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Professional project curriculum development: experiential learning in interpreter education programs

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Professional Project
Curriculum Development: Experiential Learning in Interpreter Education
Programs

By
Marisa J. Ruiz
A Professional Project presented to
Western Oregon University

In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of:
Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

June 2013

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EVALUATION PAGE

The undersigned members of the Graduate Faculty of Western Oregon University
Have examined the enclosed professional project entitled:

Curriculum Development: Experiential Learning in Interpreter Education Programs

Presented by: Marisa Jessica Ruiz

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

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

Date: June 5, 2013

Signatures Redacted for Privacy

Chairperson:

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Director of Graduate Programs:

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ABSTRACT

Curriculum Development: Experiential Learning in Interpreter Education Programs
By

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May 20, 2013

Signed and spoken language interpretation involves many intricate components. A signed language interpreter who is working simultaneously must hear and comprehend a spoken language while producing the equivalent message with his/her hands in the appropriate signed language. While there are many factors that affect the interpreter, experience and education are two key qualities of successful interpreters. Both interpreter education and the experience of putting that education into practice are vital for future interpreters while they are still students. Experiential learning activities provide this opportunity for interpreting students. According to educational theorist David A. Kolb, "Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience"(1984, p. 41). This type of learning involves exercises where students participate in authentic working situations in a safe environment while allowing them the opportunity to openly reflect on those experiences. Experiential learning in the field of signed language interpreting education may include role-playing scenarios, mock interpreting exercises, one-on-one mentorships, and internship participation. These learning activities can provide interpreting students with vital practice and experience before they enter the work force. The goal of this professional project is to design a course in signed language interpreter

education based on Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory. This course incorporates experience, reflection and application on critical components of the interpreting profession while gradually exposing students to various problems that they may face in their professional career. The proposed course titled “Experience Interpreting” will allow students to fully experience a variety of interpreting scenarios and equip them with resources for their future work in the interpreting field.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

Working professionally as a signed language interpreter, I have experienced many different situations that I never imagined I would encounter. I have experienced a variety of situations as a novice interpreter that I did not feel fully prepared to handle on my own. According to research conducted by Dean and Pollard, “most interpreters (regardless of years in an educational program, 6 weeks to 2 years) reported feeling “insufficiently prepared” or “not at all prepared” for many of the interpreting skills necessary in their work” (2001). Although I completed an interpreter education program as well a bachelor's degree in Deaf Studies, I still have learned a great deal about interpreting while on the job.

My various experiences in the early stages of my career have not only been about the interpreting process but about complex ethical conflicts as well. From my many working experiences, I have also learned how to handle a variety of conflicts between clients, logistics concerning interpreter placement, and how to mediate between two very different cultures. Unfortunately, all too often these situations come at a cost to my clients or team interpreter. While learning on the job has improved my work, it has also caused conflict and a lack of trust between my clients and me. As a result, I feel it is vital to bring those problematic scenarios into the classroom for students to experience before they enter the profession. This type of education, called experiential learning, would allow students to experience a complete interpreting assignment all in the safety of the classroom. I believe that a course developed around experiential exercises would better prepare today's interpreters for the many conflicts that they may one day face.

Problem

Many signed language interpreters are learning vital components of the profession while working in paid assignments out in the work force (Dean, 2001). Interpreters learn many logistical parts of the interpreting process as well as how to handle complex ethical conflicts while on the job. These interpreters could possibly be putting not only their clients at a disadvantage, but their fellow interpreters as well. In any given interpreting assignment, unprepared interpreters could generate misinterpreted information, misrepresent clients, or create a lack of trust among all individuals involved. Although learning while on the job is inevitable, novice interpreters could greatly benefit from more hands-on experience throughout their time in interpreter education programs. In order to fully prepare interpreters for the work force, a variety of authentic experiences are needed before they enter the field.

Purpose of the Project

While interpreter education programs seek to educate their students in all areas, a course based solely on gaining experience would be greatly beneficial for interpreting students. Allowing students to experience a variety of interpreting situations as well as possible conflicts that often arise in the profession, students would be better prepared for internships or future careers. The purpose of this professional project is to design a course based on Experiential Learning Theory for interpreter education programs. This course will prepare students to enter the field through a variety of real world experiences, reflections, and problem solving strategies. The course will progressively guide students through a variety of situations they may one day encounter equipping them with resources to analyze and solve an assortment of conflicts. The interpreting scenarios they will face throughout the course will increase in complexity and follow the natural

progression of an interpreting assignment.

Theoretical Basis

The foundation for the proposed course is based on David A. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), which brings real world experiences into the classroom. ELT is a learning model that “emphasizes a need for learner involvement in all educational activities and address the concept of how experience makes learning meaningful” (Akella, 2010, p.100). Kolb defines his Experiential Learning Theory as a “holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, cognition and behavior” (1984, p. 21). His theory proposes “a process through which knowledge is generated as new information and experiences are assimilated.” (1984, p.41). This type of learning could be greatly beneficial for signed language interpreter education.

While many interpreter education programs contain internship or practicum courses, these hours are generally logged outside of the classroom under the supervision of a certified interpreter. The course proposed in this project would bring those experiences into the classroom and generally take place before students are placed in an internship. This course would bring the full experience an interpreting assignment into the classroom to better prepare students for what they would experience in their future coursework.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in a variety of ways. The survey responses were limited by the amount of individuals that participated in the online survey. The information reported is based on a small sample of a large population of interpreters and results could vary with a larger pool of respondents. The online medium only allowed for individuals with email and Internet access to participate. To gain a more complete picture, the survey

could have been sent through the mail or made available at local and national conferences.

