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**Incorporating Physical Exercise and Job Crafting
to Buffer Cardiovascular Disease and Job Boredom in Video Remote Educational
Sign Language Interpreting**

By

Antonia A. Musto

Summer Term, 2020

Setting: Video Remote Educational Interpreter

WOU Faculty: Dr. Elisa Maroney

Abstract

**Incorporating Physical Exercise and Job Crafting to Buffer Cardiovascular Disease
and Job Boredom in Video Remote Educational Sign Language Interpreting**

By

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Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

Western Oregon University

August 2020

Over the past decade, research has demonstrated that sign language interpreters are experiencing stress and burnout at high levels, causing them to prematurely leave the profession (Schwenke, 2012; Dean & Pollard, Jr., 2001; Heller, Stansfield, Stark, & Langholtz, 1986). Interpreters are at risk for developing cardiovascular disease (CVD) (Gerber et al., 2016) due to factors such as emotional exhaustion, dissatisfaction, high demands on the job (Dean & Pollard, Jr., 2001), and job boredom (Harju, Hakanen, & Schaufeli, 2014). Theorists explain how workplace environmental variables predict stress related to job boredom through the demand-control schema (Dean & Pollard, Jr., 2001) and conservation of resources (Harju, Hakanen, & Schaufeli, 2014). Theorists advocate for a

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comprehensive approach to deal with work-related stress by involving both the employer and the individual (Dean & Pollard, Jr., 2001; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). High levels of physical activity protects and buffers stressful events (Gerber et al., 2016). Job crafting can reduce stressful conditions related to job boredom, sustaining the well being of an employee (Harju, Hakanen, & Schaufeli, 2016). New interpreters entering into the video remote educational interpreting profession can benefit from understanding the physiological consequences of stress related to job boredom and specific interventions aimed at building resilience to fighting stress. This action research project evaluates using physical exercise and job crafting as a way for me to combat stress related to job boredom in the video remote educational setting.

Key words: Sign language interpreting, physical exercise, job boredom, job crafting

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

While working as a video remote educational interpreter in the K-12 setting, I was faced with the challenge of understanding and dealing with the intrapersonal demands of my present job. I was experiencing job boredom due to significant amounts of downtime while waiting to interpret for my deaf clients during their classes. I was concerned about the negative impact job boredom would have on my physiological and psychological responses. It was important to me to understand how to deal with job boredom as a stress factor since I wanted to avoid previous stress which I encountered as a former division II swimmer.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) states that the purpose for competitive sports is to provide enjoyable experiences for athletes along with developing a variety of skills and leadership (Gould & Whitley, 2009). Although the NCAA emphasizes the importance of putting academics first, there has been a fundamental shift in collegiate sports. Universities are placing a higher value on winning and pushing their athletes to a higher level of expertise (Gould & Whitley, 2009). Competing in collegiate sports should be an enjoyable experience. However, according to sport psychology researchers, many athletes are suffering from burnout and stress due to an increased focus on winning (Raedeke, 1997). Research has suggested that athletes train approximately 10,000 hours or

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up to 10 years of practice in their particular sport in order to compete at the collegiate level (Raedeke, 1997). This time is spent developing skills which directly impact competitive performance and places highly competitive athletes at risk for burnout (Gould & Whitley, 2009). Sports science defines burnout as the result of chronic stress, which leads to a disconnection and withdrawal from the sport (Gould & Whitley, 2009). Ultimately, many athletes view competitive sports as too demanding which leads to fatigue, anxiety, and decreased athletic performances (Gould & Whitley, 2009).

As a former NCAA Division II collegiate swimmer, I experienced athletic stress and burnout as defined from a sports perspective, which I attributed to the university's emphasis on winning. Failing to reach my personal best swim times often left me feeling disappointed and discouraged. I was expected to swim at multiple practices per day, travel to swim meets for competition, and compete every weekend, leaving me emotionally and physically exhausted. At times, the high level of satisfaction and enjoyment I previously felt about swimming was difficult to maintain.

After graduating from Grand Valley State University with a degree in exercise science, I returned to school to pursue a degree in sign language interpreting. Surprisingly, the challenges and demands placed on me in the sign language interpreting program mirrored many of the challenges I experienced as an NCAA collegiate swimmer. Mirroring my collegiate swimming experience, the sign language interpreting program placed high performance demands in my sign language interpreting classes in order to prepare me for

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state certification tests. Researchers have documented a relationship between stress and burnout in the field of sign language interpreting (Schwenke, 2012). The demand-control schema (DC-S), which was adapted from Karasek's demand control theory, was conceptualized to explain the demands encountered by sign language interpreters (Dean & Pollard Jr., 2013). In one particular study, Schwenke (2012) evaluated occupational variables associated with sign language interpreters and burnout. Schwenke (2012) expected that social support from a co-worker would serve as a buffer for burnout, but surprisingly, her data did not support this hypothesis. With high documented levels of stress in the sign language profession (Schwenke, 2012), it is important for me to understand the factors associated with stress in order to maintain a high level of satisfaction and enjoyment in my career, along with remaining healthy while working in this profession.

Statement of the Problem

The focus of my research was to examine the psychosocial stress related to job boredom as a video remote educational sign language interpreter. In my present job, I noticed a significant amount of downtime spent waiting to interpret for my client. The majority of downtime occurred when students were working independently on class projects or watching videos with closed captioning. During this downtime, I often experienced feelings of job boredom due to sitting and waiting for dialogue to interpret. Since job boredom has been identified as a chronic psychological stressor linked to cardiovascular disease (CVD) (Kanel, 2008), my present investigation examined whether physical activity

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and job crafting could alleviate stress related to job boredom. My action research project posed 2 major questions. During phase one of my study, I investigated whether physical exercise performed prior to work positively affected my blood pressure (BP) readings and self-perceptions of stress related to job boredom. During phase two of my study, my research question asked whether the implementation of job crafting through changing my structural job resources positively impacted my self-perceptions of stress related to job boredom.

Purpose of the Study

Workplace health organizations promote health programs to combat job stress (Noblet & LaMontagne, 2006). Historically, stress management programs exclusively left it up to the employee to implement behavior change strategies for stress management, such as, eating a healthy diet and exercising (Giga, Noblet, Faragher, & Cooper, 2003). This approach made stress management the sole responsibility of employees and was found to have minimal impact on improving employees' health (Noblet & LaMontagne, 2006). Currently, the majority of health programs established for stress prevention favor a comprehensive approach, which combines a settings approach along with an individual's efforts to reduce occupational stress (Noblet & LaMontagne, 2006).

Previous studies found that an individual level approach to reduce stress can only offer short term benefits (Noblet & LaMontagne, 2006). From a health-wellness perspective, the view that an individual approach can only offer short term benefits was

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challenged in my study. An individual's effort in buffering workplace stress must not be minimized since an abundance of research showed that engaging in physical activity had the potential to protect children, adolescents, and adults from the negative consequences of stressful events and conditions throughout life (Gerber et al., 2016; Salmon, 2001; Carretero & Oparil, 2000). The American Heart Association found that psychosocial stress played an integral part in the development of cardiovascular diseases (Gerber et al., 2016). Additional research has linked stress related to job boredom as a psychosocial stress factor (Harju, Hakanen, & Schaufeli, 2014). Although I agreed that an employer has a responsibility to make the workplace less stressful, video remote educational interpreters often hold the sole responsibility of maintaining their health, fitness, and combatting any form of job stress due to working in a home setting.

