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The Business of Interpreting:
The Ins and Outs of Independent Contracting as a Freelance Interpreter

By
Andrea J. Rehkopf

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 2018



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

- Thesis
- Field Study
- Professional Project

Titled:

The Business of Interpreting: The Ins and Outs of Independent Contracting as a Freelance Interpreter.

Graduate Student: Andrea Rehkopf

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

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

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The undersigned members of the Graduate Faculty of Western Oregon University
have examined the enclosed thesis entitled:

The Business of Interpreting:
The Ins and Outs of Independent Contracting as a Freelance Interpreter

Presented by: Andrea J. Rehkopf

A 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.

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ABSTRACT

The Business of Interpreting:
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June 2018

When it comes to working as an independent contractor or freelance American Sign Language interpreter, there are various skills that go beyond just learning and knowing culture and language. Novice and experienced interpreters have learned that they may not be equipped with the necessary business strategies to function as a freelance/independent contract interpreter. The lack of information may be due to lack of material resources readily available or lack of specific instruction in Interpreter Training Programs. To ensure students and current working interpreters are exposed to this information, a professional development workshop was developed. This professional project was inspired by years of frustration, conversations with colleagues, personal trial and error, and this study's pertinent data. Participants attending this workshop will explore efficient and ethical business practices used by professionals in the field. Topics

covered include: marketing and social media, what invoice elements are necessary for billing, and a brief discussion about tax information. The workshop will also discuss helpful organizational systems, contract negotiating, and will touch on retirement and insurances. Much of the content for this workshop was gleaned from surveys sent to various groups in the interpreting field.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

One's path to becoming a professional signed language interpreter is a varied and long journey through diverse backgrounds, a variety of interpreter training programs (ITPs), varying skills, talents, and motivations of the individual. Though it is not known exactly where the profession of interpreting was first practiced, the most appropriate answer seems to be: wherever diverse linguistic backgrounds and people met (Stewart, Schein, & Cartwright, 2004). When it comes to signed language interpreting, interpreters were not always viewed as professionals; they were volunteers. Historically interpreters were family members and friends of the Deaf individual (Cokely, 2005). The birthplace of the interpreting profession in the United States originated at a workshop at Ball State University in 1964 hosted by the Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (Stewart et al., 2004). During this workshop, members voted to establish a national body of interpreters, known today as the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID; Stewart et al., 2004).

As of 2016, according to RID's annual report, there are 15,185 members of RID in the United States. Within that, there are around 15,000+ certifications issued to members from RID (with some members holding multiple certifications; RID, 2016). To achieve national or state certification, many interpreters attend an interpreter training program (ITP) at a college or university. A quick search on Discoverinterpreting.com regarding how many interpreting programs are available in the United States, associate and bachelor's degree, returns more than 100+ institutions. Of those 100+ programs, 18 are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE), an

organization founded to promote professionalism in the field of signed language interpreter education. There are many programs, but only a few have demonstrated that they meet the standard to be accredited by CCIE. This indicates that signed language interpreter students are exposed varying curricula from program to program.

According to the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), there are 76 associate and 43 bachelor's degree ITPs in the United States. Whether it takes an individual two or four years to become a professional signed language interpreter, there can be a time crunch for students to learn all the necessary skills to be a successful professional. Interpreting is a complex linguistic, social, cognitive and cultural process (Garcés & Martin, 2008, p. 51). That is just the practiced portion of the interpreting profession: mastering a spoken language, American Sign Language and the act of interpreting. If one chooses the path to become a freelance/independent contractor, one is essentially a small business owner. A study conducted by Meadows (2013), titled *Real-world Shock: Transition Shock and its Effect on New Interpreters of American Sign Language and English*, highlighted a general struggle in learning the business side of interpreting (i.e., billing, getting work, logistics) and indicated that it would be useful if that information were included in the program as an interpreting class or separate business management class (p. 53). Freelance interpreting/independent contract interpreting work was not discussed at great length in my ITP; as the data I collected shows, this may be the case for most programs across the United States. The terms freelance/independent contractor and the idea of being self-employed may be overwhelming and daunting for students, recent graduates, or professional interpreters entering the freelance realm. According that same study by Meadows (2013), many

respondents went through training programs with curriculum primarily focused on developing language to interpret with very little attention given to the business and logistics side of the profession. Given the limited time within ITPs to cover all an interpreter needs to know and the lack of formal mentorship programs in place, in-depth business practices and strategies may get left to the individual to figure out as they venture into their professional role. When it comes to professional interpreters, there have been multiple conversations with colleagues, many of whom stated they have fallen into unnecessary debt, discover unpaid invoices, and struggle to market themselves appropriately (if at all). When it comes to quarterly payments, invoicing, staying organized, and marketing oneself as an independent contractor/freelance interpreter, novice and experienced interpreters alike seem to be thirsty for more knowledge.

Statement of Problem

Walker and Shaw (2011) suggested that signed language interpreters who begin work soon after graduation (from either associate or bachelor-level ITPs) are vulnerable to unique challenges for which they may be inadequately prepared. The information learned in training programs is essential to the success of the interpreter and the profession, but learning through first-hand experience is well recognized as a valuable means to learning a new skill (Gunter & Hull, 1995). Many interpreter training programs emphasize teaching vocabulary concurrent with interpreting (Ball, 2013). As interpreters begin their career, they often focus on the cultural and language-learning aspect of interpreting. However, they soon realize there are many other areas involved in the interpreting profession. As Meadows's (2013) data revealed, students experienced real-world shock when entering the field regarding additional responsibilities above and

beyond interpreting between languages and cultures, such as running a business, dealing with billing, and finding work (Meadows, 2013).

According to two focus groups comprised of 66 students in Colorado and Oklahoma, Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2005) found that several students expressed concerns about there being a gap between graduate outcomes and standards of professional practice. They also stated that many students were unsure what resources they could rely on to help close that gap other than experience and possibly asking a mentor. Not enough research, if any, has been conducted on the preparedness of new interpreters regarding freelance/independent contract interpreting—specifically about running their own business. Several studies have been conducted focusing on ‘the gap’ between students graduating and their general readiness to work in the interpreting field. In one such study, Boeh (2016) asked students about being provided a mentor; 40% agreed a mentor would have benefited them in developing their professional acumen in relation to general business knowledge. Research conducted by Wilbeck (2017) specifies primary areas of difficulty for new interpreters relate to the business skills needed to work as an interpreter, such as finding work and logistics. It appears, when it comes to making quarterly payments, invoicing, staying organized, and marketing oneself as an independent contractor/freelance interpreter, novice and experienced interpreters are wanting and needing more information. If students are not learning this information in their ITP, and if certified interpreters are not privy to this information via professional development yet, where is this information integrated?

Purpose of Project

The purpose of this study and project was to survey a variety of working interpreters, students, and interpreter training programs to ascertain what information they were missing regarding freelance business skills and what topics they would like to learn more about. This data was then used to enhance and deepen a workshop previously developed by Valoree Boyer and myself: *The Business of Interpreting*. The workshop was originally developed in response to the desire for this information from the interpreting community (i.e., students, mentees and colleagues). The data gathered helped round out the workshop, which we intend to present to various parties including: interpreting students, recent graduates, and working interpreters, hoping to fill that gap of knowledge for students and current professional interpreters.

