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Communicative Equality:
Needs Assessment of Sign Language Interpreters in South Dakota

By

Cyndi Fisher

A thesis submitted to

Western Oregon University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

May 2018

Western Oregon
UNIVERSITY

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

☐ Thesis

☐ Field Study

☑ Professional Project

Titled:

Communicative Equity: Needs Assessment of Sign Language Interpreters

in South Dakota

Graduate Student: Cyndi Fisher

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

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

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

If you are always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be.

-Maya Angelou

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ABSTRACT

.   Data compiled for this research will be used as a pilot study to support further

research needed to consider an interpreter education program in West River region of

South Dakota. Surveys were distributed to businesses, individuals in the Deaf

community, and interpreters who are registered in the state of South Dakota. Face-to-

face interviews were scheduled with two owners of two interpreting agencies that

schedule interpreter requests throughout South Dakota. Data collection hinted at the need

for qualified interpreters in the state, with a more enhanced focus on the western region

of the state. Survey results suggest that interpreters are needed; however, flaws occurred

during the study, creating recommendations for further research to offer clarity and more

detailed conclusions. The participants who responded to the interpreter surveys offered

information on their educational backgrounds and ideas on what they wish had been part

of their own interpreter education training. Interviews supported information gathered in

surveys, offering their perspectives of the need for interpreters. With research compiled

and data analyzed, data suggests a possible need for interpreters, a suggestion for further

studies to develop a fuller understanding of the concept of a qualified interpreter, and

how their quality is measured is applied in the recommendations. In addition, future

studies are suggested that may lead to a more comprehensive proposal for an interpreter

education program in the West River region of South Dakota.

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

Twenty-eight years ago, when I began my interpreting career, I was naïve about all that an interpreter's role encompassed. I was unaware that American Sign Language (ASL) had linguistic rules that equated to spoken languages. Because of my rural area and the lack of interpreters, I was offered a position in the public schools system as an interpreter. At that time, I had no formal training, and the knowledge I had acquired learning a sign system was self-taught. Formal interpreter training was not available to me at that time. Over time, I was able to research and understand the linguistic construction that formed the structure of ASL. I quickly became aware that focusing on my skills and knowledge was critical for advancing within the language and the profession.

Fortunately, I could look to pioneers in the profession such as educator, author, and actor, Lou Fant; co-founder of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT), interpreter educator, Assistant Director of Colorado's DOIT Center, Anna Witter-Merithew; and long-term interpreter educator, Dennis Cokely, known for his expertise in assessment and the development of the Cokely Interpreting Model (Ball, 2013). I also continue to follow the work of Jim Cummins whose studies and publications illustrate the details of learning a language. During my first academic training as an interpreter, in the Educational Interpreter Certification Program at Front Range Community College in Westminster, Colorado, I began to learn about Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). From that first introduction to BICS and CALP, I have been fascinated with the linguistics and the

process of learning ASL. Because of these four pioneers (and so many others like them), my passion for sign language and my determination to grow as professional interpreter flourished. I quickly gained a passion for the scientific study of ASL, learning the morphology, syntax, phonetics, and semantics that create the structure of this visual language.

Due to my rural location and lack of access to a local interpreting program, I was invited to join an Interpreter Training Program (ITP) based out of Front Range Community College in Westminster, Colorado. This was an online program that required four weeks on location in the summer. I lived in a rural location and understood that this may be my only opportunity to achieve my academic goals in interpreting, without relocating my family. Therefore, I eagerly accept the invitation and began many years of academic achievements. During the ITP, I was introduced to Dr. Leilani Johnson, Marty Taylor, Anna Witter-Merithew, and many other wonderful instructors who would remain resources and important contacts. Through lectures and personal interactions with Dr. Leilani Johnson, I learned of her dedication to find ways to reach interpreters in rural areas and to offer academic advancements that would not be offered otherwise. Having the opportunity to advance my skills and knowledge as a professional interpreter in a rural location was an immeasurable opportunity that I cherish and hope to offer others as I journey through my profession. After a 10-year hiatus do to personal misfortune, I was eager to enter into the world of interpreting once again. Because the profession shifts and evolves quickly through the years with the many advancements in research, I enrolled in a bachelor's program for interpreting. It was during this program I acquired a full understanding of qualified, professional interpreting.

Statement of the Problem

In my personal interactions and conversations I have compared the population of D/deaf and hard of hearing individuals to qualified interpreters in the state of South Dakota, specifically in western portion of the state. The ratio becomes extremely unbalanced weighing heavily toward the D/deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

In my 24 years working in Rapid City and West River areas of South Dakota as an educational and freelance interpreter and through interactions within the Deaf community, the issue of the need for more interpreting services and the need for more high-quality interpreters has continued to be a topic of discussion. During many of my interpreting jobs, I consistently hear Deaf and hearing consumers express frustrations in scheduling interpreters due to the lack of qualified interpreters. I am a working interpreter in this area, and I am aware of six interpreters working within this region. However, two of those five interpreters have full-time positions in the educational setting. One does not work for an agency and is sometimes difficult to be reach. One is unavailable for the majority of the year. This leaves only two interpreters to serve Rapid City and smaller towns within a two-hour drive.

The level of need for interpreters ranges throughout the state. The majority of the population is located in the eastern portion of the state. The population of the Deaf community and interpreters likely follow the same distribution.

According to World Population Review (2018) the current population of South Dakota is 858,469. The entire state measures 77,116 square miles, and the average population is 11.1 people for each square mile. By area, South Dakota is the 17th largest

state and compared to the other 49 states, South Dakota is the 46th most densely populated state in the entire United States.

The largest city, Sioux Falls, has a population of 171,544 (World Population Review, 2018) and is located in the southeastern region of the state. The second largest city—located 347 miles away, on the opposite side of the state—is Rapid City, population 74,408 (World Population Review, 2018). The two cities total 245,952, leaving 612,517 people in more rural areas.

Rural towns have small populations; there are few, and at times no, interpreters within those areas. Erin Trimble's (2014) study highlighted the work of interpreters in rural areas and outlined problematic areas that should be addressed in the future. Although Trimble's research focused more on interpreters' professional development, she also highlighted points that relate to my research: the insufficient coverage of interpreters and the professional patterns related to rural interpreters. Many challenges may arise when an interpreter of a rural area is not available to work. Whether the reason is for illness, personal appointments, or other professional reasons, the possibility of filling an interpreting job becomes more difficult or even impossible. Trimble (2014) stated that a leave of absence for professional advancement can be detrimental: "Every time that interpreter leaves town to pursue certification or professional development, the community may be left with insufficient interpreting coverage" (p. 46). Secondly, she highlighted that interpreters in rural areas have a "need for a viable support network to prevent burnout, turnover, and isolation" (p. 46). Interpreters working within a rural area, at some point, can find themselves stretched and overworked, resulting in burnout. Working with peers and colleagues can offer a peer mentorship. Within these

relationships, "numerous benefits of mentoring, such as personal satisfaction, partnerships, and working for a greater good" (Ford, 2014, as cited in Laverick, 2016, p. 9) can occur. In addition, with the "increasing (of) a protégé knowledge, friendship may also occur" (Bono, 2014, as cited in Laverick, 2016, p. 9). These all could decrease one's feeling of being isolated and enhance an individual's support network.

The focus of this study is on West River, South Dakota. The state is divided by the Missouri River creating regions commonly referred to as West River and East River. The physical area of West River comprises more than half of the state; one-quarter to one-third of the state's population is located in West River (World Population Review, 2018). One major limitation for interpreting requests to be filled comes down to distance and time. West River has few interpreters, but interpreters are needed across vast distances; this creates heavy time constraints. This factor makes it virtually impossible for interpreters to reach all D/deaf and hard of hearing individuals in need of interpreting services.

Based on the information located on the Department of Human Services website, there are 101 interpreters currently registered in the state of South Dakota. Most of the interpreters are located East River (see Figure 1). Half (51) of the interpreters are located in the largest city in South Dakota, Sioux Falls. Within 50 miles of the area surrounding Sioux Falls there are 15 interpreters. Eighteen interpreters are located in more rural areas scattered throughout East River. Eleven interpreters registered in South Dakota live in surrounding states, such as Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and Ohio. The remaining six interpreters are located West River. Five interpreters are located in the

second largest city, Rapid City and the sixth interpreter is located 17 miles east of Rapid City.

Figure 1. 101 Registered Interpreters in South Dakota (11 live out of state)

To understand the ratio of interpreters to deaf or hard of hearing individuals within West River, I needed some concept of the D/deaf and hard of hearing population in this region. Therefore, I began with the estimated amount of 14,074 deaf or hard of hearing individuals throughout South Dakota (Gallaudet University, 2013). World Population Review states that one-fourth to one-third of the state's total population is located West River. I then paired the D/deaf and hard of hearing population with the total population of South Dakota following the same pattern on the lesser amount, one-fourth, of the total population to formulate the ratio. Using the numbers from the previous studies stated, it can be presumed one-fourth of 14,074 of the D/deaf and hard of hearing individuals live in West River. That amount is 3,518, compared to the six

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interpreters attempting to offer interpreting services. These numbers would suggest a need for qualified interpreters.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this pilot study is to create a foundation for further research that will examine a need for an interpreter education program in the western portion of South Dakota. Currently, there is an interpreter education program located on the east side of the state. However, due to the 350 miles that separate the two largest cities in South Dakota, Rapid City and Sioux Falls, those living in the western portion of the state do not have the opportunity to enroll and travel such extreme distance every day to attend classes. In addition to the distance, extreme winter conditions can create dangerous situations for traveling across the state.

Businesses, Deaf and hearing consumers, and interpreting agencies throughout the state express a need for interpreters in the western region of the state. I am a staff interpreter who works in this region of the state. Often, I witness the complaints and concerns that encompass a need for interpreters. As I am enrolled in a graduate program at Western Oregon University focusing on Interpreting Studies and Pedagogy, I approached Black Hills State University about a potential interpreter program. Black Hills State University is located in the western region of the state and is willing to accommodate such a program if a need is present. This research will offer a foundation for future data and information to help determine if such a need exists.