According to Gerber et al. (2016), the factors associated with cardiovascular risk are established early in life and continue into adult life. In other words, stress from the very beginning of life has a cumulative negative effect on an individual's cardiovascular system. Since advances in technology allow sign language interpreters to work remotely, my research examined ways I can be proactive and aggressive in fighting the psychosocial stress factor of job boredom. Since I experienced a significant amount of stress while engaging in competitive sports, my action research goal was to buffer the stress factor of job boredom while working as a video remote educational interpreter. In contrast to stress experienced by sign language interpreters in highly competitive work environments,

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research has shown that stress can be experienced when individuals are working in boring environments (van Hooff & van Hooff, 2014), which I have identified as my major source of stress. Many individuals react to job boredom with feelings of dissatisfaction, low energy levels, and negative attitudes toward their work, leaving individuals to view their work as insignificant since their skills are being underutilized (van Hooff & van Hooff, 2014). My examination attempted to offer me productive ways of combating job boredom while working as a video remote educational interpreter.

For my study, I constructed a job boredom proneness scale from items listed in the Boredom Proneness Scale which was designed to assess and identify causes of boredom (Farmer & Sundberg, 1986). The Boredom Proneness Scale consisted of 28 items and demonstrated high reliability ($r = 0.83$) (Farmer & Sundberg, 1986). I developed a 3-point Likert Scale (see Appendix C) using six items from Farmer and Sundberg's (1986) Boredom Proneness Scale to measure my stress related to job boredom in both phases of my study.

Theoretical Bases and Organization

The underlying theoretical and conceptual basis of my action research was constructed by the demand control schema (DC-S), the pathophysiological pathway, and the conservation of resources (see Appendix A). For phase one of my study, I utilized the DC-S and the pathophysiological pathway. The DC-S was developed by Dean and Pollard (2013), which provided a framework for categorizing interpreting demands. Dean and

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Pollard (2013) applied Karasek's concepts of demands and controls specifically for the sign language interpreting profession. In my action research project, I concentrated on the intrapersonal demand category, which addressed my thoughts, feelings, and concerns regarding my interpreting performance. According to Dean and Pollard, (2013), it is important to be aware of these internal processes since thoughts, feelings, and concerns can impact the facilitation process between myself and the client. As a pre-assignment control opportunity, I engaged in physical exercise prior to my interpreting assignment as a way to positively impact my personal health and overall self-perceptions of job boredom.

Evaluating my work environment through Karasek's demand and control theory, I determined that my current interpreting job placed me in two of Karasek's imbalanced quadrants: quadrant II (high demand, low control) and quadrant IV (low demand, high control). In quadrant II, I have little control over the pace of my work while having the sole responsibility to meet the demands (Dean & Pollard, 2001). As a video remote educational interpreter, if a teacher decided to change their lesson plan without notifying me, I was left unfamiliar with the content, which could cause an increase in interpreting errors. Within the same quadrant, I had no control over the pace of the teacher's presentation during a lesson, which was at times either too fast or too slow. Interpreting from off-site did not allow me to communicate immediately with the instructor. In reference to quadrant IV, I categorized my current job as stressful since there was a significant amount of downtime spent waiting to interpret subject matter. During downtime, my skills were not being utilized, which

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prevented me from practicing and advancing my skills. I fluctuated between these two quadrants depending on the subject matter and class that I was assigned to interpret in the educational setting (e.g., chemistry versus art class). Due to the significant amount of downtime, a mismatch existed between my skill set and the demands of the job (Dean & Pollard, Jr., 2001).

The pathophysiological pathway, developed by Hammer (2012), examined stress as a psychosocial risk factor associated with cardiovascular disease (CVD) (Hammer, 2012). Hammer's model provided a conceptual framework that showed how stress places an individual at risk for developing CVD (Gerber et al., 2016). Specifically, the pathophysiology pathway links psychosocial stress to negative impacts on biological processes associated with CVD (Gerber et al., 2016). In this pathway, physical fitness acts as a buffer against the negative effects of stress for individuals, which was reflected in biomedical markers such as heart rate and blood pressure readings (Gerber et al., 2016).

In reference to phase two of my study, I incorporated the conservation of resources (COR) theory, which stated that workers strive to protect, maintain, and compile resources to cope with any threats to their well-being at work (Hobfoll, 1989). From this theory emerged the concept of job crafting, which is a way for workers to proactively shape their jobs by increasing resources and seeking challenges (Harju et al., 2016). The DC-S categorized job crafting as an assignment control, since it allowed me to make a decision

during work time to reduce job boredom while simultaneously improving my interpreting skills (Dean & Pollard Jr., 2013).

Limitations of Study:

A limitation in this action research study regarded my sample size. Since I based my results and conclusions on only my personal experiences, it would be difficult to generalize my findings to other video remote educational interpreters.

Definition of Terms:

I incorporated the following definitions in my action research study:

Job boredom: Characterized by having little or no interest and difficulty concentrating during work (Fisher, 1993); negative emotions associated with job boredom include unpleasant and dissatisfied feelings with low arousal (Fisher, 1993), people perceive their jobs as meaningless and feel unchallenged (Van Tilburg & Igou, 2012); often used synonymously with work-related boredom (van Hoof & van Hooft, 2014).

Job crafting: Refers to activities undertaken by employees to shape their job tasks, work environments and their mindsets to make their jobs more meaningful for themselves (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001); employees seek challenges in their jobs and increase resources as a way to motivate themselves (Tims, Bakker & Derks, 2012). In my study, I altered my task boundaries by studying medical, legal and educational ASL videos during downtime.

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Job engagement: Characterized by commitment, enthusiasm, focused energy, and effort; associated with high levels of energy and involvement in work; high levels of concentration and happiness with time passing by quickly (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2014).

Remote setting: located far away (“Remote setting,” n.d.)

Video Remote Interpreting: “Video remote interpreting (VRI) is a form of sign language interpreting that allows people who are deaf or hard of hearing to communicate with a hearing person at the same site via videoconferencing instead of live, on-site interpreting. VRI is especially useful when (1) there is a lack of available qualified interpreters, such as at a rural location; and (2) when an interpreter is needed immediately and there is no available interpreter on-site.” (“Video remote interpreting,” April, 2019).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Recent studies have examined how high levels of physical activity buffer the negative effects of stressful life circumstances (Gerber et al., 2016). In a study consisting of 2,481 myocardial infarction patients, researchers documented a 50% reduction in the risk of death associated with CVD for patients who engaged in physical exercise (Hammer, 2012). The pathophysiological pathway developed by Mark Hammer examined stress as a psychosocial risk factor associated with cardiovascular disease (CVD) (Hammer, 2012). Hammer's model provided evidence that stress placed an individual at risk for developing CVD (Gerber et al., 2016). The pathophysiology pathway linked psychosocial stress, such as job boredom to negative impacts on biological processes associated with CVD (Gerber et al., 2016). In this pathway, physical fitness acted as a buffer against the negative effects of stress for individuals (Gerber et al., 2016). In a meta-analytic review of 34 studies, physical exercise in the form of aerobic fitness was associated with a reduction in blood pressure caused by high stress levels (Hammer, 2012). In contrast to research which relies on social validity type scales to measure an individual's self-perception of stress, the pathophysiological pathway uses objective biomarkers to measure the effects of psychosocial stress related to the development of CVD.

Many negative consequences are related to job boredom, such as stress, depressive complaints, decreased job performance, lowered job satisfaction, alcohol and drug abuse (Harju, et al., 2014); difficulty concentrating (van Hooff & van Hooft, 2014); and a sense

of meaninglessness (Van Tilburg & Igou, 2013). Job boredom was correlated with low job demands when employees viewed their tasks as unchallenging (Harju et al., 2014).

