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Editorial

Community Interpreting Research: A Critical Discussion of Training and Assessment

Jemina Napier, Editor¹

Macquarie University

This is the second issue of Volume 4 of the *International Journal of Interpreter Education*—and the first time a second issue has been produced in the relatively short life and 4-year history of the journal. The move to two issues a year is in response to the increasing number of manuscripts being received, and the quality of the submissions, and we hope that you enjoy the opportunity to read a greater number of articles and commentaries on interpreter education.

The theme of this issue is community interpreting education research. In order to contextualize this issue, I would like to give an overview of community interpreting. We know that the act of mediating between languages and cultures is a complex activity. Historically, the academic sector has focused most of its research efforts on conference interpreting (Gile, 1994). Since the 1990s, however, practitioners, professional associations and scholars alike have recognized the value of community interpreting (Mikkelsen, 1999; Pöchhacker, 1999) as being distinct from conference interpreting due to the bilateral nature of the work (Neubert, 1981). *Community interpreting* is typically defined as facilitating access to public services by mediating between service users and service providers who do not share the same language (Hale, 2007), primarily in social, legal, and health settings. Despite the fact that it is a rapidly growing field, there is variance in the nomenclature used, including public service interpreting (Corsellis, 2008; de Pedroy Ricoy, Perez, & Wilson, 2009), liaison interpreting (Erasmus, Mathibela, Hertog, & Antonissen, 1999; Gentile, Vasilikakos & Ozolins, 1996), and dialogue interpreting (Mason, 2001), but community interpreting is widely accepted as a generic term in the literature.

Opinions on the specific forms of community interpreting significantly vary among authors and countries, but the key component of community interpreting is the dialogic nature of the interaction that requires complex communication and role management (Valero-Garcés & Martin, 2008; Wadensjö, 1998). And we have lately witnessed a significant shift in many countries in the perception of community interpreters, from ad hoc,

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untrained, and unprofessional interpreters to skilled, qualified, and professional linguistic and cultural mediators of communication (Pöchhacker, 2008).

In contrast to spoken language interpreting, signed language interpreting emerged as a profession from within the community, rather than at conferences. Signed language interpreting practitioners were working with deaf people in medical, legal, and other dialogic settings (such as education) long before they started working at the conference level (Grbic & Pöllabauer, 2006); and signed language interpreting scholars (e.g., Metzger, 1999; Roy, 2000a; Turner, 2007) have taken the lead in debating the role of community interpreters by addressing the complexity of interpreter-mediated interaction, identifying the presence of an interpreter as a third party.²

The professionalization of community interpreting has thus led to greater discussions of the training, education, and assessment needs of community interpreting students as compared to conference interpreting students, for spoken languages and signed languages (see, e.g., Downing & Tillery, 1992; Roy, 2000b; Sawyer, 2004). Different countries have a range of systems for the education, training, and accreditation of community interpreters. Training ranges from ad hoc intensive short courses to established formal university programs; and accreditation is obtained through annual testing programs or by qualification on completion of a training program. Most countries start out with short courses in order to meet an immediate need and provide basic training. In some countries, (sometimes many) years of government lobbying, fundraising, and perseverance have led to the establishment of formal programs, along with infrastructure for professional regulation, monitoring, and standards.³ Thus the availability of such training has led to a call for greater connections between research and pedagogy (Angelelli & Jacobsen, 2009), and we have seen a growth in the literature in this regard—notably in this journal.

The Research Section of this volume of *IJIE* includes four excellent articles from respected community interpreting researchers about studies of community interpreting training and assessment. Three of the articles sharing cutting-edge scholarship and findings on community interpreting were first presented at Critical Link 6: Interpreting in the Community at Aston University in Birmingham, England, in July 2010. The Critical Link conferences were initiated in 1995 by Critical Link International, which originated in Canada as the International Council for the Development of Community Interpreting (see <http://criticallink.org/>). After the initial conference in 1995, conferences have been held every three years, hosted by a university in collaboration and consultation with Critical Link International. Each conference features papers and discussions that focus on community interpreting across spoken and signed languages; typically, a collection of papers from each conference is published by John Benjamins in a book of proceedings.

Previous Critical Link volumes have featured papers on community interpreter education, training, and assessment, including, for example, discussions of orientation workshops for interpreters of all languages (Mikkelsen & Mintz, 1997), distance education (Carr & Steyn, 2000), assessment tools (Fowler, 2007; Lee, 2009; Roberts, 2000), training for interpreters from refugee backgrounds (Straker & Watts, 2003), interpreter certification (Beltran Avery, 2003), internship programs (Johnston, 2007), and quality in health care interpreter training (Merlini & Favaron, 2009).

In advance of the forthcoming publication of the 2010 conference proceedings, this issue of *IJIE* features three papers from the training stream of Critical Link 6. First, Carmen Valero-Garcés and Denis Socarrás-Estrada from Spain discuss public service interpreter training assessment and evaluation; they provide an overview of tests they have used and an evaluation of the efficacy of their approach. Next, Kristina Gustafsson, Eva Norström, and Ingrid Fioretos provide details of a community interpreter training program in Sweden. Finally, Sedat Mulayim evaluates different modes used in community interpreter testing in Australia.

² See Wadensjö's (2011) and Leeson's (2011) contributions in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, or Hale's (2011) and Napier's (2011) similar chapters in the *Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies*, for detailed overviews of the professionalization and status of community/public service interpreting and the relationship to signed language interpreting.

³ See Napier (2009), which features an overview of interpreter education in a range of countries. Although the book focuses on signed language interpreter education, each chapter contextualizes the development of interpreter training within the broader translation and interpreting sector, and documents the current status of training, education, and accreditation in each country.

The fourth contribution in the Research section is by signed language interpreting scholars who did not present at Critical Link 6, but their discussion complements the theme of this issue. Len Roberson, Debra Russell, and Risa Shaw from the United States and Canada provide a case for the training of signed language interpreters for legal specialization, which could also be considered and applied to spoken language interpreters, and is a large component of community interpreting practice.

Risa Shaw appears again in our Commentary section, as a coauthor with Mary Thumann. In their commentary, Shaw and Thumann discuss how they developed guidelines for interpreting students to submit academic papers in American Sign Language. These guidelines have been long awaited in the signed language sector; many educators have grappled with how to encourage their students to submit assignments in the signed language of their working language pair, in order to encourage the development of literacy in (what is often) students' second language. The guidelines provide an alternative to the APA referencing style often required by universities for academic papers in English, but they can be adapted for signed language interpreter educators in any country.

Finally, the Open Forum section includes a review by Debra Russell of the latest book in the interpreter education series from Gallaudet University Press, which focuses on another aspect of community interpreting: health care interpreting and health care interpreting education. Debra's insights provide food for thought for spoken and signed language health care interpreter educators alike.

The publication of *IJIE* Volume 4(2) coincides with the convention of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers in Charlotte, North Carolina, in October 2012. A selection of papers from that conference will be featured in *IJIE* Volume 5(2), due in November 2013.

Although we see evidence of increased critical discussion and examination of community interpreting practice, education, training, and assessment through the sharing of research studies, the reflective practice of interpreter educators goes a long way toward supporting that critical discussion. Research is invaluable, but reflection on effective pedagogy provides a foundation for ongoing debate.

Rather than end my editorial with a quote, for this issue I would like to sum up by outlining six principles for reflective interpreter educators to follow, as suggested by Ken Bain (2004) in his identification of what the best teachers in adult education do (based on longitudinal research and observation of effective teachers), regardless of discipline. Adherence to these principles will not only allow us to engage in best practice pedagogy and reflection, but also empower our interpreting students to become critical and reflective practitioners.

1. Know your subject extremely well and demonstrate an intuitive understanding of human learning: "Learning has little meaning unless it produces a sustained and substantial influence on the way people think, act and feel" (Bain, 2004, p.17).
2. Treat teaching as a serious intellectual endeavor that is intellectually demanding.
3. Expect more from students and favor learning objectives that embody the kind of thinking and acting expected for life.
4. Create a "natural critical learning environment," using various methods addressing intriguing problems and authentic tasks.
5. Trust that students want to learn and treat students with respect.
6. Systematically evaluate your teaching efforts and impact on student learning.

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Assessment and Evaluation in Labs for Public Service Interpreting Training

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Abstract

This study reports on the development and application of two bilingual interpreting tests given to master's students during three academic years (2009–2012) at the University of Alcalá, Madrid, Spain. Its main objective is to compare trainees' test performance at two different points in time. The study analyzes the degree of accuracy and the speed of response, considering the variables of mother tongue, gender, age, and undergraduate education. Our customized tests drew upon two aptitude tests developed by Pöchlhammer (2009) and Russo (2009) and combine oral-aural exercises with tasks requiring listening skills, expressional fluency, and public-service-setting terminology. The tests are administered in a 24-seat multimedia lab, which allows recording students' performance for further evaluation. The results show the validity of the tests (Baker, 1989) to measure the students' aptitudes before and after training, and thus the tests prove to be useful tools to predict professional performance as well.

Key Words: interpreting education, competences, aptitude test, public service, assessment, evaluation

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1. Introduction

The University of Alcalá (UAH), Madrid, Spain, has been training interpreters and translators for public service since 2001 in several language combinations. It has been a member of the European Master's in Translation (EMT) network since 2009. Its main training program is the MA in Intercultural Communication, Public Service Interpreting and Translation (PSIT; 60 European Credit Transfer System [ECTS] credits). The MA is structured in five modules: Interlinguistic and Intercultural Communication, Translation and Interpreting in Health Care Settings, Translation and Interpreting in Legal and Administrative Settings, Internship in public and private institutions; and a Master's Degree/Research project (see <http://www2.uah.es/traduccion>).

As members of the FITISPos-UAH² and FITISPos-E-Learning research groups, the authors of this study are interested in creating a repository of useful learning materials for students, and in the design and application of different assessment tools to evaluate students' skills. In this article, we report on and analyze the development and partial results of two bilingual interpreting tests given at UAH during three academic years. The tests are compulsory for two required courses in the MA program: Interpreting in Healthcare Settings (5 ECTS) and Interpreting in Legal and Administrative Settings (8 ECTS).

In our analysis, we focus specifically on assessing students' performance, taking as the initial reference point an aptitude test in health care settings the students take at the beginning of the on-site classes (health care is the first module in the program). The final reference point is an aptitude test in health care, legal, and administrative settings, which students take after some 325 hours of theoretical and practical specialized training in these settings; with the second test we assess students' competence acquisition and their readiness to enter the practicum module in real institutions. Our intention in this study was to measure the students' aptitudes before and after specialized training by comparing the results of the first test to those of the second test, which has a higher degree of difficulty.

We can describe our first *aptitude test* as a standardized test designed to measure our students' abilities (verbal comprehension, reasoning, and expressional fluency) to develop skills and acquire specific knowledge in health care settings. Our second test can be considered both an aptitude test and an *achievement test*: a standardized test designed to assess aptitude and knowledge in interpreting gained through education and training, as well as measure the students' abilities to develop skills and acquire specific knowledge in legal and administrative settings.

² FITISPos is the Spanish acronym for Training and Research in Public Service Translation and Interpreting. FITISPos group website: <http://www2.uah.es/traduccion>

2. Literature Review

In developing our aptitude test, we considered previous approaches to testing. Russo (2009) concluded that the interpreting training field can benefit from aptitude tests, arguing that interpreting-related cognitive skills and verbal fluency can be both measured and predictive. Pöchhacker (2009) found that the aptitude test he designed was effective in measuring aural-oral language use proficiency and basic interpreting-related subskills. We followed Russo and Pöchhacker's recommendations (presented at the Symposium on Aptitude for Interpreting held in Antwerp, Belgium, in May 2009) in creating an effective screening tool for our own program and useful reference points to aid our future professional interpreters in their learning process.

Developing an assessment instrument requires analyzing four main factors: the competences and skills to be assessed, the scales and grading method to be applied, the reliability and validity of the test, and the different types of exercises to be used in the test. Following, we look at each of these factors.

Competences and skills. In addition to mother-tongue competence, a professional interpreter should possess an array of other competences and skills. Although there is not yet an established standard set of parameters to measure a candidate's skills, according to Pöchhacker (2004), there is consensus regarding the nature and extent of the abilities to be demonstrated on entry into a training program.

In this respect, Schaeffner (2000) states that the process of translation involves at least the following specific competences, which we consider basic, necessary, and relevant also for interpreters:

- Linguistic competence of the languages concerned,
- Cultural competence,
- Domain- or subject-specific competence,
- (Re)search competence, and
- Transfer competence. (p. 146)

Pöchhacker (2004) includes the following competences in the profile of professional interpreters (here referring specifically to conference interpreting): general knowledge, cognitive skills (analysis, attention, and memory), and personality traits (stress tolerance and intellectual curiosity). When he discusses dialogue interpreting (the most common type used in PSIT), he also includes note-taking, whispered simultaneous interpreting, intercultural communication, turn-taking, and role performance.

Although all of the aforementioned competences should be developed in students, we designed our tests to measure only linguistic, domain, and transfer competences—those noted by Schaeffner—and cognitive skills, stress tolerance and note-taking competences—those noted by Pöchhacker. The first module of our program trains and evaluates students in cultural competence; (re)search competence is trained and evaluated in the subsequent modules

Scales and grading. We used an ordinal scale suggested by Sawyer (2004, p. 105): *high pass* = 75 and higher, *pass* = 75–50, *borderline fail* = 50–25, and *fail* = 25 and lower. Grading is done by giving the first two exercises 12 marks each, the third exercise 15 marks, the fourth exercise 20 marks, the fifth exercise 16 marks, and the seventh exercise five marks.

Validity. We agree with Sawyer's argument (2004) that a central concern of testing should be the need to conduct reliability and validity studies and to foster greater awareness of the role of professional judgment in assessment practices. Internal validity is ensured through content validity, based on the extent to which our tests reflect the public service interpreting domain.

Types of exercises and the grading systems to be used in the test are explained in detail below in Section 4.

3. Method

The aptitude test measures aptitude prior to entering a training course; based on the test results, trainers adapt the content of the syllabus to the students' individual characteristics and needs. The

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achievement test measures students' acquired skills and competences after completion of the third and last module of the course and determines placement.

Both tests are given in a multimedia lab in which trainers can assess and record 24 students at a time and easily collect results to be evaluated later. The lab setting allows us to assess a higher number of candidates in a shorter period of time, but because the recorded test cannot be paused or stopped, we cannot assess turn-taking and role performance skills.

The structure of the assessment instrument is similar in both tests: a vocabulary exercise, a synonyms and antonyms exercise, a comprehension and summary exercise, a short consecutive interpreting exercise, a cloze exercise, a sight translation exercise, and a short interview. We keep this structure for both tests to help students concentrate and focus better, so that they can recall primed vocabulary and anticipate accurate subsequent expressions. The exercises are ordered in a logical language development cycle, with the degree of difficulty increasing progressively from Exercise 1 to Exercise 4. Exercise 5 would probably be better placed as number 4 because it deals with anticipation, a useful skill for interpreting. But a cloze exercise is also helpful to prime a sight translation, because it activates the mental capacity to structure grammar patterns correctly. It also allows decreasing the degree of difficulty between the two interpreting-specific exercises, Exercise 4 and Exercise 6.

The basic approach of the instruments is criterion-referenced, measuring performance against a known criterion. "It is a more meaningful approach; given the need for the interpreter to perform adequately in all situations, they should be judged against a scale of absolute criteria" (Arjona, 1984, cited in Sawyer 2004, p. 115). The result the instruments generate is a qualitative description of performance and a numerical score based on the objectives. The reporting mechanisms are feedback for the candidates, the instructors, and the department.

The results are given to all the interpreting trainers so that they can use them to inform the creation of their syllabi. After the first test, students receive their grades and comments individually, although the general results of the group are analyzed in class so that everyone can take measures to improve their performance. Students are grouped into threes according to their results, so that they can help one another. The results of the second test are given to students together with the final grades of the interpreting course, right before they start the practicum.

As mentioned, the tests were mandatory for all students in the academic years 2010–2011 and 2011–2012; they were optional in the first academic year they were given, hence a bigger difference in the number of test-takers in that year.

The authors of this study were the tests designers. One author teaches a practical interpreting course in the Spanish–English language pair; this author is also one of the two test administrators and one of the two test graders in this language pair.

As a general fact, approximately 30% of the students who enter the MA course have an undergraduate degree in Translation and Interpreting (T&I); approximately 45% of the students have a degree in Language and Literature; and approximately 25% of the students have undergraduate degrees not directly related to languages.

The competences and subskills the tests were designed to assess are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Competences and subskills assessed by each exercise

Exercise	Vocabulary	Synonyms & Antonyms	Verbal Reasoning	Consecutive Interpretation	Oral Cloze	Sight Translation	Interview
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Competence	Linguistic, Domain, Transfer	Linguistic, Domain, Transfer	Linguistic, Domain	Linguistic, Domain, Transfer	Linguistic, Domain	Linguistic, Domain, Transfer	Linguistic
Subskill	Cognitive, Stress	Cognitive, Stress	Cognitive, Stress	Cognitive, Note-taking, Stress	Cognitive Stress	Cognitive, Stress	Cognitive Stress
Indicator	Accuracy, Speed	Accuracy, Speed	Accuracy, Speed	Addition, Speed Self-correction, Omission, Hesitation	Anticipation, Speed	Addition, Hesitation, Self-correction, Omission, Speed	Coherence, Cohesion

4. Instruments

4.1 Aptitude test in health care settings

The tests were translated and adapted to the seven language-pair combinations in which the MA is offered (Spanish and Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Polish, Romanian, and Russian); for the purposes of this article, we use the Spanish–English language combination test as an example.

The aptitude test consists of seven exercises of different types designed to measure different competences, as explained below. For each exercise, we provide a short description focused on aspects such as objectives, scoring, specific elements, and required skills.

Before every exercise, the recording includes a short fragment of classical music. The objective is twofold: to help the students relax, so that they forget previous thoughts and thus connect with the new topic; and to help as a stressor to increase their level of anxiety. Initially the music lasted 8–10 seconds and included selections from different composers, with different degrees of intensity. As the music served more the second goal than the first, we reduced the time to 5 seconds and played music from just one instrument and composer. (Five seconds is the exact time available to answer all of the exercises except for Exercise 4.

Exercise 1 (Table 2) is a vocabulary exercise in which students must provide a word or a short phrase to interpret the terms. The terms belong to different syntactic categories. The exercise is composed of 12 Spanish words and 12 English words that are read/heard in alternating languages. Half of the 24 words are in common use and the other half are more specific, thus increasing the level of difficulty. The audio is recorded by native speakers of Spanish and English. For scoring, a half point is assigned to every word, which is then discounted for functional inaccuracies.

Table 2: Vocabulary exercise

Question	Answer	Question	Answer
1. Cicatriz	1.	1. Next of kin	1.

Exercise 2 (Table 3) is a synonyms and antonyms exercise composed of 12 Spanish words and 12 English words. Half of the 24 words are in common use and the other half are more specific, increasing the level of difficulty. The synonyms are all read/heard in alternating languages. Candidates are required to provide a synonym (similar or identical) for every term. Then the procedure is repeated with the antonyms. The terms belong to different syntactic categories.

The task here is not to interpret the terms, but to provide synonyms or antonyms. The exercise is challenging because it follows an exercise based on interpreting into the second language; because the previous exercise lasts for a considerable period of time, candidates tend to continue to interpret rather

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than provide a synonym to the term. Tests graders consider only a synonym or an antonym as a valid answer. Direct interpretations are marked as wrong answers.

For scoring, a half point is given to every word, which is then discounted for functional inaccuracies.

Table 3: Synonyms and antonyms exercise

Question	Answer	Question	Answer
Synonym		Antonym	
1. Misapprehend	1.	1. Estima	1.

Exercise 3 is a verbal reasoning and summary exercise consisting of 111 English words about a common health topic, cardiovascular disease. The first task is a comprehension question with four sentences and three options (*true, false, or not enough information*). Students are prompted when to start talking by means of tones. The degree of difficulty increases in this exercise with the appearance of figures and more specific medical terminology.

Students then must summarize the listening exercise in 60 seconds, which measures comprehension, memory, vocabulary, and fluency. By giving such a short period of time for this task, we are adding pressure, which causes anxiety. Test administrators observed and reported signs that could indicate students' stress levels increasing when no tone was heard at the end of the sentence. Students who do not perform well under pressure tend to rush, make more mistakes, and not finish the phrases appropriately, or they freeze and say nothing. Only a few students summarized at least the main ideas of the audio, despite being also influenced by the lack of tone, their classmates' discontented expressions, and loudly expressed errors.

For scoring, two points are assigned to every sentence and seven points to the summary. Points are taken off for grammar mistakes, lack of coherence, incompleteness, and fluency breakdown. The tasks are the following:

Say whether the following statements are true, false or whether there is not enough information. You can speak after the beep.

Make a summary of the verbal text you just listened to in sixty seconds. You can speak after the beep.

Further increasing the level of difficulty, Exercise 4 is a short consecutive interpreting exercise, the first one for which interpreting skills are really required, with 313 words to be interpreted. The audio is a doctor-patient interview related to an arm fracture, of which we reproduce a fragment below:

Patient – Will it hurt, doctor?

Doctor – No, estará bajo el efecto de la anestesia y no sentirá absolutamente nada.

Patient – Should I know anything about the anaesthetic before taking it?

Students are instructed to interpret the dialogue using the consecutive mode and may take notes. They are prompted when to start talking by tones. Two elements of the exercise increase the degree of difficulty: The nonnative speaker hesitates frequently when using confusing medical terms, and there is a short fragment deleted almost at the end of one of the doctor's explanations. This functions as another stressor and makes most of the students lose the information given after the deletion.

To score the exercise, the trainer takes into account omissions, editions, additions, speed of response, and accurate renditions, as well as rhythm, intonation, and the appropriate use of the specific terminology. Twenty points are assigned to this exercise.

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Exercise 5 is a cloze exercise divided into two texts. The first one is a repetition of the English text used in Exercise 3, consisting of a total of 111 words with eight gaps. The second part is a Spanish text about a topic related to the previous one (cardiovascular disease), with 113 words and eight gaps. All the deletions in both texts belong to different syntactic categories.

The degree of difficulty increases in this exercise due to the presence of gaps to be anticipated and also to the use of more specific medical terminology. The short time slot allowed for students to provide an answer also adds stress. To perform appropriately in this kind of exercise, students need a good memory, concentration, imagination, and speed of response. To score the exercise the trainer gives a point to every correct answer. Below are two short fragments in both languages:

- *English: Similarly, high-pressure, stressful work, even where it does not involve physical activity, should also be (avoided).*
- *Spanish: Es la causa más importante por la cual las personas sufren (ataques cardiacos).*

Exercise 6 is a sight translation of two texts. The first one, 195 words, in English, relates to the measurement of blood sugar levels. It is sent by the trainer to the students' computer screen right after they hear the piece of music and the title of the exercise—students do not need to operate the computers; they only read and interpret when they feel ready.