Role of the Researcher

Valoree Boyer and myself developed a workshop to deliver this information to the interpreting community. I have more than 10 years of freelance interpreting experience and currently hold a Board for the Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Master-level certification and a Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) National Interpreter Certification (NIC). Valoree Boyer has more than 20 years of experience and holds an NIC as well. We both come with freelance/independent contractor experience, and Valoree has the added knowledge and perspective of running an interpreting agency for a handful of years. Valoree and I have had many discussions about this topic and have shared in the frustration of lack of information and resources available on this topic. So, we developed a workshop from personal experience after asking a small sample of colleagues what their personal business strategies were. This workshop was presented at

the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), Michigan chapter mini-spring series workshops in 2017. After the completion of that workshop, we decided further research was needed to add additional relevant information to the presentation

There are multiple moving parts and areas to learn when becoming an independent contractor/freelance signed language interpreter. Before, during, and after the assignment there are a myriad of items that need to be taken care of: scheduling, invoicing, taxes, contract negotiation, staying organized and so on. This workshop refinement will provide the interpreting community with a resource on running their interpreting business, as a freelance interpreter (essentially a small business owner). At this point, this workshop, like many others, is like shoveling one pile of dirt into a large canyon; it is a start but is not nearly enough to cover all the complex aspects of being a professional signed language interpreter. This topic was originally derived from multiple professional conversations with colleagues and students about their own frustration and confusion with the business aspects of freelance/independent contract interpreting. Many questions arose during assignments with colleagues, such as: “Do you have a good CPA? How do you keep your invoices organized? Do you have an invoice template, can you share that with me?” Also, within a Facebook group of interpreters in my community someone posted desperately asking for any help regarding tracking expenses, maintaining records, working with multiple agencies and so on. Clearly there is a current need among professional working interpreters.

Conceptual Framework

According to McGaghie, Brodage, and Shea (2001), a conceptual framework is linked to a problem statement and “sets the stage” for presentation of that specific

research question. The focus of this research is based on the concept that interpreting as a profession requires a wide variety of skills and knowledge, not just learning American Sign Language, including but not limited to, the business practices/logistics. Following the work of Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2005) in *Toward Competent Practice: Conversations with Stakeholders*, there are five entry-to-practice domains, number five being: *Professionalism Competencies*. Competency #5.4 is asking for a demonstration of professional integrity by adhering to the code of ethics and applying standard business practices, including appropriate rate setting, bookkeeping, and control of working conditions. As stated in the introduction, ITPs have an accrediting body to report to (if they choose to become accredited) and nationally certified professionals have a Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) to abide by. There are many things to learn in becoming a signed language interpreter professional, and some areas are not explicitly taught in ITPs or by professional organizations. The conceptual framework for this study is viewing professional interpreters holistically, acknowledging that there are many pieces to be learned, the business aspects of this profession being among them.

Limitations of the Study

This study did have a few limitations. Research conducted through a survey format is limiting since participants will only answer the questions asked. In addition, the data was self-reported and in participants' own words for me to hopefully interpret correctly. The survey unintentionally excluded the group *Certified Deaf Interpreters* (CDI) when asking the participant to self-identify their professional title, missing out on explicitly identifying that population in the data. This study also exclusively focused on American Sign Language/English interpreters; it did not include anyone of the spoken

language interpreting field who may have added diverse and valuable perspectives about this topic. These are potential areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

According to Stewart, Schein and Cartwright (2004), the profession of signed language interpreting for deaf individuals in the United States began in June of 1964. Signed language interpreting is an emerging field (Scott-Gibson, 2015), which suggests that the field of signed language interpreting is still in its infancy when compared to other practiced professions.

Time Crunch

According to the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID; the entity previously responsible for granting national certification), issued 1,129 certifications between 2015-2018 (www.rid.org), indicating the field is indeed growing. Many individuals wanting to become an interpreter attend an interpreter training program (ITP) to acquire their signed language skills. Interpreter training programs grew from 56 colleges in 1989 to more than 100 programs today (Stewart, Schein, & Cartwright, 2004). According to the RID interpreter training program database search there are 49 certificate, 75 associate degree, and 41 bachelor degree programs in the United States (www.RID.org).

Roy (2000) indicated that since signed language interpreting transitioned from a volunteer position to a paid position, educators and programs are now challenged with graduating competent interpreters. Witter-Merrithew and Johnson (2005) concluded that “many students, from both two- and four-year programs, stated that Interpreter Education should be housed in university settings and offered a baccalaureate degree level as

warranted by the course of study” (p. 49). Their findings imply that an associate degree simply is not enough time to learn all the necessary information before entering the interpreting field. Furthermore, many students who attended an associate-level program said they felt insufficiently prepared for the human relations and professionalism domains of the profession (Witter-Merrithew & Johnson, 2005, p. 51). In addition, most students indicated that their programs focused on the importance of gaining certification, indicating that it would require several years of practice before readiness (Witter-Merrithew & Johnson, 2005, p. 49). The *Professional Supervision for Interpreting Practice* initiative spearheaded by Smith, Cancel, and Maroney (2013) of Western Oregon University suggested that students can be guided through this transition (“the gap”) from school to work. Many rationalize and accept that new interpreters need to learn the hard way, through their mistakes but through a mentorship program Western Oregon University hopes to ease that transition for students (Smith et al., 2013). The gap between graduation and readiness-to-work has been a heavy focus in the interpreting field; that lack of readiness could be extended to include business standards and professionalism.

Many skills can be learned in the classroom, but much is learned through experience, leaving students to learn this missed information while on the job or hopefully learn from workshops and mentors. According to Wilbeck’s (2017) study of 102 recent graduates, many indicated they wanted more preparation on how to acclimate to the workplace and needed help on how to find a good company and how to set their compensation rate. Many participants in Wilbeck’s (2017) research repeatedly mentioned and emphasized that they did need further development of their skill sets, yet

there was a greater need for professionalism; it was a challenging hurdle as they entered the field. Since many programs are two years long, Garcés and Martin (2008) stated that this short timeframe does not allow students to master the body of knowledge or skills to interpret effectively (p. 65). Garcés and Martin were specifically addressing the interpreting process, but this would also include other aspects of the profession, such as business skills or logistics of being a freelance/independent contract interpreter. Dean and Pollard's (2005) research indicated that many interpreters identified factors outside of language and culture that were important to their work, yet those areas were not sufficiently addressed in their ITP, regardless of the length of the program. It appears to be a challenge for ITPs to cover language, interpreting skills, and all other aspects (including managing one's freelance/independent contracting) in such a short period of time without help from additional workshops or mentorships.

Standards

The standards an accredited ITP uses to develop, evaluate, and analyze their program comes from the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE). As mentioned earlier, only 18 post-secondary institutions, out of 100+ programs, are accredited by CCIE (2017). There are 46 sub-standards stemming from 10 main standards published by CCIE. When taking a closer look at the standards that were published in 2014, there appeared to only be one standard stating anything relevant to business practices: "Standard 6.0 Curriculum: *Knowledge Competencies*, 6.2: The curriculum addresses competencies related to knowledge of the interpreting profession and relevant resources. Evidence must include documentation that the curriculum covers: Business practices" (CCIE, 2017).

The standard unfortunately does not go into any further detail, leaving the term “business practices” to be interpreted by the individual program (if the program is an accredited entity), yet at least it is a standard to follow. A search on RID.org and Discoverinterpreting.com for interpreting programs in the United States revealed more than 100+ institutions (both associate and bachelor’s). Of those 100+, fewer than 20 institutions are accredited by the CCIE, leaving the remaining programs not following a national standard. Thinking of areas in which ITPs could turn their focus, one could turn to the research done related to real-world shock for new interpreters by Meadows (2013) that speaks to six areas where new interpreters are experiencing a learning curve: interpreting and language skills, boundaries, ethics, dealing with other interpreters, technology, and business savvy (knowing how to run a business) (p. 41).

Professional interpreters who hold a national certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) must abide by a Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) to maintain their certification. The Code of Professional Conduct has 38 illustrative behaviors that fall under seven tenets. The lengthy document has a few areas that touch upon business practices:

Tenet 6.0 Business Practices: Interpreters maintain ethical business practices.

The Guiding Principle: Interpreters are expected to conduct their business in a professional manner whether in private practice or in the employ of an agency or other entity. Professional interpreters are entitled to a living wage based on their qualifications and expertise. Interpreters are also entitled to working conditions conducive to effective service delivery. (RID, 2005, p. 5)

Within tenet six, eight illustrative behaviors are described: (1) present certification or educational degrees when requested, (2) honor commitments and terminate only when justified, (3) seek appropriate remedies for effective communication if needed, (4) inform parties involved if delayed or you cannot fulfill assignment, (5) reserve the right to decline work if it is not safe or healthy, (6) refrain from harassment or coercion before, during or after the interpreting, assignment, (7) render pro bono services in a fair manner, and (8) charge a fair and reasonable fee (RID, 2005, p. 5).

