-concepts were more affected by evaluative information and had less stable self-esteem than those with clearly defined self-concepts (Guerrettaz, LinChiat, von Hippel, Carrol, & Arkin, 2014). Interpreters are regularly observed by others, whether by the Deaf and hearing clients or by interpreting colleagues, and therefore can face regular evaluation of their work as their team interpreter and clients process the interpreter's expressed messages for clarity and comprehension, along with the interpreter's internal evaluation of their work (RID, 2007). Therefore, self-concept clarity may influence an interpreter's ability to deal with the evaluative feedback that is inherent in the profession.

Another research study on self-concept clarity by Schwartz et al. (2011) found a reciprocal relationship between identity and self-concept clarity and that having a sense of identity contributed to a confidence in one's personal identity (p. 380). This reciprocal relationship emphasizes the overlapping nature between identity and self-concept clarity. One of the key elements in the Schwartz et al. (2011) study was the emphasis on the daily changes

versus the changes in self-concept clarity over extended periods of time. The authors found that “when one becomes ‘stuck’ in the daily process of developing a sense of identity—especially when one is not willing or able to stop thinking about what choices to make—large fluctuations in reconsideration may occur, and negative outcomes may result” (p. 381). According to Schwartz et al., indecisiveness inhibits the ability to fully develop an identity and without this clear sense of self, negative outcomes are more likely. Dean and Pollard (2011) recognized interpreting as a practice profession that requires moment-to-moment decision making and provide the demand-control schema as a teleological tool to help interpreters make these ethical decisions and promote positive work outcomes. As an ASL/English interpreter experiences professional identity development in the face of a variety of situations that require on-the-spot decisions, it is, therefore, more evident that the interpreter needs to possess a clear self-concept, and ultimately, a clear professional identity. The literature emphasizes that “interpreters have to ‘act’ as other parties, often dealing with complex content in stressful circumstances – they need a great deal of resilience and confidence to maintain their sense of self in such an occupation” (Bontempo et al., 2014, p. 34). Without a stable sense of self, an individual may struggle to face the everyday challenges of the vocation and may further struggle to develop their professional identity.

Professional Identity Development

As individuals progress through the journey of developing their professional identity, there are a variety of roles that they may pass through. With the intention of gaining access to the profession, an interpreter may have first been an interpreting student. Light and Visser (2013) studied the impact that exiting a role has on an individual’s self-concept and discuss the “powerful influence that social roles can have on identity, and [this] may suggest some inherent

difficulties and confusion when social roles are exited” (p. 291). Additionally, Meadows (2013) discussed this confusion on exiting social roles specifically for interpreters transitioning from student to professional and found that transition shock was mostly due to a dissonance between expectations and real world experiences. As an individual in the interpreting student role, “the repeated behavioral routines that a role prescribes are likely to become part of the self-concept” and therefore impact the emerging professional identity (Light & Visser, 2013, p. 293). As the student graduates and leaves this role behind, that student must redefine his or her self-concept based on real world experiences as a professional instead of the imagined professional expectations they held as a student. Dealing with the expectations presented during school and the reality of practicing as a professional requires the ability to experiment with “possible selves,” which may be done through “modeling, guidance, and feedback from others” (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008, p. 57). Light and Visser (2013) studied the transition period between social roles, with an emphasis on what occurs when an individual exits a role and found that both loneliness and stability resulting from exiting roles impacted self-concept clarity. These findings indicate that entering a community of practice and developing relationships with practicing professionals could offset the impact of exiting the student role by lessening loneliness and increasing stability, thus benefitting the development of a professional identity through the stability of one’s self-concept clarity. Furthermore, as Bontempo, Napier et al. (2014) indicated, there are a variety of factors that indicate an interpreter’s likely success within the profession, including high self-esteem and emotional stability. Belonging to a community of practice could further support an individual’s self-esteem and emotional stability as they navigate through the transition period towards becoming a professional interpreter.

To further examine the professional identity development process and the effects of transition from student to professional, the research by Holland, Middleton, and Uys (2013) on the practice profession of occupational therapists and their professional confidence is important. Holland et al. stated:

New graduates have expressed the need to feel confident in their role (Morley, 2006), but according to Morley, the same novice practitioners experience a crisis of confidence within the first six months of working, whereas Toal-Sullivan (2006) noted that occupational therapists, in particular, have problems with this transition and ascribed it, in part, to a lack of self-confidence. Thus, although the transition from student to graduate professional was acknowledged as being a difficult period, it is the period during which novice therapists shape their self-beliefs, including their professional confidence. (p. 106)

The first six months of working as a professional is a critical time in the development of professional identity, and like the occupational therapists studied, ASL/English interpreters have the potential for struggling with this transition period. Hunt (2015) commented that it took her approximately 10 years before she felt comfortable identifying herself as an ASL/English interpreter and not just as someone working as an interpreter (p. 25). Returning to a previously identified sentiment, the distinction between someone doing the work and someone identifying as a professional is important for the individual interpreter and the collective professionalization of the industry (Kasher, 2005).

According to Weidman et al. (2001), there are four non-linear stages along the journey to develop a professional identity and they are rooted in “socialization [which] refers to the process through which individuals gain the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for successful entry

into a professional career” (p. iii). While the stages may not occur linearly, they consist of a wide range of experiences that become a “key rite of passage, or adds important people and information to the mix” (Weidman et al., 2001, p. 5). Those who enter a profession without going the traditional route of higher education may lack exposure to the multitude of experiences that occur during the socialization process, and therefore may change the foundation for their professional identity. However, this does not mean that those taking a detour and not going the route of higher education cannot go through the socialization process since it also refers to “a subconscious process whereby persons internalize behavioral norms and standards and form a sense of identity and commitment to a professional field” (Weidman et al., 2001, p. 6). An individual needs to, at a minimum, be aware of what norms and standards exist for the profession they wish to enter, and from there they can begin to develop a professional identity.

The classroom is an important environment and plays a crucial role in an individual’s ability to develop their professional identity. Walker et al. (2014) researched the professional identity development of nurses and found that time in the less pressured classroom environment increased confidence as well as learning opportunities allowing students to engage in the professional role significantly contributed to the development of student’s nursing identity (p. 108). Nurses, like interpreters, go through rigorous training in a specialized field before becoming professionals. Additionally, Wiles (2013) stated “students must develop a personal sense of being a social worker. This can only emerge through opportunities to articulate this identity in both the workplace and the academic setting” (p. 864). Learning done in both the classroom and the workplace contributes to overall professional identity. Both the Walker et al. (2014) and the Wiles (2013) studies were focused on other professions, nurses and social workers, but the elements of professional identity development can provide a foundation for the

discussion of interpreter professional identity development. Interpreters can benefit from pre-service classroom environments where they can engage in professional practice without pressure and where they are allowed to begin to develop their professional identities. These realistic professional practice opportunities may assist decreasing the transition shock by rectifying the dissonance between professional expectations and real world experiences (Meadows, 2013). Furthermore, Daley (2001) researched several professions and how knowledge became meaningful to new professionals, finding that contextualized learning and poignant interactions with clients were significant factors. An article on physicians becoming professionals highlights that the “broad concept of teaching includes three basic actions: setting expectations, providing experiences, and evaluating outcomes” (Stern & Papadakis, 2006, p. 1794). The article goes on to discuss the importance of storytelling to pass along critical information concerning professional behavior that may not be learned in a traditional classroom setting. While academic learning is vital to creating a foundation for the development of a professional identity through learning about the profession, the opportunity to engage in actual work as a professional is a catalyst for professional identity development is. Classrooms can establish these contextualized learning opportunities in a less pressuring environment.

Research suggests that ASL/English interpreters deal with a gap from graduation to both certification and work (Bontempo & Napier, 2007; Cogen & Cokely, 2015; Cokely, 2005; Maroney & Smith, 2010; Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005; Witter-Merithew et al., 2004). The gap is discussed in detail in the National Interpreter Education Center report on recent trends, which notes that “the gap persists” and “the field has done little to date to provide formal pathways for new graduates entering the field” (Cogan & Cokely, 2014, p. 24-25). The report further stated that Interpreter Education Programs (IEP) “generally do not produce graduates

who demonstrate fluency in ASL. As a result, novice interpreters are sorely limited in the range of populations and settings in which they can begin to gain work experience” (Cogan & Cokely, 2014, p. 22). Due to this gap, ASL/English interpreters may struggle to find opportunities to engage in the work as professionals, thus hindering the ability to develop a professional identity. Research has attempted to present mentorship as a remedy for the gap (Boeh, 2016; Resnick, 1990). Returning to the literature concerning occupational therapists, Holland et al. (2013) concluded:

A number of studies have reported that novice therapists enter the work force questioning their professional confidence and often experience a further loss of confidence during their initial period of employment. This study has highlighted that novice occupational therapists understand that knowing and believing in yourself, your professional skills and knowledge, and your role leads to presenting yourself as a confident occupational therapist. (p. 112)

Sometimes, it can be difficult to truly believe in oneself and one's skills, and in order to address the existing gap prior to becoming a professional ASL/English interpreter, this is an area for further exploration. How can IEPs go beyond teaching skills to address the development of self-efficacy and professional confidence through opportunities to engage in work that will lead to professional confidence and, therefore, professional competence? According to Dall'Alba (2009), the goal of professional education programs needs to go beyond simply skills, and should emphasize the transformation of becoming professionals. Smith, Cancel, and Maroney (2013) explored a post-graduation option, the Professional Supervision for Interpreting Practice (PSIP) program that offers one year of mentorship and case-conferencing to new graduates, as an opportunity to support the transformation from graduate into a working professional. Through

the PSIP program, novice interpreters have the opportunity to gain professional confidence with experienced colleagues in a supportive environment focused on decision making skills as a professional. In their earlier research, Holland et al. (2012) discussed individuals who fail to use acquired skills, in part due to their perception that activities “surpass their coping capabilities,” and additionally, the part that self-efficacy plays in how long individuals will endure tasks when having difficulty with the tasks (p. 218). Novice professionals who struggle with self-efficacy and awareness of their own skills may go down one of two paths: novice professionals may take jobs beyond their capabilities then struggle within the given situation and therefore struggle to develop their professional identity, or novice professionals known to have acquired the skills necessary to do the job may avoid using their skills and therefore also struggle to develop their professional identity (Holland et al., 2012). Based on the aforementioned research, an individual successfully develops a professional identity, when they have been provided with opportunities to successfully engage in the work, to develop their professional confidence, and explore their own self-efficacy, self-concept, and professional identity.

A study of orchestral musicians (Johnsson & Hager, 2008) provides insight into professional identity development, as it explores a profession that requires a skill dependent on deliberate practice to acquire. Very few individuals can pick up an instrument, take one class, and decide to become a professional orchestral musician. Likewise, very few individuals can take one ASL class and become a professional ASL/English interpreter. Both occupations require hours of practice to improve skill sets. Johnsson and Hager explored the development process and stated, “Learning to become professional is about becoming part of a community that shares practical and holistic experiences; about learning how to work *with* rather than *against* or *in comparison* to others” (p. 4). This is an interesting notion for ASL/English

interpreters who often work in isolation. As current research notes that for a small subset of the overall interpreting profession, “70% of rural interpreters experience professional isolation either sometimes or all the time,” and therefore rural interpreters must overcome obstacles to build the kind of community that benefits the profession (Trimble, 2014, p. 42). While interpreters working outside of rural areas have yet to be researched in terms of professional isolation, there are many situations where they may not interact with other professional interpreters over a span of time (Frishberg, 1994). The potential for professional isolation means a significant obstacle exists for ASL/English interpreters to develop the sense of community that promotes professional identity. While orchestral musicians and interpreters may seem like dissimilar professions, both are professions that require a unique mix of talent, experience, practice, and ultimately another person’s message to be interpreted. Pertaining to the development of identity, Johnsson and Hager (2008) found that:

Learning to become a professional orchestral musician is not about understanding a single role as a performing professional in an orchestra. In fact, the growing multiplicity of roles recognizes [sic] the dynamic nature of the profession and the difficulty in ascribing a single notion of identity to practicing [sic] professionals. (p. 5)

This finding speaks to the layers that exist in professional identity development and the professional’s ability to adapt to multiple roles. Johnsson and Hager (2008) discussed the necessity of skill development to enter the profession but emphasized that “learning here is much more about searching for connections to various forms of identity” (p. 6). ASL/English interpreters require linguistic and cultural skills in both languages in order to enter the profession; however, there are additional elements that must be learned along the journey to becoming an

interpreting professional, and professional identity is a critical element that changes and adapts along the way.

The Interpreting Perspective

As Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (2013) explored role-space of interpreters, they reviewed the interpreting literature and ultimately described the fallacy of approaching interpreting from an artificially unobtrusive place where the interpreter limits their sense of self within the interpreting interaction. Rudvin (2007) stated that “the interpreter is required to negotiate this constant re-positioning as if there were no distinction between the various facets of the Self in different contexts; this constant flux and fluid role-oscillation can be extremely stressful for the interpreter” (p. 63). How does the interpreter’s personal identity exist in these different contexts and how does the interpreter develop a professional identity within these circumstances? Occasionally, intrapersonal demands conflict with the demands of the professional environment, whether interpersonal or environmental (Dean & Pollard, 2013). Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (2013) discussed the importance of the external factors and the elements central to the interaction between participants that determine an interpreter’s role-space and how the interpreter manages their sense of self within their role. Rudvin (2007) indicated that “the individual professional feels tension when there is a clash between optimal workplace conduct and psycho-social, ideological, cultural, religious and affective aspects of interpersonal relations” (p. 49). It is possible for an individual to have a clearly defined self-concept that incorporates these elements, but it clashes with the demands of the profession. Therefore, the resulting tension may inhibit the development of a professional identity within those circumstances. Based on this tension, it makes sense that Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (2013) identified the tension stemming from withholding one’s sense of self and encouraged a shift in approach by acknowledging the human

element and fully understanding the interpreted interaction and aligning with the participants of the interaction. Rudvin (2007) claimed the collective interpreting professional identity “covers a variety of job descriptions on the continuum between translator and cultural mediator” (p. 67). If an interpreter is expected to be a translator a cultural mediator (and everything in between), successful navigation of interpreted interactions mean that interpreters must be capable of adapting their identity to meet these role expectations. Additionally, Rudvin (2007) stated, “any model of professionalism should include or integrate cross-cultural aspects of identity-building” (p. 49). Regarding the importance of cross-cultural abilities in a study on Norwegian refugee interpreters, “a common problem was that the refugee interpreters often felt torn between conflicting expectations from the Norwegian personnel and their own refugee kinsmen” (Sande, 1998, p. 405). The interpreters in Sande’s study had to mediate between cultures, both Norwegian and refugee, while managing their intrapersonal demands of belonging to both cultures, forcing reconciliation between their personal identity and professional identity. To further understand the interplay of cultural dynamics on the interpreting professional, Temple and Edwards (2002) explored the use of interpreters in qualitative research studies and stated:

Though coming from different research experiences, we have both come to see the concept of ‘borders’ as a useful way of approaching the complex question of identity, perspective and who can represent others when translating or interpreting. Differences of ‘race’/ethnicity, gender, class and so on are gathered around borders, and the concept allows us to acknowledge the cultural space in which ‘difference’ becomes the point at which identity and knowledge constructions and contentions surface and shift around language. (p. 8)

Each of these examples shows how interpreters must exist in the space between cultures. It is possible to claim one culture within the interpreter's personal identity while exhibiting cultural awareness of both cultures in their professional identity. Temple and Edwards (2002) focused on interviews with non-English language speakers and the changing dynamic with an interpreter present for the interview. The researchers recognized the difficult cultural and power dynamics that can exist in an interpreted interaction and said of the interpreter: "at the same time as she constructed a shared identity border with the interviewee, the interpreter implicitly positioned me as an 'outsider' who lacked the cultural knowledge to be consulted, and included within, a discussion of what to do" (p. 7). During this interaction, the interpreter aligned, through a shared identity, with the interviewee while in an earlier interaction, they had positioned themselves in alignment with the researcher as an educated member of the middle class, making the interviewee the outsider. This interpreter was unaware how their language choices during the interpreted interaction expressed their personal identity as an educated member of the middle class instead of language choices the interviewee would have made for themselves. The interpreter from this study exhibited cultural identity aspects of both clients in the interaction, the researcher and the interviewee. Furthermore, Nicodemus and Emmorey (2015) explored the preferences and accuracy of ASL/English interpreters as they worked between two languages, their first language (L1) and their second language (L2). The collective professional identity requires work between these two languages, an L1 and an L2, and also work between the two cultures for native users of each language. Since interpreters work in the space between these cultures and languages to facilitate communication, it is vital that fluency in their L1 and L2 along with "cross-cultural aspects of identity-building" be present in the collective professional identity as well as in the individual's professional identity (Rudvin, 2007, p. 49). Without

adequate fluency in languages and cultures, how can an interpreter successfully navigate the interpreted interaction? As Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (2013) emphasized, within this border space between cultures and languages or role-space, it is important for interpreters to be human beings first, with a unique social and linguistic skill set.

Professional identity is a dynamic and complex topic no matter the occupation being examined. The literature reviewed here touched on a variety of professions from nursing to teaching to social workers to orchestral musicians to the most relevant: interpreters. Elements that contribute to the overall collective's professional identity and a comprehensive definition for professional identity from the collective's perspective were first addressed. To lay a foundation for the individual's professional identity, the impact of self-concept clarity, and therefore self-esteem related to confidence and competence, were explored. The journey from student to professional, along with the transition period before becoming a professional and the impact of work experience and mentorship, were each identified as parts of the process of developing one's professional identity. Furthermore, interpreting presents a unique challenge straddling two distinct worlds with unique languages and cultures that allow for personal identity to interact with job functions, and as this dilemma is internally reconciled, the professional identity of interpreters may be influenced.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

With three aspects of professional identity to evaluate, this research study was setup with three distinct approaches. The collective professional identity was evaluated through the development of the Professional Identity Scale in Interpreting (PISI), adapted from the Woo (2013) Professional Identity Scale in Counseling (PISC). Individual professional identity was assessed through the use of the Campbell et al. (1996) Self-Concept Clarity (SCC) scale. These two instruments, followed by an optional open-ended question portion to examine the professional identity developmental process, were utilized in a survey that was disseminated to pre-professional, professional, and post-professional ASL/English interpreters via social media distribution of a SurveyMonkey link. Once the data was collected, it was compiled and analyzed to start an exploration of the various facets of professional identity for ASL/English interpreters, with a variety of strengths and limitations pertaining to the research methodology. Ultimately, this research study is meant as an exploratory beginning to understanding the concept of professional identity of ASL/English interpreters, and further research would be beneficial.

Participants

After the university's Institutional Review Board approved the study proposal, the survey was distributed. Utilizing the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf website and social media platforms such as Facebook, participants were asked to complete an online survey. Participants were encouraged to share the survey with colleagues as well. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary, and if they decided they did not want to continue, they could exit the survey at any time without penalty. The survey began with an implied consent form, before

presenting the survey questions in three parts: the Likert scale PISI adapted from Woo's (2013) PISC, the Campbell et al. (1996) SCC Likert scale, and optional open-ended questions. Only surveys that completed the Likert scale portions were used for final analysis. The survey was open to all pre-professional, professional, and post-professional ASL/English interpreters, age 18 and over in the United States.

According to the RID 2016 Annual Report, the population of ASL/English interpreters with RID membership contained 4.89% African American/Black interpreters, 1.24% American Indian/Alaskan Native interpreters, 1.83% Asian American/Pacific Islander interpreters, 86.88% Euro American/White interpreters, and 5.14% Hispanic/Latino(a) interpreters. Additionally, of the RID members 96.05% identified as hearing, 2.78% as Deaf, 1.14% as Hard of Hearing, and 0.03% as Deaf-Blind. The membership categories show 3,228 associate members, 10,301 certified members, 1,453 student members with 1,482 male and 9,239 female members of the total 15,185 RID members in the United States (RID, 2016). This was the primary population of ASL/English interpreters sought for the study's sample population.