The degree of difficulty increases here due to the constant use of acronyms. Various methods have been used for this exercise in different academic years and language pairs, such as “launching” the text to a large screen at the end of the lab, making it difficult to see, or giving the students a low-quality printed copy of the text and suggesting they can either write on it or underline some useful necessary phrases. Writing distracts students' attention and takes more time to go through the whole text. The instruction to start sight translating is given once the first student shows signs of having finished reading. All of the methods have proven to increase students' stress levels.

Once all the students have finished the translation, the next text appears on their screens. The second text, 209 words, in Spanish, is about informed consent. The degree of difficulty increases due to the Spanish writing style, which uses many subordinate clauses, and due to its length; it is a long text to deal with after more than 20 minutes of interpreting activity.

Twenty points are assigned to this exercise, 10 to each text. An example is given below:

1. *Read the following texts and translate them at sight.*
(...) Blood will be obtained by sticking the finger with a fine-point needle.

Finally, Exercise 7 is a short interview consisting—initially—of 14 questions. Six are closed questions; seven are questions requiring specific information; and the last one is an open-ended question to obtain as much information as possible about the students' feelings and impressions on the test. This exercise is used as a qualitative research method to collect ethnographic data as well as feedback on the students' own performance and on the test. The number and type of questions have been adapted and changed every year to obtain different information.

The questions go from simple to a higher degree of complexity, from asking students to state their personal data to having them provide information that shows their language competence and intercultural capacity. The questions go from professional details to personal expectations and end by asking about the test. This exercise helps to, on the one hand, reduce stress, because students feel they control the situation when speaking about themselves or analyzing the test. On the other hand, it maintains a certain level of anxiety when students have to assess their own performance.

Five points are assigned to this exercise to evaluate the students' expression of the response rather than its content.

1. *Please, tell us all your impressions about this test?*

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4.2. Achievement test in legal-administrative settings

The structure of the achievement test given at the end of the program is similar to the initial aptitude test. It differs mainly in its content, which is specific to the legal-administrative setting. (See Valero-Garcés & Socarrás, 2011, for a deeper analysis of this test).

Another characteristic that differentiates this test from the previous one is the response-time limit for students. It was initially the same (5 seconds), but was changed to only 3 seconds. At this point students have more vocabulary related to different settings, so they are given less time to react. They are expected to cope better with stress and to recall the studied vocabulary in a very short period of time.

Exercise 1 (see Table 4) is a vocabulary exercise composed of 20 Spanish words and 20 English words related to the legal setting, which are read/heard in alternating languages. Of these words, 50% are in common use and the other 50% are more specific, thus increasing the level of difficulty.

Table 4: Vocabulary exercise, legal-administrative setting

Question	Answer	Question	Answer
1. To Acquit	1.	1. Catastro	1.

Exercise 2 (see Table 5) is a synonyms and antonyms exercise composed of 16 Spanish words and 14 English words related to the legal setting. Of these, 50% are in common use and the other 50% are more specific, so increasing the level of difficulty. The synonyms are all read/heard first in alternating languages. Candidates are required to provide a synonym (similar or identical) for every term. The degree of difficulty is increased as some Spanish words are given consecutively, which breaks the normal pattern and causes confusion. Students tend to fail even when most of the words are not difficult terms. The antonyms are all read in alternating languages.

For scoring, a half point is assigned to every word, then discounted for functional inaccuracies.

Table 5: Synonyms and antonyms exercise, legal-administrative setting

Question	Answer	Question	Answer
Synonym		Antonym	
1. Refutar	1.	1. Revocar	1.

Exercise 3 is a verbal reasoning exercise consisting of 251 English words about a topic common to (im)migrants, Spain's Residence Permit Application. The first task is a comprehension question with four sentences and three options (*true, false, or not enough information*). The second task is for students to summarize the listening exercise in 60 seconds, which measures comprehension, vocabulary, and speaking fluency. The degree of difficulty increases in this exercise with the appearance of dates, acts, and laws, not common linguistic borrowings, and informal language examples. Tones prompt candidates when to start talking.

For scoring, two points are assigned to every sentence and seven points to the summary. Points are taken off for grammar mistakes, lack of coherence, incompleteness, and fluency breakdown.

Say whether the following statements are true, false or there is not enough information. You can speak after the beep.

Make a summary of the listening in sixty seconds. You can speak after the beep.

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Exercise 4 is a short consecutive interpreting exercise with an introduction of 80 words and 680 words to be interpreted. The text is a Direct Examination of the proceedings of a trial. Students are instructed to interpret the dialogue using the consecutive mode and may take notes. They are prompted to start talking by means of tones. The degree of difficulty increases in this exercise for two reasons: the introduction has many proper names and figures and students start taking notes to interpret, but it is not necessary. By the time they realize this, the questioning has already started and students are surprised. Some students take their headsets off; others hit the table in disbelief.

To score the exercise, the trainer takes into account omissions, editions, additions, speed of response, and accurate renditions, as well as rhythm, intonation, and the appropriate use of the specific terminology. Twenty marks are assigned to this exercise.

Q. Y para que quede claro ¿en el Centro de Maltrato Doméstico, usted trabaja no solo con las víctimas de la violencia doméstica, sino que creo que ha testificado con maltratadores también?

A. Yes. I co-facilitate that group.

Exercise 5 is a cloze exercise of 313 words about a topic related to the listening used in Exercise 3. The exercise is divided into two parts. The first one is a listening exercise in English (about working permits in Spain) consisting of a total of 153 words and 10 gaps. The deletions belong to different syntactic categories: one verb, eight nouns, and one adverb.

The second part is a listening exercise in Spanish about a topic related to the previous ones (ways to work in Spain) with 158 words and 13 gaps. The deletions belong to different syntactic categories: one verb, 10 nouns, two adverbs, and one gap that does not need completion but is meant to check on students' concentration and also works as a stressor. The degree of difficulty increases here due to the use of dates, phrases in the second language, and the presence of gaps to be anticipated. The short time slot allowed for the subjects to supply an answer adds stress as well as difficulty. The second listening exercise is also more difficult because it deals with specific vocabulary related to governmental guidelines and regulations.

To perform appropriately in this kind of exercise, candidates need a good memory, concentration, imagination, and speed of response. The use of specific terminology in the texts also contributes to the increase in the degree of difficulty. To score the exercise, the trainer gives a point to every correct answer. A fragment of the text can be seen below:

Should you lose your employment and have contributed to the Spanish social security system whilst working, you will also be entitled to unemployment (benefit).

El contingente podrá establecer un número de visados para búsqueda de (empleo) dirigidos a hijos o nietos de español de origen.

Exercise 6 is a sight translation exercise with 349 words in the main text and 49 words in a supporting footnote. This text is related to the texts used in the previous exercises. The text appears on the student's screen right after they hear the piece of music and the title of the exercise. The degree of difficulty increases here due to the constant use of acronyms and formal language—the text is part of the documentation used by an official institution—in contrast with the previous texts that were less formal; in addition, it is a long text after more than 40 minutes of interpreting activity. Twenty points are assigned to this exercise, as follows:

Read the following text and translate it at sight. You can take some minutes to read it, and then start sight translating when you feel ready.

Exercise 7 is a short interview consisting of 14 questions asked in English. Six are closed questions, seven are questions requiring specific information, and the last one is an open question to obtain as much information as possible about the students' feelings and impressions on the test. It is used as a qualitative

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research method to collect ethnographic data as well as feedback on the test. Five points are assigned to this exercise. See an example below:

Do you consider this test an important part of the Continuing Professional Development program?

5. Results and Discussion

In total, 74 students have taken the test for health care settings and 63 students have taken the test for legal settings (see Table 6). Women represent a big majority, 86.7%. The average age was 25–26 in the 3 years. In the academic year 2009–2010, 10 students decided not to take the legal test because it was optional. The two tests were mandatory in the following years. Students come from six to eight different countries every year and they have very varied undergraduate studies (9–14).

Table 6: Aptitude tests application to MA students in Spanish–English groups

A. Year	Test Health	Test Legal	Women	Men	Nationality	B. Studies
2009-2010	23	13	20	3	6	11
2010-2011	27	28	25	3	8	14
2011-2012	24	22	20	4	6	9
Total	74	63	65	10		

5.1 Comparing Academic Years 2010–2011 and 2011–2012

Comparing the average marks of the two groups of students who took the tests in the last two academic years reveals similar results (see Table 7): The performance of both groups improved after receiving training.

Table 7: Aptitude and achievement tests: Spanish–English groups' final marks

Group Mean Marks (100)		
A. Year	Health Test	Legal Test
2009-2010	-	-
2010-2011	50,03	56,75
2011-2012	48,07	56,21
Total	49,05	56,48

We selected a random sample of nine students from the last two academic years to compare their results in both tests. They represent the two genders, various nationalities, and different undergraduate studies. As we can see in Table 8, representing the academic year 2010–2011, seven students improved their results in the second test. One student maintained his/her results, and one student obtained a lower result in the second test.

Table 8: Aptitude tests sample comparison Spanish–English 2010–2011.

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Group 2010-2011			
Nationality	U. Studies	Health Test	Legal Test
Esp	En Teacher	73	79.2
Esp	T&I	72.5	77.5
Esp	T&I	70	70
EU	Sp-En Filology	54	59.6
Esp	En Filology	53.5	50.2
Ita	En Filology	53	56.5
Esp	Turism	40	41.6
P.Ri	Fr Filology	39	52.6
Esp	En Filology	38.2	53.4

During the academic year 2011–2012, the results were similar (see Table 9); eight students improved their results whereas only one obtained a lower result in the second tests.

Table 9: Aptitude tests sample comparison, Spanish–English, 2011–2012

Group 2011-12		
Nationality	Health Test	Legal Test
Spa	69,5	78
Spa	62,5	69,5
Spa	60,5	67,5
Pol	48	56,5
Spa	46,5	53,5
Ven	45,5	53,5
Fra	54,5	45,5
US	42,5	45
Can	43	44,5

5.2 Comparing Students' Performance During Academic Year 2010–2011

To illustrate the analysis we carry out to assess every student's performance evolution, we have selected a random sample of nine students from the academic year 2010–2011. We show their results in both tests: first the aptitude or health care test and then the achievement or legal test.

For the analysis, we group the exercises according to the main skills they assess. Thus Exercises 1 and 2 are grouped together as language-related exercises, Exercises 3 and 5 are grouped as oral comprehension exercises, and Exercises 4 and 6 are grouped as interpreting-related exercises.

We compare speed of response with accuracy in Exercise 1 (vocabulary) and Exercise 2 (synonyms and antonyms; see Table 10). It can be noticed in the second and third columns that students are faster and more accurate when interpreting Exercise 1.

Table 10: Aptitude test sample comparison: Speed of response and accuracy in language exercises, Spanish–English, 2010–2011

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Exercises 1 & 2 Language				
	Exercise 1		Exercise 2	
Health Test	Speed (Sec)	Accuracy %	Speed (Sec)	Accuracy %
73	1.6-1.4	91.7	2.5-2.3	75.0-83.3
72.5	1.4-1.2	83.3	2.3-2.1	75.0-83.3
70	1.5-1.1	83.3	2.5-2.1	66.6-83.3
54	1.4-1.8	91.6-75	3-2.1	41.7-62.5
53.5	1.5-1.7	83.3	3.1-2.2	62.5
53	1.9-1.8	83.3-75	3.1-2.5	41.7
40	1.6-1.3	91.7-79.2	3.0-3.3	66.7-25
39	1.7-1.3	91.7-79.2	3.0-3.8	62.5-25
38.2	1.7-1.4	83.3-79.2	3.1-3.7	58.3-33.3

As shown in Table 11, we can see that students are also faster and more accurate when interpreting Exercise 1 of the legal test. The reaction time is now higher than in the health care test, however. We consider it might be due to different reasons: Now students have a larger vocabulary, so the recall/retrieval processes take longer; the exercise includes terminology from three different settings, which affects the priming effect for they do not have cuing keywords; and the exercise has many more words. Also the degree of accuracy is lower than in the health care test. We argue that the specific terminology of legal settings is more complex and it poses a bigger challenge for students who have only studied it for a couple of months

Table 11: Achievement test sample comparison: Speed of response and accuracy in language exercise, Spanish-English, 2010-2011

Exercises 1 & 2				
	Exercise 1		Exercise 2	
Legal Test	Speed (Sec)	Accuracy %	Speed (Sec)	Accuracy %
79.2	2.1	59.7	2.4-2.3	33.6-40
77.5	1.9	57.5	2.0-2.1	25-40
70	2.0	55.8	2.3-2.1	25-33.6
59.6	2.3	55.8	2.5-2.0	40
50.2	2.5	50.2	3.1-2.9	25
56.5	2.3	55.8	2.4-2.3	33.6
41.6	2.2	50.2	2.5-2.7	25
52.6	2.0	55.8	2.3-2.4	25
53.4	2.3	57.5	2.1-2.4	33.6

In oral comprehension exercises, students show the highest improvement in performance in the health care test; they are both faster and more accurate in Exercise 5 (see Table 11).

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Table 12: Aptitude test sample comparison: Speed of response and accuracy in oral comprehension exercises, Spanish–English, 2010–2011

Exercises 3 & 5 Oral Comprehension				
	Exercise 3		Exercise 5	
Health test	Speed (Sec)	Accuracy %	Speed (Sec)	Accuracy %
73	1.7	50	0.7-1.4	100-87.5
72.5	1.7	50	0.5-1.2	100-87.5
70	1.6	50	0.6-1.3	100-87.5
54	1.4	75	1.4-1.7	87.5
53.5	1.5	50	1.4-1.1	87.5
53	1.7	50	1.4-1.6	87.5
40	1.4	25	1.6-1.5	68.7-87.5
39	1.0	25	0.9	68.7-87.5
38.2	1.3	25	1.5-1.4	68.7-87.5

Table 13 shows that students have developed their comprehension skills by lowering their reaction times and increasing their degree of accuracy in Exercises 3 and 5 of the legal test.

Table 13: Achievement test sample comparison: Speed of response and accuracy in oral comprehension exercises, Spanish–English, 2010–2011

Exercises 3 & 5 Oral Comprehension				
	Exercise 3		Exercise 5	
Legal test	Speed (Sec)	Accuracy %	Speed (Sec)	Accuracy %
79.2	1.2	75	1.3-0.9	87.5-100
77.5	0.8	75	1.2-0.7	100-87.5
70	0.7	50	1.1-0.6	100-83.5
59.6	0.8	50	1.0-1.3	100-85.5
50.2	1.3	50	1.4-1.1	87.5-62.5
56.5	1.0	50	1.2-1.3	87.5

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41.6	1.3	25	1.4-1.3	62.5
52.6	1.1	50	1.1-1.0	87.5
53.4	0.9	75	1.1-1.0	87.5

To analyze the results of the exercises directly related to interpreting skills and competences, we measure students' main errors such as additions, omissions, self-corrections, and hesitations (see Table 12). Additions are not included because they are not significant. Self-correction is seen as an error only when the correction is wrong or it is a repetition of a nearby student's expression. Students do not add too much information in Exercise 4, but they omit a great deal of the content. They also hesitate a lot, which shows their lack of interpreting strategies, information recall, and note-taking skills. In Exercise 6 they hesitate and correct themselves even more but omit much less information.

Table 14: Aptitude test sample comparison: Interpreting skills exercises, Spanish–English, 2010–2011

Exercises 4 & 6 Interpreting skills								
Health Test	Exercise 4				Exercise 6			
	Additions	Omissions	Selfcorrectio	Hesitation	Additions	Omissions	Selfcorrectio	Hesitation
73	1	5	-	6	-	-	10	10-12
72.5	2	5	-	5	-	-	8	7-9
70	2	6	-	5	1	-	9	8-9
54	2	8	-	9	2	-	14	15-16
53.5	3	7	1	7	1	-	16	16-13
53	3	8	-	8	3	-	15	16-16
40	1	19	1	8	3	4	16	15-13
39	-	17	3	7	1	2	14	13-14
38.25	-	20	3	5	2	5	17	17-18

After receiving training, students are already capable of correcting themselves in Exercise 4 (see Table 15). It means they are monitoring themselves and are thus aware of their interpreting process. They still add and omit much information, likely because they still have deficient note-taking skills.

Table 15: Achievement test sample comparison: Interpreting skills exercises, Spanish–English, 2010–2011

Exercises 4 & 6 Interpreting skills								
Legal Test	Exercise 4				Exercise 6			
	Additions	Omissions	Selfcorrectio	Hesitation	Additions	Omissions	Selfcorrectio	Hesitation
79.2	2	5	6	11	1	1	10	11
77.5	1	6	5	7	-	1	7	9
70	-	7	5	7	-	2	6	8
59.6	1	7	5	8	-	-	12	14
50.2	3	14	4	13	3	4	9	19
56.5	2	9	6	9	1	2	8	13
41.6	3	17	1	9	2	4	19	18
52.6	2	12	3	8	1	3	18	15
53.4	1	9	4	9	1	1	16	14

5.3 Correlation: Accuracy, Speed of Response, and Personality Trait (Stress Tolerance)

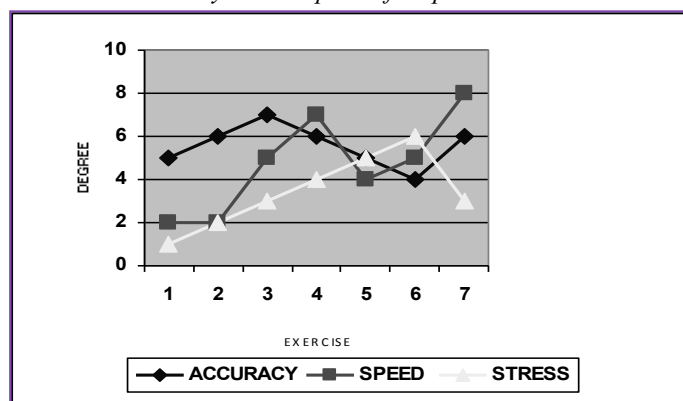
Students' performances in both tests show similar curves in the correlation of accuracy, speed of response, and stress tolerance (see Table 16), although they improved their accuracy and speed of response while their stress decreased considerably. We analyze each aspect separately across the same test.

Accuracy: Students achieved medium accuracy in Exercise 1, which gradually increased until Exercise 3. Accuracy then gradually decreased in the next three exercises, mainly due to the fact that those are the interpreting-related exercises. In Exercise 7, students regained some control, and their expression is more coherent and fluent.

Stress: We found that students arrive at the lab for both tests in a typical nervous state, and little by little their stress level increases. Their body language changes, and we observe that students make more changes or corrections as they are working through the test as well as hesitate more frequently. Students' renditions tend to be less accurate 20 minutes into the tests.

Speed of response: Students began the tests with very low speeds of response, but speed increased with the rhythm marked by the "speakers" and with the students' realization that they knew many of the words/phrases. Students had similar speeds of response compared with their own performance in Exercises 1 and 2. In Exercise 3, their speed of response increased. In Exercise 4 their speed of response gradually increased, which might be due to their getting used to the vocabulary. In Exercise 5 their speed of response was much slower, although in the second part they did better. In Exercise 6 their speed of rendering was low at the beginning, but it increased toward the middle of the text, and it ended at a medium level. In Exercise 7 their speed of response increased considerably.

Table 16: Accuracy versus speed of response versus stress level



In general, most of the 75 students who took the tests in the 3 academic years showed a good level of knowledge both in the general language and in the specific terminology. Students with a degree in Translation and Interpreting (T&I) showed a higher level of knowledge than the others; they also were more skilled in dealing with the specialized exercises (interpreting and sight translation) and showed better short-term memory skills.

Students with a degree in T&I tried harder to render more complete messages and were therefore more coherent and comprehensible. They were also more faithful to the original message, amending their own errors when necessary.

Students with a degree in Language and Literature performed better than those who had degrees in non-language-related fields. Women performed better than men, although male students showed a higher stress tolerance. Few differences were found regarding age because the majority of students were of similar age, but younger students performed better than older ones. Spanish speakers performed better than non-Spanish speakers.

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Students performed slightly better in the first two exercises in their second language than in their mother tongue. During the rest of the test, students performed better from the B language into their mother tongue. Few students had any experience, but those with some experience in the profession performed better than those who had none.

Examination of qualitative feedback: Most of the Spanish students had not lived more than a year in an English-speaking country, which may have affected their language proficiency and speed of response. Those students who lived in English-speaking countries were more proficient and reacted faster. All the students expressed their desire to be in the profession for a long time, and to become professional interpreters and translators in the public service sector. They considered the aptitude test to be a very difficult but useful test and said they would retake it if offered.

6. Conclusions

Following a review of the literature on interpreter training and assessment, we proposed and examined the four main features of an aptitude test: the competences and skills to be assessed, the scales and grading method to be applied, the validity of the test, and the different kind of exercises to be used in the test. The professional interpreter-translators we need in our multicultural societies today would ideally possess a combination of all of these competences and skills. Therefore, these criteria should be the core of our training and assessment in higher education institutions, although most of the competences and skills may well be learned and obtained through intensive practice during subsequent training courses.

We have described the two assessment instruments we designed and applied to master's students. The objective was first to determine how prepared the students were to start a postgraduate training course, then to prove the effect of that training on the students' competence acquisition. The first test focused on health care settings; the second focused on legal-administration settings.

Based on the results of the aptitude (achievement) test in health care and legal settings explained in the Findings section of this study, and after comparing them with the results of two academic years, we can confirm that the battery of exercises designed to measure the ability of our students to develop skills and acquire knowledge is a fair predictive instrument. Students with a high level of performance in the first aptitude test obtained a remarkably better result in their achievement test; other students either improved a little or maintained their performance level.

In showing that most of students improved their performance from one test to the other, our data support the hypothesis that our students had abilities to develop skills and that training positively affected their acquisition of those skills.

6.1 Limitations

In closing, we acknowledge that these two assessment instruments need to be further tested for reliability and validity. Also, because we gave the tests in a lab we were able to use its technology to assess a higher number of candidates in a shorter period of time, but the assessment instruments are mainly based on lexicon and not on face-to-face performance.

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyze the community interpreter training program in Sweden and, based on the results of two research projects, describe structural conditions and shortcomings. The authors discuss Sweden's laws and regulations, the changing demand for interpreting service in society, the open access ideology within adult education associations, and the limitation of economic resources for fulfilling the demand for trained interpreters. Interpreter training in Sweden is built on public-service needs in the areas of social insurance, the labor market, health care, and court interpreting. It is focused on factual knowledge and terminology and devotes little time for developing aspects of ethical rules, the role of the interpreter, and technical issues. In order to make progress possible it is important to use existing research and theory to develop didactics for community interpreting training.

Key Words: interpreter training programs, community interpreting, ethics, technique, didactics, theory

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Community Interpreter Training in Spoken Languages in Sweden

1. Introduction

I am an interpreter, since I have training and authorization. I dislike it when people ask me if I work as an interpreter. I am an interpreter.

As part of a project investigating the field of community interpreting in Sweden, we asked interpreters, “When did you identify yourself as an interpreter?” Livia, the respondent quoted above, aptly characterizes the feeling of many interpreters that their profession is highly skilled but it is one accorded low status. Livia is not alone in her consideration of the difference between a skilled and trained community interpreter and an interpreter without any qualifications (cf. Hale, 2007). In 2005, the Swedish government report *Interpreter Training: New Demands, New Forms* recognized the importance of competence among community interpreters in Sweden (Statens offentliga utredningar 2005). The report led to the establishment of a national, consolidated, state-financed basic training program that reformed training for interpreting in spoken languages. The aim of this article is to examine this program and the conditions for community interpreting training in Sweden.