Although boredom is a common feeling to experience (Farmer & Sundberg, 1986), job boredom is related to occupational stress (van Hooff & van Hooft, 2014). In contrast to stress experienced by sign language interpreters in highly competitive work environments, research has shown that stress can be experienced when individuals are working in boring environments (van Hooff & van Hooft, 2014). Many individuals react to job boredom with feelings of dissatisfaction, low energy levels, and negative attitudes toward their work (van Hooff & van Hooft, 2014). In sum, individuals are often left feeling that their work has little meaning and their skills are being underutilized.

Theorists from the fields of occupational health have developed theoretical models to frame issues regarding occupational stressors in the work environment. In 1979, Robert Karasek developed the demand-control (D-C) theory to analyze occupational stress and ways to reduce injury, burnout, and stress-related illness (Dean & Pollard, 2001). Karasek's model conceptualized occupational controls and demands in four quadrants, which employees can experience (Dean & Pollard, 2001). To measure the psychological and social characteristics of jobs, Robert Karasek created the job content questionnaire (JCQ) (Karasek et al., 1998). Components of this scale specifically measure the level of skills required for the job, the flexibility allowed for the workers in making decisions about their work, and whether their skills are being underutilized (Karasek et al., 1998). From this

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analysis, workers can be placed in one of four quadrants, which combine the dimensions of demand and control. The four quadrants included in the D-C model are: Quadrant I (active-high demand/high control); Quadrant II (high-strain-high demand/low control); Quadrant III (passive-limited control/low demands); and Quadrant IV (low-strain-high skills/low demand) (Dean & Pollard Jr., 2001). In the D-C model, an occupational demand refers to any job requirements and factors which impact employees, and controls refer to employees' power to make decisions to change any aspect of their jobs (Dean & Pollard Jr., 2001).

The demand control schema (DC-S) was adapted from Karasek's D-C model, which conceptualizes the demands encountered by sign language interpreters (Dean & Pollard, 2013). The DC-S has identified four types of demands in sign language interpreting assignments: linguistic, environmental, interpersonal, and intrapersonal (Dean & Pollard, 2001). Examples of the types of demand sources in the linguistic demands category are voice volume, signing space, and the clients' communication modalities (Dean & Pollard, 2001). Background noise, room temperature, and seating arrangements are examples of the type of demand sources in the environmental demand category (Dean & Pollard, 2001). Regarding the interpersonal demand category, examples of demand sources are power and authority dynamics, dishonesty and communication control (Dean & Pollard.,2001). The intrapersonal demand category includes demand sources regarding safety concerns, liability concerns, and physiological responses and distractions (Dean & Pollard, 2001).

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The DC-S addresses the concept of sign language interpreters' controls by including the resources and skills workers can utilize to deal with the demands placed on them at their jobs (Noblet & LaMontagne, 2006).

Similar to the D-C theory, the conservation of resources (COR) theory states that employees aim to keep, protect, and gain resources to cope with any threats to their sense of well-being (Hobfoll, 1989). Employees in high-skilled work professions often become trapped in jobs when they view their jobs as dull and for which they are overqualified (Rothlin & Werder, 2008). In this type of work environment, increasing job resources and seeking challenges through job crafting reduces future job boredom and increases work engagement (Rothlin & Werder, 2008). According to the COR theory, resources are defined as “those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve for attainment of these objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies” (Hobfoll, 1989, p. 516). COR theory states that workers make changes to their work environment when they view these changes as being valuable (Hobfoll, 2001).

Research studies utilizing the COR theory focus on job crafting, which has been identified as a way for employees to gain resources to protect themselves from job boredom (Harju et al., 2016). Job crafting has been defined as a method for workers to obtain resources which increase work engagement while simultaneously protecting them from the negative effects of boredom on the job (Harju et al., 2016).

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Employees may redesign their jobs through job crafting in different ways (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2012). One form of job crafting involves an employee changing aspects of their jobs that are related to the type of tasks they do during work time and the duration of the tasks (Tims et al., 2012). Another job aspect that an employee can alter involves relationships that they make at work with other employees and customers (Tims et al., 2012). Job crafting also involves an employee making cognitive changes on how they view their jobs (Tims et al., 2012). When employees engage in job crafting, they are capable of redesigning their jobs with or without the help of management (Tims et al., 2012). Although some employees might be more comfortable with job crafting, Tims, Bakker and Derks (2012) argue that all employees are capable of making changes to their job assignments.

Tims, Bakker and Derks (2012) constructed job crafting through four dimensions, which employees can engage in at their jobs. These dimensions include increasing structural job resources, decreasing hindering job demands, increasing social job resources, and increasing challenging job demands (Tims et al., 2012). Increasing structural job resources involves employees developing their capabilities within their professions, trying to learn new things at work, and using their skills to their fullest (Tims et al., 2012). Decreasing hindering job demands involves making work less mentally and emotionally intensive, minimizing contact with people who are emotionally draining, difficult to work with, and who place unrealistic expectations on the employee, and minimizing the amount

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of difficult decisions that have to be made at work (Tims et al., 2012). Increasing social job resources includes asking a supervisor to be a coach, whether the supervisor is satisfied with the employee's work, and coworkers for feedback on job performance (Tims et al., 2012). Increasing challenging job demands entails offering to help a coworker on an interesting project, being the first to learn about a new development at work, asking to start new projects, and taking on new projects without receiving extra salary (Tims et al., 2012).

Related to job boredom, a longitudinal study was conducted to evaluate whether job crafting behaviors predicted more work engagement and less job boredom (Harju et al., 2016). Over 1,600 highly educated Finnish employees from a variety of occupations engaged in a study by seeking challenges in their jobs through job crafting behaviors (Harju et al., 2016). The findings of this longitudinal study showed a positive correlation between workers who utilized job crafting by increasing their structural and social resources and work engagement (Harju et al., 2016). Most significant of this study was the outcome that job crafting prevented job boredom, which was a significant problem and potentially stressful to health.

The Boredom Proneness Scale was created to measure feelings of job boredom in industries (Farmer & Sundberg, 1986). This scale was developed from relevant literature, interviews, and surveys of situations, resulting in high social validity when using this scale ($r = 0.83$) (Farmer & Sundberg, 1986). Each question on the Boredom Proneness Scale has a 5-point scale rating, ranging from most of the time to never and asks respondents to

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answer questions related to how often they feel bored at work and whether time seems to pass by slowly or quickly (Farmer & Sundberg, 1986).

Chapter 3: Methodology

The aim of my research study was to combat stress related to job boredom as a video remote educational interpreter. In order to be proactive and buffer psychosocial stress related to job boredom, I designed my study to discover how incorporating physical exercise into my daily routine would affect my cardiovascular health and overall self-perceptions of job boredom. Additionally, I utilized job crafting during my work assignment to increase my ASL interpreting skills while reducing my overall self-perceptions of job boredom.

Design:

My research incorporated a single-case design with baseline and treatment conditions in both phases of my study. In phase one, I investigated whether physical exercise performed prior to work positively affected my blood pressure (BP) readings and self-perceptions of stress related to job boredom. My phase one baseline condition consisted of measuring my blood pressure readings (dependent variable) and completing my self-perceptions of job boredom (dependent variable) after my work day. For my phase one treatment condition, I engaged in physical exercise (independent variable) prior to work to assess any effects on my blood pressure readings and self-perceptions of job boredom. I used the American Heart Association's blood pressure chart (see Appendix B) to categorize my blood pressure readings within the five blood pressure ranges as outlined

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by the American Heart Association. During phase two of my study, my research question asked whether the implementation of job crafting through changing my structural job resources positively impacted my overall self-perceptions of stress related to job boredom. I also used a single-case design which included baseline and treatment conditions. For my phase two baseline condition, I measured my self-perceptions of job boredom (dependent variable), taken after my work day. For my phase two treatment condition, I implemented job crafting (independent variable) to assess any effects on my overall self-perceptions of job boredom.

Sample:

The sample consisted of one female caucasian individual (myself), who was working as a video remote educational interpreter in a seventh grade classroom, located in a rural district in Michigan.

Data Analysis Procedures:

Regarding my data analysis procedure for taking BP in phase one of my study, I followed the recommendation as outlined by the American Heart Association (American Heart Association, 2017): take BP at the same time of the day (2:10 pm); do not consume caffeinated drinks 30 minutes prior to taking BP; be still; sit straight with feet flat on the floor; do not put BP cuff over clothing; and record results in a data chart. For my study, I used the *A & D* medical blood pressure monitor (Model UA-651BLE). Regarding my data analysis procedure for measuring daily self-perceptions of stress related to job boredom, I

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immediately completed my job boredom proneness scale within five minutes after my work day. In developing this scale, incorporated six items taken from the Boredom Proneness Scale (Farmer & Sunberg, 1986) (see Appendix C), which measured concentration level, time passing, energy and work engagement, challenging work content, and improving my interpreting skills (see Table 1). A low level of job boredom was assigned the value of one, which correlated with a high intrapersonal demand category associated with a challenging and engaging work environment. A medium level of job boredom was assigned the value of two, which was correlated with a medium intrapersonal demand category associated with a somewhat challenging work environment. A high level of job boredom was assigned a value of three, which was correlated with a low intrapersonal demand category and a monotonous work environment.

Table 1. Job Boredom Scale

Stress related boredom level: After work

1: Low stress: It's easy for me to concentrate; time passes quickly; I feel energized and engaged during my work time;

I feel challenged during my work time; my skills are being advanced;

2: Medium stress: It's somewhat easy for me to concentrate; time passes at a medium speed; I feel somewhat energized and engaged during my work time; I feel somewhat challenged during my work time; my skills are being somewhat advanced.

3: High stress- It's difficult for me to concentrate; time passes by slowly; I feel tired and unengaged during my work time;

my work is not challenging; My skills are not being advanced

Circle rating: 1 2 3
 Low Medium High

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In order to collect baseline data for phase two of my study, I measured the amount of time (minutes) I spent interpreting for each of the three classes (first hour math, second hour science, third hour geography) of my video remote educational interpreting assignment. Since each class had a duration of 52 minutes, I subtracted the amount of time that I spent interpreting from 52 minutes in order to calculate the average amount of downtime (minutes) for each class. I used my iPhone stopwatch as my timing device. The procedure for recording my job crafting behavior consisted of using a daily journal to record the title of the ASL video that I watched during downtime. I categorized each video title under one of three categories: educational, medical, and legal (see Appendix D). I dated each journal entry and subdivided my data recordings by each class period (math, science, and geography). I also used my iPhone stopwatch to record the amount of time (minutes) spent watching each video. At the end of each work day, I measured my psychosocial stress related to job boredom by completing my 3-point Likert job boredom scale.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of my study was to examine ways to reduce stress related to job boredom during my job assignment as a video remote educational interpreter. I collected data for two phases of my study in order to evaluate whether physical exercise and job crafting would positively affect my overall self-perceptions of job boredom. In both phases of my study, I created graphs for a visual analysis of my data. In the appendix section, I categorized the amount of time I spent job crafting using three codes: legal, medical and educational.

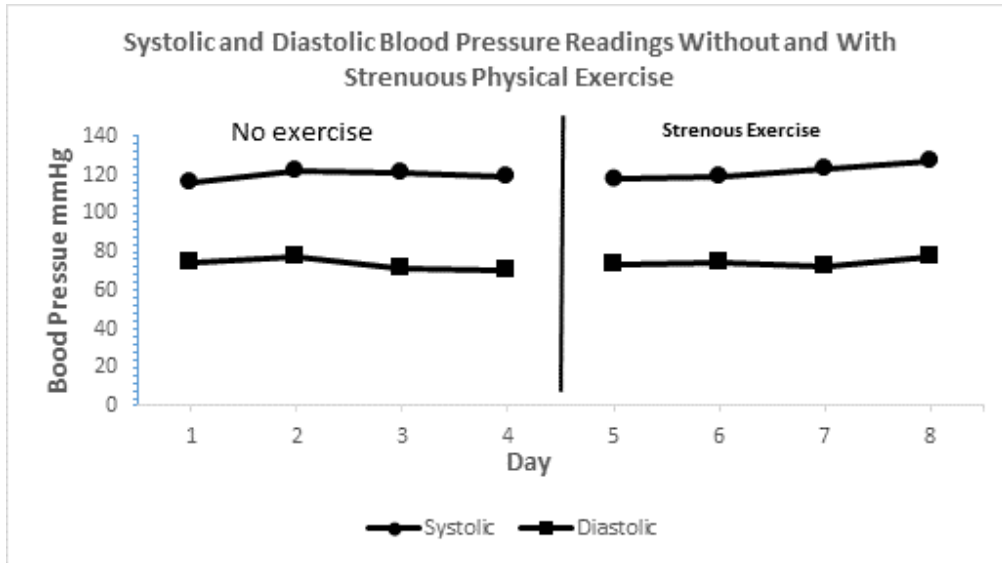
Results for phase one of action research:

During phase one of my action research study, my first research question asked whether my cardiovascular health as indicated by my BP readings would be positively affected by implementing physical exercise performed prior to work. I collected baseline data on my systolic and diastolic BP over four days within one week at the end of my work day (2:10 pm ET). My baseline data indicated that on average, I had a systolic BP reading of 120mm Hg and a diastolic BP reading of 73mm HG. I implemented my treatment condition by running three miles prior to my work day for four days within the next week. The student was absent one of the five days, which prevented me from collecting data for five consecutive days for both my baseline and treatment conditions. During my treatment condition, I obtained an average systolic BP reading of 122mm HG and a systolic BP

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reading of 74mm HG. A visual analysis of the data (see Table 2) showed there was not any significant difference in my BP pressure readings with and without physical exercise in the form of running three miles prior to my workday. My BP data indicated that at the time of this study, I maintained good cardiovascular health since my BP readings were in the healthy range. As I suspected prior to conducting phase one of my action research study, my overall blood pressure readings fell within the normal readings as defined by the American Heart Association. Since an abundance of research has documented that interpreters experience significant amounts of job stress, phase one of my study offered a model of how to implement physical activity while monitoring BP as an assessment of my cardiovascular health. Since I obtained stable readings of BP in both the baseline and treatment conditions, there was no reason to continue phase one of my study during phase two.