Design

Since this study attempts to evaluate the professional identity of ASL/English interpreters by addressing the collective professional identity, the individual's professional identity, and the process of developing a professional identity, each area had a specific approach and was compiled into a 28 question survey that took approximately 15-20 minutes for respondents to complete. Woo's (2013) PISC was adapted from a similar practice profession for application to the interpreting profession with the intention of examining the collective professional identity by answering the research question: what is the professional identity of the ASL/English interpreting profession as a whole? The Campbell et al. (1996) Self-Concept Clarity scale was

utilized in its original form to examine the professional identity of the individual by answering the research question: what is the professional identity of individual ASL/English interpreters, in relation to their Self-concept Clarity? While the first nine pages of survey questions required answers, the last page had optional open-ended questions that were designed to explore the process of professional identity development by answering the research question: how do ASL/English interpreters develop their professional identity?

Utilizing the domains identified by Woo (2013) in the PISC instrument, the survey was broken down into each domain with questions adapted for the interpreting profession, all on a Likert scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. Woo (2013) identified the following domains as contributing to professional identity:

1. Knowledge of the Profession
2. Philosophy of the Profession
3. Professional Roles and Expertise
4. Attitude
5. Engagement Behaviors
6. Interaction

Each domain was presented on a separate page and had questions related to that specific domain. Some questions were easily adapted by changing the word *counseling* to the word *interpreting*. Other questions did not apply directly and were replaced with questions that applied to the interpreting profession or left out of the survey entirely. The following tables (see Tables 1-6) show the original Woo (2013) PISC questions on the left hand side and the adapted questions related to the interpreting profession that were included in the survey for this research study. Based on a round of pilot questions sent out to colleagues, working interpreters, and interpreter

educators, and their resulting feedback, the final questions for the Professional Identity Scale in Interpreting were decided.

Table 1

Knowledge of the Profession Subscale Question Comparison

<u>Woo (2013) PISC Questions</u>	<u>Adapted Questions for Interpreting Profession</u>
I know the origins of the counseling profession.	I know the origins of the interpreting profession.
I am knowledgeable of the important events and milestones (e.g., establishing ACA, state level licensure) in counseling history.	I am knowledgeable of the important events and milestones in interpreting history.
I know the existence of the “20/20: A Vision for the Future of Counseling,” A representative process to identify where the counseling profession wants to be in the year 2020 and what it will take to get there.	
I am knowledgeable about ethical guidelines (e.g., codes of ethics/standards of practice) in counseling.	I am knowledgeable about ethical guidelines in interpreting.
I am familiar with accreditation organizations (e.g., CACREP: Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs) and their standards for professional preparation.	
I am familiar with certification organizations (e.g., NBCC: National Board for Certified Counselors) and their requirements for credentials.	I am familiar with certification organizations and their requirements for credentials.
I am familiar with professional counseling associations (e.g., ACA: American Counseling Association) and their roles and accomplishments in the profession.	I am familiar with professional interpreting associations and their roles and accomplishments in the profession.

I am knowledgeable of professional counseling journals (e.g., *JCD: The Journal of Counseling & Development*, journal(s) relevant to my specialty area) and their contents' foci and purposes in the profession.

I am able to distinguish similarities and differences between my profession and other mental health professions (e. g., counseling psychology, social work, and psychiatry).

I am familiar with laws (e.g., court cases, licensure) and regulations related to my profession.

I am knowledgeable of professional interpreting journals and their contents, foci, and purposes in the profession.

I am familiar with laws and regulations related to my profession.

I am knowledgeable about the different models and theoretical approaches to interpreting.

Table 2

Philosophy of the Profession Subscale Question Comparison

<u>Woo (2013) PISC Questions</u>	<u>Adapted Questions for Interpreting Profession</u>
I am able to distinguish the counseling philosophy from the philosophy of other mental health professions (e. g., counseling psychology, social work, and psychiatry).	I am able to distinguish and describe the ASL/English interpreting philosophy.
Most problems and concerns presented by clients are developmental in nature.	
The preventive approach is emphasized in the counseling philosophy.	I believe cross-cultural communication is emphasized in interpreting philosophy.
It is important to view clients holistically, focusing on integration of the mind, body, and spirit.	I believe it is important to have sufficient knowledge and skill in both ASL and English to provide a successful interpretation.
It is important to empower clients through an emphasis on personal strengths.	I believe it is important to empower clients through an emphasis on personal independence.

Advocacy for clients is emphasized in the counseling philosophy.

Clients are able to make constructive and positive changes in their lives.

Interactions in counseling are based on the relationship between counselor and client.

Research is an important part of the counseling profession.

Assessments and diagnosis are emphasized in the counseling philosophy. *Reverse coded

If not for insurance issues, it is not important to utilize a medical model when conceptualizing a client's presenting issue.

I believe Deaf Culture is emphasized in interpreting philosophy.

I believe interactions in interpreting are based on the equal relationship between interpreter and clients, both Deaf and Hearing.

I believe research is an important part of the interpreting profession.

I believe self-care is emphasized in the interpreting philosophy.

I believe successful interpreted interactions can be influenced by client engagement and providing feedback.

I do not believe professional appearance is emphasized in interpreting philosophy.
*Reverse Coded

Table 3

Professional Roles & Expertise Subscale Question Comparison

<u>Woo (2013) PISC Questions</u>	<u>Adapted Questions for Interpreting Profession</u>
I value various professional roles (e.g., counselor, educator, consultant, and advocate) that a counseling professional can hold.	I value various professional roles that an interpreting professional can hold.
A counseling professional's roles and duties vary depending on settings, diverse populations served, and the person's specialty.	An interpreting professional's roles and duties vary depending on settings, diverse populations served, and the specialty.

Regardless of different roles (e.g., counselor, supervisor, or consultant), a major goal is client welfare.

I believe a counseling professional should value the importance of advocacy for the populations that the person serves.

I believe a counseling professional should value the importance of advocacy for the profession that the person belongs to.

I will/have completed professional training and standard education to perform my duties in my roles.

I have professional knowledge and practical skills required to successfully perform my roles.

I am confident that there will be positive outcomes of my work and services.

I am knowledgeable of ethical responsibilities and professional standards relevant to my roles.

I am familiar with which resources to refer to when I need professional help.

I consistently self-evaluate and self-reflect my effectiveness and performances in my chosen field.

Regardless of different roles or settings, a major goal is always the communication of the clients.

I believe an interpreting professional should value the importance of advocacy for the populations served.

I believe an interpreting professional should value the importance of advocacy for the interpreting profession.

I have completed professional training and standard education to perform my duties in my roles.

I have professional knowledge and practical skills required to successfully perform my roles.

I am confident that there will be positive outcomes of my work and services.

I am knowledgeable of ethical responsibilities and professional standards relevant to my roles.

I am familiar with which resources to refer to when I need professional help.

I consistently self-evaluate and self-reflect my effectiveness and performances in my chosen field.

I am confident in my ASL to English interpreting skills.

I am confident in my English to ASL interpreting skills.

Table 4

Attitude Subscale Question Comparison

<u>Woo (2013) PISC Questions</u>	<u>Adapted Questions for Interpreting Profession</u>
My profession has a well-established theoretical body of knowledge.	My profession has a well-established theoretical body of knowledge.
My profession provides unique and valuable services to society.	My profession provides unique and valuable services to society.
I value the advancement and the future of my profession.	I am positive about advancement and the future of my profession.
I believe counseling is different from other mental health professions (e.g., counseling psychology, social work, and psychiatry).	
It bothers me to meet people who do not recognize my profession.	It does not bother me to meet people who do not recognize my profession. *Reverse Coded
It does not bother me to meet counseling professionals who value psychology/social work over my profession. *Reverse Coded	It does not bother me to meet interpreting professionals whose values conflict with social justice issues impacting the profession. *Reverse Coded
I recommend my profession to those who are searching for a new career related to helping professions.	I recommend my profession to those who are searching for a new career.
I am comfortable having discussions about the role differences between counseling and other mental health professions (e.g., counseling psychology, social work, and psychiatry).	I am comfortable having discussions about the role differences between interpreters and other professionals present in interpreted interactions.
My personality and beliefs are well matched with the characteristics and values of my profession.	My personality and beliefs are well matched with the characteristics and values of my profession.
I am satisfied with my work and professional roles.	I am satisfied with my work and professional roles.
I have a solid work-life balance and feel congruent.	My life revolves around my profession, and my personal goals are highly related to my profession.

As a counseling professional, I share my positive feelings (e.g., satisfaction) when working with people in other fields.

As an interpreting professional, I share my positive feelings (e.g., satisfaction) when working with others.

I believe in supporting and belonging to a community of interpreting professionals.

I have felt professional isolation.

Table 5

Engagement Behaviors Subscale Question Comparison

<u>Woo (2013) PISC Questions</u>	<u>Adapted Questions for Interpreting Profession</u>
I have memberships of professional counseling associations (e.g., national, state-wide, and/or regional).	I have memberships in professional interpreting associations.
I actively engage in professional counseling associations by participating in conferences and workshops every year.	I actively engage in professional interpreting associations by participating in conferences and workshops every year.
I would like to be more involved in professional development activities.	I have educated colleagues as a workshop presenter.
I engage in certification/licensure renewal process (e.g., LPC: Licensed Professional Counselor, NCC: National Certified Counselor).	I engage in certification/licensure renewal process and/or have consistently maintained interpreting certificates and credentials.
I have contributed to expanding my knowledge base of the profession by participating in counseling research (e.g., by being interviewed, taking surveys).	I have contributed to expanding my knowledge base of the profession by participating in interpreting research (e.g., by being interviewed, taking surveys).
I have conducted counseling research.	I have conducted interpreting research.
I have published research findings in my field.	I have published research findings in my field.
I follow up with theoretical, practical, and technical advancement in my profession by keeping up with literature (e.g., professional counseling journals, books) in the field.	I follow up with theoretical, practical, and technical advancement in my profession by keeping up with literature in the field.

I engage in or seek opportunities to serve in non-required leadership positions (e.g., counseling association, CSI: Chi Sigma Iota, interest network, committee, volunteering work, community service).

I educate the community and public about my profession.

I advocate for my profession by participating in activities associated with legislation, law, and policy on counseling on behalf of the profession.

I engage in or seek opportunities to serve in non-required leadership positions.

I educate the community and public about my profession.

I advocate for my profession by participating in activities associated with legislation, law, and policy on interpreting on behalf of the profession.

Table 6

Interaction Subscale Question Comparison

<u>Woo (2013) PISC Questions</u>	<u>Adapted Questions for Interpreting Profession</u>
I seek feedback/consultation from professional peers as a form of professional development.	I seek feedback/consultation from professional peers as a form of professional development.
I regularly communicate with a mentor who is interested in my professional development.	I regularly communicate with a mentor who is interested in my professional development.
I regularly communicate with a mentee who is interested in his/her professional development.	I regularly communicate with a mentee who is interested in his/her professional development.
I keep in contact with counseling professionals through training and/or professional involvement in counseling associations.	I keep in contact with interpreting professionals through training and/or professional involvement in interpreting associations.
I keep involved in ongoing discussions with counseling professionals about identity and the vision of my profession.	I keep involved in ongoing discussions with interpreting professionals about identity and the vision of my profession.
I believe supervision is needed for all counselors in order to ensure quality counseling and to enhance supervisee's professional growth.	I believe supervision is needed for all interpreters in order to ensure quality interpreting and to enhance supervisee's professional growth.

I believe core counselor education courses (e.g., career counseling, multicultural counseling, and group counseling) should be taught by counselor educators instead of other mental health professionals (e.g., psychologists, social workers, and psychiatrists).

I believe core interpreter education courses should be taught by trained interpreter educators.

The final survey presented each subscale's questions on an individual page. The survey indicated that the questions were adapted from Woo's (2013) PISC, but the original questions were not included since they did not pertain to the present research. One of the main comments of feedback from colleagues, working interpreters, and interpreter educators during the pilot round of question development was that the questions appeared complicated when they included too much expansion through parenthetical clarifications. Due to the pilot round feedback, many of the adapted questions appear in a simplified form. It is possible this variation from the original question format could influence respondent answers.

Individual Professional Identity was explored in the next portion of the survey through the use of the Campbell et al. (1996) Self-Concept Clarity Scale in its original form. Both the PISI portion and SCC portion of the surveys asked questions on a Likert scale with five options ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. A major difference between the two scales is the reliance on reverse coded questions. While the PISI has three reverse code questions, where a negatively worded question requires scale scoring to be reversed, the SCC has 10 out of 12 questions that are reverse coded. The following are the Campbell et al. (1996) SCC questions:

SCC1. My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another. *(Reverse coded)

SCC2. On one day I might have one opinion of myself and on another day I might have a different opinion. *(Reverse coded)

- SCC3. I spend a lot of time wondering about what kind of person I really am.
*(Reverse coded)
- SCC4. Sometimes I feel that I am not really the person that I appear to be. *(Reverse coded)
- SCC5. When I think about the kind of person I have been in the past, I'm not sure what I was really like. *(Reverse coded)
- SCC6. I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality.
- SCC7. Sometimes I think I know other people better than I know myself. *(Reverse coded)
- SCC8. My beliefs about myself seem to change very frequently. *(Reverse coded)
- SCC9. If I were asked to describe my personality, my description might end up being different from one day to another day. *(Reverse coded)
- SCC10. Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could tell someone what I'm really like.
*(Reverse coded)
- SCC11. In general, I have a clear sense of who I am and what I am.
- SCC12. It is often hard for me to make up my mind about things because I don't really know what I want. *(Reverse coded)

Individual professional identity is a difficult concept to research, due to the self-reporting aspect. Since the Campbell et al. (1996) SCC scale has been heavily researched and repeatedly used ever since its formation, its validity has been confirmed even with the self-reporting nature of the scale. For this reason, it was a useful instrument to explore an element of the individual's professional identity.

On the last page of the survey, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions about their professional identity and what contributed to the development of that identity. Due to the length of the survey after the first two parts and the open-ended question approach of the final section, participants were not required to type in answers and could click “complete” to finish the survey if they chose to quit without answering these questions. The questions in the survey concerning the developmental process were:

- OE1. What does being an interpreter mean to you?
- OE2. At what point in your career did you identify as an interpreter?
- OE3. What contributed to the development of your professional identity as an interpreter?
- OE4. Please describe any positive experiences related to your professional identity as an interpreter.
- OE5. Please describe any negative experiences related to your professional identity as an interpreter.
- OE6. Any additional comments:

The open-ended questions were designed to elicit thoughtful responses through story-telling and memory recall that could be open-coded for themes. If participants had been required to answer the open-ended questions, it is possible fewer complete survey responses would have been obtained.

Data Collection

Data was collected entirely through the online survey described above. The survey was opened on December 2, 2015 via the primary investigator’s Survey Monkey account. A link to the survey was posted in a variety of social media sites, including the national Registry of

Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Facebook page, regional and state RID affiliate chapter Facebook pages, and social media sites related to the ASL/English interpreting profession. Most results were collected during the first month the survey was open, but responses continued to trickle in through February, 2016, when the survey was formally closed.

By relying on social media outreach, the overall population of pre-professional, professional, and post-professional ASL/English interpreters over 18 years old, from across the United States were sought as respondents. Since part of the survey relied on examining the development of professional identity, it was important to seek responses from those currently in the developmental process, as well as those with solid self-concepts of their professional selves. An implied consent form began the survey and was followed by the Likert scale questions for the PISI, with each domain's questions on a single page, followed by the Likert scale questions of the Campbell et al. (1996) SCC on a single page. The survey ended with the optional open-ended questions. Within the consent form, participants were informed they could opt out of the survey at any time by closing the internet window and their answers would not be utilized in the research.

With the use of SurveyMonkey, all of the responses to the survey were easily collected and stored in a private, password-protected account. Initially, the data could be categorized and viewed based on a number of options and filters offered by the SurveyMonkey website. The most important filter was the ability to view only completed responses. Since the survey was setup to require answers to all of the Likert scale questions, it was simple to filter out all incomplete survey responses. The filtered, complete responses were then exported into IBM SPSS software in order to analyze the data and into Excel for the production of graphs.

Data Analysis

The resulting data required several approaches for analysis. In order to look at the professional identity of the profession as a whole, frequency tables were developed to show how the 87 participants answered the Likert scale questions. Frequency tables and accompanying graphs allowed for visual representation of the data. The collective professional identity is a broad and complex topic, and this research study can only start a discussion about it. Therefore the frequency table approach allows for an exploratory analysis of the topic. Since the portion of questionnaire adapted from the Woo (2013) PISC was essentially a newly developed instrument to measure the professional identity of ASL/English interpreters, it was important to test the scale reliability. A Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each subscale, the overall Professional Identity Scale in Interpreting (PISI), and the SCC scale as well to assess validity of the scales. In order to explore the individual interpreter's professional identity and address the hypothesis that certification impacts SCC scores, descriptive statistics and ANOVAs were run to compare SCC score means for different demographically defined groups. Since participants were able to identify all of the certifications they hold, which resulted in some participants with multiple certifications, the credentials portion of the demographics was re-coded into categories that could be analyzed with the ANOVA method to determine if there was statistical difference between groups. It should also be noted that a few of the PISI questions and most of the SCC questions were reverse coded. In these cases, a *strongly disagree* answer actually meant that the respondent *strongly agreed* with the concept of the question and vice versa. Finally, the open-ended questions were coded to identify themes. The answers to the open-ended questions were evaluated for recurring themes, and these themes were condensed into bar graphs for visual analysis. Through coding and visual analysis, the developmental process for professional identity

of ASL/English interpreters began to take shape as similar experiences and milestones were revealed.

Methodological Strengths

Participants were surveyed from across the country, from a variety of personal experiences, over a wide age range, and they mirrored the general demographics as identified by RID, the national organization for interpreters (RID, 2016). The survey utilized a Likert scale, with some reverse coded questions, based on previously validated scales and survey instruments. Additionally, the ability for respondents to answer open-ended questions provided a mixed method approach. Since professional identity has been identified in the literature as a dynamic topic with differing layers and approaches, the survey provided to participants reflected this dynamic nature and collected information exploring each of the identified definitions of professional identity.

Methodological Limitations

While the demographics mirrored the demographics as identified by RID, sample bias is possible and certain groups whose voices could have contributed positively to this research are underrepresented. Additionally, there are sign language interpreters across the world and their perspectives were not included in this research study. Utilizing the social media platforms, primarily Facebook, meant that only those with an active account could participate in the research. Social media pleas for individuals to click a link and complete a survey can be easily overlooked. Only those online when the link was initially posted, or those actively seeking older posts, had the opportunity to see the survey link. There is likely a sample of the population not surveyed due to their non-use of the technology utilized to distribute the survey. Additionally, the scope of information the survey intended to collect limited the research due to overarching

scope and time required of participants. If the questionnaire had been shorter, it is possible there would be more specific information about a singular topic within professional identity and potentially more responses to contribute to the overall data.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Once the survey link had closed and the data was compiled, the information was organized and analyzed. The demographics of the respondents provided a foundation for the discussion and structure for categorizing the data into meaningful chunks. It was important to assess the validity of the Professional Identity Scale in Interpreting. The scale was developed using the Woo (2013) Professional Identity Scale in Counseling (PISC) as a foundation, which itself went through an extensive validation process that the PISI did not, due to timing limitations. Lacking the full validation process, the scale was still tested using Cronbach's alpha analysis. Once PISI validity was assessed, the results of the survey responses for each domain could be further analyzed to explore the collective professional identity of ASL/English interpreters. Next, the results of the Campbell et al. (1996) Self-Concept Clarity scale were examined utilizing the demographic categorization with the intention of exploring ASL/English interpreter's individual professional identity. Finally, the open-ended questions that wrapped up the survey were coded to evaluate the ASL/English interpreter's professional identity development process.

Participants

Utilizing the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf website and social media platforms such as Facebook, participants were asked to complete an online survey. Participants were encouraged to share the survey with colleagues as well. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary, and if they decided they did not want to continue,

they could exit the survey at any time without penalty. Only surveys that completed the Likert scale portion were used for final analysis. The survey was open to all pre-professional, professional, and post-professional ASL/English interpreters, age 18 and over.

The online survey started with an implied consent form. The participants then answered demographic questions. Utilizing an adapted Woo (2013) PISC scale, participants used a Likert scale to respond to questions concerning their professional identity, broken down into the following categories: knowledge of the profession, philosophy of the profession, professional roles and expertise, attitude, engagement behaviors, and interaction. Participants then answered the Campbell et al. (1996) Self-Concept Clarity scale questions, and finally, answered optional open-ended answer questions and prompts. The survey took approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete from a computer with internet access.