Our findings are based on the results of two joint research projects conducted at the Department of Cultural Studies, Lund University, Sweden, between 2008 and 2011: *The Interpreter: A Cultural Intermediary* and *Behind Closed Doors. The Importance of Interpreting for the Rule of Law and for Integration, With Special Focus on Separated Minors* (for more information on these projects in English, see www.tolkprojektet.se). To achieve our overall aim to examine and analyze the role of the community interpreter and interpreting services in Sweden, we interviewed and observed interpreters, public-service providers, non-Swedish-speaking clients and patients, interpreting agencies, and procurers, as well as interpreter training and authorization programs.

1.1. Definition of Terms

Our focus is specifically on community interpreter and community interpreting as they are defined by Franz Pöchhacker (1999, pp. 126-127):

In the most general sense community interpreting refers to interpreting in institutional settings of a given society in which public-service providers and individual clients do not speak the same language. . . . Community interpreting facilitates communication within a social entity (society) that includes culturally different sub-groups. Hence, the qualifier “community” refers to both the (mainstream) society as such as its constituted sub-community (ethnic or indigenous community, linguistic minority, etc.).

In the Swedish language there is no single term for *community interpreting*. A strict translation would be *contact interpreting*, signifying the role of the interpreter as making contact possible between different parties who do not speak the same language. Other possible terms are *public-service interpreting* (Skaaden & Wattne, 2009), which relates to the definition of community interpreting, while terms such as *dialogue interpreting* (Mason, 2001) and *liaison interpreting* (Gentile, Ozolins, & Vasilakakos, 1996) refer to contexts in which the

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interpreting is performed in two language directions by the same person. For the purposes of this article, in most cases we use the short terms *interpreter* and *interpreting*.

Additionally, the term *public-service provider* denotes the professional that buys the interpreting services and use interpreters in her/his work with non-Swedish-speaking clients and patients. Private companies, financed by tax revenue and caring for clients/patients are part of the public service. We also use the terms *client* or *patient* to refer to the non-Swedish-speaking users of the services. Both parties are considered as equally dependent on interpreting.

In this article, we will give a general description of how the training program is organized in Sweden, including content, planning, and practice, and we analyze possibilities and shortcomings; and we discuss educational development within the field of community interpreting training in Sweden. The main focus will be on the conclusions we have made from our research. Our research may be understood in an international context, because many of the aspects of community interpreter training we discuss are similar in other countries, although the structural conditions for community interpreting training differ.

2. Method and Material

Interviews with 26 community interpreters working throughout Sweden comprised the main data source for our study. Livia, quoted above, is one of our interviewees. Half of the participants in our study were men, half were women, and half were “authorized” interpreters (in Sweden, community interpreters in spoken and sign languages can be authorized after being tested; we explain this process in greater detail below). Other countries have similar systems for authorization, licensing, certification, or other professional accreditation (cf. Hale, 2007; SOU, 2005). When we began the interviews in 2008, some of the interpreters had extensive experience (up to 30 years); others had as little as 3 months experience. Only one of the 26 interpreters was a native Swede. Furthermore, the interpreters had been active during different periods and in different contexts; thus, their languages and nationalities reflect periodic migration flows to Sweden. The interpreters agreed to meet us on three different occasions.

The interviews were ethics-tested in accordance with the Ethical Review Act of 2003. We informed the interviewees that their responses would be confidential and received consent from all participants. At the end of the project, interview transcripts and observation records will be housed at the Folk Life Archives at Lund University, with names and details changed to protect anonymity.

In the interviews we used an open approach, in which the interpreter was invited to speak freely about and reflect upon his/her work experiences. In the first interview we asked three questions: How did you come into the interpreting profession? How would you describe your role as an interpreter? and When did you identify with the interpreting profession?

In the second interview, we asked each interpreter to select five interpreting situations in which they had experienced an ethical dilemma. During the interviews we discussed these experiences in relation to rules of professional ethics for interpreters as they are formulated in *Good Interpreting Practice* (2010), a “principle-based” guide for authorized interpreters that prescribes what the interpreter *should* do in different situations. (All the participants in our research were familiar with *Good Interpreting Practice* and reported that they try to comply with it; the document is often used by interpreting agencies and in interpreter training.) We also talked about what the interpreter *can* do (Brander de la Iglesia, 2010). It was during these interviews that training and the possibility of authorization were raised, for example, in this comment:

I had worked as an interpreter for a couple of years before I got training. Then, I noticed that there were a lot of things I didn’t know about interpreting, about interpreting ethics and how to act, how to speak, how to sit. How did I manage and how did I *dare* to do interpreting before I got my training? (Zacharias).

Other participants explained how training gave them pride and a social context, something they often miss in their daily work, as they mostly work alone (Gustafsson, Fioretos, & Norström, 2012; Norström, Fioretos, &

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Gustafsson, 2012). Meetings with teachers and fellow students also offered an opportunity to discuss ethical dilemmas or other questions with colleagues, and participants considered these just as important as the courses themselves. In the third interview, we followed up on different themes such as interpreting for children, working conditions, union work, and training.

We conducted an extended field study during a 2-year period (2008–2010) among 40 interpreting students in the national consolidated training program for community interpreters in spoken languages at a folk high school.² The training was carried out as distance learning, and it was provided in seven languages: Arabic, BCS (Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian), Lithuanian, Romany, Rumanian, Russian, and Turkish.³ The material collected at the folk high school consists of 10 interviews with students and teachers, field notes, descriptions from observations of 10 weekend meetings, and notes on the students' work and their discussions on the web platform First Class. (For further discussion about cultural analysis and ethnological method, see Frykman & Gilje, 2003; Geertz, 1973; Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). Additionally, as part of our research we attended meetings and examinations at four interpreter training providers.

In Sweden, the organization of the training program for community interpreters in signed languages differs from that for interpreters of spoken languages; in order to compare differences and similarities, we observed training for community interpreters in signed languages, conducted interviews with teachers and students, and participated in joint training for signed language and spoken language interpreters.

We attended joint meetings for teachers and supervisors from all seven community interpreter training programs in spoken languages in Sweden. We also arranged a reference group of five teachers and training providers with whom we met on five occasions to discuss our data, analysis, and results.

3. Literature Review

In an overview of the international field of community interpreter training, the Australian researcher, interpreter, and trainer Sandra Hale (2007) states that a fundamental condition for the training of interpreters is that such training is recognized among professionals, such as public-service providers and interpreters, and among clients/patients as a need in society.

Hale (2007) describes how, in many countries, community interpreting is not a recognized profession and is undermined by poor institutional financial support. She portrays a situation in which training is not compulsory, the possibility for authorization/certification is limited, and unskilled interpreting is performed by “natural interpreters” such as relatives and friends. Whenever community interpreter training is arranged, Hale (in line with several other researchers, e.g., Valero Garcés, 2003; Niska, 2005; Taibi & Martin, 2006) argues that there exist three main challenges: recruiting suitably qualified teaching staff, attracting students with adequate bilingual and bicultural competences, and deciding on the most relevant course content and most efficient teaching methodologies. These challenges are also apparent in the papers and articles about training presented at Critical Link conferences and appearing in their publications. These articles are often based on research embedded in a national context and describing specific cases. Authors discuss content, pedagogical issues, the use of on-campus or distance learning, and assessment of interpreting performance quality (cf. Avery, 2003; Blignault, Stephanou, & Barrett, 2009; Fowler, 2007; Lee, 2009; van den Bogaerde, 2007). In a Scandinavian context, the writings of Englund Dimitrova (1991), Wadensjö (1992), Niska (2004, 2005), and Skaaden and Wattne (2009), for example, have contributed to the advancement of the training programs for community interpreters. Internationally, authors

² The folk high school is a form of nonacademic adult education that has existed in Sweden for over 100 years. Approximately 150 folk high schools in Sweden are financed by grants from the state and/or county councils. The main purposes of folk high schools are to strengthen and develop democracy, to bridge educational gaps, and to raise the level of education and cultural awareness in society.

³ To be compared with the most commonly interpreted languages used in 2010: Arabic, Somali, Dari, and various Kurdish languages.

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such as Roy (2000), Angellelli (2004), and Pöchhacker (2010), for example, have developed theories about community interpreting as a profession.

3.1. Research Questions

From the research literature we learn that different countries and languages (spoken and signed) share the same challenges for community interpreter training. In the following, we focus on five question areas inspired by the literature:

Who should provide training and authorization? Should it be the state, regions, municipalities, specialized companies, and organizations such as the Red Cross, the UN, institutions or interpreting agencies?

What competences should educators have? Are professional interpreters best suited to be teachers, or should they be professionals with academic qualification?

What form, content, and length should the training programs have? Is it necessary to conduct training in classrooms? How can the Internet and distance courses be developed? Should the training be general, covering all parts of community interpreting, including social services, health care, and the judiciary? Or should interpreters specialize in a certain area from the beginning?

What knowledge and skills are the training supposed to impart? How are the professional qualities to be assessed? What kind of technical devices should interpreters be able to handle? How should the balance between practice and theory be handled?

Should the role of the interpreter be strict, or be defined more as a mediator with extended agency? Should the role be different in various settings, situations, or contexts?

The complexity of the five questions mentioned above is developed and analyzed below with Sweden as an example, starting with an explanation of the structural conditions in Sweden.

4. Interpreting Services in Sweden

Every day many encounters occur among public-service providers and non-Swedish-speaking clients and patients. These encounters often require access to a community interpreter. There are no current statistics showing exactly how many hours of interpretation take place in Sweden or the costs of interpreting services. Within the public sector, the total interpreting time in 2004 was estimated to be 650,000 hours in more than 120 languages (SOU, 2005). Undoubtedly, the number of hours has increased since then. We estimate that the interpreting time in 2009 was most likely between 1.2 and 1.5 million hours in about 170 languages in the whole of Sweden. In addition, many interpreted meetings are carried out by untrained interpreters, family members—including children—and friends. These meetings are never included in the statistics.

Several different laws and ordinances determine state responsibility for interpreting services, but there is no coherent set of rules and regulations. In short, the right to and obligation for interpreting is based on four fundamental principles: citizen participation, the right of the individual to equal treatment, the right of national minorities to their languages, and the right to plead one's case within the justice system.

Interpreting services in Sweden are publicly funded, and access to an interpreter is thus a cost-free right for all clients and patients. It is the public-service employee who calls for an interpreter if he/she finds that it is required; the client or patient cannot book an interpreter on his/her own initiative. Aside from the supervision of authorized interpreters carried out by the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency (KamK), there is no supervision of interpreting services, which has received much criticism.

To conclude, community interpreting is a recognized need in Sweden and the government takes responsibility for interpreting services (cf. Hale, 2007). We have identified four means with which the state assumes this responsibility (Norstrom et al., 2012): First, through the authorization of interpreters. Second, via the document

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Good Interpreting Practice. Third, according to the Public Procurement Act (2007), all public authorities at the state, regional, and local levels must procure interpreting services in the open market. Last, the government supports community interpreter training.

4.1. Training of Community Interpreters

Following the regulation of immigration to Sweden in 1967, it became increasingly clear that trained community interpreters were needed for communication between individuals with no knowledge of Swedish and public employees, in order to guarantee legal security (SOU, 1972). Interpreter training programs have therefore existed in Sweden since the end of the 1960s, built on public-service needs in the areas of social insurance, the labor market, health care, and the courts. The Swedish Immigration Board and municipal immigrant service bureaus led the development of these programs, initially at the Nordic Folk High School and then at other folk high schools, study organizations, and universities in Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Lund.

In 1975, the government adopted a new policy for integration (Prop. 1975). Immigration and minority policy aimed to give members of language minorities the possibility to express themselves through their own language and cultural identity—within the frame of a community-wide Swedish interest. The policy embodied three ideals: equality, freedom of choice, and cooperation. Community interpreter training in spoken languages has since then been regarded as an “immigrant issue” in line with the integration policy goals of 1975 (cf. Niska, 2004). The Administrative Procedure Act (1986), however, specifies that a public authority should use an interpreter “when needed.”⁴

In 1986, the Institute for Interpretation and Translation Studies (TÖI) was established at Stockholm University. TÖI has since been responsible for the allocation of government support to folk high schools, study organizations, and universities. Furthermore, TÖI coordinates interpreter and translator training, training supervision, educational development, the production of teaching materials and interpreter dictionaries, the promotion of research, and collaboration with other Nordic countries. (On July 1, 2012, the responsibility for allocating government support to folk high schools and study organizations was moved to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education. It is unclear who will take over the other tasks of TÖI.)

Evidence that the need for interpreting within the public sector is paramount can be found in the government report *Interpreter Training: New Demands, New Forms* (SOU 2005), which was released in connection with the establishment of Immigration Courts, located at three of Sweden’s administrative courts (Stockholm, Malmö, and Gothenburg), in 2006. The National Courts Administration demanded higher interpreting competence, and resources were allocated to TÖI specifically for training for more in-depth knowledge within court interpreting. The report led to reforms of the general training possibilities for community interpreters in spoken languages, which will be further explained below.

In addition to these training initiatives, there are three other state-financed interpreting training programs. Training to become a sign language interpreter for deaf and deaf-blind persons is run by seven folk high schools. The training is between 3 and 4 years of full-time studies on campus and is classified as post-upper-secondary vocational training. No previous knowledge of signed language is required, and the first year is dedicated to learning sign language. Community interpreters in signed language are trained in the same public service areas as those in spoken languages. In addition to those areas and subjects, the following 2 or 3 years include language and communication theory, personal development training, video-based interpreting training, and practice with professional interpreters in “real” situations.

Since 1957, the Armed Forces Interpreter School (part of the Armed Forces Intelligence and Security Centre) in Uppsala has been training interpreters for the specific needs of the armed forces. No previous knowledge of languages other than Swedish is required. The program comprises three terms of full-time studies, of which the

⁴ The formulation “when needed” does not imply a right but gives the public-service provider the right to decide whether an interpreter is called in. The Act does not mention the need to call in authorized or otherwise professional, well-educated interpreters.

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third involves special training for field work in the areas of the world in which the respective language is spoken. Currently, interpreters are trained in Russian, Dari, and Arabic. Military training is also included. Students apply via the National Service Administration on the basis of their upper-secondary certificate.

A conference interpreting training program is offered at Stockholm University, with the first term concurrent with the community interpreting program. The conference interpreter training program gives special competence for interpreting at public events with many participants and often in international contexts, for example, within the EU.

The working conditions and status of these three interpreting training programs as well as the status of the signed language, armed forces, and conference interpreters differ from the situation of community interpreters in spoken languages in several essential aspects such as payment, possibilities of getting assignments, working conditions, and status (Pöchhacker, 2010).

In 1976, the state began to offer authorization of community interpreters. Authorization testing and supervision of authorized interpreters is administrated by KamK. The authorization test is offered in 40 languages, including signed language and national minority languages such as Sami, Finnish, and Romany. In total, there are more than 1,100 authorized interpreters, approximately 900 in spoken languages. Authorized interpreters may do a second test (written and oral) for a specialization in medical or court interpreting. Students trained at Stockholm University receive their authorization when they take their exam; candidates from the nonacademic training programs at folk high schools and study organizations have to do a special test to achieve authorization.

5. A New National Consolidated Training Program

After almost 40 years of local initiatives, the results of the governmental report (2005) led to the creation of a national consolidated training program under the auspices of TÖI. It is state-financed, uniform, and equivalent to one term of full-time studies. The training is offered by seven different study organizations and folk high schools. The study organizations give evening classes over 1 year, and the folk high schools give distance training over 2 years, meeting on site during certain scheduled weekends and otherwise using the Internet. Another route to the interpreting profession is to complete higher education courses in interpreting at Stockholm University (Interpreting and Translation I, Interpreting II–III, and a bachelor's course). These courses require previous knowledge of a language other than Swedish (60 ECTS).

Based on severe criticism of the situation before 2006, important new elements were introduced in the consolidated training program. These elements include previous knowledge testing, exams and assessment of interpreter candidates, compulsory language supervision in every featured language, and links to every subject area. A short course on asylum interpreting was introduced as well as common course literature.

The consolidated training program consists of six modules. The introductory module deals with the interpreting profession, ethics, and technique. This is followed by modules in social insurance and labor market interpreting, health care interpreting, jurisprudence basics, supplementary jurisprudence, and asylum interpreting. All modules include factual subject knowledge about public service areas, interpreter ethics, interpreting techniques, interpreting exercises, and language guidance. After each module there is a written examination on factual knowledge and an oral interpreting test. After completing the training program, students may take preparatory courses for authorization. A total of 40 training programs have been completed during 2006–2011, and a total of 517 interpreters in 36 different languages—including Arabic (149), Russian (60), Polish (39), Somali (37), and Spanish (36)—have finished the training. A total of 77 students, in seven different languages, graduated from the community interpreting program at Stockholm University between 2000 and 2011.

An important change in the new training program is the introduction of admission tests. In order to be admitted to the program, applicants must have completed at least upper-secondary education or the equivalent. A selection is made from the languages applied for and then those selected are called for 1 day of previous knowledge testing. The test consists of four parts: a written test about laws and society in Sweden, translation of phrases from

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Swedish to the source language, and two interviews—one in Swedish that tests active and passive language use and one in the source language that tests language level and aptitude.

After a few years of training students, a discussion began about the need to increase the demands on interpreter candidates, because too many of the candidates possess too low a level of education, insufficient knowledge of Swedish, and inadequate study techniques. This is confirmed by the low throughput of about 50%.

During our observations at a folk high school, we met 40 interpreter candidates, mostly women, from various backgrounds. The candidates included municipal employees, truck drivers, hospital caretakers, teachers, home care assistants, primary-school teachers, cooks, and secretaries. They were all of working age, and all had been born outside of Sweden. Some were already active as interpreters. The majority had decided to try interpreter training on their own initiative, most because they needed work and because they already had at least two languages “for free.” Some began interpreting while they were still students in the program, and some chose not to complete the training, because they were assured of getting assignments anyway. Some stopped because they realized that there was not enough demand for their language and felt they would never be able to support themselves as interpreters. The lack of future progress as a professional community interpreter makes aspirants hesitant, and it stops people from considering such training. This seems to be a common problem in many countries (Ozolins, 2000; Skaaden & Wattne, 2009).⁵

There is no specific training for the teachers in the training programs. Often, the teacher is an interpreter with long experience or one of the regular teachers at the folk high school or study organization. The same person might teach one or several of the modules as well as supervise language and interpreting training. Courses and seminars for language supervisors and teachers are infrequently arranged.

Conditions for language supervision vary. For many languages, there are no dictionaries available, which puts high demands on the language supervisor. In one example, a language supervisor of Somali showed us a compilation of 2,180 terms for the “supplementary jurisprudence” module that he and some colleagues put together themselves during a visit to Somaliland. Whereas this supervisor worked for many years visiting judges and lawyers, listening to court proceedings, and putting together useful material, teachers of many other languages have access to such material from the beginning.

Teaching is conducted partly according to traditional models such as lectures, literature studies, and practical interpreting training. Apart from physical meetings with lectures and language supervision that begin and end each module, distance training builds on the peer group method (Biggs, 2003). The candidates study and work together on the Internet-based platform First Class. As discussed in Skaaden and Wattne (2009), distance training is a necessary and efficient solution in a large and sparsely populated country. In Norway, a coherent community interpreter training program was introduced in 2004, 2 years before Sweden’s program. The Norwegian training program is also based on Internet-based distance courses, and in some aspects it uses similar pedagogical ideas about peer groups. Skaaden and Wattne (2009) refer to the experiential learning theory, which implies that the students and their experiences are a main source of learning. The exchange and exploration of experiences is mainly performed in peer groups on a Web platform with two “rooms” with both synchronous chat channels and an asynchronous forum channel (Pallof & Pratt, 1999; Skaaden & Wattne, 2007). The teachers introduce different subjects to discuss, mostly ethical issues. In Sweden there are also “rooms” for communication via the Web platform, but the tasks and issues are focused on factual knowledge or terminology.

Sweden’s interpreter training program relies heavily on interpreting exercises using prepared role plays connected to the subject area. Most of the role plays are written by one person with extensive experience both as an interpreter and as a teacher. All role plays are written in Swedish and include current terms from each subject area, as well as idiomatic expressions and various types of jargon that can be linked to, for example, age, gender,

⁵ Ozolins (2000) explains this lack of professional progress as a consequence of community interpreting (he uses the term *liaison interpreting*) being an institution-driven field, unlike conference interpreting, which has been a profession-driven field. This fits with the situation in Sweden in which the institutions (migration board, health care, police force, social service, etc.) have been the ones leading the development of interpreting. At no point could these institutions have depended upon a ready-made profession, even though institutions have generally supported accreditation or certification systems that are directly relevant to them.

or level of education. In line with Hale's (2007) description, the teachers we interviewed and observed struggle with the role plays. They find scripted dialogues useful for controlling content, grammatical structures, and vocabulary, but they are often stilted and artificial when performed. On the other hand, unscripted, improvised dialogues are useful for spontaneity but often lack depth of content and richness of language. In such improvisations, the richness of language is determined by the proficiency of the students, and that is a limitation.

The role plays could also be used to discuss ethical dilemmas and practical experiences. We have, however, noted that these are seldom discussed; teaching is dominated by factual knowledge in the subject areas, terminology, and language exercises. There are few discussions about ethical issues, except in the first module. There is no communication or language theory and no training for interpreting situations other than face-to-face. Exercises are only rarely recorded or videotaped. In addition, there is not as much didactic discussion about distance teaching as there is in other countries (cf. Skaaden & Wattne, 2009).

After having passed the final exams, students receive a training certificate. These exams are in many ways similar to those used in the authorization tests by the KamK. There is an ongoing debate about this (cf. Wadensjö & Englund, 2010). Some interpreting teachers see this as a good idea, as the consolidated training program is intended as preparation for authorization. Other teachers do not think this is reasonable and would like to see the training program assess aspects of interpreting that are not assessed in the authorization tests. Today, the tests are focused on knowledge and accuracy, which is of great significance. But as Skaaden & Wattne (2009, p. 75) state about the training program in Norway, "Interpreting is definitely a skill-based subject—it is something you do, not just something you may read and talk about." Therefore, we argue that the act of interpreting should be considered more in the training programs themselves as well as in the examination.

6. Changing Demand and Lack of Financial Resources

The consolidated training program for community interpreters is in many respects an improvement. Most apparent is the use of examination and certification, which makes it possible to quantify the competence of the interpreters and guarantees acquisition of a certain amount of factual knowledge and terminology. Still, it is a short training program and, according to providers of the training, there is a need for development. This resembles the situation in many countries (Hale, 2007; Taibi & Martin, 2006). Below, we discuss some basic problems of the Swedish training program and possibilities for the future.