The design of the survey was also limited and could have been made to show a more accurate picture of interpreters and their educational and work experience. The survey questions could have been designed with a rating scale, allowing participants to score their own experiences in the field and in the classroom. An additional survey could also have been designed to send to educators of interpreters to gain their perspective as well.

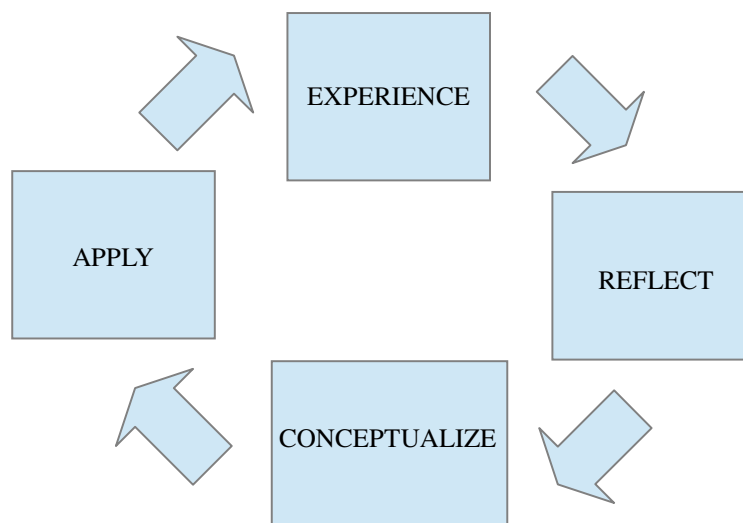
Definition of Terms

The following terms will be used throughout this paper.

- Experiential Learning: refers to experience-based learning where students experience a semi controlled environment constructed by their instructor and other individuals, this type of learning also includes reflection on the process and the application of learned concepts in future situations (Kolb, 1984)
- Mock Interpreting: a staged interpreting scenario where students working in pairs or groups practice interpreting spoken or signed texts
- Role-play: captures the features of natural interactions that interpreting students will eventually face in the professional arena (Metzger, 1999).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) is a vital tool that allows students the ability to learn from their own experiences. ELT “provides a holistic model of the learning process and a multi-linear model of adult development, both of which are consistent with what we know about how people learn, grow, and develop.” (Mainemelis, Boyatzis, & Kolb, 1999, p.2). This theory is rooted in the ideas of theorists such as John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget, but became popularized by David A. Kolb Ph.D., a professor at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Kolb defines this learning system as “knowledge (that) is created through the transformation of experience” (1984, p.41). Kolb's theory is based on a four stage learning cycle that includes – Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. During this process individuals undergo a true to life experience (Concrete Experience) and make observations based on that experience (Reflective Observation). Those reflections and observations are then sorted into abstract concepts (Abstract Conceptualization) that can be applied to future actions (Active Experimentation) (Kolb, 1999, p.3). This learning cycle is shown in Figure 1 below.



While some research has been conducted around the concept of experiential learning in interpreter education, many other professions use this type of educational practice. Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) has been greatly used in the field of business education and many individuals have tried to expand and improve the ideas of Kolb. Wolf and Byrne (1975) use the term “experiential-based learning” to apply to the same type of education from real-world situations. Their model of experience based learning is comprised of four stages: design, conduct, evaluate, and feedback. The design stage of this process is conducted by the instructor, who sets up the mock interaction. This portion of the theory includes the selection of activities and participants, the creation of learning objectives, the discussion of factors that may affect learning outcomes, and the plan for implementation. The second stage includes conducting the interaction, while closely monitoring the situation and making any necessary adjustments to the time-line and order of events. The evaluation phase is to be conducted by the instructor, while also giving students an opportunity to debrief and evaluate the process as well. Students should be able to discuss the specific learning that occurred during the interaction. The final stage, feedback, should be a continuous process that can be seen in all four steps of the model. The instructor should closely monitor the entire process, checking for any negative aspects that need improvement or removal in future scenarios (Gentry, 1990).

In the realm of business education, many other definitions of experience-based learning have been created. Building on Wolfe and Byrne's model, Hoover and Whitehead (1975) also created a definition of experiential learning that emphasizes the learning of specific behaviors. They concluded that, “experiential learning exists when a personally responsible participant cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally processes

knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes in a learning situation characterized by a high level of active involvement” (1975, p.25). Additionally in 1986, The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business Task Force formally defined experiential learning as, “A business curriculum-related endeavor which is interactive (other than between teacher and pupil) and is characterized by variability and uncertainty” (Carter et al., 1986, p. 3). A comparison of the above definitions show that no definitions are fully comprehensive, however specific criteria has been defined and can be applied to experiential learning situations. In Gentry's “Guide to Business Gaming and Experiential Learning,” he concludes that experiential learning is “participative, interactive, allows contact with the environment, and exposure to processes that are variable and uncertain” (1990, p.20). However, Gentry also determines that the process must contain some structure, include relevant learning objectives, and be closely monitored. In order for students to fully comprehend the process, there must be an element of analysis and feedback throughout the entire process (Gentry, 1990).