Responses to the survey came from throughout the United States. Of the 135 total survey respondents, there were a total of 87 complete responses ($n=87$) for the required portion of the survey, as outlined in Table 7. Participants were informed during the consent form portion of the survey that they could stop the survey at anytime and their information would not be used. The 87 respondents completed all of the adapted PISC Likert questions and Self-Concept Clarity scale questions, and some chose not to answer the optional open-ended questions at the end of the survey. Responses to the open-ended questions ranged from 21 responses to 73 responses. There were 48 respondents who were eliminated from the data due to partial response of the required survey items.

Table 7

Survey Respondent Demographics

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Gender		
Female	83	95.4
Male	4	4.6
Age		
21 - 25	7	8
26 - 29	11	12.6
30 - 34	15	17.2
35 - 39	12	13.8
40 - 44	8	9.2
45 - 49	12	13.8
50 - 54	8	9.2
55 - 59	10	11.5
60 or older	4	4.6
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	3	3.4
Asian	4	4.6
Black or African-American	1	1.1
Chicano, Latino, or Hispanic	3	3.4
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1	1.1
White or Caucasian	75	86.2
Education		
Associate degree	15	17.2
Bachelor's degree	40	46
Graduate degree	24	27.6
Some college but no degree	8	9.2
Deaf/Hearing Identity		
CODA	4	4.6
Deaf	1	1.1
Deaf of Deaf	1	1.1
Hard of Hearing (identify as Hearing)	1	1.1
Hearing	78	89.7
Other (please specify)	2	2.3

Note. Total of 87 respondents

How do you identify your gender?

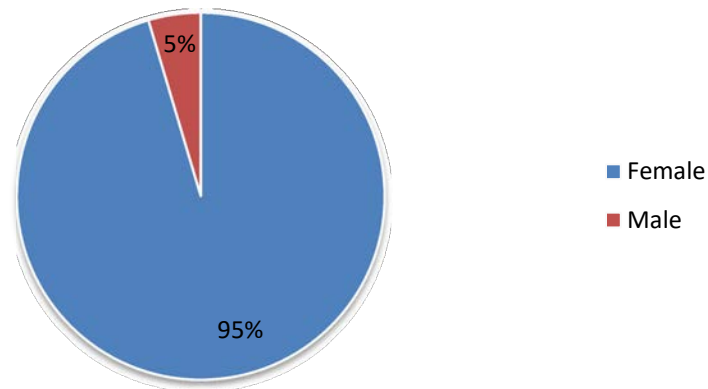


Figure 1. Gender demographics of respondents

There were 95.4% female respondents and 4.6% male respondents, as seen in Figure 1. While this may appear disproportionate, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf 2016 Annual Report indicated that across the profession in the United State, 86.2% of interpreters identify as female and 13.8% are male, of those who identified a binary gender (RID, 2016). Within the ASL/English interpreting profession, there is a disparity in gender distribution that was also present among survey respondents.

What is your age?

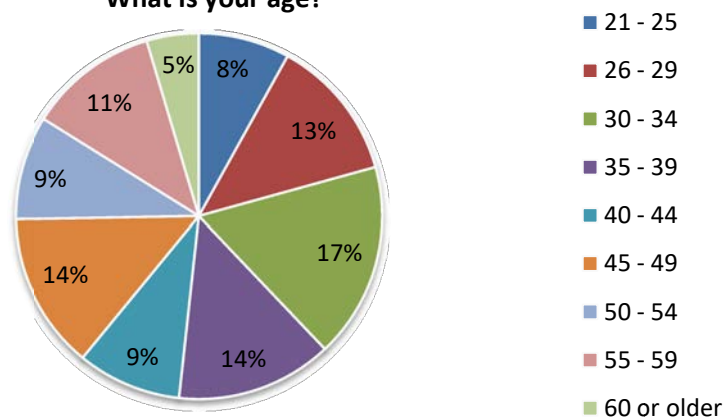


Figure 2. Age demographics of respondents

Participants identified their age by selecting the range that represented their actual age (see Figure 2). There was a fairly even distribution of ages among participants, with most, 17.2%, being 30-34 years old, and the fewest, 4.6%, being above 60 years old. Being a relatively newer profession, the drop in participants aged 60 or older is reasonable.

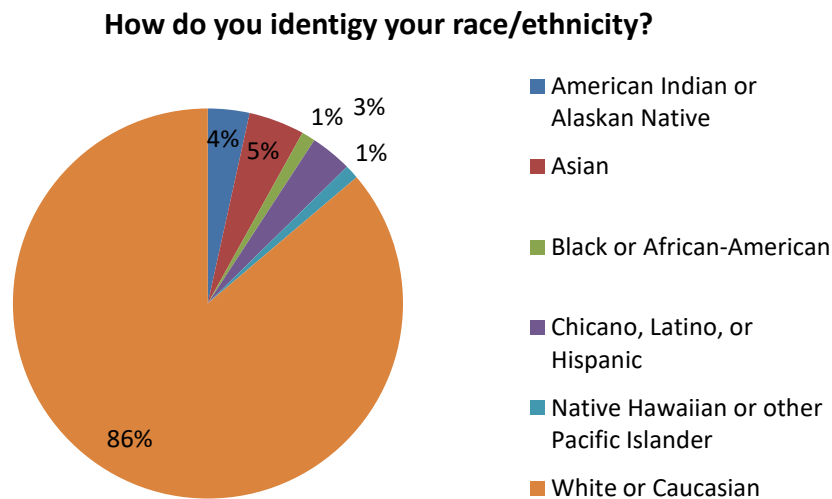
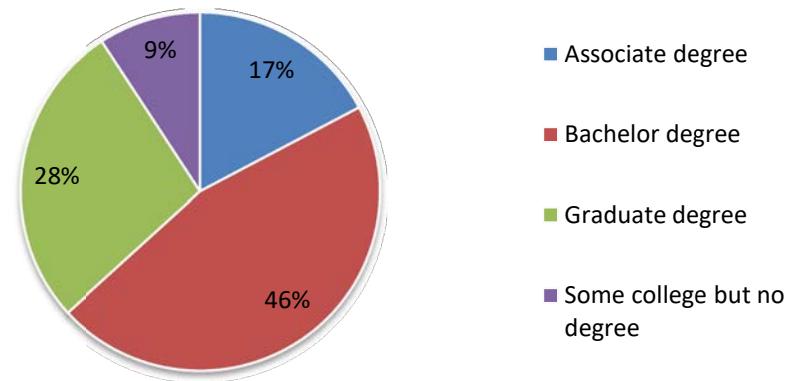


Figure 3. Race and ethnicity demographics of respondents

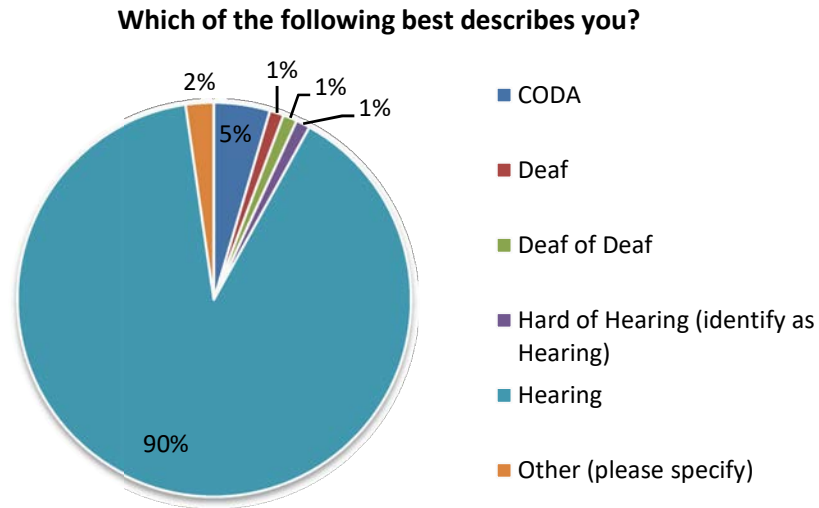
A majority of participants, 86.2%, identified as White or Caucasian, as indicated in Figure 3. In the 2014 RID annual report, this disproportionate amount was also observed as 86.9% of interpreters identified as Euro-Americans, while 4.9% were African American, 1.2% were American Indian, 1.8% were Asian American, and 5.1% were Hispanic (RID, 2016).

What is the highest level of school you have completed?



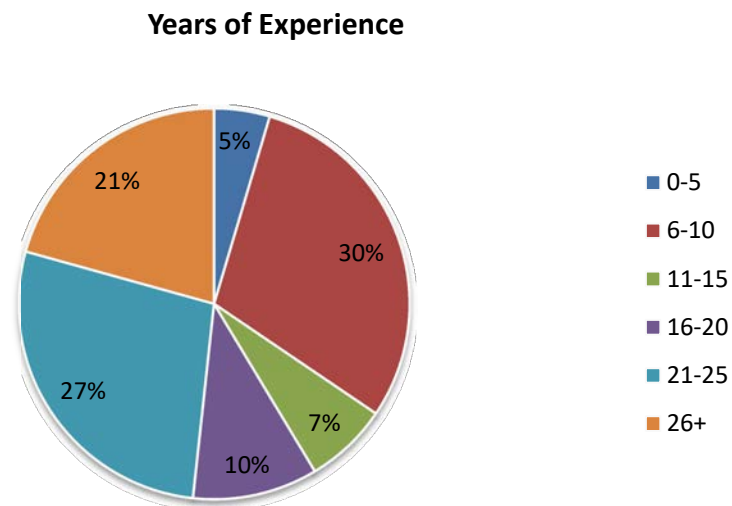
*Figure 4.*Highest level of education obtained by respondents

A majority of participants, 46%, have a Bachelor's degree, as indicated in Figure 4. While RID now requires a Bachelor's degree for certification, or completion of an alternative pathway, historically, this was not the case. Also, the survey was open to those still in interpreter education programs, so the participants with "some college but no degree" and associate degrees were anticipated. Additional education, in the form of graduate degrees, is not required by the profession, so the large amount of participants with graduate degrees was a surprising result.



*Figure 5.*Deaf/Hearing identity of respondents

Additionally, a majority of participants identified as hearing, and there were very few participants that identified as Deaf or Hard of Hearing (see Figure 5). Those identifying as Child of a Deaf Adult (CODA) could have been hearing, hard of hearing, or Deaf, but their choice to identify as a CODA over the alternate options appears to be a significant aspect of their identity



*Figure 6.*Years of Experience of Respondents

Nearly half of respondents have 21 or more years of experience and the other half have less than 20 years of experience (see Figure 6). There is a significant split in respondents with the majority of respondents having six to ten years of experience, followed by the next group having over 21 to 25 years of experience. If the groupings are split into three in ten year increments, 0-10 makes up 35% of respondents; 11-20 makes up 17% of respondents, and 21+ makes up 48% of respondents.

Table 8

Respondent Certifications and Credentials

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
NIC	18	20.7
NIC Advanced	3	3.4
NIC Master	3	3.4
CDI	2	2.3
CI	24	27.6
CT	24	27.6
CSC	2	2.3
OTC	3	3.4
SC:L	7	8.0
RSC	2	2.3
Ed:K-12	7	8.0
EIPA	20	23.0
BEI Basic	3	3.4
BEI Advanced	2	2.3
BEI Master	1	1.1
NAD IV	2	2.3
NADV	3	3.4
Total	126	144.8

Note. Respondents were able to identify all certifications they hold.

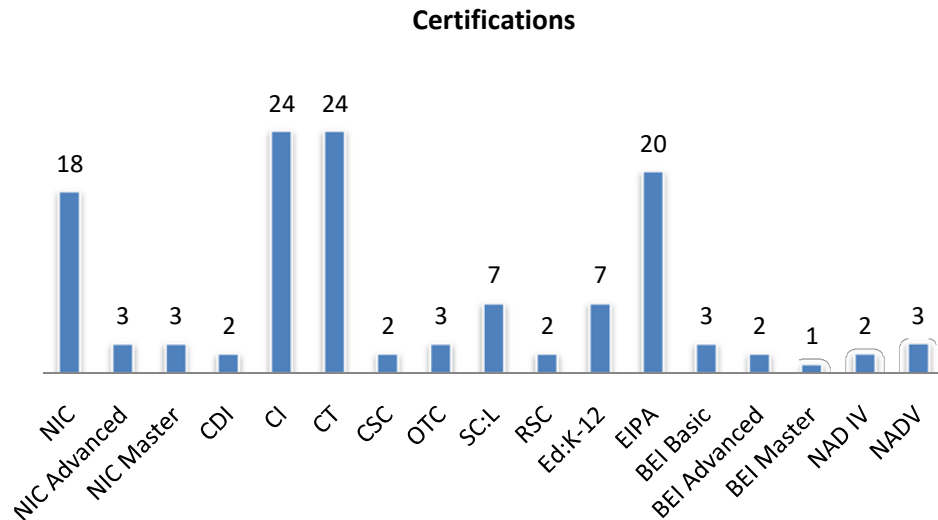


Figure 7. Certifications Held by Respondents

Participants were asked to identify their qualifications utilizing a list of certification options. They were allowed to check any and all certifications they held (See Table 8 and Figure 7). The largest number of participants identified having the Certified Interpreter (CI) and Certified Transliterater (CT) certifications. These certifications were offered from 1988 to 2008 (RID, 2015b), and during that time most interpreters pursued holding both certifications instead of a singular credential. Of the 87 respondents, there are 24 individuals with a CI and 24 with a CT, with only two occurrences where an individual only has one of these specific credentials without also holding the other one. These and several other certification options are no longer offered, but interpreters are still identified as certified if they hold and maintain previously offered certifications. The National Interpreter Certification (NIC) is the current iteration of certification. Some certifications are meant for specialized areas such as the EIPA, Ed:K-12, and BEI Basic primarily representing qualifications in educational settings, while the SC:L represents qualifications in legal settings. RID had previously offered the Ed:K-12 certification for individuals who had passed the EIPA with a 4.0 or more out of 5.0 scale on the

performance exam and had passed the written EIPA exam as well. Twenty respondents reported holding the EIPA credential, but only seven indicated they had pursued the RID credentialing for their educational interpreting skills. Out of the total number of respondents, 26 individuals hold multiple certifications, where the CI and CT certifications were counted together as a credentialing unit.

Validity of Professional Identity Scale in Interpreting

In order to test scale reliability, Cronbach's α was calculated for each domain's scale, the Self-Concept Clarity scale, and the overall Professional Identity Scale in Interpreting (PISI) without the Self-Concept Clarity scale included, as outlined in Table 9.

Table 9

Scale Reliability

	<u>Cronbach's α</u>	<u>Cronbach's α Based on Standardized Items</u>	<u>Number of Items</u>
Knowledge of the Profession	0.886	0.891	8
Philosophy of the Profession	0.625	0.633	10
Professional Roles and Expertise	0.710	0.747	13
Attitude	0.635	0.701	13
Engagement Behaviors	0.710	0.717	11
Interaction	0.597	0.593	7
Self-Concept Clarity	0.792	0.790	12
Overall PISI	0.881	.900	62

Generally, Cronbach's α results over 0.70 are considered reliable (George & Mallery, 2003). Several of the domain subscales met this 0.70 threshold, as did the entire Professional Identity Scale in Interpreting. Since an extensive round of question piloting, verification, and factor analysis was not possible due to the constraints of this research study, there is an opportunity to further refine the Professional Identity Scale in

Interpreting in future studies. However, considering the lack of additional validation testing prior to distribution of the scale, only three domain subscales did not meet the 0.70 reliability cutoff: *Philosophy of the Profession*, *Attitude*, and *Interaction*. *Philosophy of the Profession* had the most significant changes from the original questions (Woo, 2013), as it was adapted to fit the interpreting profession. *Attitude* had a couple of changes from the original Woo (2013) subscale questions as well as the most reverse coded questions. *Interaction* barely had any changes from the Woo (2013) subscale from which it was adapted. For the *Interaction* subscale, additional questions could be an effective remedy to strengthen the validity of the specific subscale. Furthermore, eliminating specific questions and further refining other questions within the *Philosophy of the Profession* and *Attitude* subscales could produce stronger scale reliability. Overall, based on the Cronbach's α result, the entire Professional Identity Scale in Interpreting is a reliable instrument meant to measure professional identity in ASL/English interpreters.

Professional Identity of the Profession as a Whole

In order to answer the question what is the professional identity of the ASL/English interpreting profession as a whole, the Woo (2013) PISC was adapted to ask questions specific to interpreting professionals. While many concepts that applied to the counseling profession also applied to the interpreting profession, altering some individual questions was necessary. The overarching themes of each subscale remained the same.

Knowledge of the Profession—pertaining to the interpreting field, based on Woo's (2013) PISC—asked the following questions on a Likert scale:

K1. I know the origins of the interpreting profession.

- K2. I am knowledgeable of the important events and milestones in interpreting history.
- K3. I am knowledgeable about ethical guidelines in interpreting.
- K4. I am familiar with certification organizations and their requirements for credentials.
- K5. I am familiar with the professional interpreting associations and their roles and accomplishments in the profession.
- K6. I am knowledgeable of professional interpreting journals and their contents, foci, and purposes in the profession.
- K7. I am familiar with the laws and regulations related to my profession.
- K8. I am knowledgeable about the different models and theoretical approaches to interpreting.

Most interpreters marked *agree* or *strongly agree* in the *Knowledge of the Profession* domain (see Figure 8). While this is true of most of the questions in this domain, K6, asking about knowledge of interpreting journals and their contents had slightly more *neutral/uncertain* and *disagree* responses than other questions. Most interpreters indicate that they have a strong knowledge of the history and origins of the profession as well as ethical guidelines, certification organizations, and laws that concern the profession.