One other area where the CPC addresses business practices is within the first tenet of *Confidentiality*, illustrative behavior number 1.2: “Manage data, invoices, records or other situational or consumer-specific information in a manner consistent with maintaining consumer confidentiality (e.g., shredding, locked files)” (RID, 2005, p. 1). Also, tenet number four, *Respect for Consumers*, illustrative behavior number 4.2: “Approach consumers with a professional demeanor at all times” (RID, 2005, p. 4). Multiple tenets within this document touch on business practices. The RID (2007) website also provides a Standard Practice Paper (SPP), written by the Professional Standards Committee, titled *Hiring an Interpreter – Billing Considerations*. This SPP provides information about hiring a sign language interpreter discussing topics such as: rates, travel fees, cancellation policies, and information needed to make an interpreter request. This document appears to be geared toward entities wanting to hire signed language interpreters. Within this article RID states that they do not dictate or restrict business practice but expect interpreters to be guided by the CPC (RID, 2007). The tenets of the CPC are to be used as a guide to professional behavior (RID, 2005, p. 1).

There are regional and state differences in billing practices based on state laws or due to the supply and demand of professionals in that area (RID, 2007).

Available Literature

Unfortunately, no peer-reviewed articles were found regarding the business practices/logistics of freelance/independent contracting as an interpreter. When looking for any current available resources about this topic, they were not easy to find. There were three books that were discovered, based on colleague recommendation and a deep search via Google. *The Interpreters Quick Guide to Self-Employment* by Johnson and Bocian (2018), *Establishing A Freelance Interpretation Business* by Richards (2008), and *The Professional Sign Language Interpreter's Handbook* by Humphreys (2007). All three books hold a wealth of information about the business aspects of freelance interpreting and are wonderful resources. Unfortunately, none of these books are listed on the RID's suggested reading list. Only two titles were available, if searched for, on the popular *Harris Communications* website, which has materials and resources for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, including interpreters. Interpreting resources that may be used among training programs discuss the business aspects of freelance/independent contract interpreting very lightly, if at all, mainly discussing the settings in where the work is done (e.g., legal, medical, etc.). Many of these titles suggested for ITP student usage are featured on the RID website and are suggested reads for preparing for the national certification exam; the above-mentioned publications about business logistics are not featured on the website.

Another great resource I found was a website, terpbizkit.com. Unfortunately, this was not easy to find as it was on page three of a Google search and currently is an

inactive domain. This website had a kit that the freelance/independent contract interpreter can purchase that included invoice templates, as well as tax and contract information. The website unfortunately is no longer up and running. The United States Small Business Administration (www.sba.gov) may also be a great resource for freelance interpreters. As professionals, interpreters are expected to abide by the Code of Professional Conduct to uphold the certification, keep accurate and honest records and appear as professionals when interacting with clients. However the lack of easily accessible, interpreting-specific information available in how to do so is detrimental.

Looking at Other Professions

When looking at other small businesses, chapter six of *Entrepreneurial Learning* by Drago and Vanevenhoven (2015) stated the challenge for institutions responsible for developing and delivering entrepreneurship education is to build a learning community that balance the rigorous academic requirements and the realities of entrepreneurship (p. 117). Some educational systems that are geared towards small businesses companies struggle to strike the balance of academic content and preparing students for the real world.

For those students venturing out to succeed in their own start-up company, Ahsan, Zheng, Denoble, and Musteen (2017) conducted a study regarding the benefits of their two-step mentorship model for students. Their analysis indicated that non-business student founders needed more psychosocial and business development support due to their unfamiliarity with business concepts (Ahsan et al., 2017, p. 96). The study concluded that student entrepreneurs who had positive mentoring experiences and support were more likely to succeed in their business ventures (Ahsan et al., 2017, p. 96).

Dean and Pollard (2005) suggested aligning the interpreting profession with the practiced professions such as medicine, law, teaching, or counseling due to the careful consideration and judgement regarding situational and human interaction. When it comes to other independent contracting professions like interpreting and their approach in teaching their students how to be self-employed, there was very little peer reviewed information available. Yet looking at available textbooks and curriculum was informative to what they did offer their students. Signed language interpreters learn a specialized skill and are set free to pick where they would like to work; this is similar to massage therapists and social workers. Interpreters, massage therapists, or social workers are able to work under many domains, possibly under the direction of a business or establish a solo practice (freelance) just to name a few. Massage therapists often come to mind when thinking of other practiced professions that parallel sign language interpreting. *The Business of Massage Therapy: Building a Successful Career* (Abegg, 2012) appears to be a great resource for massage therapists. It includes information regarding time management, record keeping, marketing, financing, certifications, ethics/professionalism, working independently or within a company, and much more. Another book, *Marketing Massage: How to Build Your Dream Practice* (Roseberry, 2002) has information about marketing, business cards, organizing your appointment book and professionalism. Irene's Myomassology Institute (n.d.) does offer one full course, "Professional Development Class," that instructs students on the ins and outs of working with other therapists and opening their own massage business, according to their website curriculum information. Also, at Altierus Career College (n.d.), "Business and Ethics" is listed as a course among the curriculum taken by students in the massage

therapy program. The American Massage Therapy Association website has an abundance of information about self-employment for therapists including links with information about marketing tools, managing your practice, being an independent contractor, setting up your practice, business finances (tax information, monthly expenses, budget), and other related article resources (American Massage Therapy Association, n.d.). The signed language interpreting field could benefit from looking at a massage therapist curriculum layout and the resources their professional organization provides; many pieces could possibly align.

Social workers may also have their own private practice and be considered self-employed. The National Association of Social Workers had little information about running a solo practice, yet I did find a three-page article regarding tax information, forms, marketing and setting fees (National Association of Social Workers, 2018).

Private Practice: A Survival Guide for Mental Health Professionals Entering Private Practice (Mohan, 2003) appears to be a great resource for therapists entering the private practice realm, guiding readers step-by-step in their decision making as they create their private practice. The field of interpreting could refer to other practice professions and their approach to freelance/independent contracting and borrow a few ideas about how to incorporate those ideas into schooling, more published materials, and further education.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

Survey Design

This survey was completed by 352 individuals: working interpreters, students, and representatives from ITPs. The survey was originally pilot tested with fellow classmates, revised according to their feedback, and readied for the public. To get an understanding of what current practices and frustrations are, participants in this research took an anonymous online survey via Google Forms. The survey had multiple blank fields for participants to say as much or as little as they wanted. The survey was emailed to participants and took 5-10 minutes to complete. After consenting to participate in this survey and agreeing they were at least 18 years of age, participants continued to the survey questions. If they wished to opt out and not participate, they simply closed their internet browser window.

I chose survey format as it was the quickest, most cost effective and accurate way to collect data from a wide range of individuals (McCoy & Marks, 2001). The questions were formatted using multiple choice and short answer. The multiple choice helped gather specific information but limited participants to only the options provided. The short answer questions yielded great data, as I was able to hear directly what the participants wanted to say. Yet, leaving an open space for 300+ people to answer left me with a variety of answers to code. I chose to ask all participant groups the length of their ITP (if applicable) and whether they were provided with any type of business training regarding freelance/independent contract interpreting. Those two questions helped determine whether training is/was provided and what length their training program

is/was. The literature review revealed that training programs are struggling to provide all the necessary information in the amount of time allotted (2-year or 4-year programs). For working interpreters, I posed questions inquiring about their organizational procedures, how long they have been interpreting, what they would like to learn more of, and what they would like to inform novice interpreters about. These questions were the topics that have come up often in conversations I have had with multiple colleagues over the years. For student participants, I simply asked what information they wanted to learn about the interpreting business. These questions were driven by personal curiosity, personal conversations over the years with colleagues and students, and data discovered in my literature review indicating this information may not fully be covered in ITPs. In addition, participants of *An Investigation of Student Perception How to Better Prepare Signed Language/English Interpreters for the Real World* (Wilbeck, 2017) expressed the desire and need to learn more about business aspects of freelance interpreting such as: managing invoices, taxes, licenses and scheduling. The raw data and direct comments from participants helped shape the development of this workshop. I then had a direct insight into what Interpreter Training Programs offered and what student and working interpreters were wanting to learn more about.