Information will be delivered as a needs assessment focusing on the need for qualified interpreters in the western region of South Dakota. Two areas of assessment will be used to compile data for analysis. First, I will identify needs in South Dakota for

qualified interpreter services, focusing on what is currently happening compared to what is desired. Second, I will analyze the needs and potential solutions to improve interpreting services specifically for the western region of South Dakota.

Theoretical Framework

This project is based in Performance Improvement Theory (Watkins, Meiers, & Visser, 2012). Watkins et al. clarified that "*improving* refers to the measured progress from a less-than-desirable state to a desirable state, whereas *performance* refers to the results" (p. 6) of a desired action. In more detail, this theory facilitates analyzing what is currently happening in the state of South Dakota compared to what is desired by interpreters, businesses, hearing consumers, and the Deaf community.

The research in this study will focus on the current state of qualified interpreters in South Dakota. Responses from participants will offer insight into their past experiences, if they were less-than-desirable or desirable. The desired state is enough qualified interpreters to satisfy the need.

Responses from interpreters will measure their level of qualifications and possible approaches to enhance those qualifications. The responses of businesses, Deaf community, and consumers will measure the positive, effective interpreting experiences as well as those that were less effective and not satisfactory.

Limitations of the Study

Research begins with a direction and a plan on how to move forward and collect data. However in this study, as with all studies, there are limitations that arise and need to be acknowledged. For this study, neither survey requested specific demographic data, allowing for a clear understanding as to where the participants are located in relation to

the state. Considering the focus of the study was on the West River region, having the knowledge of the participant's location would separate their locations from east and west and enhance the results. Specific to the Interpreter Survey, the majority of registered interpreters in South Dakota live in East River, so the information from the survey was heavily weighted in the experiences of interpreters working in the East River region.

The participants who responded to the Business, Deaf Community, Consumer Survey were not asked if they were a business owner, an individual of the Deaf community, or a Deaf business owner. All responses were compiled together not allowing for clarity and specific responses as to what groups the participants aligned. Asking specifically what group they adhere to would allow for a richer breakdown of responses that applied to each individual group.

Interviews were conducted with only two interpreter referral agencies. Although these agencies were the only two that assist in scheduling interpreters in West River, the owners of the agencies, those interviewed, work mainly in East River. Just as the surveys, the responses were from those with experiences in the East River region more than the West River. During data collection, other agencies were located in East River. However, approval from the Institutional Review Board to interview only the two agencies and my lack of knowledge of these agencies kept me from further questioning more agencies.

Information found within this pilot study offers a surface level of understanding for interpreters in the state. Further research will be needed before a clear and precise understanding of a need for interpreters truly occurs and before any final decisions can be

concluded. More in-depth suggestions are found in this study in Chapter 5, Recommendations.

This information is limited to the state of South Dakota. The information compiled will not offer information in relation to other states to clarify their need for qualified interpreters.

Definition of Terms

American Sign Language – a natural language used in the United States by D/deaf and hard of hearing individuals; made up of hand shapes, hand movements, body movements, and facial grammar

Certification – official, legal document issued by the state and/or national organization proving interpreter's ability to interpret

Consumer – a D/deaf, hard of hearing, or hearing individual who has experience working with a sign language interpret

Deaf/deaf – Deaf, an individual who socializes and identifies with the Deaf culture; deaf, the inability to hear due to physical limitations

Deaf Community – individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing, who socialize, live, and function within a larger (town) community

Freelance Interpreter – an interpreter that chooses to work independently with businesses and the Deaf community in the desired areas of need

The Gap – non-specific time period between when an interpreter completes an interpreter education program and when his or her professional skills are enhanced enough to pass a certification assessment

Interpreter Education Program (IEP) – a postsecondary program with an academic curriculum instructing students to become sign language interpreters

Licensure – temporary license allowing interpreters to work as an interpreter while improving their skills and professional abilities before becoming certified

Prosody – linguistic functions such as intonation, tone, stress, and rhythm found in a language

Qualified – "officially recognized as being trained to perform a particular job (interpreting); certified" (dictionary.com)

Quantity – the amount of interpreters within a specific geographic region

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) – national organization founded in 1964 that supports the profession of sign language interpreters and the Deaf community

Registry – documentation/list of interpreters who are registered with the state of South Dakota

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining the Need for Qualified Interpreters

For decades, researchers have discussed a need for more qualified sign language interpreters throughout the nation. But many may ask why there is a need for interpreters. According to Merriam-Webster online dictionary a need is "a lack of something requisite, desirable, or useful" (Need, n.d.). Specifically within the field of interpreting, the need for interpreters arises from the lack of qualified interpreters to provide equal access between the Deaf and hearing communities. Without a qualified interpreter, communication occurs on a minimal or shallow level, such as hand-written notes and/or lip reading. However, during a more information-heavy interactions, (e.g., legal, medical, educational settings—any setting that requires a complete understanding of communication) a qualified interpreter is needed. A qualified interpreter allows all parties involved to understand the interaction in its entirety allowing equal access to occur. "Experts tend to be more competent in both languages, English and ASL, and know how to manipulate the language more successfully than novices" (Taylor, 2002, p. 4).

What standards are set deeming a working interpreter to be "qualified"? What does this mean in relation to interpreting? According to Merriam-Webster online dictionary "qualified" refers to "fitted (as by training or experience) for a given purpose: competent" (Qualified, n.d.). In the profession of interpreting, there are many fields or areas where interpreters chose to become more specialized, including educational, medical, legal, mental health, religion, Deaf-blind, and more. Interpreters may work within many or all of these fields throughout their profession just by accepting jobs in

their everyday life. The question must be asked: Are the interpreters qualified and competent to work within each of these areas? That answer depends on their academic training, past experiences, certification, and even their personal life.

Earlier research has noted that need takes precedence over quality (Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005). Nationally, there is not a standard that all interpreters are to meet. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) recognizes certification that is functional throughout the 50 states, yet those same states are able to control their interpreter certifications, qualifications, and standards as they see fit. Within those states, individual entities, such as school districts, are able to manipulate those standards allowing any individual to enter into the workforce under the title interpreter. For consistency of qualified interpreters, "standards need to be established and enforced to define a qualified workforce" (Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005, p. 14).

Certification in South Dakota

The state of South Dakota recognizes multiple certifications as long as the interpreter remains registered with the state and maintains certification requirements, such as Continuing Education Units (CEUs). The certifications recognized by the state are National Interpreter Certification (NIC; 2005 to Current), NIC Advanced (2005 to 2011), NIC Master (2005 to 2011), RID CI/CT (1988 to 2008), SD Certificate and NAD III/IV/V (1990 to 2002) (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, n.d.). Although South Dakota recognizes the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) as an indicator of abilities, the EIPA is not a formal certification. South Dakota regulates educational interpreters' abilities by their level of testing demonstrated and reported by

the EIPA. However, school districts control their employees and make final decisions as to what employee will be placed with deaf and hard of hearing students.

Interpreters in the state of South Dakota hold a variety of certifications. Currently, 29% have the newest level of certification, NIC. For a variety of reasons, an equal number (29%) of interpreters in the state hold an EIPA score of 3.5 (state regulation) or higher and/or SD provisional license, no level of certification.

CERTIFICATIONS

- EIPA+NIC 2%
- NIC 28%
- RID CI/CT 4%
- EIPA 3.5 and higher 9%
- NIC Advanced 4%
- SD Cert/NAD 33%
- EIPA+Provisional 2%
- NIC Masters 2%
- SD Provisional 16%
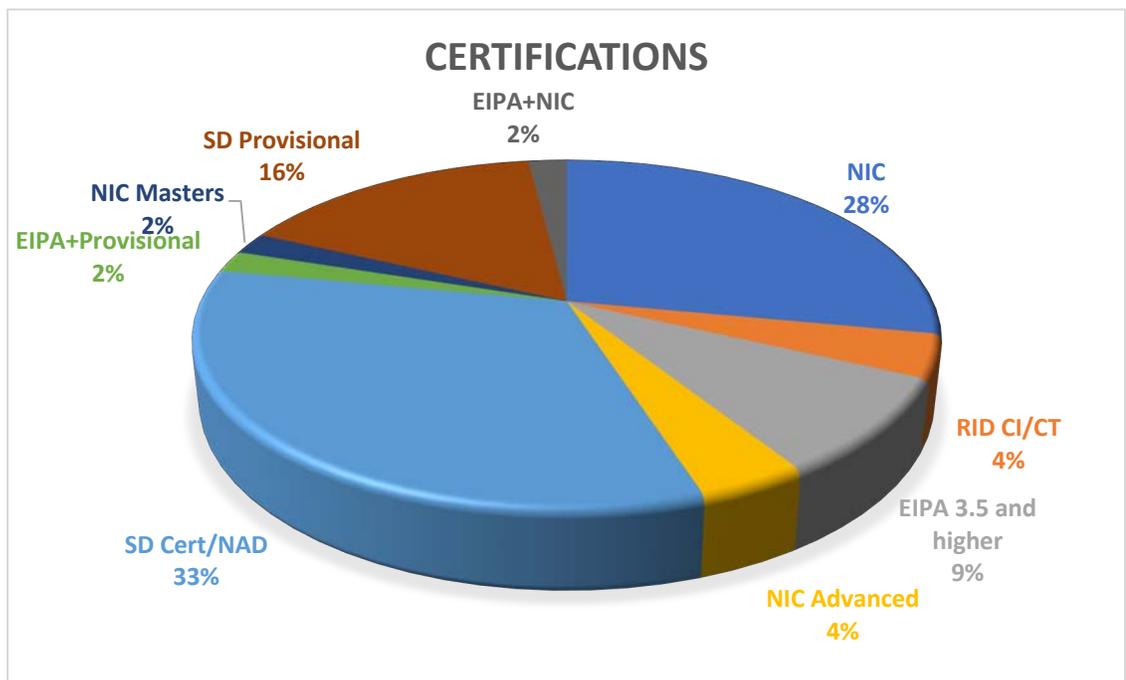
Figure 2. Levels of Certification of Registered Interpreters

Interpreter certification consists of official documentation verifying the interpreter's qualifications. This is not a complete picture of an interpreter's background and how they achieved the goal of certification. Until RID set standards stating that individuals must obtain a four-year degree prior to testing for certification, there were no rules suggesting an academic background in interpreting was necessary to achieve qualified status. Currently, interpreters are allowed to complete a four-year program of

their choice; no set rules state that the bachelor's degree must be focused on interpreting or sign language.