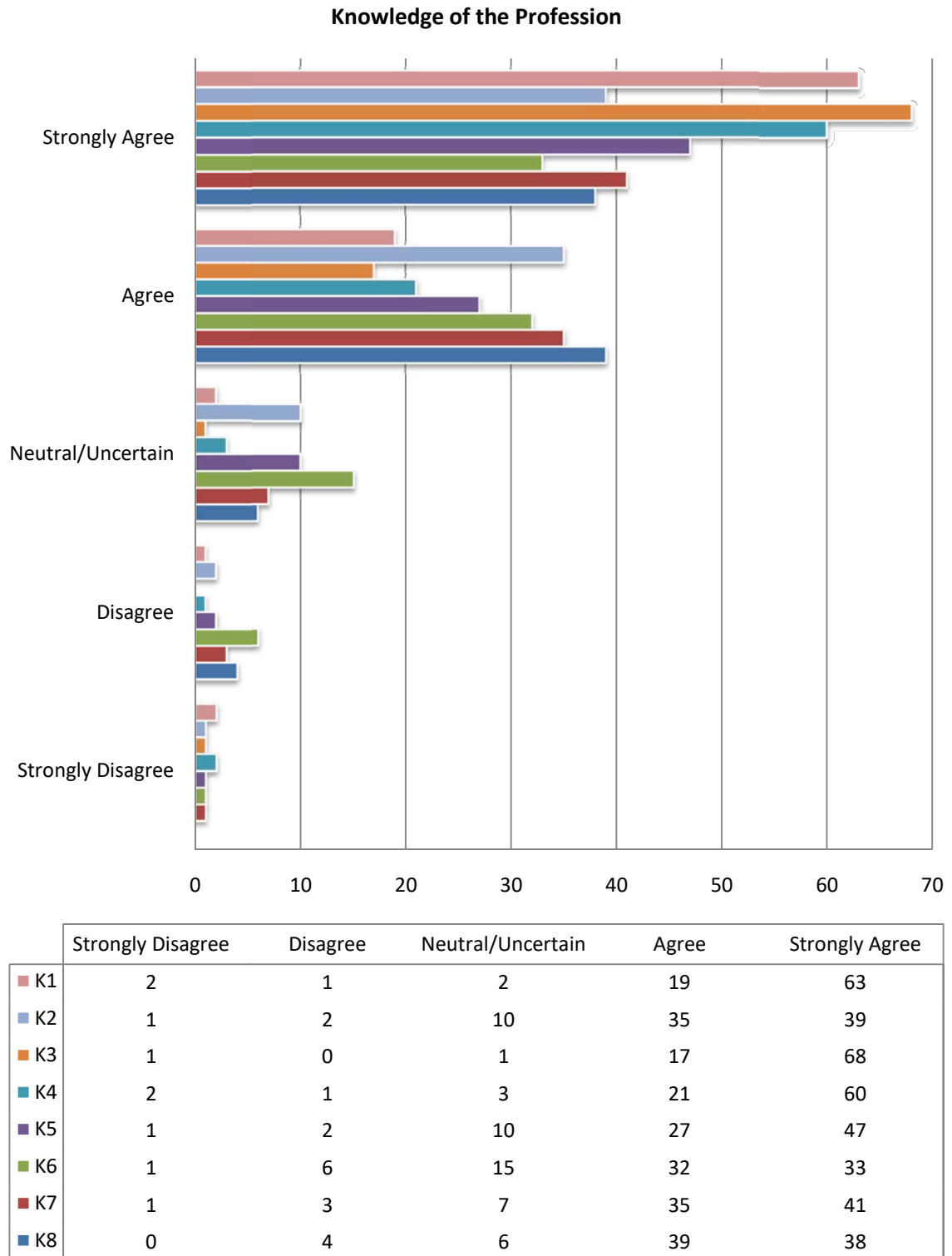


Figure 8. Respondent Answers to Knowledge of the Profession Subscale

Philosophy of the Profession—pertaining to the interpreting field, based on Woo's (2013) PISC—asked the following questions on a Likert scale:

- P1. I am able to distinguish and describe the ASL/English interpreting philosophy.
- P2. I believe self-care is emphasized in the interpreting philosophy.
- P3. I believe cross-cultural communication is emphasized in the interpreting philosophy.
- P4. I believe it is important to have sufficient knowledge and skill in both ASL and English to provide a successful interpretation.
- P5. I believe it is important to empower clients through an emphasis on personal independence.
- P6. I believe Deaf Culture is emphasized in interpreting philosophy.
- P7. I believe successful interpreted interactions can be influenced by client engagement and providing feedback.
- P8. I believe interactions in interpreting are based on the equal relationship between interpreter and clients, both Deaf and Hearing.
- P9. I believe research is an important part of the interpreting profession.
- P10. I do not believe professional appearance is emphasized in interpreting philosophy.*(Reverse coded)

Again, across the domain, a majority of the responses for each question were *agree* and *strongly agree* (see Figure 9). The fourth question in this domain, (P4: *I believe it is important to have sufficient knowledge and skill in both ASL and English to provide a successful interpretation*) had all but one participant answer strongly agree.

This is clearly an element of the ASL/English interpreting profession that is core to the profession as a whole. The final question of the domain, P10, asked about professional appearance and had less consistency in answers. Interpreters responding to the survey could not form a consensus for whether professional appearance is important to the profession or not, which is interesting because the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct (under tenet 3.5) states that interpreters should “conduct and present themselves in an unobtrusive manner and exercise care in choice of attire” (RID, 2005). Even though this tenet exists, it appears there is no agreement among survey responding practitioners what unobtrusive presentation and attire choice actually means for the profession as a whole.

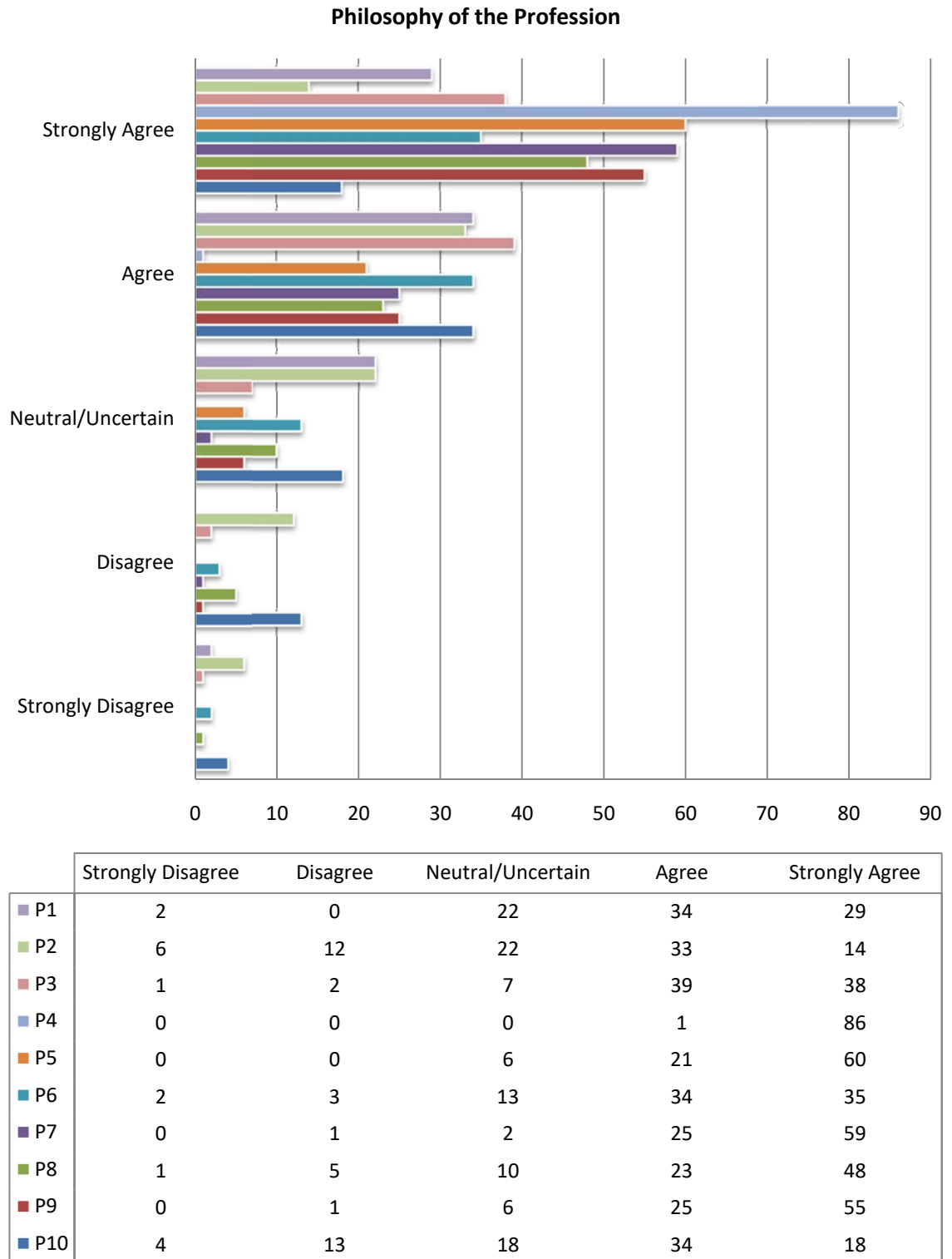


Figure 9. Respondent Answers to Philosophy of the Profession Subscale

Professional Roles and Expertise—pertaining to the interpreting field, based on Woo's (2013) PISC—asked the following questions on a Likert scale:

- R&E1. I value various professional roles that an interpreting professional can hold.
- R&E2. An interpreting professional's roles and duties vary depending on settings, diverse populations served, and the specialty.
- R&E3. Regardless of different roles or settings, a major goal is always the communication of the clients.
- R&E4. I believe an interpreting professional should value the importance of advocacy for the populations served.
- R&E5. I believe an interpreting professional should value the importance of advocacy for the interpreting profession.
- R&E6. I have completed professional training and standard education to perform my duties in my roles.
- R&E7. I have professional knowledge and practical skills required to successfully perform my roles.
- R&E8. I am confident that there will be positive outcomes of my work and services.
- R&E9. I am knowledgeable of ethical responsibilities and professional standards relevant to my roles.
- R&E10. I am familiar with which resources to refer to when I need professional help.

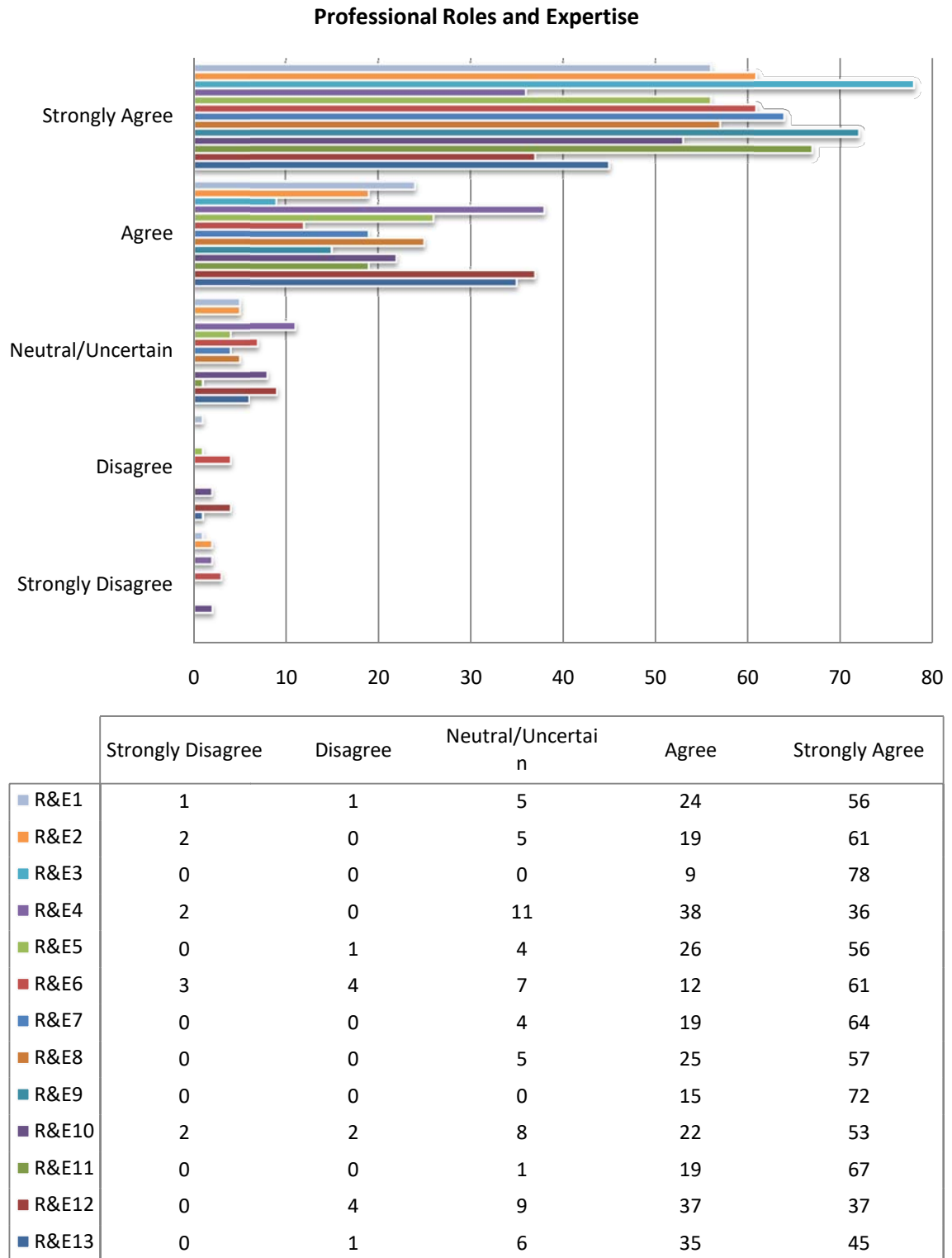
R&E11. I consistently self-evaluate and self-reflect my effectiveness and performances in my chosen field.

R&E12. I am confident in my ASL to English interpreting skills.

R&E13. I am confident in my English to ASL interpreting skills.

There is consistency among interpreters concerning beliefs on *Professional Roles and Expertise* as most of the respondents answered *agree* or *strongly agree* to the questions within this domain (see Figure 10). Two questions, R&E3 and R&E9, resulted in responses that were mostly *strongly agree*. The data shows that interpreters value communication as the primary goal of their work and their knowledge of ethical responsibilities and professional standards relating to their role.

One of the most interesting findings from this domain was the response to the final two questions. According to the data, more respondents feel confident interpreting from English to ASL than from ASL to English. Based on the demographics of the respondents, it can be assumed that, for most, English is their first, or native, language and ASL is their second language. These results are consistent with the research by Nicodemus and Emmorey (2015) who found while ASL/English interpreters may be more accurate working into their first language, they tend to prefer working into their second language.



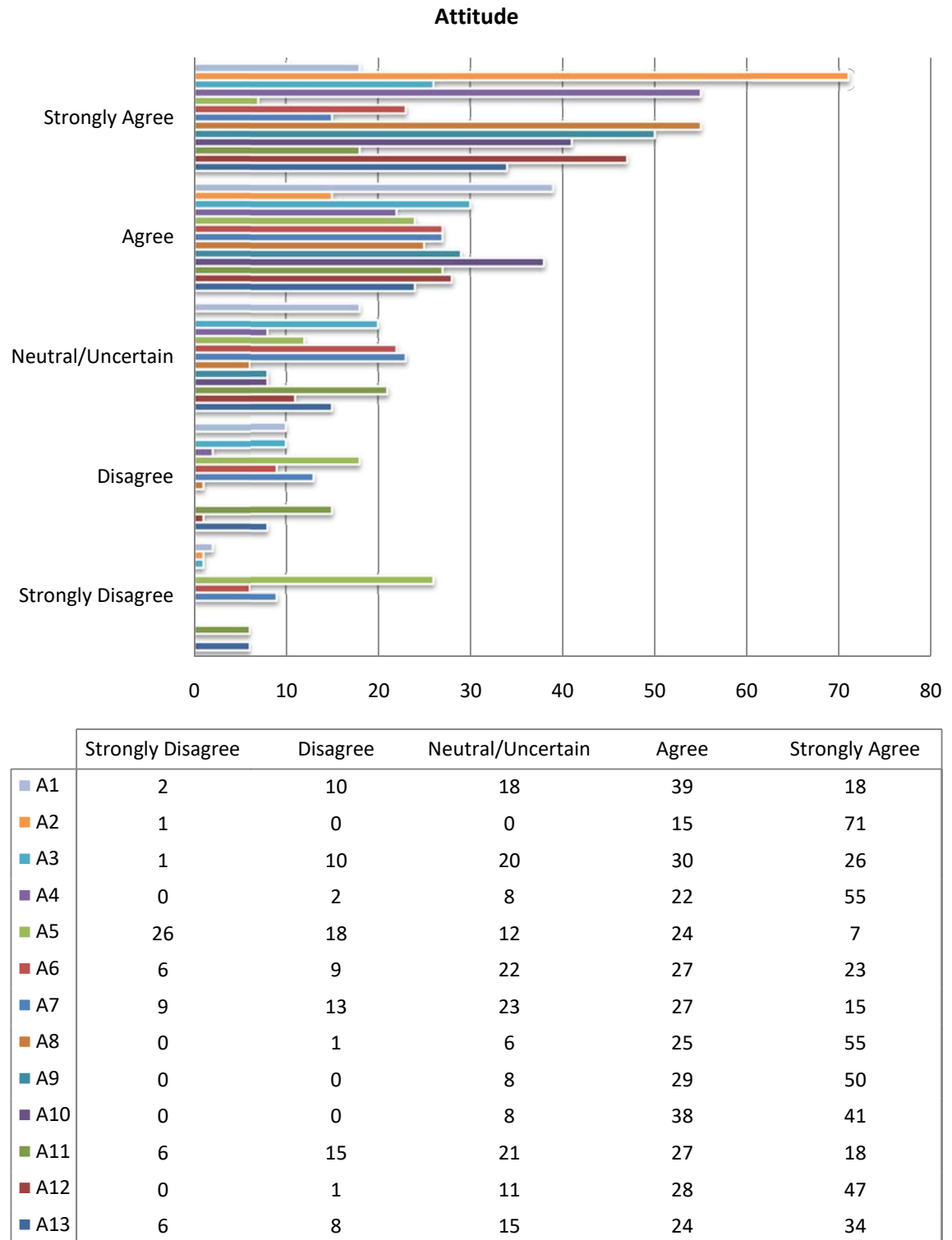
*Figure 10.*Respondent Answers to Professional Role and Expertise Subscale

Attitude—pertaining to the interpreting field, based on Woo’s (2013) PISC—asked the following questions on a Likert scale:

- A1. My profession has a well-established theoretical body of knowledge.
- A2. My profession provides unique and valuable services to society.
- A3. I am positive about advancement and the future of my profession.
- A4. I believe in supporting and belonging to a community of interpreting professionals.
- A5. It does not bother me to meet people who do not recognize my profession.
*(Reverse coded)
- A6. It does not bother me to meet interpreting professionals whose values conflict with social justice issues impacting the profession. *(Reverse coded)
- A7. I recommend my profession to those who are searching for a new career.
- A8. I am comfortable having discussions about the role differences between interpreters and other professionals present in interpreted interactions.
- A9. My personality and beliefs are well matched with the characteristics and values of my profession.
- A10. I am satisfied with my work and professional roles.
- A11. My life revolves around my profession, and my personal goals are highly related to my profession.
- A12. As an interpreting professional, I share my positive feelings (e.g., satisfaction) when working with others.
- A13. I have felt professional isolation (Trimble, 2014).

The *Attitudes* of interpreters resulted in some variety in the data compared to other domains (see Figure 11). In other domains, there appeared to be more consistency in answers; however within this subscale, the data appear more diverse. This is possibly due to the addition of two reverse coded questions. Overall, the respondents agreed to the questions within the domain. A few results stand out. Most of the respondents strongly agreed that the profession is unique and provides a valuable service. There was inconsistency among respondents over the impact of social justice values and recommending the profession to others. Social justice is a newer concept but was proposed as a requirement for continuing education for interpreters to maintain their certification at the 2015 national RID conference business meeting. Based on the data, it is unclear whether social justice values are significant to all or most interpreters.

Question A7 asked if respondents recommend the profession to others, and only 48% said that they *agreed* or *strongly agreed*. Another result of interest concerned Trimble's (2014) research of rural ASL/English interpreters where 70% of respondents had experienced the phenomenon of professional isolation. According to the respondents of this survey, 34 marked *strongly agree* and 24 marked *agree*, meaning that 67% have experienced professional isolation.



*Figure 11.*Respondent Answers to Attitude Subscale

Engagement Behaviors—pertaining to the interpreting field, based on Woo’s (2013) PISC—asked the following questions on a Likert scale:

- E1. I have memberships in professional interpreting associations.
- E2. I actively engage in professional interpreting associations by participating in conferences and workshops every year.
- E3. I engage in certification/licensure renewal process and/or have consistently maintained interpreting certificates and credentials.
- E4. I have contributed to expanding my knowledge base of the profession by participating in interpreting research (e.g., by being interviewed, taking surveys).
- E5. I have conducted interpreting research.
- E6. I have published research findings in my field.
- E7. I follow up with theoretical, practical, and technical advancement in my profession by keeping up with literature in the field.
- E8. I engage in or seek opportunities to serve in non-required leadership positions.
- E9. I educate the community and public about my profession.
- E10. I advocate for my profession by participating in activities associated with legislation, law, and policy on interpreting on behalf of the profession.
- E11. I have educated colleagues as a workshop presenter.

The data from this domain (Figure 12) shows even more variation than in other domains. The respondents answered that mostly they have not published research or

educated fellow interpreters by presenting workshops, or participated in voluntary leadership positions. These engagement behaviors are vital to the continued growth of the profession, as new generations of interpreters enter the field. While a majority of respondents indicated that they have membership in professional organizations, and maintain their certifications and/or licensure, the *Engagement Behaviors* that were less personally relevant and more collectively impactful resulted in fewer *strongly agree* and *agree* responses.