Participants

After approval was granted by Western Oregon University's Internal Review Board (IRB) the survey along with consent form were disseminated (see Appendix B). The online survey was sent via email to three specific populations: Interpreter Training Program (ITP) directors (or a faculty member who could answer), students in an ITP, and current working freelance signed language interpreters (see Appendix C, D, and E).

Contact information for ITP directors was compiled from a nationwide list found on the website Discover Interpreting (n.d.). The current ITP students were contacted through their program directors and through personal and professional contacts. The current working interpreter list was compiled through personal contacts and a post on Facebook, in hopes of further sharing among colleagues, relying on the snowball sampling method, since I could not possibly reach all these individuals all on my own. According to Hale and Napier (2013), this method is fitting when a chain of responses can be triggered throughout group members. These three populations were chosen to ensure the study was capturing different areas of the interpreting field. All three surveys inquired about what (if any) information is/was covered in school curriculum about freelance/self-employment as an interpreter. Surveying the current working interpreters was intended to gather information about their current working procedures and practices, along with their educational background.

Coding Methods

The data was coded using an open-coding system. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), open coding is initially implemented to give name and meaning to the data being coded. Strauss and Corbin also stated that open coding can use codes that comprised of the participants own words. Subsequently, codes are then linked together and grouped together as categories. There were questions participants left blank and some questions they responded with multiple answers in the blank provided. I was able to manage this by documenting and coding every answer was provided by participants, ensuring their thoughts and answers were counted. I coded the data on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, logging every answer, then tallying and grouping them together once they

occurred numerous times, continuing this process for each question for each survey. I then coded and condensed the information into tighter buckets of information after three rounds of sorting. The same wording seemed to emerge from students and working interpreters: taxes, marketing, and billing.

For students I grouped comments like: *where do I start, how do I work with agencies* and the like into “Agency work.” I categorized *mileage, write offs, taxes, deductions* into “Taxes.” For the subject of “Billing,” I included wording such as *payment, invoicing, and organization help*.

As for the surveys completed by professional working interpreters, the process was similar. Many of the answers were similar and easy to categorize due to participants using the same terminology. As for the question about which app they use on their phone, I categorized them into groups by the function versus the name of the application itself (e.g., GPS, scanners, e-mail, calendars, signature, social media). However, the actual name of the applications will be given to participants at workshops as a resource. Many of the open-ended, short-answer question responses were quite individualized, yet I was able to group and label them accordingly. For example, the group of “Be Organized” included: *document everything, have a reliable car, save your information, and so on*. Also, “Take care of yourself” included *know your worth, work/life balance, set rates appropriately, self-care* and so on. Another area with many answers that I narrowed down to “Freelance is hard!” included: *It is tough! Run away! Not enough work out there, get tough skin, and so on*. Lastly “Learn about Taxes” included *taxes, write offs, mileage, LLC, W2 work* and the like.

When coding the ITP directors' responses, I also used an open coding system. When asked about specific courses covering freelance business information the responses uncovered a theme, a handful answered "*community interpreting*" as a course that is taught, without any explanation of what exactly that covered. Other participants answered that "*business practices*" were covered in their ITP, which included ethics, practical applications, being an employee versus an independent contractor. "*Paperwork*" was another area where I grouped responses such as *resume, invoicing, contracts, budgeting and scheduling* and the like together.

CHAPTER 4: Findings

There were 352 participants in this survey. All were asked if they were over the age of 18; if not, they were not allowed access to the survey. The breakdown of respondents is 82 representing Interpreter Training Programs, 95 students in an interpreter training program, and 175 current professional working interpreters in the field. Several answered all the questions; some multiple-choice questions and short answers were left blank or filled in with multiple answers by participants. Of the current professional working interpreters, 60% of the survey input comes from interpreters who have worked for more than 10 years. The remaining 40% is derived from interpreters who have worked in the field for fewer than 10 years.

Interpreter Training Programs' Data

The first question was regarding the length of program at their respective institution. All participants but one person answered this question. Of the 81 responses, a majority (69.1%) were four-year BA/BS programs (see Figure 1), followed by a two-year AA/AS programs (30.9%), certificate programs (6.2%), one graduate degree program (1.2%), and two responses (2.5%) indicating “other,” without specification.

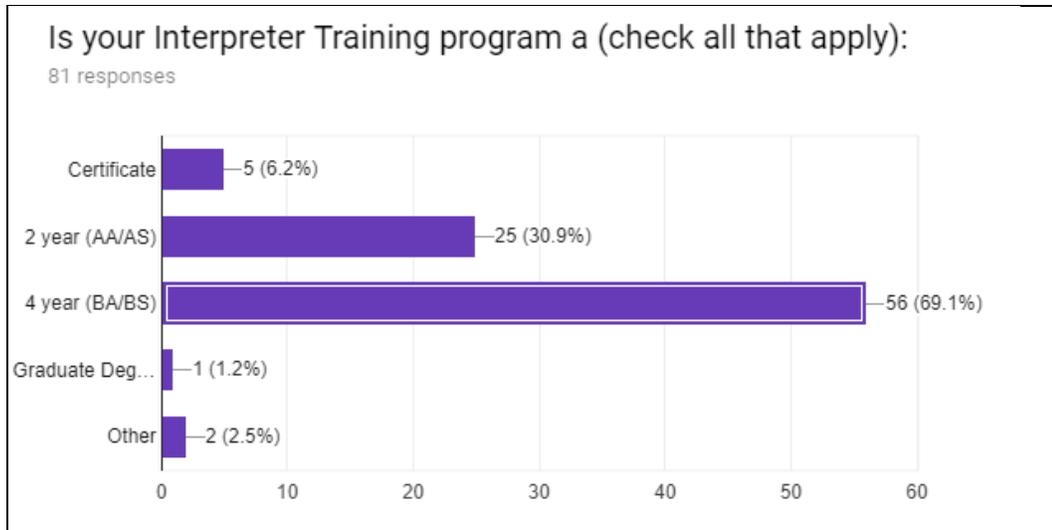


Figure 1. Length of Interpreter Training Program

The second question addressed whether the program offers a course specifically related to being self-employed as a freelance interpreter. Overwhelmingly (80.2%, 65 responses) the answer was no their program does not offer a specific course on being a self-employed freelance interpreter (see Figure 2). The remaining (19.8%, 16 responses) answered yes, indicating their program does offer such a course.



Figure 2. Self-employment/Freelance Interpreter Course Availability

The final question was a short answer format, asking if there are any small business or self-employment courses offered in their program. Few (4 responses)

answered “yes.” Many (17 responses) indicated they referred their students to other courses that were offered at the college or college of business but none specific to their Interpreter Training Program. A majority (48 responses) simply stated “no” or left the field blank.

Interpreting Students’ Data

The first question asked of the students was the length of program they are attending. All 95 respondents responded to this question (see Figure 3). Most of the students who answered (64.2%) are attending a two-year interpreter training program. The remaining students are attending a four-year program (32.6%), a certificate program (17.9%), are graduate students (2.1%), and 2.1% indicated “other.”