The continuously changing demand for community interpreters in languages new to Sweden makes it difficult to predict interpreting needs and, thus, training needs. Interpreting agencies, however, do have knowledge of and maintain statistics on the varying demand for interpreting services (even on a daily basis), varying geographical needs, and requests for certain languages. This knowledge could very well be used in the planning of training, if cooperation with the educators were developed.⁶ Within Scandinavia, the tradition of adult education within folk high schools and study organizations is based on open access, student participation in forming the course outlines, and no examinations. For the community interpreter training program, special stipulations allow initial tests and minimal demands of at least upper-secondary education or equivalent and examinations. But the idea of open access means that it is not possible, or even desirable, to direct the applicants in terms of language, for example. The training program for interpreters is open to anyone who wants a career within this profession. Everybody who passes the test has a chance whether the language is demanded by public-sector providers or not. The languages that will be available for training are therefore in reality (primarily) directed by the applicants' linguistic background and competence, not societal demand. On several occasions we have seen teachers and training providers frustrated by and critical of this "ideology of open access." They argue that it is wrong to train

⁶ The first interpreting agencies in Sweden were established in the 1970s and for a long time interpreting services were offered primarily by municipal immigrant service bureaus. Since the 1990s, private agencies have been competing with the municipal agencies. The basic function of providing interpreting services is the same for all agencies, but there are considerable differences in the conditions under which municipal and private agencies operate.

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interpreters in languages for which there is no demand—it is wrong from the perspectives of the student, the users of interpretation services, and the taxpayers.

The right to interpretation in Sweden, as we have mentioned, is regulated by several laws and ordinances, and the government has different means for fulfilling state-sponsored interpreting services (Norström et al., 2012). It is most important to maintain the state-funded training program and provision of authorization (SOU, 2005:37; Report 2012:2), but the financial resources are limited.⁷

As mentioned, the training program for interpreters in signed language is much longer than the community interpreting program in spoken languages in which, during the equivalent of one term, the students learn thousands of new terms collected from four different professional areas, in both source and target languages; it is hoped that they also learn how to grasp ethical issues and interpreting techniques.

In summary, as many teachers, students and training providers argue, the training program has to be seen as a start. It could be considered as a basic program and it *should* be complemented with other courses. In reality, there are few possibilities for attending training courses on higher levels, because such courses are almost nonexistent. The shortage of resources is a problem for TÖI, as it cannot expand the training programs to include more students, and it can only infrequently offer and develop higher courses.

There is a constant need for new skilled and trained interpreters, but instead of supporting TÖI to meet the need by developing and expanding training possibilities, the government cut back on funding. As a consequence, the agencies that provide community interpreters with assignments have started their own training programs, parallel to the national program. This will help to fill the lack of trained interpreters in the right languages, but these courses will not give the participants a certificate.

The changing and unpredictable demand for interpreting service, the open-access ideology within folk high schools and study organizations, and the limitation of resources for fulfilling the demand of skilled and trained interpreters are all issues with which the interpreting field in Sweden must contend. Often, however, there is no real discussion or debate, although the resolution of these issues is essential to ensure the quality of the existing training program.

7. Research, Theory and Didactical Development in Community Interpreting Training

One question asked in the planning of the national consolidated training program for interpreters in spoken languages was: What is the trained and examined person supposed to know and to do? Within pedagogical didactics this is framed by three questions: *What* will we offer the student, *why* will we offer it, and *how* will we offer it? Other questions were about assessment and how to measure interpreting skills and knowledge. Still, the new program is built upon the personal and practical experiences of several professional interpreters and teachers, some of whom have been involved in interpreter training since the 1970s, when training first started. The training program is therefore quite static and resembles the training programs of the 1970s both in structure and content. Society and professions within different sectors of society have obviously changed since then. In order to catch up with these changes, it is not nearly enough to train interpreters with updated, current factual knowledge and terminology. The development of new modes of communication over the telephone and Internet as well as the development of different of models for interviewing, making investigations, making decisions, and so forth, are just as important. The major part of interpreting today takes place within sectors in society that did not exist in the 1970s, for example, the Migration Board and the extended social and health care system. To meet these changes, new courses need to be developed and, perhaps, old ones replaced.

⁷ There is a need to increase the number of authorized interpreters and also the number of languages for which examination is possible, but the government has been unwilling to allocate sufficient funds for the development of authorization. During 2011, however, the Swedish Agency for Public Management investigated the possibilities for development of the authorization system (Report 2012:2).

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In addition to the scarcity of funding for the programs themselves, no government funding for research is given to TÖI; research is externally funded. One consequence of this limited funding is that there is no guarantee for knowledge accumulation and continuity within the community interpreting field. Additionally, no funds exist for developing educational science or didactics within community interpreting in Sweden, which has a direct effect on the training program, as Hale (2007, p. 178) argues: “However, teaching these areas will not be effective if it is not underpinned by theory of interpreting or informed by the results of research.” Roy (2000) agrees that successful teachers are those who base their teaching strategies on theory and research.

Today, in Sweden most teachers and language supervisors are active interpreters themselves and therefore have practical experience. Few have pedagogical training and even fewer are researchers or have access to theoretical studies about community interpreting. The course literature is focused on factual knowledge and terminology about social insurance, the labor market, health care, and the judicial system and asylum policies. The students read no texts about research or theory. Discussions about the complexity of the role of the interpreter, ethical issues, and technique therefore tend to end up in particular and concrete situations rather than general and/or theoretical discussions. And because the training program does not teach the theory underpinning technical issues and ethics, these skills are not part of the examination for authorization.

8. Training in Ethical Rules: Good Interpreting Practices

Finally, we highlight ethical skills and the role of the interpreter. In 2009, the Migration Board, together with the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights (RFSL), took the initiative to develop a training program for interpreters within the field of sexuality. The Migration Board had observed that several interpreters could not handle their personal bias against LGBT persons.

Obviously, an interpreter has to handle his/her bias when it pops up, and the field must develop methods to support new interpreters to handle this. During the course we observed there was quite an open use of racist, sexist, and prejudicial jargon, and one teacher told us that, in his experience, there are many stereotypical and prejudicial attitudes toward Swedish people and society among interpreter trainees.

During observations and interviews we were surprised to find that many interpreters do not take time to reflect on themselves and their role. Several were convinced that they “automatically” become neutral and impartial simply because they say so in the introduction to an interpretation. It is, however, easy to overstep the border of good practice, as the biases we observed exemplifies, and such bias is difficult to identify without self-knowledge. For an interpreter to remaining neutral with respect to the content of the interpreted encounter and impartial in relation to the parties involved requires knowledge, experience, and self-awareness. Many examples from our interviews show that interpreters may be emotionally caught by surprise when they do not possess the appropriate tools for dealing with a certain situation. Impartiality and neutrality require techniques and a consciousness about the interpreter’s role and its limitations, as well as an awareness of others’ potential expectations of the interpreter.

Again, for the sake of comparison, we can look to other training programs. Training for signed language interpreters in Sweden includes thorough and ongoing training of self-knowledge and methods to handle personal bias. In Norway, as described in Skaaden and Wattne (2007), the four main goals of the community interpreter training are all related to skills and link doing and thinking through structured reflection; the ultimate aim is to give the students a well-founded basis for handling challenges in real life, how to prepare, how to learn more, how to deal with ethical dilemmas, and so forth. In Sweden the aim of the training program is similar in theory, but in practice it is hardly fulfilled.

One tool that could be useful for developing the didactics of training in ethical skills is the idea of *self-reflection*, which deals with methodological questions regarding inner considerations. Such training might concern reflections on how a given interpreting situation is handled and on the relationship with the others in the interpreted encounter. This kind of reflection would give interpreters tools to distance themselves from their work and to look at their role; what the interpreter *can* do as well as what is not possible within the framework of what

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the interpreter *should* do. An important issue in the discussion about self-reflection concerns *cultural awareness*, that is, the knowledge that the interpreter is a cultural being with frames of reference and cultural conceptions (and prejudices and jargons). Training in self-reflection would help interpreters handle their own reactions and give them a deeper understanding of their role, of being impartial and neutral, of the obligation to observe silence. These are all important components of the interpreter code of ethics (Kaufert, Kaufert, & LaBine 2009; Skaaden & Wattne, 2009)

Training in the ethics of the interpreter's role is important also in an international context, because there are different approaches and traditions in different countries. Angelelli (2004), for example, argues that rather than prescribe what the interpreter's role should be during an interaction based on an ideal model like the one stated in the Swedish document *Good Interpreting Practice* (2010), a new theory could describe the interpreter's role based on situational practices in different workplaces. It would also consider the interpreter as a visible, forceful individual with the possibility of influencing the meeting. Additionally, if we are to regard interpreting as a situational and relational activity, we cannot compare, for example, health care interpreting with legal interpreting or conference interpreting. Different competences are required in different sectors, and this also affects the interpreter's role and training.

Missing in Sweden is a discussion about specialization, about training interpreters for various roles with different ethical requirements depending on the sector of society they are interpreting within. Precisely for that reason, it might be constructive to look more closely at international ideas and research for how interpreters might become specialized. Based on that, a critical analysis could be made of the more rigid and uniform interpreter's role that exists in Sweden. In light of terms such as *cultural intermediary*, *detective*, *lawyer*, or *gatekeeper*, the neutral and impartial position advocated by *Good Interpreting Practice* becomes clearer, as do its limitations and, above all, its possibilities.

9. Conclusion

Community interpreting is a complex profession that demands a wide range of skills, including language, factual knowledge, techniques, and the ability to handle emotions and social relations in all sorts of environments and settings. Training in the complexities of this profession is fundamental and it should be compulsory. The importance of training for community interpreters must be recognized and supported by society and, as a result of this, further developed and debated. Many scholars and professionals, in Sweden and internationally, concur with this view (Hale, 2007).

Sweden's existing consolidated training is a good starting point for a career as an interpreter. For progress to be possible, it is nevertheless vitally important to use existing research, to develop didactics for community interpreting training and to produce theory about community interpreting. As noted in the literature review, there is a wide range of research within this field dealing with interpreting training and didactical issues such as content, interpreting skills, pedagogical issues, the use of on-campus or distance training and assessment, and interpreting performance quality, that is, what competences and skills should an interpreter have and how are these measured and assessed. Research and training programs for teachers could be developed using existing literature and research to inspire training providers and teachers. Interpreting theory and results from international research would thus be implemented and pushed further with the goal of creating better training and progress within the whole field of interpreting services in Sweden. For interpreters in spoken languages, the debate would be part of professional recognition and higher status, equivalent with the status of signed language interpreters.

The concrete needs and demands of interpreting are identified in the everyday exercise of authority, and it is in the everyday meetings that equal rights and legal, medical, and social security are meant to be secured (Corsellis, 2000; Norström et al., 2012). Ultimately, providing society with skilled and competent community interpreters is the duty of the public-service providers tasked with ensuring clients'/patients' rights to equality and legal, medical, and social security. Public-service providers, clients, and patients should never have to question whether their community interpreters are qualified to serve them.

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A Study of Interpreting Accreditation Testing Formats in Australia

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Abstract

Advanced and affordable video conferencing technology has led to an increase in remote interpreting services via video, which has become a significant alternative to telephone and face-to-face interpreting. In keeping with this development, training providers are now incorporating video conference interpreting in their training. Video and audio resources are also increasingly being used as e-learning resources in online learning tools such as Blackboard and other university student learning portals. This has implications for the testing of interpreting skills, and the RMIT University Translating and Interpreting Program in Melbourne, Australia has started phasing in video assessment in examination and accreditation tests. In Australia, three test modes are commonly used: audio, video, and live-simulated tests. This article reports on a small-scale study that compared the three testing modes in terms of their potential impact on student examination results and also in terms of testing efficiency for training providers. Due to a lack of relevant research on the topic in the interpreting discipline, the discussion draws on relevant studies in diverse fields such as applied psychology, behavioral science, and musical performance. This study has implications for interpreter training strategies, for designing and administering interpreter assessment tests, and for resourcing in training programs.

Key Words: video interpreting test, audio interpreting test, interpreting skills, testing modes, NAATI accreditation test, Chinese (Mandarin)

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A Study of Interpreting Accreditation Testing Formats in Australia

1. Introduction

Testing modes used in assessing actual interpreting skills vary around the globe from live practical demonstrations before a panel of assessors to recorded audio sessions subsequently assessed by examiners. Whether testing modes have an impact on assessment outcome has been a point of debate among assessors and assessees. In Australia, three testing modes are commonly used: audio, video, and live-simulated. The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), the authority that oversees interpreter accreditation in Australia, uses an audio mode in interpreter accreditation tests. In the paraprofessional interpreter accreditation test, the candidate interprets two audio-recorded dialogues of approximately 300 words each. The test also includes sections on social/cultural understanding and ethics of the profession. The test is administered by a supervisor who records the candidate's performance; the recorded test then is forwarded to two examiners for marking. NAATI-approved training providers, on the other hand, have traditionally used a live-simulated mode in which two role players read two dialogues and candidates individually interpret the dialogues in the presence of two examiners. Recently, some training providers, including RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, have introduced a video mode in accreditation tests as well as in training. In this mode, a candidate interprets two video-recorded dialogues set as per NAATI accreditation test standards. The candidate's performance is video-recorded and then forwarded to examiners. Concerns were expressed about whether the video and audio formats would assess a candidate's actual interpreting skills accurately. The view was that interpreting tests administered using audio or video modes limit the opportunity for interaction between interpreters and speakers. An opposing view was that audio testing was a better method because core interpreting skills can be tested and, because candidates will not feel as pressured or anxious, cognitive processing capacity will be reserved for concentrating on content, thus more capacity will remain available to undertake transfer between two languages.

2. Testing Modes and Impact on Assessment

There is some literature from the interpreting discipline investigating the impact on quality of service that the three testing modes—face-to-face, telephone, and video—may have, in mainly medical, legal, and conferencing interpreting settings (Locatis et al., 2010; Moser-Mercer, 2005; Swaney, 1997). Overall, the studies do not indicate significant differences in terms of key quality indicators such as accuracy or unjustified additions or omissions. However, the opinions from users and interpreters seem to vary between those who prefer interpreter participation via video or telephone for reasons such as maintaining privacy or professional distance and others who prefer video and telephone interpreting because of reduced interference by the interpreter in the professional setting, such as patient-doctor consultation where the interpreter is not physically present. Some professionals, however, prefer a face-to-face interpreter as they believe that close interaction between the client and the interpreter is essential for successful communication.

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In other disciplines, there appears to be significant interest in similar testing/assessment modes that are of relevance to interpreting skills assessment. Straus, Miles, and Levesque (2001) studied the effects of video-conference, telephone, and face-to-face media on interviewer and applicant judgments in employment interviews. The three types of communication media are similar to the modes used in interpreter accreditation tests. In mock interviews, the researchers asked the six interviewers to rate 60 applicants' general abilities, likability, communication understanding, and conversation fluency. The researchers also measured applicants' self-consciousness and the degree to which they felt at ease during the interviews. Results show that interviewers evaluated applicants more favorably in telephone versus face-to-face interviews. The difference was stronger for less physically attractive applicants, which suggests that the telephone filtered negative visual cues. The researchers also provided an alternative explanation for this finding, which is that communicating by telephone imposes lower cognitive workload, and consequently applicants may have been better able to focus on the content of their responses. Both interviewers and applicants reported more difficulty regulating and understanding conversations in video-conference interviews versus face-to-face settings. Applicants reported being much more self-conscious about their nonverbal behavior in face-to-face versus telephone interviews.

Riddle et al. (2002) studied the differences in audio-recorded versus video-recorded doctor-patient interactions. The researchers recruited 47 patients, 12 doctors, and eight raters. The raters were asked to rate the doctor-patient interactions using various audio and video observational systems commonly used in assessing doctor-patient interactions. The findings of this study indicate that ratings of audio-recorded doctor-patient interactions are not equivalent to ratings of video-recorded encounters, even though raters were using the same coding system and analyzing the same doctor-patient exchanges, and that analyses based on audio-only data may not be sufficiently sensitive to raters' interpretations of behaviors, especially when judgments need to be made to address incongruence between verbal and nonverbal cues.

In another study, Ryan and Costa-Giomi (2004) asked raters from three groups to rate 10 piano performances from audiotapes (sound only) and from videotapes (sound and image). Group 1 comprised 18 boys and 14 girls age 12; Group 2 comprised non-music undergraduate students who were taking an introductory piano class; and Group 3 comprised undergraduate music students. The participants were also asked to rate the attractiveness of the performers from brief videos. Results from this study support the existence of an attractiveness bias in the evaluation of musical performance. The results also show that evaluations of audio-visual recordings of musical performances are judged more reliably than are audio recordings. The researchers argue that care should be taken when using the more reliable means of evaluation, such as videotapes or DVDs, at the risk of favoring a particular group of performers.

The above studies suggest that the modes in question may impact on performance and consequently may affect the assessment result to varying degrees. This article discusses whether the findings of these studies apply to interpreting skills testing. It provides some empirical data that may inform the debate on testing modes and offers some guidance, albeit limited, for training providers. The data collection mainly focused on whether the testing mode impacts on student achievement in an accreditation test and, if so, whether there were any identifiable factors within that mode that contributed to this, such as test anxiety or advantages in visual cues.

3. The Use of the Three Dialogue Interpreting Assessment Modes in Australia

In Australia, NAATI sets standards for various levels of interpreting accreditation and conducts interpreter accreditation tests. A number of approved interpreter training providers conduct their own interpreter accreditation tests, the results of which are recognized by NAATI. The tests are predominantly given in one of three modes: audio, video, and live.

The accreditation test at the paraprofessional level, which is the focus of this discussion, involves two bilingual dialogues of approximately 300 words each. The maximum word count in each segment cannot exceed 35 words. The test also has social/cultural understanding and ethics-of-the-profession sections where candidates are expected to answer four questions in each section (two questions in each language). However, approved training programs may only administer the dialogue-interpreting section of the accreditation test, as social/cultural understanding

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and ethics content is covered in other subjects and assessed separately. At present, NAATI (2008) requires students studying with approved training providers to achieve a minimum result of 70% (or *competent with distinction*) out of a nominal mark of 100 in the dialogue-interpreting test held under NAATI testing standards, and a minimum result of a pass (or *competent*) in the other subjects.

3.1 Audio Mode

In this testing mode, mainly used by NAATI, candidates undertake testing in a soundproof recording room. The assessment supervisor operates the recording equipment. In the paraprofessional interpreter accreditation test, two scripted dialogues are played to the candidate from a master recording. A briefing in English of the dialogue scenario is played before each of the dialogues (the briefings do not have to be interpreted). The candidate is prompted to start interpreting after the briefing. The candidate can signal the assessment supervisor if s/he needs to have a segment repeated; only a limited number of repetitions are permitted without penalty. The assessment supervisor will not answer questions regarding the content of the dialogue. The candidate's interpreting performance is audio-recorded for later marking.

3.2 Video Mode

In this testing mode, candidates attempt two video-recorded scripted dialogues. A briefing in English for each scenario is played; these do not have to be interpreted. The candidate is required to interpret the dialogues segment by segment. There is a pause after each segment to allow for interpreting. The candidate can signal the assessment supervisor if s/he needs to have a segment repeated, but the assessment supervisor will not answer questions regarding the content of the dialogues. The candidate can ask for a limited number of repetitions without being penalized. The candidate's interpreting performance is video-recorded for later marking.

3.3 Live-Simulated Mode

A test in this mode is conducted in a classroom. During the test, two role players read out two scripted dialogues. One of the role players is a native English speaker; the other is a native speaker of the candidate's other language. A briefing in English for the scenario is read out (the briefing does not have to be interpreted). The candidate is required to interpret the dialogues segment by segment. The role players pause at the end of each segment to allow for the candidate to interpret. Two examiners observe the performance of the candidate and assess in the room.

4. Data Collection

4.1 Procedure

For the purposes of generating data, students from the Chinese (Mandarin) language group who had completed two thirds of a 6-month full-time program were invited to participate in the study. The selection of Mandarin language speakers was purely due to resourcing considerations such as availability of markers and recording booths. Five student interpreters from the Mandarin language group volunteered to take part. The Mandarin language group is part of the Diploma of Interpreting, which is a 6-month full-time vocational education and training program. Student selection for the program is through a bilingual intake test in which applicants are expected to demonstrate a sufficient level of bilingual skills to be admitted to the program. The Diploma of Interpreting program is an approved program by NAATI, and the final interpreting test, which is designed according to NAATI accreditation test standards, is also assessed against NAATI accreditation standards. Those

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students who achieve a minimum of 70 out of 100 in both dialogues are recommended to NAATI for accreditation at the paraprofessional level.

Two scripted dialogues for each mode were designed and produced according to the NAATI paraprofessional accreditation test standards in terms of complexity and word-count ranges for each segment and for the whole dialogue. The topics of the dialogues were from common community interpreting topics such as welfare, education, and community health and included broad and routine language as stipulated in NAATI accreditation test standards. Each student was asked to interpret a set of two dialogues under each mode (a total of six different dialogues per student): a live-simulated setting with two role players and two examiners present, an audio setting where a test administrator was present, and a video-recorded setting where a test administrator was present.

Two examiners were asked to mark the students' performances in each mode. The examiners did not have any direct contact with the students prior to the study. The students' performances in all three modes were video-recorded.

.2 Results

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to process the data collected (see Appendix A). SPSS for Windows Version 16.0 was used for statistical analyses. The variables of marker and student were added to the ANOVA as it was perceived that they may impact on the result. Student and marker were treated as random factors.

Table 1. Mean scores and standard deviations for test mode

<i>Test mode</i>	<i>Mean (out of 100)</i>	<i>Standard deviation (SD)</i>
<i>Audio</i>	<i>68.10</i>	<i>6.73</i>
<i>Video</i>	<i>65.80</i>	<i>8.34</i>
<i>Live</i>	<i>66.82</i>	<i>7.79</i>

Table 2. Results of ANOVAs

<i>Source</i>	<i>F test(*)</i>	<i>p value (**)</i>
<i>Test Mode</i>	<i>0.904</i>	<i>.568</i>
<i>Marker</i>	<i>7.147</i>	<i>.184</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>12.381</i>	<i>.057</i>
<i>Test Mode × Marker</i>	<i>0.901</i>	<i>.444</i>
<i>Test Mode × Student</i>	<i>1.025</i>	<i>.487</i>
<i>Marker × Student</i>	<i>1.138</i>	<i>.404</i>
<i>Test Mode × Marker × Student</i>	<i>1.502</i>	<i>.198</i>

**An F test is used to compare the means of two or more groups involved in the study. It can be used with any sample size higher than two.*

***If the p value is $p < .05$ or $p < .01$, the result is regarded as statistically significant. That is, there is significant difference between the means. If the result is $p > .05$, there is not significant difference between the means.*

Variances in the three testing modes, between markers, and among students were analyzed, as well as variances in marking consistency under different test modes. In addition, variances were assessed in marks each

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student received under different testing modes, in marks each marker gave to students, and in marks under different test modes among markers.

Overall, analyses of student performance under the different testing modes showed $p > .05$, which means there were not any differences that were statistically significant. Transfer skills—that is, comprehension in one language and expression in another—did not appear to be significantly impacted by the mode of delivery. The results achieved by the students ranged from 53 to 80, mostly within the 60%–69% (*credit*) range, which is quite acceptable at this stage of their studies but less than the minimum of 70% (*distinction*) required for NAATI accreditation. Only Student 5 achieved a clear NAATI accreditation result in the audio and live-simulated modes.