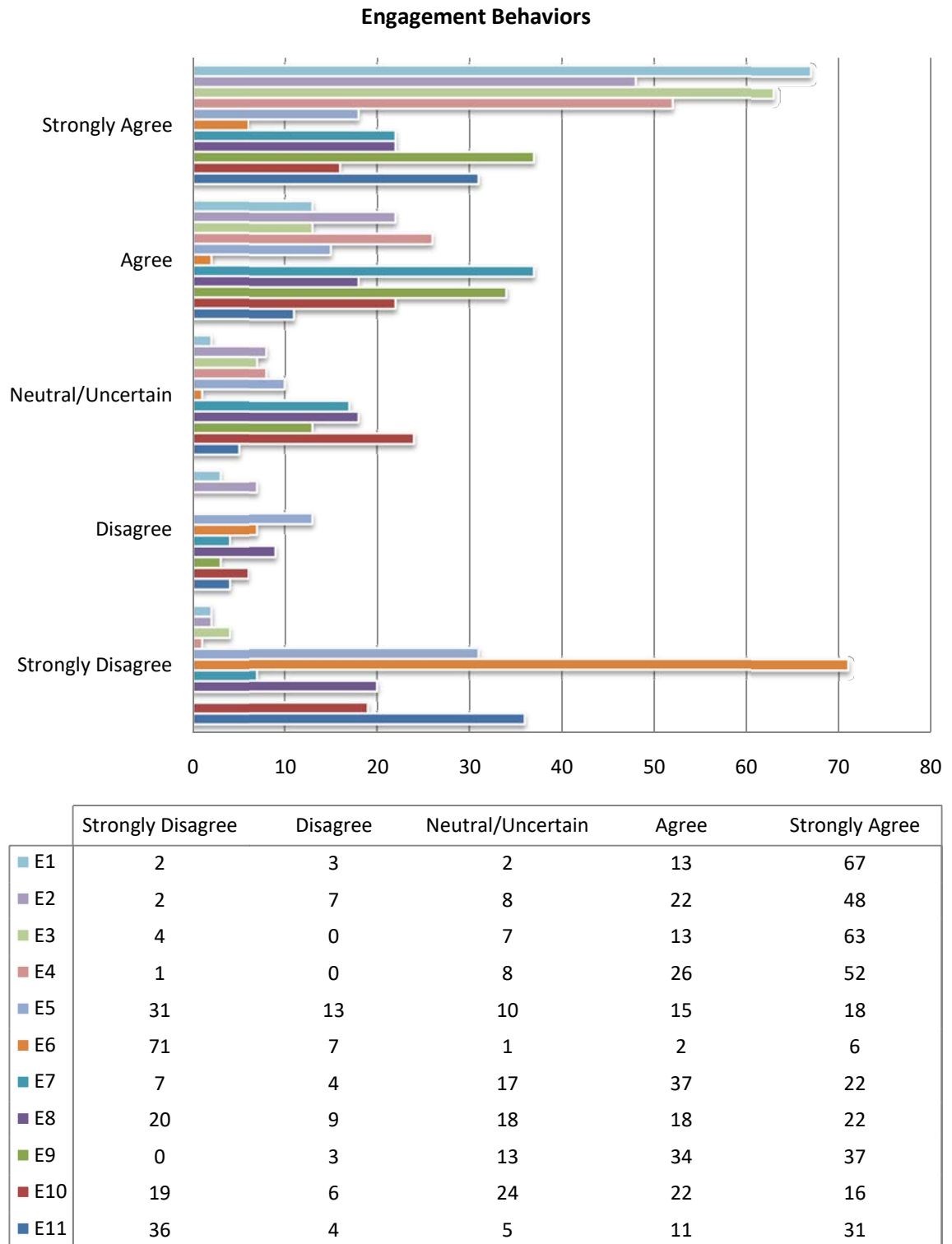


Figure 12. Respondent Answers to Engagement Behaviors Subscale

Interaction—pertaining to the interpreting field, based on Woo’s (2013) PISC—asked the following questions on a Likert scale:

- I1. I seek feedback/consultation from professional peers as a form of professional development.
- I2. I regularly communicate with a mentor who is interested in my professional development.
- I3. I regularly communicate with a mentee who is interested in his/her professional development.
- I4. I keep in contact with interpreting professionals through training and/or professional involvement in interpreting associations.
- I5. I keep involved in ongoing discussions with interpreting professionals about identity and the vision of my profession.
- I6. I believe supervision is needed for all interpreters in order to ensure quality interpreting and to enhance supervisee’s professional growth.
- I7. I believe core interpreter education courses should be taught by trained interpreter educators.

Interestingly, respondents overwhelmingly strongly agreed that interpreter education courses should be taught by trained interpreter educators (see Figure 13). However, based on the previous domain, there are few interpreters engaging in behaviors that would help them become qualified to take on these roles as interpreter educators. Additional notable results from this domain’s data show an inconsistency concerning interpreters receiving and providing mentorship. The responses concerning both giving

and receiving mentoring show disparity among participants as they are fairly evenly distributed across the Likert scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Ever so slightly, the data indicates that more respondents interact with mentees than with their own mentors.

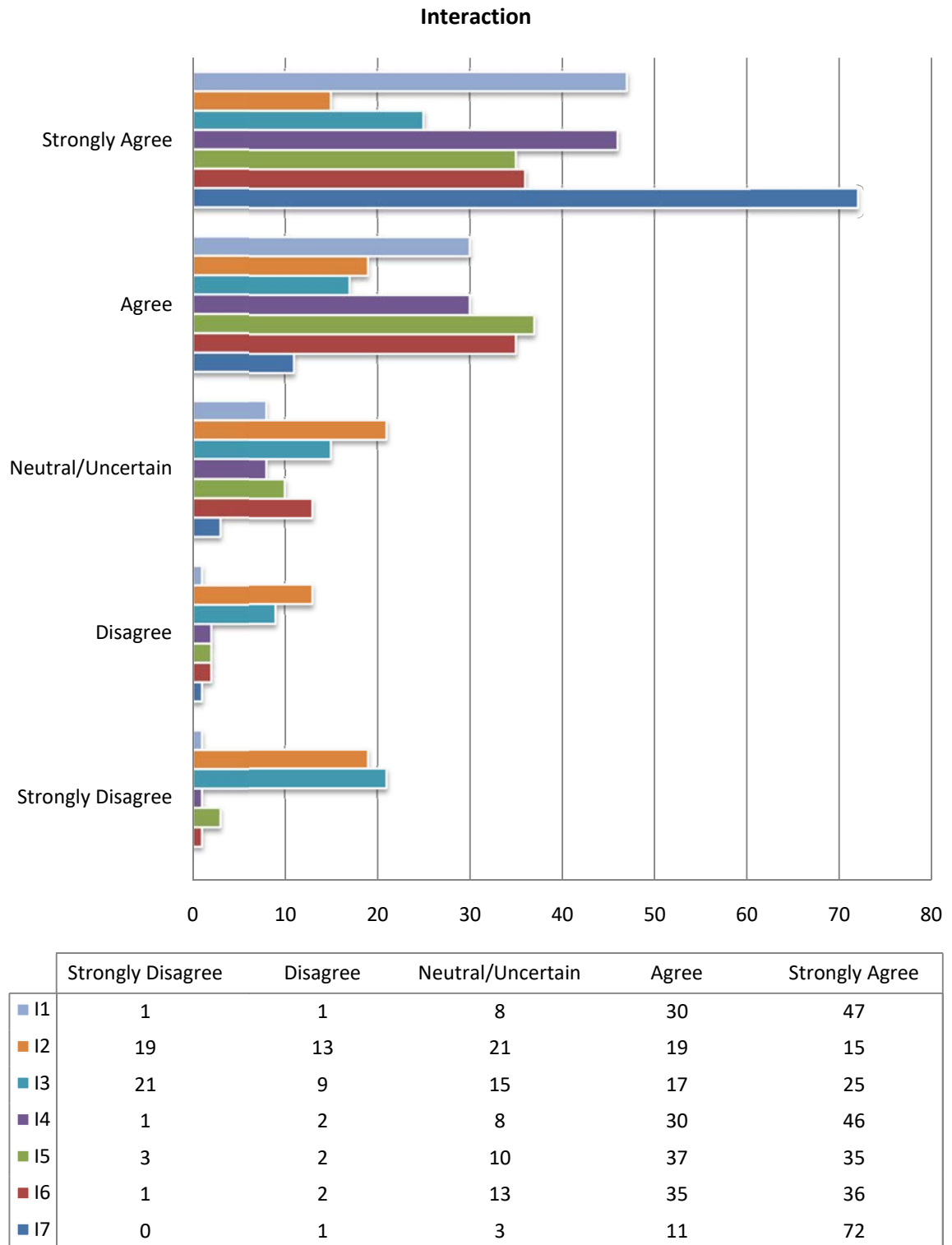


Figure 13. Respondent Answers to Interaction Subscale

Individual Professional Identity and Self-Concept Clarity

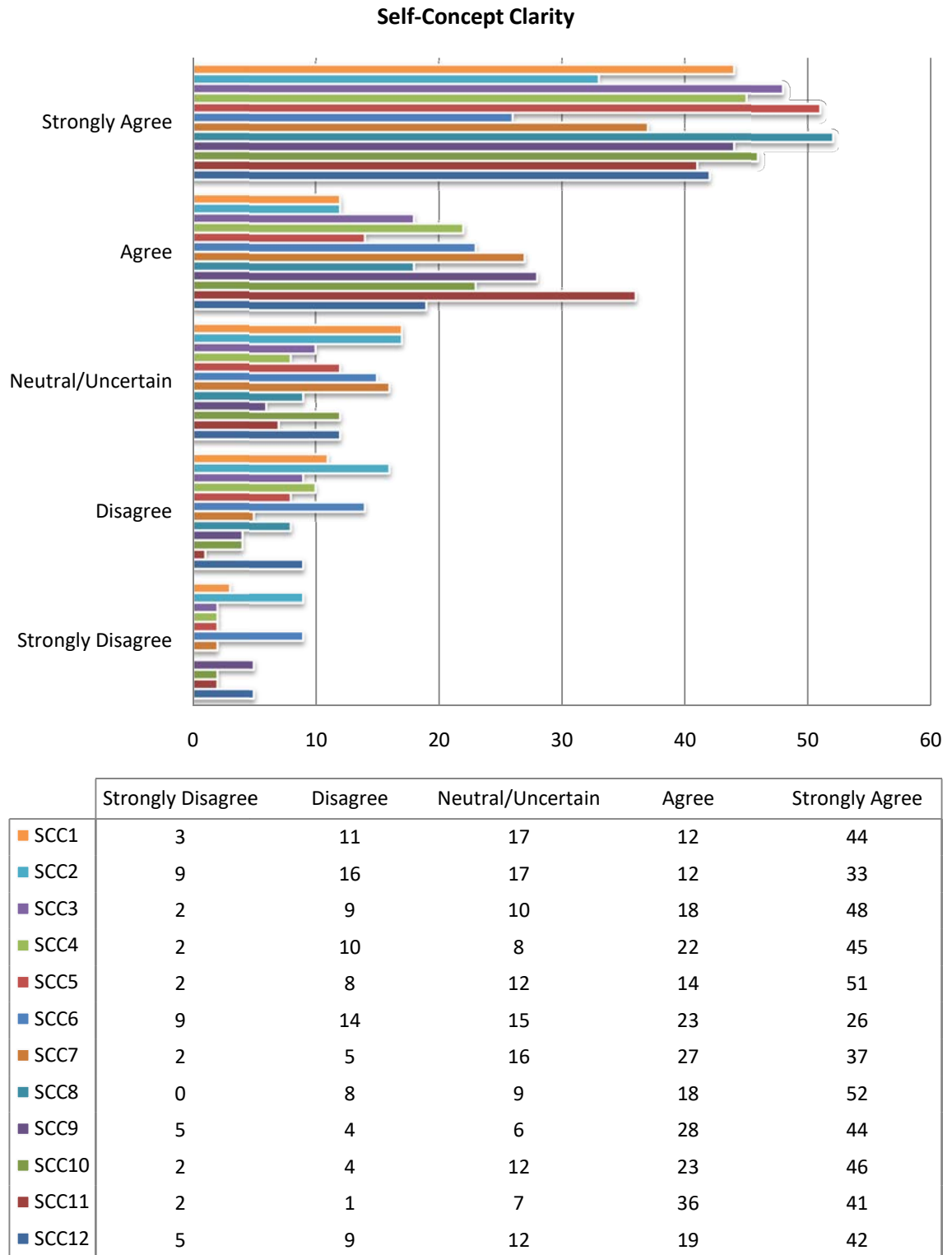
The Campbell et al. (1996) Self-Concept Clarity scale was used to examine the individual interpreter's professional identity. By looking at "the extent to which the contents of an individual's self-concept (e.g., perceived personal attributes) are clearly and confidently defined, internally consistent, and temporally stable" (p. 141), a foundation for understanding the individual interpreter is formed while exploring the answer to the research question, *what is the professional identity of individual ASL/English interpreters, in relation to their Self-Concept Clarity?*

Self-Concept Clarity Scale—Campbell et al. (1996) asked the following on a Likert scale:

- SCC1. My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another. *(Reverse coded)
- SCC2. On one day I might have one opinion of myself and on another day I might have a different opinion. *(Reverse coded)
- SCC3. I spend a lot of time wondering about what kind of person I really am. *(Reverse coded)
- SCC4. Sometimes I feel that I am not really the person that I appear to be. *(Reverse coded)
- SCC5. When I think about the kind of person I have been in the past, I'm not sure what I was really like. *(Reverse coded)
- SCC6. I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality.

- SCC7. Sometimes I think I know other people better than I know myself.
*(Reverse coded)
- SCC8. My beliefs about myself seem to change very frequently. *(Reverse coded)
- SCC9. If I were asked to describe my personality, my description might end up being different from one day to another day. *(Reverse coded)
- SCC10. Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could tell someone what I'm really like. *(Reverse coded)
- SCC11. In general, I have a clear sense of who I am and what I am.
- SCC12. It is often hard for me to make up my mind about things because I don't really know what I want. *(Reverse coded)

In order to statistically address the data, all scale items that were reverse coded were flipped to the appropriate direction. This means that for the reverse coded items, the number of respondents shown as answering *strongly agree* based on the graph above, had in fact answered *strongly disagree*. Therefore, even though the graph (Figure 14) looks like most respondents answered *strongly agree* or *agree*, they were more confident in their self-concept clarity than the graph makes it appear. Only two questions, SCC6 and SCC11 are displayed as originally coded. The original SCC study by Campbell et al. (1996) showed that “people higher in clarity were higher in self-esteem” (p. 146).



*Figure 14.*Respondent Answers to Self-Concept Clarity Scale

To further analyze the data from this study with that finding in mind, further descriptive statistics were used, specifically ANOVAs and comparison of means based on differing independent categories. Utilizing the original research methodology of Campbell et al. (1996), each Likert scale question corresponds to a number value where *strongly disagree* equals one, *disagree* equals two, *neutral/uncertain* equals three, *agree* equals four, and *strongly agree* equals five. Each respondent ended up with an overall SCC score, with a maximum score of 60, and where the higher the SCC score means the higher the self-concept clarity for that individual. These SCC score values were compared between demographic groupings by comparing means for the groupings.

Table 10

Mean SCC Score by Certifications

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>
BEI	45	2	2.83
CDI	59	1	-
Educational	48.79	14	7.66
Multiple	51	24	9.61
NIC	41.77	13	8.74
Not	47.37	19	10.15
Previous	51.29	14	7.70
Total	48.47	87	9.30

Table 11

ANOVA Table Based on Certifications

		<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
SCC Score by Certifications	Between Groups (Combined)	1007.74	6	167.95	2.10	0.06
	Within Groups	6433.94	80	80.42		
	Total	7441.68	86			

Note. Confidence level of 95%

The hypothesis suggested that those with certification would have a higher Self-Concept Clarity score. By breaking down the results by certification type, the data show that while there was a difference in mean SCC scores depending on the type of certification held by the ASL/English interpreters, the data did not reach the 95% significance required to support the hypothesis (See Tables 10 and 11). If the significance had been less than 0.05, the hypothesis could have been supported. Notably, besides the single CDI, those interpreters with previously offered certifications had the highest mean SCC scale scores, and those with NIC certification actually had the lowest mean SCC scale scores. Since participants were able to identify any and all certifications held, the primary investigator had to re-code the data into categories that could be analyzed, including the category, multiple certifications.

Table 12

Mean SCC Score by Years of Experience

<u>How many years of interpreting experience do you have?</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>
0 - 5	46	4	10.03
6 - 10	47.38	26	8.04
11 - 15	45.33	6	7.53
16 - 20	51.11	9	8.10
21 - 25	52.67	24	9.86
26+	44.72	18	9.79
Total	48.47	87	9.30

Table 13

ANOVA Table Based on Years of Experience

		<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
SCC Score by Years of Experience	Between Groups (Combined)	852.36	5	170.47	2.10	0.07
	Within Groups	6589.32	81	81.35		
	Total	7441.68	86			

Note. Confidence level of 95%

Again, while there appears to be a difference in SCC score means between groups (Tables 12 and 13), the result of 0.074 indicates there is not a statistically significant difference between groups based on years of experience. Looking at the table above, the score means appear to be increasing with years of experience until it drastically drops at over 26 years of experience. Perhaps if respondents in the 26 years of experience and above category had indicated higher score means, the results would have been statistically significant.

Furthermore, to look more carefully into the idea that certification could impact SCC scores, each individual certification ANOVA was analyzed. Only three resulted in statistical significance: NIC, CI, and CT.

Table 14

Mean SCC score by NIC Certification

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>
No	49.78	69	9.23
Yes	43.44	18	7.94
Total	48.47	87	9.30

Table 15

ANOVA Table based on NIC Certification

NIC Certification			<u>Sum of</u>		<u>Mean</u>		
			<u>Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
	Between Groups	(Combined)	573.50	1	573.50	7.10	0.01
	Within Groups		6868.18	85	80.80		
	Total		7441.69	86			

Note. Confidence level of 95%

The data from the above ANOVA table (Tables 14 and 15) show that those without NIC certification have a higher mean SCC score than those with NIC certification. With a significance value of 0.01, this result is statistically significant. More research is needed to definitively say whether having NIC certification contributes to a lower SCC score or if there are other contributing factors that influence these results, such as rhetoric in the field concerning the NIC. This result is the opposite of what was hypothesized.

Table 16

Mean SCC Score by CI Certification

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>
No	46.32	63	9.08
Yes	54.13	24	7.43
Total	48.47	87	9.30

Table 17

ANOVA Table Based on CI Certification

CI Certification			<u>Sum of</u>		<u>Mean</u>		
			<u>Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
	Between Groups	(Combined)	1059.40	1	1059.40	14.11	0.00
	Within Groups		6382.28	85	75.09		
	Total		7441.68	86			

Note. Confidence level of 95%

As seen in the above tables (Tables 16 and 17), participants with CI certification had a much higher SCC score mean than those without the CI certification, and the results were statistically significant. Very similar results were found with the CT certification.

Table 18

Mean SCC Score by CT Certification

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>
No	46.43	63	9.21
Yes	53.83	24	7.32
Total	48.47	87	9.30

Table 19

ANOVA Table Based on CT Certification

		<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
CT Certification	Between Groups	(Combined) 952.92	1	952.92	12.48	0.00
	Within Groups	6488.76	85	76.34		
	Total	7441.68	86			

Note. Confidence level of 95%

Like the CI certification results, those participants with CT certification had significantly higher SCC score mean than those without CT certification (Tables 18 and 19). When looking at the other certifications, there were no other statistically significant results. It is possible that since the CI and CT certifications were offered from 1988 to 2008, the additional time with certification impacted SCC scores. Additionally, it should be noted that when breaking the data down by age, gender, and ethnicity, there were no statistically significant results found. The NIC certification has only been offered since 2005 (RID, 2015a); therefore, those practitioners holding this certification do have fewer

years of experience and may be closer to the “gap” than the practitioners with CI and CT certifications (Bontempo & Napier, 2007; Cogen & Cokely, 2014; Cokely, 2005; Maroney & Smith, 2010; Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005; Witter-Merithew et al., 2004).

Professional Identity Development

Open-ended questions and prompts wrapped up the survey to answer the research question: *How do ASL/English interpreters develop their professional identity?*

Participants were free to respond to these questions and prompts if they wanted to:

- OE7. What does being an interpreter mean to you?
- OE8. At what point in your career did you identify as an interpreter?
- OE9. What contributed to the development of your professional identity as an interpreter?
- OE10. Please describe any positive experiences related to your professional identity as an interpreter.
- OE11. Please describe any negative experiences related to your professional identity as an interpreter.
- OE12. Any additional comments:

Answers to the open ended questions were coded by looking for repeated themes or key words in the responses. Upon coding the answers to the open-ended questions, several themes were revealed. Figures 15-20 show the results of how the questions were coded based on the themes identified.