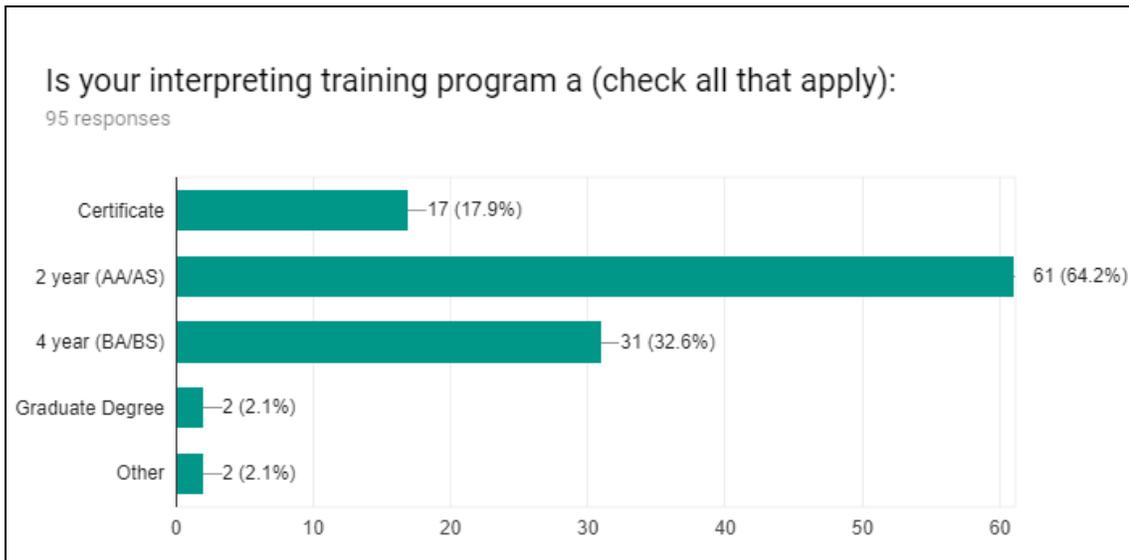


Figure 3. Interpreter Training Program Length for Students

The second question asked of students was if their program offers any courses related self-employed freelance interpreting. Ninety-four out of 95 responded to this question (see Figure 4). A majority (86.2%) responded that their program does not offer

a specific course about being a self-employed freelance interpreter, with the remaining (13.8%) indicating yes, their program does offer such a course.



Figure 4. Self-employment/Freelance Interpreter Course Availability as a Student

The third and final question was aimed at content gathering, asking students what information they would like to learn about the topic of self-employment and freelance interpreting. Of the respondents, 86 students responded in the short answer field. Multiple responses (47 entries) indicated they wanted information about taxes: how to file them, when to file them, how much to pay, and so on. The second highest (36 entries) topic that students inquired about was billing and invoicing: how to invoice, what does it look like, how does billing work, who do I bill. Students also indicated they wanted information on where to find interpreting assignments, how to work with agencies, marketing, and general business practices.

Working Interpreters' Data

The first question for the current working interpreters was about their education level. There were five options available, and they could select all that applied (see Figure

5). The results indicate that many (36.8%) of the 174 participants attended a two-year interpreter training program. Close behind that was a four-year program (28.7%), persons who did not attend an interpreting training program (25.3%), individuals who received a certificate (14.9%), and 8% with graduate degrees rounding out the group.

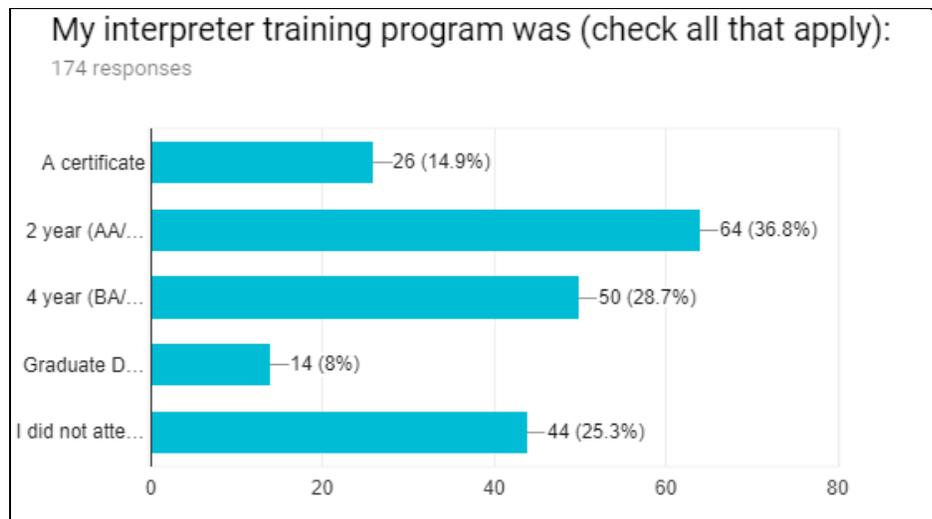


Figure 5. Length of Interpreter Training Program for Working Interpreters

The third question in the working interpreters' survey asked how many years they had been professionally working as an interpreter. Most of the participants surveyed have worked in the field for more than 20 years (30.9%). The second largest group (20.6%) of participants had worked professionally as an interpreter for 6-10 years. The remaining interpreters break down as following: 1-2 years (6.9%), 3-5 years (11.4%), 11-15 years (16.6%), and 16-20 years (13.1%). This sample group is more experienced (see Figure 6), with 60.6% having more than 10 years of experience and 38.9% with fewer than 10 years of experience.

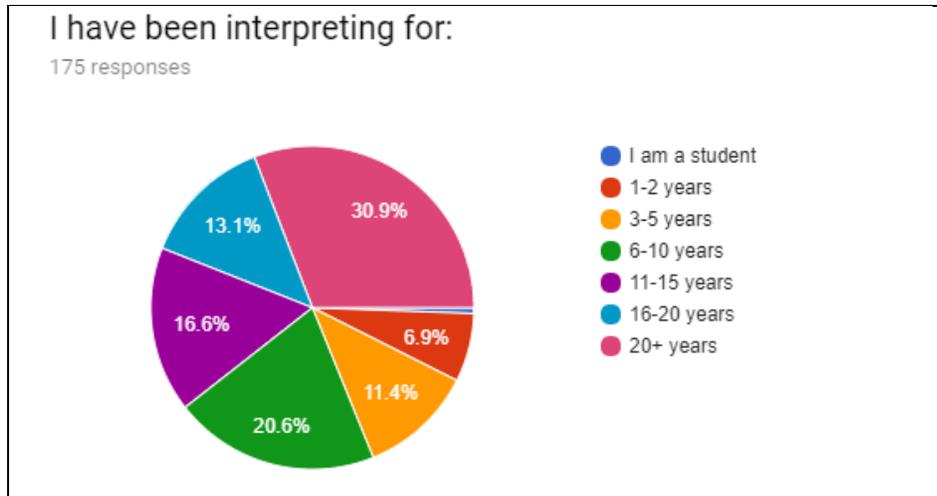


Figure 6. Years of Interpreting Experience

The next question in the survey asked working interpreters about their ITP and if there was a course dedicated to freelance or self-employed interpreters. The question was a multiple-choice question with yes, sort of, no, and n/a as options. A majority (53.1%; see Figure 7) answered “no” that there was not such a focused course.

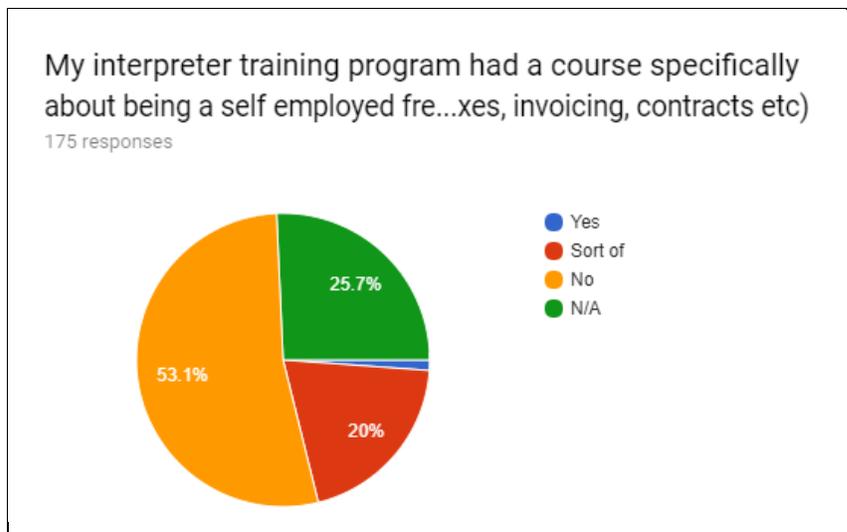


Figure 7. Self-employment/Freelance Interpreter Course Availability for Working Interpreters

The fifth question was an open-ended question asking working interpreters what apps they use on their phone to help them as freelance interpreters. This question aided me in gathering content data for the workshop being developed. The answers widely varied, yet some underlying themes emerged. The most commonly reported app used was GPS (Google maps or Waze; 49 responses), followed by scanning apps (48 responses), calendar apps (36 responses), web browsers (28 responses), dictionary (27 responses), and a handful of others with fewer responses.