.3 Observations and Data Collected Through Questionnaires and Interviews

The students were also asked to complete a brief questionnaire and attend a short, semistructured interview to collect data about their experiences under each testing mode (see Appendix B). Most participants believed that the live-simulated setting was more “real,” with real interactions with speakers. They also believed that physical appearance does affect the assessor’s judgement and said they would choose more formal attire when attending tests using live-simulated mode, because “that will give examiners a good impression.” Another advantage they stressed was that they could ask questions when they encountered unfamiliar words and expressions. Most of the participants asked the role players to explain unfamiliar words or concepts at least once. However, most of them reported nervousness in the live-simulated setting and anxiety about how their body language and nervousness may have given a bad impression to the examiners. One of the participants reported being distracted by the role players’ facial expressions after each of her renditions: “The reaction of the role players distracted me. I could not help thinking about the role player’s expressions—did I omit something? Was my rendition right or wrong?”

Most of the participants claimed they felt less anxious when sitting in the video and audio interpreting booth and said they could concentrate more on the interpreting task; however, they thought the setting was less “real.” The students all noted the fact of not being able to ask questions as a downside of these two modes. Most participants reported they did not find much difference between the audio mode and the video mode in terms of having visuals in video mode as an additional feature, as they were busy taking notes most of the time.

The markers were also interviewed. Both markers believed that the live-simulated setting provided a more complete view of candidate performance and said that they did not believe the candidate’s appearance, or lack of it, had an impact on their assessment of a performance.

5. Discussion of Findings

5.1 Test Anxiety

Test anxiety, a factor that clearly affects test performance, has attracted interest among psychologists and researchers from different disciplines. According to Moshe Zeidner (1998), “it has been found to interfere with performance both in laboratory settings as well as in real life testing situations in schools or colleges. The higher the reported test anxiety scores, the greater the problems reported in the processing of information” (p. 215). Test anxiety is multidimensional, affecting people in different ways, and different test settings generate test anxiety differently. Researchers in other disciplines such as management have examined test anxiety in three communication media—videoconferencing, telephone, and face-to-face—similar to the three interpreter testing modes.

Research on test anxiety has emerged in the field of language testing, an area closely related to interpreting and translation studies. Bachman (1990) stated that “test performance is affected by the characteristics of the methods used to elicit test performance. . . . Some test takers may perform better in the context of an oral interview than they would sitting in a language lab speaking into a microphone. . . . Performance on language tests

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varies as function both of an individual's language ability and of the characteristics of the test method" (pp. 111–113).

Zeidner (1998) provided a list of information processing deficits in high-test-anxious individuals, for example,

- Distractibility
- Test-anxious individuals have difficulty in concentrating on cognitive tasks
- Information storage and processing
- Anxious arousal causes a reduction in cognitive capacity devoted to the task, thus reducing resources for short-term memory task; working memory is particularly affected. ("Working memory" refers to active processing and transient storage of information.)
- Language processing
- Test-anxious individuals have vocabulary deficits and are deficient in their comprehension and reading efficiency (p. 257).

Research suggests that the presence of an external observer may negatively impact upon examinees' anxiety in an evaluative situation (Zeidner, 1998). "The presence of an external observer or audience in the test situation may be particularly debilitating for high-test-anxious subjects, who may be more responsive to the potential evaluation of others and react to such evaluation with increased levels of anxiety" (p. 228). This is relevant to live-simulated test settings where role players are, in effect, observers during the assessment. As mentioned earlier, most participants in our study reported nervousness in live-simulated test settings.

5.2 Trading a More "Realistic" Interaction for a Less Anxious Mind

Although research suggests that in-person encounters are more highly rated by interpreting users and interpreters, (Locatis et al., 2010), no significant difference in exam results between audio/video settings and the live-simulated setting has been noted. This may be due to negative impacts on performance caused by the comparatively high level of anxiety in the live-simulated setting offsetting benefits associated with this mode (i.e., being "more real," allowing real interactions with speakers, and "allowing candidates to ask questions"). This explanation is supported by the study of the effects of video-conference, telephone, and face-to-face media on interviewer and applicant judgments in employment interviews mentioned earlier, in which the researchers provided an alternative explanation for their finding. According to Straus and colleagues (2001, p. 374), "Communicating by telephone imposes lower cognitive workload, and consequently, applicants may have been better able to focus on the content of their responses."

5.3 Fairness-Related Issues in the Three Testing Modes

Fairness in testing refers to testing that is free of bias, equitable treatment of all examinees in the testing process, and fairness and equality in the outcomes of testing (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999). In this study, it was noted that some issues with testing can potentially negatively affect the fairness of the tests, which in turn may affect the accreditation testing system as a whole. It is acknowledged that "absolute fairness to every examinee is impossible to attain, if for no other reason than the fact that tests have imperfect reliability and that validity in any particular context is a matter of degree" (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999, p. 73). However, it is worthwhile to bring these issues to the attention of test developers and researchers.

5.3.1 Bias

Bias on the part of the assessors or raters of a particular professional performance can impact on assessment outcome. As Richard Stiggins, an expert in performance assessment, has stressed, it is critical that the scoring procedures are designed to assure that "performance ratings reflect the examinee's true capabilities and are not a

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function of the perceptions and biases of the persons evaluating the performance” (as cited in Linn, Baker, & Dunbar, 1991, p. 18).

5.3.2 Appearance Bias

Appearance bias is particularly relevant to the study of the three testing modes. Although both markers in our study responded that appearance was not a consideration in marking, studies conducted in other disciplines demonstrate the existence of an attractiveness bias in the evaluation of professional performance. Therefore, it can be argued that, compared with candidates who take tests administered in an audio mode, candidates who take tests administered in video or live-simulated settings are more likely to be subject to appearance bias. Different degrees of risk in relation to biases resulting from differences in testing modes may translate into differences in scores. This is supported by findings in the study of doctor-patient interactions, in which ratings of audio-taped doctor-patient interactions were not equivalent to ratings of videotaped encounters, even though the raters used the same coding system and analyzed the same doctor-patient exchanges.

5.4 Cost and Efficiency

Interpreting accreditation tests are labor intensive and costly. As Clifford (2001) stated, an assessment may be valid, reliable, and equitable, but high cost and unreasonably elaborate procedures may prevent its use. The live-simulated mode is the most costly and least efficient of the three testing modes.

5.4.1 Cost

For each language group, the live-simulated mode involves at least two role players reading scripted dialogues to each candidate. The examiners and role players are required to sit through the entire assessment process. Compared with the live-simulated mode, video and audio modes cost much less. The passages are prerecorded; no role players are required during the assessment process; and just one exam supervisor is needed to operate the recording equipment. Due to higher requirements for technical sophistication and resources, the costs of producing prerecorded video dialogues and video mode renditions are higher than administering tests in the audio mode.

5.4.2 Efficiency

In a live-simulated test setting, both of the markers have to be present and watch every rendition at the same time. In audio and video test settings, in contrast, a number of recordings can be done at the same time. Markers do not have to be in the same room at the same time and sit through the entire interpreting process; they can mark the renditions at a later time.

6. Limitations

This study has a number of limitations. First, the scale of the study is small, with a small number of candidates, markers, dialogues, topics, and only one spoken language group, so the results must be interpreted with caution. Students who volunteered for the study had completed two thirds of a 6-month full-time program, accredited at paraprofessional level. This limits the representativeness of the findings. Additionally, the students involved knew the purpose of the study and that this was not a real accreditation test. If students had believed they were taking a real test for accreditation, they may have reacted differently (e.g., become more nervous).

7. Conclusion

In this article, I have reported on a comparison of three interpreter accreditation assessment modes currently in use in Australia. The results from this study did not reveal significant statistical differences in terms of marks achieved by students under the three testing modes and does not show that the testing mode has a significant impact on the result. This study did not show any evidence that testing mode may have a significant impact on the performance of a candidate/student during the actual transfer process. By exploring various discussions and research conducted in other disciplines on how different settings (i.e., face-to-face, audio, and audio-visual) may affect performance and rating, this study indicates a need to further examine different aspects of the three common interpreter test modes as part of a more in-depth study of interpreter testing design.

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Appendix A: Marks Achieved in Each Testing Mode

Note that each examiner marked two dialogues for each candidate.

Audio Mode

Student	Marks (out of 100 as per NAATI accreditation test marking guidelines)	
	Examiner A	Examiner B
1	74	64
	70	70
2	68	74
	65	66
3	65	64
	64	74
4	62	59
	62	54
5	79	74
	79	75

Video Mode

Student	Marks (out of 100 as per NAATI accreditation test marking guidelines)	
	Examiner A	Examiner B
1	77	60
	77	66
2	64	65
	65	61
3	64	58
	65	68
4	60	53
	58	65
5	79	53
	80	78

Live-Simulated Mode

Students	Marks (out of 100 as per NAATI accreditation test marking guidelines)	
	Examiner A	Examiner B
1	64	60
	64	65
2	70	68
	70	72
3	73	57
	75	65
4	57	55
	55	53
5	80	72
	80	76

Appendix B: Post-Recording Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions. You may provide your answers in either Chinese or in English.
Please use a separate sheet if you need more space to write.

1. Of the three assessment modes, which mode do you believe allowed you to demonstrate your ability the most?

- a) Audio mode
- b) Video mode
- c) Live-simulated mode

1.1 Why?

2. Please list in your opinion both the positive and negative sides of the three modes.

- a) Audio mode
- b) Video mode
- c) Live-simulated mode

3. Do you think physical appearance affects your judgement of a student's performance?

- a) Yes
- b) No

4. Do you think dress code is important for interpreting evaluation session? Has your teacher ever talked to you about dress code?

- a) No
- b) Yes

5. Do you think your body language during the assessment would affect the assessors' judgement of your performance?

- a) No
- b) Yes

5.1. Why?

A Case for Training Signed Language Interpreters for Legal Specialization

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Abstract

Interpreting in legal settings has become a specialized area of practice that requires specific training and ongoing professional development. This study examined the training and professional development needs of ASL–English interpreters in North America. The 1,995 participants in an online survey included interpreters who provide services in legal settings and those who do not. The data suggest that interpreters desire certificate programs that are delivered in multiple formats, including face-to-face intensive experiences, online distance learning, and regional and local mentoring experiences. The training content areas participants wanted most include specialized interactions; legal discourse across a range of settings including police, domestic violence, depositions, and jury trials; interpreting techniques when working in deaf/hearing teams, using consecutive interpreting and error identification and correction; and ethics and decision making. All of the data analyzed offer insight into how best to design learning events that are meaningful for interpreters who want to work with legal discourse and interactions in a variety of settings, including courtrooms. Recommendations for educational institutions, professional organizations, and individual practitioners follow from the data.

Key Words: legal interpreting, signed language interpreting, team interpreting, deaf interpreting, training content, sequence of courses, curriculum design, interpreter educators

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A Case for Training Signed Language Interpreters for Legal Specialization

1. Introduction

Interpreting in legal settings is a distinct area of practice that requires specialized skills and training (Hale, 2002, 2007; Lee, 2009; Russell, 2002, 2008). The development of specialized skills and the participation in training focused on specific knowledge and skill sets leads a general practitioner to become a specialist. Bontempo and Napier (2007) surveyed interpreter practitioners about their perceptions of the skills needed for effective practice, along with their self-reports of competence. The findings revealed significant gaps in the skills required by interpreters, which has implications for ongoing professional development in order to move interpreters from generalists to specialists. A *specialist* is defined as a “practitioner who, through advanced training, acquisition of specialized skills, knowledge, and experience, distinguishes him or herself as being uniquely qualified for the demands of the specialized interpreting work” (Witter-Merithew & Nicodemus, 2011, p. 57). Witter-Merithew and Nicodemus (2011) further suggest that in order to protect the interests of consumers who rely on the services of interpreters with specialized competencies, the field of interpreting must be intentional in developing specializations in interpreting.

In North America, organizations such as the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) have promoted interpreting in legal settings as a distinct, specialized field of signed language interpreting that requires both advanced skills and training. RID developed a specialist’s certificate in legal interpreting known as the Specialist Certificate: Legal (SC:L). In Canada, the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) produced a guide for signed language interpreters in legal settings in 1994, the *AVLIC Position Paper on Legal Interpreting*, that identified the specialized skills and knowledge necessary to interpreting in such settings. In 2011, AVLIC updated the document (AVLIC, 2012), encouraging interpreters to acquire the necessary advanced discourse, protocol, and process knowledge prior to working in interactions that involve legal discourse. The document emphasizes managing legal discourse as opposed to settings. This is critical given that legal discourse can occur in many interactions, such as a video remote service call, a doctor’s interview, or a real estate or insurance transaction.

Approaches to providing specialized training for interpreting in legal settings have varied within North American and European contexts. For American Sign Language (ASL)–English interpreters in the U.S., acquiring the advanced training needed to achieve the RID specialist certification often has meant attending a series of workshops provided by state or regional interpreting organizations. Other interpreters have chosen to participate in courses designed for spoken language interpreters as well as language-specific courses for ASL–English interpreters. Another option available to ASL–English interpreters is to take the Legal Interpreter Training Program offered by the Distance Opportunities for Interpreter Training (DO IT) Center at the University of Northern Colorado. This program is offered over four semesters, comprising three knowledge courses delivered online and an intensive fourth course delivered in a face-to-face format that is focused on the interpreting skills necessary for this specialized area. For European interpreters wishing to specialize in legal interpreting, there are

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numerous courses across several countries. Since 2009, the European Legal Interpreters and Translators Association (EULITA) has offered comprehensive training for spoken and signed language interpreters and translators; typically these interpreters and translators possess an undergraduate or graduate degree prior to specialization.

In 2009, the authors launched a research project in North America to gather data from certified and noncertified sign language interpreters who provide interpreting services in legal settings and from other interpreters who choose not to work in legal settings. (For a more complete review of this data, see Roberson, Russell, & Shaw, 2011.) It was clear from the study that throughout North America, the demand for interpreters with specialized training for legal settings far exceeds the supply of such qualified interpreters. As a result, a great proportion of legal interpreting services are provided by individuals who are certified as generalist practitioners, with or without comprehensive training in legal discourse, legal protocol, and legal systems (Roberson, Russell, & Shaw, 2011).

Participants identified professional development related to interpreting in legal settings in which they had participated and what they believe they needed in order to be more prepared for specialized legal discourse and interactions. The respondents also provided input on the format and structure of training opportunities they felt would be most useful to them. Hence, this article describes the findings as they pertain to the training desired and/or needed in order to enhance the pool of interpreters qualified to work in settings and/or interactions that involve legal discourse. The research questions from the larger study that are pertinent to this article include:

1. What training in legal interpreting have interpreters who provide legal interpreting services had?
2. What training in legal interpreting do certified interpreters need in order to provide legal interpreting services?

In addition to reporting the findings, we discuss implications and provide recommendations for individuals, educational institutions, and professional organizations to provide experiences that would enhance the skills and knowledge of interpreters working in legal settings, thus allowing them to gain and demonstrate the skills needed for legal interactions. Although the data were derived from North American participants interpreting ASL–English, the findings and recommendations may be relevant to other countries, especially when contrasted with similar findings and directions of the Reflection Forum on Multilingualism and Interpreter Training (European Commission, 2009).

2. Review of the Literature

What follows is an overview of literature relevant to specialization of interpreting in legal settings, interpreter training models in general, and interpreter training specific to legal settings and research that frames current adult education development. This literature will situate the relevant sections of the study reported in this article.

2.1. *Specialization Within the Field of Interpretation*

Specialization within the field of interpreting has been an area of interest for the past two decades. During 2005–2010, the (U.S.) National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC) examined the development of specialized competencies through a variety of research projects. Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2005) reported on a North American study that revealed that as deaf people gain greater access to education, employment, and other aspects of social inclusion, the demand for qualified and competent interpreters grows. Hauser, Finch, and Hauser (2008), in their edited volume on designated interpreters, highlighted the specialized competencies and strategies needed to work with deaf doctors, lawyers, academics, and senior executives, to name but a few areas of specialization where designated interpreters are emerging. Mathers and Witter-Merithew (2008) further pointed to the advanced competencies required by the interpreting demands related to deaf people who are semilingual (or alilingual) as a result of educational, social, or linguistic deprivation.

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The NCIEC produced several research papers that define competencies for interpreters specializing in legal, medical, mental health, and video remote interpreting (VRI) settings (Witter-Merithew, 2010). However, Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2005) found that there are many interpreters who do not possess the competencies required by a generalist practitioner, let alone possess the abilities required for specialized areas. Bontempo and Napier (2007) reported similar findings that indicated significant gaps in the skills required by interpreters for effective practice. Further developments of the NCIEC Effective Practices Team (EPT) led to the development of a broader conceptual framework for understanding the need for specialization and some of the necessary factors needed for an interpreter to achieve specialization (Witter-Merithew, 2010). As part of that work, specific recommendations emphasized the importance of addressing specialization within legal interpreting and steps to be taken in order to advance this area of specialization.

Other authors have underscored the need to view interpreting in legal settings as a distinct area of practice that requires specialized skills and training (Hale, 2002; 2007; Lee, 2009; Russell, 2002, 2008; Walker & Shaw, 2011).

2.2. *Specialization Credentialing and Training*

North American legislation has supported spoken and signed language interpreters in their efforts to define interpreting in legal settings as a specialized area of interpreting practice. Mikkelsen (1998) identified numerous federal and state statutes in the U.S. that helped define the role of the court interpreter and led to the development of standards of conduct for interpreters in legal settings. Canada, an officially bilingual nation, ensures access to court proceedings in English or French; and, in areas of Canada where there are large numbers of First Nations people, language rights legislation ensures services in multiple aboriginal languages. In more recent years, an increasing number of countries, in accordance with the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of Disabled Persons (UNCRPD), are officially recognizing the signed language(s) of their countries. These events have served to advance the profession of interpreting and to require improved standards of practice. These standards of practice include the development of codes of ethics, guiding documents, and accreditation procedures.

In addition to legislation, the field of sign language interpreting in both Canada and the U.S. has worked with hiring agencies to develop the minimum qualifications to practice in courts. There are entities providing interpreting services in the U.S. that require interpreters to demonstrate a high level of specialized expertise (Witter-Merithew & Nicodemus, 2010). In addition, several state courts now require the RID Specialist Certification (e.g., Maine, California, and Ohio), whereas other states do not require specialist certification but may require the RID Generalist Certificate. Although there is inconsistency in applying the standard, increasingly we see professional organizations working with the justice system to recognize the specialized qualification.

There are two accrediting bodies for signed language interpreters in North America: RID in the U.S. and AVLIC in Canada. Both organizations have two-part knowledge and performance testing processes, and both grant certification to those candidates demonstrating the skills and knowledge deemed satisfactory. What differs between the two organizations is that since 1980, RID has offered a specialist's certificate in interpreting in legal settings, the SC:L, whereas AVLIC offers a generalist certificate only. AVLIC also has a guide for interpreters working with legal discourse, identifying the specialized skills and knowledge necessary to interpret in such settings, urging courts and legal personnel to hire certified interpreters who possess additional training in interpreting in legal settings. AVLIC encourages interpreters to acquire the necessary advanced discourse, protocol, and process knowledge prior to working in interactions that involve legal discourse. The AVLIC document also places an emphasis on managing legal discourse as opposed to settings, reflecting a current understanding that legal discourse occurs across multiple settings.

The European Legal Interpreters and Translators Association (EULITA) was founded in 2009 as a result of a 2-year project under the European Union's Criminal Justice Program, in which three associations of professional legal interpreters and translators (both spoken and signed), three universities training legal interpreters and translators, and two experts from the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AICC) and the International Federation of Translators (FIT) cooperated to prepare the foundation of a European association of legal interpreters and translators.

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EULITA shares the RID and AVLIC's goal of improving the quality of training available for interpreters and translators working in legal settings and moving the specialization forward in an organized manner, which includes addressing accreditation processes used within Europe. The 2010 report of the European Judicial Systems, *Efficiency and Quality of Justice*, included court interpreting for the first time, citing that a growing concern for Europe is efficient access to quality translation and interpreting services (Council of Europe, 2010).

2.3. Generalist Interpreter Training Models

Within the U.S., ASL–English interpreter education has expanded from short-term programs in the 1970s to well-established diploma and bachelor degree programs, and in more recent years, to graduate programs at the master's and PhD levels. An important move in advancing the education of signed language interpreters in the U.S. was the decision made by RID to require a bachelor's degree prior to sitting for certification exams. This change, which went into effect in July 2012, resulted in numerous changes in the configuration of programs and the dismantling of some 2-year programs in favor of 4-year programs.

Canadian ASL–English interpreter education has merged into 3- or 4-year tracks of training, depending on the postsecondary institution. Most students complete a full-time 1-year Deaf Studies program, followed by 2 years of full-time studies in ASL–English interpreting. Throughout North America, the programs focus on providing a generalist education, graduating practitioners who can work in a range of community-based settings. Once interpreters have a solid interpreting foundation, built on education and experience, they are then ready to specialize in an area of practice, such as interpreting in legal settings.

2.4. Training Models for Interpreting in Legal Settings

Specialized training approaches for interpreting in legal settings have varied within North America and in Europe. Witter-Merithew (2010) reviewed the history of preparation opportunities for ASL–English interpreters to work in legal settings. From the first training in 1974–1976 at Wayne State University Law School to the development of 3-week intensive courses offered by Gallaudet University and California State University Northridge and followed by combined training for Spanish–English and ASL–English interpreters in 1986, interpreting in legal settings has been viewed as an area requiring specialized training. The training available continued to expand beyond the 3-week format to an expanded program of coursework, and in 2001, the DO IT Center expanded the scope and sequence to begin delivering a series of four courses leading to a specialty certificate (Witter-Merithew, 2010).

For ASL–English interpreters in the U.S., acquiring the advanced training needed to achieve the RID specialist certification has often meant a series of workshops provided by state or regional interpreting organizations. Other interpreters have chosen to participate in courses designed for spoken language interpreters, such as the Legal Interpreting program housed at Boston University, as well as language-specific courses for ASL–English interpreters. In Canada, ASL–English interpreters have pursued advanced training by participating in U.S. offerings and short-term workshops available on an ad hoc basis in Canada.

For European interpreters wishing to specialize in interpreting in legal settings, there are numerous courses across several countries. Since 2009, EULITA has offered comprehensive training for both spoken and signed language interpreters and translators, and typically these interpreters and translators possess an undergraduate or graduate degree prior to specialization. A core curriculum has been developed for the training of interpreters and translators working in legal domains, and EULITA is currently addressing guidelines for the certification and recertification of interpreters and translators in legal settings.

2.5. Technology and Interpreter Education

Over the past few years, the use of emerging technologies has influenced the delivery of interpreter education, moving the traditional face-to-face classes to virtual classrooms in which students can participate in the learning regardless of geography (Carr & Steyn, 2000). Blasco Mayer and Jimenez Ivars (2007) identified that new

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software developments have allowed digital laboratories to dramatically change how spoken language interpreting is taught, bringing the lab to students' home computers and, allowing them access to practice materials 24 hours a day. Similarly, Gorm Hansen and Shlesinger (2007) suggested that digital technologies could serve to reduce anxiety for interpreting students while facilitating self-paced and self-monitored practice.

