

Translation: Sandra Gish Presentation

translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

Clips 7-10

Clip 7. Assessing/Building Skill

Now I'd like to talk briefly about what I believe about teaching or mentoring. First off, new interpreters simply cannot interpret everything. They can't. Sometimes if you are trying to help an interpreter who has worked for a long time to change or get to the heart of what interpreting means - not words or signs, but what actual interpreting means - often, they can't interpret everything they might hear or see. It's not possible to interpret everything that person hears or sees. We didn't know this in the past, but as you'll recall, just as I do myself, for the many years I've been teaching and looking at videotapes, it would be a matter of advising someone to just go ahead and do their best. People would then struggle with trying to sign or speak or to keep up and have a difficult time in general. Seeing this consistent failure, I tried to modify the mentoring, perhaps making it slower, simpler. It was a struggle with not achieving success no matter what I changed. Then, finally about 1986, which was the first time I published the theory or idea, I thought to myself "What are we thinking? Of course you can't interpret everything!" That was a new idea. It was like saying to someone who was new to ice skating to go out and do a triple jump. Of course that's not possible. One must first develop the basic skills before going on to do something that complicated. The same idea applies to mentoring students or those whose goal is to improve their interpreting.

So to begin with, quantity is important, but I also need to have the mind set that quality is just as important. I need to have established what the criteria are for ensuring that quality is present. Can the individual attain those criteria within a single sentence, for instance? If so, then we can move on to two sentences. If the person is still meeting the criteria, then we can move on to five sentences, and so forth. They can listen to longer and longer chunks and still maintain the quality of the interpretation. Of course, it's understood that the goal is the quantity - being able to interpret everything. But, that's not the first goal. It comes later. The person who is interpreting can continue on with seven sentences, and then ten. With that, they may encounter difficulty, at which point we can back up to the smaller pieces and still maintain the quality. One word of warning...Sometimes people misunderstand this part. When I am talking about four to five to six sentences, I am referring to practice sessions, not during a job. In a real assignment, of course you have an interpretation that incorporates the material in its entirety. The person is not interpreting a large chunk and out of that does just one sentence, for instance. I am talking about working on areas of improvement. Let's say you go to see a play. You'll see it from start to finish. The next day the actors in the play may need to practice one discrete part of the play, such as where to walk or blocking or the level of their voices. That one piece or skill will be focused on outside of the context of the whole play. But, if you were to go see the play the next night, you'll still see the whole play, not just those parts. But that one skill has been taken out of the larger



Translation: Sandra Gish Presentation

translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

context of the play to be focused on and practiced before once again being applied in a new way. I don't want people to think it's alright to have just pieces of an interpretation done during a real assignment. That's not what I am saying.

Another belief that I have is that we often don't give people how to analyze themselves, or what they hear and see, what they are thinking about, and what they produce. We need to give people some way or some strategy to analyze themselves. The mentee may need some strategies to analyze how they listen, think or visualize something, as well as what they produce in an interpretation. This may also be true for reception and making the transition of going from one channel to another and analyzing that whole process.

Another issue relates to control. You know quite well that this can be a dangerous word for interpreters, because there is so much complexity in the process that is going on. By the word "control," I don't mean controlling deaf people or controlling the interaction the people are having. It doesn't mean controlling what people are doing. By "control," I mean having a handle on their mind, their thoughts, the processes and thinking that are going in their head, and then the output in terms of an interpretation that goes along with that. You know, people can't just sign on and on or talk on and on without any control and knowing what I've signed or said. If I can't remember what I've signed and am just putting something out, then it's impossible to analyze that. So, I have to back up and control my thinking and that's really what I'm referring to when I say "control."

The last idea is that people need to have success. I know I've already said that recently, but I want to emphasize it because you must figure out some strategy or method that will help them achieve success. It's not going to happen all the time, for every mentee or colleague. You know that's not realistic. But, it's important to adhere to the philosophy that initial success leads to continued success. It's also important to remember that they need to learn the control and how to analyze on their own and to determine how to practice and improve on their own.