What does Being an Interpreter Mean?

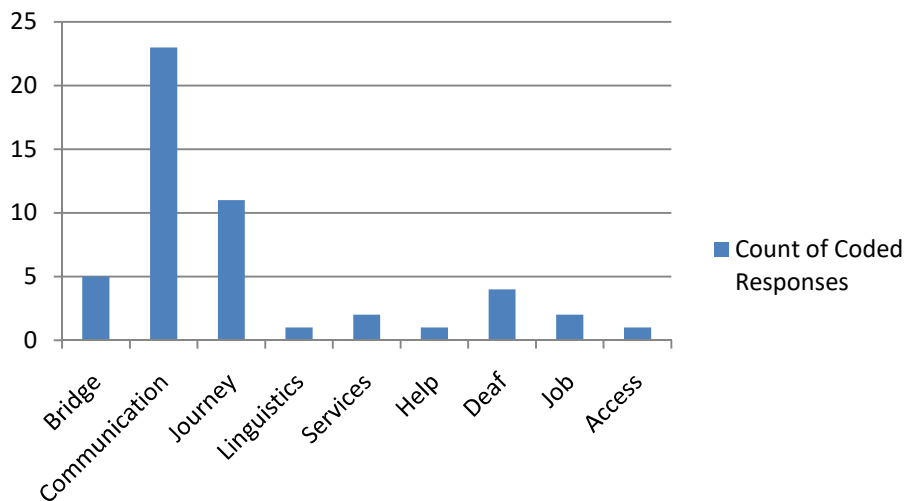


Figure 15. Themes Identified: What does being an interpreter mean to you?

There were a wide range of answers (see Figure 15); however, of the 64 responses, most responses discussed the importance of communication for the interpreting practitioner. One response discussed interpreting in terms of helping others, and one touched on the linguistic nature of the job. Another response highlighted the accessibility that the profession provides, while similar answers discussed providing a service. Some responses highlighted the role of the Deaf community being served, while others discussed bridging the cultural or language gap. Several responses discussed the journey that an interpreter embarks on and the experiences along the way. One respondent said that being an interpreter means:

Hard work, dedication, a thick skin, persistence, few thank-yous, physical pain in upper body, tons of education, and basically blood sweat & tears. It also means multi-cultural perspectives, bicultural/bilingual, never a dull moment, being an

ally, making a difference, being a professional, cognitive skill, and all around being invested in and loving what you do.

Another response that discussed the journey stated:

I’m a young professional engaged in relaying messages from the hearing world to the Deaf world by using skills and techniques I’ve developed over a span of 20 years. As an interpreter, I feel people’s pain, joy, frustration, anxiety, satisfaction, surprise, etc. along with them. I walk through the experience with them as I provide information access into their heart language. I advocate, educate, remediate, mentor, learn, change, adapt, grow... I’m an interpreter. That’s my job—my calling.

From a foundational standpoint, the job would not exist if there were not a need for a bridge between cultures and language. However, these two responses describe some of the additional elements respondents feel are required of the profession along the journey.

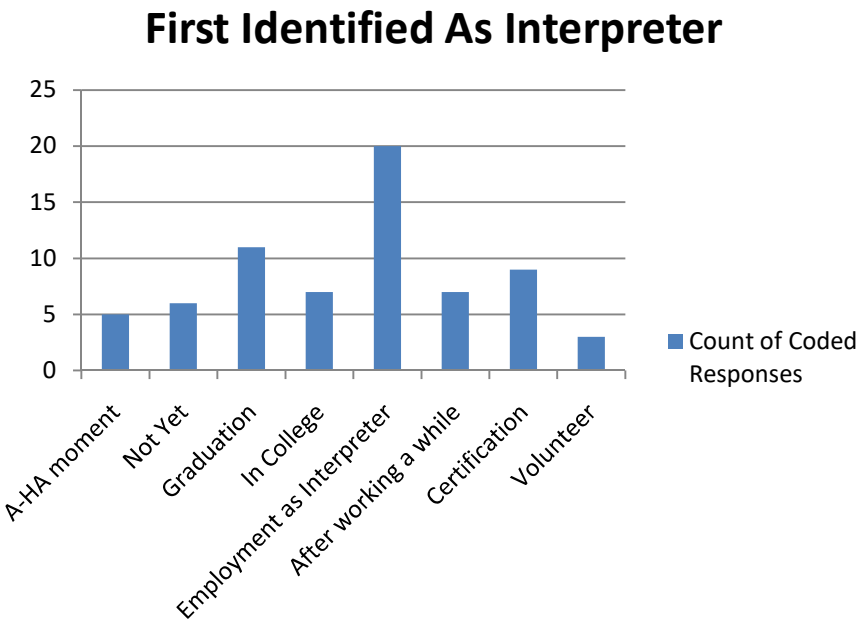


Figure 16. Themes Identified: At what point in your career did you identify as an interpreter?

In order to explore the concept of professional identity development, the notion of when a practitioner first identifies as a professional is significant because it is the moment their identity is changed by their profession. According to the 73 responses provided (Figure 16), most interpreters indicated that they identified themselves as interpreters based on actual employment as an interpreter, with important distinctions being payment for services rendered and working independently. Several responses also indicated that graduation from an interpreter education program was the signifying moment, while others attributed the identifying moment to gaining certification. Some responses claimed it happened while they were in college during their IEP, and others claimed it only happened after working for a while as an interpreter. Others indicated that they identified themselves as an interpreter when they were offering volunteer services and some respondents said they have not yet identified themselves as an interpreter. One participant stated, “I still don’t feel after two years of interpreting I am an interpreter. I feel like a fraud each time I interpret even though I am qualified for the job.” While there is no way to ascertain when the magic “A-HA” moment will happen, several respondents acknowledged the importance of actual experience working. Another participant responded: “My identity as an interpreter has evolved over time. While I’ve always called myself an interpreter (at least after graduation from my first ITP), I suppose I truly identified as one a year or two into professionally working.” This answer shows that for some interpreters, it may not be a single signifying moment but rather the effect of multiple elements that contributes to the process of developing a professional identity.

What Contributed to your Professional Identity?

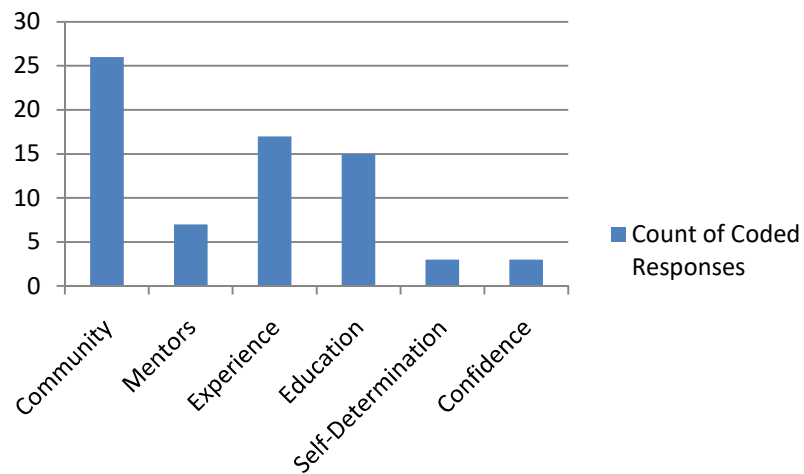


Figure 17. Themes Identified: What contributed to the development of your professional identity as an interpreter?

While the previous question asked about the actual moment behind self-identification as an interpreter, this question sought to explore what contributes most to an interpreter's professional identity. Of the 71 responses, most respondents identified several elements (Figure 17), with the core theme behind their response being a community of colleagues, mentors, teachers, students, and the Deaf community they serve. Some responses only discussed mentors individually and were therefore coded separately. Experiences working as interpreters and education through IEPs were also significant contributors. A few responses identified their own self-determination and others their own confidence as contributing elements to their professional identity development. One respondent identified their professor as the single most important contributing factor for their professional identity and answered, "My ITP Director and the classes I took. She instilled a sense of community, respect, compassion, and support from day one. Her passion became ours." This response highlights the importance of

interpreter educators and the lasting impression they leave on their students. Beyond traditional educators in the classroom, mentors were also highlighted as key contributors. One participant responded, “Supervision and mentor relationships have allowed me to grow as an interpreter by providing a space to look at my work objectively and to recognize areas needing development,” and went on to say, “it also helped to discuss areas of strength to keep my confidence up as a new interpreter.” Respondents reported that mentors allow for healthy discussions of the work and the ability to therefore improve skills and, ultimately, professional confidence. Another participant commented on the impact of mentors and answered:

The way my mentors viewed me as a colleague from the start. They would introduce me to the community as a fellow interpreter. Having a sage interpreter affirm my belonging in the field had a huge impact on my professional identity.

The transition from mentee to identified colleague who belongs in the profession obviously impacted this participant’s professional identity and, additionally, contributes to the sense of being supported by the community of professionals.

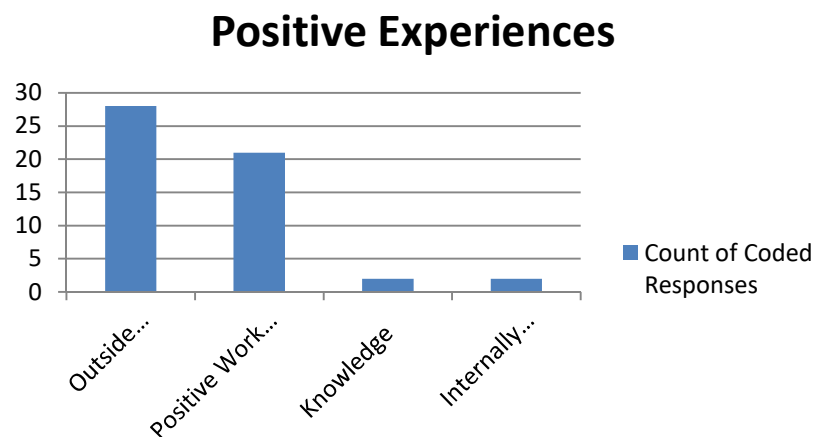


Figure 18. Themes Identified: Please describe any positive experiences related to your professional identity as an interpreter

With 56 responses, a majority of participants indicated that outside recognition, in the form of positive feedback from both colleagues and clients, was the most significant positive experience related to their professional identity (see Figure 18). One response stated that “receiving constructive feedback from interpreters, peers, and the deaf community” contributed to positive experiences concerning professional identity. While another form of outside recognition was identified in the following answer: “leadership roles in my state professional organization. People seeing me in the community and knowing I am an interpreter.” Again, the idea of community plays a role, but ultimately, recognition from others played a positive role for this respondent. One participant recognized the limitations of relying on outside recognition and said:

My colleagues are the only opinions I value for judgment and acceptance for community standards such as appearance and sign choice. That can be really limiting because you are essentially caring what everybody thinks instead of following your heart.

Relying on outside validation can be both impactful and limiting, since it is ultimately out of an individual’s control. A couple of respondents discussed the impact of concrete knowledge while others discussed their internal motivation. The other theme that appeared in many of the responses was the impact of positive work outcomes, as one response simply stated, “I have higher self confidence from successful experiences at work.” Another respondent shared a story about a positive work outcome that contributed to their professional identity:

This happens to be a personal story, but it completely boosted my self-confidence and my realization that what I did changed lives. My uncle [...] had [a medical

condition] and he asked me if I would interpret something for him he wanted to tell my dad, who is deaf. The conversation became an afternoon of chatting between my uncle and my dad. Before I left, with tears in his eyes, my uncle told me that was the best conversation he ever had with my dad. If I never interpreted again, that day made all the schooling and training I did worth every penny and every minute spent becoming an interpreter.

In this situation, the client did provide positive feedback, but ultimately, the actual process of interpreting and the work done by the interpreter was successful to the point where the conversation flowed between the hearing and Deaf conversant in an effective way that resulted in the positive feedback. As seen in this example, positive work outcomes, from effective interpreting, appear to lead to the ability to identify as a professional interpreter. These moments of positive work outcomes are vital to the continued development of a professional identity.

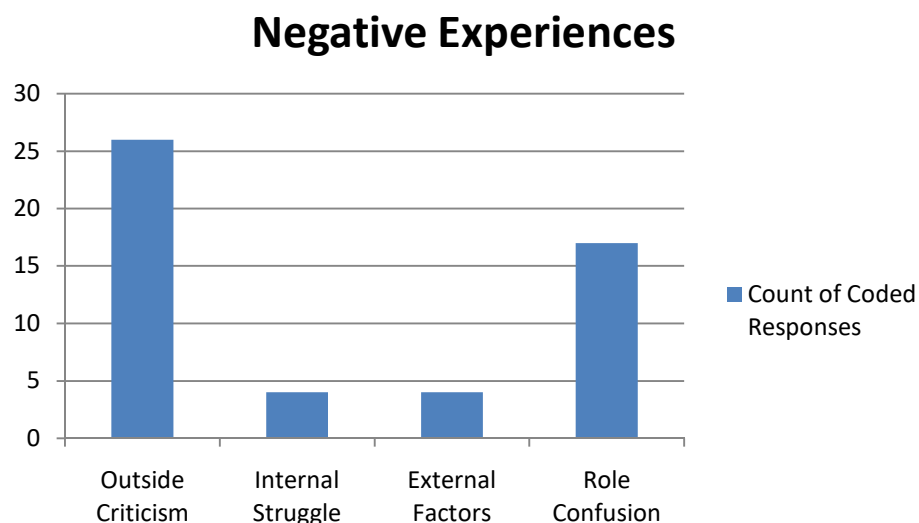


Figure 19. Themes Identified: Describe any negative experiences related to your professional identity as an interpreter

Interestingly, outside criticism was the theme that occurred most often in the 54 responses to the question about which negative experiences impacted professional identity (see Figure 19). One participant answered, “hurtful words from other interpreters under the guise of ‘feedback’, the lack of organization in our ‘professional’ organizations, lack of Deaf people involved in the shaping of our profession and our interpreters.” This answer touches on external factors, but the idea that feedback is meant to be hurtful instead of helpful and merely wrapped up in a package claimed to be “feedback” is perceived as a negative experience. Most respondents mentioned negative feedback contributing negatively to their professional identity. In one of the most extreme examples, a participant stated:

I’ve had serious incidents with other interpreters who used their power and influence to try and put me down and prevent me from working. I left the state because of the extremely toxic competitive environment of power and control obsessed interpreters that were prevalent in that state. These interpreters would attack mine and others professionalism without justification and use slander to attempt to taint ones status within the profession.

In this situation, the outside criticism went beyond feedback and transformed into something much more detrimental. The overarching theme for outside criticism impacting professional identity negatively can be summed up in one respondent’s answer as they said their negative experiences are “too many to count. Most related to rejection by other professional interpreters.” Internal struggles like “having to keep traumatic or high-stress situations to myself when I may want to reach out to the client(s) involved, or

that I may need to let off my chest” also appeared in the results. However, these internal influencers were found significantly less in the responses than external influencers.

The other theme that occurred in many of the responses was role confusion. As one participant pointed out:

Many people out there think they know our field better than we do, so they attempt to give us direction instead of allowing us to give our professional opinion based on knowledge, experience, research, and actually being in the trenches.

When there is confusion over job expectations from outsiders to the field, it seems to impact an individual’s ability to clearly define their professional self-concept. Several answers discussed trying to navigate role confusion. Another respondent answered:

The main negative experience relates to the general relationship between Deaf and hearing communities. It is difficult to work hard at a profession, only to face criticism (not personally, but as a profession. That interpreters in general can never be “fluent,” don’t have “Deaf heart,” participate in oppression if they work in VRI, etcetcetc).

This could be related to role confusion, but it is possible there are other elements at play within this answer. For this respondent, outside recognition of the community served by ASL/English interpreters is significant in the development of the cohesive professional identity and therefore the individual interpreter’s identity.

The final open-ended prompt, which asked for any additional comments, only produced 21 responses and was therefore not conducive to coding for themes. However, there were a couple of interesting responses. One response suggested looking further into

the various settings in which ASL/English interpreters work, such as medical or Video Relay Service (VRS) settings, because working as a staff interpreter in a hospital garners a different reaction than “I work in a call center and interpret phone calls for Deaf people.” This was a valid suggestion for further research into how interpreting settings impact one’s professional identity. Another response to the additional comments prompt offered the following response:

I see and believe that it is critical for signed language interpreters to be professional and belong to a professional organization that helps us to continually grow individually and as an organization at large. I feel like RID has a very long way to go in supporting us with certification in that the current test isn’t working, and the disparity of skill level of terps who have older certifications. I also feel that on the individual and organizational levels we need to be doing a lot more to support interpreters post ITP and pre-certification. There are still many issues that need to be addressed concerning the lack of diversity within our field. At this time our organization does not feel very organized, I hope that things will change for the better in the future.

While most respondents did not discuss professional organizations, this respondent recognized that professional organizations offer a sense of community that contributes to professional identity. This response also discussed the importance of certification and diversity within the field, and the obligation the professional organization has to addressing these topics. Ultimately, this response highlights that a professional organization has an impact to both the collective professional identity and the individual’s professional identity.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ASL/English interpreter professional identity is a complex topic that can be simplified by addressing the three elements that make up professional identity: the collective professional identity, the individual's professional identity, and professional identity development. With the intention of examining the collective professional identity of ASL/English interpreters, Woo's (2013) definition of professional identity and PISC were relied on for a foundation. In exploring the literature on the individual's professional identity, there appeared to be a link between self-concept clarity, self-esteem, professional competence, and professional confidence. As a way to broach these complicated intertwining concepts, the Campbell et al. (1996) Self-Concept Clarity Scale was used to survey respondents. Professional identity development and the process of becoming a professional ASL/English interpreter were examined through answers to open-ended questions. This study attempted to explore each of these elements and answer the questions:

1. What is the professional identity of the ASL/English interpreting profession as a whole?
2. What is the professional identity of individual ASL/English interpreters, in relation to their Self-Concept Clarity?
3. How do ASL/English interpreters develop their professional identity?

Collective Professional Identity

While there is not a definitive answer to the first question, using the Professional Identity Scale in Interpreting, some important foundations were explored. The ASL/English interpreters surveyed have a strong foundation under the domains, *Knowledge of the Profession*, *Philosophy of the Profession*, *Professional Roles and Expertise*, *Attitude*, *Engagement Behaviors*, and *Interaction*. *Knowledge of the Profession* and historical context appears to be one of the most well-known domains for the collective professional identity. With an emphasis on historical context, ethical guidelines, certification organizations, and laws concerning the profession, the *Knowledge of the Profession* domain includes concrete information that can be found through internet searches and introductory-level classes. *Philosophy of the Profession* resulted in congruent answers across most of the questions, which centered around everyday behaviors that impact the professional's work, such as: self-care, cross-cultural communication, knowledge and skills in both ASL and English, and interpreted interactions. The collective professional identity has a strong foundation in the basic needs of a professional to function as an interpreter. These basics are also the elements that respondents would likely know regardless of their years of experience. While there was a wide range of ages and years of experience represented, a novice interpreter and a seasoned interpreter would both require knowledge of the basics. The one question from the *Philosophy of the Profession* domain that resulted in mixed responses was regarding professional appearance. While a uniform is not likely in the future of the profession, a consensus about professional appearance could contribute to a more concrete collective professional identity. It is possible that the evenly distributed age demographics and

generational differences could have impacted perception of professional appearance and its necessity to the field. For *Professional Roles and Expertise*, the responses were consistently *strongly agree* or *agree* resulting in a collective professional identity that values communication and ethical behavior, no matter the job function or setting, with a strong foundation of training, education, knowledge, and skills.