Being a qualified interpreter is more multifaceted than learning a second language and becoming bilingual. An interpreter must comprehend the culture and nuances hidden within the prosody before understanding both languages to their fullest. Because the interpreting profession is young, it is important to understand and maintain quality of the profession. "The field is growing too fast and this results in a loss of quality and quality control. The rapid growth is unregulated and needs attention by the fields of Interpreting and Interpreter Education" (Witter-Merithew and Johnson, 2005, p. 36). The question is how do we regulate the quality and who is responsible for this duty? Does it begin within the realms of academia?

Research is showing that once a sign language student graduates, there is a period of time before their skills are at the level of certification readiness. For the purpose of this study, this period of time will be referred to as "The Gap." Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2005) described the gap this way:

> Clearly, there is mismatch between Interpreter Preparation Program outcomes and the expectations of consumers. This incongruence appears to be evidenced in the practice of more experienced interpreters as well. Interpreter education programs that promote guided Deaf Community involvement, resulting in reflection, self-awareness, and authentic acquisition of linguistic and cultural competence would be the ideal way to resolve this current dilemma. (p. 42)

Recognition of The Gap has occurred, and further research is currently taking place. This recognition is shedding light on the amount of time an interpreter is working

before they are certified or qualified. Interpreters are being placed into work because of the need disregarding the quality of their work. "Nationally, the demand for interpreting services seems to continue to be on the rise overall. Many of those interpreters who reported a decline in demand for their services expressed the perception that work is going to less experienced, less expensive interpreters" (National Consortium of Interpreters Education Centers, 2013).

To further understand the cause of The Gap, those in the interpreting profession need to become aware and take responsibility for what needs to occur in the profession. Many have pioneered through the changes of the profession providing the knowledge that exists today. It is time for those who once followed to become those who now lead to find answers and solutions to important issues. When the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT) addressed The Gap, they identified the same level of leadership needed, stating that "often novice interpreters are working without appropriate skills, wreaking havoc on our professional standards and demoralizing our new generation of interpreters" (Resnick, 2008, para. 1). As Theresa Smith, a member of the Authority Opinion Group stated: "We all own the gap. We must all speak up (and work) for the solution" (as cited in Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005, p. 14).

"Nationally, the demand for interpreting services seems to continue to be on the rise overall. Many of those interpreters who reported a decline in demand for their services expressed the perception that work is going to less experienced, less expensive interpreters" (NCIEC, 2013, p. 53). Personally, I have chosen to no longer follow but to step out and through this study become one who offers valuable information that has the possibility to make advances in the profession of interpreting. Past and more recent

studies offer enough information for colleges to reflect and analyze their current

interpreter education program to consider possible changes needed to enhance student's

skills and knowledge reaching a higher level of readiness to work. Smith and Maroney

(2016) conducted a study in 2009-2016. In their results they stated, "As a result of these

findings, we are exploring changes to the interpreter education offerings at WOU"

(Revisiting: Defining the Nature of the "Gap", 2016).

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

Design

The state of South Dakota has very little data that focuses on sign language interpreters. I was unable to uncover data discussing the need for interpreters or the population of the Deaf community throughout the state, with the exception of information from Gallaudet University (2013) and the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC, 2013).

To gather information focused specifically on South Dakota, I conducted two surveys and two interviews. I began by seeking approval from the Institutional Review Board at Western Oregon University to conduct my research. Once my research was approved, I contacted Katie Gran, program specialist with the state's Department of Rehabilitation Services. After reviewing the interpreter survey, Katie approved and agreed to send the link to all registered interpreters with in the state. Katie then sent the email, with the survey link, through a mass email.

To reach the largest number of D/deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the state, I contacted representatives from three statewide organizations that support the D/deaf and hard of hearing community. I asked the representatives of the Black Hills Association of the Deaf–South Dakota (BHAD), South Dakota Association of the Deaf (SDAD), and Deaf Grassroots Movement–South Dakota (DGM–SD) asking their approval to post surveys through their websites and Facebook pages. All responded positively; I posted the link on all three Facebook feeds and sent the link to the representatives to post on their websites.

Businesses were identified through my personal contact as an interpreter, listed, and called individually. When contact was made, I requested their participation in the survey. If businesses agreed, I requested email addresses for everyone in the business who had past experience working with an interpreter. The link to the survey was sent directly to appropriate email addresses.

For the interviews, I contacted the two interpreter agencies who schedule interpreters throughout the entire state. I scheduled in-person interviews. Prior to the interviews, consent forms were signed and later filed. All hard-copy consent forms and notes from the interview were retained in a locked drawer in my home office.

Treatment

The research was primarily quantitative with some qualitative data. Quantitative data was collected through surveys. The surveys were created to collect data from a larger sample and uncover patterns found among the participants. The two surveys were administered online, in person, or via the United States Postal Service. The qualitative data was collected by interviews.

One survey was designed for registered sign language interpreters within the state of South Dakota. As mentioned earlier, Katie Gran was asked to reach out to all interpreters, statewide, to complete the survey directed toward interpreters. The initial survey was sent asking for their assistance in the study, and a second email was sent encouraging those who had not yet completed the survey to please complete the form.

The second survey was designed for businesses, hearing and D/deaf consumers, and the Deaf community who have had past experiences working with an interpreter as a consumer. This survey was put onto social media of SDAD, BHAD, DGM-SD. I also

personally contacted businesses within my local area such as Rapid City, Spearfish, Hot Springs, Hill City, and Sturgis and asked them to complete the surveys.

The interviews were used for a deeper understanding of the need for interpreters in the state of South Dakota. There are only two agencies that staff interpreters on the west side of the state. I requested interviews with the owners of each agency. The interviews took place in person. Interview questions were used for structure and clarity. The interview process offered more flexibility and a broader understanding of a need for interpreters within the state.

The goal of the data collection was to gather sufficient information demonstrating a need for more qualified interpreters in the state of South Dakota. As a need became apparent, data will be compiled to offer a proposal to the South Dakota Board of Regents regarding the need for an additional interpreter training program located in the western region of the state.

Sampling

Participants for the surveys were selected using a combination of snowball sampling, convenience sampling, and purposive sampling. Interpreters were identified using the South Dakota Interpreter Registry located on the website of the Department of Human Services/Rehabilitation Services (dhs.sd.gov). I sent the survey for interpreters via email and asked Katie Gran, Program Specialist with DHS, to distribute emails to all interpreters located in this registry. For the second survey, D/deaf, hard of hearing, hearing businesses and individuals were contacted through personal and professional contacts with consumers in the state of South Dakota and through online social media.

There are only two sign language interpreter referral agencies in South Dakota. I contacted the owners of these two agencies through my professional connections. Interviews were conducted individually, so responses from one would not influence the answers from the other.

Data from participants were anonymous. At the end of the survey, participants had an option to include their name and email address if they were interested in being in a focus group. Potential focus groups may be needed for further research emerging from this study. If further research arises, those offering personal information will be contacted. Information found during the focus group will not be included in this study.

For this study, there are no known risks for taking the online surveys or answering interview questions. Participants were allowed to end the survey at any time or refrain from answering any or all questions. If the survey or interview was not completed fully, no repercussions occurred.

The individuals within the Deaf community were encouraged to complete the survey through organizations in South Dakota, specifically Black Hills Association of the Deaf (BHAD), South Dakota Association of the Deaf (SDAD), and Deaf Grassroots Movement-South Dakota (DGM-SD). I approached the president of SDAD, the state representation for the Grassroots Movement, and the online administrator for BHAD asking if the survey could be accessible on each of their Facebook pages; I also asked these individuals to discuss the survey during meetings, encouraging involvement and emphasizing the importance of taking the survey. Paper surveys were printed to administer to personal contacts in the Deaf community during socials and individual gatherings.

Businesses I had personally worked with in the past were invited to complete the survey. Twenty-three businesses were contacted by phone. I offered information about myself, the reason for the survey, and asked for their email address. Once email addresses were obtained, I sent the survey link directly to them with an appreciative note and a brief description of our previous phone discussion.

Consumer surveys focused upon the need for qualified interpreters in the state of South Dakota. The consumer survey was designed to reach out to the Deaf community, hearing community, and businesses that had past experiences working with sign language interpreters. I also drew from my personal experience and my interactions within these groups. Most comments expressed disappointing statements regarding the need for more interpreters and the need for improved skill levels of interpreters. Because of these comments continually occurring, I expected results to sway heavily toward the need for interpreters and the need for interpreters to be more qualified.

Chapter 4: FINDINGS

Need for Interpreting Services

Participants who completed the Business, Deaf Community, and Consumer

Survey consisted of individuals in the Deaf community, individuals who identified

themselves as hearing, medical providers, and special education teachers. This survey

offered insight into how consumers felt about the need for interpreters and the quality of

interpreters available. All participants were located in a variety of areas throughout the

state of South Dakota except for the businesses that took part. Businesses were chosen

from my personal contacts and were located only in the West River region of the state.

The amount of time interpreters were needed by those who participated varied.

Of those who participated, 64.3% use interpreting services once every six months, 10.7%

use interpreting services once every three months, 10.7% use interpreting services once a

month, 3.6% once a year, and 3.6% once a week. Based on these results, most

participants use interpreters approximately twice a year.

Of those who participated, 78.6% requesting interpreting services stated they were

able to schedule an interpreter on their desired date and time. Just over 14% stated they

were in need of an interpreter yet were not successful in scheduling an available

interpreter during their first attempt. Others were unable to schedule an interpreter during

their second attempt (3.6%). Overall, participants were asked about the scheduling

process: 89.3% were satisfied with 21.4% of those being VERY satisfied; 10.7% were

not satisfied with the scheduling process. This question was offered in a ranking system

from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. There was no clarification as to what they considered satisfied or why they considered the scheduling process satisfactory.