The seventh question asked about their individual organizational method, asking participants what they do regarding tracking their invoices and payments. Overwhelmingly, 73 responses (see Figure 8) indicated they use Excel spreadsheets to organize their business. Other apps and organizational systems were also described.

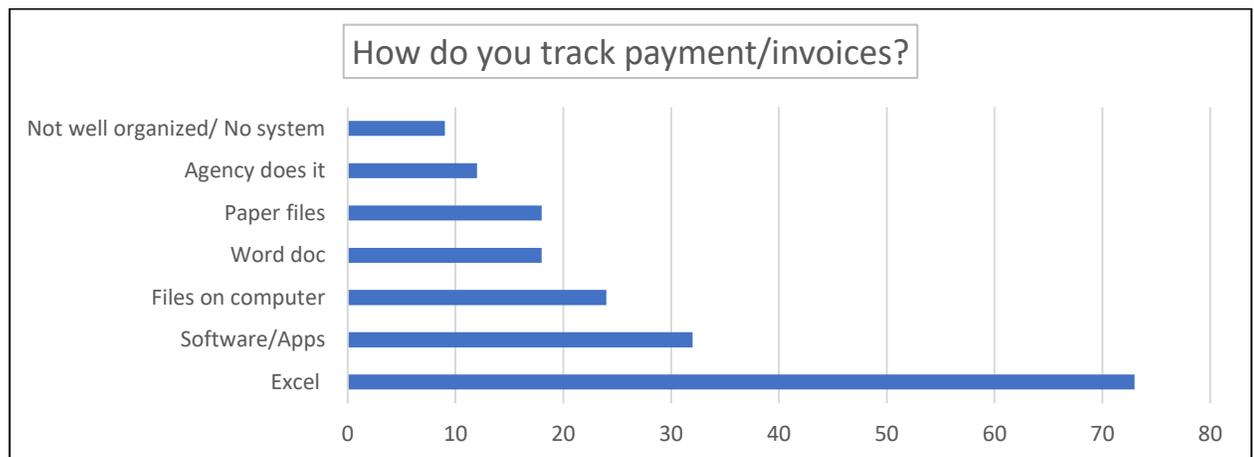


Figure 8. How Working Interpreters Track Their Payment/Invoices

In the current working interpreter survey, I also asked what advice they would give to new interpreters. This was also a content-driven question, gathering data that would help shape the developing workshop. Question nine was a short-answer response asking what they would like to share with a new interpreter regarding freelance interpreting as a business. The popular answers (66 responses; see Figure 9) focused on

becoming familiar with taxes (deductions, filing, LLC, etc.). Another answer along the same lines was “Hire a good CPA” (27 responses). The second most common theme (43 responses) was to be organized (have a system, document everything, etc.).

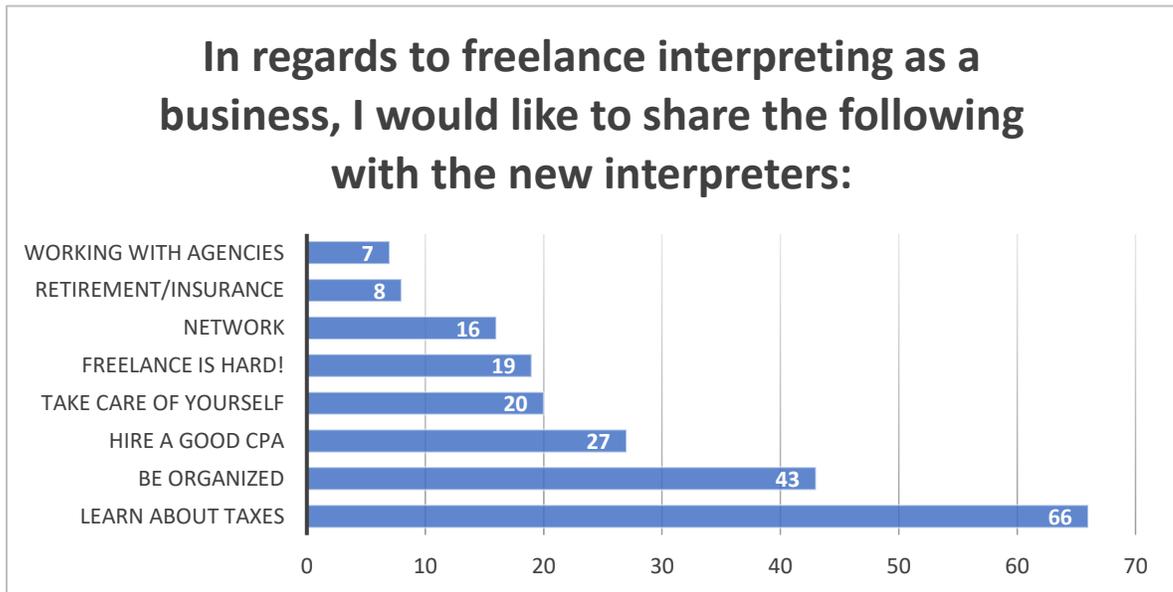


Figure 9. What Working Interpreters Want to Share with Novice Interpreters

Lastly, I asked current working interpreters what they would like to know more about. Question 10 was an open-ended, short-answer question asking what you as a freelance interpreter would like to know more about in relation to interpreting as a business. Overwhelmingly (59 responses; see Figure 10), the responses revolved around tax information (filing, write offs, LLC, etc.).

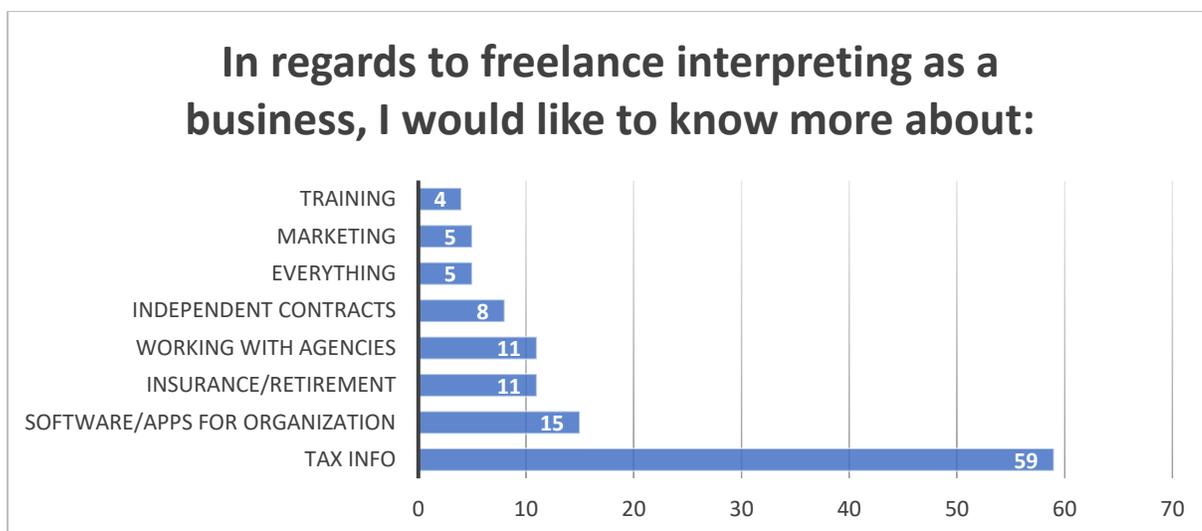


Figure 10. What Working Interpreters Want to Know More About Interpreting as a Business

Discussion

Looking at the data it was surprising to have an over-representation of bachelor programs reply to the survey. It could be that 4-year institutions are more inclined to have more faculty or staff available to answer a survey and are more used to being involved in research than 2-year programs. A few common themes emerged from the three groups that were surveyed. A majority of students and working interpreters have not taken a course related to this material, and a majority of ITPs do not offer a course specifically about freelance interpreting as a business. This leaves current students and working interpreters in areas they would like more information about. Working interpreters and students alike were wanting more information about taxes, organizational help, working with agencies, contracts, and marketing. Between working interpreters and students, 106 responses out of 195 indicated they would like more information specifically about taxes as a freelance interpreter. In addition, out of 309 responses, 94

related to wanting to learn more about billing, invoices, or needing a system for organizing their paperwork. The survey data clearly indicates there is little knowledge around many areas when it comes to freelance interpreting and how to manage the work as a small business, and there is a strong interest. The data also indicate that this information is not often being covered within interpreter training programs.