Many interpreter education programs have moved to blend technology into existing programming, using platforms such as Blackboard and Moodle to design learning environments that take advantage of the opportunities that exist and bringing classroom discussions, readings, and activities into a virtual space. One of the earliest providers of distance education for ASL–English interpreters in the U.S. was the DO IT Center in Colorado, which began offering training for interpreters in educational settings using online courses, distance tutors, and mentors, and summer face-to-face programming. The Master Mentor Program, operated by Dr. Betsy Winston while she was at Northeastern University in Massachusetts, was an early model of ongoing professional development in the form of distance education for signed language interpreters in the U.S. In Australia, postgraduate diploma programs in interpreting and translation for spoken and signed language interpreters have also relied on blending distance and face-to-face learning opportunities (Napier, 2006).

2.6. Adult Education and Program Development

Program development from an adult education perspective and teaching activities for adult-related learning have framed many translation and interpreting programs. The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has influenced European programs by emphasizing that students must be active in their learning processes (Sanchez-Gijon, Aguilar-Amat, Mesa-Lao, & Pahisa Sole, 2009). Building on constructivist principles and problem-based learning techniques, interpreting students bring forward their learning needs in order to work collaboratively in teams and small groups (Napier, 2006; Sanchez-Gijon et al., 2009). This approach to learning is widely practiced throughout Canada, the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, and the U.K., capitalizing on the adult education literature and approaches. Napier (2006) summarized the literature that is relevant in this area, suggesting that effective pedagogy must be built on active learning, student-centered learning, and experiential learning, and there must be an interface between learning and the demands of the workplace. Seeking input from the learners in designing and implementing programs, whether professional development in structure or formal degree programs, is key to successful planning and learner satisfaction.

3. Methodology

The findings that form the foundation for this article are based on a survey conducted by three researchers in North America. The survey was designed to collect demographic and relevant information on signed language interpreters relative to the provision of interpreting services in legal settings in North America. Data were collected on the type of practices interpreters used in their work in legal settings, their training related to interpreting in legal settings, and what they believed to be training needs that had not been met. It is this latter set of data related to training, both received and needed, that is presented in this article.

The three researchers, representing three different educational institutions in North America, obtained ethical approval from institutional review boards at each of their institutions prior to conducting the study. The research team developed the questionnaire that was used to collect the data and obtained feedback on the content and design of the survey instrument from a small group of three individuals, interpreters who specialized in interpreting in legal settings and experienced researchers. (To view the questionnaire, please contact the researchers at len.roberson@unf.edu.)

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3.1. *Participants*

Participants were ASL–English interpreters in the U.S. and Canada. The study targeted current certified signed language interpreters (deaf and hearing) and other noncertified interpreters in both countries, many of whom currently provide interpreting services in legal settings. The sample included interpreters who did not work in legal settings, and data were obtained regarding their reasons for not working in these settings. Potential participants were identified from the RID and AVLIC membership rosters. In the U.S., the entire certified membership of RID was used. The list of names and email addresses was purchased from RID. In addition, noncertified interpreters in the U.S. who were deaf were also invited to participate by an invitation sent to the Deaf Caucus Member section of RID. In Canada, the entire membership was invited to participate via email communication from AVLIC to its members.

The names and email addresses of all potential participants were entered into the online survey tool Vovici, housed at the University of North Florida. A total of 6,657 participants were invited to participate in the study via an electronic invitation sent by the Vovici survey system. The invitation was a request for the recipient's participation in the study and an explanation of the study, including information about anonymity. Participation in the research study was voluntary, and no payment was offered to those who completed the survey. Included in the email was a hyperlink to the online survey. After 4 weeks, a follow-up email was sent reminding individuals who had not yet completed the survey about the request for their participation. The follow-up email again explained the study and the value of participant input and requested that they complete the survey. One additional follow-up contact was made 2 weeks after the first follow-up, making it 6 weeks following the initial contact. This last reminder was sent only to those who had not yet completed the survey. After six weeks, the survey was discontinued. In the end, 1,995 individuals completed the survey between March and May 2009. This represents a 30% response rate, which is a robust rate for survey research (Creswell, 2002).

3.2. *Instrument*

The survey consisted of 64 questions and was developed using the Vovici online survey tool. The question formats included closed questions, multiple choice questions, and open-ended questions. Nine questions related specifically to the training, education, and preparation of interpreters for legal specialization. The survey was divided into eight parts, including general information; interpreting in legal settings experience; interpreting in legal settings training; interpreting in legal settings practices to include use of simultaneous and consecutive interpreting, preparation, deaf and hearing teams, and protocols; and a concluding section seeking final thoughts and recommendations from the participants.

3.3. *Procedures and Data Analysis Approaches*

Survey data were analyzed using SSPS and the statistical processes built into Vovici. The researchers wanted the content to be analyzed for themes that emerged in the data, and for the participants' perspectives to be retained in their original words, so the qualitative data were analyzed using a software program known as NVivo 9.

4. **Findings**

The following section highlights the findings pertinent to the preparation of interpreters who work in this specialized area. Findings are also reported regarding the reasons why those interpreters who do not work in legal settings choose not to do so. Please note that when asked for comments, participants provided a large volume of comments. We have chosen quotes that are representative of the data collected and which speak to the themes below.

Training Interpreters for Legal Specialization

4.1. Years of General Interpreting Experience and Interpreting in Legal Settings Experience

Information relative to participants' interpreting experience, both in general and legal settings, was requested. Table 1 presents data on the number of years participants had provided interpreting services in general. One third of the respondents (33.3%) had between 11 and 20 years of interpreting experience. Over one third had 21 or more years experience as interpreters. Table 2 highlights the respondents' experience with interpreting in legal settings; 46% indicated they provided interpreting in legal settings services, with the majority (55.6%) providing interpreting services in legal settings for 10 years or fewer.

Table 1: Years providing interpreting services in general

Years	%
1– 10	28.7
11– 20	33.3
21– 30	25.7
31– 40	11
41– 45	1.3

Table 2: Years providing interpreting services in legal settings

Years	%
1– 10	55.6
11– 20	25.9
21– 30	12.4
31– 40	5.5
41– 45	.4

4.2. Reasons Behind Not Interpreting in Legal Settings

Participants were asked whether or not they provided interpreting services in legal settings, and 54% indicated they did not. There were many reasons behind the decision to not interpret in legal settings (see Table 3). The primary reason was lack of training, with the second most cited reason being lack of knowledge of legal discourse.

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The third most frequent reason why participants did not provide interpreting services in legal settings was a “concern about the consequences of potential errors.” Participants also indicated that a lack of knowledge in key areas related to this specialization in interpreting prevented them from providing services in legal settings. These key areas included legal systems and legal settings. It is worth noting that of those who did not provide interpreting in legal settings, 48% did not do so because they lack the specialty certification in interpreting in legal settings. It is also worth noting that 1.1% stated they are not willing to have their work monitored as a reason for not interpreting in legal settings.

Table 3: Reasons for not interpreting in legal settings

Reason	Frequency (%)
Lack of training	67.8
Lack of knowledge of legal discourse	62.0
Concern about consequences of potential errors	60.7
Lack of knowledge of legal systems	49.6
Lack of certification	48.0
Lack of knowledge of legal settings	46.5
Work fulltime in other settings	44.9
Concern about potential liability issues	37.1
Lack of confidence	35.7
Availability of more experienced interpreters	26.1
High levels of stress	23.4
Other	16.0
Legal systems unwilling to provide team interpreters	5.2
Prior unpleasant experience	4.8
Insufficient pay in my region	3.8
Unwillingness to be monitored	1.1

Note: Values represent percentages of total responses.

The following statements from participants illustrate some of the reasons why they do not interpret in legal settings:

I am not qualified due to lack of training—i.e., knowing signs, etc. I am familiar with legal settings and know and understand the terminology in English but do not sufficiently know the sign vocabulary to render messages faithfully.

I do not feel that I have a sufficient knowledge of how to navigate the legal system to ensure that I can provide adequate interpreting services. I also do not feel confident in my understanding of the content that I would be interpreting.

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Need legal training before I work in a legal setting to feel confident and knowledgeable while interpreting. I would not feel comfortable in a setting using language I do not understand or know the signs for.

I need appropriate training in the area of legal interpreting to be able to do a successful, competent job in that arena.

...lack of training, lack of confidence and concern about potential liability issues.

I am not interested in legal interpreting. I work in the VRS setting, and because of the inability to match assignments to my existing skill set, I seek training in the basics to help me provide legal interpreting to the extent that it exists on the phone.

One theme found in the data was how the lack of mentoring has influenced individuals to not interpret in legal settings. The following sentiments were shared by participants related to mentoring:

I do not provide interpreting in legal settings due to the inability to get appropriate mentoring opportunities.

There is simply insufficient mentoring for legal settings.

I don't feel trained enough in this field therefore there is no certificate that I have obtained. No one is willing to mentor in that field. Believe me, I've tried to find mentors.

I would like to participate in a legal practicum course—a guided way of getting involved in legal interpreting through observation, discussion, and mentoring.

4.3. *Academic Preparation: General and Specific*

The data indicated that 43% of the respondents had a 4-year degree as their highest academic degree and 27.6% had a graduate degree (master's or doctorate) as their highest degree. In addition, 29.4 % of the respondents held a 2-year degree as their highest academic degree (in any field). Participants were overwhelmingly interested (72%) in taking college or university courses in interpreting in legal settings if offered for credit. There was an overwhelming response to this question, with several hundred comments provided. The statements below are representative of those responses and support the idea of academic preparation in the field of interpreting in legal settings:

I would like intensive legal training providing theoretical and mock practical work including lecture, group discussions which apply theory, observation of real interpreted situations, and mentorship.

I would like a year-long college program that would be offered online or a once a week night program that is offered at a college close to my home. There is so much information involved with

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legal interpreting that there would need to be at least a year to learn all that is required of the interpreter and to gain the confidence needed to interpret in those settings.

A program that led to a master's degree or could be part of a broader master's program that focused on legal interpreting.

A legal "track" would be ideal. Something that accommodates working professional interpreters looking for more intense training.

For those who have a 4-yr degree a master's program would be nice, otherwise there's no point in paying for credit hrs. Also, my VRS company will not reimburse for credit programs, so my preference would be an intensive online program w/o college credit.

There should be a master's degree program offered with different emphasis. Most AA and BA degrees are for educational or general interpreting. What is next? Why not have a MA degree in either legal interpreting, medical interpreting, or business interpreting?

4.4. Professional Development and Training Received

Participants were asked to identify topics in which they had received training and whether or not such training was helpful in their work interpreting in legal settings. Table 4 identifies the topics and whether the participants in this study who participated in trainings in the identified areas found them helpful.

Table 4: Helpfulness of training taken

Training Topic	Helpful	Not Helpful
Introduction to legal systems	95.2	4.8
Legal vocabulary	94.5	5.5
Overview of criminal law	94.2	5.8
Language use	93.9	6.1
Hearing/hearing teams	93.2	6.8
Deaf/hearing teams	92.9	7.1
Overview of civil law	92.7	7.3

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Qualifying the interpreter	92.2	7.8
Interpreting the Miranda	92.2	7.8
Preparation strategies	91.7	8.3
Mock trial experience	91.4	8.6
Proceedings interpreting	90.6	9.4
Working with children	90.4	9.6
Witness interpreting	90.3	9.7
Table interpreting	89.6	10.4
Overview of family law	88.3	11.7
Working as a monitor interpreter	86.1	13.9
Jury Trials with deaf jurors	85.3	14.7
Legal interpreting and VRS settings	81.0	19.0
Forensic assessment protocols	80.7	19.3
Overview of Young Offenders Act	79.6	20.4

Note: Values represent percentages of total responses.

4.5. Professional Development and Training needed

Participants were asked to identify topics about which they felt they needed additional training. Numerous topics were identified by interpreters, with the most frequently identified topics falling into the categories of legal discourse and processes, working with deaf/hearing teams, interpreting techniques, and ethics and decision making. Table 5 lists the themes that emerged from responses.

Table 5: Topics

Specialized legal language
Children
New immigrants

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Legal lexicon discourse in each of the following legal settings:

- Forensic events
- Domestic violence
- Depositions
- Law enforcement
- Jury trials with deaf jurors
- Courtroom procedures and protocol
- Reading of constitutional rights
- Overview of criminal, civil, and family law
- Witness interpreting

Interpreting techniques

- Consecutive interpreting
- Error correction
- Monitoring interpreting techniques
- Preparation strategies
- Working in teams (deaf/hearing, hearing/hearing)

VRS calls that involve legal discourse and/or interaction

- Ethics and decision making

Error correction

Team composition (knowing when deaf interpreters are needed)

Qualifying as the interpreter

Interpreting or passing a VRS call

The data showed that interpreters recognized the need to be aware of the skills and knowledge required to work effectively in legal settings. In addition, participants indicated their need to obtain, maintain, and enhance their skills and knowledge. Participants indicated a strong desire for mock trial experiences as one way of applying knowledge gained in training and acquiring the skills necessary for this specialization.

Participants provided examples of how the interpreter's decisions and actions have consequences on the work they do and the people with whom they work. There was specific focus on the consequences of adequate preparation (or lack thereof). Study participants said the following about the overall impact of preparation:

Preparation, or lack thereof, influences all factors for interpreting in legal settings. The details of the case, the charges, the language/s need of the setting and/or deaf individual/s involved, the knowledge of what proceeding/s will occur, discovering specific items and actions when handling concepts such as "weapon/s" or "assault." There are several more ways, but those are some of the factors that preparation, or lack thereof, will influence.

When unprepared my confidence level drops significantly, which has a definite impact on my ability to understand signed testimony, etc., as well as impacting my clarity in expressing legal terms and expressions used by lawyers and judges.

Preparation gives more confidence and ability to judge my qualifications for the assignment.

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In addition, participants provided several statements that support the need for training in one or more of the areas listed above in Table 5. These statements are provided below.

I always prefer to have a deaf/hearing team in legal settings and am limited only by the tendency of the courts, attorneys, etc, to dismiss the benefit of using a deaf interpreter. However, I do more strongly advocate for a deaf interpreter when the deaf client lacks the language and exposure to information that would allow them to comprehend the legal system and the possible outcomes of their case.

I refuse to do the job if the client is minimal language [sic], or foreign language without a deaf team. However there are times I feel a youth or certain deaf person would definitely benefit from a CDI, but since I live in a remote area and they come from 3 hours away, I have reserved the request for the most dire cases.

4.6. Preferred Delivery of Professional Development and Training

In an effort to explore how future training might be provided, participants were asked to indicate their preferred training delivery formats. The top three formats for training were, in order of preference, single weekend trainings, blended learning (defined as a combination of online learning and face-to-face learning), and distributed delivery where training occurs one weekend a month with practical application and learning activities in between the weekend meetings. Some of the comments provided by participants are presented below as a sample of the types of delivery desired:

If the program was offered near me, then something offering a series of night classes would be the best. Maybe 3-hour classes twice a week for two or three semesters. If the program was not located near me, then an intensive summer program would be nice. I don't think online classes would be effective for someone like myself with no legal experience.

Face-to-face with online work conducted between sessions. I would prefer whatever length of time needed to cover the topics in depth. For me it is important to make sure there is time between introducing new topics and then time to digest the information, before moving on to application. This is why I prefer an ongoing training that has some time between sessions, perhaps monthly.

I'd want weekend all-day training with online study courses during the week over the course of one month.

I would be able to participate in a program that was part time that allowed me to continue to work and not be away from my family too much.

I do prefer the semester-by-semester format online with a summer internship at the end. Since there is so much to learn, I think it would have to take some time to accomplish that.

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4.7. *Interpreting Legal Discourse in VRS or VRI settings*

Interpreting in VRS settings is relatively new to the field and has quickly become an often-used service in the U.S. Participants were asked whether or not they handled calls that were legal in nature (e.g., a call from an attorney to a deaf client, a call from Child Protective Services to a deaf parent) in their work as VRS or VRI interpreters. They also were asked whether or not they could pass calls for which they felt unprepared on to another interpreter. Of those participants who indicated they do work in VRS and VRI settings (50.8% of the study participants), 90.7% indicated that they do receive calls that are legal in nature. 46.1% said they take calls of a legal nature, and 61.8% indicated they felt prepared to handle the legal calls. 31.1% who work in VRS and take VRS calls of a legal nature will pass the call to another interpreter if they feel unprepared or uncomfortable, whereas 5.4% said they will not pass the call if they feel unprepared or uncomfortable. 4.7% said they do not take calls of a legal nature.

5. Discussion

We turn now to a discussion on the findings in order to consider the issues for the education, professional development, and training of interpreters in legal settings. There are a number of implications and recommendations that arise from the data that are situated in the North American context, and we believe these also will apply to other countries and other signed and spoken languages. What may differ is how they are addressed depending on organizations or educational institutions available in the country. We encourage readers to consider their specific region and country and how partnerships can be established across regions and across countries to further develop training available to interpreters who work in legal settings.

5.1. *Training: Content and Delivery Options and Outcomes*

The lack of training and knowledge, coupled with the consequences of potential errors, were the most frequent reasons practitioners gave for not interpreting in legal settings. It is advisable that major stakeholders, including professional organizations, educators, and educational institutions, address the type of training and information that practitioners need in order to increase their capacity to work in this specialty. Participants indicated preferences for delivery options for content and format.

5.1.1 Content

As seen in Table 5, participants specified the training that would be relevant for them. These content areas, combined with meaningful practical application, must be delivered by professional organizations and academic institutions in a coherent and sequenced manner and be accessible countrywide. Participants identified some training as more helpful than others. Once again, this should serve as a reminder to verify that the content, curriculum, and delivery method meet the needs of learners.

Participants indicated a strong desire for mock trial experience as a way to apply the knowledge and techniques gained through training. Their desire for practical interpreting experience applies to other legal events as well, such as depositions, attorney-client meetings, and interrogations. Training in deaf/hearing teams also is needed across all of these situations. This practical experience should include preparation strategies and protocol. The benefit of hands-on experience, analyzing one's own work coupled with feedback and supervision, and seeing the work modeled in order for practitioners to acquire the skills necessary for this specialized area of work cannot be overstated. This type of training and work also provides practitioners with information about the gaps in their skills and knowledge and the type of focus their individual learning requires.

A consistent theme across the study was the desire for mentoring opportunities in order to address the lack of confidence and need for ongoing training and supervision among interpreters who are reluctant to provide interpreting in legal settings. The participants in this study expressed a strong desire for this approach to learning,

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which supports what the NCIEC Best Practices document (2009) speaks to regarding mentoring interpreters working in legal settings. The document indicates the need for formal and informal approaches to mentoring and specified that organized mentor training for this specialization would be helpful for building capacity among our profession. Drawing on the blended delivery options cited earlier, the authors of the document recommend designing and implementing a training program for experienced practitioners in order to develop a pool of talented mentors with effective strategies for this specialized work. These mentors then could be used at the local, regional and national levels, depending on the nature of mentorship required by the practitioner needing to develop the readiness.

It is disconcerting that participants indicated they did not have the strategies for recognizing when they are not qualified to accept an assignment with legal discourse. We anticipated interpreters would have strategies from their generalist practice for dealing with this aspect of professional practice and ethics. In addition, respondents also commented on the need to have strategies to deal with requests from hiring bodies that pressure interpreters to accept work for which they have determined they are not qualified. This may include responding to colleagues and courts that point to national certification and years of experience as rationale for taking the work. For a field that is attempting to develop this specialization, both of these strategies result in unacceptable consequences and speak to the need of basic ethics and self-assessment training. Ultimately, this also points to a need to educate others about how to define “qualified interpreter” in this specialized area and how to recruit interpreters who are qualified.

Participants documented a need for specialized training in VRS/VRI situations related to recognizing calls of a legal nature and consequences of deciding to accept or turn over such a call (see Section 4.7). Specialized training for interpreters working in VRS environments must be supplemented so that interpreters can recognize when they are dealing with legal discourse and gain strategies for getting a team and dealing with the legal discourse and interaction, as well as for turning over the call should the interpreter not be suited to it. This study revealed that practitioners are interpreting in legal settings without any training in this specialized area, which has significant implications for VRS providers and for consumers (deaf and hearing) who may have no idea if the work is inaccurate.

Clearly the content areas identified in this study point to the need for interpreter educators, as a profession, to establish standardized curricula that will support the development of the skills and knowledge needed.

5.1.2 Delivery Options and Outcomes of Training

Since the early 1990s, the field has seen multiple delivery options and models in North America. Some examples of this approach are a 3-week face-to-face training in one location, workshops in home communities (2–5 days at a time), workshops during conferences and as pre- or postconference trainings, and conferences focused specifically on interpreting in legal settings. Trainings do not appear to use standardized curricula, nor do the workshops fit into a structured plan that would lead to academic credit or certificate credential. Most, if not all, have been created in response to a need for the training, in collaboration with the deaf community, workshop participants, trainers, and the legal community. We believe this model of collaboration must be maintained regardless of the design and delivery of training.

A dominant theme in the data was the desire for distance/online formats in combination with face-to-face components of training. It was also clear that the participants believe that solely online delivery is not the best option; they stressed the need for face-to-face training and simulated, hands-on experiences as ways to ensure the training is authentic and meaningful. As noted in the literature review, there are programs such as those offered by the DO IT Center that offer a structured blend of online and face-to-face classes, combining theory and practical elements, and resulting in a certificate. Given that this study was conducted in 2009, there have been technological changes that need to be considered when planning for a combination of multiple delivery options. These delivery options identified by the participants apply regardless of content.

Participants want credit courses delivered by academic institutions. Even though 43% of respondents have a 4-year degree and 27.6% have graduate degrees, 72% of the participants indicated they want additional academic credit courses in this specialty. It may be useful for academic institutions to consider postgraduate certificate programs as one way to meet this demand.

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The data also suggest that undergraduate interpreting programs could also begin with a minimum of one course, introducing learners to the setting and specialization. Gallaudet University and the University of North Florida provide these types of courses at the graduate level. In these courses, students focus on translation and interpreting in the consecutive mode while learning about the discourse and interactive features specific to legal settings. They also learn about specific ethical requirements and considerations in legal settings. These courses are described as introductory to the setting and students are explicitly encouraged to take all available additional training once they have several years of general interpreting experience prior to working in this setting.

Mentoring services can be delivered in several ways. For example, at the local level, mentoring could occur in teamed assignments, observations, and simulated practice sessions. At the regional level, mentoring could take advantage of technologies allowing mentors and mentees to be at a distance to hold mentorship conversations. These same approaches could be implemented for training mentors to do this work. The field could consider a certification for mentors in legal specialization.

In the U.S. and Canada there are various kinds of mentorship programs provided by universities, interpreting agencies, and professional organizations. Although these models exist, there is a need to collaborate on the development of a structured mentorship program for interpreters who are experienced in working in legal settings. For example, large video relay service providers currently operate mentorship programs in both Canada and the U.S. In addition, both national interpreter organizations advocate for and support mentorship opportunities and programs.

With over 18% of the participants having more than 21 years of interpreting experience in legal settings, it would be prudent for the field to capitalize on that experience as mentors and plan for knowledge transfer as people may move towards retirement. Seizing the opportunity to provide training in mentoring to more seasoned practitioners will advance the field in significant ways. Finally, there are opportunities to combine across countries as one way to collaborate and build effective training and delivery models.