The survey also asked if consumers had been forced to cancel an appointment due to the lack of an interpreter. Most participants (78.6%) stated when they were in need of an interpreter they were successful in finding an interpreter, leaving 21.4% who stated although they needed an interpreter, they had been forced to cancel an appointment due to the lack of interpreters. Most of the participants (66.7%) had this experience once every six months; 14.8% stated this occurred within one to three months. Several (14.8%) had never been for forced to cancel an appointment due to a lack of interpreter.
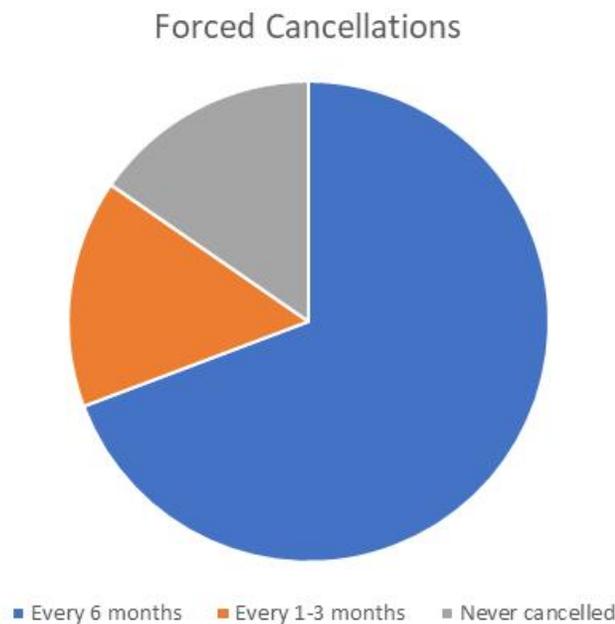

Figure 3. How Often Cancellation Occurs Over a Six Month Period

Quality of Interpreting Services

Participants were asked to consider the quality of interpreting services they had received in the past year. Of the 28 who replied, 96.4% were satisfied, of those satisfied, 32.1% reporting being very satisfied. The remaining 3.6% were very dissatisfied.

Focusing more specifically on areas where consumers were satisfied, the survey asked participants to rank their level of satisfaction specifically in the areas they were most satisfied (see Figure 4): medical, eye doctor, dentist, mental health, settings related to their employment, post-secondary, and meetings. In all areas, satisfactory levels were met. The medical and settings related to employment had the highest reported levels of satisfaction.
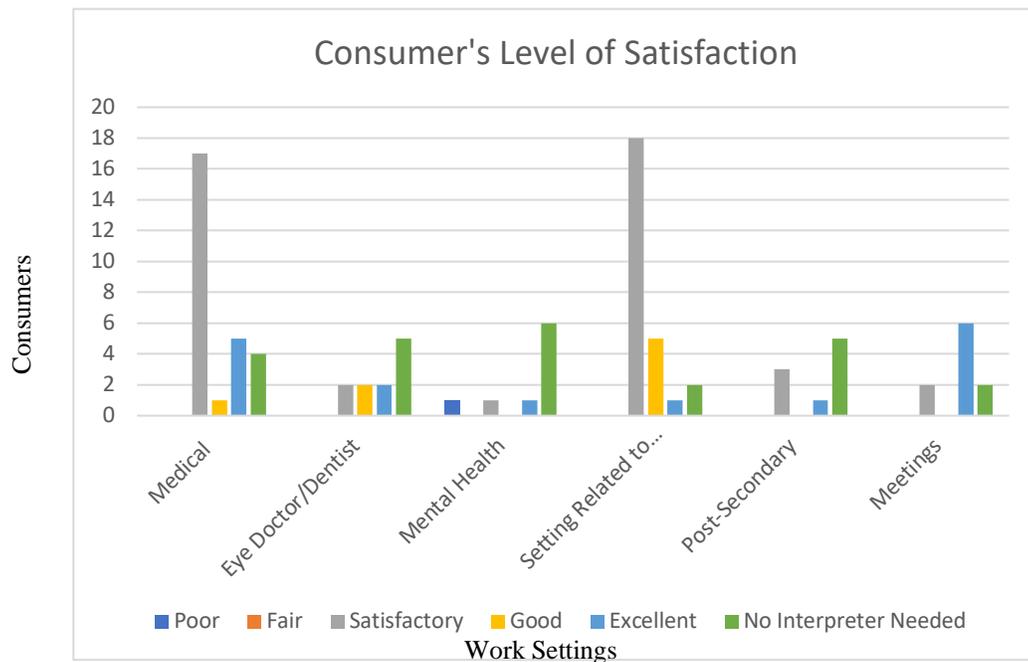
Figure 4. Reported Levels of Satisfaction in Various Domains

Overall, 89.3% of participants reported being satisfied while using interpreting services. Of those 89.3 %, 35.7% were very satisfied. This is compared with 7.1% who were dissatisfied and 3.6% who were very dissatisfied. The information demonstrates that a majority of businesses, individuals in the Deaf community, and hearing consumers are satisfied with the interpreting services offered.

As shown in the chart above, the choices offered to participants were poor, fair, satisfactory, good, and excellent. Although participants chose satisfactory, this was a

more neutral choice compared to the two more unacceptable choices of poor and fair and the two more acceptable choices of good and excellent. Further clarity is needed to understand if satisfactory is simply accepting the less-desirable interpreting services rather than offered the most desired.

When participants were asked for more descriptive reasons for their satisfaction, the majority of responses were related to the demonstration of professionalism by the interpreter (92.9%). The remaining responses indicated the interpreter was on time (89.3%), stayed throughout the entire need of interpreting service (89.3%), was clearly understood (85.7%), was personable (82.1%), was available on first request (78%), clearly understood all parties involved and conveyed accurate message (32.1%), wore appropriate attire (3.6%), and was available most of the time (3.6%).

A small portion of participants (5) chose to respond and answer their level of dissatisfaction. Eighty percent of participants who indicated dissatisfaction stated it was due to no interpreter being available (see Figure 5). Four additional reasons were given by the participants: interpreter was late, interpreter was unprofessional, interpreter was not understandable, and one participant stated they had no bad experiences with an interpreter in the past.
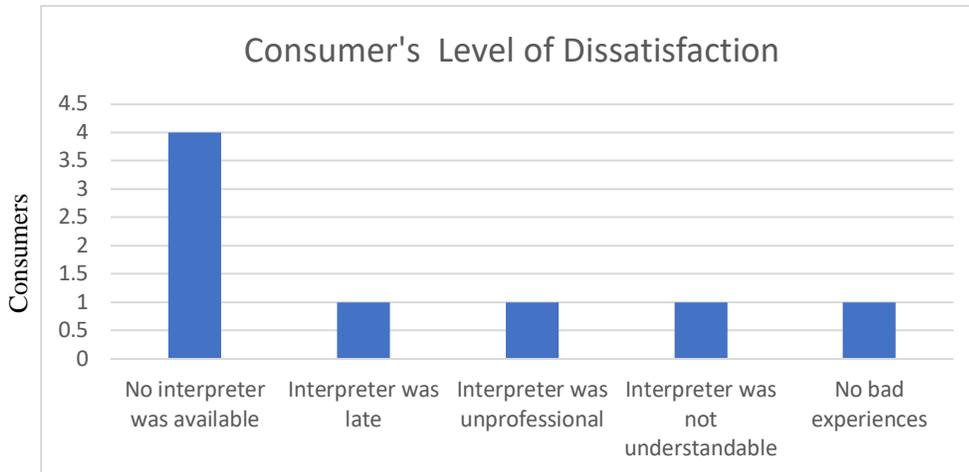
Consumer's Level of Dissatisfaction

Figure 5. Reasons for Dissatisfaction

Interpreter Survey Results

Participants were interpreters registered with South Dakota Department of Human

Services. Once I had acquired approval, participants were contacted via email sent from

Katie Gran, DRS Program Specialist. She sent the survey link to the 101 registered

interpreters in the state of South Dakota. A reminder email was sent two days prior to the

closing of the survey. There was a total of 25 interpreters who participated in the survey;

all identified as hearing.

Need for Interpreting Services

To have some understanding of what an interpreter's schedule may be in a week's

time, participants were asked, on average, how many hours they work per week (see

Figure 6). Sixty percent of the interpreters who participated stated their work schedule

was full-time; results show that this is 30-40 hours per week, and 8% worked more than

40 hours per week. The majority of the participants (64%) are satisfied with the amount

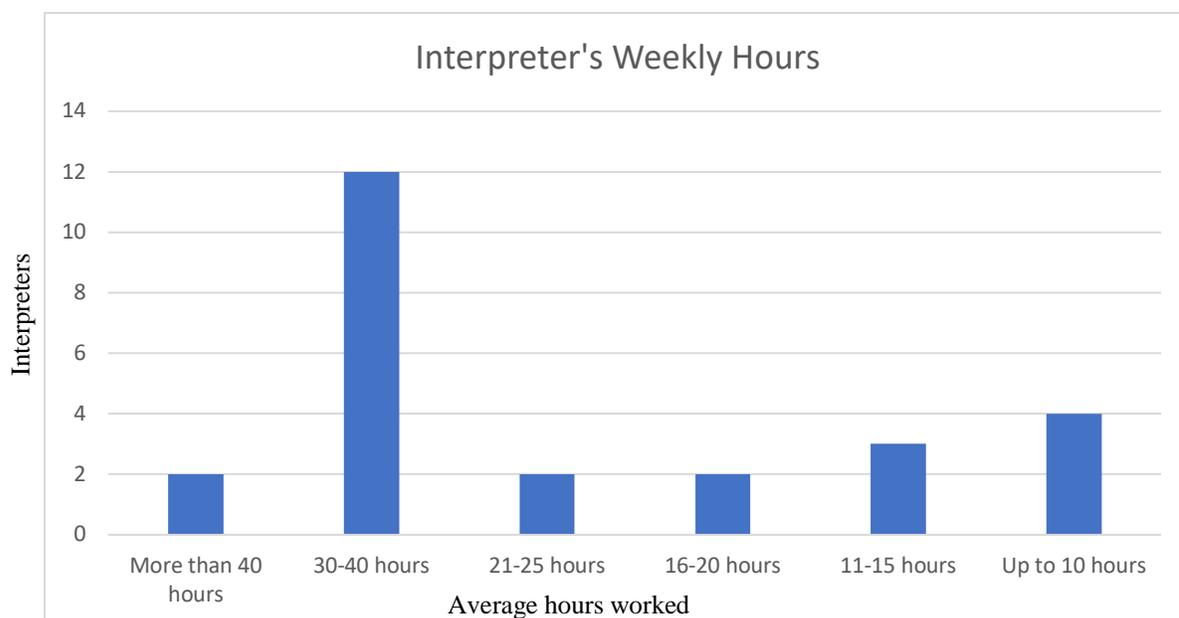of work available to them, 24% were neutral, and 12% were not satisfied.