Experiential learning opportunities are also included in many other educational fields. The medical field uses a variety of experiential exercises to prepare students for working with patients. Experiential learning has greatly influenced the medical field and has been used for both nursing and doctoral students. Research related to ELT has been conducted in residency training programs, anesthesia education, family medicine, surgical training, and continuing medical education (Baker, 1985). Experiential learning has also greatly benefited the nursing field. Laschinger conducted extensive research in 1990 within the nursing field. He concluded, “Kolb's cycle of learning which requires the use of a variety of learning modalities appears to be a valid and useful model for instructional design in nursing education” (p. 991). Many nursing programs include

exercises and opportunities to interact with live human subjects in the safety of the classroom. These scenarios prove to be extremely beneficial to nursing students. “Human patient simulators offer an important alternative to contextual learning and a means to facilitate the development of nursing students' critical thinking abilities” (Lisko & O'Dell, 2010, p.107).

The field of legal education has also extensively incorporated Kolb's theory. While educational practices are constantly changing and evolving, the legal field has kept current by incorporating more hands-on educational practices within their colleges and universities. According to Bierman, an Associate Dean at Northeastern University School of Law, “Clinics, externships, simulations and other hands-on courses and pedagogies became valuable tools to prepare law students to engage in the delivery of legal services. Now, legal educators from more than 30 law schools across the country have joined together to make experiential legal education the norm and not just an afterthought” (2012, p. 42). In keeping up with these educational practices, Columbia Law School has implemented a full course on legal ethics that utilizes experiential learning techniques. This course “puts students in a role and asks them to deal, in role, with issues that most of them are likely to encounter, regardless of their future areas of practice” (Liebman, 1995, p.73). Proven to be a very effective method of education, Columbia proposes more courses based in experiential education. (Liebman, 1995).

Interpreter education is another field that utilizes a variety of teaching methods. While few, if any, courses are fully based on Experiential Learning Theory, many educational programs utilize role-playing techniques. Often videotapes or DVD's are used to teach interpreting skills, however “they do not realistically capture conversational turn taking and overlap, or many other features of interactive discourse that practicing

interpreters face on a daily basis” (Metzger, 2000, p.84). According to research done by Metzger, “one of the most important tools that interpreter educators have for teaching interactive interpreting skills is the role-play” (2000, p.84). Out of the nine bachelor degree programs and four associate degree programs accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE), one program contains a course based on experiential exercises titled “Interactive Interpreting.” In this course “students will integrate, broaden, and apply skills and knowledge developed in interpreting courses by experiential practice in interactive interpreting” (http://aslie.eku.edu/sites/aslie.eku.edu/files/ITP_Course_Description.pdf).

First proposed by Kolb, Experiential Learning Theory has been shaped and molded to meet the needs of a variety of educational programs. Educators have used his theory of experience-based education to prepare students in a variety of fields. While many interpreter education programs use experience based activities in the classroom, a full course based on this learning method would greatly benefit any interpreter education program by allowing students to experience and encounter future conflicts that they may one day face in the field. Using techniques to set up the classroom to mimic a real-life working scenario and bringing live models into the classroom, interpreting students can experience what their future work may encompass. By bringing these real life situations into the classroom, students can develop the skills that they will one day use in their internships or in the work force. Experiential learning is a valuable educational tool that can better prepare students for their future work and reduce the amount of on the job learning that many interpreters face.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Research for the curriculum development was based on the above literature review related to Experiential Learning Theory. The majority of the curriculum is based on Kolb's four stage experiential learning model. In addition to the literature review, a survey was conducted in 2012. This survey sought to obtain information about signed language interpreters currently in the work force. The survey was sent electronically through Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), an organization of signed language interpreters. Answers from the survey were collected and tallied; written responses were coded by topics and keywords.

Design of the Study

Participants in this research voluntarily and anonymously took an online survey that included information regarding their level of education, the types of exercises involved in their interpreter education programs as well as their experiences working in the field. The survey was delivered online through various regional chapters of Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). RID is a national agency that provides a variety of certifications for signed language interpreters.

Survey Questions

The purpose of this research was to survey working interpreters to find how much of their learning occurred after entering the field. The survey questions were designed to obtain a general demographic of those who took the survey, information about their education prior to entering the field, and where they felt the majority of their learning occurred. This survey aimed to reveal how much learning interpreters experience while in

the field compared to in the classroom. Responses from participants will show if there is a need for more authentic learning environments in the classroom. See Appendix A for the survey questions.

Participants

Participants who completed the survey were male and female American Sign Language/English interpreters currently working in the field. Individuals ranged in age from 21 to 60 years old and above. Participants were located around the United States and had various educational backgrounds and interpreter certifications. A total of 84 surveys were completed.

Data Analysis Procedures

The online survey engine, surveymonkey, tallied the final results of all completed surveys. For questions with multiple-choice responses the answers were collected and correlated. For survey responses that required participants to respond with a written answer, the answers were listed in order as participants completed the survey. The written responses were then coded based on keywords and concepts.

Written responses were analyzed and coded based on themes and related concepts. For information related to the types of experiential learning exercises that the participants experienced, the answers were searched for the terms “deaf,” “mock interpreting,” and “role playing.” Responses including the term “deaf” showed the amount of exercises that included deaf participants. Out of 68 responses only 10 individuals responded they had worked with or interpreted for live deaf models during their educational experiences. Seven responses included the term role-playing, and 16 individuals commented that their

educational experience included mock interpreting scenarios. Out of the total 84 participants, only 14 interpreters claim their educational experiences felt authentic, while 18 claim they felt unauthentic or staged.

After the initial coding of terms, all of the written responses were then analyzed for the concept of “on-the-job learning.” The responses were searched for terms related to the amount of learning interpreters experienced while already in paid working positions. Responses including terms such as “on the job“ and “in the field” were collected, as well as responses from participants who did not receive any formal training. Out of all of the written responses, over half of the interpreters experienced a large portion of learning while in the work force.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The survey was completed by 84 individuals. Of those 84 individuals, 77 identified as female and 11 identified as male. The age range of individuals was well-balanced with the majority of interpreters in the 30-39 year old range (See figure 2). The data from the survey results were tallied and written responses were analyzed looking for key terms in responses.