Before this study, a workshop had already been developed covering this information. Many revisions to that previous workshop have taken place due to the data collected. The previous workshop developed had very general and basic information about freelance interpreting, showing more of the marketing, social media aspects of owning a small business. The newly revised workshop, which has been influenced by the participants' responses, covers a wide variety of items slightly more in depth. Taxes, insurance, organizational tools/strategies, marketing, invoicing, working with agencies and tax write off information are the main areas elaborated on for this new workshop version. The topic areas were clearly decided for me as I coded the survey responses.

This study indicates there is a clear need for more education on this topic. In the survey data, working interpreters and students asked for education on a handful of themes, which is the catalyst for a workshop being developed and refined. After having this conversation personally with many colleagues and interpreting students, I now have the data and defined topic areas to justify the need for a workshop to cover this information.

Proposed Project: Workshop Development

When considering the ways to deliver this data and information to those in the field, many formats seemed possible. I decided to develop a workshop since many

interpreters are striving for certification or hold certification(s) and need continuing education units to maintain that certification. The national certification for signed language interpreters is issued by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). To maintain certification, interpreters must obtain continue education units (CEUs). According to the RID website maintaining certification requires a total of 8.0 CEUs (80 contact hours) within each 4-year certification cycle (www.rid.org). There are four approved options for obtaining continuing education units through RID: college courses, RID-sponsored workshops, non-RID conferences or seminars, or independent studies (www.rid.org). Individual states have their own state certification process that may also require continuing education units to maintain certification. To uphold certifications and fill possible gaps in information not covered in the interpreter training program, workshops and conferences are provided to students and professional interpreters as a continuing education option. Professionals interpreters are using multiple ways to present the missing information to students and colleagues via online modules and professional workshops, according to Roberson, Russell, and Shaw (2012). Workshops are also a standard in the interpreting field to disseminate current relevant information. After open coding my survey data, there was clear guidance for what was needed in this developing workshop. The online platform Prezi.com is used to present this information. The outline and framework in which this workshop was developed and revised derived from the data collected in this survey.

This workshop begins with an introduction of myself and my co-presenter, Valoree Boyer (who will present this information with me at conferences). We then give a friendly disclaimer that this information is not professional legal or financial advice and

participants should consult a professional. The data influenced the content and topics emphasized in this presentation. The first main topic discussed is how to work with interpreting agencies. This section is geared for students, as 41 of the responses (out of 86 respondents) indicated they would like more information about this topic. The next area relates to invoice tracking and some helpful billing and organizational strategies. When 137 working interpreters were asked what they would like to tell novice interpreters, 43 recommended having a good organizational system in place. In this slide, I use graphic representation of the data from the survey showing how working interpreters track their invoices/payments (150 responses). The following areas covered use data from the survey outlining the applications working interpreters use most frequently to help them with their freelance work. This information is directly from the data, as 137 respondents listed their favorite apps. When it came to marketing, 5 working interpreters and 14 student interpreters responded in the survey requesting more information. The subsequent slides touch upon marketing as well with samples of badges and business cards, as well as information on building your own website, professional headshots, and email signature. The next few slides cover taxes: what information a CPA wants, what can be deducted, and the difference in filing as an LLC and so on. Then we touch lightly on Traditional and Roth IRA retirement plans. Out of 109 working interpreter responses, 59 stated they wanted more information about taxes. In addition, 66 working interpreters suggested that novice interpreters *"learn about taxes,"* and 47 students responded they would like more information about that exact topic. After that, I cover what disability and liability insurances entail and what that means for freelance/independent contract interpreters. There were a handful of working interpreters suggesting that students investigate

insurance and retirement information and a handful requesting more insurance and retirement information.

Attendees to this workshop will have a quick reference sheet (see Appendix A) of all the information covered in the Prezi presentation. As I developed this presentation, I consulted with a financial advisor and CPA, Kyle Robarge (an investment advisor representative with E3 Consultants Group/Kalos Financial), about tax deduction options, retirement, tax filing and insurance options (K. Robarge, personal communication, December 11, 2017).

Information for this workshop was gleaned from multiple sources. Much of this workshop was developed from personal experience, data from the survey conducted, and discussions with colleagues throughout my years of work, as well as direct research on the topics. Much of the information we had originally planned for this workshop was confirmed by students and working interpreters through the survey. *The Interpreter's Quick Guide to Self-Employment* by Johnson and Bocian (2018) was a great back up resource, helping me fill in the final gaps in my presentation.

CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

The aim of this research was to survey working interpreters, interpreting students, and interpreter training programs about their understanding, availability of resources, knowledge, and curiosities about the business side of freelance/independent contract interpreting. The findings of this study indicate various content areas about which these groups would like more information. Interpreters in the field and interpreting students are not being taught this information in depth in their ITPs, as the data indicated. This is not surprising: many professionals—including myself—have learned by trial and error on how to stay organized, maintain contracts, and essentially run a small business as an independent contractor. What surprised and delighted me most was 60% of the working interpreters who responded reported having more than 10 years of professional experience. Those experienced interpreters were asked what areas they would like more information about and what would they like to share with novice interpreter, and they stated the same for both questions: information about taxes and organizational tools. I personally work with multiple colleagues who have forgotten to invoice for interpreting assignments, losing out on hundreds of dollars, and others who have failed to pay the appropriate amount in taxes (or any) and are thousands of dollars in debt. So many interpreters have been working and functioning as independent contractors/freelance interpreters and simply figuring it out as they go. This information needs to be discussed,

not just among mentors and mentees or in passing among colleagues during breaks at interpreting assignments.

What's Next?

The development of this workshop was to educate, share ideas, and help independent contractors organize their small businesses. What I would like to see next is for this workshop be presented to all those who are interested in the content. The plan is to propose this workshop idea to local and national interpreting organizations and at ITPs. The hope is that this information sparks a discussion among colleagues and students regarding best business practices for independent contractors. A one-time workshop may not be the only approach for sharing this information, as I am sure it cannot meet everyone's needs all at once. After each workshop, we will review the participant evaluation sheets and incorporate their feedback into future workshops. Additional workshops have already branched off this idea, such as tailoring the content for students, new interpreters, and experienced professionals to meet them at their level. It would be ideal for this information to make its way into an ITP curriculum. Whether that is an entire semester-long course or a few lessons within other courses, the key is that this content needs to be unpacked further than it currently is.

Once an interpreter has learned this content, whether a workshop or course curriculum format, they will hopefully have a deeper understanding of how to manage their own professional realm. After learning this information, students, future interpreters, and current working interpreters will have more resources regarding organizational techniques, basic tax information, marketing tools, contract negotiation and basic best business practices. With that information, interpreters can feel more

confident in their ability to step into the freelance/independent contractor world and manage their own work.

Future Research

This research has led to the refinement of an existing workshop for interpreters and students, covering resources and tools on how to function as a freelance/independent contract interpreter. There are a few areas uncovered throughout this study that could benefit from further research. This could begin with a deeper investigation into ITP curricula: Where could this topic be integrated more thoroughly in their program? Only a few ITPs indicated they provide courses that touch on this topic; as the data revealed, not many covered this information in depth—if at all—in their program. Interpreter training programs could use data from this study to inform further research questions asking what students do not know and what working interpreters need to know once working as an independent contractor, to ensure they are preparing their students for their future careers. Furthermore, data from this or subsequent studies could inform the development of a classroom curriculum for ITPs to adopt and implement into their programs.