Figure 6. Interpreter's Weekly Hours

Because interpreters may work within a variety of areas within the interpreting

field, participants were asked to rank the most dominant to least dominant areas where an

interpreter is needed. The survey offered the following categories: educational settings

(elementary and secondary – K-12), medical, mental health, post-secondary, Video Relay

Service (VRS), religion, eye doctor/dentist, Deaf-Blind, and a category titled other.

As shown in Figure 7, the most dominant need for interpreters is the education

setting (K-12). Mental health and VRS were the next two categories in high need of

interpreters. The level of EIPA requirement in the state of South Dakota is 3.5 or higher.

Interpreters holding a nationally recognized certification meet state regulations and the

interpreter do not have to complete the EIPA assessment. The EIPA also has a written

test, but interpreters in the state of South Dakota are not required to complete or pass this

written exam. The Classroom Interpreting website (n.d.) explains: "The EIPA is a tool

that evaluates the voice-to-sign and sign-to voice skills of interpreters who work in the

elementary through secondary classroom using videotape stimulus materials and a

procedure that includes a comprehensive rating system."
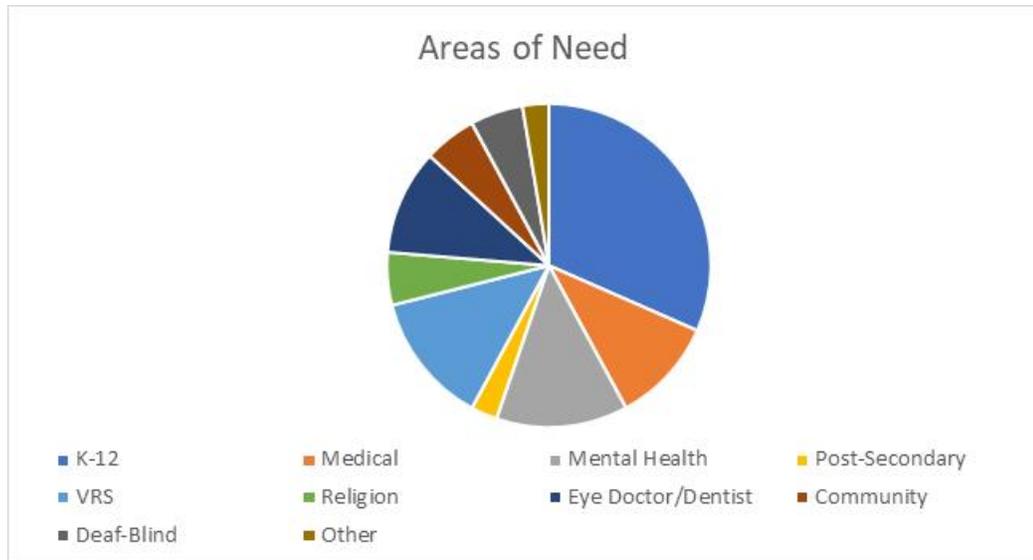
Figure 7. Areas of Need for Interpreters

Participants were asked what reasons they have given for declining work in the

past (see Figure 8). Participants were asked to check as many that apply. The majority

of interpreters (87.5%) responded they had cancelled interpreting work due to a personal

obligation. Other reasons included previously accepted an interpreting job (70.8%), the

distance and time constraints would not allow time to reach the consumer at the time they

were requested (25%), unable to reach an acceptable date and time with the consumer

(8.3%), and while attempting to match schedules with the consumer another job was

accepted (4.2%). Some interpreters felt they were not qualified for the interpreting job

(16.7%), some had scheduling conflicts (4.2%), and some interpreters had never declined

interpreting work (4.2%).
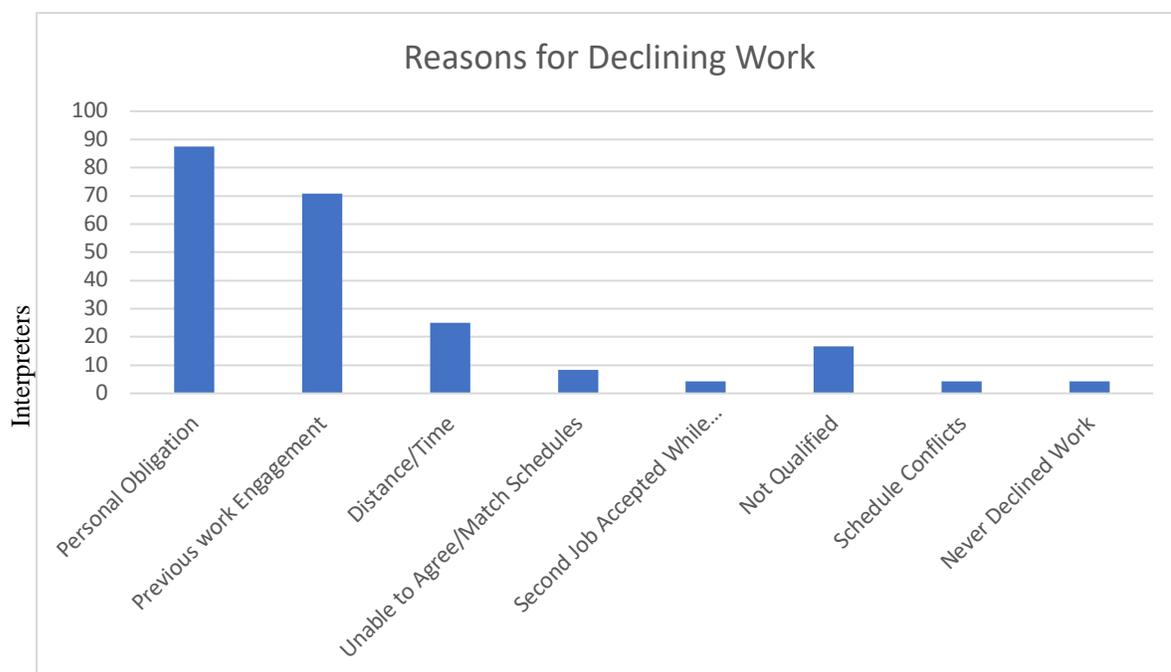
Figure 8. Reasons Interpreters were Forced to Decline Work

Quality of Interpreting—A Focus on Educational Backgrounds

Interpreters are required to obtain a minimal academic level of a bachelor's degree, prior to receiving of a national certification. Due to that fact, part of the survey focused on participants' academic background. The majority of participants (88%) attended an interpreter education program (IEP), and 54.5% have a bachelor's degree (see Figure 9). Not all the participant's bachelor's degrees were associated with interpreter training. The academic programs where the participants acquired their training varied across 12 states; however, South Dakota was the location the majority of participants attended for their academic background, including Augustana University (IEP), Southeast Technical Institute in Sioux Falls (AA), and Colorado Technical University in Sioux Falls (Business). Participants were also asked about specific areas of interpreting and how well, in their opinion, their training prepared them.
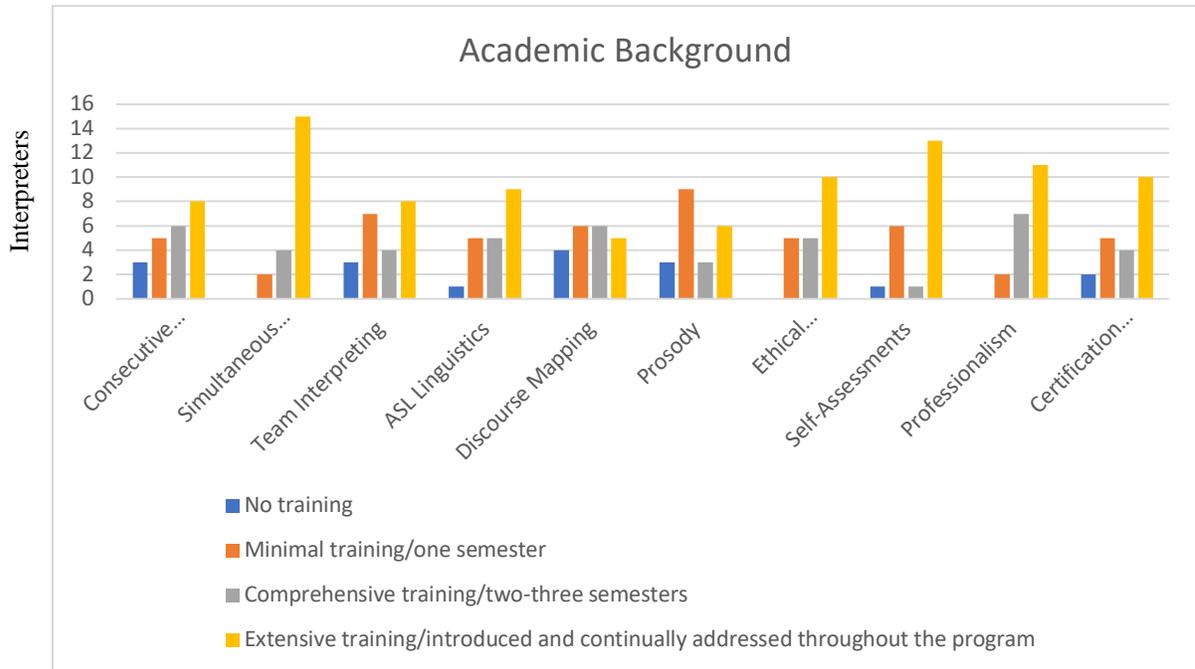
Figure 9. Subjects of Interpreters' Past Academic Training

When participants were asked the skills area(s) in which they would like to have

had more in-depth training, the most dominant want was certification readiness (see