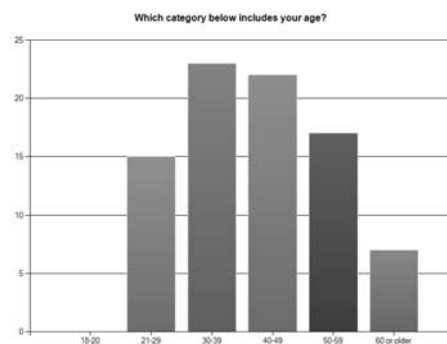


Figure 2

Results of the survey were analyzed and categorized into the different types of learning activities that the participants claim were used in their interpreter education programs. Figure 3 shows that many individuals responded that their formal education included some form of experience based learning however the responses point to a lack of authenticity in those exercises. While 84% of participants acknowledged that their educational programs included mock interpreting situations many commented that these exercises did not feel authentic. Written responses regarding lack of authenticity were correlated and a total of 18 out of 64 individual's responded that their educational

exercises lacked authenticity and often felt staged.

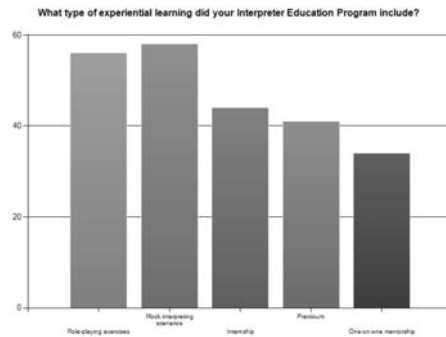


Figure 3

While responses varied on the authenticity of educational exercises, further questions show interpreters learned a lot about their profession while on the job. Results of the closing questions show a high percentage of interpreters have learned the most about vital parts of the interpreting process while already working in the field. When asked where individuals felt they learned the most about the interpretation process, 53% replied “while working as a professional,” and when asked where they learned the most about teaming 64% replied “while on the job” (See figures 4 and 5). Over half of the participants also responded that they learned the most about making ethical decisions while “working in the field” (See figure 6).

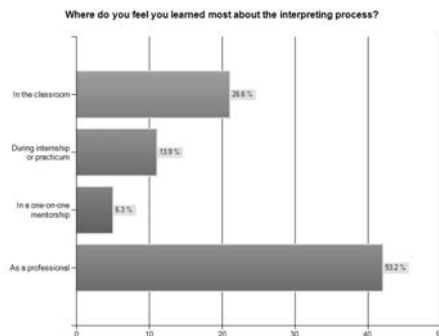


Figure 4

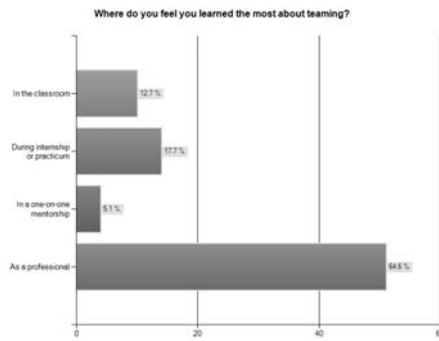


Figure 5

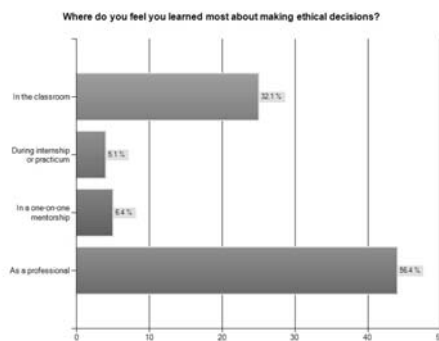


Figure 6

Discussion

The results of this survey show that many signed language interpreters have acquired a variety of skills while working in the field. Although some interpreter education programs include components of experience based learning, many interpreters still responded they learned a large portion of their skills while in paid working positions. While gaining valuable experience is necessary for any new interpreter, sending a novice interpreter into the field unprepared can be harmful to both the interpreter and the clients they serve. Unprepared interpreters could misinterpret information or mishandle cultural mediation between clients causing a lack of trust with clients and team interpreters. The “on the job” skills that current interpreters are learning need to be better incorporated into

their formal education.

Although learning on the job may be inevitable in most professions, a course developed around experiential learning theory could help to reduce the gap between the student and the working professional. While interpreting curriculum includes didactic teaching methods as well as experience based learning, a full semester or quarter course based on experiential learning theory could greatly benefit interpreting student. Allowing students more time to practice and strengthen their skills in the safety of the classroom can better prepare future interpreters for the various conflicts they may encounter. An entire class rooted in experiential learning theory can also better equip students for future internship or practicum courses.

This research is limited to a select population of individuals and results could vary with a larger pool of respondents. However, the results of this survey imply that signed language interpreters are learning various aspects about their profession and gaining a large portion of their skills while working in the field. The following proposed curriculum aims to bring the experience of real-world work into the safe environment of the classroom. The suggested collegiate level course is based solely on experiential learning exercises that allow students to fully learn from a real-world interpreting situation with little to no risk to other individuals.

