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## Beyond Theory: Simulation and Role-play in Interpreter Education

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Beyond Theory:  
Simulation and Role-play in Interpreter Education  
By  
Cameo Hunsaker

A thesis submitted to  
Western Oregon University

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

March 2020

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Beyond Theory:**

### **How Simulation and Role-play are Transforming Interpreter Education**

By

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In the 1960s and 1970s, a cultural shift began in the interpreting and Deaf communities of America. According to Cokely (2011), the Deaf community, who once had control over the selection, vetting, and training of ad hoc interpreters, were replaced as societal gatekeepers by institutions of higher learning.

This transition has presented systemic issues in signed language interpreter education. Many fundamental aspects of interpreter education have yet to be researched or standardized (Witter-Merithew, 2004). Interpreter Education Programs (IEPs) have struggled to effectively train interpreters for work as professionals, as evidenced by a decades-old graduation-to-certification gap (Cogen & Cokely, 2015).

This research examines simulation and role-play as a possible solution to effectively train future interpreters. These activities provide exposure to authentic settings, real-world practice, and experiences that cannot be learned by observation or interpreting from a video source. The path is also then paved for the Deaf community to resume their traditional role in interpreter education. Despite the perceived efficacy of



simulation and role-play as an educational technique, there has been very little research on these activities in IEPs.

Signed language interpreters and interpreter educators nationwide were surveyed about their use of simulation and role-play, their experience learning through simulation and role-play, and the effect these activities had on their growth as a professional interpreter. Responses to the survey illustrate the authenticity of current usage practices, as well as the barriers that educators face in designing and implementing these types of activities.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Background

Signed language interpreting is a relatively new professional field, although the act of interpreting between Deaf and hearing people is hardly a recent phenomenon (Frishberg, 1990). It was not until the disability rights movement gained momentum in the 1960s and 1970s that mainstream society recognized the need for communication access for the Deaf community (Frishberg, 1990).

Prior to the disability rights movement, Deaf individuals communicated with the hearing world via well-intentioned hearing people who had at least some cursory knowledge of American Sign Language (Frishberg, 1990). These hearing people did not typically receive formal education for providing interpreting services and often were not compensated for their work (Frishberg, 1990). “There was no distinction ... in the decades before the 1960s between a ‘helper’ (any hearing signer who might help out) and an interpreter” (Frishberg, 1990, p. 11). Ad hoc interpreters typically came in the form of a hearing family member, a church congregant, a neighbor, or a staff member from the local School for the Deaf (Cokely, 2011; Frishberg, 1990). Although the linguistic skill of these volunteers varied, those who lacked fluency, cultural competence, and understanding of ethical boundaries had the potential to cause errors and communication breakdowns. Additionally, without a professional code of ethics ensuring neutrality and confidentiality, these underqualified volunteer interpreters “rarely considered their own obligation to maintain attitudes of confidentiality, impartiality, or the right of the deaf person to know and understand the full proceedings” (Frishberg, 1990, p. 10).

There was an inherent oppressive nature to this system of ad-hoc interpreters. “‘Helping out’ in this way may reflect that deaf individuals are not able to take care of their own business, social and personal affairs without the intervention of a hearing person” (Frishberg, 1990, p. 11). However, there were benefits to utilizing these “homegrown” interpreters. The Deaf community could choose, train, and vet interpreters based on the standards and values of their culture (Cokely, 2011; Volk, 2014). The education of these interpreters was community-based and situational, often with the Deaf person as the linguistic model. The Deaf community had full control over who would be permitted into the intimate corners of their world. There was an inherent level of trust between the community and the communication facilitator. The “‘Deaf grapevine’ made known to the Community who could be trusted as an interpreter and who could not” (Cokely, 2011, para. 2). The Deaf community, as a whole, was a gatekeeper for hearing interpreters.

During the disability rights movement, several federal laws made communication access a legal requirement and determined that paid professional interpreters would be required for interactions with businesses, organizations, social services, and educational institutions (Ball, 2013; Frishberg, 1990). These new laws spurred the need for formal training of interpreters and professionalization of the interpreter’s role. The field of professional signed language interpreting was born.

Although some may perceive this as a positive change, it is important to recognize that “deaf people’s lives have not simply improved in a straight linear fashion through the centuries, despite what early hagiographers believed” (Van Cleve, 1993, p. ix). As Deaf people fought for these legislative mandates for communication access (Cokely, 2011) and as signed language interpreting became viewed as a profession, an unintended cultural shift took place. According

to Cogen and Cokely (2015), “the Deaf community ... lost its central place in the preparation and validation of interpreters” (p. 23). They lost “the ability to define the work of interpreters ... [and] they would soon no longer be the primary source from which non-Deaf people would learn their language” (Cokely, 2011, para. 3).

The interpreting field now had formal education programs in institutions of higher education. The schools and, later, credentialing bodies deemed who would be considered a qualified interpreter. The Deaf community was no longer making collective decisions about who would have access to some of the most intimate details of their life. The gatekeeper role had transitioned to the interpreter education programs (IEPs) that were being developed all over the country (Boyd, 2014).

Since the formalization of signed language interpreter training, educators have been trying to develop the most effective and efficient training techniques. Moving interpreter training from cultural immersion to the classroom environment proved to be a challenge on many levels. For decades, educators have been struggling to standardize curricula for interpreter education and establish effective benchmarks for interpreter assessment (Cogen & Cokely, 2015; Volk, 2014). This challenge is best illustrated by the historically low certification rates of IEP graduates and the ever-present graduation-to-certification gap (Cogen & Cokely, 2015; Herring & Swabey, 2017; Volk, 2014). According to the Interpreter Education Program Needs Assessment (2014):

Currently, about 65% of interpreter education programs across the U.S. are AA/AAS degree programs. The 2014 NIEC Interpreter Education Program Needs Assessment found that AA/AAS program graduates now need as much as 25-36 months post-graduation on average to attain the four-year degree and achieve national certification. It

is worth noting that two-year program graduates average approximately 13-18 months to earn local credentials (e.g., a state-issued certificate) and 12-18 months to gain employment as an interpreter, compared to four-year program graduates who average 7-12 months to achieve local credentials and a little more than 6 months to gain employment as an interpreter. (p. 25)

The Deaf community is now saddled with a power shift from their own values in lieu of what academia and legislation has deemed “sufficient” for their communication access. However, these new gatekeepers have yet to determine what sufficiency means or how to educate new generations of interpreters to meet quality standards.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The goal of formally educating interpreters is a relatively recent phenomenon. With that, academic systems have struggled to find effective training techniques and curricula design to adequately prepare interpreters for the work force. Obst (2010) stated, “Nowhere is the ignorance about professional interpretation greater than at our universities, which are preoccupied with the teaching of theoretical linguistics, a discipline of little value to society when compared with the many benefits derived from applied language training” (Introduction, para. 11).

Education for signed language interpreters has faced its own unique challenges. Training began as workshops and developed into Associate-level programs at community colleges and technical schools all over the country (Ball, 2013; Godfrey, 2010). While the frequency of bachelor’s and master’s-level interpreting programs are on the rise (Godfrey, 2010), the majority of programs remain at the 2-year degree level, despite overwhelming evidence that two years is

an insufficient amount of time to learn a new language and the skill of interpreting (Cogen & Cokely, 2015; Humphrey, 2000). As Cogen and Cokely (2015) indicated:

Two or three years of academic study of a language is generally insufficient to acquire fluency in any language, much less a modality-different language. Unlike spoken language majors that often include a semester or year-long study abroad experience, interpreting majors offer no extended immersion opportunities. Classroom instruction alone is inadequate, and meaningful program interaction with diverse communities of d/Deaf people is missing from most programs (p. 22).

The struggles of effective training strategies are felt by graduates of IEPs, as well. In Wilbeck's (2017) survey, many of her 102 participants were dissatisfied with the preparation they received from their IEP. Those participants cited the need for "more challenging language courses .... at least 50% of classroom time being hands-up practice, ample opportunities to practice interpreting ... and more practice with real people" (p. 43). One participant even reported that "they had completed almost twice as many (internship) hours as their school required and still were not adequately prepared" (p. 34). Several studies have highlighted the severe graduation to certification gap for signed language interpreters (Godfrey, 2010; Herring & Swabey, 2017; Volk, 2014; Wilbeck, 2017). These sources consistently state that it is "common practice for interpreter education graduates to be unprepared for employment upon graduation" (Wilbeck, 2017, p. 14).

The past 60 years have brought monumental changes to the Deaf and interpreting communities. Interpreter training transitioned from a community-immersion, learn-as-you-go approach with the Deaf community at the helm to a structured, formal, didactic approach in

institutions of higher learning. Both systems have benefits and drawbacks. The challenge lies in finding a balance between the two.

There is a disconnect between Deaf community involvement in interpreter training, effective training methods, and preparing students for the workforce after graduation. The challenges academia faces include identifying best practices for training interpreters, while also striking a balance between Deaf and formal education gatekeeper roles.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The researcher posits that one educational approach has the potential to address the issues of a lack of Deaf community involvement and effective preparation methods for interpreting students in IEPs. Role-play and simulation activities are often used in present-day IEPs; however, it is possible that a more robust, authentic application of simulation and role-play in IEPs could, potentially, aid in bridging the gap between traditional, community-based approaches to interpreter education and current curriculum in post-secondary IEP environments.

To date, there has been little research on the use of role-play and simulation in IEPs. The literature to date offers scant information on the ways in which educators utilize this approach. There has been no research on how often role-play and simulation are employed in IEP classes, what types of activities have been found to be effective, how much time students are spending doing these activities, or the activity's level of authenticity.

The aim of this research is to gather and describe the way IEPs have used role-play and simulation in the past 20 years. Interpreter educators and IEP graduates will provide insights into their experiences with simulation and role-play. Participants will describe the kinds of activities available in their IEP, the frequency of simulation and role-play throughout their

training program, and the involvement, if any, of Deaf community members and other community partners.

### **Theoretical Bases**

The educational philosophy at the foundation of this investigation is Experiential Learning (EL) (Kolb, 2015). EL is a pedagogical approach that situates students in real-world environments, allowing them to learn through personal experience and reflection (Kolb, 2015). EL is defined as “a philosophy that informs many methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people’s capacity to contribute to their communities” (Association for Experiential Education, n.d., para. 3). This approach centers on bringing the real-world into the classroom, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge obtained through more traditional styles of teaching and learning through hands-on activities. EL emphasizes “the central role that experience plays in the learning process” (Kolb, 2015, p. 31).

The use of EL is, seemingly, an appropriate fit for interpreter education when one considers the traditional experiential approaches used by the Deaf community to train interpreters. As a community of practice, EL has an integral role in preparing IEP students for work in the field. Many IEPs utilize the framework of EL during students’ internship or practicum opportunities. However, rather than focus on internship design and implementation, this study will focus on the EL activities of simulation and role-play and how these activities could prepare students for internships and field experience beyond graduation.



## **Limitations of This Study**

The scope of this research was limited to interpreter educators and IEP graduates from the last 20 years who have had experience working in the field. Graduates may not accurately remember details from the EL activities throughout their IEP. Also, educators may have limited information about EL activities in classes they do not personally teach.

The survey was distributed digitally, primarily on social media. This required “respondents (to) have access to and be comfortable using technology” (Shannon, Johnson, Searcy, & Lott, 2002, p. 6). Those without a computer, internet access, or access to social media were not able to participate. The researcher’s email address and social media username were available to participants; however, no respondents contacted the researcher at any time to ask for clarification or report any problems with the survey.

Another limitation of this research is the inherent dangers of a self-reporting survey. Self-reporting, especially via online questionnaires, is a relatively popular approach to data collection for several reasons (Hoskins, 2012). Self-reports are easy for researchers to design and distribute, they can be distributed to large numbers of people, and they can provide information that would be difficult for one researcher to observe (Hoskins, 2012). However, there are also several drawbacks to self-reporting. As with any self-report, there is always the possibility of participants responding dishonestly (Hoskins, 2012). Other barriers, like introspective ability, may also hinder participant’s ability to respond honestly (Hoskins, 2012). For the purposes of this study, participants may also be challenged with remembering the details of their IEP experience. There is also the possibility of participants misunderstanding terms or questions on the survey (Hoskins, 2012). This was an especially significant factor when asking participants questions about terms that are often misused or misunderstood by the general public.

Although these and other reasons provide research limitations when utilizing self-reporting, the researcher felt this approach was best suited for the purposes of this study.

A general limitation noted in participants' responses is the traditionally ambiguous definition and understanding of the terms "experiential learning," "simulation," and "role-play." As is discussed in this paper, these terms not only lack standard academic definitions, there is significant variance with layperson usage. Although the researcher provided explicit and narrow definitions to clarify these terms several times throughout the survey, many participants misunderstood or misused the terms as they were intended. This not only led to misconstrued answers from some participants, it also resulted in conflicting information as their understanding of the terms refined as the survey progressed.

### **Definition of Terms**

Select terms used throughout the course of this study have the potential to be ambiguous or misinterpreted. Below are definitions for several terms that are used throughout this work.

**Authenticity:** The measure of how much an educational activity mirrors interpreting work in the field.

**Deaf:** A capital letter "D" used in this term "indicate(s) the sociolinguistic signing community" (Ball, 2013, p. xvii). People identifying as Deaf share a culture, including using signed language as their primary mode of communication.

**deaf:** A lower case "d" is often used to refer to "the physiological condition of hearing loss" (Ball, 2013, p. xvii). However, some authors throughout history have used the terms *Deaf* and *deaf* interchangeably. Although the word "deaf" does appear in several quotations throughout this paper, it should be assumed that the meaning is always referring to the capital "D" Deaf cultural community.

**Experiential Learning (EL):** EL is an educational approach that focuses on learning through real-world experience. A more detailed definition is available in the Literature Review section of this paper.

**Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** This term refers to activities designed to include students or faculty from multiple departments within an educational institution.

**Internship/Practicum:** The terms “internship” and “practicum” may be used interchangeably throughout this work. For this research, an internship/practicum is work experience provided to a student- or novice-interpreter under the supervision of an instructor, mentor, or other professional interpreter. Internships/practicums are often higher risk than simulation or role-play activities because interpreting services are being provided to consumers at legitimate interpreting assignments. To participate in an internship/practicum, students and supervising interpreters are encouraged to obtain consent from all stakeholders prior to the assignment in accordance with the industry standard code of ethics.

**Mock interpreting:** Mock interpreting is a scripted or semi-scripted interpreting activity that takes place in the classroom environment. Deaf and/or hearing consumers may or may not be present, depending on the goal of the activity. Mock interpreting almost always refers to an activity where student-interpreters are practicing interpreting skills.

**Role-play:** A role-play is a scripted or semi-scripted activity that takes place in a classroom environment. Deaf and/or hearing consumers may or may not be present, depending on the goal of the activity. Role-play can be used to practice interpreting skills, ethical dilemmas, soft skills, or other non-linguistic professional skills.

**Simulation:** For the purposes of this research, a simulation is a scripted or semi-scripted interpreting activity situated in an authentic environment outside of the classroom. A simulation

could take any number of forms, such as interpreting in a board room, interpreting in a theater, or interpreting in a simulation hospital. Deaf and/or hearing consumers may or may not be present, depending on the goal of the activity. A defining characteristic of a simulation is that all consumers are played by actors and are there solely for educational purposes.

**Video Relay Service (VRS):** VRS is a telephone relay service funded by the federal government for people who use sign language to communicate. Signed language interpreters in call centers interpret between callers on video screens and hearing callers on the phone.

**Video Remote Interpreting (VRI):** VRI is a similar service to VRS. Interpreters in remote locations interpret via webcams to individuals who use sign language to communicate. VRI, however, is designed to be used between hearing and Deaf individuals in the same room, whereas VRS is designed to interpret for callers in separate locations. VRI is funded by a business, organization, or hearing individual who is in need of the service.

**Volunteer Interpreting:** To differentiate this term from “internship/practicum,” volunteer interpreting will refer to interpreting opportunities for student- or novice-interpreters with actual consumers, typically in low-risk environments, without the supervision of a professional interpreter. Examples of these activities may be working at an information booth at a community event or interpreting at a family gathering, such as a wedding or a baby shower.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Defining Experiential Learning

While the concept of EL has been discussed and researched as an educational philosophy for almost a century, pinning down a distinct definition can prove to be somewhat of a challenge. Herring and Swabey's (2017) recent research into EL provides a well-rounded overview of the spectrum of EL definitions available in the literature. The general consensus is that EL is a student-centered educational approach, a process of doing and learning through direct experience with the goal of informing learners' beliefs, emotions, perceptions, and future choices (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Herring & Swabey, 2017). EL focuses on the process of learning rather than the product or end result (Kolb, 2015). While a standard definition of EL can be elusive, academics can agree on what EL is not. As Beard and Wilson (2013) stated, EL is "definitely not the mere memorizing of abstract theoretical knowledge, especially if taught by traditional formal methods of instruction such as lecturing and reading from books" (p. 24).

The most notable application of EL in academic literature is often attributed to Kolb (2015), the father of Experiential Learning Theory (ELT). Kolb provided an in-depth history of EL and its significance as an educational philosophy. While historical models of development from Piaget, Loevinger, Kohlberg, Perry, and others focus on a unilinear progression, Kolb's ELT "provides a holistic model of the learning process and a multi-linear model of adult development, both of which are consistent with what we know about how people learn, grow, and develop" (Mainemelis, Boyatzis, & Kolb, 1999, p. 2). Kolb (2015) provided clear differentiation between ELT and behavioral, rationalist, and cognitive learning theories. He emphasized that this theory is not meant to be a competing alternative. Rather, ELT is a "holistic

integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition, and behavior” (Kolb, 2015, p. 31).

Kolb (2015) developed a structured approach for applying ELT using a four-step method: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. These stages each benefit students in a variety of ways. During the first step, Concrete Experience, an individual encounters a new experience that provides the opportunity to learn (Kolb, 2015). This stage requires active participation in the experience, rather than a passive approach to learning, like reading. Step two of Kolb’s (2015) method, Reflective Observation, requires students to ruminate on their experience, analyzing the event through the lens of multiple perspectives. Step three, Abstract Conceptualization, encourages students to develop theories and ideas about their observations, which will help them apply what they have learned to other experiences in the future (Kolb, 2015). The fourth and final step, Active Experimentation, encourages students to apply their newly developed theories to a decision-making framework, a novel experience, or to solve a problem (Kolb, 2015).

A benefit of Kolb’s ELT is that it is malleable enough that the approach can be applied to any field of study. The most effective applications, according to Kolb (2015), are in “complex learning environments” where “the emphasis is on experiencing what it is actually like to be a professional in the field under study” (p. 277). The goal of the educational activity is to mirror the experiences of practitioners. Using ELT, the design of the activity and the feedback provided are personalized to the specific needs of the learner (Kolb, 2015). Additionally, the learning process can begin at any stage and can be repeated or revisited as needed (Herring & Swabey, 2017).

## **Experiential Learning in Various Fields**

EL has been shown to be beneficial across the spectrum of postsecondary education (Herring & Swabey, 2017). Cantor (1997) claimed that “experiential learning is a necessary component of formal instruction in colleges and universities” (p. 3) because of the multi-faceted benefits EL brings to the educational environment. With the diversification of the student body and the ever-changing work force, Cantor (1997) wrote that EL caters to non-traditional learners and better prepares students for entry into a variety of fields. He also cited other benefits, such as economic prosperity and rapport-building between local community members. Cantor (1997) identified multiple disciplines that utilize EL in their curriculum such as social work, psychology, and medicine.

Nursing is an example of a practice profession that incorporates EL into its educational standards. While nursing education historically took place in the lecture hall, the laboratory, and the internship settings, the use of simulation has been increasing over the past 40 years (Nehring & Lashely, 2009).

One simulation technique used in nursing education that could be applied to a wide variety of fields is the use of role-play. According to Nehring and Lashely (2009), role-play allows students “to learn about human interaction and empathy” (p. 531). It gives students the chance to apply theoretical skills learned in the classroom with minimal risk to patients. Students are also able to practice skills that cannot be experienced in a lecture setting, such as positioning themselves in the role of nurse, fixing errors in real-time, and working within a group (Nehring & Lashely, 2009). These simulations helped students address issues with anxiety before their internship placements and “increased (their) assertiveness and self-confidence” (Nehring & Lashely 2009, p. 531). Simulations have been so successful, in fact, that researchers

have begun discussing the idea of fully replacing clinical practicums with similar role-play activities (Nehring & Lashely, 2009).

### **Experiential Learning in Interpreter Education**

Signed language interpreting is often considered a practice profession “due to the significance of situational and human interaction factors on their ultimate work product” (Dean & Pollard, 2008, para. 1). As a practice profession, EL seems a natural approach for interpreter educators to include in their curriculum. Learning how to interpret requires interpreting; “the very nature of the task precludes passivity” (Herring & Swabey, 2017, p. 36).

Downing and Tillery (1992) published a study which compared 25 well-known spoken and signed language interpreter training programs to assess the commonalities shared between their approaches. Although EL was not a focus of their findings, they did state that “the direct experience approach is most commonly used to train interpreters (utilizing) a combination of interpreting simulations and laboratory work” (p. 35).

Responses in Wilbeck’s (2017) survey directly addressed a comparison between practicing with video recording and more authentic, real-world experiences. Participants wanted “more practice with real people or ‘air guitar’ and less work with recordings” (Wilbeck, 2017, p. 43). There was a general consensus that “reading books and watching videos was no way to build proficiency” (p. 34) due to the myriad of factors involved in interpreting that cannot be replicated by practice videos. The participants felt they would have been better prepared for work in the interpreting field had their IEP focused more on application of theory using real-world experiences rather than discussions, readings, and practice with videotapes (Wilbeck, 2017). Although the solution to effective interpreter training is a complex matter, “creating realistic real-world work in academia would lead to greater comprehension for students”



(Wilbeck, 2017, p. 8) and may be a large part of the solution to more effective training of signed language interpreters.

Metzger (2000) also drew comparisons between practicing with a video source and EL activities. She found that the perceived lack of interaction between interpreting students and consumers on the video “gives (students) the illusion that an interpreter’s role is that of a ‘passive conduit’” (Metzger, 2000, p. 83). Instead, interpreters have been found to

take an active role in the turn exchanges in interpreted encounters (Roy 1989, 1993) and to contribute self-generated utterances that not only relate the utterances of the primary participants but also fulfill a coordinating function, at times providing information that no one has uttered but which is nonetheless an inherent part of the interaction, such as the identity of the original source. (Metzger, 2000, p. 83)

Interactional, or dialogic, interpreting poses several demands not found in monologic interpreting work. Skills such as turn-taking, asking for clarification, including supplementary information (such as source attribution, expansion, and visual cues), rapid transitions between languages and cultures, features inherent to interaction (such as overlap and interruption), and back channeling (Metzger, 2000) cannot be replicated with practice videos. Metzger stated that dialogic role-play is “one of the most important tools that interpreter educators have for teaching interactive interpreting skills” (p. 84).

Ruiz (2013) also discussed the various benefits of EL training for interpreters. She explained the many dangers of on-the-job skill-building, both to the interpreter and other stakeholders. Ruiz (2013) recognized that by “allowing students to experience a variety of interpreting situations as well as possible conflicts that often arise in the profession, students would be better prepared for internships or future careers” (p. 2). In her survey, 84 professional

interpreters reported on the perceived efficacy of the simulation experiences offered by their educational programs. The results showed that, while many interpreters reported having exposure to simulations and other EL, many of them felt the experience “lacked authenticity” (p. 13).

Echoing Ruiz’s (2013) findings, Bentley-Sassaman (2009) stated that “the more varied settings and clients that the students encounter during class simulations and their practicum, the more it helps them to refine their skills and develop their potential as interpreters” (p. 65). Her study is one of the only published works this author could find that connects specific examples of interpreting activities with Kolb’s ELT method. According to Bentley-Sassaman (2009), Concrete Experience is achieved during in-class, recorded interpreting practice using video source texts. Reflective Observation occurs during any observation and analysis, either of a professional interpreter’s work, the work of peers, or one’s own interpreting work (Bentley-Sassaman, 2009; Herring & Swabey, 2017). Students employ the third step, Abstract Conceptualization, during critical thinking activities regarding work they have observed, connecting challenges and successes from their observations to concepts learned in the classroom (Bentley-Sassaman, 2009; Herring & Swabey, 2017). The final step, Active Experimentation, is achieved when students apply what they have learned to a life-like experience, such as interpreting during a role-play, volunteer interpreting, or interpreting within their internship (Bentley-Sassaman, 2009). These activities also compliment Beard and Wilson’s modifications to Kolb’s ELT for application to interpreter education, referring to the four stages as “experiencing/noticing, interpreting/reflection, generalizing/judging, and applying/testing” (Herring & Swabey, 2017, p. 15).

Recently, Herring and Swabey (2017) published their seminal work on EL in interpreter education. The goal of their paper was to provide a reference for including EL in IEPs, as well as providing a foundation for developing an EL-based program to close the gap between graduation and certification. They outline a framework for formulating EL activities, provide guidelines for field-based internships and practicums, and discuss assessment strategies for interpreter educators (Herring & Swabey, 2017).

They also provide an in-depth analysis of several other examples of EL from interpreting studies literature. They state, “experiential learning approaches are widely employed in interpreter education programs, even if they are not labeled as such” (Herring & Swabey, 2017, p. 36). One study referenced is by Roberson, Russell, and Shaw (2012), whose paper promotes the necessity of authentic mock interpreting practice within education programs. In addition, Herring and Swabey (2017) stated, “McDermid’s (2009) survey of Canadian interpreter educators mentioned a number of experiential or active learning activities, including group/team work, games, debates, dialogues, peer feedback, and student self-evaluation” (p. 36). The authors also referenced Russell’s (2010) work, which includes discussion of role-plays for teaching consecutive interpreting. Several other examples are provided from both signed and spoken language education literature.

### **Authenticity of the Experience**

A common thread for all approaches of EL is the need for authenticity in the activity. Authenticity “strengthen(s) the link between theoretical reflection and practical know-how in order to develop self-reflective professional translator expertise and generic skills like creativity, critical thought, autonomy, responsibility, cooperativeness, and professionalism in a holistic way (Mitchell-Schuitevoerder, 2013, as cited in Pacheco Aguilar, 2015, p. 13). Herring and Swabey

(2017) stated, “In designing experiential learning activities, the realness of the experience is an area of concern, especially when the skill being learned is not one that can be readily practiced in real-world settings” (p. 21).

Similar to sentiments by Kolb (2015) and Beard and Wilson (2013), Metzger (2000) wrote that role-plays will be more meaningful and beneficial to students if the activity “realistically captures the features of natural interactions that interpreting students will eventually face in the professional arena” (p. 84). This also directly addresses some of the suggestions by the participants in Wilbeck’s (2017) study for improving EL in IEPs. Researchers such as Crezee, Thumann, and Smith have even suggested interdisciplinary partnerships with other collegiate disciplines, such as psychology, medicine, and social work to develop low-risk, realistic, joint simulations with students (Herring & Swabey, 2017).

### **A Critique of the Literature**

Although a hallmark of EL is its malleability to be applied to a variety of fields, its greatest strength may also be its greatest weakness. The literature seems to lack a standard definition for this educational approach (Herring & Swabey, 2017; Moon, 2005). Explanations of EL are vague and can seem overly simplified. Fenwick (2000) stated:

The notion of experiential learning has been appropriated to designate everything from kinesthetic-directed instructional activities in the classroom to special workplace projects interspersed with critical dialogue led by a facilitator, to learning generated through social action movements, and even to team-building adventures in the wilderness.

Definitional problems continue when one tries to disentangle the notion of experiential learning from experiences commonly associated with formal education such as class discussions, reading and analysis and reflection. (p. 108)

Similarly, several other terms seem to be used interchangeably with EL. In the course of this research, terms such as *situated learning*, *active learning*, *cooperative learning*, *service learning*, and *simulated situated learning* were all observed in the literature and seemed to carry similar, if not identical, usages to EL.

Although the literature agrees that experience is central to the approach (Bentley-Sassaman, 2009; Kolb, 2015; Ruiz, 2013), there seems to be conflicting views regarding what experiential activities can be labelled as EL. For example, Kolb (2015) generically defined his first step in the ELT process, Concrete Experience, as an event or experience that prompts a person to learn. Several sources emphasize the need for Concrete Experience to be a real-world, authentic event (Kolb, 2015; Mainemelis, Boyatzis, & Kolb, 1999). According to Bentley-Sassaman (2009), in-class practice with a videotaped source is an example of Concrete Experience. However, Metzger (2000) stated emphatically that videotaped sources do not provide an authentic experience to practice interpreting.

While the EL literature available provides a theoretical foundation, there are gaps in the data that require additional focus. In multiple works, EL is assumed to be a beneficial teaching tool for interpreting education. Considering the interpreting field's tradition of on-the-job training (Frishberg, 1990; Ruiz, 2013), this assumption may seem to be common sense. However, there is a lack of empirical data to provide evidence of EL's efficacy in interpreter education programs.

Finally, nowhere in the literature is there an examination of the various methods currently being used to employ EL in interpreting educational curriculums. The aim of this research is to better understand how EL is currently being used in IEPs across the country and the perceived efficacy of EL activities for interpreter practitioners.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **Design of the Investigation**

This qualitative research study was designed to document recent utilization of simulation and role-play activities in IEPs. Responses were collected from current and former IEP educators, as well as IEP graduates who had experience working as professional interpreters after graduation. Before starting the survey, participants were provided with a confidentiality and anonymity agreement (see Appendix B). Consent to these terms was documented when participants clicked “continue” in the first question of the survey.

To protect all individuals involved in this study, the survey and scope of the research was evaluated and approved by the Western Oregon University Institutional Review Board (IRB; see Appendix A). Contact information for the IRB and the thesis advisor were provided to participants in the event they had any concerns about the survey (see Appendix B). Participation in the survey was on a volunteer basis. Individuals could exit the survey at any time.

The survey consisted of multiple choice and open-ended questions (see Appendix C). Multiple choice questions were used when the researcher had a set of fixed responses or wanted to limit the options of participants’ responses. Open-ended questions were provided when the researcher inquired about participants’ opinions or in circumstances where answers could not be predicted.

Recognizing that some terms in this research have several meanings and usages, the researcher utilized section descriptions in the survey to provide narrow definitions of concepts discussed (see Appendix C). The term Experiential Learning was defined as “activities in the classroom with in-person consumers. This could take the form of mock interpreting, educational

role-play activities, or staged simulations with Deaf and/or hearing community members.” It was also mentioned that interpreting with video sources or involvement in internships were not to be included in this definition of EL.

The survey was designed in Google Forms and distributed electronically. An electronic, web-based form allowed for a variety of question types and response options (Shannon, Johnson, Searcy, & Lott, 2002). Additionally, responses received could easily be downloaded into a spreadsheet for analysis (Shannon et al., 2002).

The survey was available for a total of 20 days. To distribute the survey, a link was posted in several Facebook groups, including local and national interpreter groups, interpreter education groups, and groups affiliated with Western Oregon University. The purpose of using social media was to glean responses representing a wide range of IEPs. Additionally, it has been found that “people increase their level of confidence because the researcher shows his personal information (Facebook profile) and also participates in their groups of interests (Facebook’s groups)” (Baltar & Brunet, 2012, para. 3). Social media posts were encouraged to be shared to promote snowball sampling (Hale & Napier, 2014). Snowball sampling has been shown to be effective in “expand(ing) geographical scope ... (and) increase(s) the sample size and its representatives” (Baltar & Brunet, 2012, para. 1).

The survey was also emailed to a compiled list of IEP department chairs and program directors, shared with the researcher by another Western Oregon University graduate student who had used the same list for her thesis survey. This approach was used to encourage a higher response from current educators familiar with curricula and educational activities.

The survey was attempted by 62 anonymous individuals. Participants were able to skip any questions and could opt out at any time. The survey took approximately 15 minutes for

participants to complete. Respondents to the survey self-identified as former interpreter educators, current interpreter educators, former IEP students, current IEP students, and having no affiliation with an IEP. Due to the parameters of this study, the two individuals who were current IEP students and the two who had no IEP affiliation were deemed ineligible and were not permitted to complete the survey.

The survey utilized skip logic to focus questions toward participant's personal affiliation with an IEP. Including the consent to participate and the IEP-affiliation question, those who identified as a former IEP student were presented with 21 questions in total. These questions focused on respondents' personal experience in an IEP. Sixteen questions were multiple choice and five were open-ended. One multiple choice question accepted multiple answers and had the option of writing in a short-answer text.

Those who identified as current or former interpreter educators were given 32 questions. Educators were not only asked for data regarding the classes they taught, but also for any information they had about other classes in the IEP with which they were affiliated. Twenty-four of the questions were multiple choice. Eight questions were open-ended. One multiple choice question accepted multiple answers and had the option of writing in a short-answer text.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

After closing the survey, all data was electronically transferred from Google Forms to a Google Numbers spreadsheet. Once cell formatting was cleaned up and easily readable, coding of the data began.

Data was analyzed using Grounded Theory, an analytical approach in which themes in the data drive theory development (Tie, Birks, & Francis, 2019). According to Tie et al. (2019),



Grounded Theory is well-suited to analyze data about subjects of which little is previously known. Considering this investigation is the first of its kind, Grounded Theory was a good fit.

Every response was coded, keeping a separate list of code abbreviations used. After all responses in a column were reviewed, codes were added up and tracked. Using this tally method and Grounded Theory, certain themes emerged that allowed the categorization of many of the responses. The researcher recognized that demographic data regarding participant's affiliated IEP was relevant to the themes and goal of the investigation. Other demographic information was collected but did not play a role in this research (see Appendix D).

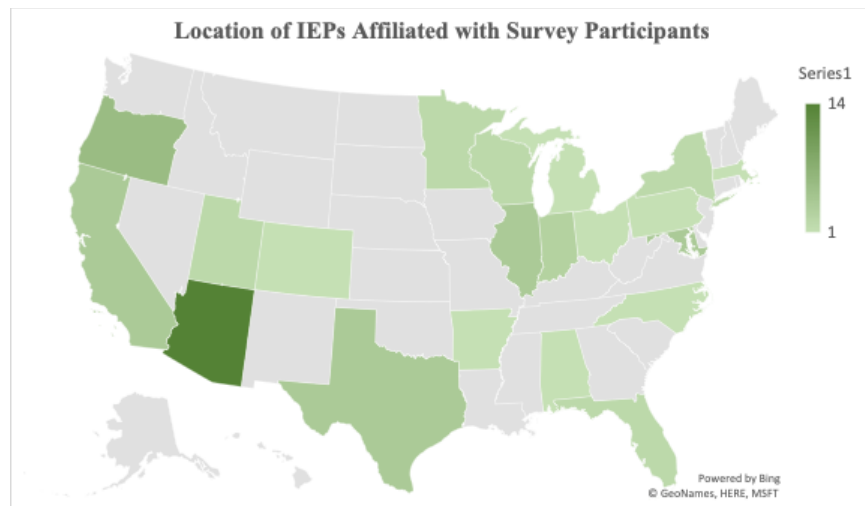
While much of the research reported is numerical in nature, participants' personal narratives offer detail and insight that percentages cannot convey. Therefore, direct quotes from several of the open-ended questions are included in the Results section of this paper.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Sixty-two participants responded to the survey. Two participants noted that they were current IEP students and another two did not have an affiliation with an IEP. These four participants did not meet eligibility requirements and were not permitted to complete the survey.

### Demographics

Responses to the survey represented 20 post-secondary education programs from 21 states and one U.S. territory (20 participants reported the location of their affiliated IEP but not the name of the institution). The most responses came from Arizona (26%) and Oregon (14%). Figure 1 illustrates the location of participants' affiliated IEPs. The map feature was not able to show the one participant to the survey who reported their IEP location as Puerto Rico.



*Figure 1.* Location of IEPs Affiliated with Survey Participants

No questions were asked regarding participants' age or gender. Of the respondents, 61.3% are former IEP students and 30.6% are current IEP educators. One participant stated they are a former IEP educator (Figure 2).

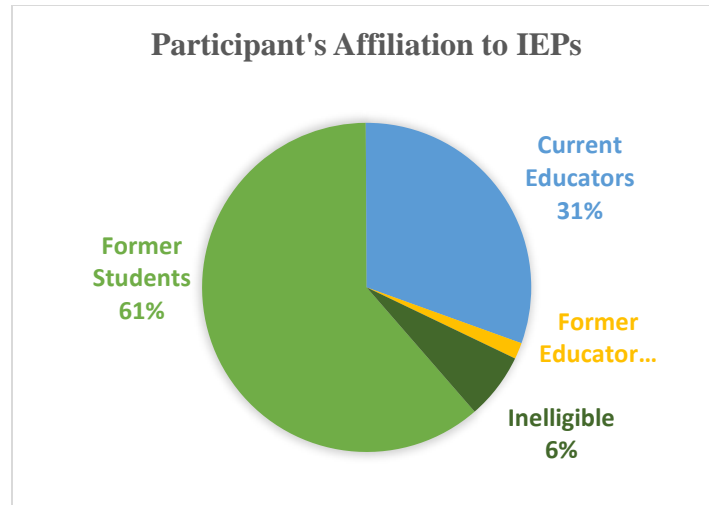


Figure 2. Participants Affiliation to IEPs

Twenty-eight of the participants either received their degree from or taught in four-year programs. Twenty-one participants had experience in two-year programs. Five participants referenced certificate programs, and two participants were affiliated with graduate-level programs. One respondent noted that they received training from a private organization that does not follow traditional degree levels. Four of the participants listed affiliation with more than one degree program. Two respondents claimed affiliation with both four-year and graduate-level programs, while two more are affiliated with certificate, 2-year, 4-year, and graduate-level programs. All of these responses are included in Figure 3 because it is likely that participants' responses throughout the rest of the survey reference their experience from all of their affiliated degree programs.

These numbers, however, are not indicative of the spectrum of degree programs available in interpreter education. According to the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (n.d.), 24% of current IEPs provide certificates, 43% are two-year programs, 30% are four-year programs, while only 3% offer master's degrees (see Figure 3). It is possible, then, that responses from

participants affiliated with certificate and two-year programs may represent a higher percentage of interpreters' experiences than what is demonstrated in this research.

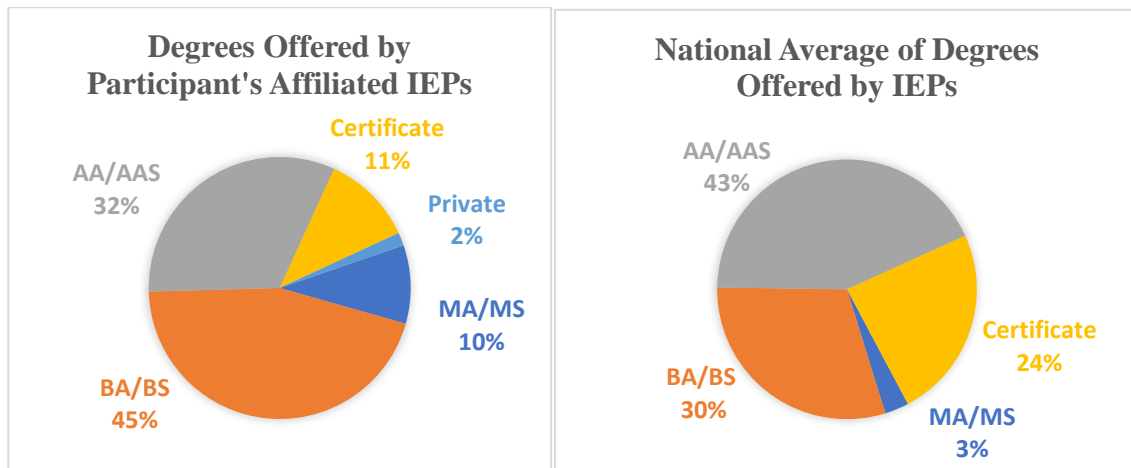


Figure 3. Comparison of Degrees from Participant's Affiliated IEPs and National Average of IEP Degrees Available (RID, n.d.)

Because this research is intended to highlight how simulations and role-play have been used in the past 20 years, graduates of IEPs were asked to note the year they completed their interpreter training (see Figure 4). Of the 38 former IEP students that responded, 34 (90%) graduated from their program in the year 2000 or later. Twenty-five of those students (66%) graduated between 2010 and 2020. All of the instructors except one identified as current educators.

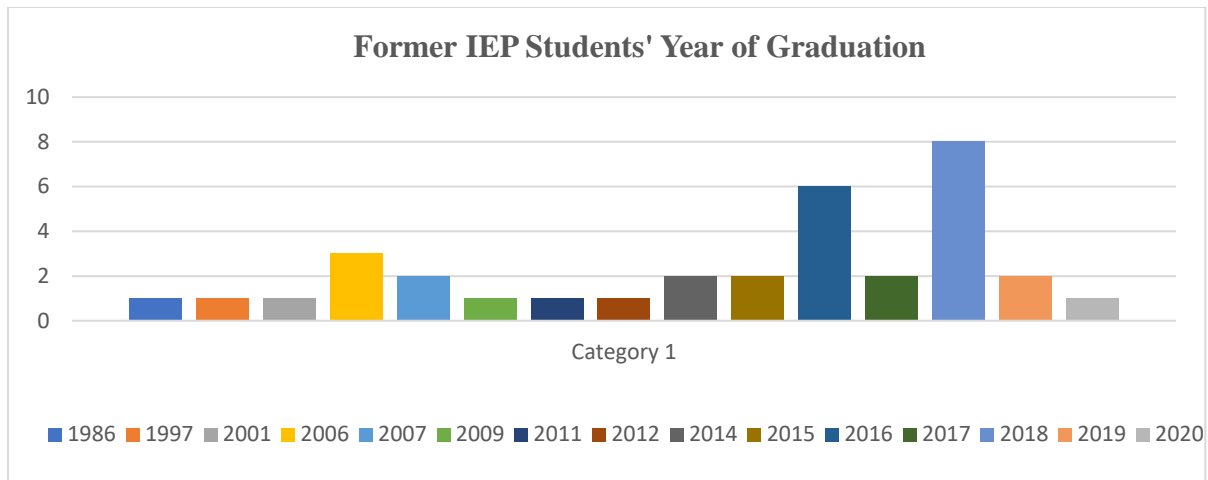


Figure 4. Former IEP Students' Year of Graduation

The responses of participants who graduated prior to 2000 or were not current educators were not included in the findings. For the remainder of this paper, all mentions of participants refer to the 34 students and 19 teachers with IEP experience from 2000 or later.

### Exposure to Simulation and Role-Play

IEPs have long been challenged with limitations of time and credit allotment when training American Sign Language interpreters (Cogen & Cokely, 2015, p. 2). Signed language interpreter educators are tasked with providing language instruction and interpreting skill development within the boundaries of certificate, two-year, or four-year programs. Because of this, “interpreters’ ability to practice is sorely limited” (Cogen & Cokely, 2015, p. 2).

This research aims to discover how much of that limited contact time within IEPs is used for EL. In the survey, EL was described as “activities in the classroom with in-person consumers. This could take the form of mock interpreting, educational role-play activities, or staged simulations with Deaf and/or hearing community members.” The definition also outlined that the term EL did not include “recorded practice videos or practicum/internship at actual jobs in the community.”

Participants were given a multiple-choice question to identify how many classes in their IEP utilized EL activities such as role-play or simulation (see Figure 5). Thirty-one percent of respondents cited that five or more classes in their IEP offered some kind of simulation or role-play activity. Fifteen percent reported at least four classes in their program that offered simulation and role-play. Another 15% cited three classes, and 38% of participants reported two or fewer classes with any role-play or simulation activities. Eleven percent of the respondents stated that role-play and simulation were not used in any of the classes in their IEP. It should be noted, however, that two participants began the survey by reporting none of their education included role-play or simulation, but later were able to list a few role-play activities from their IEP experience. This may be an indication of confusion with the terms “experiential learning,” “simulation,” or “role-play,” a challenge faced throughout this study.

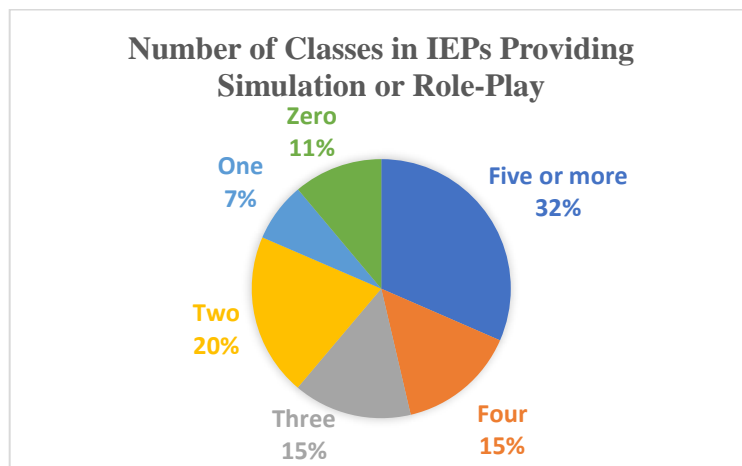


Figure 5. Number of Classes in IEPs Providing Simulation or Role-Play

The question, then, is whether the amount of time in an educational program effects the amount of EL opportunities provided to students. Participants from certificate programs, which are historically shorter and less intensive than degree-granting programs, reported the lowest number of classes with EL (see Figure 6). Sixty percent of the contributors from certificate programs did not experience any role-play or simulation activities in their IEPs, while 20% of

students reported two classes with simulation or role-play, and another 20% cited EL activities in five or more classes.

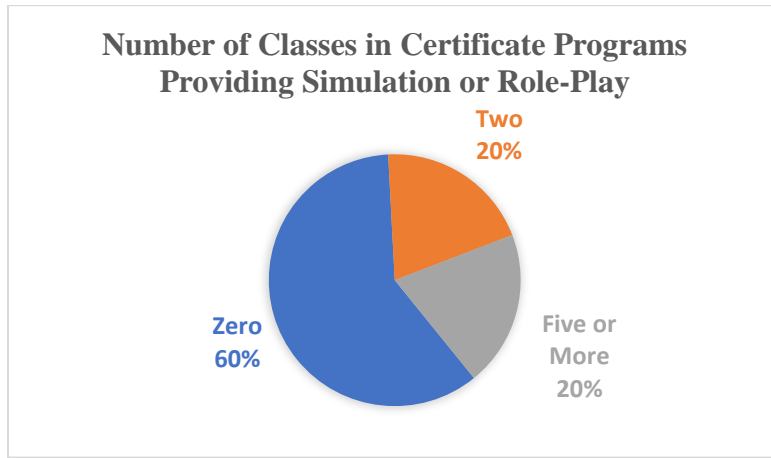


Figure 6. Number of Classes in Certificate Programs Providing Simulation or Role-Play

Two-year degree programs showed an overall increase in the number of classes offering simulation and role-play activities (see Figure 7). Only 15% of the respondents from two-year programs cited zero classes that provided simulation or role-play. Thirty percent of students and teachers reported two classes offering EL activities, while 25% stated five or more classes in their program incorporated simulation or role-play.

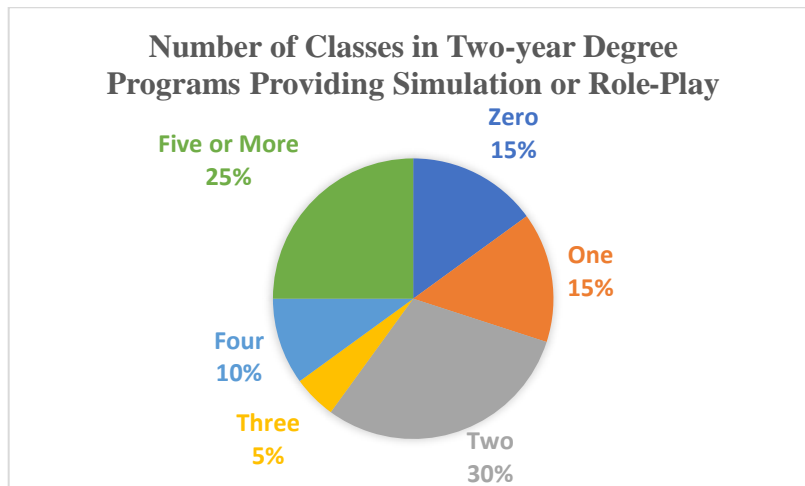


Figure 7. Number of Classes in Two-Year Degree Programs Providing Simulation or Role-Play

Four-year degree programs proved to show a large range of the number of classes with EL activities (see Figure 8). While 6% of respondents did note that their program provided zero classes with simulation or role-play activities, 44% of teachers and students from these programs reported four or more classes that included simulation and role-play. Figure 9 shows a comparison between all program categories and the number of classes that offered EL activities.

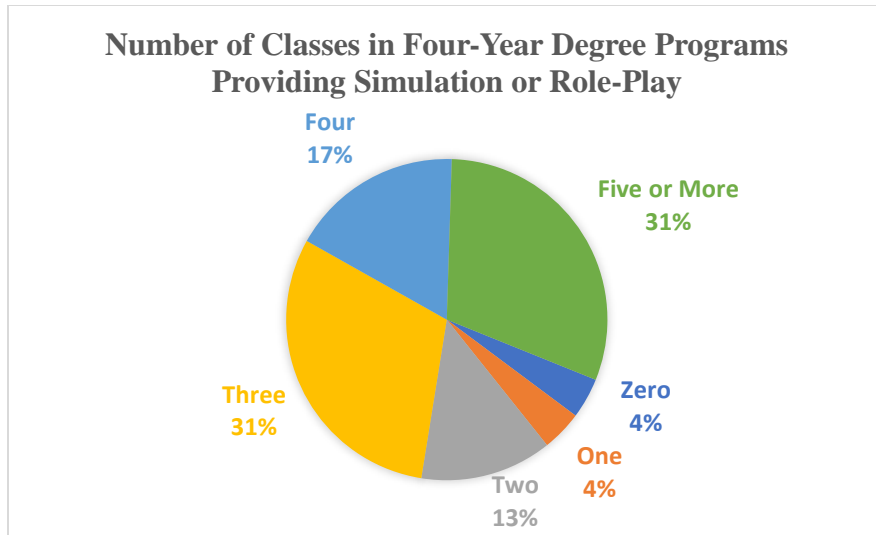


Figure 8. Number of Classes in Four-Year Degree Programs Providing Simulation or Role-Play

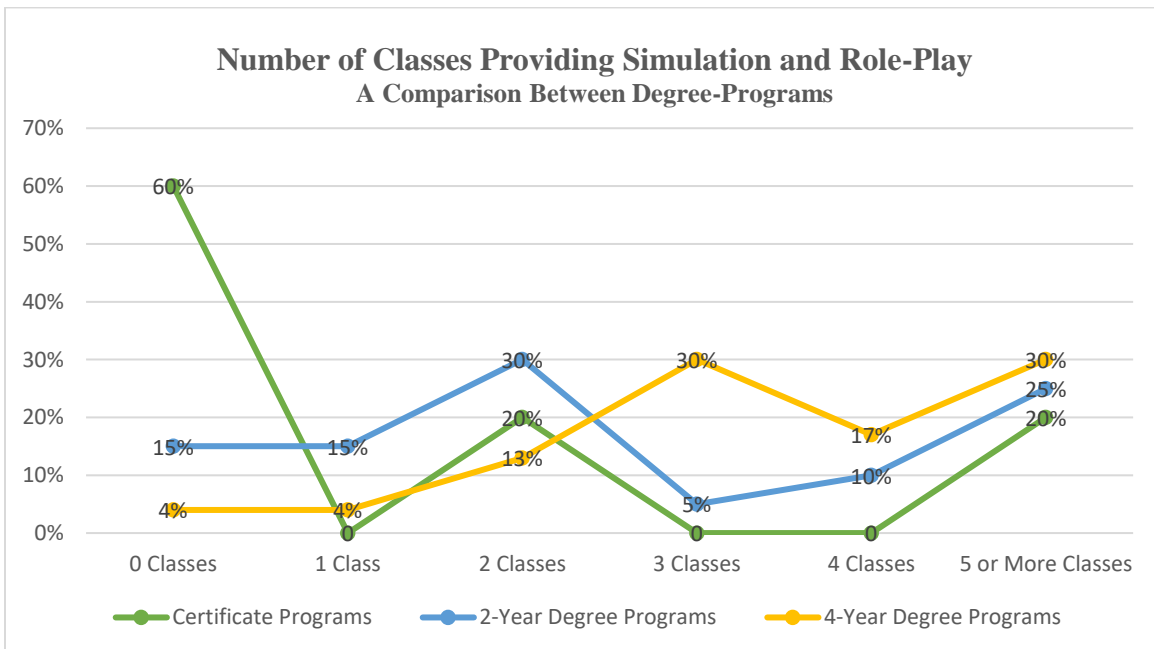


Figure 9. Number of Classes Providing Simulation and Role-Play: A Comparison Between Degree Programs



It is worth mentioning that several participants listed more than one program affiliation with varying degree-levels. Three respondents stated that they were affiliated with both bachelor's-level and master's-level programs, while two more respondents listed affiliations with certificate programs, two-year programs, four-year programs, and post-graduate programs. Because of these ambiguous designations, the researcher was not able to include the data from these participants in the previous figures. However, each of these participants reported high frequency of classes with EL. Four of these contributors reported five or more classes in their IEP experience, with the last contributor noting four classes with simulation and role-play activities.

### **Types of EL Activities**

Contributors were also asked to comment on the types of simulation and role-play that were used in their IEP experience. Participants were given two pre-scripted options—"mock interpreting/role-play activities in the classroom" and "staged simulations outside of the classroom"—and then given an opportunity to write in any other EL activities that were part of their program. The intent of these fixed options was to clarify the types of activities that are the focus of this research. The option for the free-form answer was included so as to not limit or exclude other approaches to EL that were unfamiliar to the author of the survey.

The most common IEP activity reported was "mock interpreting/role-play activities in the classroom." Eighty-six percent of participants experienced this type of activity within their IEP, either as a student or instructor. Fifty-one percent of respondents also reported "staged simulations outside of the classroom." Other activities included ethical role-play and interpreting in a simulation lab with robots. The remaining free-form answers included volunteer

interpreting and interpreting at public events without Deaf consumers present, which did not fit the parameters of the provided definition of EL.

Contributors were also given the opportunity to expound upon these activities with a more detailed account of their experience. Many respondents mentioned that the simulations and role-plays in their IEPs were settings-based, providing students the opportunity to practice interpreting in various settings where professional interpreters commonly provide services (see Figure 10). The settings mentioned with the highest frequency were Social Security meetings, medical interpreting, interpreting job interviews, and meetings regarding real estate or apartment hunting.

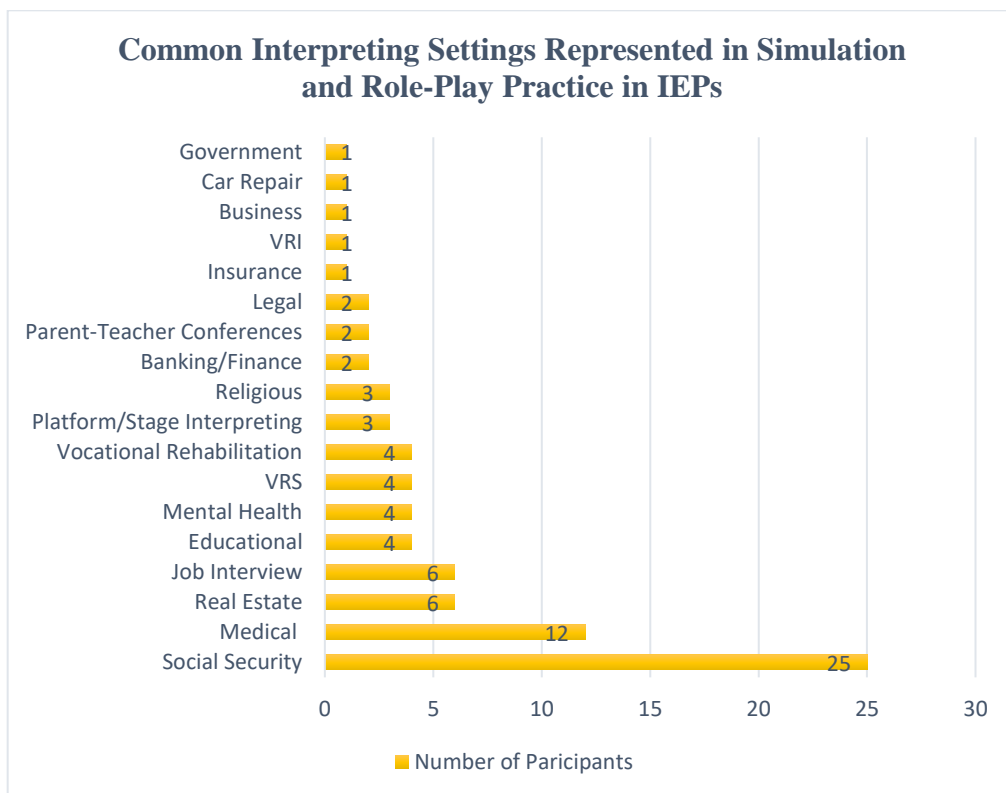


Figure 10. Common Interpreting Settings Represented in Simulation and Role-Play Practice in IEPs.

Twenty-four participants (42%) described their EL experiences as being primarily in the classroom. Based on descriptions, this included activities such as interpreting for guest speakers,

practicing everyday conversations, or working through ethical scenarios with other students. Participants' comments show that these types of activities not only encourage linguistic skill development. They also provide opportunities to develop conversation management, analyze peers' work, provide professional feedback, explore extra-linguistic knowledge and current events, gain exposure to multicultural issues, work as interpreting teams, utilize various linguistic registers, practice effective preparation strategies, and apply professional decision-making skills.

Eight participants offered descriptions of out-of-class EL activities. One contributor described practicing interpreting skills at various on-campus events, such as poetry night and African American cultural events. Another contributor mentioned taking students on "field trips," such as visits to doctors' offices, local museums, or the bank. Yet another respondent mentioned coordinating an activity in a theater to provide students the chance to experience platform interpreting with a microphone.

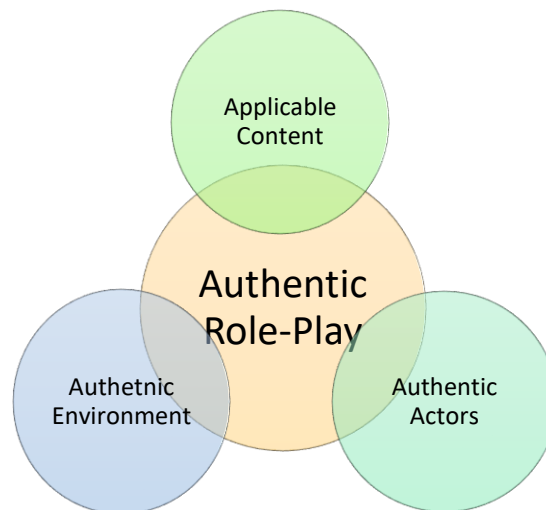
Still others reported experiences with unique consumer groups. For example, five participants commented that Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDI) visited their class to offer an introduction on working as a Deaf/hearing interpreter team. An educator also mentioned inviting Deaf consumers with unique language needs, such as Deaf individuals who have additional disabilities (Deaf-plus and Deaf-Blind) and Deaf community members with atypical language use.

Interestingly, six contributors described interdisciplinary collaborations developed between their affiliated IEP and other community partners or departments on campus. On-campus partnerships included nursing, theater, dental, physical therapy, and physician assistant

programs. Other IEPs report collaborations with attorneys, social service agencies, local and state governments, video relay service providers, religious organizations, and local hospitals.

### **Authenticity**

There are several parameters involved when describing the authenticity of an interpreting activity (see Figure 11). The first concern is whether the activity is indicative of the kind of work interpreters do in the field. The second point to consider is whether the “actors” involved provide the interpreting student with authentic interaction. Thirdly, the setting of the activity should adequately replicate the demands experienced by professionals in the field.



*Figure 11. Authenticity Framework for Simulation and Role-Play Activities*

Authenticity of participants in an interpreting simulation or role-play is of vital importance (Metzger, 2000). Pacheco Aguilar (2015) stated an understanding of authenticity, not as a matter of judgement, but as an ontological quality, can be explored by considering that the object of authenticity is not the learning process itself and the learning situation in which that process is embedded, but the individuals who are involved in this process. (p. 19)

For signed language interpreted interactions, there are two considerations: whether the actors have the appropriate hearing status and language fluency to replicate real-world interpreting scenarios and whether the actors have personal experience or pre-existing knowledge about the activity in question.

To gauge the authenticity of EL activities, participants were asked a series of questions about the actors used during these activities and the setting in which the activity took place. For each question, participants had the choice of answering “yes,” “no,” “sometimes,” or “I don’t know.” In the following analysis of questions pertaining to authenticity, “I don’t know” responses were omitted, as that option was simply provided to participants in the event they did not have the necessary information to make one of the other three choices. Therefore, the following results include only those who answered “yes,” “no,” or “sometimes.”

Survey participants were asked if Deaf individuals were used as actors in role-play and simulation activities (see Figure 12). For the purpose of evaluation, “yes” responses were interpreted to mean Deaf individuals were always used in EL activities, “no” was interpreted to mean Deaf individuals were never used in EL activities, and “sometimes” means that Deaf individuals were occasionally used in these activities. Fifty-six percent of respondents reported that Deaf individuals were always involved in EL activities in their IEP. Eleven percent of participants reported that Deaf individuals were never used in any simulation or role-play activities. Thirty-three percent said that Deaf individuals were sometimes used.

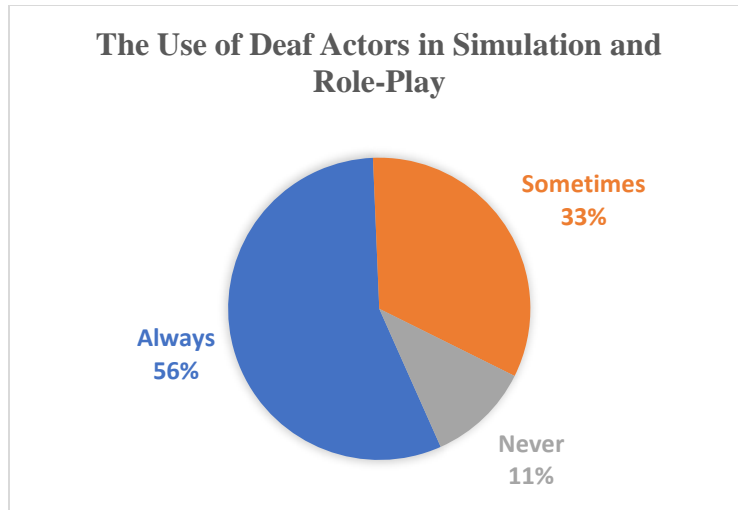


Figure 12. The Use of Deaf Actors in Simulation and Role-Play

To measure authenticity of language content, participants were then asked whether the Deaf actors were personally familiar with the setting or type of interaction that was addressed in the activity (see Figure 13). The example provided was “a Deaf community member playing a role in the field where they work in real life.” Thirty-seven percent of respondents said the Deaf actor in the EL activities did have first-hand knowledge of the interaction in question. Twenty-six percent of participants said the Deaf actors did not have prior knowledge or experience in the setting of the EL activity. Thirty-seven percent said the Deaf actor sometimes had first-hand knowledge.

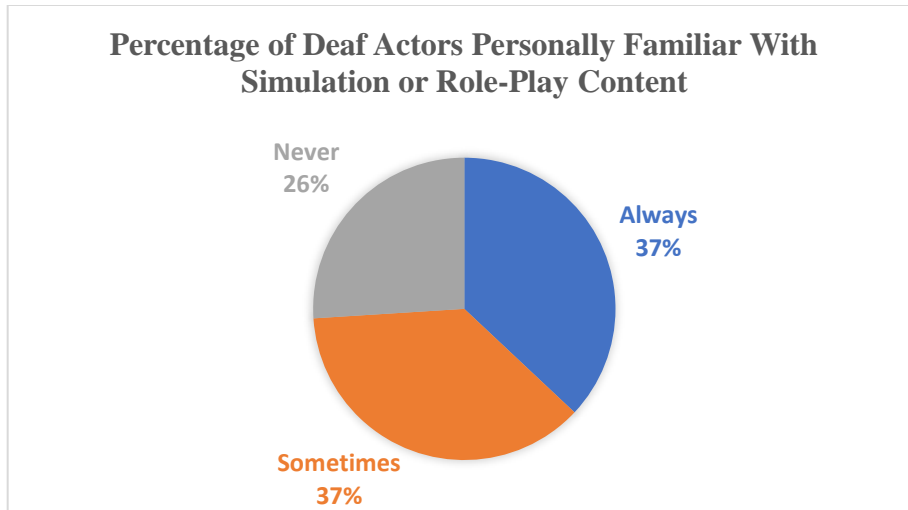


Figure 13. Percentage of Deaf Actors Personally Familiar with Simulation or Role-Play Content

The same questions were asked about the hearing individuals used as actors in these activities (see Figure 14). Participants were first asked if hearing community members (other than the class instructor) were used as actors in role-plays or simulations. Thirty-four percent of respondents stated that hearing community members were always used. Twenty-four percent of respondents said that hearing people were not involved in role-plays or simulations. Forty-two percent reported that hearing actors were sometimes involved in EL activities.