Figure 9). At some level, all 10 areas were ranked as the most dominant area they would

have preferred to have more in-depth training during their IEP. Although 77.3% of

participants stated they were offered preparation for certification within the curriculum,

the most dominant preference was certification readiness. This information reinforces the

existence of The Gap (see Figure 10). In addition to collegiate establishments

recognizing a need for interpreters to become prepared for certification, interpreters are

recognizing and having a desire for more intense training that prepares them for

certification after graduation. Listing the most desired to least desired: Certification

Readiness, Professionalism, Self-Assessment, Consecutive Interpreting, Team

Interpreting, Prosody, ASL Linguistics, Discourse Mapping, Simultaneous Interpreting,

and Ethical Reasoning/Decision Making.
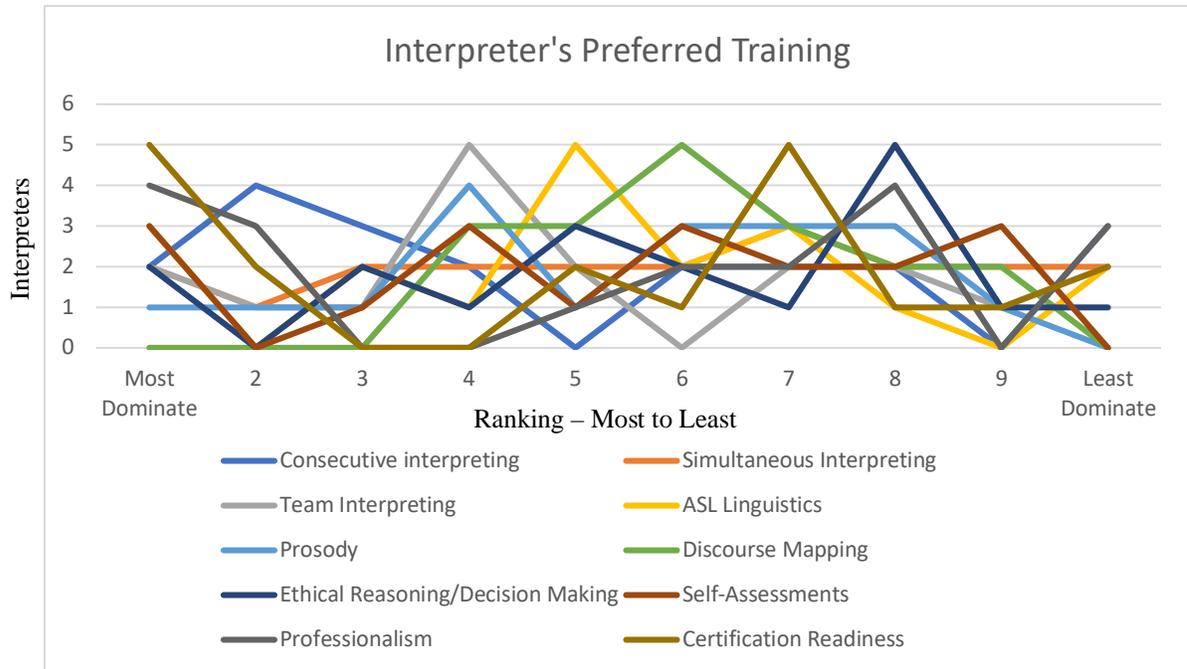
Figure 10. Interpreters Preference to More In-Depth Training during IEP

In addition to the prepared answers offered on the survey, interpreters also stated they would have preferred more supervised practice (63.2%), more interaction with the Deaf community (57.9%), and more interaction with Deaf mentors (57.9%). The participants' top three answers were internship (42.1%), working interpreters as my instructors (36.8%), and more training on ethical decision making (31.6%).

Certification

Of the 24 participants who responded to the question, 91.7% stated they were certified (see Figure 11). The participants were asked what certification they held: 45.5% hold the most current and presently offered certification, the NIC; 18.2% have ED:K-12 certification[1]. The remaining 36.3% who are certified have certifications that meet state regulations.

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[1] ED:K-12 is a certification was offered nationally recognized by RID until approximately 2013; the certification continues to be recognized, but no longer is issued.
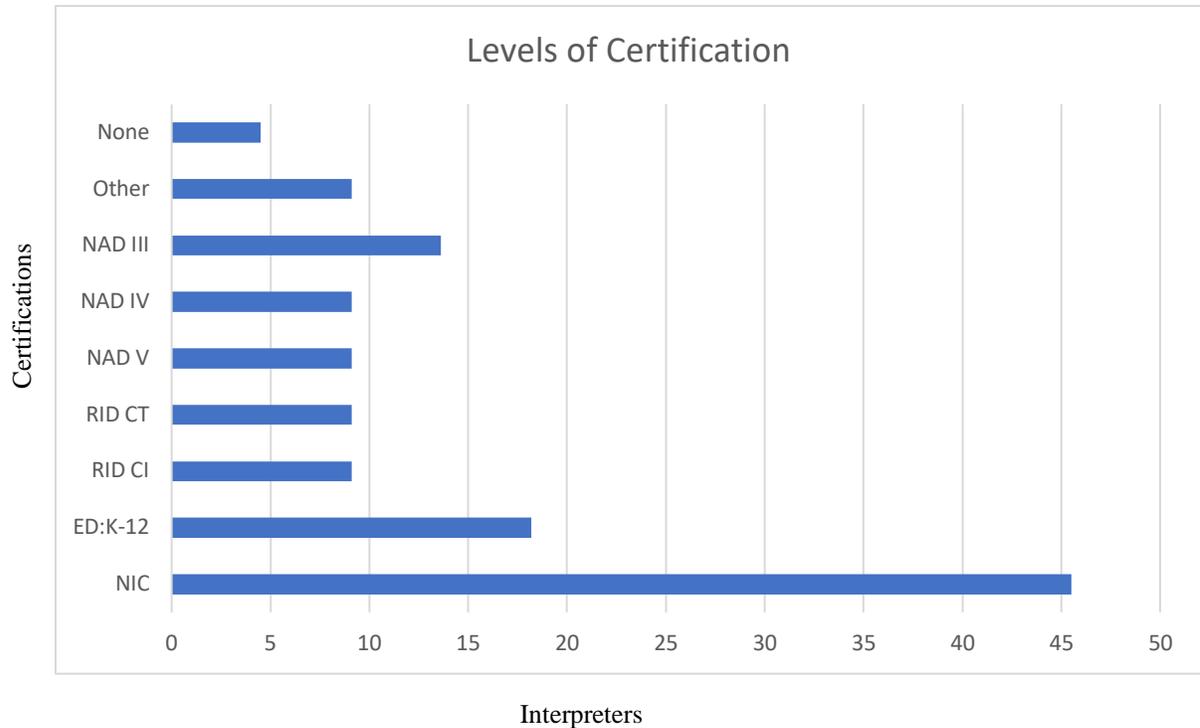
Figure 11. Participants' Level of Certification

When participants were asked how long after completing their IEP they became certified, the responses varied greatly. Many participants stated they completed their certification prior to completing their IEP (26.1%). Another 21.7% completed their certification one year after their IEP and 21.7% hold a state required licensure. The remaining participants were certified 2-3 years (4.3%), 4-5 years (8.7%), and more than 5 years (17.4%) following their IEP. Five participants stated they were not certified at this time but were working toward certification. They were asked how many years it had been since they had completed their IEP. Forty percent stated 1-2 years, 40% stated 3-4 years, and 20% stated more than five years. Those who become certified years after completion of their certification may have information to offer future research that focuses on The Gap and how to lessen the time between graduation and certification.

Those who hold an ED:K-12 certification passed the written assessment and achieved a level of 4.0 or higher on the performance piece of the EIPA.

Because the EIPA is not recognized as a certification but a level of 3.5 is required in the state of South Dakota, participants were asked if they had taken the EIPA; 56.5% responded yes and 43.5% responded no. Of those who did take the assessment, 92.9% met the state EIPA requirements of 3.5 or higher.

Interpreter Referral Interview Results

Within the State of South Dakota there are two interpreter referral agencies that schedule interpreters on the west side of the state. Other agencies throughout the state were either unknown prior to my approval with the Institutional Review Board or did not offer interpreting services in West River. Both agencies are located in Sioux Falls, which is located on the east side of the state. My preference was to meet the owners of both agencies face-to-face. I hoped to create a personal connection and possibly formulate a more in-depth discussion. To maintain confidentiality, I will refer to these agencies as Agency A and Agency B.

For both agencies, contracting and scheduling of sign language interpreters is handled by individuals on staff who were hired into the position of scheduling. During specific times (e.g., after hours or when staff need any level of time off), both owners step in and handle the scheduling. They were asked how many requests for interpreters, statewide and West River, were filled in a week. No exact number was given; however, they both expressed concerns with not having enough interpreters to satisfy the need.

The agencies expressed similarities in how they staff interpreters. It was stated that interpreters work for a variety of locations and/or agencies. Although Agency A has approximately 50 interpreters on their staff list, only 10 are available at any time, night or day. Specific to West River, there are five interpreters on staff; only two or three are

available 24/7. Agency B has approximately eight interpreters on staff, but only one is available to travel to West River.

Agency A and B follow state regulations and laws. All interpreters must have a current certification or a licensure before they are hired by the agency. A bachelor's degree in the field of interpreting is preferred, but not required. Interpreters must follow laws and guidelines set by the state.

Both agencies, when requested, will supply interpreters for the school district. At this time, it remains as a substitute status. The state of South Dakota does not have a school for the Deaf where children attend. South Dakota School for the Deaf (SDSD) functions with offices and outreach consultants. Students throughout South Dakota are mainstreamed in public school districts, homeschooled, or attend private schools. SDSD services approximately 500 D/deaf and hard of hearing students throughout the state (R. Norris, personal communication, April, 2018). National certification, ED:K-12, or EIPA 3.5 with state provisional license is required to interpret in the school districts.

When asking agencies about filling interpreting requests, both replied after considerable thought. Agency A stated that from 1-10, with 1 being the most difficult to fill requests, statewide was 6-7 and West River was 3-4. Agency B stated they were not able to fill requests on the eastern portion of the state 10% of the time. West River was more difficult. Currently, they have one interpreter on staff that is willing to travel across the state to fill requests in West River.