CHAPTER 5: CURRICULUM COMPONENTS

Course Description

This course based on Experiential Learning Theory will allow students to learn vital interpreting skills through experience, analysis, and application. Students will experience scenarios related to inappropriate logistical arrangements, interpretation accuracy, and ethical dilemmas. Each scenario will follow the logical progression of an interpreting assignment, and increase in complexity as the semester/quarter progresses. Students will discuss and analyze each scenario with their peers and formulate multiple responses for each situation. Students will gain knowledge of Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) and how to apply its tenets to a variety of interpreting situations. In this course, students will learn problem-solving strategies that can be applied in their future work in the field. By the end of the course, students will have learned to approach each interpreting conflict independently and be able to formulate a resolution that is supported by the CPC.

Instructional Materials

Instructors will utilize the following materials:

1. Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J Prentice-Hall. Instructors will use this book to enable them to fully understand and apply the theory of experiential learning. The course will be comprehensively based on Kolb's four phase learning cycle described in the book.
2. Cartwright, B. E. (1999). *Encounters with reality: 1,001 interpreter scenarios*.

Silver Spring, MD: RID Press. Instructors will utilize this book to assign out-of-class work to be completed individually by the students. Instructors will choose scenarios relevant to each class meeting for the students to further analyze.

3. *The Practice Profession of Interpreting: An Introduction to Demand Control Schema* by Robin Dean and Robert Pollard. This text will provide the framework that students will use when discussing and analyzing a given scenario. Instructors will be familiar with Demand-Control Schema and how to apply it to a variety of interpreting situations.

Students will be required to consult the following materials:

1. Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf “Code of Professional Conduct”: This text will be provided by instructors as well as available via the internet (<http://rid.org/ethics/code/index.cfm>). Students will commit the seven tenets to memory and be able to apply them in the situations they will experience. This text will be evaluated in the form of a written exam.
2. Cartwright, B. E. (1999). *Encounters with reality: 1,001 interpreter scenarios*. Silver Spring, MD: RID Press. Students will be required to purchase this textbook. Students will use the interpreting scenarios in this book to further analyze and formulate their own decision making process.
3. *The Practice Profession of Interpreting: An Introduction to Demand Control Schema* by Robin Dean and Robert Pollard: This textbook will be required and will be used as a model for decision making throughout the course. Students will use the Demand-Control Schema to analyze each situation they encounter or observe.

Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes:

- Students will gain knowledge of Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf *Code of Professional Conduct (CPC)*
- Students will be able to apply the CPC's tenets to various interpreting situations
- Students will learn how to use Dean and Pollard's *Demand-Control Schema* to analyze any given interpreting assignment
- Students will experience different interpreting situations where conflicts arise and be expected to work through a variety of possibly choices
- Students will collaborate with classmates on interpreting logistics, interpretation choices, and ethical scenarios
- Students will experience a full real-world interpreting assignment from start to end

Upon completion of this course:

- Students will be prepared for a variety of interpreting scenarios and dilemmas
- Students will be equipped with tools for discussing and analyzing any interpreting assignment
- Students will be prepared for the interview portion of RID's National Interpreter Certification

Course Outline/Procedures

Students will be divided into two groups and will remain with these groups for the entire term. While students in one group participate in the mock exercise, the students in

the other group will observe and record data based on what occurred in each scenario. After the scenario is completed, both groups will debrief using Dean and Pollard's Demand Control Schema. Each student will then follow up with a one page written paper that analyzes the situation and includes their own personal response if they were faced with a similar situation.

The scenarios will be divided into three levels, gradually increasing in complexity. During the actual mock scenario, the student involved will be allowed to call a "Time-Out" at any moment when they feel unsure of how to proceed. During the "Time-Out" the student-interpreter will be allowed to ask their peers for suggestions or begin a discussion about the scenario. The instructor will be present to facilitate discussion if needed; however most of the conversation should be happening among classmates. Each "Time-Out" will also be monitored by the instructor for appropriate length and topic focus. During the "Time-Out" the actors in the scenario will be frozen and not allowed to comment or participate in the discussion. Once the student announces "Time-In" the scenario will continue. Amount and length of the "Time-Out" is up to the teacher's discretion.

*Optional addition 1: In each scenario an experienced certified interpreter would be present with the student-interpreter as a resource and can aid the student in how to proceed.

*Optional addition 2: The instructor will be allowed to call a "Time-Out" during the scenario if the student has reached a critical decision point.

*Optional addition 3: An additional deaf participant will be present and available to aid the interpreter with their perspective on the scenario.

Mock Interpreting Levels

The three levels of scenarios will include:

- Level 1 Scenarios (Logistics): These mock scenarios will include situations where students are faced with dilemmas related to the logistics or set up of an interpreting assignment. These dilemmas may include, but are not limited to: not being able to find the client or requester, issues related to the placement of the client or interpreter, receiving wrong information from the requesting agency, not being allowed entrance into where the client is located, etc.
- Level 2 Scenarios (Interpretation): These mock scenarios will include situations where students must navigate through a difficult interpretation. These conflicts may include: knowing when to interrupt a client for clarification, handling an inappropriate action from a client during an interpretation, cultural mediation between clients, more than one client talking simultaneously, etc.
- Level 3 Scenarios (Ethical): These mock scenarios will include situations where students are faced with an ethical decision. In this level, students will be expected to make an ethical decision and support the reason behind their decision using RID's Code of Professional Conduct.

Mock Scenario Examples

Level 1 Logistics

- Scenario 1: In this scenario a deaf client is being interviewed for a position at a large corporation (instructor can choose a local business to make the scenario more realistic). The agency sends the interpreter to an address in a huge block of businesses but does not give the interpreter the building

number. The student-interpreter gives the name of the deaf client to the gatekeeper but he/she cannot find any information in their system. How can the interpreter find the client?