There were slightly more respondents indicating confidence in interpreting from English to ASL than those responding confidence in interpreting from ASL to English. This is consistent with the research by Nicodemus and Emmorey (2015) who found that while ASL/English interpreters may be more accurate working into their first language, they tend to prefer working into their second language. It is possible that this confidence, seen from respondents, of interpreting from English into ASL rather than into their native language comes from the ability to self-assess their native language production in English immediately when hearing the production and instantly becoming aware of errors. Since ASL is a visual language that needs to be seen to be evaluated, when interpreting from English into ASL, the interpreter may need to video record their work in order to actually watch their production of a visual language with the intention of becoming aware of their errors compared to the ability of immediately hearing the English errors produced while interpreting. Ultimately, further research is needed to understand the relationships between actual ASL and English expressive language skills and perceived confidence in skills.

Regarding *Attitudes*, the results varied more than in other domains, specifically regarding the importance of social justice in the profession. Since the concept of social justice is fairly new to the field, this result makes sense, and it is possible that over time,

a consensus may form. It would be interesting to research the impact and importance of social justice in other practice professions. Meanwhile, respondents *strongly agreed* that the profession is unique and provides a valuable service, mostly *agreed* in belonging to a community of interpreting professionals, were comfortable having discussions about professional roles within the interpreted interaction, and were satisfied with their work and professional roles. Unfortunately, 67% of respondents have experienced professional isolation, and perhaps this contributes to the inconsistency among respondents to recommending the profession to those searching for a new career. Fewer than half of respondents indicated that they are recommending the profession to others, and the reason behind this result needs to be assessed further. The data from this research study indicates that belonging to a community of interpreters is an important component of developing a professional identity, and with the prevalence of professional isolation, this is a necessary element to pursue for ASL/English interpreters.

Meanwhile, *Engagement Behaviors* appear to be an area of inconsistency. Most respondents have membership in a professional interpreting association and engage in certification and licensure, and they may be more likely to participate in workshops and trainings. Leadership *Engagement Behaviors* areas appeared less consistent. These areas, such as presenting workshops and educating colleagues, are vital for the continued growth of the profession as a whole (Greenwood, 1957, p. 67-71). While they may go beyond the skill of interpreting between languages, these leadership roles need to be taken on by experienced professionals in order to adequately educate the future practitioners and continue to elevate the expectations of the profession. The data collected show that teachers, mentors, and leaders are important to the development of professional

identity. With the experience range of respondents, it is possible that some do not feel ready to take on leadership positions, and further research would be beneficial to determine how much experience and what credentials are considered necessary for leadership positions.

For the *Interaction* domain, the only consensus was that interpreter education courses should be taught by trained interpreter educators, and yet, based on the information from the previous domain, there are few interpreters seeking the necessary training to become interpreter educators. The rest of the questions had more varied responses. A majority of respondents regularly seek out feedback and keep in contact with other interpreting professionals. Concerning mentoring, the responses were fairly evenly distributed across the Likert scale of *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* with a slightly higher number of respondents interacting with mentees than their own mentors. Perhaps, as more interpreters seek out leadership within the field, the answers to these questions will form a consensus that benefits the collective professional identity as well as their own individual professional identity. Again, further research is needed to determine when an individual switches from mentee to mentor, and how this impacts professional identity. Most of the questions from the Professional Identity Scale in Interpreting produced answers that were overwhelmingly positive or *strongly agree*. The overall consistency of responses to the scale indicates that there is a collective professional identity, even if it is still being developed and has room for continued growth, and the PISI is a useful instrument for measuring professional identity of ASL/English interpreters.

Individual Professional Identity and Self-Concept Clarity

In order to answer the second research question and determine the individual ASL/English interpreter professional identity, the Campbell et al. (1996) Self-Concept Clarity scale was utilized. Based on the results of the survey, it was clear that ASL/English interpreters scored higher as a group, with a mean SCC score of 48.47, than the original groups surveyed by Campbell et al. (1996), where the mean SCC scores for their three studies were 42.12, 39.68, and 38.86. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that those surveyed either had already developed—or were in the process of developing—a concrete professional identity as ASL/English interpreters. Research focused on SCC scores for groups of professionals in other occupations would be necessary to examine the impact a specific professional role has on self-concept clarity. Additionally, some of the literature reviewed touched on the fact that ASL/English interpreters must have a clearly defined sense of self to exist within their role as an interpreter taking on the identities of their clients and to respond well to the regular feedback inherent in the profession (Bontempo, Napier et al., 2014; Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2013). While the one hypothesis for this research study proposed that certification would contribute to higher self-concept clarity, the results of the survey indicated that while there may have been a weak correlation, it was not statistically significant. There were a couple of certifications that did produce statistically significant results, and those with CI and CT certifications had significantly higher self-concept clarity than interpreters without these certifications. These certifications were offered from 1988-2008 and therefore, there are other factors that may contribute to these results, such as age and experience. Those with the current NIC certification produced results that were

significantly lower in self-concept clarity than those who did not have the NIC certification, including those who indicated having the CI and CT certifications. It is possible that since the CI and CT certifications were offered from 1988 to 2008, the additional time with certification impacted SCC scores. An additional consideration for the SCC scores being lower for those with NIC certification could be explained by current rhetoric in the field surrounding the NIC test and certification. Further research is necessary to find out what interpreters are actually saying and internalizing about the NIC in order to understand the drop in SCC scores. When SCC scores were compared by years of experience, the scores increased in a linear trend, until there was a significant decline for those with more than 26 years of experience. These data could be explained by looking into these participants' ages and life stages during those later years, when some may be transitioning out of the interpreting profession, and by exiting the interpreting professional role their self-concept clarity may be impacted by transitioning between roles. Further research is necessary to explore how extended years of experience and exiting the professional role impacts self-concept clarity.

Based on the literature review and partially the results of this research, it should be noted that there are potential links between self-concept clarity, self-esteem, professional confidence, professional identity, and ultimately professional competence that need to be further researched and explored (Bontempo, Napier et al., 2014; Campbell et al., 1996; Guerrettaz et al., 2014; Holland et al., 2012; Schwartz et al., 2011).

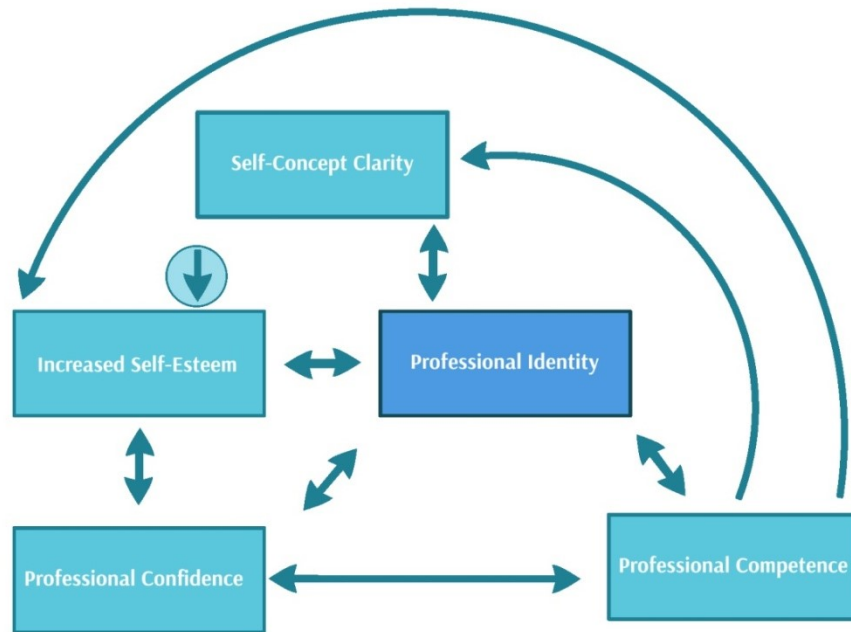


Figure 20. Links between Professional Identity and Other Elements

Campbell et al. (1996) found that individuals “higher in clarity were higher in self-esteem” (p.146). Since there is an instrument to measure self-concept clarity and research that has found a direct impact on self-esteem, the link in Figure 20 between *self-concept clarity* and *increased self esteem* is emphasized. Schwartz et al. (2011) supported the link between *self-concept clarity* and *professional identity* and their reciprocal relationship. For the link between professional identity and professional competence, as well as professional confidence, the literature by Holland et al. (2012) was used since they determined, “professional confidence underpins professional competence and is inextricably linked to professional identity” (p. 20). Additionally, Bontempo et al. (2014) researched sign language interpreters and found that self-esteem predicts competence, which could be due to the impact on confidence determined by Holland et al. (2012). If an individual possesses professional competence, they are likely to have a more clearly defined concept of self and higher self-esteem due to positive work outcomes. Central to

Figure 20 is professional identity and the reciprocal relationship with the elements highlighted in the literature review and data collected from this research study. Each of the links presented in Figure 20 represent areas of future research. Furthermore, research determining actionable practices to increase self-concept clarity and professional identity would be useful because of the impact on professional competence. Since much of the literature was pulled from other practice professions such as social work and counseling, Figure 20 does not represent the relationship of these elements for ASL/English interpreters only. There is a possibility that Figure 20 could be used and researched in other fields as well.

Professional Identity Development

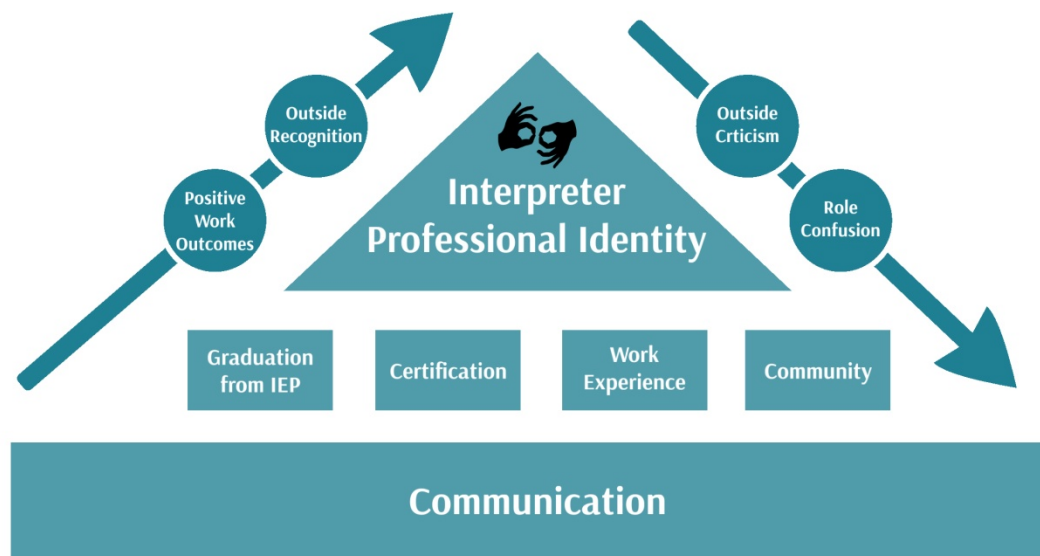
The final research question was addressed through the open-ended question portion of the survey. Most respondents indicated that communication is the foundation for what it means to be an interpreter. Additionally, it was evident that specific elements, such as graduation from an IEP, certification, and actual interpreting work experience, contributed to an individual fully identifying themselves as an interpreter. In fact, the theme that occurred most frequently was actual employment as an interpreter contributing to when an individual first identified themselves as an interpreter. In exploring how ASL/English interpreters develop their professional identity, the coded responses revealed the importance of community, through colleagues, mentors, and the Deaf community. Both positive and negative experiences contributed to the development of professional identities for ASL/English interpreters. According to Baumeister and Leary (1995) non-negative (either positive or neutral) interactions lead to a sense of belonging (as cited in Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001, p. 331).

Additionally, Baumeister et al. (2001) found that evidence suggested “negative affect is stronger and more important than positive affect. People have more words for bad emotions than good ones and use them more frequently” (p. 334), and, therefore, it makes sense that there were far more strongly worded responses concerning negative interactions impacting the development of a professional identity. However, both positive and negative experiences were mostly the result of outside influences. Feedback, when positive, helped to create professional identities and, when negative, hindered the development of professional identities. Very few responses indicated the role that the individual interpreter has on his or her own development based on internal motivation and positive self-talk. With the influence of external feedback on respondents, this emphasizes the importance of mentoring relationships. Recent research by Boeh (2016) on mentoring in the interpreting profession found that “practitioners in the field perceived a need for interpreting mentorship in many capacities and settings within the signed language interpreting profession” (p. 69). As a field, practicing interpreters recognize the importance of mentoring, and yet, based on the results of the survey, there is no consistency in receiving or providing mentorship.

Linking the results of the SCC scores and the open-ended answer portion of this study, an interesting result emerged. The respondents overwhelmingly identified outside influences as contributing to their professional identity, such as feedback and recognition, and only mention certification as a specific milestone in identifying as an interpreter. Once the certification milestone occurs, respondents no longer consider it a positive or negative contributor to their professional identity and therefore, this further supports the null hypothesis that certification does not impact SCC scores. Since certification does not

have a statistically significant impact on SCC scores, there would then be no statistically significant impact on self-esteem (Campbell et al., 1996). Overall, for the development of a professional identity, respondents did not follow a consistent or linear path, but there were similar milestones leading to the signifying moment of identifying oneself as an ASL/English interpreter.

Utilizing all of the information collected through the open-ended question responses, Figure 21 was developed:



*Figure 21.*Developmental Process for ASL/English Interpreter Professional Identity

The visual shows (Figure 21) how communication is the foundation of what interpreters do occupationally. The milestones along the path to developing a professional identity were recognized as *graduation from an interpreter education program*, *certification*, *work experience*, and *community*, which included both the Deaf community and the community of interpreter colleagues. The aspects that positively impacted an individual's professional identity were documented as positive work outcomes and

outside recognition. The aspects that negatively contributed to an individual's professional identity were documented as outside criticism and role confusion from those outside the profession not understanding the function and purpose of an interpreter. It would be interesting to compare other practice professions and see if there are similar milestones and influencing factors.

Implications for Future Research

As exploratory research, some questions were answered by this study, but more research is needed to fully understand the collective professional identity of ASL/English interpreters, their individual professional identity, and the professional identity developmental process. The Professional Identity Scale in Interpreting has room for improvement. A few questions could be refined while additional questions added, and then a thorough factor analysis and an attempt to obtain higher reliability through Cronbach's α would be recommended.

A larger sample size would have benefited the research. The Self-Concept clarity scale used with a larger sample size could either confirm the results found here or may produce even stronger correlations, if any exist. Additional tests based on self-efficacy and professional confidence could explore this topic further. Also, studies that incorporate skills and competencies based on self-concept clarity and/or professional confidence could add further insight. Since professional identity development occurs over time, a longitudinal study exploring the fundamental milestones and contributing factors would be beneficial to the profession as well. Studies founded in research methods other than surveys would also be valuable.

The topic of professional identity, whether collective, individual, or the developmental process, and the resulting research will benefit the overall professionalization of the ASL/English interpreting profession as well as providing vital information about the “gap” between graduation and being ready to work as a professional ASL/English interpreter.

Conclusion

For ASL/English interpreters, in a fairly new profession, both the individual practitioners and the collective profession are still going through the dynamic process of developing their professional identity. As this process continues, there is an opportunity to continue to assess these elements from an exploratory perspective, as well as a more in-depth and detailed approach. The potential links between self-concept clarity, professional identity, professional confidence, and ultimately professional competence are intriguing and potentially significant.

Based on the survey results, it is apparent that both collective and individual professional identities are strengthened through mentorship, educational opportunities, research, and a sense of community. Surprisingly, few respondents are filling these necessary leadership roles, whether they are publishing research, presenting workshops, mentoring, or taking on voluntary leadership roles within RID (or related organizations) at local and national levels. The data indicate there may be a need for interpreters to fill leadership roles that is not being met. Potentially, there are ASL/English interpreters filling these roles who did not take the survey, but this does not eliminate the evident lack of leadership within the profession suggested by this study. Additionally, with 67% of respondents indicating they have felt professional isolation, these leadership roles could

alleviate the trend of professional isolation through building a stronger community. If there are more interpreters presenting workshops, there would potentially be more opportunities to build networks of colleagues and mentors, meaning professionals may feel less isolated. If there are more interpreters taking on leadership positions in their neighborhoods, communities of interpreters can thrive, and professionals may feel less isolated. According to Kruse and Louis (1993), “supportive leadership is necessary for a professional community to emerge” (p. 21). Therefore, the future of the collective professional identity relies on these leadership roles to continue to educate and model the way for future generations of professionals.

With further research into the topic of professional identity, there is an opportunity to explore the impact of professional identity on the transition period before becoming an ASL/English interpreting professional. Since positive work outcomes and outside recognition were the most noted contributing factors to the development of a professional identity, there is a need for actual development of opportunities for novice interpreters to foster positive work outcomes and incorporate positive outside recognition. These opportunities will promote the stability of the collective professional identity, strengthen individual ASL/English interpreter professional identity, while contributing to the process of developing professional identity, and ultimately provide positive work outcomes for both hearing and Deaf clients in the communities served.

Further research is also necessary to evaluate ways to increase self-concept clarity for ASL/English interpreters. One hypothesis for this research study was that certifications would contribute to higher self-concept clarity and therefore a more defined concept of one’s professional identity. The data collected did not support this hypothesis.

Therefore, while credentials alone may not hold the key to understanding the professional identity of ASL/English interpreters, the experiences of the collective profession and individual professional do present a glimpse into the possible connections between professional identity, self-concept clarity, professional confidence, and ultimately, professional competence.

References

- Adams, K., Hean, S., Sturgis, P., & Clark, J. M. (2006). Investigating the factors influencing professional identity of first-year health and social care students. *Learning in Health and Social Care*, 5(2), 55-68.
- Ball, C. (2013). *Legacies and legends: History of interpreter education from 1800 to the 21st century*. Edmonton, Alberta Canada: Interpreting Consolidated.
- Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Finkenauer, C., & Vohs, K. D. (2001). Bad is stronger than good. *Review of General Psychology*, 5(4), 323.
- Blocher, D. H., Tennyson, W. W., & Johnson, R. H. (1963). The dilemma of counselor identity. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 10(4), 344-349.
- Boeh, K. A. (2016). *Mentoring: Fostering the profession while mitigating the gap* (Master's thesis, Western Oregon University). Retrieved <http://digitalcommons.wou.edu/theses/26/>
- Bontempo, K., Goswell, D., Levitzke-Gray, P., Napier, J., & Warby, L. (2014). *Testing times: Towards the professionalization of deaf interpreters in Australia*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- Bontempo, K., & Napier, J. (2007). Mind the Gap. A skills gap analysis of sign language interpreters. *The Sign Language Translator & Interpreter*, 1, 275-299.
- Bontempo, K., Napier, J., Hayes, L., & Brashear, V. (2014). Does personality matter? An international study of sign language interpreter disposition. *Translation & Interpreting*, 6(1), 23-46.
- Campbell, J. D. (1990). Self-esteem and clarity of the self-concept. *Journal Of Personality & Social Psychology*, 59(3), 538-549.

- Campbell, J. D., Trapnell, P. D., Heine, S. J., Katz, I. M., Lavalley, L. F., & Lehman, D. R. (1996). Self-concept clarity: Measurement, personality correlates, and cultural boundaries. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70(1), 141.
- Clance, P. R. (1985). *The impostor phenomenon: Overcoming the fear that haunts your success*. Atlanta, GA: Peachtree Publishers.
- Cogan, C., & Cokely, D. (2015). *Preparing interpreters for tomorrow: Report on a study of emerging trends in interpreting and implications for interpreter education*. Boston, MA: National Interpreter Education Center at Northeastern University.
- Cokely, D. (2005). Shifting positionality: A critical examination of the turning point in the relationship of interpreters and the deaf community. In M. Marschark (Ed.), *Sign language interpreting and interpreter education: Directions for research and practice* (pp. 3-28). Cary, NC: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.ebrary.com>
- Daley, B. J. (2001). Learning and professional practice: A study of four professions. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 52(1), 39-54.
- Dall'Alba, G. (2009). Learning professional ways of being: Ambiguities of becoming. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 41(1), 34-45.
- Dean, R. K., & Pollard, R. Q. (2004). A practice-profession model of ethical reasoning. *Views*, 21(9), 1.
- Dean, R. K., & Pollard, R. Q. (2011). Context-based ethical reasoning in interpreting: A demand control schema perspective. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, 5(1), 155-182.