5.2. *Qualities of Interpreter Educators and Mentors*

Institutions and organizations, as well as individual practitioners, must ensure that they that are engaging the services of educators and mentors who can teach and model effective and best practices for working with legal discourse and in legal settings. In order for this to occur, educators and mentors must consistently upgrade their own skills and stay current with knowledge in the specialty. With the content areas outlined above, content specialists need to be considered for each of the content areas. Legal content should be taught by legal experts, both deaf and hearing, and interpreting skills taught by interpreter educators, both deaf and hearing. Educators who are teaching interpreting skills must be able to analyze the interpretation product for accuracy and the interpreting process for effectiveness and be able to teach those skills to practitioners. In addition, they must be able to teach practitioners the skills of self-analysis. A structured, sequenced, and standardized curriculum that considers the content, delivery options, and training outcomes specified in this study must be designed and implemented.

5.3. *Closing Thoughts*

One of the most important themes that arose in this study is that interpreting in legal settings is not an area of work or specialty in which all practitioners are well suited or interested. As Witter-Merithew and Nicodemus (2011) stressed, interpreting in legal settings is a specialized area and, as such, significant investment of time is required on the part of the individual practitioner to acquire the skills and knowledge for this work. This is also a critical theme to be addressed by professional associations when lobbying employers for appropriate standards. The consequences of hiring interpreters who lack the necessary specialized skills and knowledge are grave and have profound implications on deaf people or other minority language consumers accessing the judicial system. Thus, all major stakeholders have a significant role in developing this area of specialization to ensure that the training required for the specialized training is available and meaningful for practitioners, and that employers and courts move to consistently hire interpreters who have these specialized skills.

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Almost half of the interpreters surveyed (46%) do not interpret in legal settings. This may be a potential pool of interpreters who could acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for this specialization, which may increase the capacity of the judicial system to meet the needs of the deaf community.

Of note, 56% of the respondents who interpret in legal settings report 10 years or fewer of interpreting experience. This invites conversation about the need for appropriate training for newer practitioners. A specialized area such as interpreting legal discourse requires a solid foundation of interpreting experience, and practitioners with insufficient experience may not possess exposure to language diversity and the range of experiences necessary to make immediate ethical decisions in complicated matters.

6. Recommendations

Witter-Merithew and Nicodemus (2011) stress that

without the intentional development of specialization and the ability of specialists to capture the unique patterns of practice that define specialization in interpreting, it will remain difficult—perhaps impossible—to protect the interest of consumers who rely on the services of interpreters with specialized competence. (p. 73)

Our recommendations from the findings in this study are as follows:

6.1. *Practitioner Competencies Needed*

Individual practitioners must seek out initial, current, and ongoing training and mentorship. This includes knowledge of legal systems, changing laws, new protocols and practices, and so forth. Practitioners may need to set up training opportunities for themselves or a group of interested interpreters when there are no institutional or organizational trainings offered. Although we recognize that some of these exist individually, we are recommending a consistent model of training be developed in which the content is delivered in a particular sequence on a regular schedule, so it is available to a broader pool of potential interpreters.

- a. Linguistic fluency and cultural adeptness are prerequisite skills in order to provide meaning-based interpretation to work in situations with legal consequences. Interpreters must seek out honest and accurate assessments from language and cultural experts of their language and cultural skills, and incorporate changes in these areas to modify and enhance their skills.
- b. Practitioners must be proficient in all modes of interpretation (translation, sight translation, consecutive interpreting, and simultaneous interpreting).
- c. In order to provide effective interpretations, interpreters must do accurate message analysis.
- d. Interpreters must perform error identification and correction.
- e. Interpreters must be skilled in self-analysis.
- f. Practitioners must be aware of the ethical consequences of their decisions and actions. This includes the consequences of:
 - i. Determining appropriateness for and accepting an assignment;
 - ii. Appropriate and thorough preparation (or the lack thereof)—determining what preparation is needed, how to conduct it, and how to prepare with the people with whom interpreters work;
 - iii. Training, experience, and skill in consecutive interpreting;

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- iv. Determining which mode(s) of interpretation will be most effective;
- v. When and how to work alone or as a team of interpreters, including as a team of deaf and hearing interpreters;
- vi. Ensuring that an event is preserved by video recording;
- vii. Identifying a situation that is legal in nature;
- viii. Turning back or turning over a VRS call; and
- ix. Not having the interpersonal skills required for this professional environment.

6.2. *Training for Educators and Mentors*

We recommend designing and delivering a specialized program for those educators and mentors who teach and mentor interpreters who work in legal settings. Those people conducting training must be able to offer ongoing modeling, assessment, and dialogue in their teaching and training to serve practitioners as well as prepare specialists to serve as educators, trainers, and mentors in the future.

Practitioners, educators, and mentors must be able model effective interpretation, assessing their work for accuracy, and decision-making skills, and make themselves available for observation and discussion.

6.3. *Content, Format, and Delivery*

Although the findings show a strong preference for a face-to-face mode of training, those providing training should consult potential participants to confirm the preferred preferences of potential participants. Given the small and dispersed number of people in many areas, regional approaches that include the use of blended technologies and a hybrid approach (a combination of face-to-face and remote/online) are preferred by many practitioners. A regional approach would be an effective way to capitalize on the resources in many areas.

6.4. *Sequence and Content*

Educational institutions must design and deliver specialized, systematic training that meets the current needs of interpreters. This may be in collaboration with professional organizations, be sponsored by professional organizations, or be taken on by individuals. We suggest the following systematic training sequence, which assumes prior linguistic and cultural competency:

1. Translation, sight translation, CI, and SI training (preparation in general, discourse and text analysis, error analysis, self-assessment, and ethics and decision making)
2. Team processes, and specifically deaf/hearing teams
3. Orientation to the legal system*
4. Legal discourse and interactions*
5. Types of law and laws pertaining to interpreters*
6. Protocol (videotaping, qualifying, conflict of interest checks, preparation strategies, and ethics and decision making)
7. Case preparation (preparing the individuals involved, establishing working conditions, materials preparation, ethics and decision making, etc.)
8. Message analysis and error correction specific to legal settings

*These items will be country specific, which includes the country and local culture(s).

We recommend collaboration between signed and spoken language interpreting communities in order to determine which courses could be made available to interpreters regardless of language pairs and which courses

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need to be language specific. Such an approach would foster collegiality among interpreters from different language communities and bring consistency to the training available to the legal system.

6.5. *Academic Recognition and Specialized Certification*

Educational institutions, in collaboration with professional organizations, should determine the options available for academic credit or a post-diploma program. For countries with generalist certification, we recommend exploration of a specialized certificate that determines the competencies of interpreters working in legal settings.

6.6. *Collaboration Among Stakeholders*

Based on our findings from this study that emphasize the need for training, we recommend collaboration among all stakeholders, including local deaf organizations and communities. We recommend that professional interpreting and deaf organizations in collaboration with local deaf communities implement ongoing education programs. These programs should be designed to assist courts and other legal personnel in understanding the consequences of hiring/using interpreters who are not qualified.

7. Conclusion

This research examined the experiences of Canadian and American interpreters related to legal interpreting, with particular focus on training and ongoing professional development needs. The data included responses from interpreters who currently provide interpreting in such areas and those who do not. The findings provide a context for understanding the needs of interpreters who would provide service in legal settings, if they had training. As well, the findings address the ongoing professional development needs in order for interpreters to maintain or enhance their skills in this specialized domain. The data show the topical areas most desired by interpreters in order to prepare for this specialized area of interpreting, and the formats preferred by the respondents. The majority of participants stressed the need for flexible training formats, which include face-to-face intensive experiences, online distance learning opportunities, and local and regional mentoring opportunities. The qualities most sought in mentors included the ability to model interpreting strategies and decision making that contribute to effective practice, and the ability to analyze the interpretation from a lens of linguistic effectiveness. Participants identified the content and topical areas that would be helpful to them. These included working within deaf/hearing teams, using consecutive interpreting, identifying and correcting errors, ethical decision making across a range of settings, and specialized training for dealing with issues of domestic violence, police interactions, depositions, and jury trials. The findings also point to the opportunities for collaboration among stakeholders involved (deaf community organizations, interpreting organizations, spoken language interpreters, justice system personnel, etc.) to plan for models of training that meet the needs of all and make effective use of the resources available.

The findings reveal that many practitioners understand the value of acquiring current knowledge specific to legal discourse and legal interactions, and in the practice of interpreting. However, the format of the training and content may either draw interpreters or prevent them from taking the training. Further, the data indicated that exposure to legal settings and understanding potential consequences in peoples' lives is a first step for interpreters in deciding if they wish to undertake this type of work. The fact that the data showed that *not* interpreting in legal settings is a conscious choice is an important decision to be aware of and to foster in all practitioners. Practitioners, when provided with opportunities to explore competencies required in an area of specialization, will be in a better position to make more conscious decisions about the work for which they are qualified.

Although the list of recommendations may appear lengthy, this is the type of work that must occur if the field is to develop the maturity and specialization that the people and communities we serve envision and deserve. Despite differences in legal systems and the status of interpreting as a profession across countries, there are opportunities for both regional and international collaborations in the area of developing training models and

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effective interpreting practices. Such a program of standardized professional development would serve consumers well and advance the field of both signed and spoken language communities, and could be realized in a coherent, organized fashion.

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Signed Language Academic Papers

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Abstract

Signed language academic papers are a new possibility that recent developments in technologies for recording, editing, presenting, and reviewing visual materials have made practical in an academic setting. This article presents guidelines the authors developed for papers specifically in American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting courses; however, signed language academic papers can be effectively used in signed language classes of all levels in any country.

The authors offer rationales for assigning signed language academic papers to bilingual students, and suggest style and practical guidelines analogous to guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA). Recommended guidelines address practical and academic considerations. The recommendations arose from a collaborative process with students and have been refined over time through implementation in an interpreting program. Observed benefits of signed language academic papers are a transformative change in students' conception of the capacities of signed language as a language; opportunities for linguistic analysis and improved fluency; opportunities for planned, formal, and academic use of signed language; and transfer of skills to interpretations and translations. The end result has produced successful student outcomes from the perspectives of students and instructors.

Keywords: ASL, signed language, academic papers, tools for bilingual classroom

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Signed Language Academic Papers

1. Introduction

The authors of this article co-taught a first semester interpreting course in fall 2009 (Fundamentals of Interpreting). During the second week of class, students approached us with a request to produce and submit some of their papers in American Sign Language (ASL). This request initiated our collaborative process of developing guidelines and grading rubrics for ASL academic papers. In this article, we present the parameters of academic signed language papers that we developed in our work with students. These parameters are analogous to written academic conventions.

1.1. Academic Papers and Video Texts

Written academic papers follow standard conventions and style manuals. In 1929, the first style manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) was published as a “standard of procedure, to which exceptions would doubtless be necessary, but to which reference might be made in cases of doubt” (Bentley et al., 1929, p. 57). Our goal has been to provide analogous general principles and guidelines for students and academicians producing academic papers in a signed language. (We have retained the English word *paper* to refer to an unpublished work developed in the context of an academic setting, regardless of language.) At this stage, our goal is to help lay a foundation toward a standardized set of principles and guidelines for use of signed language academic papers.

The Office of Bilingual Teaching and Learning at Gallaudet University hosted a series of presentations on Academic ASL in fall 2011. As part of this series, Raychelle Harris and Chris Nunn presented their findings on a study they conducted on academic ASL at Gallaudet University (Harris & Nunn, 2011). Their findings focused on language use and attitudes towards language. This provides a backdrop for information on language use in academic signed language papers.

In our review, the only other reference to what we have termed “ASL academic papers” or “signed language papers” is what the Office of Bilingual Teaching and Learning at Gallaudet University calls “video texts.” The Office of Bilingual Teaching and Learning website provides links to a number of resources for ASL use within academic settings, including tutorials of academic ASL modules and an undergraduate rubric for ASL public presentations. The tutorial modules are intended to aid students in developing skills in academic ASL and include a series of videos on Core Principles of ASL Composition that describe formatting suggestions for ASL academic use in video texts.²

Currently, published ASL journal articles can be found in the *Deaf Studies Digital Journal (DSDJ)*. *DSDJ* has submission requirements specific to that journal (see <http://dsdj.gallaudet.edu>) that will result in a posted presentation with visual components (main video, plus visual aids, picture in picture, and text citations). Authors provide the presentation, text, photos, and images, along with cue points, and *DSDJ* formats the presentation.

² We refer readers to these modules at http://www.gallaudet.edu/Office_of_Academic_Quality/Office_of_Bilingual_Teaching_and_Learning/Academic_ASL_Modules.html.

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From our review, *DSDJ* is the only publication that publishes in ASL. We are aware that the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT) and the *IJIE* have expressed interest in publishing signed language papers, but at present *IJIE* requires papers to be in English, and the CIT proceedings remain in English.

We collaborated with instructors and students across departments (interpreting, ASL, deaf studies, and general studies), undergraduate and graduate schools, and faculty at different institutions (Gallaudet University, Douglas College, Lakeland College, and the University of Alberta). In our initial collaboration we located rubrics for ASL presentations that focused on the use of the language. We did not find any instructions or rubrics for ASL academic papers. We had discussions with people from various programs, but to our knowledge no one had developed a style manual.

1.2. *Our Perspective*

We teach in the U.S., and our working languages are ASL and English. The work we share here can be applied to any signed language. Nothing in our recommendations is necessarily limited to the context of ASL. We have tried to reflect this belief in our writing. However, for the remainder of this commentary we refer to our own experience of developing ASL academic papers, with the assumption that our discussion can be applied to the development of an academic paper in any signed language. Throughout this paper when we talk about students and interpreters, we are talking about those who are deaf as well as those who are non-deaf. (The benefits of producing ASL academic papers are not contingent on whether students are deaf or non-deaf, nor are the benefits contingent on the students' native language.) We specify one or the other when necessary.

Furthermore, although we developed this approach for use in an interpretation and translation program, the principles laid out here could be applied in any academic course that uses a signed language as a classroom language. The core concepts underlying these recommendations for signed-language papers can be incorporated, with appropriate modified expectations and requirements, at any level of education (similar to incorporating written papers from a very early age).

This paper is an expanded version of our original presentation at the 2010 CIT convention entitled "Students' ASL Academic Papers: The How-To, the Benefits, and the F-U-N." Below, we discuss the rationale and outcomes for these papers; present and discuss the conventions, guidelines, and rubrics we developed; and discuss the implications and recommendations for incorporating ASL papers in academic settings.

2. ASL Academic Papers

As we are teachers of interpretation and translation it is incumbent upon us to create opportunities for students to increase and demonstrate their ability to use their working languages (in our case, ASL and English). Just as there are different levels of formality and complexity for written academic work, we envision educators tailoring the specifics of an ASL academic paper to analogous levels of formality and complexity. It is possible for educators to use ASL academic papers in the same way as written academic papers. Although the techniques are different, our expectation is that ASL academic papers are as formal and rigorous as their written counterparts.

ASL academic papers are not the same as ASL journal articles. Just as written term papers are a precursor to formal journal and other academic authorship, ASL academic papers allow students to develop the skills to progress toward journal articles and other academic authorship. Classroom ASL academic papers serve as a stepping-stone to developing the requisite skills for formal and academic ASL use and the development and argumentation of a thesis in a signed language. Likewise, ASL academic papers are distinct from presentations, in large part because the format is different. Presentations may be planned and even scripted; however, the audience is live, and there is opportunity for interaction, however minimal it may be in a particular case. Academic papers are intended to become frozen texts.

Throughout their academic careers, students have had the opportunity to produce written academic papers. With this article we are promoting an avenue for students to produce signed-language academic papers. The courses we teach require a variety of papers, which prior to 2009 were solely written (and, therefore, necessarily

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English) papers. In this section, we discuss the benefits of signed-language papers and suggest formatting conventions, style guidelines, and assessment rubrics for ASL academic papers.

2.1. *Benefits*

Once students proposed the idea of ASL academic papers, we immediately saw the value of such papers as in alignment with development and refinement of the requisite skills for interpreters and interpreting students, as well as with the core values of bilingualism. Below we discuss four benefits that we have observed and students have reported. There was one significant and unanticipated benefit, which has fundamental implications. We discuss this benefit first.

2.1.1 Paradigm Shift

ASL academic papers provide an opportunity for students to examine and broaden their worldview of ASL. Requiring ASL academic papers facilitated and forced a new level of understanding and embodiment of the language. Although we had not anticipated that creating signed-language papers would lead to a paradigm shift for the students, they reported and we observed that this was the case. In producing ASL academic papers, students reported a transformative and unexpected change in their understanding of ASL, their abilities to use ASL, and their conception of the capacities of ASL as a language. They said that being required to use ASL in a formal, planned, and academic manner afforded them the opportunity to examine their attitudes, formerly unconscious, toward the language. And in turn, being required to use ASL in an academic paper forced them to discover new ways to use the language that they had not had to do previously. Their linguistic understanding, use, and appreciation of the language increased.

We observed this transformation of students' attitudes toward, understanding of, and respect for, ASL. Although students and second-language users generally understand on an intellectual level that ASL is a fully capable language, they may have a tendency to actually use and work with ASL as though it is has limited capacities. Students may believe, for example, that ASL is unsuitable for discussing abstract concepts, and therefore has limited academic application.

A paradigm shift for students happened as they realized that limitations they had ascribed to ASL (consciously or not) were actually merely limits in their own language usage, not deficiencies in the language. The changes for students happened in a nonlinear fashion, but they included the following: (a) identifying unconscious beliefs about ASL, (b) recognizing how these beliefs limited their understanding of ASL, (c) identifying their own limitations in using ASL, and (d) making changes in usage toward more appropriate usage for different contexts. Notwithstanding previous protestations to the contrary, students who viewed ASL as a less than fully capable language began to shift their thinking. This shift led students to consider that they may not be as fluent in the language as they had thought, to open their minds to other possibilities, and to find ways to increase their proficiency in the language. This in turn allowed them to incorporate ASL more fully into their academic worldview.

2.1.2 Academic Papers

Being required to produce papers in ASL forced students to produce ASL on an academic level in a way that classroom use of the language alone did not. ASL academic papers require students to use the language in a register appropriate for academic discourse, which is not necessarily a consequence of classroom use of ASL. Using ASL in an academic manner may be a new experience for students, and it is a process that does not happen overnight. Nonetheless, we have consistently seen students make significant improvements in their ASL use as a result of being required to produce academic-level ASL, which then show up in their other uses of the language (i.e., the improvements are not limited to the papers themselves). This increased facility with language use occurred when students were compelled to find ways to successfully complete the assignment that they produce academic papers in ASL.

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2.1.3 Planned Formal and Academic Discourse

The process of creating multiple drafts of a paper in any language aids in the development of a thesis, cohesive use of discourse, and the ability to structure a paper to make clear and concise arguments with a logical progression of ideas and supporting information. The formal academic discourse expected in ASL academic papers required students to employ skills to create a planned, structured and edited paper. Whether students produce papers in ASL or English, the process is recursive, providing opportunities to inculcate beneficial habits of thought and organization. The improvements students made while working on ASL papers also carried over to their written English papers.

2.1.4 Language Analysis

In addition, ASL academic papers, including drafts, provide students with data they can use to analyze their own language use. Once papers have been recorded, students have the opportunity to review discrete parts of their language use on their own, with each other, and with their instructors. From this work, they can identify areas of appropriate and inappropriate language usage and develop plans for refining their language use.

This is significant because students have the opportunity to examine their own language production as they are constructing their thoughts, as opposed to when they are interpreting someone else's language use. For many students, an ASL academic paper might be the first opportunity they have to look at a recorded version of their language use and analyze it for appropriate linguistic features. By requiring ASL papers throughout a program, students gain practice at assessing their language use. Students analyze their own language production systematically through several drafts and through different assignments, throughout their academic career.

In addition, students studying their language use in ASL papers are analyzing *academic* language use, as opposed to narrative or conversational use. They are also analyzing their language use without the interference of the interpreting process. These factors highlight areas where students' ASL usage may be problematic and allows them to incorporate appropriate linguistic features.

2.2. *Formatting for ASL Academic Papers*

Style conventions exist to provide guidelines for standardization, convenience, and ease of readability (APA, 2010). We offer the conventions we have developed and modified, and we hope that these will contribute to the standardization of a style for ASL academic papers. The specific conventions that we present below are not as important as the fact that the field needs to come to agreement for one or more sets of conventions for ASL academic paper style(s).

2.2.1 Paper Conventions

As in any educational setting, instructors and programs have different expectations for written work, depending on the goal of any given assignment. This is as true for signed-language academic papers as it is for written academic papers. The types of paper required of students will vary according to course and assignment. We consciously walk students through the process of creating ASL academic papers by beginning with less formal and less complex papers. We then move on to more formal and complex papers requiring greater length, more citations, greater formality, and so forth. Our classes called for the following types of papers, in order of increasing formality and complexity:

- Reflection papers
- Self-analysis papers
- Linguistic and discourse analysis papers
- Research papers

We initially developed guidelines for ASL academic papers by reviewing guidelines and conventions for written academic papers. We used APA-style formatting, and incorporated elements (e.g., identifying information, reference lists) where appropriate. When we introduced the concept of ASL academic papers to students, we first talked about how a written academic paper is constructed, because they were familiar with this type of paper. We discussed general formatting expectations and requirements, such as margins, title page, and reference lists. This

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led to a discussion of how to create analogous formatting markers for a signed-language paper. The conventions and guidelines we present below are the result of our collaborative process with students as they completed their assignments. Subsequent to developing these guidelines, the Academic ASL Modules were created and posted (2010),³ and we now refer students to those as well. Below is a comparison of the signed-language and written conventions.

Table 1: Comparison of conventions

ASL	English
Title slide with identifying information	Identifying information (at top of first page or on cover page)
Table of contents slide* with time codes Section slides and other transitions	Page numbers Headings (and sub-headings)
Supplemental document*: table of contents, outline & reference page	APA style
Clear, flat, solid background Full frame Professional dress Professional stance (standing)	1"-1.25" margins 12-point <i>Times New Roman</i> Double-spaced Headers
Citing	Citing
Reference list at end of movie	Reference list at end of paper
Appropriate use of examples of work	Appropriate use of examples of work
Spell check	Spell check
Edit papers	Edit papers

*The purpose of the table of contents and section slides is to function as a guide to locating content within the documents, analogously to how page numbers, headings and sub-headings function in written work. This allows a reader to quickly scan for content sections. The supplemental document functions in the same way, but includes an outline that allows the instructor to have an overview, quick glance, and reference points for more of the content of the paper. It is likely that as we become more accustomed to scanning videos to locate the information we need, and as technology improves to allow for searches in a video, we will find this supplemental document will no longer be necessary. We have begun to test requiring students to use ELAN (Eudico Linguistic Annotator, a transcription software tool available as a free download from the Max Planck Institute website at <http://www.lat-mpi.eu/tools/elan>) and submit an .eaf file with their video that includes the information in the outline and table of contents. This may replace the supplemental document altogether.