So, now you know my philosophy and what I believe. I want to focus next on talking about my approach and my strategy. That's what I hope to share with you today. In mentoring, we often may stop and consider what we are doing in that position and what the goal is in being a mentor to someone. I am going to suggest some ideas and answer to these questions. We've already said that we want to mentee to analyze things for themselves and to learn about themselves. That's an important question to ask them – "What did you learn about your interpreting?" You can also inquire about what they learned about their process and their product. This involves asking them what they want to do and how they can practice in order to make those gains and improvements. You can ask them what you can do to provide the support they need. Some ideas include practicing at home or with videotapes; going to an event; contacting a colleague and initiating their involvement to come and work with the mentee; helping the mentee to network



Translation: Sandra Gish Presentation

translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

and develop professional relationships; practicing in the car while driving and listening to the radio for those who are hearing; practicing off the captioning on the TV. Essentially, exploring all the possibilities for practice using the resources and tools around me. It involves asking the mentee how we can support them and coming up with ideas to make that happen.

Along those same lines, when the person goes out and practices on their own, we can analyze the practice material, too. How did it feel? Did it help? Or did it make things worse? Now, let's go back and see what else we can do in practicing it. Sometimes the mentee will go off and practice and come back and reveal that in the process of doing so they discovered the problem was in fact something completely different! Now, it back to square one and starting over with something else. That in and of itself is a really neat learning process. It's cyclical in that way. Sometimes the practice leads us to learning what the problem is, which in turn leads us to brainstorming and developing strategies for additional practice. And then back again. That's part of helping that independence and growth in the mentee.

Now I want to bring up something a little bit off the point, or actually to back up. You as a mentor must know several things about interpreting itself. When you are mentoring, there may come a time where you have to ask yourself whether you really know something about a particular point. You have to ask yourself if you really have that information yourself in order to be able to guide the mentee. I have an assumption that you will continue your studies by learning about current interpreting theories, reading books and articles, viewing videotapes and attending presentations and workshops. I am assuming that you already know, for instance, the Colonomos model, the Cokely Model, Taylor, [11:32 ???????????] There's also a book, and the author's name is very long, Seleskovitch. Also, Gish and [11:50 ????????]. All of those I'm presuming you are aware of. I don't want to offend anyone I may have forgotten. It involves reading and each of us knowing that we are up to date with our knowledge. If we are not, it requires knowing where to find it and which resources are available in order to find that particular piece of information.

By the way, my theory and my approach in no way conflict with other theories and theories or what has been written about interpreting up to this point. First of all, I'm always playing around with how to draw different models and flowcharts, or how to make visual diagrams of the theory. At first I had it set up sort of like a triangle that was more "top-down." So a sentence was at the top and then there was a funnel or triangle that came down to the actual objective at the bottom. The source language, the sentence that the speaker either signed or voiced was at the top, and then it was broken down or analyzed so that there was an end point, which was the goal. What we produced then stemmed from this goal positioned in the middle and widened out to another triangle. The goal or objective was what was in the back of our minds guiding what we then



Translation: Sandra Gish Presentation

translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

produced. If you superimpose that diagram onto Betty Colonomous' model, it's a perfect fit. Really. I mean the two of them just mesh together quite naturally with her concepts and my concepts. Betty wrote about the depth of processing, such as lexical, phrasal, sentential, and then textual. In effect, they are really the same ideas, just as with other models like Dennis'. When you take all of them together as a whole, the result is that you have more information about how interpreting works.

I want to go back as something has come to mind. The model needs to be clearly explained to students. We don't only interpret the objective. Of course, we interpret everything. But, we still must know that objective and keep that in our minds. We can ask ourselves if we are still on that objective or if we've moved on to another one. How do I produce that objective in a second language? How do I change my body to describe what I'm signing? I can ask myself those questions and know that the objective is complete and continue interpreting in a different way. Perhaps the speaker has gone back to a previous point, then I can do so because I have the whole list of objectives that have been covered in my head. So, I just wanted to make sure that was clear.

Clip 8. Gish Approach

Now, I'd like to move on and talk about some other parts of my presentation. I want to start talking about the Gish Approach to information processing. And I have to laugh a little bit because I'm not crazy about calling it the "Gish Approach." Back in 1986, when I first published the approach, I called it Goal-to-Detail and Detail-to-Goal Approach to Information Processing. Somehow, though, people thought that was too long of a title. And people would refer to it as, "oh you know that Gish stuff." People pestered me to change it and I was resistant to the idea. So, finally one person just went ahead and put it down on paper as the Gish Approach. So, there you have it. I guess it feels to people as if it is easier to remember and talk about with that name.

I do want to let you know that the approach really does seem to work. Now, it's been fifteen or sixteen years and people are still using it and expressing interest in it. It doesn't mean you have to believe and follow it to the letter. Use some; combine it with other approaches and strategies. If it doesn't work for you, then toss it out. It works for some people and other people are not as comfortable with it. So, just toss it out if that's the case. Later, if some new idea comes along that you find works better, then great. I don't mean to imply that by teaching my way now, that everything that's been done in the past is wrong. That's not the case either. This is just one part of the whole world of interpreting process. The Gish approach seems to be successful now and fit into the bigger picture. It seems natural to ask why the approach continues to be used. One thing is that it lets people work at their level. People can work and analyze at one level with where they are presently, and feel successful in that they are controlling their processing, and still continue to use it as they advance to increasingly higher levels. Just to let you know, this approach strongly emphasizes content and prediction. Some people talk about prediction or



Translation: Sandra Gish Presentation

translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

anticipation and use other words for it as well. This is fine, but I happen to use the word prediction. The approach focuses first on meaning. It doesn't involve affect, style or changes in register. Other people have done studies on that. It's interesting though to learn first if people understand the meaning and then those other aspects can be incorporated and added to the analysis. But, the foundation is meaning. Another benefit that it seems this model has helped people develop is its use in consecutive interpreting, and that seems to help guide them into simultaneous interpreting. That seems to be more natural and I like that as well.

Your paper shows the Gish approach to information processing in a flowchart. I want give some basic explanations about what is on that paper. I learned something many years ago. Often people are interpreting, but it seems like they are on automatic pilot. They are just seeing or hearing something and then putting that out in another language without actually thinking about or understanding what they are doing. For example, I recall one time where an interpreter that I was mentoring was doing sign to voice interpreting with the goal of working on their voicing skills. The deaf speaker was explaining about looking for a job for a long time and that they finally found the right job for them. The speaker talked about looking in newspapers and finding ads and where they needed to go and so forth. He said, "So I got up, got dressed in my suit and tie, and went downtown and found the building. I went in and saw a desk where a woman was sitting. The placard on the desk said 'Receptionist.'" The interpreter was so funny. She said, "So I looked around and saw the desk with the woman sitting behind it. There was a sign on the desk and the sign said I missed the fingerspelling." I interrupted and reminded the mentee of all the experiences and background they could bring to this. All the times you've gone into places like this and seen similar signs. What does the sign generally say? The mentee was pretty puzzled, but just encouraged them to guess what it could possibly be. I asked them if they thought the sign said "Spaghetti Special Today." And of course, they said no! Then they were able to formulate that it could have said Information, No Smoking or Receptionist. Then I suggested that we go back and look at the videotape again. That time, she was able to catch the fingerspelling and that the sign said "Receptionist." That's it! That's the meaning. It can be predicted. Parts of the fingerspelling can be caught and then context can be used to fill in the rest and get the whole meaning. I tried to experiment and investigate these things and use them to develop a new approach.

What I found when I was reading other books or from other fields, like acting, writing, or poetry, was that people always have the idea first. They have an idea and their point about something, and then they figure out how to express it, whether that is through writing, lecturing, dancing, what have you. TV is the same way, you know. Let's say there is a writer for a regular TV series. The writers get together and brainstorm the next week's show by determining the goal for the show. From that idea, which comes first, they develop something.



Translation: Sandra Gish Presentation

translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

We can apply that same idea to interpreting. You'll see on your paper it is set up as "Goal" and below that is "Theme." For "goals" we are really using verbs. For instance, the goal may be to teach, inform, inspire, warn, punish, enjoy, entertain, flatter, convince, etc. That's really important because it is the reason behind why the person is talking in the first place. Do they want to convince someone? Scold someone? What is their purpose behind the communication, in essence. When you are working with a mentee, they can analyze different messages and find the goal for each one. For this part of the mentorship, I use one of my favorite videotapes, called "A Christmas Memory." Before the mentee sees the videotape or does any kind of interpreting, it's important to start at the very beginning. So, I ask them to think of what they think the person's goal will be for talking about Christmas memories. Perhaps it is to reminisce. Maybe it is just to enjoy or to let someone know something. We want the mentee to come up with a lot of potential goals. It's very much like an essay test. Sometimes that's hard, because you have this whole sheet of paper and you feel a huge burden to have to fill up that empty space. Some people prefer a multiple choice on a test. That's what we want – to have people come up with a lot of possible goals. The brain actually likes that. Then, when we start to watch that person on the videotape, we have the multiple choices ready and we can select the one that fits. In that videotape, "A Christmas Memory," the woman's story and talking about Christmas is meant to create warm feelings and a sense of nostalgia.

Underneath the word goal, you'll see the word theme. That's really the most important point. It encompasses a lot of things all in one. For instance, if you go to see a movie and later meet someone who asks you what the movie is about or who is in it, you don't start with the first sentence in the movie and then provide all the dialogue thereafter. That's silly. What is natural in this instance is to say "It's about..." And sum it up. Another idea related to themes is that if a person doesn't understand the them about something, maybe they'll go buy a TV Guide. That's really it - that book is all about themes! Or a newspaper may have a short sentence about a movie. For Fatal Attraction, for instance, it will say "A woman becomes obsessed with a married man and almost destroy their family." That's the theme. That applies to mentoring because it helps the person to understand the meaning and to keep that in the back of their mind all the time.

You can use any videotape , really, but mine is "A Christmas Memory." I elicit from the student what could possibly come up. And they may say it could involve a tree. And that's good, but it's only one and we want many. So I inquire what else may come up and encourage them to come up with more. In the process, they respond that there may be presents opened, a lot of food and cooking, and a beautiful, elaborate table. And I dig further. They may say that there will be a lot of family and people who haven't seen each other in a long time, all commenting on the changes that have occurred during that time. With each one of these ideas, our mind is



Translation: Sandra Gish Presentation

translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

expanding wider and wider to all the possibilities. Then I ask them to add some negative things that may occur. The student may respond with the recollection of a having to drive in a ton of snow and not being able to get through, which meant sleeping in a hotel for days. Everyone else was in the same position, so it was crowded and there was not enough food. You can encourage and dig deeper for more and more ideas from the student. It's funny. When we are mentoring people, we have to remind them to add something related to Deaf culture. So, I'll prompt them to recall that the person signing the Christmas memory is Deaf and ask how that might impact what we will see. Perhaps the family is all hearing and the storyteller is the only Deaf person. Every year, then, it's the same thing of being the only Deaf person there and having limited, strained communication with their family members. Everyone else is jabbering about while they are eating around the table, leaving the Deaf person isolated and left to just eat the meal hastily. Then, I ask what a Christmas meal at a residential school might look like. And you get answers about a signing Santa, and so forth and so on. It's really just a matter of brainstorming and thinking of all the possibilities.

The mentee, or colleague, formulates all these ideas and from that I draw a picture. This really helps because we are going from words to a visual representation of the concept itself. I'll draw pictures, and you know, I do the best I can, stick figures and all. I know my students are going to laugh, but they learn the process. At that point, I'm satisfied with developing the understanding of what the goal is. We have in mind possible themes. I call that "getting your mind right." Your mindset is established and later the production of your interpretation can then come from that. That's practice for the mentee, but even later as one is interpreting we still need to be able to wrap our heads around it. The choices I make in terms of words or signs, my affect, and so forth will be greatly helped by having a handle on this. Even as I'm interpreting, while it's happening, part of my mind is still analyzing and thinking about what the point is in all of it. That's while I am in the middle of the job. This is an instance, though, where the mentee can take it out of the task of actually interpreting and practice it separately.

Clip 9. Watching a Text

Now, let's say we are ready to watch a videotape and analyze it. I want to help that mentee practice only the goal of determining the theme, whether it is with one videotape, many tapes, or maybe even out in the Deaf community. I just want them to identify what people are talking about – not even worrying about words or signs yet. Not being nosy, of course, or bothering people, but you know, just to determine what they are talking about. Or, at a church or a temple they can identify the goal and theme in those settings. The TV is a great resource to use for practice. They can use their family, too. When someone is chatting, you can be analyzing and processing in your mind what the goal is for an interaction. American people are very well known for being vague. Sometimes it can be hard to find out what exactly they are talking about and that is quite typical for hearing people.



Translation: Sandra Gish Presentation

translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

Anyway, let's say we are working with a videotape. I'd like to summarize the interaction that occurs with "A Christmas Memory." After putting the tape in, the screen shows a woman. Actually, I like to pause it right there. We can examine what she looks like, her age, her gender, skin type, clothing and so on. I don't mean to encourage negative stereotypes about people, of course. But, we can understand a lot about a person and get a lot of information just based on the physical things we see. For instance, if she were black, I would recognize that I don't know very much about African American culture. Or, if they were from Mexico, I can think about the things I've learned about that culture. In this videotape, the woman is about 35 years old, white, wears glasses and is dressed very conservatively. I like to study the image first and encourage the mentee to make predictions based on some of those things. In this case, we know that we are not going to be talking about a Hispanic Christmas. We know we are not going to see something about having been born in China and moved to the US, finding out what a huge thing Christmas is here in America. Instead, we know that it is a white woman in her mid thirties. The first thing she says on the tape is "Now it's Christmas time and that reminds me of what happened to my boy John when he was three." Then I pause it again. I don't ask for a description of the sentence or an interpretation of the sentence. I ask the mentee what information they gleaned from it that is helpful in predicting the theme. They may say that it is a story about a little boy growing up. The mentee may ask me if it is her son, or her brother, or another boy and I hold off on giving an answer. We haven't gotten to that yet and the fact that we know it is a boy is enough for now for what we've seen so far. That's my general principle – to work with what they saw or heard. I'm not going to be there when they are out in the real world interpreting. As interpreters, we must work with what we have.

Alright, so we know it is a small boy, a child and I'll ask them if they can predict the theme from that. Is there anything they want to add or delete from the list of themes they have generated? From that we can start to eliminate ideas, or add that it may be about Santa Claus, toys, or being out shopping or so forth. At that point, I start to play the tape again. The woman signs, "At that time, when he was three, my boy used an FM type hearing aid system with a harness and straps around his waist. He was very good about taking care of it. Each morning, he'd put it on and every night he was very conscientious about taking it off putting it away. He was very good about the routine." Then, I pause it again. At that point I'll ask if they have gotten any other information that is helpful. They'll reply that now we know it involves a hearing aid. When I ask them what the significance of that is, the mentee will respond that it means he is deaf. And again, I'll ask what changes they want to make to our predictions based on the new information. The mentee may respond with an idea that the boy will get new behind-the-ear hearing aids for Christmas to replace the FM type system. So, we'll go over what else we want to keep and make the new additions. I encourage them to think more about how the pieces of Christmas, a Deaf boy and hearing aids all fit together. As the mentee reviews the pieces they already know, some may come up with an idea about the



Translation: Sandra Gish Presentation

translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

boy wrapping the hearing aids up in a box as a present to someone else. Or, maybe it's the first time he'll hear music. We modify and change our drawings accordingly.

I hit play again and the woman signs, "One night he went upstairs to go to bed and after doing some things I went up to check on him. I noticed he was sleeping with his hearing aid system on. I thought that was a little odd. Every night he puts it away and is so responsible about it. I thought maybe he was tired or something and had fallen asleep with it on by accident. So I took it off and put it away." Then, I pause it again and ask the mentee what we know. We can identify all those components that we know and the new fact that we know the boy is sleeping with his hearing aids on. As the mentee thinks about and processes this new information, they may consider that when stories talk about habits or routines, the story is generally about something different or unique happening. Some mentees will catch it at this point, while others do not. I hit play again and the woman says, "I carefully put it away and then another night it happened again! He fell asleep with the hearing aids on." And then, the mentee will jump in excitedly to say that he wants to hear Santa Claus come to the house and come down the chimney, bringing all the presents. I try to keep a very neutral expression and not give anything away. But, we change the drawing and the mentee gets so excited that they know. It's really interesting. Imagine that person feeling so enthusiastic, excited and desperate to see more. We have so many experiences with students who are scared and hesitant and not sure they want to look at anything. This is the exact opposite. In addition, the predictions are really amazing. The mentee starts to change and feels that they are looking for something, instead of at something. Many times, a new interpreter or a mentee will look at a Deaf person signing and gets intimidated because it feels like they are looking at a flurry of hands moving. They are looking at the signing. This, on the other hand, is an exercise in looking for clues and then having that find a place in what we are thinking.

I ask the student if they want to see more and of course, they are eager to see the rest. We look at more of the movie and the woman signs that she was so puzzled by the fact that he was wearing the hearing aids, but started to take them off and the little boy woke up. He told her to leave them on. When the mother asked him why, he replied that it was because he wanted to hear Santa and the reindeer land on the roof of the house. And do you know how the mentee feels? They feel great! They see that they can do it and that is really a wonderful thing. It's important because [9:58????????????????], capacity, working memory and so forth are limited. We just can't do too many things at the same time. We can do many things at the same time, but we do have a limit to how much our brain can do all at

Translation: Sandra Gish Presentation

translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

once. If the mentee is able to predict and develop comprehension about the point and the meaning, that is one less thing the brain is having to do. That leaves room, then, for making other predictions, or working on affect, or attending to style and the like.

On your handouts, you'll see Goal, then Theme and underneath that is Objective. There are actually several objectives that occur throughout the story – what happened first, second, third, etc... Oftentimes, people tend to have an introduction, followed by a series of events, the affect or conclusion, and then a closure. That's a general pattern for how people tell stories or relate something that happened. The person that I am working with is now able to catch each one of these objectives. This is a really good time for me to bring up discourse markers. I'll ask the mentee how they know when the speaker has begun a new idea. They may comment about different things they saw, like a pause, or a change in posture, or the person's hands being brought up into the air. They may remark on lexical items, like "now," "so," or seeing their head or eyebrows move up and down. I can also ask them how they know that an idea has been finished. They may comment on the fact that deaf people tend to shift their shoulders and upper body down, or move their eyebrows down, or hold their hands together in front of their body. Or, perhaps, they will hold a sign longer. Again, there are lexical markers too, such as "THAT!", "OK," "You remember..." There are so many possibilities for these discourse markers, and this is a good time to analyze those. I like to use the same videotape again to identify where each of those objectives are grouped based on where these discourse markers are. We'll watch for a marker and then pause the tape when we notice one. You can practice this anywhere! The TV, or hearing people can use the radio, just chatting with people, by watching a movie, or watching other people in a conversation. In observing and watching, the student can determine where the stops and starts occur.

Clip 10. Voicing

Now it's time to practice actually interpreting. I want the mentee, or colleague, to interpret only one objective or section at a time. You'll recall I talked about needing to teach people how to control their interpreting. They must have satisfactory grammar, sentence structure, and all of those criteria. Now is the time to really help that person understand that. You have a handout with the four criteria, plus two more. Take a moment now to find that paper. As the interpreter, I will control how much or how little of that information that I am receiving, I am ready to put out. Or, when I receive something, I will voice it or sign it when I understand it. How much or how little varies. How long do we wait until we understand what is said? I look back on the old days when we discussed how many seconds we would be behind the speaker or how high to count in creating lag time. Now we are on the right track, though. I'm getting a little off the point, here, but how long do we trail behind the speaker in our interpreting? Until we understand. Period. That's all. If we don't understand it, we can't interpret it. We can do something, but that's not interpreting.



Translation: Sandra Gish Presentation

translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

So, the answer to the question depends on that mentee and their processing. Some people will take a long time before they start. Others may quickly pick up on what the speaker is saying and understand it and are then able to put out an interpretation. With this example, it's not necessarily the case that the mentee is making the call. The person who is pausing the tape is who is controlling the pace. That's a bit of a problem, but for practice it's acceptable. The third statement on that paper is that the interpreter controls the production – what I say or what I sign. I'm responsible for that.

Those four things are my groundrules, or the basic criteria. What the interpreter is saying or signing must be formed with correct grammar. If the interpreter is just talking or voicing, it may not necessarily be English. Sometimes it's 'ASL talk.' For instance, "the four of us in the car drive drive drive." I don't think so! Sometimes the interpreter will be voicing using a mixture of ASL and English. Let's say the Deaf person signs 'I PUZZLED/QUIZZICAL, WHY HEARING AID LEAVE?' So, the interpreter says "I was puzzled. Why did that boy fall asleep with his hearing aids on." Actually it's why did my son leave his hearing aids on.

But the point relates to the sign PUZZLED. We have to be careful sometimes that when we see a sign we don't latch onto that and understand it only in one sense of the word. This would be glossing it. We tend to say the one word we associate with that sign. I mean, hearing people must think Deaf people are the most puzzled group of people in the world. And, the most curious, too! You know the sign for curious is often not the meaning of what is actually being said. It's just a polite way to begin a question. Deaf people will often sign "curious" with the intent behind it being that they don't want to disagree or challenge the other person. So, they sign CURIOUS at the beginning of their statement or question. The interpretation, though, is always "I am curious..." and that's really silly. It's just a heads up on something to be careful about.

In the practice session, then, we see that being signed in the videotape. Now it's time to work on producing one good sentence with appropriate English grammar. I tell the student that their sentence must be a complete sentence. As interpreters, we are infamous for starting a sentence and then just leaving it hanging halfway through. An example can be taken from the dialogue in the videotape when the woman explains she was doing this and that before going into the boy's room. If the interpretation is "Well, I...", then the people in the audience are left thinking that they have to finish that thought themselves. Sometimes I call that the magic fairy dust need. We expect some magic fairy to come in and with her fairy dust create meaning for us. That's silly. We are so infamous for that, particularly when interpreting from English to ASL. We'll just sign this and that, here and there and dropping sentences as we go. Often interpreters begin one sentence and miss a part, or are behind or something, and the second half of the sentence is just gone. For the next sentence we miss a part or the brain just doesn't get it, and so the first half of the second sentence is missing and we just finish up with the last part. By



Translation: Sandra Gish Presentation

translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

missing the last half of the first sentence and the first half of the second sentence, we just sandwich those two halves together and think we're done! But, it's not so at all. That's very dangerous. We must have the sentence be a complete one.

Next, what is said has to be equivalent to what the speaker has said at some level. There are varying levels. For the first sentence of "A Christmas Memory," maybe that mentee can only say "Now, it's Christmas Time." OK, great! That's 'equivalent.' It's not completely equal, but it's a start. We can start with that at their level. Or perhaps an interpretation of: "Now that it's Christmas, I want to tell you about something that happened when my child was young." The grammar is complete and it's equivalent. Not totally equivalent yet, but it is for their level. As time passes and the mentee improves, she'll add more and more to reach more sophisticated levels in reaching a full equivalent. That's the goal, of course. But for now, they can't. So what are the choices? "Now that it is Christmas I want to tell you about something that happened to my child when they were young." That's one choice. The alternative is: "Christmas time....I remember..boy...I missed the fingerspelling...story." Which do you prefer?

You know, it's funny. When I started to actually think about and develop this approach, I asked Deaf people a question. I asked them which of two choices they would prefer given a scenario with a hearing speaker talking on and on, for let's say fifty sentences. I asked them which they'd rather see: all fifty sentences signed but all garbled together OR ten sentences that are clear, to the point and use appropriate grammar. What most Deaf people said was that they wanted all fifty as good, clear, to the point sentences. Of course! Quality with quantity. But sorry, Charlie, that isn't your choice today! I'm often working with a mentee, colleague, protégé, or student, or an experienced interpreter who wants to go back to develop foundations. In asking them which of those two choices they wanted, the Deaf people of course picked the option of good, clear sentences with correct grammar. Many of the responses indicated an appreciation for good, clear sentences because it meant the Deaf person was not having to process what they were seeing and try to make sense of it. Instead, because they were not forced to try to figure out what was being said by the speaker, they were left free to think about what the speaker was saying, develop their own opinions, and consider the information itself. In addition, there is time to interject with an idea or ask a question.

That information gives us a start. We can practice until we get to that point. I can promise the Deaf person that this is the goal we are working towards and we'll get there. Right now, it's just a matter of practice. Once again, this is not on the job or during an assignment. I'm referring to the videotape and the practice sessions we are doing with it. An interesting note is that sometimes we have to, absolutely have to, decide how to consolidate information. Let's say we are at a hospital in a really tough situation. There's been a car accident or a heart attack or such. In those instances, you don't want to be interpreting a mile a minute. That requires a lot of analyzing. Another interesting point comes from Betsy Winston. She's done a lot of



Translation: Sandra Gish Presentation

translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

interesting research and work related to interpreting in the classroom. She'd looked at the question of how frequently a student can watch the interpreter and still know what is happening within the classroom environment. The result of that research was the discovery that it rarely happens. Most students in a classroom multi-task by listening and writing notes simultaneously, or watch a videotape or movie, or watch a scientific experiment being conducted. The point is that their attention has to be diverted elsewhere while doing something else at the same time. The deaf person, on the other hand, is stuck. How can we create a situation where the Deaf student can watch the scientific experiment and yet still get the information? We need to be listening and holding on to all that information and then put that out in a more concise, consolidated piece that gets right to the point when they are able to bring their attention back to the interpreter and away from whatever it is they also need to watch. And if we interpret that objective or portion with good use of grammar, I think more students will watch the interpreter. Now, we sign willy-nilly, here and there and are directing the student to watch us. Well, my question is "why watch?" if none of it is understandable. If it's all gobbledygook, what's the point? Imagine if that student was watching the movie, or science experiment, or whatever and knew when they looked over at the interpreter the interpretation would be clear, to the point and in a consolidated piece. They knew they could direct their attention between the two things. Even better would be if I got the student's attention and directed them to watch me, they would trust and know that this is an important piece. When the interpretation is produced and everything is clear, then they could direct their attention elsewhere. So, we need to work on that.

Next on your paper, you'll see "sub-objectives" underneath "objectives." This is what happens when a speaker goes on for a very long time, or there is a lot of turn taking that occurs over a long period of time. Initially, I'll establish each objective. As time progresses I will take those individual objectives and put them together as one objective. And that is all one objective that has many parts to it, each of which is a sub-objective. But, you don't need to worry about that part. If your colleague feels comfortable with the various objectives, it's almost a natural progression that they will start to do more and more, just like in the model and eventually start to have complete sentences in larger chunks.

Let me back up a bit to the criteria needed for an interpretation. The first is that there must be good grammar used in full, complete sentences. The second criteria is that there must be equivalency that is in line with their skill level. Third, their needs to be congruence [14:58 ??????????????]. It's not appropriate to have an interpretation like: "Now it is Christmas. He fell asleep with his hearing aids on. I worked around the house." I'll tell the mentee how very nice that is – I don't think so! There must be flow to each of those parts. The fourth criteria is that there needs to be pauses between sentences. That one may seem an odd one in the context of the other three criteria and you may be wondering why I have that as one of the criteria. The reason I put it in there is because Deaf people asked me to. They expressed real frustration with interpreters just signing away, one sign after another without ever



Translation: Sandra Gish Presentation

translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

pausing. This was an experience in confusion. Was one idea finished and a new idea had been introduced, or was the speaker still on the same idea? There should be pauses in between different chunks of information. I feel badly for hearing people, too, because they experience the same thing when there is voicing interpretation.

So, those are the four criteria. And remember, I said there are four, and two more. The other two are kind of funny. The first one is something we all tend to do. It's where we insert things like "I don't know if I got everything" or "I don't know if that's right." Or, we'll make that facial expression of rolling our eyes or exasperation. That's not permissible for the student. Out in the real world, that can't happen. One needs to maintain their professional demeanor. I'm not talking about when an interpreter who is out interpreting kind of gets by with not understanding something. When we don't understand something, we have a lot of different approaches for how to handle that, such as interrupting, asking question, or making adjustments. I don't want that student to practice with old, bad habits. So, I ask them to think about if they are ready and when that is the case, then just talk. And then they'll start with "Now it's Christmas..." and so on. For the other additional criteria, I tell them that when they are finished with their sentence to shut up! Interpreters, you know, will so often come out with this beautiful, flowing sentence and end it with "I hope that's right." Or a beautiful sentence with "that was garbage; I didn't get that right!" tacked on at the end. Out in the world, though, you can't do that. There are lots of strategies for how to transmit information to a Deaf person and to a hearing person. If it's not exactly what you want, there are ways to address that without it being a grumbling complaint that gets put on at the end. Another thing that tends to happen is a sentence that progresses towards a growl or a disgusted face. Instead, it needs to be done with a neutral, professional demeanor accompanying the interpretation. Really, though, these things are human nature. When we preface the interpreting with saying it's not right or add on that it's not very good, the meaning behind that is that really we're right! What it is actually saying is "Well, I told you it wasn't any good" or "I told you I didn't get everything" and therefore I've covered my bases and I'm still right. That's natural. But, it's really not acceptable.