- Frishberg, N. (1994). Internship, practicum, fieldwork, mentoring. In *Mapping our course: A collaborative venture: Proceedings of the 10th National Convention of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers, USA, CIT* (pp. 71-74).
- Gazzola, N., & Smith, D. J. (2007). Who do we think we are? A survey of counselors in Canada. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 29(2), 97–110.
- George, D., & Mallery, P. (2003). *SPSS for Windows step by step: A simple guide and reference. 11.0 update* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Gibson, D. M., Dollarhide, C. T., & Moss, J. M. (2010). Professional identity development: A grounded theory of transformational tasks of new counselors. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 50(1), 21-38.
- Greenwood, E. (1957). Attributes of a profession. *Social Work*, 45-55.
- Guerrettaz, J., LinChiat, C., von Hippel, W., Carroll, P. J., & Arkin, R. M. (2014). *Individual Differences Research*, 12(4-B), 180-190.
- Harvey, J. C., & Katz, C. (1985). *If I'm so successful, why do I feel like a fake? The imposter phenomenon*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Holland, K., Middleton, L., & Uys, L. (2012). The sources of professional confidence in occupational therapy students. *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 42(3), 19-25.
- Holland, K. E., Middleton, L., & Uys, L. (2013). Professional confidence: Conceptions held by novice occupational therapists in South Africa. *Occupational Therapy International*, 20(3), 105-113.

- Hunt, D. I. (2015). *“The work is you”: Professional identity development of second-language learner American Sign Language-English interpreters* (Doctoral dissertation). Gallaudet University. Washington, DC..
- Johnsson, M. C., & Hager, P. (2008). Navigating the wilderness of becoming professional. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 20(7/8), 526-536.
- Kasher, A. (2005). Professional ethics and collective professional autonomy: A conceptual analysis. *Ethical Perspectives*, 12(1), 67-97.
- Kruse, S. D., & Louis, K. S. (1993). An emerging framework for analyzing school-based professional community. Proceedings from annual meeting of the *American Educational Research Association*. Atlanta, GA.
- Llewellyn-Jones, P., & Lee, R. G. (2013). Getting to the core of role: Defining interpreters' role space. *International Journal of Interpreter Education*, 5(2), 54-72.
- Light, A. E., & Visser, P. S. (2013). The ins and outs of the self: Contrasting role exits and role entries as predictors of self-concept clarity. *Self & Identity*, 12(3), 291-306.
- Maroney, E., & Smith, A. (2010). Defining the nature of the “gap” between interpreter education, certification and readiness-to-work: A research study of bachelor's degree graduates. *RID Views*, 27(4), 35-37.
- Meadows, S. A. (2013). *Real-world shock: Transition shock and its effect on new interpreters of American Sign Language and English* (Master's thesis, Western Oregon University). Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.wou.edu/theses/8/>
- Mikkelsen, H. (1996). The professionalization of community interpreting. In O'Keeffe, M. (Ed.) *Global vision: Proceedings of the 37th Annual Conference of the*

- American Translators Association* (pp. 77-89). Alexandria, VA: American Translators Association.
- Nicodemus, B., & Emmorey, K. (2015). Directionality in ASL-English interpreting: Accuracy and articulation quality in L1 and L2. *Interpreting*, 17(2), 145-166.
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (2005). *NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct*. Retrieved from Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.: http://www.rid.org/UserFiles/File/NAD_RID_ETHICS.pdf
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (2007) *Team interpreting: Standard practice papers*. Written by the Professional Standards Committee.
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (2015a). *NIC certification*. Retrieved from <http://rid.org/rid-certification-overview/nic-certification/>
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (2015b). *Previously offered RID certifications*. Retrieved from <http://rid.org/rid-certification-overview/previously-offered-rid-certifications/>
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (2016). *Annual report: Fiscal year 2016*. Retrieved from <http://rid.org/2016-annual-report/>
- Resnick, S. (1990). The skill gap: Is mentoring the answer? In L. Swabie (Ed). *The challenge of the 90's: New standards in interpreter education*: Proceedings of 8th National Convention of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers. Pamona, CA. Retrieved from <http://www.cit-asl.org/new/the-skill-gap-is-mentoring-the-answer/>
- Rodgers, C. R., & Scott, K. H. (2008). 40 The development of the personal self and professional identity in learning to teach. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-

- Nemser, D. J. McIntyre, & K. E. Demers (Eds), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (pp. 732-755). New York, NY; Routeledge.
- Ronfeldt, M., & Grossman, P. (2008). Becoming a professional: Experimenting with possible selves in professional preparation. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 35(3), 41-60.
- Rosenberg, E., Seller, R., & Leanza, Y. (2008). Through interpreters' eyes: comparing roles of professional and family interpreters. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 70(1), 87-93.
- Rudvin, M. (2007). Professionalism and ethics in community interpreting: The impact of individualist versus collective group identity. *Interpreting: International Journal of Research & Practice in Interpreting*, 9(1), 47-69.
- Sande, H. (1998). Supervision of refugee interpreters: 5 years of experience from northern Norway. *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry*, 52(5), 403-409.
- Schwartz, S. J., Klimstra, T. A., Luyckx, K., Hale, W. W., Frijns, T., Oosterwegel, A., & ... Meeus, W. J. (2011). Daily dynamics of personal identity and self-concept clarity. *European Journal of Personality*, 25(5), 373-385.
- Smith, A. R., Cancel, P. D., & Maroney, E. M. (2012). Creating innovative opportunities for interpreter education program graduates: Transitioning to the professional world. In L. Robinson, & S. Shaw (Eds.), *iCore: Innovative and creative opportunities for research education. Proceedings of the 19th National Convention of Interpreter Trainers* (pp. 35-54), Charlotte, NC. Retrieved from <http://www.cit-asl.org/new/past-conference/proceedings/2012-cit-proceedings/>

- Stern, D. T., & Papadakis, M. (2006). The developing physician—becoming a professional. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 355(17), 1794-1799.
- Swick, H. M. (2000). Toward a normative definition of medical professionalism. *Academic Medicine*, 75(6), 612-616.
- Tickle, L. (2000) *Teacher induction: The way ahead*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Temple, B., & Edwards, R. (2008). Interpreters/translators and cross-language research: Reflexivity and border crossings. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(2), 1-12.
- Trimble, E. (2014). *The rural interpreter: Perspectives on professional development and professional partnerships* (Master's thesis, Western Oregon University). Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.wou.edu/theses/15/>
- Walker, S., Dwyer, T., Broadbent, M., Moxham, L., Sander, T., & Edwards, K. (2014). Constructing a nursing identity within the clinical environment: The student nurse experience. *Contemporary nurse*, 49(1), 103-112.
- Weidman, J. C., Twale, D. J., & Stein, E. L. (2001). Socialization of graduate and professional students in higher education: A perilous passage? *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report*, 28(3). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series.
- Wiles, F. (2013). 'Not easily put into a box': Constructing professional identity. *Social Work Education*, 32(7), 854-866.
- Witter-Merithew, A., & Johnson, L. J. (2005). *Toward competent practice: Conversations with stakeholders*. Alexandria, VA: Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.

- Witter-Merithew, A., Johnson, L., & Taylor, M. (2004). A national perspective on entry to-practice competencies. In E.M. Maroney (Ed.) *Proceedings of the 15th National Convention of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers* (pp. 23-42), Washington, D.C.: Conference of Interpreter Trainers.
- Woo, H. R. (2013). *Instrument construction and initial validation: Professional identity scale in counseling [PISC]*. (Doctoral Dissertation). University of Iowa. Iowa City, Iowa.

Appendix A: Consent Form

Dear Colleague,

I am a master's degree student at Western Oregon University in the College of Education under the supervision of Dr. Elisa Maroney. I am conducting a research study seeking to understand the professional identity and self-concept clarity of ASL/English interpreters in the United States. I am requesting your participation in this survey. It will take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

Who is eligible to participate?

Pre-professional, professional, and post-professional ASL-English Interpreters age 18 and over.

Why is this research being done?

The study is looking to explore professional identity of ASL/English interpreters and the relationship, if any exists, to self-concept clarity.

Benefits

The findings from this study will help the ASL/English interpreting profession by exploring self-concept clarity and professional identities and recognizing contributing factors to the development of a professional identity for ASL/English interpreters. These findings could aid in future research and the professionalization of ASL/English interpreting.

Discomforts and Risks

This project will require you to answer questions about your professional experiences. There will be no physical risk of any kind.

Who will see the information about me?

The survey instrument will not collect any identifying data. The primary investigator and her faculty advisor will see your responses. The data will be shared in a graduate thesis, with the potential to be used in reports, presentations, or publications, with no identifying information.

Confidentiality

No identifying information is requested in the survey. If by chance you provide identifying information, be assured that the write-up of data will use pseudo names, and situations will be tweaked to make it impossible to identify individuals: location and names will not be discussed. Research records will be stored securely on a password-protected laptop and will be kept private only available to the principle investigator and faculty advisor.

May I stop my participation in this study?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. Even if you begin, you may discontinue your participation at any time by closing your browser. Any information related to responses will be discarded.

Consent

By participating in the survey your consent to participate is implied.

Who can I contact for questions?

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please contact Nicole Harwood, Principal Investigator at nharwood14@wou.edu or 503-929-1071 or Dr. Elisa Maroney, Thesis Committee Chair at 503-838-8735. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Western Oregon University Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the WOU Institutional Review Board at any time regarding the study at 503-838-9200.

Thank you for your participation!

Nicole Harwood Ed:K-12

nharwood14@wou.edu | 503-929-1071

Western Oregon University Masters student, College of Education

Appendix B: Survey Questions

*** How do you identify your gender?**

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

(If neither of the above, please indicate your gender identity)

*** What is your age?**

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 18 - 20 | <input type="radio"/> 35 - 39 | <input type="radio"/> 55 - 59 |
| <input type="radio"/> 21 - 25 | <input type="radio"/> 40 - 44 | <input type="radio"/> 60 or older |
| <input type="radio"/> 26 - 29 | <input type="radio"/> 45 - 49 | |
| <input type="radio"/> 30 - 34 | <input type="radio"/> 50 - 54 | |

*** How do you identify your race/ethnicity?**

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> American Indian or Alaskan Native | <input type="radio"/> Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian | <input type="radio"/> White or Caucasian |
| <input type="radio"/> Black or African-American | |
| <input type="radio"/> Chicano, Latino, or Hispanic | |
| <input type="radio"/> Race not listed above (Please specify)._____ | |

*** What is the highest level of school you have completed?**

- ☐ Less than high school degree
- ☐ High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
- ☐ Some college but no degree
- ☐ Associate degree
- ☐ Bachelor degree
- ☐ Graduate degree

*** Which of the following best describes you?**

- ☐ Hearing
- ☐ Hard of Hearing (identify as Hearing)
- ☐ Hard of Hearing (identify as Deaf)
- ☐ Deaf
- ☐ Deaf of Deaf
- ☐ CODA
- ☐ Other (please specify)_____

*** What are your current interpreter credentials? (Please select all that apply.)**

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CSC | <input type="checkbox"/> BEI Basic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NIC: Advanced | <input type="checkbox"/> OTC | <input type="checkbox"/> BEI Advanced |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NIC: Master | <input type="checkbox"/> SC:L | <input type="checkbox"/> BEI Master |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CDI | <input type="checkbox"/> RSC | <input type="checkbox"/> NAD III |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CI | <input type="checkbox"/> ED:K-12 | <input type="checkbox"/> NAD IV |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CT | <input type="checkbox"/> EIPA | <input type="checkbox"/> NAD V |

- ☐ None
☐ Other (please specify)_____

*** Did you graduate from an Interpreter Education Program?**

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not yet, currently enrolled

*** How many years of experience interpreting do you have?**

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 0 | <input type="radio"/> 6 - 10 | <input type="radio"/> 16 - 20 |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 - 5 | <input type="radio"/> 11 - 15 | <input type="radio"/> 21+ |

Knowledge of the Profession (scale 1-5, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

I know the origins of the interpreting profession.

I am knowledgeable of the important events and milestones in interpreting history.

I am knowledgeable about ethical guidelines in interpreting.

I am familiar with certification organizations and their requirements for credentials.

I am familiar with professional interpreting associations and their roles and accomplishments in the profession.

I am knowledgeable of professional interpreting journals and their contents, foci, and purposes in the profession.

I am familiar with laws and regulations related to my profession.

I am knowledgeable about the different models and theoretical approaches to interpreting.

Philosophy of the Profession (scale 1-5, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

I am able to distinguish and describe the ASL/English interpreting philosophy.

I believe self-care is emphasized in the interpreting philosophy.

I believe cross-cultural communication is emphasized in interpreting philosophy.

I believe it is important to have sufficient knowledge and skill in both ASL and English to provide a successful interpretation.

I believe it is important to empower clients through an emphasis on personal independence.

I believe Deaf Culture is emphasized in interpreting philosophy.

I believe successful interpreted interactions can be influenced by client engagement and providing feedback.

I believe interactions in interpreting are based on the equal relationship between interpreter and clients, both Deaf and Hearing.

I believe research is an important part of the interpreting profession.

I do not believe professional appearance is emphasized in interpreting philosophy.

Professional Roles & Expertise (scale 1-5, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

I value various professional roles that an interpreting professional can hold.

An interpreting professional's roles and duties vary depending on settings, diverse populations served, and the specialty.

Regardless of different roles or settings, a major goal is always the communication of the clients.

I believe an interpreting professional should value the importance of advocacy for the populations served.

I believe an interpreting professional should value the importance of advocacy for the interpreting profession.

I have completed professional training and standard education to perform my duties in my roles.

I have professional knowledge and practical skills required to successfully perform my roles.

I am confident that there will be positive outcomes of my work and services.

I am knowledgeable of ethical responsibilities and professional standards relevant to my roles.

I am familiar with which resources to refer to when I need professional help.

I consistently self-evaluate and self-reflect my effectiveness and performances in my chosen field.

I am confident in my ASL to English interpreting skills.

I am confident in my English to ASL interpreting skills.

Attitude (scale 1-5, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

My profession has a well-established theoretical body of knowledge.

My profession provides unique and valuable services to society.

I am positive about advancement and the future of my profession.

I believe in supporting and belonging to a community of interpreting professionals.

It does not bother me to meet people who do not recognize my profession.

It does not bother me to meet interpreting professionals whose values conflict with social justice issues impacting the profession.

I recommend my profession to those who are searching for a new career.

I am comfortable having discussions about the role differences between interpreters and other professionals present in interpreted interactions.

My personality and beliefs are well matched with the characteristics and values of my profession.

I am satisfied with my work and professional roles.

My life revolves around my profession, and my personal goals are highly related to my profession.

As an interpreting professional, I share my positive feelings (e.g., satisfaction) when working with others.

I have felt professional isolation.

Engagement Behaviors (scale 1-5, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

I have memberships in professional interpreting associations.

I actively engage in professional interpreting associations by participating in conferences and workshops every year.

I engage in certification/licensure renewal process and/or have consistently maintained interpreting certificates and credentials.

I have contributed to expanding my knowledge base of the profession by participating in interpreting research (e.g., by being interviewed, taking surveys).

I have conducted interpreting research.

I have published research findings in my field.

I follow up with theoretical, practical, and technical advancement in my profession by keeping up with literature in the field.

I engage in or seek opportunities to serve in non-required leadership positions.

I educate the community and public about my profession.

I advocate for my profession by participating in activities associated with legislation, law, and policy on interpreting on behalf of the profession.

I have educated colleagues as a workshop presenter

Interaction (scale 1-5, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

I seek feedback/consultation from professional peers as a form of professional development.

I regularly communicate with a mentor who is interested in my professional development.

I regularly communicate with a mentee who is interested in his/her professional development.

I keep in contact with interpreting professionals through training and/or professional involvement in interpreting associations.

I keep involved in ongoing discussions with interpreting professionals about identity and the vision of my profession.

I believe supervision is needed for all interpreters in order to ensure quality interpreting and to enhance supervisee's professional growth.

I believe core interpreter education courses should be taught by trained interpreter

educators.

Self Concept Clarity (scale 1-5, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another.

On one day I might have one opinion of myself and on another day I might have a different opinion.

I spend a lot of time wondering about what kind of person I really am.

Sometimes I feel that I am not really the person that I appear to be.

When I think about the kind of person I have been in the past, I'm not sure what I was really like.

I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality.

Sometimes I think I know other people better than I know myself.

My beliefs about myself seem to change very frequently.

If I were asked to describe my personality, my description might end up being different from one day to another day.

Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could tell someone what I'm really like.

In general, I have a clear sense of who I am and what I am.

It is often hard for me to make up my mind about things because I don't really know what I want.

Open-ended Questions

What does being an interpreter mean to you?

At what point in your career did you identify as an interpreter?

What contributed to the development of your professional identity as an interpreter?

Please describe any positive experiences related to your professional identity as an interpreter.

Please describe any negative experiences related to your professional identity as an interpreter.

Any additional comments:

Appendix C: Scale Reliability Statistical Detail

Table 14

Scale Reliability Statistical Detail

	<u>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</u>	<u>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</u>	<u>Corrected Item- Total Correlation</u>	<u>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</u>
K1	250.60	405.406	0.385	0.878
K2	250.95	401.905	0.470	0.877
K3	250.47	407.345	0.442	0.878
K4	250.64	404.069	0.416	0.878
K5	250.86	399.795	0.519	0.877
K6	251.17	398.168	0.498	0.876
K7	250.92	401.726	0.469	0.877
K8	250.93	403.018	0.467	0.877
P1	251.20	409.624	0.220	0.880
P2	251.78	411.149	0.131	0.882
P3	250.93	407.670	0.311	0.879
P4	250.22	417.731	0.150	0.881
P5	250.59	408.617	0.378	0.879
P6	251.09	404.084	0.353	0.878
P7	250.57	409.829	0.342	0.879
P8	250.92	402.238	0.394	0.878
P9	250.67	406.155	0.431	0.878
P10	251.64	409.139	0.177	0.881
R&E1	250.68	411.593	0.202	0.880
R&E2	250.63	410.445	0.225	0.880
R&E3	250.31	415.705	0.208	0.880
R&E4	250.99	410.523	0.210	0.880
R&E5	250.63	409.072	0.344	0.879
R&E6	250.78	396.731	0.490	0.876
R&E7	250.52	406.881	0.499	0.878
R&E8	250.61	408.799	0.381	0.879
R&E9	250.38	410.261	0.519	0.879
R&E10	250.80	401.926	0.423	0.878
R&E11	250.45	414.250	0.212	0.880
R&E12	250.98	408.092	0.292	0.879
R&E13	250.78	407.591	0.379	0.878
A1	251.51	405.718	0.289	0.879
A2	250.43	412.991	0.224	0.880
A3	251.40	412.546	0.114	0.882
A4	250.71	406.230	0.378	0.878
A5	252.57	410.131	0.115	0.883

	<u>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</u>	<u>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</u>	<u>Corrected Item- Total Correlation</u>	<u>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</u>
A6	251.61	412.939	0.084	0.883
A7	251.91	402.759	0.289	0.879
A8	250.67	405.132	0.469	0.878
A9	250.72	405.877	0.453	0.878
A10	250.83	405.075	0.492	0.878
A11	251.79	400.306	0.348	0.878
A12	250.82	410.175	0.251	0.880
A13	251.38	415.727	0.022	0.884
E1	250.60	406.755	0.306	0.879
E2	250.98	396.744	0.484	0.876
E3	250.70	410.165	0.182	0.881
E4	250.74	405.987	0.386	0.878
E5	252.48	406.578	0.145	0.883
E6	253.76	404.767	0.275	0.880
E7	251.48	398.043	0.420	0.877
E8	252.06	383.915	0.549	0.875
E9	251.00	404.674	0.394	0.878
E10	252.09	392.131	0.441	0.877
E11	252.24	396.115	0.263	0.882
I1	250.82	411.919	0.180	0.880
I2	252.23	400.226	0.290	0.880
I3	252.02	396.348	0.318	0.880
I4	250.85	401.547	0.483	0.877
I5	251.07	398.298	0.504	0.876
I6	251.02	407.255	0.301	0.879
I7	250.44	413.156	0.215	0.880

Note. The overall scale Cronbach's α is 0.881. Therefore, if a scale item is deleted and the Cronbach's α increases, these scale items should be assessed for deletion.