Questions discussing the inability to find interpreters to fill interpreting requests began with specific issues, such as distance, benefits (e.g., health insurance), and having continual full-time work. Interpreters work only when there is a request for an

interpreter. Many times there are fluctuations in an interpreter's schedule. Agencies are unable to promise interpreters full-time work, so interpreters are scheduled on an "as needed" status. Specific to West River, interpreting requests are filled as interpreters are available. Agency A stated that if an interpreter is not available upon the consumer's original request, the agency and consumer must consult with the interpreter individually to find a day and time they are available and that works for all (deaf individual, business, hearing consumer, interpreter). When an interpreter is not available and the request remains unfilled, agencies then suggest the availability of Video Remote Interpreting (VRI).

Both agencies expressed the need for more interpreters throughout South Dakota with West River having a higher level of need. Although the agencies feel this need, both are willing to work with interpreters, deaf individuals, and businesses to satisfy requests for interpreters. Both agencies spoke of improving the status of qualified interpreters and the need to increase the number of interpreters. Both also indicated they are continually attempting to find solution to satisfy both issues.

Chapter 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this pilot study was to assess the interpreting services in the state of South Dakota, offer information to college-level institutions to begin data collection for a proposal of an interpreter education program, offer data to begin an analysis of the need for qualified interpreters, and offer a foundation to further research that focuses on the benefits of either creating an interpreter education program or to extend an already existing interpreter education program to the West River region. The data from this pilot study (surveys and interviews) contributes to an understanding of the need for increased number of qualified interpreters in South Dakota and, more specifically, the West River region of the state.

One contrast in the data should be noted. Nearly 90% of participants stated they were satisfied with the scheduling of an interpreter. However, nearly a quarter of the participants who completed the Business and Deaf community survey reported being forced to cancel appointments due to the lack of interpreters. The imbalance of results is due to the number of participants that responded to these two separate questions. Full participation occurred when participants were asked their satisfaction level of scheduling an interpreter. Only 1/6 of the participants responded they were forced to cancel appointments due to the lack of interpreter. One reasoning for the consumer's satisfaction was due to the fact that an interpreter was available upon the initial request. Further research will be needed to clarify if satisfactory is equivalent to qualified or a point of acceptance for consumers due to a need for interpreters.

Recommendations Based on the Need for Interpreters

Rural areas, such as the West River region of South Dakota, create a varied dynamic for interpreters. The amount of work that occurs in their day and distance constraints means "the profession must consider the recruitment of interpreters to ensure sustainability of interpreting services in rural communities" (Trimble, 2014, p. 46). Participants who responded to the interpreter survey stated they had been forced to decline an interpreting job due to distance. Offering a program in a more rural area would benefit small remote communities by reaching interpreters who may not have an opportunity to advance their skills and knowledge otherwise and train individuals wanting to become interpreters into the area increasing the interpreter population.

Both agencies interviewed expressed concerns with not having enough interpreters to satisfy the need. Agencies are forced to work one-on-one with interpreters, Deaf individuals, and the businesses to mesh their schedules, in hopes of matching dates and times so equal access is achieved for all parties involved. At the times an interpreter cannot be scheduled, VRI is utilized as the last resort. Although this is an effective alternative, my personal communications with those in the Deaf community render a negative opinion of this technology. The Deaf community appreciates VRI as an alternative. However, because of technology issues—such as the screen freezing, the interpreter not being able to hear the English speaker, the hearing consumer not placing the tablet in a location where the Deaf consumer can see the interpreter at all times—they may be forced to cancel an appointment and wait for a future date when an interpreter is able to be physically present during their scheduled appointment.

Recommendations Based on Qualified Interpreters

The participants in this study, as well as additional data, demonstrated the variety of certifications held by interpreters in South Dakota. The focus must remain on the quality of work an interpreter produces and how that quality is measured and evaluated. Certification has been set in place to achieve that goal. During the certification assessments, interpreters prove their levels of ability and are awarded the appropriate qualification that matches their achievements and their certification. Due to the wide variety of certifications accepted statewide and nationally that began in the 1980s, I would recommend a further study comparing the assessments of each certification gauging level of satisfaction to mastery. Doing this would allow for a deeper understanding of "qualified" and how various certifications compare with each other, in terms of interpreter skill and professionalism.

A second recommendation would be to research and compare South Dakota certification requirements with certification requirements in the other 49 states. In doing this, individuals working with the state government could offer data demonstrating levels of certification among all 50 states and suggest high level of qualifications be required of the interpreters working in the state of South Dakota.

Recommendations for Establishing an Interpreter Education Program

Interpreter Education Programs (IEPs) are found in many states nationwide. These IEPs vary in their requirements for graduation. IEPs range from a certificate program to a master's program. There is no consistent national standard that determines if these interpreter graduates as qualified. The Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE) has listed IEPs that follow strict standards required for a program to be

successful, identifying "the knowledge, skills, and perspectives students need to gain

order to enter the field of professional interpreting" (CCIE, 2014). The list of accredited

programs can be found on the CCIE website (http://ccie-accreditation.org/

accredited-programs/). Also, RID has provided a link to the accredited programs list.

RID references five associate degree programs and 13 bachelor degree programs

nationwide; Augustana University, located in East River, South Dakota is one of these

accredited programs.

> The field of interpreting is, in many ways, at a crossroads. Diminished program
>
> involvement with the Deaf community has impacted student language learning
>
> and cultural understanding. In addition, two-year degree programs are
>
> increasingly challenged to justify their existence in light of national certification
>
> requirements for a bachelor's degree, and in general, programs are not producing
>
> ASL-fluent graduates. Many times the new interpreters' ability to practice is
>
> sorely limited, and the gap between interpreter graduation and readiness to work
>
> has continued to grow. Interpreter education programs (IEP) provide little
>
> guidance for new graduates and there are few formal, structured post-graduation
>
> pathways for graduates to gain experience with minimal risk to themselves and
>
> their customers. (Retrieved from http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-
>
> content/uploads/2016/02/NIEC_Trends_Report_2_2016.pdf)

Research varies and data is suggesting several causes of The Gap. Some refer to

academia needing to be reevaluated and restricted, while many believe the lack of

exposure and interaction with the Deaf community to be at fault. The answer may lie

between the two: "Experience is often the crux of this gap; but, depending on the quality

of the interpreter educations, as well as the maturity and commitment of the student during their education other factors may influence what this period of induction includes" (Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005, p. 75). Further research is recommended to establish underlining causes of The Gap before establishing an Interpreter Education Program. Clarity and a clear understanding of what elements are needed for students to advance their interpreting skills and be certification-ready are beneficial to a new program and the creation of a new curriculum.

The information within this study offers a surface level of understanding that leads to more need for research. Some recommendations for future studies would be to clarify what is meant by "satisfied" and "satisfactory" within the survey instruments used. Although participants' responses were "satisfied," research needs to show if this is an acceptable level of qualified or if this is a level consumers are willing to accept because need takes precedence over quality.

Secondly, isolating specific groups for analysis would enhance the understanding of each group specifically. For example, the Businesses, Deaf Community, and Consumer Survey would be more beneficial if these three groups were separated into individual groups and new surveys were created with questions directed toward each specific group. Specific questions pertaining to those individual groups would offer more precise data and more focused information to advance the field. Lastly, further research needs to focus completely on the West River region. This would allow for the data to emphasize possible need for qualified interpreters within this region without receiving influence from the East River region. However, if further researchers feel information

from the entire state would be beneficial, individual participants should identify their location, West River or East River.

Conclusion

The data found within this pilot study demonstrates a surface level of understanding for the need of qualified interpreters in West River region of South Dakota. The purpose of the study was to understand if there was a need for qualified interpreters and further, the need for an interpreter education program in the western region of South Dakota. The two surveys and two interviews implied a need for qualified interpreters. However, through the prior suggestions addressed for further studies, more specifics are needed before a proposal for an Interpreter Education Program can be formulated. Therefore, the above recommended research will need to take place before offering sufficient information for a proposal to be completed and offered to the South Dakota Board of Regents.

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Appendix A: BUSINESSES, DEAF COMMUNITY, AND CONSUMER SURVEY

Thank you for your consideration in participating in my research project. I am currently a graduate student at Western Oregon University under the supervision of Amanda Smith. I am reaching out to individuals throughout the state of South Dakota to complete a research study to identify a need for an interpreter education program at Black Hills State University. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

The purpose of this study is to identify a need for an interpreter education program within the state of South Dakota. You must be an owner or employee of a business who has hired a professional interpreter for communicative purposes or a Deaf individual who has experience working with sign language interpreters in South Dakota.

There is a minimal risk of loss of confidentiality. The records of this study will be kept private. Any report or information made public will not include any information that will identify any individuals involved in the study. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records.

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to complete a survey. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Western Oregon University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Should you have any questions or concerns you may contact me, Cyndi Fisher, by phone (605) 431-3653 or e-mail cfisher16@mail.wou.edu or my faculty advisor, Amanda Smith at (503) 838-8650 or asmith@wou.edu. Further questions or concerns, you may contact the Chair of the WOU Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (503) 838-9200 or via e-mail at irb@wou.edu.

I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

     I agree
     I do not agree

Are you:
     Deaf
     Hard of Hearing
     Hearing
     Other (please explain) _____

How often do you use interpreting services?

> Several times a week
> Once a week
> Once a month
> Once every three months
> Once every six months
> Once a year

When requesting interpreting services, was an interpreter available on your requested date and time?

> Yes
> No, not on the first date and time requested
> No, not on the second date and time requested
> No, I needed to correspond dates and times to match interpreter's schedule

Overall, how satisfied were you with scheduling the interpreting services?

> Very Dissatisfied
> Dissatisfied
> Satisfied
> Very Satisfied

Overall, how satisfied were you with the interpreting services?

> Very Dissatisfied
> Dissatisfied
> Satisfied
> Very Satisfied

For a clearer understanding of your overall experiences using interpreting services. Please answer the following questions.

In the past, considering all interpreting services you received, how would you rate the quality of interpreting services?

