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Collaboration with Interpreters in K-12 Education

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**Collaboration with Interpreters
in K-12 Education**

By
Karen E. Brimm

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

**Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies
and Communication Equity**
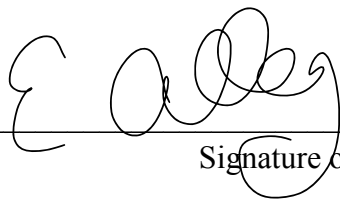
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Abstract

Educational interpreting for students who are Deaf and hard of hearing (DHH), like other interpreting specializations, involves much more than linguistic competence, message management skills, and cultural competence. An educational interpreter uses those skills and competencies within the K-12 environment populated by other educational professionals (e.g., related services personnel and teachers). Best practices in educational interpreting suggest that collaboration between the interpreter and the rest of the IEP team is fundamental. However, strategies for such collaboration are not outlined in the literature. This two-phase study examined collaboration in the K-12 school setting between educational interpreters and other educational professionals (OEPs) (i.e., general education teachers, teachers of the Deaf and hard of hearing, special education teachers, and speech-language pathologists) in order to identify the patterns of collaborative practices. The researcher distributed a national survey instrument. The researcher then conducted interviews with a randomly selected volunteer from each job category. The data gathered indicated that collaboration not only takes place in K-12 settings but also appeared to be a critical element of the work done by educational interpreters and OEPs in service of DHH children in K-12 education. The study revealed existing patterns of collaborative practice including resource and information sharing, attendance of meetings and training, problem-solving, and building of rapport. It also detected factors that supported or inhibited collaborative efforts such as availability of time, sharing of student-related information, perceptions of expertise and professionalism, and confusion regarding the role of the interpreter. Findings suggested that collaboration with interpreters in K-12 settings necessitates coordinated and strategic efforts on the part of interpreters and OEPs who work with students who are Deaf and hard of hearing.

Collaboration with Interpreters
in K-12 Education

Educational interpreting for students who are Deaf and hard of hearing (DHH), like other

interpreting specializations, involves much more than linguistic competence, message

management skills, and cultural competence (Stuckless, Avery & Hurwitz, 1989; Smith, 2013).

An educational interpreter uses those skills and competencies within the K-12 environment

populated by *other educational professionals (OEPs)* (e.g., teachers and related services

providers). Those professionals impact the interpreter's practice and the interpreter's ability to

collaborate (Witter-Merithew, Johnson & Nicodemus, 2010). I decided to pursue collaboration in

K-12 interpreting as a topic of research because the majority of my professional interpreting

experience has occurred in the K-12 environment. I have noticed firsthand the importance of

effective collaboration among educational team members in successfully providing quality

educational interpreting services to students who are *Deaf and hard of hearing* (DHH). Students

who are DHH are acknowledged to have a level of hearing loss which adversely affects their

educational performance (IDEA, Sec. 300.8). Effective collaboration among professionals

ideally creates a synergistic whole that is worth more than the sum of its parts (Schutz et al.,

2001) and assumes that meaning and knowledge are co-constructed by collaborators (Montiel-

Overall, 2005a). Interpreters are constantly balancing what they think should be done in the

classroom with what the other educational professionals think should be done (Smith, 2013), all

in the pursuit of providing access to a quality education to students who are identified as DHH.

Best practices in educational interpreting resources, such as those written by Seal (2004), and

Schick (2007), the creator of the nationally recognized Educational Interpreter Proficiency

Assessment, recommend collaboration between the interpreter and the rest of the members of

Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. However, a question still remains: What does that collaboration among professionals in the K-12 setting look like?

Statement of the Problem

Interpreters struggle to successfully navigate the educational setting (Smith, 2013; Witter-Merithew et al., 2010; Johnson, Brown, Taylor & Austin, 2014), partially due to the fact that although best practices encourage interpreters to collaborate (Seal, 2004; RID CPC; Schick, 2007), strategies for such collaboration are not outlined (Mertens, 1991; Smith, 2013).

Research Questions

In what ways do educational interpreters collaborate with fellow educational professionals in the K-12 setting? In what ways do other professionals in the educational system collaborate with educational interpreters? What, if any, is the relationship between relational autonomy and collaboration?

Purpose of the Study

This research aims to investigate the ways in which educational interpreters currently collaborate with other OEPs (i.e., general education teachers, teachers of the Deaf and hard of hearing, special education teachers, and speech-language pathologists) in the K-12 setting. The current study will result in an extrapolated definition of collaboration as it pertains to interpreting in the K-12 setting. This research identifies some common patterns of collaborative practice reported by K-12 educational interpreters working in concert with other professionals in the educational system. Applying a phenomenological research philosophy (Manen & Adams, 2010), qualitative and quantitative data were gathered to explore collaborative practices used by educational interpreters and other professionals. Collection of data regarding the form and effectiveness of collaboration between interpreters and educational professionals could lead to

recommendations for improved collaborative efforts and provide suggestions for improved best

practices. This exploration begins with a review of the present literature surrounding the notion

of collaboration.

Literature Review

Framework for Collaboration

Although collaboration in business and education has been studied in depth (Cook &

Friend, 1991; 2010; Pugach & Johnson, 2002; Schutz, et al., 2001), a precise definition has not

been agreed upon by researchers. This is because the nature of collaboration is dependent on the

context in which it occurs. Additionally, there is a common misconception that collaboration

happens *whenever* people work together (Elliott, 2001). Collaboration does occur when people

work together, but one of its foundational characteristics is the pursuit of a common goal

(Giangreco, Prelock, Reid, Dennis, & Edelman, 2000; Hoza, 2010). Rather than being construed

as an end product that results from collegiality, it should perhaps be conceptualized as a process.

For the purposes of framing this study, *collaboration in K-12 interpreting* will be defined in line

with Elliott (2001), Hoza (2010), and Monteil-Overall (2005a) as a process where willing

professionals work together through cooperation and the combining of expertise to provide

educational and social access to the student(s) with whom they work.

Research in the field of education characterizes successful collaborative efforts in

educational settings, including: (a) rapport building, (b) democratic establishment of project

goals, (c) commitment, (d) cultural and institutional awareness, and (e) acknowledgement of

individual areas of expertise (Elliott, 2001). *Rapport* can be loosely defined as the establishment

of meaningful interpersonal relationships in order to create mutual understanding (Elliott, 2001).

Elliott's (2001) area of study was concerned with instructors and researchers in the post-

secondary setting, but the principles and characteristics which Elliott discussed can be generalized and applied to the K-12 setting.

Specifically pertaining to the interpreting profession, collaboration has most commonly been framed as an interdependent relationship between a team of two (or more) interpreters acting together to create an effective interpretation (Hoza, 2010). MacDonald (2002) defined a professional as a member of a self-regulating occupation group who has the right to practice in a specific field. To be considered interdependent, interpreting professionals must bring their own competence and abilities to the interpreting team so that they can rely on each other for expertise and assistance (Hoza, 2010; Montiel-Overall 2005b). Thirty-two percent of the interpreters surveyed by Hoza (2010) felt that they practiced collaborative and interdependent teaming, which suggests that the field of interpreting was at that time beginning to view collaboration as more than simply two interpreters working together on the same assignment and instead viewed teaming as a partnership involving a contributive process.

Interpreters working in an educational environment may utilize collaboration in a different manner. In 1975, the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (PL-94-142) necessitated that interpreters enter public education classrooms in order to provide services to students who are DHH (Cook & Friend, 1991). Later, the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004* established that special education teams must include interpreters as related services providers (IDEA, Sec. 300.34). As a result, interpreters' concept of teaming had to be adapted from interpreter-with-interpreter collaboration to that of being a member of the educational team. Under federal statutes, a *related service* is any "developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education" (IDEA, Sec. 300.34). Collaboration between educational

professionals and what are now called educational interpreters became necessary for the benefit of students who are DHH. It therefore would be helpful to examine how educational professionals view collaboration, and then to review what has been observed in research related to collaboration in educational settings.

Collaboration in educational settings. Drake (2001) examined collaboration as an organizational process applied by educators while delivering a curriculum. Drake (2001) noted that educators often were given directives via administration or legislation but were just as often left to co-construct strategies necessary for carrying out those directives. The development of a collaborative culture within schools became integral to the successful accomplishment of group goals. Collaboration necessitated a conducive organizational environment. However, Drake (2001) found that mandated or "contrived collaboration" (p. 87) was unsuccessful. He agreed with older research by Hargreaves (as cited in DiPardo, 1997) who called it "contrived collegiality" (p. 100). Drake (2001) agreed with Elliott (2001), asserting that parties from different backgrounds and specializations must participate willingly if the collaboration were to be successful. Drake (2001) also identified three general levels of collaboration: (a) information exchange; (b) joint planning and participation; and (c) joint and concurrent implementation. Drake (2001) also found that educators' lack of available time to engage with one another was a significant hindrance to collaborative activities, as well as to establishing and maintaining working relationships (Drake, 2001). This supported earlier observations by DiPardo (1997) and Smith (1998) regarding the scarcity of available time, and observations by Montiel-Overall (2005b) regarding the need for the formation of relationships between interactors.

Prior to Drake (2001), John-Steiner, Weber, and Minnis (1998) responded to an argument presented in "Collaboration as Dialogue: Teachers and Researchers Engaged in Conversation

and Professional Development" (Clark et al., 1996). The original work had examined the power

dynamic within the collaborative effort, specifically between teachers and researchers. The

respondents felt that although Clark et al. (1996) effectively described collaboration stories in

their piece and recognized that collaboration involves professional tension, they did not allow for

a sufficiently broad definition of collaboration but rather restricted it to dialogue only. John-

Steiner et al. (1998) felt that a multifaceted definition of collaboration should be established

using multiple models of collaboration. They discussed processes and outcomes of collaboration

and came to the conclusion that collaboration should be examined as a framework across

settings, tasks, and work methods in order to satisfy common goals. It was their opinion that

collaboration developed through complimentary relationships and through overcoming status

differences between participants. This correlated with arguments made by Elliott (2001) and

Schutz et al. (2001) regarding the need for *situational leadership* dynamics instead of

hierarchical structures.

Later, Montiel-Overall (2005a) approached the topic of professional collaboration from

the perspective of teachers and librarians in secondary schools. Much like Elliott (2001),

Montiel-Overall acknowledged that collaboration is a widely used term with many definitions.

Montiel-Overall (2005a) defined collaboration as a process where individuals partner to integrate

information for the benefit of their students. Four models of collaboration were detailed, and

attributes and activities of collaboration were listed including friendliness, collegiality, respect,

shared vision and problem solving, trust, flexibility, and communication. The author came to the

conclusion that collaboration is critical among specialists who are tasked with serving the needs

of the student holistically. She also noted that organizational culture may need to be adjusted in

order to create a collaborative environment, and that administrations must support that effort.

These principles can be extrapolated to apply to other collaborative partnerships in the K-12 setting. Montiel-Overall (2005b) followed that article with another, suggesting several models of collaboration noting a range of involvement and investment by participants. The notion that participants must choose to buy-in to the process of collaboration was also noted by Antia and Stinson (1999) whose work will be discussed later in this review.

Collaboration in special education. As was previously explained, educational interpreters are considered related services providers in the educational setting (IDEA, Sec. 300.34). Giangreco, Prelock, Reid, Dennis, and Edelman (2000) explained,

> related services personnel can provide students with disabilities *access* to an appropriate education and facilitate students' pursuit of important *learning outcomes* through the application of the specific skills associated with their respective disciplines and the collaborative skills required to work effectively with others (p. 360-361, emphasis in the original).

However, Giangreco et al. (2000) also noted that while related services providers possess a level of expertise in their particular specialty, it cannot be assumed that they also have the expertise to provide that service in an inclusive school setting which serves children with varying degrees of developmental disability. For that reason, and because specialties sometimes overlap, Giangreco et al. (2000) suggested that collaboration and communication among providers and teachers is essential for efficient and effective service provision, as did Cook and Friend (1991). Adopting this shared framework of collaboration in pursuit of quality education provision was determined to be necessary (Giangreco et al., 2000), in spite of specialists' natural tendencies to sometimes protect their areas of expertise as singularly important. It must also be acknowledged that related services providers may themselves provide services at proficiency levels ranging between novice

and expert (Seal, 2000). Therefore, only by collaborating can special education professionals ensure that a student's education is being provided in the most optimal fashion.

Hunt, Soto, Maier, and Doerning (2003) found that in special education, teachers often used collaborative teaming to deliver curriculae to students. This approach to instruction allowed special educators to unify the general education and special education systems in order to tailor an education plan to a student's specific needs. Collaborative teaming processes practiced by teachers in their study required: regular and positive face-to-face interactions; a structure for resolving issues; monitoring of performance; and individual, agreed-upon accountability (Hunt et al., 2003). A degree of role flexibility assisted in addressing student needs, and the teachers involved had to share responsibility for the team's success or lack of progress toward a student's goals. Thousand and Villa (2000) argued that expertise therefore must be shared via positive *interdependence*, and that there must be structured time set aside within the professional day for this sharing to occur. Thousand and Villa (2000) also mentioned that in collaborative teaching teams, members must use that time to publicly state goals and objectives so that everyone involved can be held accountable. They noted that certain interpersonal skills are advantageous to collaboration of this kind, including: trust building, communication, leadership, creative problem solving, decision making, and conflict management (Thousand & Villa, 2000).