Further research could be conducted with interpreting agencies. Surveying agencies, inquiring about their policies and procedures to get a better feel for what the norms or outliers are for particular areas or nationwide would be helpful.

Another area for further research would be to investigate working interpreters in greater depth, perhaps exploring how working interpreters manage their current organizational strategies, tax preparation strategies, invoice elements, contract writing and more. Gathering such information would help make a workshop more robust and diverse with resources, ideas and strategies to share with participants.

One last area where further research would be beneficial would be to design a different format to deliver this information. Although the workshop format is the industry norm by which interpreters get their continuing education units, another option could be dividing this workshop format into smaller modules, possibly making modules with different sections of the workshop, so students and working interpreters or even ITPs have the option to choose which content area they want to focus on.

All in all, this research highlighted what is unknown and what students and professionals in the interpreting field want to know more about. If a signed language interpreter wishes to become a freelance/independent contractor in any capacity, whether full or part time, these skills need to be acquired to maintain one's business. Using this information, my co-presenter and I hope to deliver this information across America so students and professional interpreters have at least a list of resources and our contact information to reach out to if they have any questions. Ironically, this profession is about communication and clarity, yet this information is not openly shared among colleagues and students. We hope this workshop can begin this essential dialogue.

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APPENDIX A: Workshop Participant Handout

The Business of Interpreting

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Apps/Software

GPS:

Waze
Google/Apple Maps
Leave Now
InRoute
MapQuest

Scanner:

PDF Scanner
Scanner Pro
Cam Scan
PDF Expert
Genius Scan

Invoicing:

Quickbooks
Invoice2Go
Freshbooks
Wave

Mile Tracker:

Mile IQ
Trip Log
Mileage Tracker
Everlance

Signature:

Adobe Fill and Sign
Sign Easy
Sign Now
DocUsign

Misc:

Email
Google Drive
Dictionary/Thesaurus
Agency apps

Park Mobile
YouTube
Group Me
Clockz

Marco Polo/Glide/IMO
Body Atlas/ Body Digital

Tax info

Documentation for CPA:

Mileage
1099 forms and total \$
W2 forms and total \$
Retirement contributions
Mortgage interest
Student loan interest
Childcare expenses
Charity donation total \$

Deductions:

Mileage
College tuition/books
Professional Development
Printer ink & paper “supplies”
Legal Fees
Uniforms*
Subscriptions
½ cell phone bill*

Massages*
Previous year tax prep fee
Business travel
Membership dues
Testing costs
Business expenses
Home office*
Interest paid*

| | |
|--|---|
| LLC/Sole Proprietor information | https://www.entrepreneur.com/articles/38822 |
| Kyle Robarge: Retirement/Tax/\$\$ Investing | http://www.e3wealth.com/ |
| Deaf CPA | https://deaftax.com |
| Deaf Insurance Agency | https://dhhinsurance.com/ |
| Online payment to IRS | http://www.irs.gov/payments |
| RID: Disability/Vision, Dental/Life Insurance | http://rid.associationbenefitservices.com/ |

Paper check made out to: “United States Treasury”

Include: Name, SS#, “2018 taxes” on memo line.

Sent to: *Internal Revenue Service*

PO Box 802502

Cincinnati, OH 45280-2502

Misc. Resources:

Websites:

Squarespace

Wordpressr

Wix

Weebly

Have saved and ready on computer:

Signed W9

Headshot

Certification(s)

Degree(s)

SS card

Driver’s License

Liability Insurance

Resume

- Interpreter owned business: www.IDmatters.biz
- ASL index of Philosophy, Literature, Biology, Physics (Art & Math soon):
<https://aslcore.org/>
- **Freelance/Independent Contractor Books:**
 - *The Professional Sign Language Interpreters Handbook* - Humphreys
 - *Establishing a freelance interpretation business* - Tammera Richards
 - *The Interpreter’s Quick Guide to Self-Employment* - Rosemary Johnson & Brent Bocian

APPENDIX B: Participant Consent Form

The Business of Interpreting

Andrea Rehkopf

Hello! My name is Andrea Rehkopf and I am currently a student in the Masters of Arts in Interpreting Studies at Western Oregon University under the supervision of Amanda Smith, Associate Professor. The purpose of this survey is to collect more information about the freelance interpreting field. The study aims to survey students, working interpreters and Interpreter Training Program directors about their understanding and preparation for being a self-employed freelance signed language interpreter. The results of this study will be used in my master's final professional project and may be used in presentations or future publications. I am inviting you to participate in this survey which contains a questionnaire that will require around 5 minutes to complete. Your responses will be confidential and identifying information such as your name, email address and IP address will not be collected or used. There are no perceived risks with this survey. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any point without penalty or consequence by closing your browser. The benefit of participating in this survey is it will increase understanding within the freelance interpreting field.

The Institutional Review Board at Western Oregon University has approved this research project. For questions about the review process, please contact the IRB at (503) 838-9200 or irb@wou.edu. If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact me at arehkopf13@mail.wou.edu, or my faculty advisor, Amanda Smith, at smithar@wou.edu.

By beginning the survey:

- you have read the above information
- you voluntarily agree to participate
- you are at least 18 years of age

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by not opening the survey or closing the window at any time.

APPENDIX C: Interpreting Student Survey

1. Is your interpreting training program: Mark only one oval.

- Certificate
- 2 year (AA/AS)
- 4 year (BA/BS)
- Graduate Degree
- Other

2. Does your program include a specific course on being a self employed freelance interpreter? Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

3. What information would you like to learn about being a self employed freelance interpreter?

Powered by



Google Forms

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19bxxq9UlxyskD4F4keijVqPnUhVpR15hSRA26Eq3Wk/edit> 1/1

APPENDIX D: Interpreter Training Program Survey

1. Is your Interpreter Training program: Mark only one oval.

- Certificate
- 2 year (AA/AS)
- 4 year (BA/BS)
- Graduate Degree
- Other

2. Does your program include a specific course on being a self employed freelance interpreter? Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

3. If yes, list the main subject areas that are covered in this course are:

4. If no, where is freelance interpreting discussed within your program? Mark only one oval.

- Short lesson within a course
- Guest speaker/one time presentation
- It is not discussed
- Other: _____

5. Are there any self employment or small business related courses in your program? Mark only one oval.

- Yes , please briefly describe:
- No



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<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1e26teyKotCkCf9jUgXuDvtHxy8s5mUBT5n5FGuKkUwE/edit>

1/1

APPENDIX E: Working Interpreter Survey

1. My interpreter training program was: Mark only one oval.

- A certificate
- 2 year (AA/AS)
- 4 year (BA/BS)
- Graduate Degree
- I did not attend an interpreter training program

2. I consider myself a/an: {check all that apply} Check all that apply.

- Freelance Interpreter
- Educational Interpreter
- Self Employed
- Small business owner
- Interpreter student
- Staff interpreter
- Other: _____

3. I have been interpreting for: Mark only one oval.

- I am a student
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 20+ years

4. My interpreter training program had a course specific to being a self employed freelance sign language interpreter. (taxes, invoicing, contracts etc) Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- Sort of
- No
- N/A

5. I use the following apps on my phone to help me with my freelance interpreting needs (pdf scanner, dictionary etc)

6. I am professionally present on the internet via: {Check all that apply} Check all that apply.

Facebook

Twitter

LinkedIn

My own professional website

Other:

7. My invoice and payment tracking system, briefly put, looks like: {i.e. Excel spreadsheet with color coding or printed and filed paperwork}

8. I am knowledgeable when it comes to my tax information (1099/W2 forms, quarterly payments, deductions): Mark only one oval.

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Not knowledgeable at all | <input type="radio"/> | Very knowledgeable |

9. In regards to freelance interpreting as a business, I would like to share with the new interpreters:

10. In regards to freelance interpreting as a business, I would like to know more about:

