





Panel on Sign Language Interpreting Education and Assessment

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Sign Language Interpreter Accreditation: Lessons Learned



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Interpreters: Presence around the World





Competency: How do we Assess?

- Beginning with training processes
 - Competency and Outcomes in programs (Roberts, 1992; Liu & Yu-Hsien, 2009)
 - Assessment Practices among faculty and among programs (Winston & Swabey, 2011)
 - Recruitment & Retention of Potentially Successful Interpreter Students (Bontempo, 2015; Bontempo & Napier, 2014)
- Entry level to specialization
 - Competency and Outcomes in programs (Winston, 2005; 2014)
 - Assessment Practices (Napier, 2004)









Around the world

Theoretical Knowledge

- Written Exams
 - History of Profession
 - Linguistics
 - Interpretation Models
 - Ethical Decision Making
- Specialized Knowledge – ex: Legal System, Legal Vocabulary; Legal Processes
 - De Souza, 2020; Pochhacher, 2004; Russell & Malcolm, 2011; swabey, 2017)

Interpretation Performance

- Monologues
- Interactive Segments
- Simultaneous
- Consecutive
- SI/CI blends
- Scenarios – Appropriate for domain being tested
- Ex: conference work vs. medical interpreting


Other Assessment Options Used

Portfolio Approach

- Based on demonstrating competency or outcomes
- Often use as final assessment process prior to graduation from IEP
- Faculty & Community Raters
- Challenges: Validity – Standardization

Live Simulations


- Based on demonstrating competency or outcomes
- Challenges: Validity – Standardization
- Ex:
 - Proficiency Assessment for SL (SLPI or CEFR)
 - Simulated Patient in Medical Programs



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Testing: Language vs. Interpretation

- Many countries struggle with this and mix both into same test
- Best practice:
 - *Separate the language testing; if cannot meet language performance criteria, how can the person interpret?*
- Current practice:
 - *Pass Language domains first, and if not pass those, then not mark interpretation segments.*
 - Expensive model



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Interpretation: Lessons Learned?

- **Internationally:**
 - ISO Standards exist for general interpreting, community, conference, legal & healthcare interpreting
 - WFD-WASLI Joint Standard on International Sign Accreditation
 - Portfolio & Performance – still people can slip through +/- passes and fails
- **Nationally:**
 - Stakeholder involvement key in gaining construct validity & content validity
 - Criterion or Norm Referenced
 - Setting bar with panel of experts
 - Need to work with Measurement & Assessment specialists
 - Build in test renewal and evaluation per 3-5 year cycle


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Interpretation: Best Practices

- External Body vs. Professional Body managing accreditation
 - Ex: NAATI model
- Test versions: A & B
 - Renewal Cycles
- Pass/Fail – no appeals
 - Retake in 6 months
- Raters – trained/ monitored for inter-rater reliability
- Consensus Models
 - Interpreter raters: Deaf & non-deaf
- Feedback or no Feedback
 - Rubrics shared with candidates
 - Written feedback – open to “interpretation” but can be useful
 - Ex: One screening allows candidate to see their performance & discuss with a specialist who is NOT a rater

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Rubrics



- Link to cognitive models of interpreting & major constructs of interpreting per each Target Language
- Refined descriptions 1-6
- Constructs examples:
 - Understands communicative intent & event purpose
 - Meaning-Based interpreting
 - Interpreting Process Management
 - Situationally Appropriate

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Translation: Lessons Learned?

- **Internationally:**
 - ISO Standards exist
- **Nationally:**
 - Standards exist
- Prepared Translation
- Sight Translation
 - Ex: Medical Form
- **Best Practices:**
 - Use of dictionaries, resources on line
 - Error categories clearly defined
 - Marking – Inter-rater reliability
 - Rubrics that are refined with descriptors

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Conclusion: Fast, Good, of Cheap – Pick Two

- Create assessments for professional accreditation WITH Deaf community organizations
- Separate testing body from professional body
- Seek clear guidance from assessment specialist familiar with signed languages & interpretation practices
- Take the time *to get it right*
 - Pilot testing
 - Quality vignettes film
 - Rubrics refined for task
 - Inter-rater reliability





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