Table 2. Phase One Blood Pressure Readings

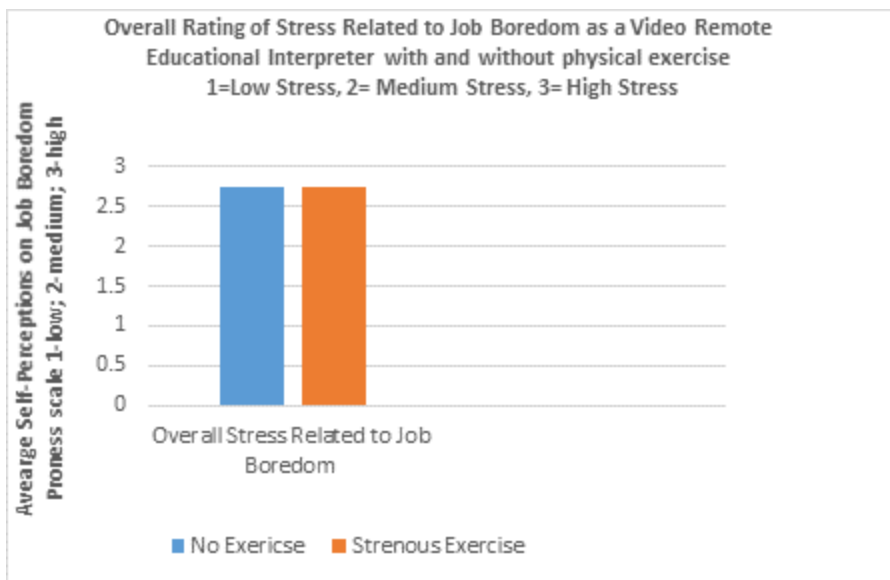


During phase one, my second research question explored whether physical exercise performed prior to my work day would positively affect my overall self-perceptions of job boredom as measured on my job boredom proneness scale. My data indicated that my overall self-perceptions of job boredom did not change when implementing physical exercise prior to my work day (see Table 3). Overall, I rated my job boredom at a 2.75 value regardless of whether I engaged in physical exercise prior to work as a video remote educational interpreter. An average value of 2.75 indicated that I experienced a high stress level related to job boredom since this value was only 0.25 away from the maximum value of 3.0, which indicated high job boredom. This was somewhat surprising since one of the factors I used in constructing my job boredom proneness scale measured my energy level. It seemed that engaging in physical exercise by running three miles prior to work would

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make it easier for me to deal with job boredom since I would be feeling more energized. Although I felt more energy when I initially started my workday, unfortunately, adding physical exercise into my daily routine did not change my overall perceptions of job boredom.

Table 3. Phase One Overall Job Boredom Rating Results



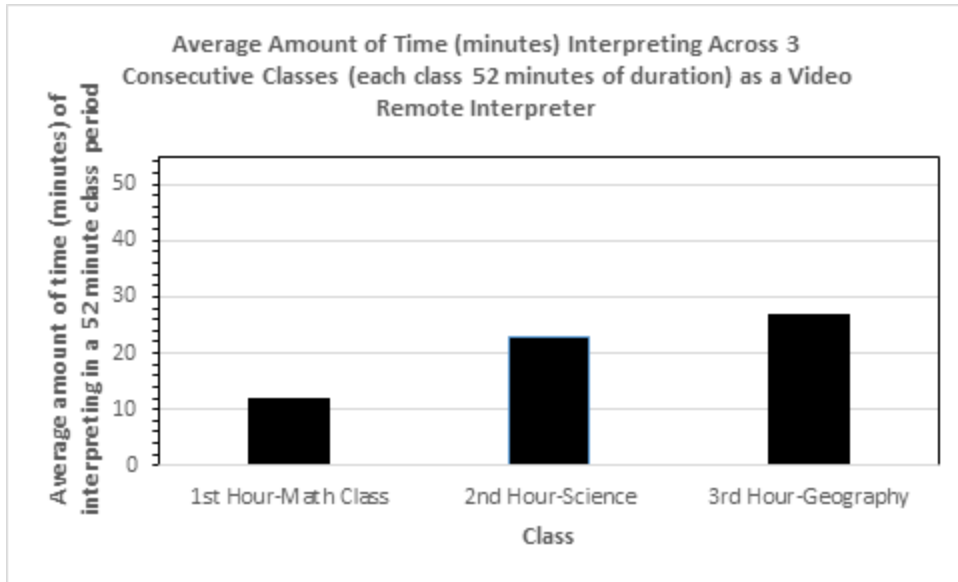
Results for phase two of action research:

In phase two of my study, I investigated how much downtime I experienced during each of my three classes which I interpreted for my client and whether job crafting would reduce the amount of psychosocial stress related to job boredom. I collected baseline data over three consecutive weeks for 12 days for each of the three classes to determine the total amount of downtime for each class. I also collected baseline data by completing my overall

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self-perception of psychosocial stress related to job boredom by completing the 3-point Likert job boredom proneness scale at the end of each work day. The average amount of time (minutes) out of each 52 minute class I spent interpreting across three consecutive classes as a video remote educational interpreter was 12 minutes for math, 23 minutes for science, and 27 minutes for geography (see Table 4). These results showed that I spent 23% of my time interpreting in math class, 44% of my time interpreting in science class, and 52% of my time interpreting in geography class. My results indicated that I spent on average less than 25% of my time interpreting in math class, while spending slightly over 50% interpreting in geography. These results supported my assumption that I spent a significant amount of time waiting to interpret for my student. Regarding my overall self-perception ratings on the job boredom proneness scale, I obtained a value of two which indicated a medium level of psychosocial stress related to job boredom in the baseline condition.

Table 4. Phase 2 Results of Average Interpreting Time



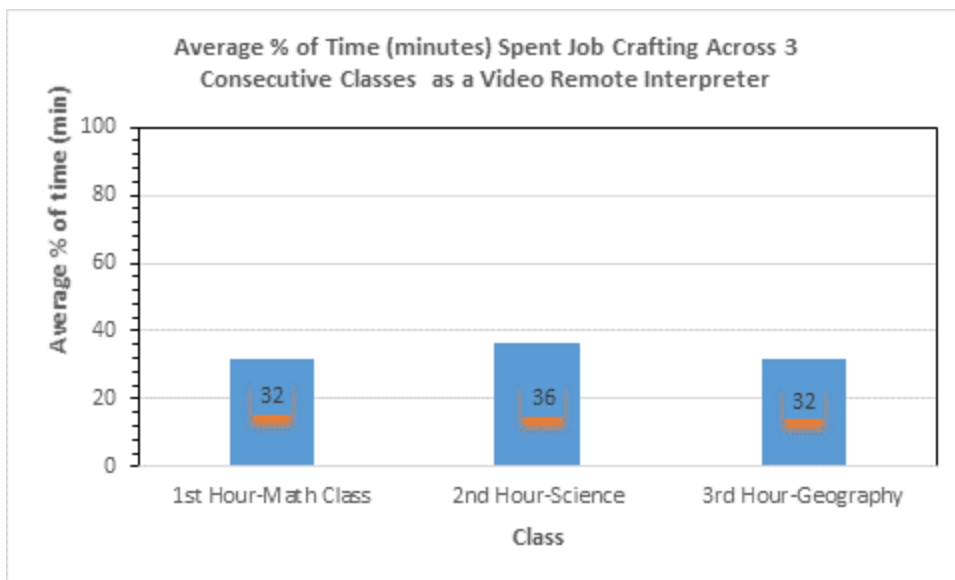
Regarding my treatment condition, I implemented job crafting over eight consecutive weeks, with a total of 32 school days. Seven school days were missed due to the student being absent and the school district having mid-winter break. In order to assess whether job crafting alleviated job boredom, at the end of each school day I rated my self-perceptions of job boredom on my 3-point Likert job boredom proneness scale.

The total amount of time (minutes) spent job crafting across three classes for eight weeks indicated that I engaged in 1,847 minutes of job crafting for a total of 32 days, which was an average of 58 minutes of job crafting per school day. Out of the 1,847 minutes spent job crafting, I spent 595 minutes during my first hour class, 667 minutes during my second hour class, and 585 minutes during my third hour class. The average percentage of time

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(minutes) spent job crafting across three consecutive classes resulted in 32% in my first hour math class, 36% in my second hour science class, and 32% in my third hour geography class (see Table 5). These results suggested that I spent approximately 1/3 of each hour engaging in a proactive way to prevent job boredom.

Table 5. Phase 2 Summary of Time Spent Job Crafting Across Classes

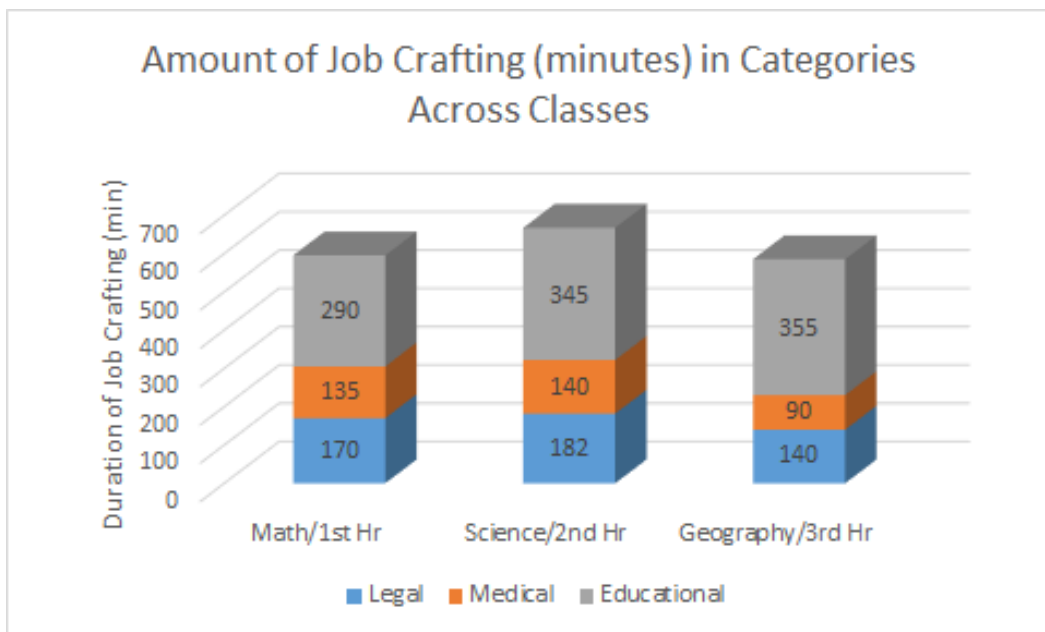


Analyzing my job crafting minutes across categories in each class suggested that I spent the majority of my time learning educational content, and more time learning legal content in contrast to medical (see Table 6). My results indicated that I recorded 290 minutes of educational content in my first hour math class, 345 minutes in my second hour science class, and 355 minutes in my third hour geography class. Regarding legal content, I

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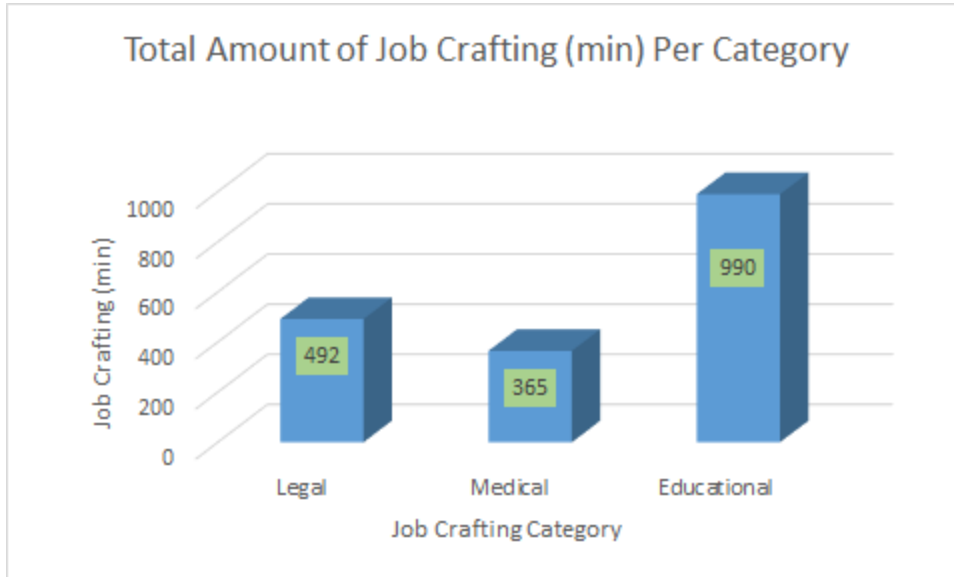
spent 170 minutes of job crafting in my first hour math class, 182 minutes in my second hour science class, and 140 minutes in my third hour geography class. Regarding medical content, I spent 135 minutes of job crafting in my first hour math class, 140 minutes in my second hour science class, and 90 minutes in my third hour geography class.

Table 6. Phase 2 Summary of Job Crafting Per Category



My data analysis indicated that I spent 990 minutes of job crafting in educational content, 492 minutes in legal content, and 365 minutes in medical content (see Table 7).

Table 7. Phase 2 Total Minutes of Job Crafting Per Category

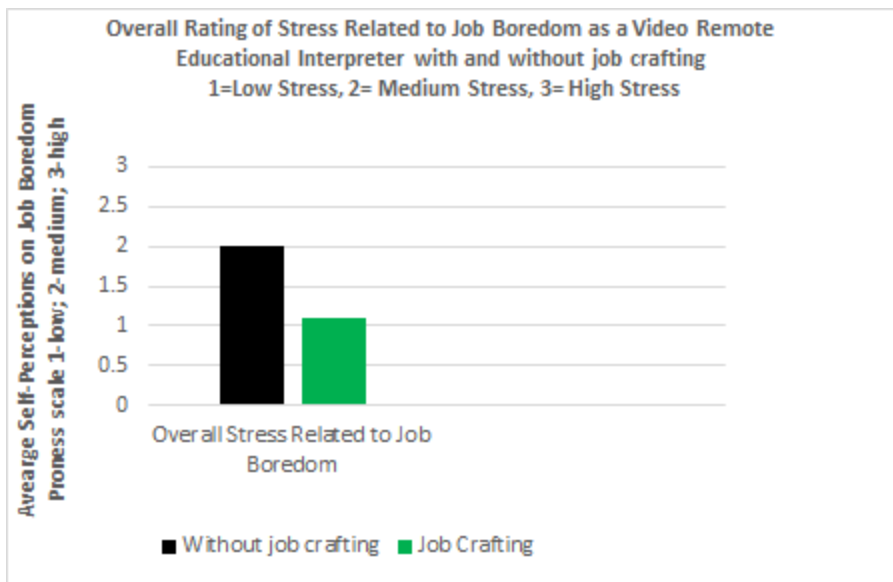


Implementing job crafting significantly altered the average value I obtained on my job boredom proneness scale when compared to my baseline condition (see Table 8). During baseline condition, I obtained an average value of two, which suggested a medium psychosocial stress level related to job boredom. During my treatment condition, I obtained an average value of one, which indicated that I had a low psychosocial stress level related to job boredom. These results demonstrated that implementing job crafting into my daily work routine reduced my job boredom by 50%. A 50% reduction of job boredom was significant for me since it showed that it was easier for me to concentrate and time passed more quickly during my job assignment. Additionally, my low psychosocial stress level indicated that I experienced a state of increased energy, along with viewing my work as

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more challenging. Most important, I viewed that job crafting increased my skills in the interpreting profession. In other words, job crafting enabled me to mitigate some of the unfavorable work characteristics associated while working remotely.