2.2.2 Formatting style guide for ASL academic papers

In this section we provide an example of the guidelines we provide to students when we introduce ASL papers in a course, after we have discussed the parallels between an English and ASL academic paper (see Table 1 above). The guidelines are in the table below:

³[http://www.gallaudet.edu/office_of_academic_quality/office_of_bilingual_teaching_and_learning/academic ASL modules.html](http://www.gallaudet.edu/office_of_academic_quality/office_of_bilingual_teaching_and_learning/academic_ASL_modules.html)

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Table 2: Guidelines

Filming/ Recording	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Record with a clear background, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you use a curtain as a backdrop, iron it. ○ The wall behind you should be flat (not a corner), and free of visual distractions like outlets, pictures, etc. ○ Pay attention to how the light in the room changes at different times of the day to have the light be consistent. ▪ Full frame where you can be seen clearly (be sure you do not cut off your head or your arms/hands when they move) ▪ Professional dress ▪ Professional stance (standing rather than sitting) ▪ Place notes near the camera lens so you are not looking away when you look at your notes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider whether you want your notes to be nonverbal, screen shots from drafts, words, or a combination. ▪ Film with breaks so that you can edit with ease.
Slides See Figures 1-6	<p>You may use visual materials, titles, slides, and/or movie/DVD tools for the opening and/or closing and transitional portions of your paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifying information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student's name, instructor's name, course name and number, assignment name, date) ▪ Table of contents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To provide a list of your topics or sections <i>with</i> time codes ○ Formatted for ease ▪ Headings/section slides ▪ Quotes ▪ Citations (along the bottom of the frame) ▪ Examples ▪ References ▪ Avoid redundancy; avoid duplicating information—see below for slides; if you use a slide to provide information do not repeat that information in ASL, or vice versa.
Cites See Figures 4 and 5	<p>Ensure that it is clear what claim you are attributing to the author. You may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sign the citation before the claim (S-M-I-T-H, 1997), or ▪ Place the citation as a title on the bottom of the screen <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When using a quote, keep the original language on a slide if it is written or as a video insert if signed (do not translate quotes)
Examples included in paper See Figure 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Video clips or pictures from actual source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sample of clip full frame ○ Sample of clip in the frame and transition slide ▪ Reenacted examples
Typed document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Table of contents with time codes ▪ Typed outline follows the structure of your ASL academic paper ▪ Typed reference page

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These guidelines cover appearance, formality, professionalism, and formatting. As with any academic paper, students are advised that they may not turn in a “first draft,” and they are expected to proofread and edit their papers. It should be clear from the submitted work that a paper has gone through necessary revisions and is being turned in as a final paper. We recognize the challenge this may present in the beginning, as students need to acquire a degree of technical proficiency to produce and edit ASL academic papers. Below are images from student papers that illustrate text slides, quoting, citing, and including an example.

Figure 1
Identifying information

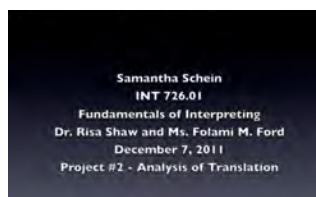


Figure 2
Table of contents with time codes

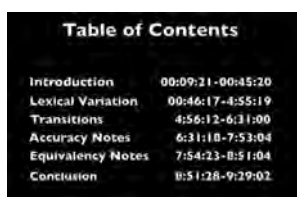


Table of Contents	
Introduction	00:09:21-00:45:20
Lexical Variation	00:46:17-4:55:19
Transitions	4:56:12-6:31:00
Accuracy Notes	6:31:10-7:53:04
Equivalency Notes	7:54:23-8:51:04
Conclusion	8:51:28-9:29:02

Figure 3
Headings/section slides

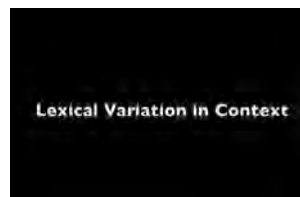


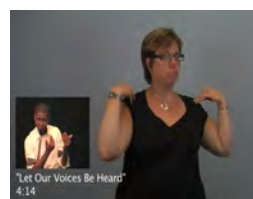
Figure 4
Quotes



Figure 5
Cites (along the bottom of the frame)



Figure 6
Sample of Picture-in-Picture



Figures 4 and 5 are examples of quoting and citing. If the student chooses to display a quote at the bottom of the screen or as a full frame slide, it has to remain on the screen for a sufficient time for the viewer to read the entire text. When the student cites an author (Figure 5), the citation should remain visible to identify the entire segment that is being attributed to that author. The image in Figure 6 shows an example of the student discussing the data she analyzed by using picture-in-picture with time code. Students can also choose to show the example full frame, transitioning to and from the example.

As ASL academic papers become normalized, the conventions and guidelines laid out here may not need to include the sort of general instructions that are assumed in the context of written work; for example, for written academic papers, “make sure your paper is not crumpled” and for ASL academic papers, “do not let your cat jump on your lap, and if this happens, be sure to edit it out.” However, it was through the process of students attempting their first ASL academic papers and submitting them that we realized the significance of explicitly noting the required elements until such conventions are fully developed and well established. Some of the early problems in students’ papers are listed below:

- Inconsistent or inappropriate fonts (shadowed, not professional or academic)
- Font sizes that were too small to read, or too large for the screen
- Background containing extraneous visual distractions (visible corners, outlets, or pictures/books, wrinkled curtain, shadows from natural light, noncontrasting or inconsistent color, people or animals walking through)
- Inappropriate dress (colors blend with skin, distracting tie, sleeves too short or too long—ideal length seems to be $\frac{3}{4}$ or long sleeves that end at wrist)

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- Transitions that were too “fancy,” for example, circle open or close, cube, and mosaic transitions (as named in iMovie).
- Signing before camera is fully on
- Editing issues, e.g., overlapping transition with signing, pasting video segment more than once in the paper

In addition to providing students with guidelines, we remind students to plan ahead and allow time to deal with technical difficulties that are likely to arise. Although this advice also applies to written academic papers, students may not yet be accustomed to the specialized technical requirements of ASL academic papers, including editing an ASL academic paper. This can be a steep learning curve for some students. On the other hand, students often have a greater facility with technology than their instructors, and they can provide excellent guidance on which programs are most suitable for creating and editing ASL academic papers that will comply with these conventions and guidelines.

For each assignment, we specify for students the minimum and maximum permissible length of the assigned paper. Initially, we tried to determine appropriate recommended length of ASL academic papers by “translating” length from equivalent written academic papers. We discussed the issue of how to assign length for ASL academic papers with other instructors and decided on requiring the equivalent of a 1-to-1 correspondence for written and ASL academic papers (if we required a 4- to 5-page paper, we would require a 4- to 5-minute paper). However, based on student feedback and our assessment of the depth and quality of the content of the paper, we later modified our requirements such that 1.5–2x was allowed/required for ASL academic papers as compared to the number of pages for a written academic paper.

2.3. *Rubrics and Assessment*

For any assignment, we provide students with guidelines, which include a rubric with information regarding assessment of the content and format of the assignment. Below is an excerpt describing the expectations of a high quality academic paper (see Appendix for sample rubric):

Clearly and concisely delivered, with coherent and logical progression of ideas and supporting information; clear introduction, transitions, and closing; cohesive discourse throughout. Precise and correct use of professional academic language, tone, and demeanor; applies theory; follows formatting instructions; follows APA rules (appropriate use of quotes, attributions, and citing with clarity on relevance to points, analysis, and/or arguments; reference list is complete).

The goals and student-learning outcomes of each particular assignment guide our assessment of students’ papers. Our assessments reflect our intended focus for the assignment, and we modify the rubric according to the goals of the assignment; for example, if an assigned paper is less formal, formal citing may not be required. If the purpose of the assignment is to focus on language use, we will add a section in the rubric that specifically addresses language use.

Although it may be daunting at first to envision how to grade and offer feedback to students on ASL academic papers, we benefitted from and strongly encourage the use of the transcription software program ELAN. This program provides a useful and elegant mechanism for providing students with instructor feedback on language use, formatting, and content. The beauty of ELAN is that it enables the user to tie her/his comments directly to the corresponding segment of the video. When we provide feedback to students, we create tiers (lines for annotated text) for content, argument, formatting, citing, and language use. This both structures our review process for our own benefit and allows students to make better use of that feedback. ELAN makes the work of the instructor easier and significantly increases the benefit to the students.

3. Conclusion

The value of ASL academic papers for students, both personally and academically, became apparent almost immediately. We saw growth in the development of students' critical thinking skills and language skills as a result of the process of learning to produce academic ASL papers. We also saw fundamental changes in students' self-assessment skills and in their perception of ASL. The process of constructing ASL academic papers helped students recognize and address some of their unwitting audism and paternalism. This helped them uncover their unconscious assumptions about ASL. This was true for non-deaf and deaf students alike, though the specifics may have differed. The students developed a more realistic picture of what they were capable of doing in the language and the work they would need to do to be able to use the language more fully. This is transformative!

Students reported pride and satisfaction in creating ASL academic papers. They also reported that they recognized and could pinpoint their improved fluency in ASL. They realized the importance of the process of examining and making changes in their unconscious notions about ASL. Students reported that these benefits outweighed the struggles they had experienced when called upon to meet the challenge of creating ASL academic papers.

We have found that we have spent more time giving feedback on the first few papers students turned in. The more invested students become in examining their language use and perspectives about ASL, the quicker they make significant strides in language proficiency.

The more students were afforded opportunities to work on ASL academic papers, the more comfort, confidence, and fluency they gained in their use of ASL both in academic register and in more general use. These gains, coupled with feedback from instructors, allowed students to become more proficient at producing academic papers. They also were better able to understand and use the nuances and intricacies of the language. Students increased their range of formal language use and their ability to structure and make logical arguments, as well as produce coherent and cohesive discourse.

We have seen benefits to deaf and non-deaf students simply from the fact that they went through the process of creating ASL academic papers at the same time. Students have helped one another with structure, with filming, and with editing of their papers (both signed and written). This collaboration can lead to more proficient language use and more cogent argumentation, as well as increased desire and ability to work with one another in teams on translations and interpretations.

In each course we teach, we now require both ASL and English papers from students, strategically choosing which to assign according to the learning outcomes and goals. The range of expectations for papers will vary depending on the level of the course (differing, for example, between an introductory undergraduate course and a graduate course) and the pedagogical focus of the class (e.g., language learning, self-analysis, research, etc.). We have incorporated signed-language papers program-wide in the Interpreting Program at Gallaudet University, and we use them in our qualifying and comprehensive exams as well.

Our work is an initial step in the development of protocols and standards for signed-language academic papers for classroom work. It is our hope that this paper and the work we have presented will further discussion toward standardizing and including signed-language academic papers in classrooms wherever signed languages are in use.

4. Recommendations

All students who are in signed-language interpreting programs (regardless of academic level) should be able to successfully create a signed-language paper. If they are not linguistically able to do so, they may need to rethink whether they have the requisite language fluency to interpret, and consider developing greater fluency before proceeding with interpreting training.

Students at any level can create level-appropriate papers in a signed or written language. Students who are learning a signed language and who may not have adequate language proficiency for an academic paper can begin

Commentary: Signed Academic Papers

with shorter and less formal papers. As students become more proficient bilinguals, this proficiency should be demonstrated in more rigorous academic papers.

We recommend that deaf and non-deaf students work together as editors and consultants on academic papers in any language. As a result of this collaborative work, deaf and non-deaf student teams will serve as models of collaboration for the field, not only as teams on language-focused projects, but also as teams on interpreting and translating assignments.

With regard to grading ASL academic papers, it has been our experience that the more we used ELAN for grading, the more proficient we became at providing feedback, and the less daunting and time-consuming the process became. In fact, after we each graded several papers, we established procedures and routines for viewing ASL academic papers and providing feedback, just as instructors have always established personal procedures and routines for reading written academic papers and providing feedback. Although we currently require a supplemental paper document to be submitted along with a signed-language paper, we are exploring how to move the information required for that document to an ELAN-native .eaf file. We anticipate that by doing this, one will be able to search within ELAN just as one can skim a paper document to locate sections and topics.

In the development of standardized guidelines, it is important to take into consideration feedback from students, instructors, and professionals who have various applications for academic signed papers. We recommend cross-discipline collaboration, across professional organizations and across academic institutions and departments. Over the course of the last 2 years, we have revised the guidelines and conventions in consideration of issues in papers students have produced and based on our ongoing conversations with students in numerous classes about their experiences with creating ASL academic papers. These guidelines and conventions will continue to be developed as a result of the process of requiring, reviewing, discussing, and determining the efficacy of ASL academic papers. Part of this process of standardization will involve application of the guidelines we offer and those developed by others (see websites below). Standardization will also require discussion with professionals in the fields of interpreting, language teaching, education, and research. We look to the profession to continue to develop and refine expectations, requirements, and conventions for signed academic papers. We hope to see standardized guidelines for signed-language papers included in style handbooks in the future.

The use of ASL academic papers has produced innovative and creative opportunities for successful student outcomes. The process has been both exciting and beneficial, and we encourage others to incorporate signed-language academic papers in their work.

Acknowledgments

We wish to acknowledge and thank those who collaborated with us when we began requiring ASL academic papers. This includes Kitty Baldridge, MJ Bienvenu, Raychelle Harris, Karen Malcolm, Chris Nunn, and Debra Russell. It also includes all of the students we have worked with since fall 2009, and especially the group of students who made the request that we consider replacing *some* of the written academic papers with ASL academic papers, and those who worked diligently with us to revise the paper requirements so they made more sense and served the students: Bradley Dale, Darsi Dalen, Marc Burton, John K. Kreuger, D’Lisa Hopewell, Sequoia El-Amin, Julianna Lovik, Ashley Jackson, Amanda Kennon, and the students in INT 726 in 2010 and 2011. We also thank our excellent editor, Sharon Gervasoni.

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Appendix

For all assignments, we provide students with assignment guidelines that include a rubric regarding assessment of the content and format of the assignment. Below is an excerpt of the assessment of the formatting portion of the paper only.

	Possible points	Maximum points	Midrange	Work not appropriate
Paper formatting, language use, academic paper	Number of points for this part of the assignment	Demonstrates x-level presentation ability; clearly & concisely delivered with coherent and logical progression of ideas & supporting information; clear introduction, transitions, and closing; cohesive discourse throughout. Precise and correct use of professional academic language, tone, and demeanor; applies theory; follows APA rules (appropriate use of quotes, attributions and citing with clarity on relevance to points, analysis, and/or arguments; reference list is complete).	Demonstrates some x-level presentation ability; some clear & concise delivery with some coherent and logical progression of ideas & supporting information and some cohesive discourse; inconsistent use of professional and academic language, tone, & demeanor, application of theory, and support; inconsistent or inaccurate use of APA style; some correct use of grammar; some correct organization, cohesion, & coherence.	Lacks x-level presentation of information; lacks coherence & logical progression of ideas & cohesiveness; imprecise and incorrect use of professional and academic language, tone, and demeanor; lacks application of theory and support; does not cite and/or follow APA style; inappropriate use of grammar; inconsistent and/or confusing organization, cohesion, and/or coherence.

Book Review: Strategies for Interpreter Education and Practice in the Health Care Setting

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Swabey, L., & Malcolm, K. (Eds.). (2012). *In our hands: Educating healthcare interpreters*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press. ISBN 13: 978-1-56368-521-7 (hardcover), ISBN 13: 978-1-56368-522-4 (e-book).

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Open Forum: Book Review

Swabey and Malcolm's contribution to the Interpreter Education Series (edited by Cynthia Roy) has importance and relevance for educators and interpreters alike. The book collects chapters that offer a range of perspectives on an issue of common concern: the need for qualified and competent interpreters to work in health care settings. I appreciate the volume's multicountry focus; the editors have solicited chapters on developments from Australia, the United Kingdom, and other European countries, to offer a contrast with the North American perspective.

Building on the exceptional work of the CATIE Center (a center established by St. Catherine University in Minnesota that focuses on interpreting research), the volume begins with a discussion of health care competencies. Swabey and Craft Faber describe an effective health care symposium held in the U.S. that led to the documentation of domains and competencies. These domains and competencies can translate into curriculum development, making this chapter a useful resource for educators planning for specialized training in health care settings, and for interpreters looking to assess their own learning and build a plan for enhancement.

This is followed by a practical example of applying discourse analysis principles in the classroom. Major, Napier, and Stubbe share strategies to draw attention to linguistic features that are crucial in any interaction, while using material that is authentic to medical settings. The chapter is easy to follow, and mentors, study groups, and more traditional training programs could easily implement the approach.

Crump walks the reader through a model program in Alabama that prepares interpreters to work in mental health settings. The program planning drew on evidence from outside of interpreting in order to create a comprehensive model that speaks to the specialized skill sets required. This chapter is a compelling piece for practitioners to share with health care providers and interpreter referral services, specifically during discussions about the qualifications necessary to do the work effectively.

Dean and Pollard, both educators in the Alabama program, urge readers to consider the demand-control schema (DC-S) in the context of experiential learning. They offer examples that will enhance an educator's understanding of ways to use DC-S as an effective tool for group and individual learning.

I especially enjoyed the Bontempo and Malcolm chapter for its focus on strategies to educate interpreters to avoid or manage vicarious trauma. Bontempo and Malcom do much to help interpreters recognize how much they are impacted through the meaning making of interpreting and the narratives that emerge in health care settings.

Bowen Bailey is known for his creative application of technology in interpreting, and his chapter furthers his reputation. In his contribution, he inspires readers to reconsider designing environments for optimal adult learning in an online format.

The book then shifts its attention to broader issues related to health care interpreting. Moreland and Agan offer insight on educating interpreters to work with deaf health professionals. This chapter has relevance beyond health care professionals and is rich fodder for discussions of curriculum and the training required by designated interpreters working in highly specialized areas.

Hedding and Kaufmann raise some of the complicated matters of health literacy and the diversity of deaf consumers accessing health care; however, the recommendations at the end of the chapter indicate the authors are unaware of some of the exceptional training that is available. As well, the emphasis on formulaic language as part of translation process when dealing with a signed language and a spoken language is not in keeping with what those in the field know must happen: a shift to understanding interpreting as co-construction of meaning.

Morgan and Adam provide insight from deaf interpreters, deaf interpreting being an essential component of effective service delivery, and argue for increased training opportunities for them. The content of this chapter is somewhat familiar, but it is a good reminder to construct learning environments that are welcoming to both deaf and hearing colleagues.

Downing and Ruschke bring us valuable insights about the nature of spoken-language interpreter education in health care settings and set a historical context. De Wit, Salami, and Hema describe the state of health care interpreting in the Netherlands, the U.K., and Italy.

Open Forum: Book Review

In Our Hands offers readers both something new and something familiar, across a range of topics. The chapters, well edited and easy to read, provide educators, mentors, and interpreters a host of tangible ideas to apply in the classroom and in practice. Missing, however, are recommendations for future research: As interpreters work to define specialization in the crucial area of medical and mental health interpreting, what research directions will enhance this development? Additions to the literature that follow Swabey and Malcolm's worthy contribution will help to answer this question.

Dissertation Abstracts

In order to inform our readers of current research on translator and interpreter education and training, we will regularly feature abstracts of recently completed theses in each issue. If you have recently finished a master's or PhD thesis in this field and would like it to be included, please send an abstract of 200–300 words, along with details of the institution where the thesis was completed, the year in which it was submitted, and a contact email address. Submissions should be sent to Dissertation Abstracts Section Editor Carol Patrie at carol.patrie@gmail.com.

Deaf Leaders: The Intersection of Deaf Culture, Leadership and Professional Associations

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Deaf heritage and community viewpoints give rise to cultural behaviors and expectations, which can affect interactions in organizations, presenting challenges to leaders because personalities and work styles must be made to interact cross-culturally. This dissertation examined the roots of the deaf community in terms of membership, historical influences, cultural values, and organizations, and then, through the lens of organization and leadership theories, focused on professional associations such as the American Sign Language Teachers Association, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, and the Conference of Interpreter Trainers. Relationships among the three areas of deaf culture, leadership, and professional associations were examined by comparing small sample groups of deaf leaders, hearing leaders with no deaf family members, and hearing leaders with deaf family members. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior instruments were used to compare types, styles, and demographic variables. No particular dominant types or styles were found among the groups, but some commonalities were found. The most common personality type for all three groups was that of Introversion-Sensing-Thinking-Judging (ISTJ). Demographic variables only served to demarcate sharply the three groups.

Interpreting by Design: A Study of Aptitude, Ability, and Achievement in Australian Sign Language Interpreters

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This thesis explored and investigated factors that may be predictors of interpreter performance. The research study identified the skills, knowledge, and abilities deemed necessary for competent performance as a signed language interpreter; measured perceived competence in interpreters; gathered data on the skills gaps of interpreters and a range of personality constructs; and applied this potentially predictive data. The application of the findings of the research study include piloting interpreter education program admission screening procedures; establishing a diagnostic skills analysis and performance management process for educational interpreters; and documenting the

Dissertation Abstracts

risk associated with interpreting in traumatic settings, and introducing strategies to enhance the personal coping skills of interpreters working in such environments.

The data gathered from this unified corpus of research will contribute to the field of interpreter education by increasing the body of knowledge about interpreter aptitude, ability, and achievement. Knowing what qualities may be predictive of successful performance in the profession may lead to the development of more effective screening tools for assessing occupational suitability for interpreting; the potential for better predicting achievement in programs of study; improved capacity for addressing skills gaps in interpreters; and better training opportunities and safeguards for working practitioners. It will also provide direction and guidance to interpreter educators, employers, and practitioners themselves, in regard to curricula, staff supervision and support, interpreter performance management, and individual awareness of the aptitudes and abilities recommended for effective interpreting practice. The results of the study have implications for both spoken and signed language interpreting fields in regard to research, pedagogy, and practice

The Role of Language Program Directors in the Articulation of American Sign Language Programs

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Articulation is the continuity of one academic course to the next, without interruption and without redundancy, for the purpose of student learning. Very little, if any, research has evaluated the articulation of ASL courses, although the lack of articulation has been blamed for the low enrollment in advanced foreign language courses; only 12% of all ASL students were observed to study ASL beyond the first year in postsecondary institutions. For this study, ASL instructors and language program directors (LPDs) were asked to complete an electronic survey designed to examine the articulation of their ASL programs, the roles of their LPDs, and the desired roles of LPDs. Descriptive analyses indicated that, although ASL instructors and LPDs indicated that their programs had strong articulation, their LPDs either “always” or “never” fulfilled many of the outlined roles. In addition, they desired strong or stronger leadership from their LPDs in the articulation of ASL programs. However, respondents also expressed concerns about LPDs having “unilateral control” of ASL programs and academic freedom. One-way between-subjects analyses of variance (ANOVAs) indicated significant differences between respondents who identified themselves as deaf or hearing, from different types of institutions, whether or not they had LPDs, and the number of years the ASL program has had LPDs. Marginal differences were found in the desired roles of LPDs by respondents of varying levels of education, years of experience as ASL instructors, and sizes of ASL programs. And, finally, no significant differences were found by respondents of varying positions. The clarification of the roles of LPDs, as well as the interpretation of the program characteristics, was recommended for future research to further understand the roles of LPDs in the articulation of ASL foreign language programs.