- Scenario 2: In this situation the interpreter is sent into a business meeting with the room already set up. The placement of the interpreter and deaf client is uncomfortable and the interpreter struggles to hear what is being said. The deaf client is clearly agitated but does not say anything or speak up about the situation. What can the interpreter do?
- Scenario 3: In this scenario, the interpreter is sent as a substitute for a college course on horticulture. The interpreter shows up in their professional business attire only to find out that the class is going on a field trip to the local arboretum. The class will be walking around taking field notes on the different plant species for the two-hour class. What is the issue? What can the interpreter do?

Level 2 Interpretation

- Scenario 1: In this situation the interpreter shows up to an interview that has already begun. The team interpreter immediately motions for the student to switch and take over as the on interpreter. The interpreter takes their place next to the hearing client. Throughout the assignment the hearing client refers to the deaf individual in the third person. (For example, “Can you ask him/her why they left his/her last job? Can you ask him/her what his/her weaknesses and strengths are?”) The interpreter must choose how to mediate this situation. What can the interpreter do/say?
- Scenario 2: In this scenario the interpreter is assigned to interpret a college

counseling appointment between a deaf college student and a hearing counselor. The deaf student fingerspells rapidly and has an unclear sign production. The client also uses many name signs unfamiliar to the interpreter and does not fingerspell any names. What can the interpreter do in this scenario?

- Scenario 3: In this situation, the interpreter is assigned to a middle school classroom. The teacher directly asks the deaf student to answer the problem. The student clearly responds and the interpreter voices the student's response. The teacher says that the answer is incorrect and tells the student the correct answer. The student then responds, "That's what I said. The interpreter got it wrong!" The teacher then turns to the interpreter. How can the interpreter respond?

Level 3 Ethical

- Scenario 1: In this scenario, the interpreter is interpreting a meeting between a real estate agent, a deaf client, and the deaf client's hearing friend. During the meeting the deaf client and hearing friend start having a side conversation. The hearing real estate agent asks the interpreter what they are talking about. At the same time the deaf client signs to the interpreter not to tell the hearing client what they are saying. How does the interpreter handle this situation? What can the interpreter do/say?
- Scenario 2: In this situation, the interpreter is working in a high school science class. The hearing teacher finishes the lecture and instructs the student to work independently at their desks. The teacher then approaches the interpreter and asks if they can watch the classroom while the teacher

runs to make copies in the staff room. What will the interpreter do?

- Scenario 3: In this setting, the interpreter is working in a college English class on Shakespearean literature. The deaf student comes into the class well prepared for his/her final exam but visibly struggles to answer the essay questions. The team interpreter has read all of the course material and is very familiar with the specific play that the final is based on. The deaf student asks the team interpreter for clarification on the question and the team interpreter tells the student the answer to the question. The instructor is unaware of what has occurred. What does the student-interpreter do?

Scenario Development

The above scenarios were developed using real life experiences as well as scenarios based out of Brenda Cartwright's book *Encounters with Reality: 1,001 Interpreter Scenarios*. Additional situations may be developed using instructors own personal experiences. Each mock situation should include a conflict or moment of decision where the student must decide how to proceed or call a “Time-Out” for support.

Student Assessment

Students will be assessed throughout the course by the instructor as well as by their own assessment of their performance and participation. After their mock-interpreting experience, the instructor will complete an assessment rubric for each student-interpreter. This rubric will give feedback to the students on his/her performance. Each student will assess his/her own learning as well and complete an assessment evaluation form following each exercise. This will allow students the opportunity to comment on their performance as well as on the activity itself. (See Appendix C and

Appendix D). Following each of their classmates' scenarios, students will also be required to write a 2-3 page paper summarizing the situation they observed. In this paper, students will also be expected to make an alternative decision than the one made and defend their reasoning. After completing all three stages of mock interpreting exercises students will take a final written exam to test their knowledge of RID's Code of Professional Conduct (CPC). This exam will also test the students' ability to identify an ethical dilemma, make a decision regarding that conflict, and defend that decision using the CPC.

Course Assessment

This course will be assessed after its initial year as well as every five years following. The course will be assessed through student and teacher evaluation forms and a full department review. The department review will include observations by multiple instructors in the department throughout the course. The observing instructor will complete an evaluation form based on their observation. Volunteer (or paid) participants will also complete evaluation forms at the end of each mock exercise.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Signed language interpreters have been learning a great deal about their profession and their own skills while working in paid positions. At times, this may be a detriment to their clients or co-interpreters. Because of this, I have proposed the above collegiate course to help lessen the amount of learning that interpreters experience while in the work field. This course seeks to bring real life situations into the safety of the classroom where students are free make errors without any damaging effects.

The proposed course in this professional project, based on Experiential Learning Theory, would bring real life encounters into the classroom diminishing the amount of on-the-job learning that takes place in the field of signed language interpreting. This collegiate level course would appropriately fit near the end of an interpreter education program, providing students with real life experiences while still in the classroom and giving them an easier transition into the work force. This course could greatly benefit interpreting students and better prepare them for their career as signed language interpreters.

PART II: EXPERIENCE INTERPRETING COURSE

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Description

In this course, students will learn vital interpreting skills through experience, analysis, and application. Students will experience real-world interpreting scenarios where they will be faced with a conflict. Conflicts will relate to inappropriate logistical arrangements, interpretation accuracy, and ethical dilemmas. Students will learn how to discuss and analyze the scenario with their peers and formulate multiple responses for each situation. The decision making process learned in this course will be applicable for their future work in the field.