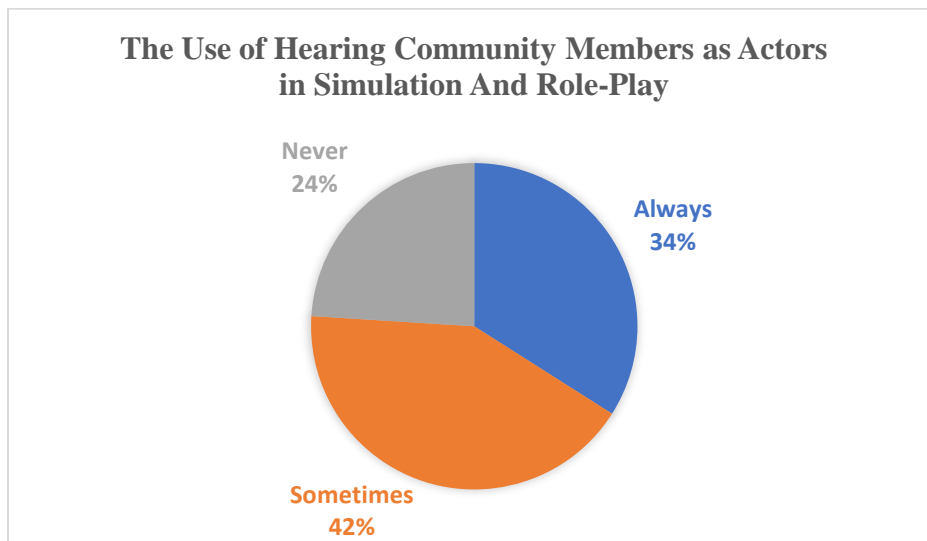


Figure 14. The Use of Hearing Community Members as Actors in Simulation and Role-Play

Respondents were also asked about the previous experience these hearing actors had with the content being discussed in the role-play or simulation (see Figure 15). The example provided in the survey question was “a hearing person playing the role of a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, a job they have/had in real life.” Thirty percent of the participants stated that the hearing actors did have first-hand experience with the content of the activity, while 38% stated that the hearing person had no previous experience or knowledge of the setting or content being discussed. Thirty-two percent claimed the hearing actors sometimes had personal knowledge of the content.

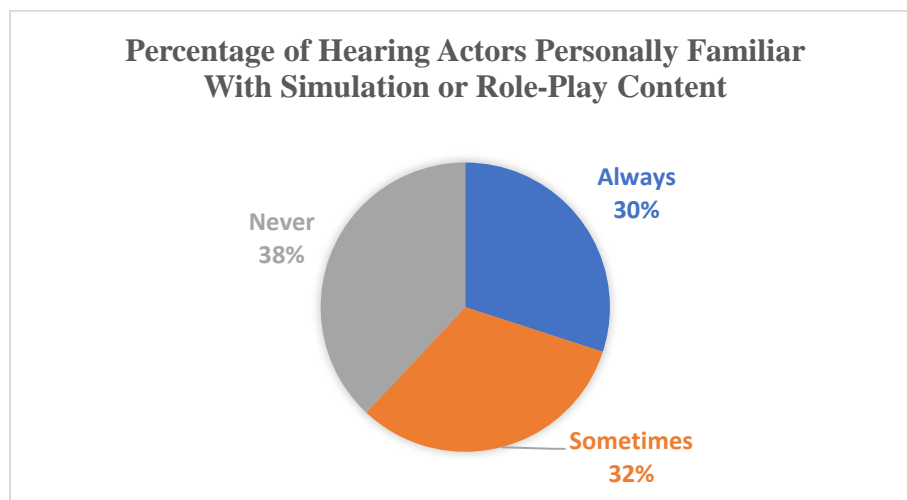


Figure 15. Percentage of Hearing Actors Personally Familiar with Simulation or Role-Play Content.

Lastly, contributors were asked if these role-play and simulation events were held in authentic environments, for example, a medical interpreting role-play that took place in a doctor’s office or hospital (see Figure 16). Only 5% of participants reported that their activities did take place in an authentic environment. Sixty-one percent said they were never held in an authentic setting, and 34% of participants said EL activities were sometimes held in authentic spaces. These results parallel the anecdotal evidence about in-class EL activities provided by



participants. Figure 17 provides an overview of the authenticity of setting, actors, and actors' prior knowledge as reported by participants.

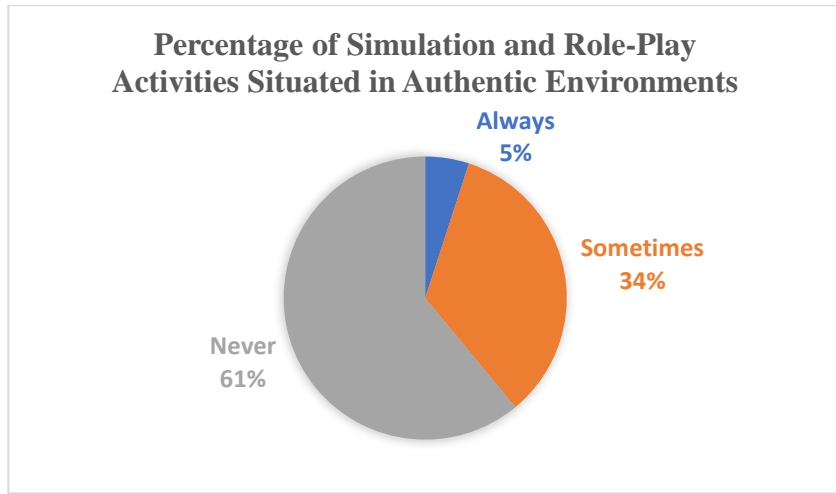


Figure 16. Percentage of Simulation and Role-Play Activities Situated in Authentic Environments

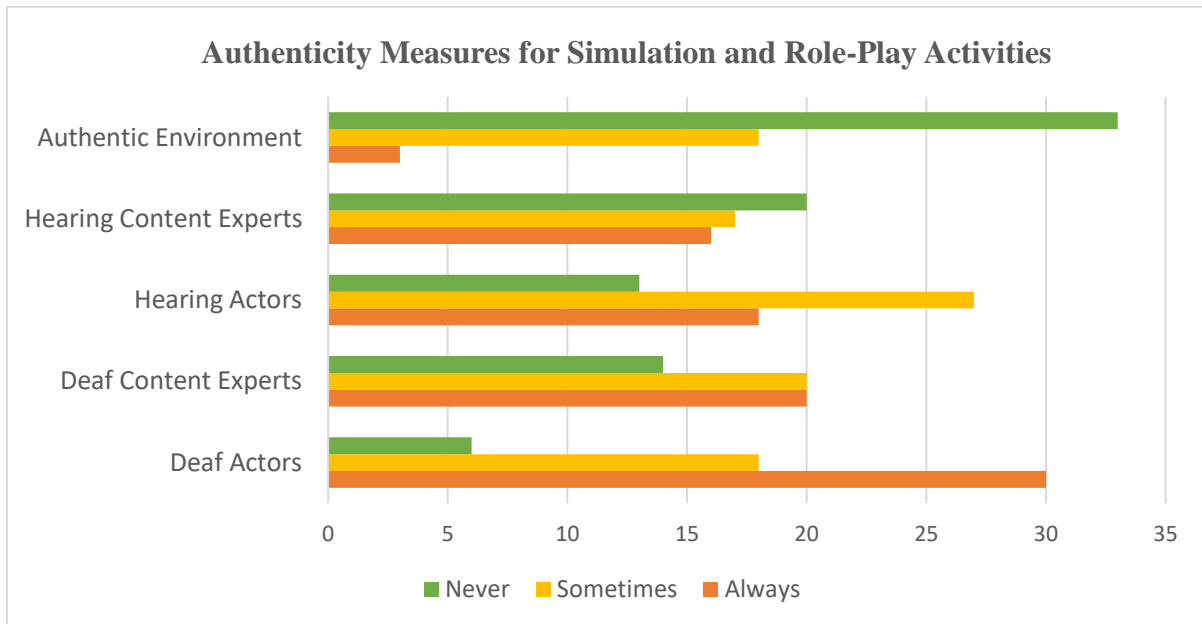


Figure 17. Authenticity Measures for Simulation and Role-Play Activities.

It should be noted that the answer of “sometimes” provides some ambiguity to these results. The prevalence of “sometimes” responses in this study hints at a deeper story and more detailed information waiting to be uncovered. For those that answered “sometimes,” there were

no follow-up questions provided to get a clearer understanding of their experience. Additionally, the reasons behind why a respondent would choose “sometimes” is unclear. A thorough investigation into the story behind this data is needed to ascertain a more accurate picture of EL authenticity.

### **Opportunities and Barriers**

Throughout the survey, participants commented about the efficacy of simulations and role-play in preparing them for work in the field. They were also able to report the experiences they wish they had more of prior to completing their studies. A common theme between many responses was the current lack of authenticity in IEP activities and the relationship between robust, authentic practice and preparedness for the workforce.

Several participants claimed that the EL activities in their IEP were beneficial, but only to a point. Getting the opportunity to practice language (what interpreters often call “hands-up time”) is always beneficial, however the experiences were lacking because they were “far from real with real demands.” Another participant mentioned that their IEP provided many role-play opportunities, but topics and scenarios were not predetermined. “Sometimes the concepts that were being role-played out (were) awkward or not fully developed. While we did a lot of role-playing, I’m not sure how much it actually reflected anything that really happened in real life.” Another comment emphasized how awkward it was when the actors in the role-play were not familiar with the content, when they had to come up with dialogue on the fly, or when hearing actors pretended to be Deaf.

Others mentioned how more authentic practice could have promoted their professional development. One participant commented how much they wish more practice was done in authentic environments. “It would be nice to know where to stand, what to say, how to interact

in REAL life scenarios in real settings to get the feel/layout/dynamics of real situations.”

Another participant wrote,

It would've helped to have done more of these activities in the actual environment that they would've taken place in. Several of my peers have never been in a church in their entire life, and we attempted to do church interpreting role-play set up in the classroom. If you've never been in that environment, it's hard to fully get the concept across of how to set up and be prepared.

IEP graduates who took part in this survey were asked open-ended questions about what kinds of activities they wish they had more exposure to during their programs. Many participants mentioned how much they value the safe, low-risk environment of interpreting simulations and what a benefit it would be to revisit the same activity more than once. Several graduates also commented that more EL activities would have provided them with more confidence to interpret in a variety of settings. One person wrote, “I feel that if I had more experience in an environment where I could make mistakes, I would be less timid in trying those jobs now.” Another graduate said, “[More EL activities] would have taught me to handle pressure much sooner than I actually did. It's better to make mistakes in low-risk, educational environments than in the real world with real consumers depending on you.... I never felt nervous in my IEP because there were no real stakes.... When I left the IEP, I was almost overwhelmed with the pressure.”

Several participants mentioned that they were provided with a taste of simulations but would have benefitted from a greater variety of settings and consumers. The need for more EL activities, specifically in educational and medical settings, was mentioned by several participants. “I BEGGED for more experiential learning in my program,” one person wrote,

“The benefits of live interpreting even in a controlled environment were paramount to my success in the real world. Additionally, watching my classmates in these roles was great. I learned so many soft skills, both from analyzing my work and my classmates.” Another participant wished her program had “an entire class that was designated to just real-time mock interpreting/role-play/simulation activities.”

The educators in this study were also asked about what kinds of simulation and role-play activities they would like to see in IEPs. Many instructors expressed that they are either happy with the amount of role-play activities offered, or they would like to see more. One educator wrote, “Overall, [I want to see] more Deaf people involved in ALL interpreting coursework. I would like to see at least two full classes within the semester in each course in the entire program dedicated to Deaf visitors in the classroom.” Another mentioned that they would like to employ EL activities on a weekly basis.

Instructors also mentioned a few setting-specific activities they believe will benefit students. Echoing the comments of recent graduates, educators also want to see more simulation and role-play for education and medical settings. Mental health role-plays were also mentioned, as well as low-risk public events.

Another common thread among many participants was the interest in developing interdisciplinary collaborations. Those who had yet to develop partnerships with other departments expressed interest in starting the process, while those who already have successful programs look forward to expanding opportunities to even more settings. One participant specifically mentioned their current goal of partnering with their local hospital for a large-scale emergency simulation.

The responses from educators were remarkably consistent. Among participants in this study, EL is widely accepted as one of, if not the, most effective tools for training interpreters. Teachers want to include more activities with more Deaf community members with the goal of authenticity. One respondent said, “Having Deaf people in the classroom interacting with interpreting students offers the purest ‘real-life’ scenarios I can offer my students outside of practicum experiences.” If it is the educators’ belief that simulation and role-play are vital to interpreter education and, yet, so few students are receiving these educational opportunities, there must be barriers causing these conflicting data points (see Figure 18).

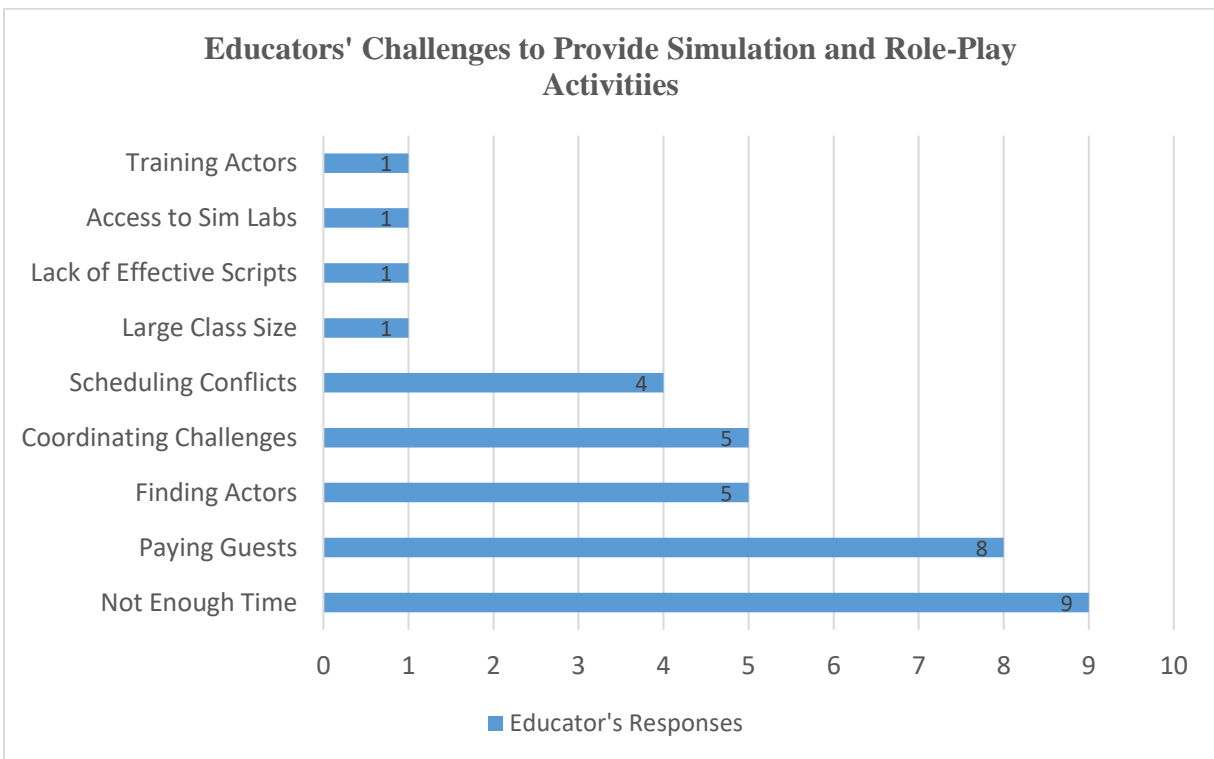


Figure 18. Educators’ Challenges to Provide Simulation and Role-Play Activities

According to the respondents for this survey, the most commonly mentioned barrier is not having enough time in the program to design and implement simulations or role-play activities. Of the 19 educators who chose to answer this question, 10 mentioned time as a barrier. One instructor wrote, “The curriculum is so dense that it’s hard to sacrifice things in

favor of mock interpreting time ... it's very challenging to go beyond the lowest common denominator of the group in role play.”

Another common challenge faced by many participants is arranging for actors to be paid for their time. Several participants mentioned that their institution does not earmark any money to pay guests, so actors either have to volunteer or instructors pay them out of their own pockets. Others said that the bureaucratic payment procedures at their college are so complex, it is too much of a challenge to navigate.

Several respondents noted that their IEP is located in an area with a small Deaf community, resulting in challenging recruitment efforts for appropriate actors. Additionally, many instructors noted that the coordination of a role-play or simulation can prove to be a scheduling challenge. For example, Deaf actors may not be available during IEP class times, and students often have scheduling conflicts or transportation challenges with out-of-class activities.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This qualitative study was intended to explore the way role-play and simulation are used in IEPs. Although some research has been done on EL, simulation, and role-play within IEPs (Bentley-Sassaman, 2009; Herring & Swabey, 2017; Metzger, 2000), there have been no studies, as of yet, that catalogue the frequency of use in IEPs or the types of EL activities utilized in IEPs. The goal of this study was to remedy these gaps in the research by compiling a list of the types of EL activities utilized in interpreter education, the frequency of role-play and simulation activities in curricula, the authenticity of those activities, and the barriers instructors face when planning these activities. The theoretical basis of this study is EL, an educational approach that focuses on direct, authentic experience in safe, low-risk environments to develop skills needed for the workforce.

A survey was created in Google Forms and distributed via email and social media. A total of 62 participants responded to the survey. Four participants were deemed ineligible for not meeting basic eligibility requirements for the study. The responses were reviewed, coded, and analyzed using Grounded Theory. The demographic data relevant to this paper focused on the degree granted by participants' affiliated IEP, the state where their affiliated IEP is located, and—if the participant was a former IEP student—what year they graduated from the IEP.

Results showed that participants experienced a varying amount of simulation and role-play activities in their IEPs. The majority of participants (61%) reported at least three of their classes in their affiliated IEP included some sort of simulation or role-play activity. While this result may seem satisfactory on the surface, a deeper look into the data finds that students' EL exposure may be limited in some situations.

First, the amount of EL activities varied greatly between programs with limited contact time, like certificate and two-year programs, as opposed to four-year degree programs. Participants who attended certificate-granting IEPs reported the majority (60%) had no classes that offered any type of simulation or role-play activities. Sixty percent of participants from two-year IEPs reported that two or fewer classes in their program included role-play or simulation. While it is possible that only certain classes in IEPs lend themselves to skill development through EL, it is important to understand what implications these results have on interpreting students' education.

Simulation and role-play were defined, in this study, as educational activities with in-person Deaf and hearing consumers. This means that 60% of certificate program graduates never practiced interpreting with an in-person Deaf consumer prior to completing their studies. Sixty percent of two-year programs, then, are providing this kind of experience to students in one or two classes, or not providing this type of education at all. Also, considering the percentage of respondents from certificate and two-year programs is lower than national statistics, it can be assumed that the percentage of these programs with little-to-no simulation or role-play activities is higher than the findings of this study.

Thirty-five percent of participants affiliated with two-year programs did report four or more classes in their IEP provided EL activities. That number is even higher for participants from four-year degree programs. Forty-four percent of respondents from bachelor-level programs reported four or more classes in their IEP included simulation or role-play activities. Although it seems that the additional time available in four-year programs lends itself to the inclusion of beneficial EL activities, these findings also show that a shorter program does not necessarily preclude the possibility of including simulation and role-play into the curricula.



When participants were asked about the type of EL activities they have experienced, an overwhelming number (86%) cited mock interpreting/role-play activities in the classroom. A common activity described by participants was students interpreting for a guest speaker (either Deaf or hearing) in front of their peers. While classroom role-plays are certainly more convenient to coordinate and have the potential to provide students with a robust experience, the high percentage of in-class role-plays presents the possibility of EL activities in inauthentic environments. Thirty percent of participants did report experiencing activities in more authentic environments during staged simulations outside of the classroom. Eight participants reported that their EL activities happened on field trips, in the community, or in simulation labs in collaboration with other disciplines.

An overwhelming number of participants described EL activities in their IEPs that are designed around specific settings where professional interpreters often provide services. Twenty-five respondents mentioned role-play activities about Social Security appointments. Twelve respondents participated in medical simulations. Several other individuals mentioned activities regarding interpreting job interviews and real estate meetings. While these are examples of settings where interpretation can take place, a startlingly low number mentioned role-play or simulation in educational settings, which is commonly the first work experience available to new interpreters entering the field (Cogen & Cokely, 2015). Additionally, there were few mentions of training interpreters to work in technical or corporate settings even though “a growing number of d/Deaf individuals are pursuing advanced study and working in specialized professions such as law, medicine, engineering, and high tech industry” (Cogen & Cokely, 2015, p. 11). The lack of professional interpreters qualified to work with Deaf

individuals in these fields can have a devastating impact on Deaf people's opportunities and the advancements of the Deaf community as a whole.

The Deaf community's involvement in interpreter education is widely accepted to be integral to the development for new interpreters (Boyd, 2014; Cogen & Cokely, 2015; Volk, 2014). Not only does Deaf-involvement help develop interpreters' skills and provide students access to the Deaf experience, it also allows the Deaf community to share in the gatekeeper role for the interpreting field. The researcher posits that Deaf community involvement in simulation and role-play activities provides a level of authenticity that greatly benefits students' preparedness for work in the field. Fifty-six percent of respondents reported that Deaf actors were always involved in simulation and role-play activities in their IEP. Another 33% of participants stated that Deaf actors were sometimes used in EL activities. While this result has the potential of increasing the percentage of Deaf involvement in IEPs, the ambiguity of the answer does not clarify how often Deaf individuals were involved as compared to how often they were not. Only 11% of participants reported that Deaf individuals were never included in simulation and role-play activities during their IEP experience, however, this finding conflicts with other studies that have claimed "62% of interpreter education programs report that they rarely or never have native users of ASL ... entering class" (Cogen & Cokely, 2015, p. 23). There was a general consensus among the educators who participated in this study that more Deaf involvement was needed in all aspects of IEPs, not only for role-plays and simulations.

Another aspect of authenticity is the actor's familiarity with the setting or content. Several participants mentioned leaning on Deaf faculty or staff to step in as actors for these simulation and role-play activities, begging the question of the actors' ability to participate in the activity based on their knowledge or first-hand experience of the role-play setting. Seventy-four

percent of participants said the Deaf actors were always familiar or sometimes familiar with the content of the role-play. However, when asked if hearing actors in simulations or role-plays were familiar with the content, only 62% were personally familiar or sometimes familiar. With such low percentages of authentic actors used in these role plays, the question of authenticity is worth continued investigation.

Participants were also asked about the authenticity of the setting where the simulation took place. Only 5% of participants said that the simulation activities from their IEP were consistently held in authentic environments. Thirty-four percent reported EL activities were sometimes in authentic environments, leaving 61% or more of students never having a simulation experience in the environment where that event typically takes place. The comments from participants mirror these findings, referencing the benefit of being in an authentic environment and their lack of opportunities for these types of learning activities. Many respondents drew a connection between activity authenticity and preparedness, citing that more authentic practice in real environments would have better prepared them for professional work. Respondents recognized that real-life demands such as interpreter placement, the use of visual aids, and conversation management tactics were often not possible to replicate during in-class role-plays. The lack of experience with these skills caused many participants to lose confidence in their professional abilities and feel unprepared for work within the field after graduation. This corroborates the findings of Wilbeck's (2017) survey "An Investigation of Student Perception: How to Better Prepare Signed Language/English Interpreters for the Real World." Exposure to authentic settings, either through community partnerships or interdisciplinary collaborations with other college programs, could be an avenue to provide more authentic practice for interpreting students.

When asked what kinds of EL activities students would have liked to see during their training, the overwhelming response was the need for more opportunities in diverse settings. Several participants mentioned how valuable it was to practice in safe, low-risk settings prior to entering internships or the workforce where novice mistakes could have disastrous consequences. Many respondents also noted how much more confidence they could have had with more of these simulation and role-play opportunities. Among participants, there was a recurring request for more simulation exposure to education, medical, and mental health settings, as well as low-risk public events.

Instructors were also asked what barriers kept them from integrating more EL activities into their curriculum. The overwhelming response was that time is their biggest barrier. Another common challenge faced by educators is the issue of paying the actors involved in the role-play or simulation. The general consensus was that these community members should be paid for their time; however, several schools either did not have funds earmarked for such activities or the bureaucratic process for them to receive payment was overly complex and inaccessible. Several of the educators noted that they or their colleagues pay actors out of their own pockets with gift cards or other tokens of appreciation. Lastly, some instructors lamented about the small Deaf community in their area, limiting their resource for actors to take part in such activities.

## **Recommendations**

As this is the first study of its kind, there is ample opportunity for further research into IEPs' use of simulation, role-play, and EL activities in general. A more in-depth analysis into educators' approaches to simulation and role-play is needed, making specific distinctions between the frequency of activities at all levels of education. Due to some participants' multiple

responses when asked about the degree program of their affiliated IEP in this survey, it was not always clear which degree program offered the EL activities reported by the participants.

Ideally, researchers would observe activities on-site at a variety of IEPs nationwide. This could contribute to the validity of unreliable self-reporting and reduce the misunderstanding of terms. They would be able to investigate instructors' processes and activity designs, while also having access to learners' perceptions of the activity.

Comparative analyses between students exposed to EL and those not provided with EL learning opportunities are needed to ascertain the role of EL in interpreter workforce readiness. More research is also needed in determining the effect EL has on students' certification rates and time between graduation and certification. Considering many educators emphasized the challenge of finding time in their programs for EL, future research could examine the difference in EL application between two-year and four-year programs. Further research could be done on best practices for utilizing EL in programs with identified time constraints by examining the most effective strategies for EL application in IEPs.

An investigation could also be done on the evolution of EL over time. When these survey questions were developed, an intent of this research was to compare the historical use of EL in IEPs with reports from more recent graduates. Unfortunately, only two participants reported graduating from an IEP prior to 2000, which did not provide a sample size large enough to draw comparisons. Because the researcher chose to let the data drive the goals of this research, it was decided that investigation into the evolution of EL in interpreter education would be better served by a separate study. In future research, IEP curricula from the past 60 years could be analyzed and compared with EL uses today. These results could also be cross-referenced with certification rates or student satisfaction surveys.

Authenticity in EL activities is an area with significant research potential. Although this survey did ask if Deaf individuals were involved in EL activities, the survey did not clarify if the EL activity in question warranted a Deaf person's participation. The possibility of these types of activities may have skewed the results of this study. More research is needed to compare the efficacy of activities that utilize Deaf actors, as opposed to hearing actors pretending to be Deaf.

Research is also needed regarding the impact of actors who are personally familiar with content and setting within the simulation or role-play. While participants of this survey were asked if hearing actors other than their instructor were used for role-plays, the research neglected to consider the possibility of Deaf IEP instructors stepping in as role-play actors. This oversight presents an interesting phenomenon considering how many participants mentioned Deaf staff or Deaf lab assistants were used as actors for in-class role-plays and simulations. Although it is entirely possible for these Deaf staff to be familiar with a myriad of interpreting settings, this does beg the question whether these actors are involved because of authenticity or because of easy access, and whether that affects the outcomes of the learning activity. Similarly, an analysis between role-plays in inauthentic settings as opposed to authentic settings can inform the design of future EL activities.

The interpreter educators who participated in this study believe simulation and role-play may prove to be vital to the education of future interpreters. It is the recommendation of this researcher that EL, specifically authentic simulation and role-play activities, should be incorporated into IEPs as much as possible as they are of vital importance to the education of future interpreters. Not only does EL allow students to apply theory in authentic, low-risk environments, these activities also invite the Deaf community into the classroom to increase their participation in interpreting students' education. EL has the potential of finding a balance

between theory and practice, a possibility that could impact Deaf and interpreting communities far into the future.

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## APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL FORM



Institutional Review Board

Todd Hall 345 | 503-838-9200 | irb@wou.edu | wou.edu/irb

DATE: 12.03.2019

TO: Cameo Hunsaker

RE: Certification of Exemption

Project Title: Experiential Learning: A Snapshot of Applicability in Interpreter Education Programs

IRB #: 1100

Date of Certification: 12.03.2019

Dear Cameo,

On 12.03.2019, the WOU Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the above project protocol. It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for exemption based on the federal requirements for an exempt status based on exempt category #2. This category is restricted to research that includes only interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording), provided that these interactions are conducted in a manner consistent with those outlined in exempt category #2.

Please note that although your project is exempt from IRB oversight, it is your responsibility to report promptly to the WOU IRB any adverse events or unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others as a result of your engagement in this project. Additionally, you must contact the WOU IRB prior to implementing any changes in your study which may have bearing on the rights and welfare of the participants, including change in design, population targeted, and/or consent process. Protocol modifications must be reviewed and approved by the WOU IRB prior to implementation. Any proposed modifications may disqualify the project from exempt status, and in these cases, an expedited or full board review may be initiated. Please contact the IRB chair to facilitate this process.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at Western Oregon University and your continued commitment to human subject research protections. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself or any other member of the WOU IRB.

Good luck in your research activities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ethan McMahan".

Ethan McMahan, Ph.D.

Chair, WOU Institutional Review Board

## **APPENDIX B: SURVEY AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

### Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Hello interpreters and interpreter educators!

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this survey. My name is Cameo Hunsaker and I am a student in the Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies at Western Oregon University. I am conducting research on how Experiential Learning - specifically, simulation/role-play activities with live Deaf guests - is currently used in Interpreter Education Programs.

This survey will ask questions about your personal experience with Experiential Learning (simulations and role-play activities) in the Interpreter Education Program with which you are affiliated. It will include questions about the type and duration of the Experiential Learning activities, as well as your personal feelings about the efficacy of these activities.

Below is some additional important information about the study and your role in this research should you choose to participate. Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can always change your mind and withdraw at any time.

Study title: Experiential Learning: A Snapshot of Applicability in Interpreter Education Programs

#### Risks:

We do not anticipate any risks for participants taking this survey. You can skip any questions you do not want to answer or stop the survey entirely. All data will be kept anonymous and confidential.

There is, however, a risk of online data being hacked or intercepted. This is a risk you experience any time you provide information online. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

#### Possible benefits:

Responding to this study will assist in the ever-growing literature about signed language education. Your answers will help determine the extent to which interpreter education programs are utilizing Experiential Learning activities and examine what approaches have been deemed successful.

#### Expected Duration:

This survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

#### Where will data be stored?

I, the researcher, will be the only one with access to data being gathered. Data will be maintained by using password-protected desktop and laptop computers for administering the

survey, gathering data, and any note-taking. Both computers have enabled disk-level encryption and passwords are unique for each machine.

Contact information:

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Cameo Hunsaker via email at [chunsaker18@mail.wou.edu](mailto:chunsaker18@mail.wou.edu) or my graduate advisor Amanda Smith at [smithar@mail.wou.edu](mailto:smithar@mail.wou.edu) or 503-838-8650.

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board at (503) 838-9200 or [irb@wou.edu](mailto:irb@wou.edu).

Please print or save this screen if you want to be able to access the information later.

IRB #: 1100

IRB Approval Date: 12/3/2019

Agreement to Participate

If you meet the eligibility criteria below and would like to participate in this study, click the button below to begin the survey. Remember, your participation is completely voluntary, and you're free to withdraw at any time.

- I am at least 18 years old
- I am affiliated with an interpreter education program, either as a current student, a former student, or an educator.
- I have experience as a professional, working signed language interpreter

## APPENDIX C: SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. By clicking “continue,” you are agreeing to participate in this study.

Continue

Skip to question 3

No, thank you.

Skip to section 10 (Thank you for your interest!)

2. What is your most recent involvement with interpreter education? Mark only one oval.

I am a former student in an Interpreter Education Program

Skip to question 4

I am a former educator in an Interpreter Education Program

Skip to question 14

I am a current educator in an Interpreter Education Program

Skip to question 14

I am a current student in an Interpreter Education Program

Skip to section 10

I have no affiliation (as a student or educator) with an Interpreter Education Program

Skip to section 10

### Use of Simulation and Role Play in Interpreter Education Programs (student)

The following questions will ask about the various types of "experiential learning" used in your Interpreter Education Program. For the purposes of this study “experiential learning” is defined as activities in the classroom with in-person consumers. This could take the form of mock interpreting, educational role-play activities, or staged simulations with Deaf and/or hearing community members. This does NOT include activities such as recorded practice videos or practicum/internship hours at actual jobs in the community.

3. How many classes in the Interpreter Education Program included mock interpreting, role-play, or simulations with Deaf and hearing consumers? (This does NOT include practicum, internship, or practicing with video sources.) Mark only one oval.

0    1    2    3    4    5 or more

4. Please list the names of the classes that included mock interpreting, role-play, or simulations with Deaf and hearing consumers. (optional)

5. What types of Experiential Learning activities were used in the Interpreter Education Program you attended? Please check all that apply....

Mock interpreting/role-play activities in the classroom

Staged simulations outside of the classroom

Other: <fill in the blank>



6. Describe the kinds of mock interpreting, role play, or simulation activities that were included in the Interpreter Education Program you attended? (optional)

7. Were Deaf community members used as actors in these role-play and simulation activities? Mark only one oval.

Yes                  No                  Sometimes

8. Were the Deaf actors personally familiar with the setting/content that was addressed in the activity (ex: a Deaf community member playing a role in the field where they work in real life)? Mark only one oval.

Yes                  No                  Sometimes                  I Don't Know

9. Were hearing community members (other than your teacher) used as actors in these role-play or simulation activities? Mark only one oval.

Yes                  No                  Sometimes

10. Were the hearing actors personally familiar with the setting/content that was addressed in the activity (ex: a hearing person played the role of a VR counselor, a job they had in real life)? Mark only one oval.

Yes                  No                  Sometimes                  I Don't Know

11. Were these role-play and simulation activities held in authentic environments (ex: medical interpreting practice that was held in an actual doctor's office or simulation hospital)? Mark only one oval.

Yes                  No                  Sometimes

12. What other information would you like the researcher to know about simulation and role-play activities in your Interpreter Education Program? (optional)

**Use of Simulation and Role-Play in Interpreter Education Programs (educator's personal experience)**

The following questions will ask about the various types of "experiential learning" used in your Interpreter Education Program. For the purposes of this study "experiential learning" is defined as activities in the classroom with in-person consumers. This could take the form of mock interpreting, educational role-play activities, or staged simulations with Deaf and/or hearing community members. This does NOT include activities such as recorded practice videos or practicum/internship hours at actual jobs in the community.

13. What degree is offered from the Interpreter Education Program (IEP) where you provided instruction? Mark only one oval.

Certificate      AA/AAS      BA/BS MA      PhD      Other: <fill in the blank>

14. How many classes that you taught included role-play, simulation, or mock interpreting in the classroom? (This does NOT include practicum, internship, or practicing with video sources.) Mark only one oval.

0      1      2      3      4      5 or more

15. Please list the names of the classes that included mock interpreting, role-play, or simulations with Deaf and hearing consumers. (optional)

16. What types of Experiential Learning activities are featured in the classes you taught? Please check all that apply....

Mock interpreting/role-play activities in the classroom

Staged simulations outside of the classroom

Other: <fill in the blank>

17. Describe the kinds of mock interpreting, role play, or simulation activities that were included in the Interpreter Education Program with which you are affiliated. (optional)

18. Were Deaf community members used as actors in these role-play and simulation activities? Mark only one oval.

Yes                  No                  Sometimes

19. Were the Deaf actors personally familiar with the setting/content that was addressed in the activity (ex: a Deaf community member playing a role in the field where they work)? Mark only one oval.

Yes                  No                  Sometimes                  I Don't Know

20. Were hearing community members used as actors in these role-play or simulation activities? Mark only one oval.

Yes                  No                  Sometimes

21. Were the hearing actors personally familiar with the setting/content that was addressed in the activity (ex: a hearing person played the role of a VR counselor, a job they either had or have)? Mark only one oval.

Yes                  No                  Sometimes                  I Don't Know

22. Were these role-play and simulation activities held in authentic environments (ex: medical interpreting practice that was held in an actual doctor's office or simulation hospital)? Mark only one oval.

Yes                  No                  Sometimes

**Use of Simulation and Role Play in Interpreter Education Programs (programmatic knowledge)**

23. How many classes in the Interpreter Education Program, other than the classes you taught, included mock interpreting, role-play, or simulations with Deaf and hearing consumers? (This does NOT include practicum, internship, or practicing with video sources.) Mark only one oval.

0      1      2      3      4      5 or more

24. Please list the names of the classes that included mock interpreting, role-play, or simulations with Deaf and hearing consumers. (optional)

25. What types of Experiential Learning activities are featured in other classes? Please check all that apply....

Mock interpreting/role-play activities in the classroom

Staged simulations outside of the classroom

Other: <fill in the blank>

26. If known, describe the kinds of mock interpreting, role play, or simulation activities that were included in the program's classes. (optional)

27. Were Deaf community members used as actors in these role-play and simulation activities? Mark only one oval.

Yes                  No                  Sometimes

28. Were the Deaf actors personally familiar with the setting/content that was addressed in the activity (ex: a Deaf community member playing a role in the field where they work)? Mark only one oval.

Yes                  No                  Sometimes                  I Don't Know

29. Were hearing community members used as actors in these role-play or simulation activities? Mark only one oval.

Yes                  No                  Sometimes

30. Were the hearing actors personally familiar with the setting/content that was addressed in the activity (ex: a hearing person played the role of a VR counselor, a job they either had or have)? Mark only one oval.

Yes                  No                  Sometimes                  I Don't Know

31. Were these role-play and simulation activities held in authentic environments (ex: medical interpreting practice that was held in an actual doctor's office or simulation hospital)? Mark only one oval.

Yes                  No                  Sometimes

32. What other information would you like the researcher to know about simulation and role-play activities in the Interpreter Education Program with which you are affiliated? (optional)

### **Reflection of Experiential Learning Opportunities (students)**

The following section will ask participants to assess the benefit of the experiential learning activities in their Interpreter Education Program.

33. Do you feel the experiential learning activities in your Interpreter Education Program helped prepare you for work as a professional interpreter? Why or why not?
  
34. How do you envision more experiential learning would have impacted your professional and skill development? What kinds of activities would you have liked to see in your Interpreter Education Program? How much time would you have liked to participate in these types of activities?

### **Reflections of Experiential Learning Opportunities (educators)**

35. If you believe your students' education could benefit from more experiential learning, what kinds of activities would you have liked to see included in the curriculum? How much time would you have liked to commit to these types of activities?
  
36. What are the barriers keeping you from including more role-play and simulation activities in your course curriculum?
  
37. Do you believe your Interpreter Education Program would benefit from introducing simulation and role-play activities earlier in the program's curriculum? Why or why not?

### **Demographic Information**

38. What is the highest level of education you completed in the field of interpreting? Mark only one oval.

None

Certificate Program

AA/AS/AAS degree (2-year program)

BA/BS degree (4-year program)

Master's Degree

Doctoral Degree

Other

39. What year did you complete your training in the Interpreter Education Program?

40. In what state is the Interpreter Education Program with which you are affiliated?

41. How long have you worked as a professional interpreter?
42. What certification do/did you hold?
43. If you obtained certification, how many years did it take you after completing an Interpreter Education Program before you became certified?
44. What is the name of the Interpreter Education Program with which you are affiliated?  
(optional)

The information provided in this survey will help fuel future research that will benefit both the fields of signed language interpreting and interpreter education. Thank you for your time and dedication to these fields.

## **APPENDIX D:**

### **QUESTIONS FROM THE SURVEY NOT INCLUDED IN ANALYSIS**

1. What is the highest level of education you completed in the field of interpreting?
2. How long have you worked as a professional interpreter?
3. What certification do you hold?
4. How many years did it take you after completing an Interpreter Education Program before you became certified?
5. What is the name of the Interpreter Education Program with which you are affiliated?