Table 8. Phase 2 Comparison of Overall Job Boredom During Conditions



CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

A variety of stress models conceptually frame how stress negatively affects employees in the workplace. To guide my action research in the sign language interpreting profession, I integrated the demand control schema (DC-S), the pathophysiological pathway, and the conservation of resources (COR) to examine a specific type of psychosocial stress related to job boredom. The DC-S was created specifically for the interpreting profession to understand the demands and controls within this profession (Dean & Pollard Jr., 2013). Interpreting demands are classified into four categories: environmental, interpersonal, paralinguistic, and intrapersonal (Dean & Pollard, Jr., 2013). In my action research, I focused on the intrapersonal demand category to examine my thoughts, physical reactions, feelings and concerns of my interpreting performance. It is critical to recognize these factors since they cause psychological and physiological responses which can negatively affect sign language interpreters (Dean & Pollard Jr., 2013). The DC-S was derived from the demand-control theory, created by Karasek (Dean & Pollard Jr., 2001). Karasek conceptualized the dimensions of demands and controls into four quadrants: active, high-strain, passive, and low-strain (Dean & Pollard Jr., 2001). In my current job assignment as a video remote educational interpreter, I categorized my current work situation as low-strain since I possessed many skills but my assignment did not present many demands. Some interpreters may view this type of situation as relaxing.

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However, I reacted somewhat negatively by feeling bored since I experienced a significant amount of downtime and was not utilizing my interpreting skills.

Although the demand control model is often utilized to assess psychosocial work factors associated with cardiovascular disease, researchers also conceptually frame job stress through the pathophysiological pathway (Gerber et al., 2016). According to the pathophysiological pathway, any kind of psychosocial stress, including job boredom, can negatively impact the health of workers (Gerber et al., 2016). Employees experiencing psychosocial stress are at risk for developing cardiovascular disease (CVD) (Gerber et al., 2016). One way to combat psychosocial stress is by engaging in physical fitness on a regular basis (Gerber et al., 2016). Physical exercise has the potential to buffer negative effects of stress, which can be measured by blood pressure and heart rate (Gerber et al., 2016). Chronic exposure to stress should be taken seriously since it may overwhelm a person's ability to cope, leading to negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, and hopelessness (von Kanel, 2008). Since cardiovascular diseases are a significant cause of death in western countries (Backe et al., 2012), workers should consider implementing physical exercise as one way to combat all forms of job stress.

In my action research study, I also incorporated in my conceptual framework the theory of conservation of resources (COR). The COR states that when workers are confronted with stressful work conditions, individuals will strive to minimize any net loss of resources (Hobfoll, 1989). When work conditions are viewed as stressful, individuals

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will actively seek to change their work environment in order to be happy and successful (Hobfoll, 1989). Workers strive to develop resource surpluses in order to reduce future loss of skills and resources (Hobfoll, 1989). The COR model defines four kinds of resources: object resources, conditions, personal characteristics, and energies (Hobfoll, 1989). The energy resource category includes resources such as knowledge, money and time (Hobfoll, 1989). Conserving and building a surplus of my skill knowledge was the focus of my research since I identified job boredom and downtime as factors which potentially could drain my energy resources. Engaging in job crafting allowed me to build and maintain my skills and knowledge in sign language interpreting as a way to promote my well-being. Harju et al. (2016) conducted a longitudinal study to examine whether job crafting reduced job boredom and more work engagement in highly educated Finnish employees from a variety of occupations. Their results indicated that when employees sought challenges to combat job boredom, workers were able to accumulate structural and social resources. This longitudinal study cited that organizations benefited from having employees engaging in job crafting and employers should encourage job crafting behavior (Harju et al., 2016).

Since research has documented that sign language interpreters are experiencing a high level of stress and burnout, my action research study examined the implementation of a simple physical exercise regimen and job crafting to buffer the negative effects of psychosocial stress related to job boredom. The design of my investigation was to evaluate two research questions. During phase one of my study, I examined whether engaging in

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physical exercise prior to my work day had a positive effect on my BP readings and my overall self-perceptions of job boredom. During phase two of my study, I examined whether job crafting had a positive effect on my overall self-perceptions of job boredom. In both phases, I used a single-case design and collected baseline data to assess treatment effects. My results from phase one showed that during the time of this study, I maintained good cardiovascular health as indicated by my normal blood pressure readings, which I collected during my baseline and treatment phases. Since I have an athletic background, I was not surprised with these results. Although my BP readings were at a healthy level, the results from phase one of my study levels indicated that I was experiencing a medium level of stress as indicated by my self-perception ratings on my job boredom proneness scale. However, I was surprised that physical exercise did not positively impact my overall self-perceptions of job boredom. On my job proneness scale, an item I included involved evaluating my energy level after work. I mistakenly thought that exercising prior to work would also make me feel more energized throughout my workday. What I found was that my energy level after work was often rated at level two, which indicated medium stress (see Table 1).

In phase two of my study, I implemented job crafting as a way to reduce job boredom while simultaneously increasing my work engagement. I was pleasantly surprised that job crafting reduced my overall self-perception ratings of job boredom by approximately 50%. This outcome was really important since it suggested that I reduced

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unpleasant feelings associated with work time passing by slowly. Additionally, this outcome suggested that I was successful in implementing a coping behavior as a way to positively affect my well-being. Implementing job crafting gave me a way to enhance my work engagement, especially during significant amounts of downtime at work as a video remote educational interpreter. Thus, I was able to assert some control over my work assignment by engaging in job crafting.

Research has suggested that individuals choose to become job crafters to reach goals or achieve future states or outcomes (Demerouti, 2014). Individuals who engage in job crafting often do this to improve their individual fit within the work environment (Demerouti, 2014). Other reasons for an employee to engage in job crafting is a need to take control over some aspect of their work environment, or to fulfill the human need to form social connections with others (Demerouti, 2014). In my situation, I chose job crafting to increase my interpreting skills as a way to offer me future opportunities and advancements within the profession. Additionally, job crafting allowed me to reduce psychosocial stress related to job boredom.

Job crafting is built on the idea that an employee must be motivated to job craft and notice opportunities within their current position to change job features (Wrześniewski, 2001). I was motivated to incorporate job crafting into my current assignment as a video remote educational interpreter since I was concerned about two aspects of my job: psychosocial stress related to job boredom and advancing my sign language interpreter

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skills. I had the opportunity to job craft since I experienced a significant amount of downtime, waiting to interpret content for the student. My job crafting practices involved changing my task boundaries by watching educational, medical, and legal sign language interpreting videos on my iPad. Changing the design of my job allowed me to advance my interpreting skills and reduce job boredom. Ultimately, job crafting made my work experience more meaningful.

This action research project was significant since it offered me a viable way to deal with psychosocial stress related to job boredom. Changing task boundaries through job crafting allowed me to reduce job boredom while increasing resources, which potentially added meaning to a job. Additionally, sign language interpreters may not be aware of a specific type of psychosocial factors due to stress associated with job boredom. Research involving sign language interpreters often focused on stress in challenging work environments, such as in medical, mental health, and legal settings (Dean & Pollard Jr., 2001). However, monotonous and repetitive work environments often pose challenges to an individual's well-being, due to a lack of external or internal stimulation. Although individuals differ in the amount of stimuli needed to maintain a good level of arousal (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2014), having too much downtime during work can be challenging for many individuals, including myself.