Learning Outcomes

During this course:

- Students will gain knowledge of Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf *Code of Professional Conduct (CPC)*
- Students will be able to apply the CPC's tenets to various interpreting situations
- Students will learn how to use Dean and Pollard's *Demand-Control Schema* to analyze any given interpreting assignment
- Students will experience different interpreting situations where conflict arises and be expected to work through a variety of possible choices
- Students will collaborate with classmates on interpreting logistics, interpretation choices, and ethical scenarios
- Students will experience a full real world interpreting assignment

Required Materials

1. *Encounters with Reality: 1001 Interpreter Scenarios* by Brenda Cartwright
2. *The Practice Profession of Interpreting: An Introduction to Demand Control Schema* by Dean and Pollard
3. Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) – *Code of Professional Conduct (CPC)*

Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to RID's Code of Professional Conduct

Week 2: Introduction to Dean and Pollard's Demand-Control Schema

Week 3: Mock Scenarios Level 1 – Group A

Week 4: Mock Scenarios Level 1 – Group B

Week 5: Mock Scenarios Level 2 – Group A

Week 6: Mock Scenarios Level 2 – Group B

Week 7: Mock Scenarios Level 3 – Group A

Week 8: Mock Scenarios Level 3 – Group B

Week 9: Conclusion/Review

Week 10: Final Exam

Grading

Participation - 50%

Active (participating in the mock scenario) 25%

Passive (participating in the group discussion) 25%

Homework - Papers/Assessment Rubrics - 25%

Final Exam – 25%

Assignments

Paper: After each mock scenario, students will be required to write a paper about the experience. In this paper, students will summarize the scenario and the decision that was made during the exercise. They will also make an alternative decision and defend their reason for making their choice using RID's Code of Professional Conduct. Each paper must be 2-3 pages, double spaced, 12 point font.

Assessment Rubric: After participating in each mock exercise, all students involved in the scenario will complete an assessment rubric provided by the instructor. Students involved in the exercise will not be required to write the above paper.

MOCK SCENARIO SCRIPTS

Level 1 – Scenario 1

Characters:

Interviewer – Julie Perez (hearing client)

Candidate – Jonathon Bates (deaf client)

Gatekeeper – George Rodriguez

Secretary – Marsha Allen

Setup:

- A person at the door acting as the gatekeeper.
- Receptionist desk placed just inside the door
- One table set up as a desk. Hearing client placed on one side and the deaf client placed on the other. Chair set up next to the hearing client for the interpreter (or they can stand).

Scenario:

In this scenario, a deaf client is being interviewed for a position at Apple. The agency sends the interpreter to an address on a huge campus, but does not give the exact building number. The interpreter gives the name of the deaf candidate, but the gate attendant can't find any info about them in his booth.

DECISION POINT: How will interpreter find client?

Background info: The contact person for this assignment is at another location altogether and they do not answer their phone when the attendant calls. The student-interpreter has already received a confirmation email with the name of the hearing client. When/If they give this information to the attendant they will be shown to the interview room.

Level 2 – Scenario 1

Characters:

Interviewer – Julie Perez (hearing client)

Candidate – Jonathon Bates (deaf client)

Secretary – Marsha Allen

Setup:

- Receptionist desk placed just inside the door
- One table set up as a desk. Hearing client placed on one side and the deaf client placed on the other. Chair set up next to the hearing client for the interpreter (or they can stand).

Scenario: When the interpreter arrives at the interview room, all participants are already seated and ready to begin the interview leaving no time for the interpreter to discuss anything with either client. The hearing client has never worked with a deaf individual or an interpreter before and they are clearly nervous. The hearing client continuously refers to the client in the third person. This scenario will run like a typical interview where the hearing client asks the deaf client a variety of questions. The student volunteer interpreter will have to deal with the hearing client not speaking directly to the deaf individual.

Script: (Can mostly be improvised.)

Questions that hearing client may ask the deaf candidate:

Can you ask him how many years has he lived in the area?

I see he attended a community college, can you ask him what his job experience has been?

What does he see as his strengths and weaknesses?

DECISION POINT: What can the interpreter do/say?

Level 3 – Scenario 1

Characters:

Home buyer – Jon Smith (deaf client)

Real estate agent – Kevin Kirkland (hearing client)

Hearing friend – Sarah Flowers

Setup:

One table set up as a desk or conference table. The real estate agent is placed on one side and the deaf client and friend are placed on the other. Chair set up next to the hearing client for the interpreter (or they can stand).

Scenario:

In this situation the deaf client is meeting with a hearing real estate agent. Both parties have worked together before and are familiar with each other. The deaf client has brought a friend with them to this meeting and often has side conversations with this person. The interpreter does not voice for the side conversations and the real estate agent becomes uncomfortable with the side conversations between the deaf client and his/her friend. The hearing client asks the interpreter to voice what they are saying.

DECISION POINT: What does the interpreter say/do?

Script:

Agent: Hey Jon, good to see you again. How have you been?

Jon: Pretty good. Work's been busy but I'm glad to have a job... This is my friend Julie. She's thinking about buying a house in the next few years and wanted to come along.

Julie: Hi. Nice to meet you. (Extend hand to agent, agent holds Julie's hand)

Agent: Hi Julie. Nice to meet you too. I'd *love* to help you when you are ready to buy house. Keep me in mind for when that time comes. *wink, wink

Jon (signing to Julie): I think he/she is flirting with you!