> Excellent
> Good
> Satisfactory
> Fair
> Poor

If your past interpreting service experiences were more often satisfying, please clarify your reasoning. (Check all that apply)

> Interpreter was available upon first request
> Interpreter was on time
> Interpreter stayed throughout the entire need of interpreting services
> Interpreter was clearly understood
> Interpreter clearly understood all parties involved and conveyed accurate message

Interpreter was professional
Other (please explain)_____

If your past interpreting service experiences were more often <u>dis</u>satisfying, please clarify your reasoning. (Check all that apply)
No interpreter was available
Interpreter was late
Interpreter left when interpreting services were still in need
Interpreter's professional abilities were lacking
I could not understand the interpreter
The interpreter was unable to convey my meaning to the other party involved
Interpreter was unprofessional
Other (please explain)_____

In the following settings, please rate your level of satisfaction.

- Medical
  Excellent
  Good
  Satisfactory
  Fair
  Poor
  No need for interpreter in this area

- Eye doctor/dentist
  Excellent
  Good
  Satisfactory
  Fair
  Poor
  No need for interpreter in this area

- Mental Health
  Excellent
  Good
  Satisfactory
  Fair
  Poor
  No need for interpreter in this area

- Setting related to your employment
  Excellent
  Good
  Satisfactory

Fair
Poor
No need for interpreter in this area

- Post-secondary
    Excellent
    Good
    Satisfactory
    Fair
    Poor
    No need for interpreter in this area

- Meetings
    Excellent
    Good
    Satisfactory
    Fair
    Poor
    No need for interpreter in this area

Have you ever had an appointment or event cancel due to a lack of interpreter?
    Yes
    No

How often do you cancel appointments due to a lack of interpreter?
    Once a week
    Twice a month
    Once a month
    Once every three months
    Once every six months
    Other _____

If you are interested in discussing issues in regards to interpreting services, please enter your name and email address below to participate in a focus group to explore the issues raised in this survey.

Name _____
Email_____

Thank you for your time and participation!

Appendix B: SOUTH DAKOTA INTERPRETER SURVEY

Thank you for your consideration in participating in my research project. I am currently a graduate student at Western Oregon University under the supervision of Amanda Smith. I am reaching out to individuals throughout the state of South Dakota to complete a research study to identify a need for an interpreter education program at Black Hills State University. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

The purpose of this study is to identify a need for an interpreter education program within the state of South Dakota. You must be a sign language interpreter currently working within the state of South Dakota.

There is a minimal risk of loss of confidentiality. The records of this study will be kept private. Any report or information made public will not include any information that will identify any individuals involved in the study. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records.

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to complete a survey. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time without punishment.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Western Oregon University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Should you have any questions or concerns you may contact me, Cyndi Fisher, by phone (605) 431-3653 or e-mail cfisher16@mail.wou.edu or my faculty advisor, Amanda Smith at (503) 838-8650 or asmith@wou.edu. Further questions or concerns, you may contact the Chair of the WOU Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (503) 838-9200 or via e-mail at irb@wou.edu.

I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

 I agree
 I do not agree

Are you:
 Deaf
 Hard of Hearing
 Hearing
 Other

Considering the total time you dedicate to interpreting, would you consider yourself to be:
 Full time

Part time
Occasional

How many hours in a week do you provide interpreting services?
Up to 10 hours
11-15 hours
16-20 hours
21-25 hours
25-30 hours
30-40
More than 40 hours

What reasons, if any, have you declined interpreting work (check all that apply)?
Previously accepted an interpreting job/already scheduled for that specific date and time
Personal obligations
Another job was scheduled while attempting to match schedule with consumers
Travel time and distance was too excessive/unable to reach consumer due to distance
Unable to agree on a date and time with consumer
I have never declined interpreting work
Other_____

How satisfied are you with the amount of interpreting work available to you?
Very Satisfied
Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Neutral
Somewhat Dissatisfied
Dissatisfied
Very Dissatisfied

In your current personal work schedule, please rank the following list 1-10, 1 being the most dominant need for interpreting:
K-12
Medical
Mental Health
Post-Secondary
VRS
Religion
Eye doctor/Dentist
Community
Deaf-Blind
Other – please specify_____

How often do you find work in your '10' choice?

 Everyday

 Once a week

 Up to five times a week

 Once every two weeks

 Once a month

Did you attend an Interpreter Education Program?

 Yes

 No

Please answer the following if you selected "yes, you attended an interpreter education program."

What is the highest level of academic achievement?

 Certificate

 Associate Degree

 Bachelor's Degree

 Master's Degree

 Doctorate Degree

Name of program and certificate/degree (if more than one, please list all)

Program_____Certificate/Degree_____

Program_____Certificate/Degree_____

Program_____Certificate/Degree_____

Program_____Certificate/Degree_____

What state was the program located?_____

In your opinion, how well did your program prepare you for interpreting work in the following skill areas?

- Consecutive Interpreting Skills

 No training

 Minimal training/one semester

 Comprehensive training/two-three semester

 Extensive training/introduced and continually addressed throughout the program

- Simultaneous Interpreting Skills

 No training

 Minimal training/one semester

 Comprehensive training/two-three semester

 Extensive training/introduced and continually addressed throughout the program

- Team Interpreting
  No training
  Minimal training/one semester
  Comprehensive training/two-three semester
  Extensive training/introduced and continually addressed throughout the program

- ASL Linguistics
  No training
  Minimal training/one semester
  Comprehensive training/two-three semester
  Extensive training/introduced and continually addressed throughout the program

- Discourse Mapping
  No training
  Minimal training/one semester
  Comprehensive training/two-three semester
  Extensive training/introduced and continually addressed throughout the program

- Prosody
  No training
  Minimal training/one semester
  Comprehensive training/two-three semester
  Extensive training/introduced and continually addressed throughout the program

- Ethical Reasoning/Decision Making
  No training
  Minimal training/one semester
  Comprehensive training/two-three semester
  Extensive training/introduced and continually addressed throughout the program

- Professionalism
  No training
  Minimal training/one semester
  Comprehensive training/two-three semester
  Extensive training/introduced and continually addressed throughout the program

- Certification Readiness/Preparation
  No training
  Minimal training/one semester
  Comprehensive training/two-three semester
  Extensive training/introduced and continually addressed throughout the program

Now that you have experience working as an interpreter, what skills area(s) would you like to have had more in-depth training? Please rank the following list 1-10. 1 being the most dominant need and 10 being the least dominant need.

Consecutive Interpreting Skills
Simultaneous Interpreting Skills
Team Interpreting
ASL Linguistics
Prosody
Discourse Mapping
Ethical Reasoning
Professionalism
Certification Readiness

In addition to the above, what other areas would you have liked more during your time in the interpreter program (check all that apply)?

More supervised practice
More training on ethical decision making
More interaction with the Deaf community
With Deaf mentors
With working interpreters as instructors
Internship
Other (please explain)_____

Did your program address certification as part of the curriculum?

Yes
No

Are you certified?

Yes
No

What certification(s) do you hold? (Check all that apply)

None
NIC
NIC Advanced
NIC Master
BEI
ED: K-12
CI
CT
CSC
CDI
SC: L
OTC

NAD V
NAD IV
NAD III
Other_____

How long after graduation/completion of your interpreter program did you become certified?
Before finishing program
1 year after
2-3 years after
4-5 years after
more than 5 years after
I have a licensure with the state where I interpret
My state does not require certification/I am not working toward certification

If you are still working toward certification, how many years since you completed your program?
Less than a year
1-2 years
3-4 years
5 years
More than 5 years

Have you taken the EIPA?
Yes
No

Did you meet your state EIPA requirements?
Yes
No

If you are interested in discussing issues in regards to interpreting services, please enter your name email address below to participate in a focus group to explore the issues raised in this survey.

Name _____

Email_____

Thank you for your time and participation!

Interview Questions

Thank you for your consideration in participating in my research project. I am currently a graduate student at Western Oregon University under the supervision of Amanda Smith. I am reaching out to individuals throughout the state of South Dakota to complete a research study to identify a need for an interpreter education program at Black Hills State University. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

The purpose of this study is to identify a need for an interpreter education program within the state of South Dakota. You must be an owner/employee/scheduler for an interpreting agency within the state of South Dakota.

There is a minimal risk of loss of confidentiality. The records of this study will be kept private. Any report or information made public will not include any information that will identify any individuals involved in the study. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records.

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to complete an interview. The interview process will take a minimum of 30 minutes. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time without punishment.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Western Oregon University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Should you have any questions or concerns you may contact me, Cyndi Fisher, by phone (605) 431-3653 or e-mail cfisher16@mail.wou.edu or my faculty advisor, Amanda Smith at (503) 838-8650 or asmith@wou.edu. Further questions or concerns, you may contact the Chair of the WOU Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (503) 838-9200 or via e-mail at irb@wou.edu.

Name:_____Title:_____
Agency:_____
Signature:_____

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Are you responsible for contracting or scheduling the services of sign language interpreters within the state of South Dakota?

2. Statewide, approximately how many interpreting requests do you fill in a week?

3. On average, what percentage of the interpreting requests (from question #2) occur in West River Territory?

4. To fill interpreter requests throughout the state, do you use staff interpreters, contracted freelance interpreters, both, other options?

5. Do you require interpreters to hold certification or licensure?

6. What certifications and licensure are accepted to meet your requirements?

7. Do you schedule interpreters to work within the public school system?

8. If you require EIPA, what minimum score do you require?

9. Do you require interpreters to hold a specific level of academic degree?

10. If so, what level of degree?

11. Do you require their academic degree focus to be in interpreting?

12. Throughout the state of South Dakota, how many interpreters would you estimate are in the pool of people that you contact to fill interpreting assignments?

13. How many interpreters, within that same pool of interpreters, are located West River?

14. Statewide, how would you rate the ease in locating interpreters to fill interpreting assignments?

15. West River, how would you rate the ease in locating interpreters to fill interpreting assignments?

16. What issues impact your inability to find interpreters to fill assignments?

17. Specific to West River, what issues impact your inability to find interpreters to fill assignments?

18. Statewide, how often does an interpreting assignment go unfilled for your agency or organization?

19. West River, how often does an interpreting assignment go unfilled for your agency or organization?

20. When an assignment is not filled, what alternatives are available to the consumers?

21. Do you currently have unfilled job openings for full or part time interpreters?

22. In addition, any follow up questions as needed to complete clarify answers and interview process.