In conclusion, my action research project brings awareness about potential health hazards associated with a particular type of psychosocial stress, that of job boredom. In

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order to buffer against psychosocial stress factors which are related to cardiovascular disease, sign language interpreters might consider implementing a daily exercise regimen while monitoring biophysical markers such as blood pressure. Additionally, it might be useful for sign language interpreters to monitor their psychosocial self-perceptions of stress using factors from the Boredom Proneness Scale (Farmer & Sundberg, 1986), which align directly with their current job position. In order to assess whether job boredom is problematic, sign language interpreters can complete the Boredom Proneness Scale created by Farmer and Sundberg (1986). If the results from this analysis indicate that job boredom is a problem in their current position, then sign language interpreters can implement job crafting as a way to balance the demands and resources of their jobs with their individual needs and abilities (Demerouti, 2014). My action research combined objective and subjective aspects. Future research might benefit from an investigation which analyzes the types of thoughts (positive and negative) experienced by sign language interpreters with and without implementing job crafting. By so doing, this data could support the social validity of using a self-perception job boredom scale as a way to measure psychosocial stress in the video remote educational interpreting setting.

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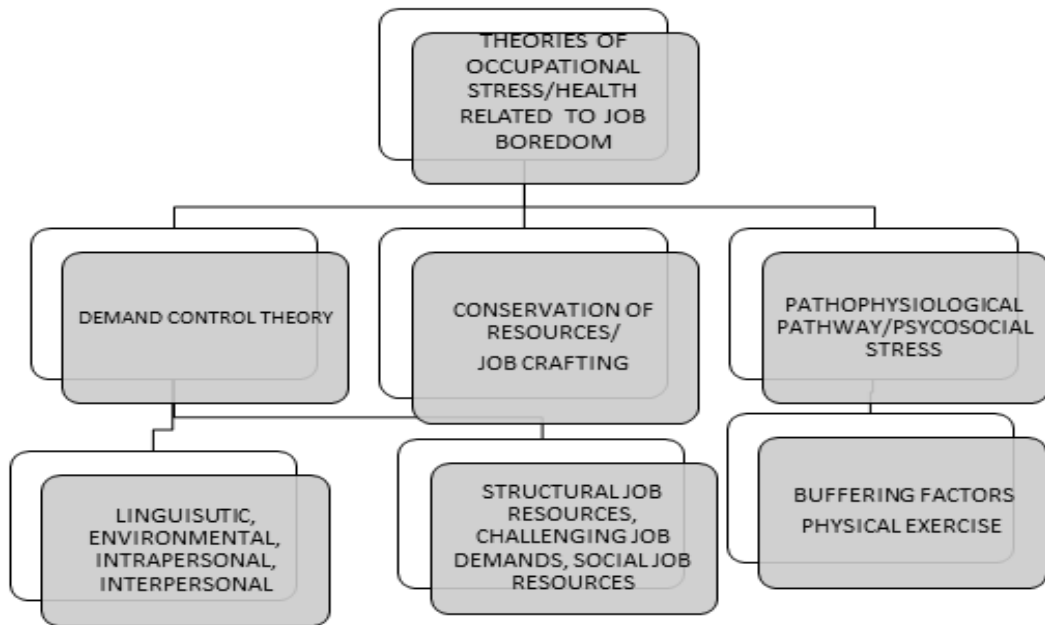
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Appendix A:

Theoretical Framework



Appendix B:

American Heart Association Blood Pressure Categories Chart

Blood Pressure Categories



BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120 – 129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1	130 – 139	or	80 – 89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

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Appendix C:

Items selected from R. Farmer and N. D. Sundberg's (1986) Boredom Proneness Scale.

1. It is easy for me to concentrate on my activities.
3. Time always seems to be passing slowly.
14. Much of the time I just sit around doing nothing.
16. I often find myself with nothing to do--time on my hands.
20. I would like more challenging things to do in life.
21. I feel that I am working below my abilities most of the time.

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Appendix D:

Amount of Time Job Crafting per Category Code

Category Code for ASL video: L = Legal; M= Medical; E= Educational			
Day #	Class Hour/Subject	Category	Amount of Time (min)
1	1 st /Math	L	25
1	2 nd /Science	L	7
1	3 rd /Geography	L	20
2	1 st /Math	L	40
2	2 nd /Science	L	50
2	3 rd /Geography	L	10
3	1 st /Math	L	45
3	2 nd /Science	E	10
3	----- -	----- -	-----
4	1 st /Math	E	5
4	2 nd /Science	E	30
4	3 rd /Geography	E	25

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5	-----	-----	-----
5	-----	-----	-
5	-----	-----	-----
6	-----	-----	-----
6	2 nd /Science	L	10
6	3 rd /Geography	L	50
7	-----	-----	-----
7	2 nd /Science	L	10
7	3 rd /Geography	L	50
8	-----	-----	-----
8	2 nd /Science	E	10
8	3 rd /Geography	E	10
9	-----	-----	-----
9	2 nd /Science	E	10
9	3 rd /Geography	E	15

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10	1 st /Math	E	20
10	2 nd /Science	E	20
10	3 rd /Geography	E	25
11	1 st /Math	M	5
11	2 nd /Science	M	20
11	3 rd /Geography	M	20
12	1 st /Math	M	25
12	2 nd /Science	E	15
12	3 rd /Geography	E	5
13	1 st /Math	E	20
13	2 nd /Science	L	35
13	3 rd /Geography	L	30
14	1 st /Math	L	10
14	-----	----- -	-----
14	-----	----- -	-----

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15	-----	-----	-----
			-
15	-----	-----	-----
		-	-
15	-----	-----	-----
			-
16	-----	-----	-----
		-	
16	-----	-----	-----
16	-----	-----	-----
			-
17	1 st /Math	E	20
17	2 nd /Science	E	35
17	3 rd /Geography	E	10
18	1 st /Math	E	35
18	2 nd /Science	E	50
18	3 rd /Geography	E	40
19	-----	-----	-----
19	-----	-----	-----
19	-----	-----	-----

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20	-----	-----	-----
20	-----	-----	-----
20	-----	-----	-----
21	1 st /Math	E	10
21	-----	-----	-
21	3 rd /Geography	E	15
22	-----	-----	-----
22	-----	-----	-----
22	-----	-----	-----
23	1 st /Math	E	20
23	2 nd /Science	E	20
23	3 rd /Geography	E	10
24	-----	-----	-----
24	-----	-----	-----
24	-----	-----	-----
25	1 st /Math	L	50

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25	2 nd /Science	L	35
25	3 rd /Geography	E	25
26	1 st /Math	E	10
26	2 nd /Science	M	20
26	3 rd /Geography	M	25
27	1 st /Math	E	30
27	2 nd /Science	E	30
27	3 rd /Geography	E	15
28	1 st /Math	M	15
28	-----	-	-
28	3 rd /Geography	M	20
29	1 st /Math	E	20
29	2 nd /Science	E	25
29	3 rd /Geography	E	15
30	1 st /Math	E	15
30	2 nd /Science	E	35

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30	3 rd /Geography	E	15
31	1 st /Math	E	15
31	2 nd /Science	E	10
31	3 rd /Geography	E	15
32	1 st /Math	M	20
32	2 nd /Science	M	45
32	3 rd /Geography	M	25
33	1 st /Math	M	20
33	2 nd /Science	M	35
33	3 rd /Geography	M	20
34	1 st /Math	M	25
34	2 nd /Science	M	20
34	----- -	----- -	----- -
35	----- -	----- -	-----
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INCORPORATING PHYSICAL EXERCISE AND JOB CRAFTING

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36	1 st /Math	M	25
36	-----	-----	-----
36	3 rd /Geography	E	20
37	1 st /Math	E	45
37	2 nd /Science	L	45
37	3 rd /Geography	L	30
38	-----	-----	-----
38	2 nd /Science	E	15
38	3 rd /Geography	E	35
39	1 st /Math	E	25
39	2 nd /Science	E	30
39	3 rd /Geography	E	40
40	-----	-----	-----
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INCORPORATING PHYSICAL EXERCISE AND JOB CRAFTING

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