Julie (signing back to Jon): Should I tell him I'm married?

Agent looks to the interpreter.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Brief Description of the scenario:

Please rate the following statements about the exercise on a 1-5 scale.

1 – strongly disagree 2 – disagree 3 – neither agree or disagree 4 – agree 5 – strongly agree

1. This situation felt authentic. _____
2. I believe this situation could happen in my future professional work. _____
3. I benefited from my peers input during this exercise. _____
4. I felt lost or unsure of what to do during this exercise. _____
5. I needed more input or direction from the instructor during this activity. _____
6. I felt engaged and active throughout the entire encounter. _____
7. I felt my classmates were involved and attentive throughout the activity. _____
8. I understood the conflict that arose during the exercise. _____
9. I felt comfortable calling a “Time-Out.” _____
10. The decision I made solved the issue without further complications. _____

If faced with this situation again an alternative decision would be:

This is supported by which tenet of RID's CPC?

How did this mock exercise feel?

Any additional comments about the exercise or my performance during the scenario.

INSTRUCTORS ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Date: _____ Student: _____

Scenario: _____

Setup/Take down Time: _____ Total Scenario Time: _____

Time	The scenario was easily set up in the time allotted.	The scenario was easy to setup but insufficient time given.	The scenario was difficult to set up but with sufficient time.	The scenario was difficult to set up with insufficient time.
Flow	The scenario ran smoothly with little difficulty.	The scenario contained a few difficult moments.	The scenario contained many issues but was still successful.	The scenario ran with a lot of difficulty and was unsuccessful.
Participants	Participants worked together well.	Participants struggled at moments but recovered well.	Participants experienced many moments of uncertainty.	Participants did not work well together.
Student Participant	Student participant gave full effort throughout the entire scene.	Student participant gave full effort but needed some prompting.	Student gave some effort with a lot of prompting.	Student gave little to no effort throughout the role play.
Class Participation	Majority of the class was engaged and involved in the scenario and discussion.	Most of the class was involved with little prompting from the instructor.	Some of the class participated with a lot of prompting from the instructor.	Only a few members of the class were involved.
“Time Out”	The time-out was used by the	The time-out was used by	Time time-out was called by the	The instructor called the time-

	student participant and appropriate discussion followed.	the student but class discussion did not follow.	student participant at an inappropriate time.	out.
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Instructors overall reflection on the scenario:

Comments for the student participant:

FINAL EXAM

True or False

1. RID's CPC states that interpreters should be continuously developing their professional skills as well as their education. _____
2. All interpreters are to keep interpreting assignments confidential at all times and in all situations. _____
3. Interpreters do not need to get consent from clients or team interpreters when bringing a student or intern into an assignment. _____
4. RID's CPC does not address interpreters attire. _____
5. RID's CPC states that certified interpreters should work as mentors and assist student-interpreters throughout their educational path. _____
6. Interpreters working in the medical field should be up to date with all immunizations and proper paperwork before accepting a job. _____
7. When working in the educational field interpreters should always respect the teacher's wishes over the students. _____
8. Because interpreters are to remain confidential mandatory reporting regulations do not apply to them. _____
9. RID's CPC contains 7 tenet's that apply to all sign language interpreters.

10. Interpreters should not accept assignments that may contain information that would make them uncomfortable. _____

List RID's Code of Professional Conduct's 7 Tenets.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

COURSE ASSESSMENT

The course “Experience Interpreting” will be assessed for its effectiveness in the following ways: (1) student pre and post course survey (2) course evaluations (3) follow up with mentor during internship/practicum course. In the initial quarter/semester of the course students will take a pre and post survey. The survey given at the beginning of the course will focus on the student’s previous experiences in interpreting situations, his/her view on decision making, and questions related to how he/she might respond in certain situations. The post course survey will contain the same scenario questions to measure if any of their answers changed.

Course evaluations will also be given at the end of the term. The course evaluations will ask students to rate the course, the instructor, and the educational materials that were required. The course evaluations will also ask students to rate how realistic and authentic the scenarios felt and provide an opportunity for students to give feedback on the overall course and its effectiveness.

Lastly, instructors will interview and survey mentor interpreters during the initial cohort’s practicum or internship course. If the “Experience Interpreting” were placed after students completed their formal interpreting courses but before they begin their internships out in the actual field, instructors would be able follow up with the student’s and their mentors during that internship or practicum term. Instructors would survey the students to see how prepared they felt for their internship hours and follow up with their mentors about their students’ knowledge and behavior in the field.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. What is your gender?
2. Which category below includes your age?
3. Did you graduate from an Interpreter Education Program? If so, what year and type of program (an associate's degree, four year bachelor degree, or a certificate) did you complete?
4. What type of experiential learning did your Interpreter Education Program include (role playing exercises, mock interpreting scenarios, internship, or practicum, one-on-one mentorship)?
5. Please provide a brief description of the experiential learning activities that were included in your program. How authentic did those learning exercises feel?
6. Did your Interpreter Education Program include a one-on-one mentorship, internship or practicum? If so, how many hours in the field were required? Please briefly describe.
7. Where do you feel you learned most about the interpreting process? (a) In the classroom (b) During internship or practicum (c) In a one-on-one mentorship (d) As a professional.
8. Where do you feel you learned most about teaming? (a) In the classroom (b) During internship or practicum (c) In a one-on-one mentorship (d) As a professional
9. Where do you feel you learned most about making ethical decisions? (a) In the classroom (b) During internship or practicum (c) In a one-on-one mentorship (d) As a professional
10. Please add anything else you would like to add about experiential learning.