Collaboration observed in research. Smith's (2013) study concluded that interpreters would benefit from understanding how collaboration occurs and what makes that collaboration effective. Smith (2013) suggested, "interpreters must also be well equipped to interact socially and professionally with school personnel as well as Deaf and hard of hearing students" (p. 166). Researchers from Mertens (1991) to Smith (2013) noted that additional research continues to be needed in order to more fully investigate collaborative strategies. Beaver, Hayes, and Luetke-

Stahlman (1995) surveyed educational interpreters and teachers and concluded that collaborative effort among professionals was imperative for student success. Seal (2000) added to the field's knowledge of collaboration by surveying educational interpreters and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) specifically. While conducting a multi-year study, Antia (1999), and Antia and Kreimeyer (2001) looked at the roles of educational interpreters and special educators and cited several challenges and pitfalls that prevented effective professional collaboration. The following is a summary of collaboration research done to date which involved educational interpreters specifically.

Antia (1999) conducted one of the first longitudinal studies examining special education specifically as experienced by Deaf and hard of hearing students. The study collected data over a three-year period in a public school, observing efforts to mainstream Deaf and hard of hearing students. Interviews and observations focused on the educators' interactions and roles in an inclusive environment and how those roles supported student success. The researcher came to the conclusion that teachers and specialists should clarify their roles and responsibilities in order to form an effective educational team. She noted that the collaborative classroom tended to have more than the standard number of adults entering and exiting the room in the course of delivering services, which can be disruptive if handled improperly and can cause friction between adults who may feel territorial about sharing a professional space (Antia, 1999), an observation echoed by Cawthon (2001). The teachers reported that at times they were uncomfortable with the interpreter's presence in the classroom. Also noted was a general lack of time available for inter-specialty planning and collaborating during the school day. This negatively impacted collaboration, since time is required for establishing rapport, sharing resources and expertise, and formulating ways to attain shared goals (Antia, 1999; DiPardo, 1997; Hunt, Soto, Maier, &

Doering, 2003). Antia's (1999) study documented some role confusion involving the teacher of the Deaf assuming interpreter duties, and interpreters being tasked with classroom management or instructional assistant duties. Interpreters were often excluded from planning sessions and not given lesson plan materials in advance of the lesson delivery. Antia (1999) determined that these issues are problematic and detracted from collaborative success.

The same study was described from a slightly different perspective by Antia and Kreimeyer (2001). Their article accompanied Antia's (1999) previous study, and examined the same data, focusing specifically on the role of interpreters in the classroom. This is one of the few study articles to date that has addressed teacher-interpreter interaction specifically. Major themes that emerged include diversity of role responsibility, differences in the perception of the interpreter's role by the various educational professionals who participated in the study, educational team membership acceptance, and the change in the interpreter's role over time (Antia & Kreimeyer, 2001). Personal discomfort felt by team members was noted regarding the presence of the interpreter and the need to sign in front of the interpreter. The authors suggested that a close working relationship between the teacher and the interpreter was desirable in order to facilitate visual accessibility of material and smooth classroom interactions. They suggested that the school's ongoing lack of role delineation could hinder the collaborative process (Antia & Kreimeyer, 2001).

In one of the few study articles to date that addresses teacher-interpreter interaction specifically, a nationwide study conducted by Beaver et al. (1995) investigated *in-service training* practices for teachers regarding their work alongside educational interpreters in mainstream classrooms. In-service training was defined as that which provides opportunities for teachers to grow professionally in skills or competencies. The majority of teachers who

participated in the study stated that they had not received in-service training to familiarize them with educational interpreting, regardless of the grade level they taught or how many Deaf or hard of hearing students there were in the student population. These teachers obtained their information via the educational interpreters themselves or from the teachers of the Deaf, although there was no determination made about whether those individuals were qualified to provide that information. Teachers who did attend DHH-related in-service trainings reported that they found the training useful. The study suggested that teachers should receive in-service training about educational interpreting in order to enable collaboration between professionals. This concurs with similar recommendations from Schafer and Cokely (2016). Beaver et al. (1995) asserted that improved in-service training availability would result in better outcomes for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. More recently, Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (2014) agreed, stating that this type of interaction allowed participants to become more familiar with one another personally and professionally, thereby engendering trust, respect, and understanding of group norms.

An earlier study by Mertens (1991) explored the quality of an interpreted education as experienced by Deaf students. This is one of the few study articles to date that addresses teacher-interpreter interaction specifically while including the student perspective. One of the three salient issues addressed in the study was the student's concern regarding the role of the interpreter in the classroom. Unlike the teachers, who predominantly thought that the interpreter should participate in classroom behavior management while working, the students surveyed indicated that the interpreter should not be involved in directing students. The interpreters indicated that they wished to adjust their role responsibilities according to the needs of the situation, which reflects a need for *relational autonomy*, or informed decision-making power as

described by Witter-Merithew et al. (2010). Mertens' (1991) study implied that interpreters and teachers need to confer with each other to provide clarity regarding role duties among other concerns related to the classroom environment. This study concurs with the earlier National Task Force on Educational Interpreting (Stuckless, et al., 1989) when it suggested the need for appropriate delineation of role and responsibilities for interpreters. It also highlighted, as did Smith (2013), that concrete strategies need to be established for teachers and interpreters to accomplish collaboration.

Seal (2000) conducted a survey of educational interpreter participants and extrapolated from research to date to suggest guidelines for improved working relationships between educational interpreters and SLPs in K-12 settings. She suggested that optimally educational interpreters should meet state quality standards, in addition to having prior knowledge of child language and development and familiarity with educational pedagogy and teaching approaches. Those skills contribute to effective professional collaboration. Seal (2000) recommended that SLPs take advantage of the interpreter's specialized expertise whenever possible, a notion supported later by Elliott (2001) and Montiel-Overlook (2005a). She recommended that SLPs consult the interpreter in order to gain information regarding each student's communication skill profile (Seal, 2000) and about sign language and signing systems, and to gain knowledge about Deafness and Deaf culture, areas where interpreters were subject matter experts. Seal (2000) noted that SLPs and interpreters must agree on division of responsibilities during treatment and diagnostic sessions conducted by the therapist, including the preferred language mode to be used during these sessions. This would allow the therapist to more effectively gather data. Concurring with findings by Beaver et al. (1995), the interpreters from Seal's (2000) surveyed also suggested that in-service training for SLPs improved their professional relationship and contributed to

collaborative programing success. Although Seal (2000) cautioned against over-generalizing the responses from her survey, she indicated that the survey findings can be used in the field as an effective preliminary baseline for collaboration recommendations among professionals who provide communication services. This is one of the only studies to date which elaborated on real-world strategies for interpreters and SLPs to develop a collaborative relationship.

Patterns of Practice

Collaboration is recommended in prominent "best practices" resources, such as those written by Seal (2004) and the creators of the Educational Interpreter Proficiency Assessment (EIPA), a nationally recognized test of educational interpreter knowledge and skills, provided through the EIPA Diagnostic Center at Boys Town National Research Hospital. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf's (RID) NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) (2015) states that "interpreters are expected to collaborate with colleagues to foster the delivery of effective interpreting services" (Tenet 5.0). RID (2015) narrowly defines the term *colleague* as a fellow interpreter, but also recommends in Tenet 2.4 of the CPC that interpreters should "request support" from others who can provide additional expertise in the work environment. For the purposes of this study, colleagues include not only fellow interpreters but also teachers and related service providers within a K-12 setting.

Best practices for educational interpreters. In a foundational report entitled *Educational interpreting for deaf students: A report on the national task force on educational interpreting*, Stuckless, et al. (1989), presented work which was the culmination of a multi-organizational task force assembled to examine the then newly established specialization of educational interpreting. Among other aspects, the report suggested minimum standards and protocols for: specifying an educational job description; delineating roles and responsibilities;

and suggestions for training educational professionals and parents regarding the effective use of

interpreting services. Written not long after the passage of PL-94-142, the national legislation

requiring inclusive special education for students with disabilities, this report is a seminal work

in the development of educational interpreter standards of practice and professionalism.

Stuckless et al. (1989) recommended that educational interpreters have the ability to work with

OEPs to provide DHH resources, assess the student's ability to learn via an interpreter, and

participate in the IEP team and process.

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID, 1993) released a report entitled *Model*

standards for the certification of educational interpreters for deaf students and suggested options

for routes to certification. This document delineated guidelines and suggestions made by the

National Task Force on Educational Interpreting, which was formed in 1985 in order to collect

data on the current state of educational interpreting. Many organizations and experts participated

in the Task Force, including the American Society for Deaf Children, the National Association of

the Deaf (NAD), RID, and individuals of high professional regard such as Dr. Carol Patrie and

Dr. Diane Castle. The document concisely stated the Task Force's recommendations for

minimum standards of interpreter quality and patterns of practice. Recommendations included

essential competencies for educational interpreters, such as: knowledge of general education

principles, foundations in education and deafness, foundations in interpreting, knowledge

specific to educational interpreting, minimum communication and educational interpreting skills,

and observation and practicum participation. This remains a foundational document for the

educational interpreter specialization because it, along with the Task Force report itself,

established minimum expectations for the K-12 setting for the first time. Particularly relevant to

this study is the consideration that educational interpreters should have an understanding of the

foundations of education so that they can function effectively in an educational environment, a view supported by Witter-Merithew et al. (2010) and Seal (2004).

Seal's (2004) book describes best practices for educational interpreters within K-12 and post-secondary settings. Seal gathered myriad references and culled them to assemble basic guidelines: everything from sample job descriptions and evaluative checklists, to recommendations for further research. Primary, elementary, middle, and high schools, and post-secondary settings were covered in separate sections. Her text is a seminal work which has been used by interpreters since it was written in order to develop constructive patterns of practice in the educational setting. Of particular interest to this study are the subsections of the book which described the interpreter's role in the classroom, hypothetical cases which provided illustrative solutions to common interpersonal challenges faced by interpreters when dealing with other staff members, and citations of related research concerning educational interpreter professional behavior. Seal (2004) noted that educational interpreters are a critical link between the student who is DHH and other members of the educational team, and as such are integral team members. She also pointed out that many of the guidelines used by SLPs and teachers regarding collaboration should and can be applied to interactions with educational interpreters. Seal (2004) proposed that interpreters demonstrate their value to the team through the performance of their services, and that collaboration between professionals will occur once teachers recognize each team member's valuable contribution to their shared efforts. This perspective is slightly less direct than other methods of establishing rapport and synergy (Schutz et al., 2001).

Practices observed in research. The focus of Smith's (1998) dissertation was to clarify the sometimes-overlapping roles and responsibilities of the special educator, general educator and the educational interpreter in the mainstream classroom inclusive of Deaf and hard of

hearing students. Smith (1998) outlined the history of educational interpreting, provided to-date

descriptions of the roles of the staff members mentioned above, and presented a

conceptualization for collaboration that could be applied to the dynamic between those staff

members. Consensus was established about role delineation between the individuals surveyed.

The author also concluded that collaboration on the part of the professionals was vital to the

success of the student, a conclusion later supported by Smith (2013). Smith (1998) asserted that

the members of the team must have "buy-in" to collaborative efforts, also characterized as

"ownership" by Antia and Stinson (1999), and that school adminstrations must support these by

fostering a philosophy of collaboration and providing time and resources. Confirming

conclusions drawn by Cook and Friend (1991), Smith (1998) observed that each of the three

types of professionals brought their own expertise to the environment and must be allowed to

share that expertise with mutual respect, as was later noted by Elliott (2001). Findings suggested

that mutual respect through collaboration is more effective than an expert-based models which

value certain areas of expertise above others and discourage equivalent contributions from all

parties (Cook and Friend, 1991). Smith's (1998) study recommended that pre-service and in-

service training be provided, as mentioned by Beaver et al. (1995) and by Shafer and Cokely

(2016), and that professionals not isolate themselves from each other. It will be interesting to

compare the Smith (1998) study with the current thesis research to see differences in role and

collaboration, since Smith's (1998) was one of few studies in which collaboration involving

educational interpreters was a primary focus.

Smith's (2013) book results from Smith's (2010) dissertation, both of which stem from a

multi-school study examining patterns of practice in order to determine what educational

interpreters actually do in the classroom as compared to best practices. The author highlighted,

among other challenges, the existence of role confusion and lack of adequate preparation on the part of working interpreters. Smith reviewed research to date, mentioning roles and duties that interpreters have self-reported in past studies, some of which have reportedly caused problems related to collaborative success between interpreters and classroom teachers. The study concluded that it is vital for the interpreter to understand the goal of the instruction, and that collaboration between the interpreter and the classroom teacher is also vital. Smith pointedly stated, however, that more research needed to be done in order to examine interactions between interpreters and teachers, and that interpreters would benefit from a clearer understanding of interactive characteristics that would allow for successful collaboration. This conclusion was one inspiration for the current study of educational professional and interpreter collaboration and informed this thesis topic and questions. This text shed light on a setting which has had little direct study to date. Shafer and Cokely's (2016) focus group research concurred with Smith's (2013) recommendation that educational interpreters need to find strategies for working with other school personnel in a manner conducive to the learning of students who are DHH.

Johnson et al. (2014) presented evaluative data collected through a Department of Education grant in order to identify and describe patterns of practice in the area of educational interpreting. The data were used in order to provide an evidence-based approach for enriching pre- and in-service training for interpreting students and working educational interpreters. Among other questions, the study sought to determine the primary roles and responsibilities of the interpreters surveyed and determine what patterns of practice existed between interpreters and other educational professionals. The study included 1,615 interpreters from all 50 states but relied heavily on urban respondents who were credentialed and formally trained. This differs from the current study which seeks to include interpreters from diverse environments and

backgrounds. Johnson, et al's (2014) study found that while the participants highly valued

collaborative and supportive educational teams, many of them could not identify the members of

an educational team nor the roles of the various team members. Among the least important

elements of their role, they listed "understanding the curriculum." Only about half of the

respondents reported having any background in child, cognitive, or language development, and

only about 37% of them claimed to have training in educational theory. These findings

demonstrate that the training recommendations outlined by Stuckless et al. (1989) and RID

(1993) were not being followed nationally. The study's authors determined that participants'

clear lack of understanding of the educational system was a problem, and that interpreting skills

must be balanced with knowledge related to learning, language acquisition, and *systems thinking*

in order for the interpreter to be effective, the latter of which agrees with the argument presented

by Witter-Merithew et al. (2010). Systems thinking involves conceptualizing the

interconnectedness of the parts and participants of a system and appreciating how the system

functions and where the interpreter fits into that system (Witter-Merithew and Lancton, 2014).

Collegial relationships are essential in order to support student learning, which includes knowing

how to address challenges and with whom. This echoes findings by Stuckless et al. (1989) and

leads us to consider relational autonomy as related to collaboration.

Relational Autonomy

Witter-Merithew et al. (2010) authored a paper introducing a conceptual framework for

relational autonomy and discussed that topic in reference to student and novice interpreters'

decision-making skills development during their interpreter training. In order to do this, they

explained that interpreter autonomy, rather than being free agency for the interpreter to decide

whatever they like, is actually dependent on the social systems in which it is employed; in other

words, interpreters experience *relational autonomy*. Legislative mandates and patterns of

practice contribute to the framework of acceptable conduct, as do the inter- and intra-personal

relationships formed during work. Decision-making leads to professional action, which must

occur within the normed boundaries of behavior in that setting. Building on the work of many,

including Kasher (2005) and Dean and Pollard's (2001) Demand Control Schema framework for

ethical decision-making, the authors noted that professional maturity is displayed through

relational autonomy when interpreters avoid uninformed decisions and embrace collaboration

with others. This system-centric, rather than interpreter-centric, approach boosts professional

growth and integrated partnerships, and this approach to autonomy is compatible with

collaboration as defined in the current thesis development.

Kasher (2005) explained a basis of understanding for what constitutes a "profession" and

the professional acts and professional autonomy that follow. In Kasher's (2005) view, a

profession is defined as a certain sphere of human activity which is practiced as the extension of

a philosophy. Professional acts are those that align with the philosophy of a group of people who

identify as members of a given profession. Viewed through this lens, professionals must possess:

relevant systematic knowledge, systematic proficiency in solving relevant problems, a practice of

constant improvement, local understanding of practices, and global understanding of the nature

of the system in which they work (Kasher, 2005). Also discussed was the idea that although

professional communities cannot autonomously form their own definition of professional

practice, they can decide norms and ethical guidelines for what the community determines are

accepted professional acts under the circumstances. This may explain why interpreters have

historically struggled to establish professional practice standards that may be applied across a

wide range of settings and contingencies and has led to the well-used axiom of interpreter conduct, "It depends" (Woodruff, 2013).

This perspective aligns with the National Task Force standards summarized for the field by RID (1993) and with Seal's (2000) subsequent attempt to use those standards to establish conduct guidelines for educational interpreters specifically in the K-12 setting. The principles of professionalism (Kasher, 2005) therefore advocate for collaboration between educational professionals, which is the topic of the current thesis research.

MacDonald (2002) approached autonomy as a relational phenomenon, in this case taking place in the nursing field. The author asserted that professional autonomy cannot occur without understanding the relationships between professionals and patients, and between groups of professionals in general. In order to cultivate relational autonomy in staff members, institutional culture and profession norms must support and encourage development of independent judgement by also encouraging personal and institutional relationships in the workplace. According to MacDonald (2002), a *professional* is defined as a member of a self-regulating occupation group who has the right to practice in a specific field. This definition correlates with the definition provided by Kasher (2005) and is the definition that this researcher has adopted for the current study. The right to practice can be granted by legislative authority or self-imposed by the members of the occupation group, so sign language interpreters can be considered an occupation group to which this definition applies. To that end, power dynamics and social relationships in the occupational setting provide a social structure where autonomy in action and decision-making can grow, and that ability to grow is threatened if relationships are weak. This concurs with conclusions made by Elliott (2001), and with later conclusions by Witter-Merithew et al. (2010) in their study of relational autonomy in the interpreting field.

Hseih (2010) summarized a study which examined collaboration between interpreters and medical care providers, asking each group to describe their perceptions and challenges when working together in a bilingual medical encounter. Both groups described experiencing conflicts related to authority and expertise as well as the overstepping of expertise and role boundaries. These conflicts hindered effective collaboration and patient care. Providers often erroneously thought that interpreters were neutral conduits and were not aware of the cultural mediation and message management that occurred during the interpreting process. Hsieh suggested that medical providers receive training in how to work with interpreters. She also recommended that interpreters must include the provider's expert perspective when communicating the interpreted message to the patient, while still being free inform the provider of their expert opinion on the clarity or effectiveness of the communication. These combined expectations equate to relational autonomy. This aligns with prior assertions by Tribe and Sanders (2003), who pointed out that interpreters must know enough information to do a good job while not attempting to simultaneously be a member of another profession. They are solely interpreters and are not medical providers, and as such should not behave entirely as do medical providers, but instead as interpreters compatible with the medical environment. Although Hseih (2010) and Tribe and Sanders (2003) focused on the medical setting, the collaboration principles they discussed can be applied in other settings as well, since the practice implications of training, pre- and post-conferencing, and open-minded organizational culture would benefit collaboration in virtually any setting, including K-12 education.

Collaborative relational autonomy in educational interpreting. Fitzmaurice (2017) summarized a study which aimed to explore the ways in which uncredentialled interpreters in rural settings were going about their roles as interpreters. Although small in scope, this study

indicated that further research into the autonomy of educational interpreters should be conducted.

Fitzmaurice, an interpreting instructor at Clemson University, observed that despite the fact that

there exists literature and research outlining minimum standards of qualification and training for

interpreters, teachers and interpreters remain confused as to what the interpreter's actual role is

in the classroom; in other words, there may be room for understanding educational role through

the frame of "role space" as defined by Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (2014). Llewellyn-Jones and

Lee (2014) argued that interpreters should conduct themselves in ways that match the

expectations of the participants of an interpreted event, but Fitzmaurice's (2017) study

highlighted the problems which can occur when participants have contrary expectations for role

performance. This is particularly problematic when interpreters, most of whom have no

pedagogical training, are expected to provide direct instruction to students and when the students

receive little direct guidance from the teacher. This problematic gap in expertise was noted by

Giangreco et al. (2000). While both personal and professional interaction between the

interpreters and teachers was observed by Fitzmaurice (2017), the teachers were not aware that

these important one-on-one instructional moments were occurring between interpreter and

student in lieu of the teacher's actual lesson being interpreted, echoing Hseih's (2010) findings.

Interpreters reported that they were left out of educational team discussions regarding learning

goals and objectives. As a result of both of these issues, students missed large portions of the

teacher's instructional content. These observations supported the notion suggested by Antia

(1999) and Antia and Kreimeyer (2001) and Mertens (1991) that professional collaboration

involving the interpreter is essential for students' classroom success. Fitzmaurice's (2017) study

is the most recent study to date examining the role of the educational interpreter and was singular

in that it included uncredentialed interpreters in rural areas, a setting where educational interpreters commonly work.

   Emergent leadership and interdependence. The assertion of relational autonomy by educational interpreters during collaboration follows principles of "*emergent interdependence*" (Caruso and Woolley, 2008, p. 245). Once professionals understand their place within an environment and realize their decision-making latitude, they must then understand that the decisions they make are within a discrete context, informed by the decisions of fellow professionals. According to Caruso and Woolley (2008), this interdependence emerges as collaborative interactions take place, which echoes Hoza (2010). Collaborative goals are established and declared publicly, but the team must adaptively develop the processes by which the goals will be achieved. Voluntary sharing of tasks and accountability can occur only once team members have shared their "*thought worlds*" (Caruso & Woolley, 2008), personal perspectives shaped by background and experience. This notion was also used by Dean and Pollard (2013). It is important to acknowledge that individuals may have agendas of their own that need to be served at the same time that group goals are being tackled (Thousand & Villa, 2000). Sharing perspective and expertise allows the team to determine who among them should take the lead on a given task or goal. This is a phenomenon which Schutz et al. (2001) labeled "situational leadership" (p. 223) but which Northouse (2016) more accurately labeled "*emergent leadership*" (p. 8). In order for collaboration to succeed, hierarchical structure in the environment, if there is one established or understood, must be superseded by positive and emergent interdependence where an individual's strengths are maximized for the good of the group (Thousand & Villa, 2000). No single person has the ultimate authority or expertise; instead, team members take turns transferring their knowledge and skills to advance the goals of

the group. Collaborators must be both dependent and dependable, regardless of their status as novice or seasoned professional (Krug, 2001). Elliott (2001) noted that voluntary participation, autonomy, and the ability to shift roles according to the needs of the project are also integral to successful collaboration. Simply working together without these efforts does not constitute collaboration. Navigation of system hierarchies and dynamics must also be negotiated throughout the process. When performed successfully, collaboration can contribute to personal and professional growth for the collaborators.

Conclusion

The existing literature indicates that collaboration in the K-12 setting is a critical component of curriculum delivery, and therefore, student success (Drake, 2001; John-Steiner et al., 1998; Montiel-Overall, 2005a). Best practices in educational interpreting resources, such as those written by Seal (2004), and Schick (2007), recommend collaboration between the interpreter and the rest of the members of Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. However, there is a lack of data regarding the nature of collaboration between interpreters and other educational professionals working together within the K-12 environment (Smith, 2013). Best practices describe collaboration with fellow professionals as being essential to effective interpreting delivery and student success but fail to provide clear guidance on how interpreters might actually perform the collaboration. Research in this area will lessen the gap in knowledge and provide beneficial information about collaborative practices between interpreters and OEPs in K-12 education, a setting where large numbers of interpreters are employed. It is hoped that this thesis project will produce data which could be used to develop guidance to that end.

Methodology

Design of Study: Phase I

In order to gather both quantitative and qualitative data from current practitioners in the

K-12 setting, a mixed method, sequential explanatory strategy (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007)

was employed. Phase I involved the development of an anonymous survey instrument via

Qualtrics, an online survey platform. A pilot version of the survey was distributed to a limited

number of educational professionals in Canada in November 2017 in order to test survey item

effectiveness and formatting without influencing the intended U.S. target population. After the

conclusion of the pilot survey, the final survey link and research project background information

were distributed through online solicitation in January 2018. A recruitment flier (Appendix A)

was forwarded by email and Facebook utilizing a "snowballing" social and professional network

forwarding strategy (Lavrakas, 2008; Hale & Napier, 2013) to reach potential participants who

satisfied the survey candidate criteria. Participants were required to be adults 18 years of age or

older who described their jobs as educational interpreters or other qualified educational

professionals (i.e., classroom teachers, teachers of the Deaf and hard of hearing, special

education teachers, and speech-language pathologists) who had prior experience working on an

educational team with an interpreter. The respondent pool was limited to interpreters who have

been working an average of at least three days per week in the K-12 educational setting for three

years or more, and who described themselves as having satisfied their state's requirements for

being a "qualified interpreter" in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(IDEA). Selecting these criteria increased the likelihood of gathering a survey sampling which

would reflect the general population of educational interpreters nationally, meaning those who

are qualified, as opposed to only those who are certified, and to garner a sampling of the widest

possible range of experience from the "other educational professionals" population.

The recruitment email and flier were distributed online through professional groups (i.e.,

the RID, the RID Interpreters in Educational and Instructional Settings member section, and the

National Association of Interpreters in Education [NAIE]), and published to the national

Facebook group "Discover Interpreting." It was featured in the January 2018 *RID eNews*, was

posted on the RID and NAIE Facebook pages, and was posted on the American Speech-

Language-Hearing Association's "ASHA Community" members-only message board.

The final survey (Appendix B) contained a total of 63 items designed to elicit qualitative

and quantitative answers pertaining to collaborative practices and interactions. Answers to the

default questions determined whether the respondents met participation parameters and also

channeled participants to one of two survey branches, one for Educational Interpreters and one

for OEPs. Many of the questions in the two branches paralleled each other in order to allow

comparing and contrasting of the data for each subgroup. Some items were specific to a

particular subgroup in order to ascertain commonalities across opinions in that subgroup. Item

types included open-ended, multiple choice, Likert scale, and slider formats.

Once the survey was closed to additional participants, the 161 responses recorded were

audited. Of those, 121 were considered usable after deletion of any response indicating that the

respondent did not meet the demographic criteria set out in the survey recruitment email/online

posting. Also deleted were any responses which answered only the basic demographic questions.

Partial responses, those which answered at least some of the questions from one of the two main

branches of the survey, were retained and analyzed. Quantitative data from questions which were

formatted as multiple-choice, matrix questions, or embedded data were automatically tabulated

by the Qualtrics program and could be cross-tabulated with each other as well. Open-ended

questions which resulted in a qualitative response provided via text box, including those next to

the "other" multiple-choice boxes, were manually coded and analyzed.

Due to the subjective nature of the topic of collaboration, the survey design was heavy

with open-ended questions. In order to organize the data collection, the qualitative questions

were analyzed in pairs whenever possible; the dual branch structure of the survey was such that

the educational interpreters' survey branch would contain a question virtually identical to one in

the educational professionals' survey branch. For example, Q2.8 on the interpreters' branch and

Q3.4 on the educational professionals' branch were both worded "What is your definition of

'collaboration in the K-12 setting?'" These corresponding questions were analyzed and coded in

succession, in order to ascertain what themes were most commonly mentioned by the

respondents regarding a specific topic. In this way, qualitative data in the form of statements of

varying length and sentiment could be converted into quantitative data which could more easily

be summarized and compared. Some of the open-ended questions in the interpreter branch were

profession-specific and so did not have a corresponding version in the educational professionals'

branch; however, those qualitative responses were topicalized in the same manner. Once all of

the responses were coded, a report was generated via Qualtrics which provided a list of all

questions with their statistics, topics, and actual response wording. That report was downloaded

as an Excel spreadsheet so that the data could be compared side by side.

Design of Study: Phase II

Using a phenomenological approach (Manen & Adams, 2010) in order to gain insight

into participants' everyday interactions, interview questions were designed during the survey

phase and then edited in light of topical trends apparent from the preliminary survey data

gathered. If survey participants reached the end of the survey and officially submitted their responses, they were then given the opportunity via a Google Form sign-up link to volunteer to be interviewed by the researcher during the second phase of the study. This second phase involved 5 one-on-one video-recorded interviews conducted via the Zoom.com online videoconferencing platform.

Once the survey was closed and the responses audited for participant qualification and completeness, 121 respondents had officially submitted survey results, and 31 of those respondents indicated their willingness to participate in an online interview by filling out a Google Form on which they provided their email addresses and job categories. The interview candidates were sorted by job description and assigned a number 1-31, and an online random number generator was used to select which candidates would be solicited. An acknowledgement email was sent to each randomly selected interviewee for a maximum of five interviewees (one each from the job categories of interpreter, special education teacher, classroom teacher, teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, and speech-language pathologist). Those interview candidates were contacted via email and asked to complete a Consent Form (Appendix C), provided with a "Frequently Asked Questions" sheet (Appendix D), which included mention that interview subjects would be offered a $10.00 Amazon gift card as a token of appreciation. Subsequently, subjects were interviewed during approximately one-hour-long video meetings via Zoom.com which were recorded for transcription and analysis purposes. A Verbal Interview Consent Script (Appendix E) was read to each participant at the start of the interview, and then they were read a list of prepared questions (Appendix F). The interview transcripts were reviewed in order to identify common and contrasting themes and to determine if the sentiments expressed by the interviewees correlated with those expressed by the other survey respondents.

After the first interview was conducted, the questions were re-ordered slightly to facilitate a more natural progression of topics. Clarifying follow-up questions were asked as appropriate in order to establish full understanding of the meaning and sentiment behind the participants' comments. Initially the participants were to select their own pseudonyms for use in reference to their statements; however, none of the participants wanted to choose their own pseudonyms. Instead they will be identified by job description.

Results

After national distribution, the sample size garnered for the study was 121 educational interpreters and other educational professionals. This number exceeded the researcher's goal sample size of 100 participants. The majority of survey items were answered with at least a 70% response rate, with open-ended items receiving fewer responses than the quantitative items which were easier to answer more quickly considering the online survey platform employed. In this section, results from the survey will be reviewed.

Phase I: Survey

Participant demographics. Educational interpreters made up 66% of the sample collected during the survey. Out of the 80 respondents in the educational interpreter subgroup, 35 (44%) reported that they had between 3-10 years of experience working at least three days per week in K-12 classrooms, and the remaining 45 (56%) reported 11 years of experience or more. When asked if they satisfied their state's minimum requirements to be considered a "qualified interpreter" in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act, 72 people responded in the affirmative, seven people indicated that their state had no minimum requirements, and one person stated that they did not know their qualification status. Interpreting credentials reported ranged from nationally certified to no credentials whatsoever (See Table 1).

Table 1: Indicate your interpreting certifications and/or credentials (check all that apply)

Answer	Count
State Quality Assurance Screening	11
EIPA 2.5-2.9	0
EIPA 3.0-3.4	5
EIPA 3.5-3.9	22
EIPA 4.0 or above	12
EIPA Written Exam	15
RID Ed:K-12 certificate	12
RID National Certification	23
BEI	2
Other (including state licensure, NAD levels, ESSE, and teacher certifications)	9
I do not hold any certifications or credentials in interpreting	1
(N = 66)	

Interpreters from 28 states participated (See Table 2), with district types represented as follows: 42% working in suburban areas, 34% in urban areas, and 24% in rural areas. One concern regarding sampling bias needed to be addressed, however. When responding to the question "in which state do you WORK?" 32 of the 121 participants who answered reported that they work in Virginia. This is most likely due to the fact that the researcher lives and works in Virginia and was the origin of the "snowballing" (Lavrakas, 2008; Hale & Napier, 2013) effect. This resulted in many of the researcher's professional network contacts participating in the study and forwarding the study opportunity to coworkers. In order to determine whether this Virginia-heavy concentration of participants was skewing the data, all of the responses from participants from Virginia were filtered out and another data report was produced for comparison with the full data set. It was determined that the vast majority of the statistics (percentage of most common answers, trends, and cross tabulation comparisons) remained stable and unaffected by the omission of the Virginia responses. This led to the conclusion that the Virginia responses had not significantly skewed the data, and that the whole of the data could be reported. In the few

cases where it was apparent that the data were skewed by the Virginia responses, that bias will be noted.

OEPs made up 34% of the sample collected. The OEP subgroup was divided up as follows: 19 (46%) teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, 10 (24%) speech-language pathologists, 8 (20%) general education/classroom teachers, and 4 (10%) special education teachers/consultants (See Figure 1). Out of those 41 OEP respondents, 18 (44%) reported that they had between 0-10 years of experience working in their job category in the K-12 setting, and the remaining 23 (56%) reported 11 years of experience or more. When asked how many years they had worked specifically with educational interpreters, 27 (66%) of the OEPs stated that they had 0-10 years of experience and the remaining 14 (34%) stated that they had 11 years of experience or more. OEPs from 15 states participated (See Table 2), with representation distributed as follows: 54% working in suburban districts, 36% in urban districts, and 10% in rural districts.

Table 2: In which state do you WORK?

Educational Interpreters

Answer	%	Count
Virginia	22.78%	18
Minnesota	8.86%	7
Oregon	7.59%	6
Alaska	6.33%	5
California	6.33%	5
Florida	5.06%	4
Maryland	3.80%	3
Massachusetts	3.80%	3
Colorado	2.53%	2
Georgia	2.53%	2
Illinois	2.53%	2
Iowa	2.53%	2
Nebraska	2.53%	2
New York	2.53%	2
North Carolina	2.53%	2
Wisconsin	2.53%	2
Connecticut	1.27%	1
Delaware	1.27%	1
Idaho	1.27%	1
Indiana	1.27%	1
Kentucky	1.27%	1
Mississippi	1.27%	1
New Jersey	1.27%	1
North Dakota	1.27%	1
Oklahoma	1.27%	1
South Carolina	1.27%	1
South Dakota	1.27%	1
Tennessee	1.27%	1
Total responding	100%	79

OEPs

Answer	%	Count
Virginia	34.15%	14
Iowa	17.07%	7
Minnesota	9.76%	4
New York	9.76%	4
Mississippi	4.88%	2
California	2.44%	1
Delaware	2.44%	1
Florida	2.44%	1
Illinois	2.44%	1
Maine	2.44%	1
Maryland	2.44%	1
Nebraska	2.44%	1
New Jersey	2.44%	1
Oregon	2.44%	1
Pennsylvania	2.44%	1
Total responding	100%	41

Figure 1: Other Educational Professionals Surveyed

24%   20%

10%

46%

- general education/classroom teacher
- special education teacher/consultant
- teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- speech language pathologist
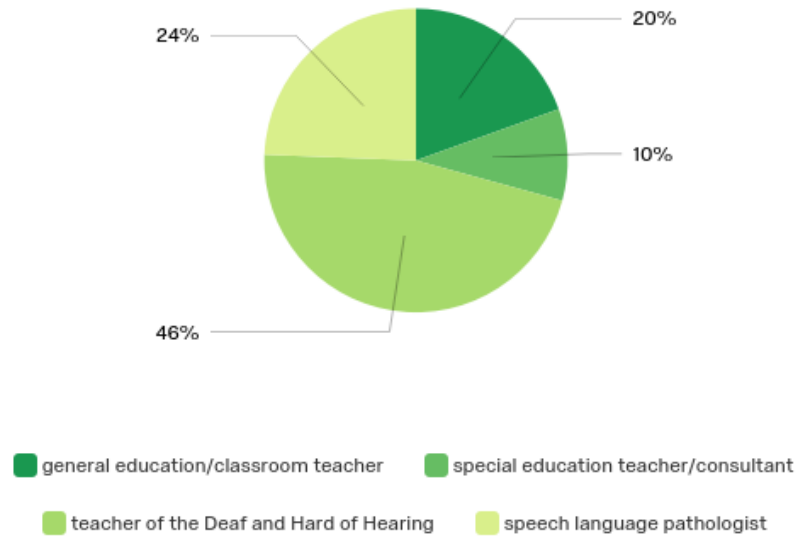
Of the 120 respondents who answered the item regarding whether their school had an in-house program for students who are DHH, 73 (61%) said yes, 46 (38%) said no, and one (an interpreter) did not know. OEPs who worked in schools with in-house DHH programs were more likely to be working consistently with three or four educational interpreters per week, while those in schools without in-house programs tended to work with fewer interpreters per week.

Defining "collaboration in K-12 education." In order to establish a baseline of common understanding from the participant pool, each respondent was asked the following question, "What is your definition of 'collaboration in the K-12 setting?'" This open-ended question garnered an average response rate of 93%, from which 10 common themes were observed with similar frequency across both subgroups (See Table 3).

Table 3: What is your definition of "collaboration in the K-12 setting?"

Educational Interpreters			OEPs	
Theme mentioned	Count		Theme mentioned	Count
student focus	47		work together	29
work together	44		goal	26
team	34		student focus	26
goal	30		team	10
communicate	23		plan/strategy/decision-making	8
needs	14		communicate	7
plan/strategy/decision-making	8		share	6
share	8		mutual respect	5
mutual respect	4		needs	5
curriculum	3		curriculum	1
74 responses for a 92.5% item reponse rate			38 responses for a 92.7% item response rate	

One educational interpreter respondent crystallized an aggregated definition expressed by the group by stating that collaboration in the K-12 setting demands that "professionals who are equally invested in the success of a student must work together in an effective, respectful manner. They must create, develop, and implement educational plans to provide the most beneficial experience for the student." Another person noted that it is important to "openly share expertise and perspective…with respect and open-mindedness."

Collaboration itself was characterized generally by members of both subgroups as: (a) working together, (b) bringing together individual insights, (c) coordinating work with other service providers, (d) cooperation, (e) sharing experiences, (f) working in concert to come to an agreement, (g) co-constructing meaning, and (h) being a full and active member of the IEP team. Respondents expressed that collaboration serves the purpose of accomplishing goals such as: (a) providing direct or related service, (b) providing accommodations or curriculum modifications, (c) teaching curriculum and developing both academic and advocacy skills, (d) planning lessons and strategies, (e) developing environmental setups and establishing educational routines, (f) successful and ethical decision-making in order to determine the best

course of treatment or instruction, (g) identifying students' target goals and supporting them in accomplishing them, (h) giving equal or increased access to the educational environment, (i) determining best practices in order to create the best learning environment, (j) problem-solving, and (k) communication of information. The types of communication being employed by respondents included: regularly sharing, discussing, and exchanging relevant information, ideas and feedback; and engaging in a student-centered approach through active dialog. That communication might involve collaborative activities such as brainstorming, listening to the input and concerns of others, and inviting each other to ask specific questions for the benefit of the student. It also may involve sharing: (a) resources and materials, (b) background information about the student or the curriculum topic, (c) topics of expertise specific to the participants' professions, and (d) schedules or calendars. Student concerns, either personal or academic, can also be discussed for the benefit of the students' development. This collaboration can occur before, during, or after class, with varying degrees of frequency.

Of the 118 participants who responded to a Likert scale item regarding the level of importance collaboration held for them in the workplace generally, 95 (80%) felt it was "extremely important" to the success of their work, while 21 (18%) felt it was "very important." The remaining two respondents felt it was "moderately important" to the success of their work. Ninety-nine of the respondents who expressed that collaboration was at minimum "very important" concurrently claimed to collaborate either "every day" or "almost every day," which indicates a strong correlation between the frequency of collaboration and the value placed on collaboration.

It should be noted that several of the interpreter participants had a narrow definition as to which people in the educational environment are included in the collaborative process. One

interpreter defined it as involving teamed interpreting and did not include professionals who

were not interpreters, which follows the interpreter-to-interpreter paradigm discussed by Cook

and Friend (1991). Some participants included only teachers in their collaborative paradigm.

This difference in definition and team member conceptualization made collaboration a rarity for

these respondents and was evident in their low collaboration frequency statistics (See Table 4).

  Collaborative practices. The majority of interpreters and OEPs felt that they participated

in collaboration at work on a daily or near daily basis (See Table 4). Due to outlier definitions of

collaboration, a total of seven participants felt that they never collaborated or did so only once or

several times per year. The majority of OEPs felt that they participated in collaboration

specifically with educational interpreters with daily or weekly frequency (See Table 5) with a

few outliers who claimed to collaborate rarely.

Table 4: Given your definition of collaboration, how often do you participate in collaboration at work?

Answer	Interpreters		OEPs	
	%	Count	%	Count
everyday	53.16%	42	60.98%	25
almost every day	22.78%	18	26.83%	11
several times a week	8.86%	7	9.76%	4
once a week	0.00%	0	2.44%	1
once a month	2.53%	2	0.00%	0
several times a year	2.53%	2	0.00%	0
once a year	1.27%	1	0.00%	0
never	5.06%	4	0.00%	0
other	3.80%	3	0.00%	0
Total	100%	79	100%	41

Table 5: Given your definition of collaboration, how often do you participate in collaboration specifically with educational interpreters?

	OEPs	
Answer	%	Count
everyday	35.00%	14
almost every day	25.00%	10
several times a week	12.50%	5
once a week	17.50%	7
once a month	0.00%	0
several times a year	2.50%	1
once a year	0.00%	0
never	2.50%	1
other	5.00%	2
Total	100%	40

Collaboration tools. Of the 15 collaborative tools and methods listed as options on corresponding multiple-choice items (See Table 6), both subgroups mentioned the use of face-to-face conversations as the most common method for collaborating with others, followed by emailed conversations and conferencing before or after class. Planning meetings and video conferencing were the least likely venues for collaboration. During collaboration, curriculum content and lesson plans were just as likely to be shared online as they were to be shared as hard-copies. A higher percentage of OEPs than interpreters indicated that information from teacher meetings was being shared online, which may indicate that OEPs are providing interpreters with online access to meeting materials but interpreters are either unaware of or not taking advantage of this online access. Textbooks are still a staple preparation item, being just as likely to be shared as other types of curriculum materials mentioned. Interestingly, the four OEP subgroup members who did not answer this item were all teachers of the Deaf (ToDs). It could be postulated that this is due to the fact that ToDs often conduct direct instruction rather than utilizing the services of an interpreter to provide students with access to the curriculum.

Table 6: What tools do you employ to support collaboration? (check all that apply)

Collaboration Tool	Interpreters (N=73)		OEPs (N=37)	
	%	Count	%	Count
access to closed captioned/subtitled videos	10.81%	56	6.79%	15
access to information from teacher meetings	5.21%	27	7.69%	17
conferencing before or after class	9.46%	49	10.41%	23
curriculum content shared online	8.11%	42	7.24%	16
curriculum content shared via hard-copy	7.92%	41	8.14%	18
emailed conversations	10.04%	52	9.95%	22
face to face conversations	13.13%	68	16.74%	37
lesson plans shared online	5.41%	28	4.98%	11
lesson plans shared via hard-copy	4.44%	23	4.98%	11
notebook/note exchange	3.09%	16	1.36%	3
other (i.e. handouts, video recorded work, instant messaging)	1.35%	7	1.81%	4
planning meetings	3.67%	19	5.43%	12
shared Deaf education resources (e.g., pamphlets, booklets, books, websites)	8.11%	42	7.69%	17
textbooks	8.88%	46	6.33%	14
video conferencing	0.39%	2	0.45%	1
Total	100%	518	100%	221

Interpreters' attendance of meetings and training. Of the 78 interpreters responding to an item regarding their attendance at "teacher meetings" at their school, 32 (37%) of them indicated that they never attend. The remaining 46 interpreters indicated attendance of varying frequency to a range of meeting types (See Table 7). The most commonly attended meeting types were those labeled as "full faculty" (27 mentions) and "staff" (32 mentions), both of which would be open to a wide range of employees in the instructional setting, followed by Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings (27 mentions). In-service trainings were attended slightly less frequently (22 mentions). Least commonly attended by interpreters were grade level (6 mentions) and departmental (15 mentions) meetings. Corresponding data on this topic gathered from the OEP subset were statistically similar. When examined globally, only 60% of the interpreters surveyed indicated that they attended any type of "teacher meetings," and of those who did attend them, the highest attendance rate for any one type of meeting was 69% of those surveyed. When asked if interpreters attended "teacher meetings" at their schools, only 29 OEPs

responded, which may indicate that many OEPs do not notice whether interpreters are present.

This implies that memorable collaboration with interpreters is not taking place in those settings.

Table 7: Meeting attendance by interpreters: type and frequency

As an educational interpreter, do you attend teacher meetings at your school? (check all that apply)		
	Interpreters	
don't know	0.00%	0
never	37.21%	32
weekly	17.44%	15
monthly	20.93%	18
quarterly	15.12%	13
yearly	9.30%	8
Total	100%	86
(N = 78)		

Educational interpreters attend teacher meetings at your school which could be described as (check all that apply)				
	Interpreters		OEPs	
departmental	11.19%	15	12.16%	9
grade level	4.48%	6	5.41%	4
full faculty	20.15%	27	18.92%	14
staff	23.88%	32	21.62%	16
Individualized Education Plan (IEP)	20.15%	27	17.57%	13
in-service training	16.42%	22	16.22%	12
other	3.73%	5	8.11%	6
Total	100%	134	100%	74
(N = 78)		(N = 29)		

In-service training. The survey respondents indicated an overall lack of DHH-related in-

service training opportunities at their schools. Of the 109 participants who responded regarding

this topic, 54 (49%) reported that their school had not offered DHH-related in-service trainings.

It should be noted that when these data were filtered to remove responses from those working in

Virginia, there was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of OEPs reporting the

absence of in-service training opportunities, which indicates that in-service training for OEPs

may be more common in Virginia than in other states. One interpreter respondent conveyed

feelings of frustration about the lack of training support, reporting that, "despite constant

requests for administration to provide DHH staff the platform to educate general education

professionals about our students and the services we provide, the administration has yet to listen

to our requests."

Those who reported that in-service training was available to them indicated that the

following training topics had been offered, listed from most to least commonly mentioned: (1)

how to work with an interpreter, (2) accommodations for students who are DHH, (3) assistive

technology for students who are DHH, (4) Deaf culture and communication, (5) "other" DHH related topics such as sign language classes and visually accessible phonics, and (6) Special Education with a focus on students who are DHH.

   Individual Education Plan meetings. A total of only 40 survey respondents out of the 116 who attempted the item indicated that interpreters at their school attended IEP meetings with some degree of frequency (See Table 7). This implies that possibly up to 65% of the educational teams affiliated with the survey respondents did not include educational interpreters as invited members of the meetings. This corresponds roughly with the number of interpreters and OEPs reporting that interpreters only sometimes, rarely, or never attend meetings when the topic of IEP attendance was asked in a slightly different way (See Table 8).

Table 8: Frequency of interpreter attendance of IEP meetings as team members

	Interpreters		OEPs	
never	16.67%	13	23.68%	9
don't attend, but interpreters contribute notes/feedback/comments for the record	8.97%	7	23.68%	9
rarely	16.67%	13	10.53%	4
sometimes	15.38%	12	21.05%	8
frequently	12.82%	10	13.16%	5
always	29.49%	23	7.89%	3
Total		78	100%	38

   Problem-solving during collaboration. This research explored the topic of problem-solving through the use of open-ended survey items. Participants noted that problem-solving was one of the goals which was positively served by collaboration in the K-12 setting. Of the 101 participants who responded as to whether they have experience problem-solving with others in that setting, 89 answered in the affirmative. That positive response rate was relatively low, perhaps due to ambiguous phrasing of the question; no example of problem-solving was provided to the respondents as a guide so that they would not be biased toward a particular

answer. The survey requested examples of problem-solving from survey subjects, and the 84

entries submitted were coded in order to identify common situations and challenges experienced

during collaboration. Five challenge categories of problem-solving were culled from the

examples: (a) curriculum modification, (b) increasing the DHH-friendliness of the classroom

experience, (c) interpersonal issue management, (d) interpreting logistics, and (e) student-

specific approach development. Problem-solving was reported to be conducted via discussion,

strategizing, and brainstorming between the interpreter and the OEP. Problem-solving that rose

to a level that might be characterized as dispute resolution was mentioned by respondents, and

this type of collaboration was cited as being most appropriately handled "outside of class."

Curriculum modification challenges addressed through problem-solving included testing

accommodation provision (such as how to deliver read-aloud content or plain-English formatted

content), testing content delivery issues (such as spelling and vocabulary tests), and deciding on

content delivery technique variation (such as chunking or expansion).

Interpreters and OEPs solved issues which presented barriers or obstacles to the DHH

student's effective classroom experience including those which could be characterized as:

- Familiarizing teachers with how interpreting works

- Improving accessibility through captioning

- Adding visuals to curriculum delivery

- Reducing split-attention, where the student who is DHH is forced to divide their

  attention between visual materials and the teacher and interpreter who present

  the material (Mather & Clark, 2012)

- Increasing social opportunities for the student who is DHH

Participants noted that interpersonal issue management was a reason for interpreters and OEPs to employ problem-solving together. OEPs mentioned conflicts related to interpreter professionalism such as dress code violations, insufficient signing skills, and inappropriate levels of "coddling" toward the student who is DHH. Interpreters mentioned attempting to resolve issues related to staff reluctance to work with Deaf students and interpreters. Both subgroups mentioned confronting personality conflicts between professionals as well as interpreter-student conflicts.

The two subgroups reported working together regularly to solve challenging interpreting logistics. Interpreter placement, student seating arrangements, and lighting adjustment were mentioned. Both subgroups expressed the need to adjust interpreter and student scheduling, and to address the difficulties that arose when it became necessary for one interpreter to provide service simultaneously to more than one student who was DHH.

The respondents also provided examples of student-specific challenges. Language mode management decisions and alternate teaching method strategies were formed through problem-solving. The formulation of test-taking/giving strategies was reported, including changes to the technology setup to best fit a particular student. Student behavior management decisions were also made via problem-solving together.

An open-ended survey item explored a specific area of problem-solving by asking OEP respondents to identify what they expected interpreters to do should an "immediate need arise in the classroom not related to interpreting." A corresponding open-ended item in the educational interpreter branch asked interpreters what they *actually* do under those circumstances. The meaning of "immediate need" was left intentionally ambiguous by the researcher in an attempt to garner the widest variety of perspectives on what constitutes a situation where an interpreter

might "step out of role," a term often used by interpreters (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014) but which is especially ambiguous when framed with the K-12 educational environment. The open-ended responses were thematically coded in order to identify common patterns of expectation and behavior regarding non-interpreting related classroom demands. The questions garnered responses from 31 OEPs and 68 interpreter participants, giving item response rates allowing for a comfortable degree of confidence in the validity of the perspectives provided.

Data shows that the OEPs tended to desire or expect that, should a non-interpreting related immediate need arise, the interpreter would actively support the teacher by "helping," "jumping in," or intervening. Conversely, predominant sentiments in the educational interpreter responses indicated that the interpreters' first reaction would be to "alert the teacher or other staff" so that others could "handle it" rather than stepping in themselves. Interpreters did agree with OEPs that in instances where safety is an issue, interpreters should, as one interpreter stated, "function as another adult in the classroom and behave accordingly if there is a dangerous situation" but interpreters clearly preferred to defer to OEPs for most circumstances except the most serious. This disconnect in role expectations and joint problem-solving between the parties has the potential to damage trust and rapport and may negatively impact collaborative success as a result.

Factors supporting and inhibiting collaboration. Thematic coding of answers to open-ended items revealed commonly mentioned factors supporting and inhibiting collaboration between the two subgroups. These items garnered approximately a 77% response rate, high enough to compare and contrast them with relative confidence. Communication between parties (of various types and regarding various education-related subjects) was the factor supporting collaboration that was most often mentioned, followed by open-mindedness. Both subgroups

indicated that maintaining a student-focused approach and a positive professional attitude also contributed to successful collaborative efforts. Joint problem-solving and teamwork were also mentioned as effective supports.

When examining factors that inhibit successful collaboration, lack of available time was ranked first by OEPs, while in contrast, interpreters ranked time or lack thereof as the third most inhibitive factor. Both groups indicated that when collaborative meetings did occur, they tended to be held before or after class or, more rarely, as stand-alone appointments inserted into the regular work schedule. Teachers specified that they experience difficulty finding the time or enthusiasm to set up meetings with interpreters outside of their regularly scheduled, teacher-related meetings. Collaboration during class tended to be of an in-the-moment, problem-solving nature, rather than of a planning or strategizing nature. Interpreters most often cited lack of respect for them or their work as an inhibitive factor, making it their main concern, whereas OEPs were comparatively less concerned about experiencing a lack of respect for their work. Interpreters mentioned concern about the lack of understanding exhibited by OEPs regarding DHH-related concepts, as well as concern about OEPs' possible tendency to be unwilling to engage in collaborative efforts at all. Those concerns were not echoed by the OEPs toward interpreters, but OEPs were instead more cognizant of the detrimental impact of past negative attitudes, both personal and professional, exhibited by some interpreters.

Interpreters stated that they could not have effective collaboration with an OEP who "thinks they have all the answers or believe their way is the best way," or is "being unapproachable." One interpreter expressed a "fear of being shut down" when attempting to collaborate, and another pointed out that OEPs who held the attitude that he or she was "just the interpreter" were difficult to collaborate with. "Arrogance" and "big egos," on the part of OEPs,

as well as on the part of other interpreters, were mentioned by some interpreters as off-putting to collaborative success. On the other hand, interpreters found that "communication without judgement" encouraged collaborative efforts. One interpreter stated that he or she felt validated "when professionals ask me questions about culture (or anything really), then REALLY LISTEN to me" (emphasis in the original).

OEPs felt that unprofessional attitude or behavior on the part of the interpreter would inhibit collaborative success for them, and one specified that that he or she could not work effectively with an interpreter who thought "they already know more than I do about the situation." Examples cited of interpreter attitudes which OEPs would find difficult to work with included a "not my job" mentality, and what one OEP labelled "interpre-tude" which he or she defined as an interpreter's insistence that they "don't feel that they need to prepare" for their work. Conversely, OEPs found professionalism and positive professional demeanor to be helpful in supporting collaborative success. Working with an interpreter who "demonstrates humility and willingness to learn" was cited as a valuable experience, and one OEP commented on the benefit of the "professional nature of our interpreters. They know their job well and we respect their understanding of each student's communication strengths and weaknesses."

Because literature suggests that social relationships between collaborators can impact collaborative success, a Likert scale item was designed in order to identify the degree of importance social relationships held for respondents (See Table 9). A rating scale of one ("not important at all") to five ("extremely important") was available for each item. When asked how important social relationships were to them, the respondents' opinions covered the full range of the Likert scale provided; therefore, there did not appear to be a commonly held opinion by either subgroup. OEPs valued social relationships with interpreters with a mean score of 3.92,

placing their average value just below the "very important" range. Interpreters valued

relationships with teachers in the classroom with a mean score of 2.25, placing their average

value solidly in the "slightly important" range, and they valued social relationships with other

school professionals slightly less at a mean score of 2.00, also squarely in the "slightly

important" range. The study did not ask respondents about the importance of professional

relationships, so no information on that topic was gathered for comparison.

Table 9: Importance of social relationships

		Not at all important		Slightly important		Moderately important		Very important		Extremely important		Total responses
EI	Social relationships between me and the teacher(s) in the classroom are	4.17%	3	15.28%	11	23.61%	17	26.39%	19	30.56%	22	72
EI	Social relationships between me and other school professionals are	7.04%	5	11.27%	8	29.58%	21	29.58%	21	22.54%	16	71
OEP	Social relationships between me and the interpreter(s) in the classroom are	2.63%	1	5.26%	2	21.05%	8	39.47%	15	31.58%	12	38

Open-ended survey items asked each subgroup how they felt about sharing space with

another professional. OEPs were asked "When there is an interpreter(s) working in the room

with me, I feel... (text box)," while the educational interpreters were asked "Interpreters often

work in spaces that are not their own. How do you feel when you interpret in someone else's

space (e.g. classrooms, offices? (text box)." These questions were intended to elicit answers

pertaining to interpersonal challenges which, based on Antia's (1999) findings regarding

interpersonal discomfort, the researcher predicted would reflect areas of difficulty for both

subgroups connected to territorialism or personal space. Instead, the data showed that OEPs

almost exclusively responded with positive feelings such as "comfortable," "grateful,"

"supported," and "empowered." Though many of the interpreters also indicated that they felt

"comfortable," "welcomed," or were used to sharing space, some did indicate that they felt

"awkward," "intrusive," "like a visitor," and tried to "be as unobtrusive as possible."

Rapport building. Many of the themes mentioned in connection to inhibition and support of collaboration also appeared after thematic coding was applied to responses to open-ended items pertaining to the establishment of effective rapport between collaborators. Communication between parties was prominently noted by both subgroups as a critical component to rapport development. OEPs expressed the desire for interpreters to ask about the curriculum elements and the goals set for the student who is DHH, while interpreters wished that OEPs would acknowledge interpreters as a resource for DHH-related information. Lack of communication reportedly led to inhibition of rapport establishment.

OEPs reported a dislike for "cold" or "arrogant" attitudes exhibited by some interpreters in the classroom and recommended that interpreters remain student-centered in their approach to their work. Neither subgroup preferred to be "told "; OEPs did not like it when interpreters "tell me 'that's not my job'" or "tell me 'I'm only here to interpret," which also indicated that OEPs recognized problems with interpreters' rigidity regarding their role-space. Likewise, interpreters did not like to have an OEP "tell me how to do my job" or "tell me what to do." Doing so would prevent rapport from developing and lead to interpersonal problems in the professional relationship.

Another element most commonly mentioned involved the confusion often experienced regarding the role of the interpreter. OEPs expressed a desire to understand and be informed about the interpreter's work and practice so that they could establish a rapport with the interpreter. They indicated that lack of role clarity detracted from successful rapport, which was echoed by many interpreters who responded. Interpreters indicated that when OEPs did not understand the interpreter's practice (e.g., where the interpreter needed to be positioned in order to work and why the interpreter needed to be there in the first place) or seemed confused about

what the interpreter's responsibilities were in the classroom (e.g., see them as a helper, aide, assistant, or other less professional job category), they felt their role was devalued and found it difficult to establish effective rapport. At least 20 of the interpreters surveyed cited this type of role disdain and it seemed to be of concern to them. While OEPs did express concern about role clarity or lack thereof, they did not explicitly express disdain for interpreters or what they do.

Characterization of the interpreter's role. The multiple-choice item which asked OEPs to indicate how they "see the interpreter" was designed to begin determining a baseline for how interpreters are characterized in the K-12 environment (See Figure 2). Of the 41 participants who responded, 20 (49%) chose the label "colleague" to describe the interpreter(s) they worked with. Eleven people (27%) chose the label "professional." The "communication conduit" label was chosen by six OEPs (15%), all of whom were either speech-language pathologists or teachers of the Deaf. The "para-professional" and "related service provider" labels were only chosen by two participants each (5% each). The remaining options of "assistant," "one-on-one," and "resource" were not selected by any participants.

Figure 2: The OEP characterization of the interpreter's role

(N = 41)

| ■ a colleague | ■ a professional | ■ a para-professional | ■ a related service provider |

■ a communication conduit
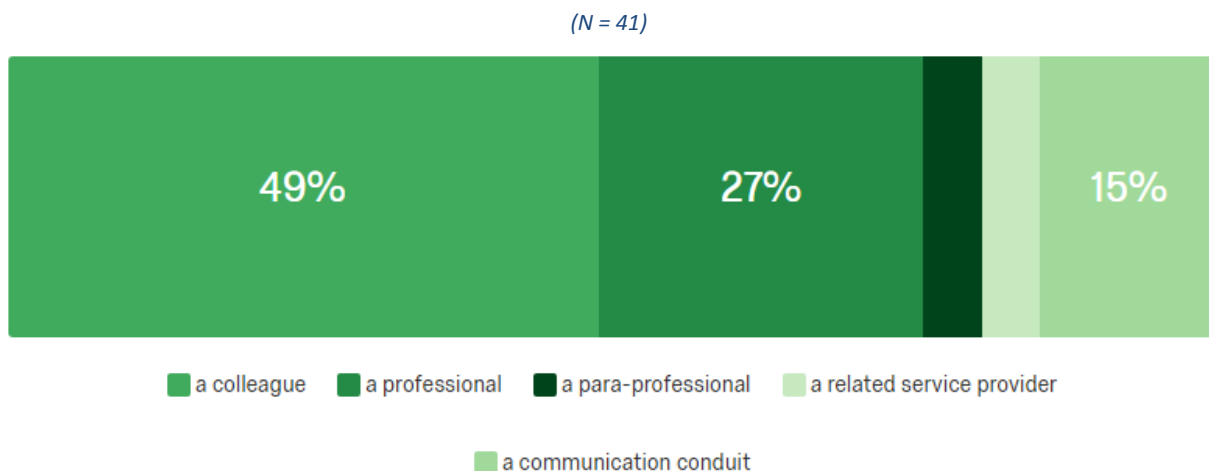
Dispute resolution. The survey also posed questions related to dispute resolution and the behaviors that interpreters exhibit when settling disagreements regarding educational matters between themselves and OEPs. Responses were provided by 106 participants in total, and in their comments, they mentioned face-to-face talk and discussion 78 times as the primary route toward compromise and practice decisions. Respondents also recommended consultation with the student's case manager or an immediate supervisor as an avenue for settling differences of opinion. Both subgroups recommended a student-centered perspective when seeking resolutions. Interpreters mentioned using data gathering as a method of proving their point, while OEPs cited consultation of best practices resources to facilitate informed dispute resolution. Only very rarely were unyielding sentiments expressed, such as the interpreter who suggested they might "do what I think is best without telling the other professional what I'm doing" or "tell them I understand their point, but this is what I've noticed works and helps the success of the student from research and experience and legalities." The OEPs also only rarely expressed similar unyielding sentiments such as "remind interpreter of their role." By and large, the themes reflected in the responses gathered, such as "discuss it with them and share our different perspectives," indicate that both subgroups tended toward partnership in dispute resolution rather toward a boss-employee decision-making dynamic.

Importance placed on systems understanding. The survey utilized Likert scale items to identify the degree to which familiarity with and utilization of systems knowledge was important for respondents. A rating scale of one ("not important at all") to five ("extremely important") was available for each item. When asked how important knowledge of current educational principles was to them, 58% of interpreters indicated that those principles were "extremely important," the highest level of importance possible on the scale provided, while only 39% of the

OEP subgroup indicated that they were of the highest level of importance (See Table 10). The majority of the combined OEP subgroup (55%) reported that they felt current educational principles were "very important," the second highest rating available. This researcher hypothesizes that interpreters gave a higher importance value to those principles than OEPs did due to their desire to learn about a profession which is different than their own, whereas OEPs have received pedagogical training in the past and may feel satisfied with prior knowledge rather than the most current theories.

On the other hand, when asked how important awareness of current Deaf education principles was to them, both groups chose a higher percentage of "extremely important" than "very important" labels to describe their valuation level. However, interpreters gave Deaf education principles the highest rating significantly more frequently (75%) than did OEPs (53%) (See Table 10). This suggests that OEPs were less concerned with learning about DHH-related pedagogical information than interpreters were, while still assigning Deaf education a higher level of importance and more frequently than they did general educational principles. The majority of the participants who answered indicated that their knowledge of the educational system itself was "extremely important" to them. Changing from the Likert scale to a different question format that would rank the importance of the various types of principles when compared to each other might have provided a clearer indication of the values held by the two subgroups.

When asked how highly they valued their ability to utilize interpreting industry standards in the classroom, all of the interpreter respondents valued that ability as at least "moderately important" with the majority labeling it as "extremely important" (See Table 10). This suggests to the researcher that some educational interpreters may feel that generalized industry standards

do not wholly apply to the K-12 setting, or that some interpreters are satisfied with their own

methods rather than striving for industry norms.

Table 10: Importance of system understanding

		Not at all important		Slightly important		Moderately important		Very important		Extremely important		Total responses
EI	My awareness of current educational principles is	1.39%	1	0.00%	0	6.94%	5	33.33%	24	58.33%	42	72
OEP	My awareness of current educational principles is	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	5.26%	2	55.26%	21	39.47%	15	38
EI	My awareness of current Deaf education principles is	1.41%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	23.94%	17	74.65%	53	71
OEP	My awareness of current Deaf education principles is	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	47.37%	18	52.63%	20	38
EI	My understanding of the educational system that I'm working in is	0.00%	0	1.41%	1	1.41%	1	30.99%	22	66.20%	47	71
OEP	My understanding of the educational system that I'm working in is	0.00%	0	2.63%	1	2.63%	1	44.74%	17	50.00%	19	38
EI	My degree of success in utilizing interpreting industry standards in the classroom is	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	4.23%	3	32.39%	23	63.38%	45	71

Empowerment and autonomy. Likert scale items were utilized to identify how

empowered interpreters felt to do their job, and these items were answered by 71 of the 80

interpreters surveyed. A rating scale of one ("not at all empowered") to five ("extremely

empowered") was available for each item. A follow-up, open-ended survey item asked the

interpreters to elaborate on why they felt the level of empowerment that they reported. Those

elaborative answers, provided by 65 of the interpreter respondents, were thematically coded in

order to determine common elements of interaction which supported or hindered feelings of

empowerment.

Most of the elements which impacted the interpreters' feelings of empowerment toward

their ability to do work correspond with factors cited previously which impacted collaborative

success. When asked how empowered they felt, 12 interpreters (17%) indicated that they felt

"extremely empowered," the highest level of empowerment possible on the scale provided (See

Figure 3). A total of 22 interpreters (31%) reported feeling "very empowered." Interpreters

mentioned the following themes as supporting their positive feelings of empowerment:

- They could give their opinions and feel "heard"

- Their empowerment was self-generated

- They were confident in their own experience and education

- The classroom teacher accepted and/or respected them

- They felt valued and/or trusted

- They were treated as professionals

- The received support from the ToD, building administration, or direct supervisor

- They felt that the staff understood their role/purpose

A total of 22 (31%) of the interpreters responding felt "moderately empowered." When

analyzed in the context of the elaborative comments provided by those individuals, it became

apparent that the qualifier "only" was implied, meaning that this label was construed by the

group who chose it as representing a less than satisfactory level of empowerment. Another 10

(14%) interpreters reported feeling "slightly empowered," and the remaining five (7%) claimed

to feel "not at all empowered." This means that fewer than half of the respondents reported

feeling satisfactory levels of empowerment. In addition to the antitheses of the supporting factors

listed above, interpreters mentioned the following themes as contributing to their negative

feelings of empowerment:

- The student they served was ignored or forgotten

- They had no say in the decision-making process

- They were treated like a guest, outsider, or interloper in the classroom

- They were not provided with preparation materials

Figure 3: Empowerment felt by interpreters

(N = 71)
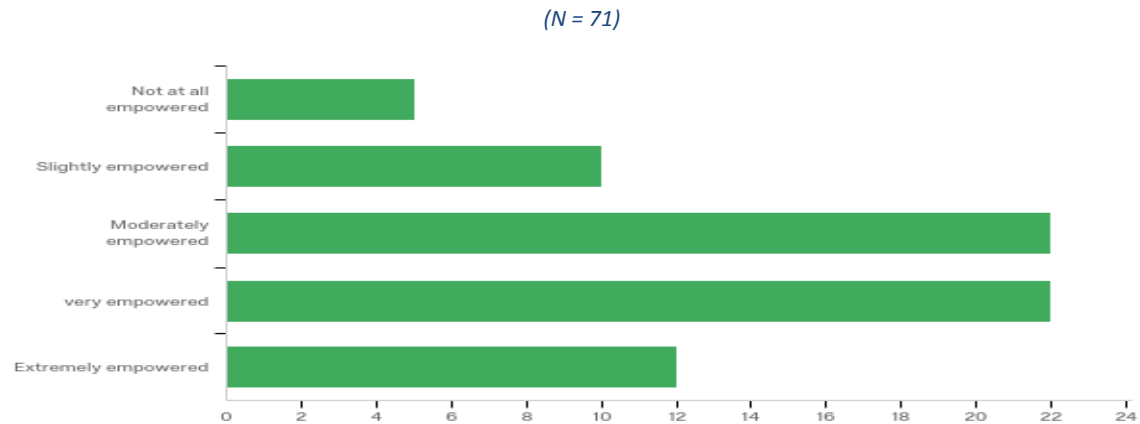
Several interpreters mentioned that an environment lacking in support from the ToD and DHH department members negatively impacted their feelings of empowerment. One educational interpreter stated "I am not supported by the DHH professionals with whom I work.…Without collaboration among those working with DHH, it is difficult to gain support within the mainstream." Another stated that he or she felt that "the classroom teacher is open to my suggestions and trusts that I am doing what's best for the student. I feel the Deaf Ed teacher feels threatened by me…." Interview subjects in this study later echoed concerns regarding a perceived disconnect between ToDs and interpreters and as well as other educational staff.

A multiple-choice item provided interpreters the opportunity to report who they took direction from regarding their daily work. This item was designed to identify whether educational interpreters commonly worked with some level of autonomy, and to whom they were deferring. Respondents could choose more than one answer. Forty-seven interpreters reported that they were in charge of themselves at least to some extent by choosing the label "self-directed" (See Table 11), and out of those, 15 reported being solely "self-directed."

The next most common source of direction mentioned was the ToD. Eight respondents reported that they received direction from "no one." Additional analysis and research would be needed to determine if autonomy on the part of the interpreter influences their ability to collaborate with OEPs, or whether taking direction from ToDs while also trying to maintain their standing as an equal partner in collaboration may inhibit collaborative success. Due to the structure of the survey items pertaining to empowerment and direction, it was not possible to cross-tabulate these topics to find a correlation.

Table 10: From whom do interpreters take direction?

(N = 78)

	Count
self-directed	47
DHH teacher	29
building administrator	22
lead interpreter	16
interpreter supervisor	12
other (GenEd teacher, manager, administrator)	11
interpreting service coordinator	9
no one	8
interpreting agency	4
speech language pathologist	1

Phase II: Interviews

Participant demographics. All survey respondents who reached the end of the survey and pressed "submit" were offered the opportunity to volunteer to be interview candidates. Of the 121 survey respondents eligible, 31 people provided their job category and email information via a Google form. Volunteer data were sorted by job category: educational interpreter, general education teacher (GenEd), teacher of the Deaf (ToD), special education teacher (SpEd), and speech-language pathologist (SLP). They were then numbered. If a particular job category only

had one volunteer, that person was selected by default. If a particular job category had more than

one volunteer, then an online random number generator was used to select one volunteer from

that category. Interview invitations were sent to the five chosen candidates, and if an invitation

was declined, another randomly selected candidate was invited in their place. Ultimately, five

interviews lasting a minimum of an hour each were conducted and recorded, then transcribed and

analyzed by the researcher.

The interview participants were:

- An educational interpreter with four years of full-time educational interpreting experience

  who was a graduate of an interpreter training program and licensed in a Midwestern state,

  working in a suburban area. She scored 4.0 on the performance portion of the EIPA, and

  passed both the EIPA Written Test and the National Interpreter Certification Knowledge

  Exam.

- A general education teacher with 31 years of teaching experience, 30 of which alongside

  interpreters in her classroom several times per week, working in a suburban area in a

  Mid-Atlantic state.

- A teacher of the Deaf with 25 years of teaching experience both at schools for the Deaf

  and mainstream public schools, now working in a suburban area of a New England state.

- A special education teacher endorsed in multiple specialized areas with seven years of

  teaching experience at a school with an in-house DHH program, working in a suburban

  area in a Mid-Atlantic state.

- A speech-language pathologist with 18 years of experience providing related services in a

  mainstream school with an in-house DHH program, working in a suburban area in a

Mid-Atlantic state. It is interesting to note that this speech-language pathologist also studied sign language interpreting at the undergraduate level.

Due to the small size of the interview pool, the comments made by the participants are not as generalizable as those made by the body of survey participants, but they were analyzed in light of the survey data in order to find supporting or contradictory sentiments or experiences which may be relevant to the study. After the transcriptions were thematically coded in a similar manner to the open-ended items from the survey, several key topics also found in the survey were evident: (a) the importance of collaboration in K-12 education, (b) problem-solving and dispute resolution, (c) professionalism, (d) rapport building, and (e) sharing of expertise. This section of the report includes pertinent quotes from the interview transcriptions.

Importance of collaboration in K-12 education. Collaboration was characterized by respondents as being a vital component to an effective teaching environment and positive outcomes for students.

I try to work with the person as much as I can to solve the issue because ultimately, we have to make it work. It can't NOT work! .... There is a job to be done for the sake of the child and to me it is the responsibility of both parties involved in that situation to meet each other as professional equals. Some [interpreters] may feel like teachers treat them as "just" an interpreter; I've never seen it that way, but we each have a role to play.

(GenEd)

Interviewees noted that wherever there is an intersection of areas of expertise, there has to be collaborative effort on the team.

Yes, it has to be that way because you aren't the only professional, and I think as long as you are working with people who are mutually respectful. I totally respect what you do

because I can't do it, and without [the interpreter] this kid fails. Without me, this kid also

fails. So, we have to find a middle ground.

(SpEd)

Shared goals and understanding were cited as necessary for forming a professional partnership

that will benefit the participants.

In order for me to serve the children effectively we needed to both be on the same page,

we needed to both be fighting and working toward the same goals…. I do think it is a

critical partnership.

(SLP)

Even when collaboration efforts are ineffective or rebuffed, it is important to continue working

toward success for the benefit of the student.

I just feel like any feedback, or anything that I bring to the table [is ignored], but I'm

willing to have a tough conversation…. Why not do everything that we can, and pool our

resources, and work together to make sure that this kid gets there, and gets it?

(Interpreter)

It doesn't mean we get along always but…one nice thing is that we get to try again

tomorrow.

(GenEd)

Problem-solving and dispute resolution. Disputes that happen during the provision of

services necessitate post-session discussions to find resolution and/or an understanding of what

to do in similar situations should they arise in the future. Respondents indicated that this type of

dispute resolution should happen after class, not necessarily during class.

Q: So after the stressor or the struggle, then you would go back later on and repair with

the teacher, or say hey let's talk about that so that next time that will be smoother?

A: Yes, and that's been super successful for me, I've found that the more honest and real

I am, the more willing I am to confront something, the more people will understand why

that didn't go so great. And vice versa, like I need to know where you are coming from.

(Interpreter)

Problem-solving needs to be effective, but also well timed. Respondents indicated that they

preferred that disputes be settled away from the presence of the student in order to maintain

respect and dignity for all parties.

There was one instance where I felt like that person was not being professional, and was

"correcting" me when the child was there…it had the sound of a reprimand to it. And I

didn't care for that… I asked for a change of interpreters.

(SLP)

Problem-solving was mentioned as an important component of professionalism and professional

behavior.

Professionalism *is* doing that problem solving – "this is not working for you, so what can

I do to make it better" or "here's what I need when you are here interpreting beside me."

It's people being generally considerate of one another beyond personalities. You step up,

and you act like an adult, and if I've ever had a complaint or a problem I try to present it

in a way that is certainly not aggressive but "this is what I'm feeling, this is what I'm

seeing happening here." That's an ideal positive working relationship.

(GenEd)

Professionalism. The term "professionalism" appeared a number of times in the open-ended responses received during the survey phase. Several comments are cited below regarding how the interpreter's performance of role expectations impacts collaboration.

Role rigidity/boundaries and transparency about support level being provided by the interpreter were of concern to the OEPs interviewed.

> I think the interpreters overall have been really great and flexible about that, and we've had interpreters who were very down the line "I'm only here to interpret," and then we've had honest collaboration "beyond interpreting," where the interpreter is really working in a situation…going beyond that role in a positive way and helping that child understand even better. I value those times…. I've never questioned an interpreter doing extra so that the student got what they needed. For a while interpreters were not allowed to do that, but everyone realized that they needed to do more than just interpret. I've learned to be more aware of what the interpreter is doing or trying to do. It's not a control thing.
>
>   (GenEd)

While they did want the interpreter to be flexible in their role, the OEPs expected that interpreters would inform them if the student was experiencing an ongoing struggle with a particular issue rather than keeping it to themselves.

> …sometimes the kids don't want to be so direct about a struggle that they are having, whereas they are communicating [with the interpreter privately] "I don't understand" and the interpreter wouldn't all-class-long voice all those comments when the student talks directly to the interpreter. In that case the interpreter should come and make sure I'm aware of that dialog that's happening so that I can do my job and provide for them.
>
>   (SpEd)

The interpreters were generally given the latitude to tutor or engage in expansion for the sake of providing contextual information or reinforcement, but OEPs uniformly asserted that it should be under their guidance since the teacher or service provider of record was ultimately responsible for the student's progress. The collaborative effort should be a joint effort.

> I was aware that the interpreters were watching how it was being taught, so that it could be explained the same way consistently, which is so important with children with disabilities that it be consistent so that they don't get confused…. Because interpreting is a whole other degree, they may not have the knowledge of ADHD, or significant learning disabilities, or speech-language disorders, like apraxia, that I have.
>
> (SpEd)

OEPs also noted that although the interpreter plays an integral role in the student's academic life, they should be mindful to avoid becoming over-involved with the student because that relationship can inhibit collaboration between the interpreter and the teacher.

> The only person this child had to really communicate with all day was the interpreter …or me who they would see for 40 minutes maybe every other day.... They are this child's sole communication partner.... I think the interpreters who have done it best have done a good job of riding that line of being compassionate and caring without being the child's friend, without being the child's counselor…
>
> (ToD)

Utilizing the interpreter as a resource to learn specifics about a particular student's needs, background, and personality appears to be a common occurrence. This researcher labeled this activity *"student-info sourcing"* as a way to categorize the collaborative exchange of this type of

information. However, the expectation that an interpreter would share their insights about a student with an OEP did not double as a permission to engage in gossip or breach confidentiality.

> …[interpreters] bring so much more to the table, they might be able to tell me something
> that just happened, or they might be able to tell me how to connect the information that
> I'm sharing in a way that related to something that maybe just happened yesterday or
> something that happened last week. So, I find their role invaluable.
>
> (SLP)

> I think also teaching is a field where gossip is just kind of, the world. Everyone talks…
> then we have trouble keeping that under control…I think it's essential for everyone, but
> especially for interpreters because you are witness to everything, to be careful about how
> much of the gossip mill you participate in, and who you trust with having real
> conversations.
>
> (SpEd)

Often a student's social/emotional status information reportedly came to the OEP mainly from the interpreter and was a critical component of the student's success.

> I got so much more information about the student, their classwork, their abilities...the
> child may not have realized that they had misunderstood something but the interpreter
> knew and could come to me and [fill me in] ...I was always so much better informed and
> I was always able to affect a much greater change because I knew so much more about
> what was going on with the student.
>
> (ToD)

Rapport building. Participants noted that self-introductions at the beginning of a working relationship effectively established the credibility and professionalism of the

collaborators. The absence of an introduction at the start of the relationship could later hinder collaborative efforts.

What's my "elevator speech?" Thirty seconds before we get to the next floor for me to tell you what I do clearly enough for you to understand it, to describe to an outsider what our work is. I am daily working on "how do I explain what I do as a professional and how do I get people to take that seriously in a positive way."

(Interpreter)

…The DHH teacher comes in, doesn't say anything to me, doesn't say anything to the teacher, and I keep interpreting because that's what I'm supposed to do…. At the end of the day I saw the DHH teacher and said "Hey, maybe you could send a follow-up email to [the GenEd teacher] to just clarify what you were doing, and maybe what you expect from the student, and if those expectations aren't met, what are consequences? He [the GenEd teacher] doesn't know who you are! He didn't know who you were, and why would he? I don't introduce you.

(Interpreter)

[The interpreter should] introduce themselves--that indicates to me "Hi, I'm here to do a job, I'm not just tagging along." All those things that you do to kind of command the presence of a professional.

(GenEd)

Interviewees, and indeed some survey respondents as well, indicated that DHH-related staff may experience a "silo effect," or isolation from members of other academic specialties (Linton, 2009). The interpreter who was interviewed commented,

I just feel like sometimes Deaf culture and sometimes interpreting can be such a... A lot

of people [think] "Oh gosh, I don't really want to work with those people" or "I don't

really want to work with an interpreter."

This "silo effect" was especially apparent regarding teachers of the Deaf and their interaction

with other staff, causing a negative impact on collaboration.

I felt like she [the ToD] didn't want to be a part of my team, like "I'm doing my job, you

do your job." So that was a hard relationship because when I'd say "Well, this is what we

are working on, could you incorporate that somehow?" [the ToD would respond to the

effect of] "Well, I have my own stuff to do, so I can't incorporate what you need me to

incorporate because I have my own list of things I have to incorporate."

Q: So, because of some of the disconnects with the ToDs, did you feel like the

interpreters were really the avenue for addressing issues that were DHH related?

A: I felt like the interpreters could help me understand how to better communicate with

those staff members because they spent more time in direct communication with them….

(SpEd)

The interpreter's response to a follow-up question regarding in-service training highlighted the

"silo effect" she witnessed:

Q: What kind of in-services did you ask for?

A: When quarter switches we would switch to new teachers, and there was a lack of

communication as far as who's coming into the classroom, so I have requested each new

quarter so far, "Hey, can you please get in contact with that teacher? So that maybe we

can meet ahead of time so they don't have any questions, or so there can be a smooth

transition for all of us?" And there hasn't been a lot of follow through [from the DHH

department], so...that's been kind of frustrating.

Q: So, you as the interpreter would look to your DHH department to support you in

networking to the teachers that would be upcoming with the new schedule switch?

A: Yes, and one of the reasons why is because any type of behavioral things or things

pertaining to the student would be directed towards [the DHH teacher] ...so I just wanted

them to like get a message from the DHH teacher...and I'm always redirecting

everything, saying "… Please send these thoughts to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

teacher...she's the teacher, I'm not the teacher." I wish that that [message] came from [the

DHH teacher] instead of me"

(Interpreter)

The "silo effect" began early in teacher training according to interviewees. Teachers

reported a lack of formal training in their educational backgrounds regarding issues pertaining to

instruction of students who are DHH. Teachers reported that their knowledge about educational

interpreters and DHH-related information came mostly from the interpreters with whom they had

worked.

In special education training, they don't address Deaf and Hard of Hearing because it's

its own subgenre almost? And you have to have a separate degree to be a Deaf and Hard

of Hearing teacher. I don't remember a college professor EVER addressing working with

students who are Deaf in my training program. And I thought my program was pretty

comprehensive otherwise. So it's definitely something that is lacking.

(SpEd)

[Thirty years ago] we knew we would possibly have special needs students but specific

types were not studied, special needs information was covered very broadly.... I think the

realization that we would have anywhere from slightly to what we used to call severe and

profound special needs really wasn't addressed in any kind of deep way. It was very

much of an overview.

(GenEd)

Even the teacher of the Deaf who was interviewed experienced a lack of formal education to

prepare her to work with educational interpreters.

A: Really [learning about interpreters] was mostly on the job. I got my masters from

____, certainly [interpreting] was a topic of conversation particularly during our student

teaching, but it wasn't really ever anything formal, it was largely when I got to [work]

and I had to present to teachers about the role of educational interpreters, so I figured "I'd

better figure that out!"

Q: So you were tasked with giving in-service information but up until then you'd never

really had…

A: Any formal training? No.

(ToD)

Sharing expertise. Teachers expressed a desire for more in-service training opportunities

regarding DHH related topics, and more opportunities to share expertise across specializations.

I wish that teachers that were working directly with students who were DHH, whenever

the interpreters had a training specific to your profession, that we could have met

afterwards…. That helps me to be a better team member, because I understand where the

gap is for this kid, and if I know of a tool that you have that can be used then it helps….

If you are working with a teacher and you have a new skill or information that could be

useful, sharing that. Because I can't ask you to use it if I don't know it exists.

(SpEd)

Limitations of Study

The small sample size (small n-value) for the OEP participant pool prevented accurate

analysis of each job category as compared with another. Discrimination of differences in opinion

or experiences across job categories might have led to a greater number of insights specific to

certain professional types. OEPs were mostly examined as an aggregated subgroup instead,

compared to the educational interpreters' subgroup. Similar future studies could be conducted to

include a larger participant pool, providing a more accurate breakdown of opinion and

experience.

Data provided through the survey and interviews were self-reported and therefore not

verifiable. Respondents professed to meet demographic requirements, but since no proof of their

experience and qualifications was requested, participation was allowed on an "on your honor"

basis. This limitation is unavoidable if survey respondents' identities are to remain anonymous.

Due to the fact that the researcher lived and worked in Virginia, there was a high

percentage of participation from respondents who worked in that state. The researcher's own

professional network influenced the size and demographics of the respondent pool. This could

have been avoided if the researcher had relied solely on organizational-level distribution of the

study's promotional information, but doing so would have reduced the overall number of

respondents participating in the research.

This study focused on the collaborative interactions between educational interpreters and

some of the other educational professionals with whom they frequently work. The OEP subgroup

was limited to four job categories customarily practiced in K-12 classroom environments, but this group was not fully inclusive of all professional job categories known to appear in that setting, excluding paraprofessional and administrative job categories altogether. The researcher selected this limited OEP subgroup scope due to limitations in research time and resources. Future studies could include input from a wider scope of professional and paraprofessional job categories in order to render the results more generalizable.

The participant pool for this study was limited to interpreters and OEPs who performed work with K-12 students who were DHH, but did not include the students themselves or their parents. Although they are IEP team members the opinions and perspectives of these individuals would be extremely valuable additions to the body of educational interpreting research, collection of data from students who are DHH and from parents of children who were DHH regarding their collaboration with interpreters would constitute a separate topic of study.

Discussion

The results of this study serve to illuminate possible patterns of practice for educational interpreters and OEPs regarding current collaborative efforts in the K-12 environment. Data analysis indicated that collaboration is taking place, and that there exist commonly occurring behaviors and factors, both supportive and inhibitive, influencing the effectiveness of collaboration between professionals as well as impacting their relational autonomy and empowerment. The following discussion addresses some of those behaviors and factors in greater detail.

Reframing Collaboration between Interpreters and OEPs

This study gathered comments from educational interpreters and other educational professionals from which a definition of collaboration in the K-12 setting can be constructed: Collaboration involves members of an educational team working together with mutual respect in order to share expertise in pursuit of the common goal to plan and implement student-focused strategies to deliver access to a curriculum. Although this definition aligns with definitions found in research (Elliott, 2001; Giangreco et al., 2000; Monteil-Overall, 2005a), participants' responses in this study omitted recognition that collaboration is an ongoing process. Rectifying this critical omission would benefit K-12 collaborators because doing so would reframe collaboration as a continuous partnership or cohort activity rather than an abstract ideal or a series of isolated incidents.

Community interpreters tend to work assignment to assignment, and their collaborative effort with a particular client ends when the assignment is finished. Educational interpreters typically work in a consistent setting where it is possible to establish rapport with coworkers, as opposed to the itinerant, short-term client associations experienced by freelance and community interpreters. In the educational setting, the interpreter's work is not performed as a "clock in, clock out" activity, ending when the class or therapy session ends. Ideally, interpreters would engage in collaboration each and every time they work with fellow educational professionals and would carry over the collaborative effort even after they have left a particular classroom. As the SLP interviewed expressed, it is reasonable to expect that the interpreter can support the student's use of the skills that the OEP is trying to cultivate throughout the day, so the collaborative effort extends outside of each discrete classroom or office. An interpreter must be a partner in carrying forward the skills and curricular elements that they have seen OEPs introduce

with the student, in hopes of continuing that effort until the next time the child encounters the OEP. Collaboration should be carried on after the class or session through reinforcement of concepts and skills across the curriculum.

An ongoing collaborative effort yields other benefits, including effective facilitation of student-OEP rapport. OEPs commented that when their own professional collaborative rapport with the interpreter was effective, it allowed the conditions to be optimal for them to establish a rapport with the student. They reported utilizing the interpreter as a resource for figuring out what the best approach would be for reinforcement, expansion, and clarification of information. They also gained an understanding of each student's linguistic needs so that the student received the material appropriately. But more than that, they claimed that collaboration with the interpreter allowed them to form comfortable and stable rapports with the students rather than feeling that the interpreter inhibited personal student connections from forming.

This study also indicates that tutoring could be reframed as a collaborative activity that is an extension of the instructional session. Instead of being construed as an additional duty above and beyond interpreting, tutoring can be conceptualized as an interdependent activity (Caruso and Woolley, 2018) where interpreters restate and reinforce concepts and messages delivered originally by the teacher during a lesson and redelivered at the direction of the teacher. Tutoring provides a context for the overlapping of expertise where the interpreter utilizes their linguistic knowledge to support the instruction of the teacher who is an expert in an area of curriculum content, and then brings any insight from the tutoring activity back to OEPs to inform their instructional practice.

Impact of "Student-info Sourcing"

This study uncovered a phenomenon which this researcher has dubbed "student-info sourcing," meaning that often the educational interpreter served as a source for OEPs to gain academic, behavioral, linguistic, and personal information pertaining to the students who are DHH whom they worked with on a daily basis. This is a foundational educational interpreter role function recommended by Seal (2000, 2004). In the present study, OEPs did not characterize interpreters as a "resource," (See Figure 2) and yet many of them mentioned that they relied on the interpreter they worked with to be a source of wide-ranging information about the students who were DHH. This indicates that to some extent interpreters are being utilized to make the most of their expertise, a concept endorsed by Seal (2000). As stated by the interview subject who works as a teacher of the Deaf,

> I got so much more information about the student, their classwork, their abilities.... The child may not have realized that they had misunderstood something, but the interpreter knew and could come to me and [fill me in] ... I was always so much better informed and I was always able to effect a much greater change because I knew so much more about what was going on with the student.

And the SLP interviewed said,

> If I'm struggling and I don't feel like the child has the concept, I'd like to be able to ask the interpreter "Can you think of anything else? Is there another way that you can think of to convey this concept?" I think that their knowledge base is so important.
>
> Q: So, you are looking to [interpreters] to be willing to be a resource for you?
>
> A: Yes

Due to this apparent reliance on interpreters for extensive "student-info sourcing," educational interpreters may logically assume that OEPs construe them as "experts" regarding that student and about language related issues in general. This researcher hypothesizes that this reliance may give interpreters the impression that they are the greater expert compared to the OEP, while at the same time the OEPs may feel that their expertise in pedagogy supersedes the interpreter's expertise. This misconception possibly leads to the inhibitive behaviors mentioned by both subgroups which were construed as "arrogant" or "disrespectful," behaviors which both subgroups identified as being highly detrimental to collaborative efforts and causing lack of trust and effective rapport. This study indicates that this type of misunderstanding may cause challenging interpersonal situations, and this behavior conflicts with recommendations from Thousand and Villa (2000) that collaborators should not presuppose authority over each other solely by virtue of their expertise in a particular content area.

Interpreters who were not utilized for "student-info sourcing" by OEPs claimed to feel ignored or disempowered, and those that were utilized felt valued and respected, as expressed in the following comments from interpreter survey respondents:

- We should be the experts offering ways to meet the students' unique needs.

- I feel the other educational professionals I work with respect and appreciate the work I do and know that I'm the "expert" on interpreting and trust I'm doing my job and have the knowledge to do a good job.

- Teachers tend to assume I know nothing about the educational system or strategies with children.

- I do not feel empowered by the school in any way to express my concerns,

    opinions or expertise in the area of deaf education or interpreting. I am very much

    treated like a necessary evil.

Interpreters must find ways to convey that they are professionals who possess specialized

skills and knowledge while also acknowledging that they are not subject matter or systems

experts. Approaching their work in the K-12 environment with collaborative and cooperative

practices and attitudes would build trust and interdependence within the educational team, and

subsequently OEPs and educational interpreters may be less likely to construe each other as

arrogant or full of hubris.

Interpreter Inclusion in IEP Meetings

Despite recommendations that educational interpreters ideally should participate actively

in the IEP meetings of the students who are DHH with whom they consistently work (Stuckless

et al., 1989; Antia & Kreimeyer, 2001), the data gathered in this study indicated this may not be

the case, generally. Up to 65% of the survey respondents gave indications that interpreters were

not routinely included as invited members of IEP meetings. Survey respondents commented to

that effect, stating:

- Despite being a person that works with students daily and knows their

    communication, … I am not invited to attend IEP meetings and share my

    knowledge as other professionals do.

- Only the lead interpreter can attend IEP meetings and/or voice concerns or

    possible goals to the IEP team.

There are several reasons that this may be the case. Some interpreters commented that

there were no substitute interpreters available to serve the student if the IEP meeting was held

during class time. They were unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts or lack of staffing. Some indicated that they were not viewed as related service providers despite federal legislation to that effect (IDEA, Sec. 300.34), and so they were not consulted due to a perceived role inequity.

Likewise, only a small number of respondents indicated that educational interpreters were invited to submit written input in lieu of IEP meeting attendance. It appears that even if (as mentioned above) they are being consulted informally on a regular basis via "student-info sourcing," interpreters are underutilized as sources of similar reports for IEP purposes regarding the linguistic, social, emotional, and communication skill development of students who are DHH.

Establishing effective ways to note educational interpreters' student-related observations for the record would serve several purposes. An educational team could develop guidelines for recording appropriate interpreter input involving tools and procedures such as forms, notebooks containing data or anecdotal evidence, or meeting notes which could be saved and assembled for consultation or presentation during the development of the IEP. Interpreters may or may not be invited to attend the IEP meetings as team members, but the inclusion of their documented input would provide vital information to the team for the benefit of the student who is DHH, while also validating the interpreter's status as a respected and necessary professional teammate.

The "Silo Effect"

No single person can be a subject matter expert in all content areas or specialties. This renders recommendations for collaborative practices by Hunt et al. (2003), Seal, (2004), and Thousand and Villa (2000) important for interpreters and OEPs to recognize. Sharing specialized knowledge through collaboration can prevent the "silo effect" where professionals function in

isolation (Linton, 2009). Rather than working in isolation, professionals can support one another by creating a whole that is more than the sum of its parts and improving each other's work quality (Elliott, 2004), thereby practicing relational autonomy which may result in professional empowerment.

One way to prevent the "silo effect" (Linton, 2009) is to institute in-service training for all OEPs who will be working consistently with students who are DHH, along with those students' interpreters and/or teachers of the Deaf. Orientation at the start of the service period would familiarize OEPs with standards of DHH-related practice, logistical considerations, and establish a rapport between professionals, which could diminish the likelihood that an interpreter or teacher of the Deaf would be working in isolation during the school year. This type of training supported by the administration can increase understanding and cooperation between professionals who might otherwise feel unsure of each other's perspectives.

As mentioned in the study data, taking the time and effort to make formal introductions between interpreters and OEPs could be energy well spent which would establish positive rapport among educational team members. This simple step, which apparently is often omitted at the start of professional relationships, is a critical piece of socialization that establishes feelings of respect and professionalism. Several study participants specifically mentioned introductions as a tool which can support effective collaboration. One general education teacher survey respondent offered a simple standard operating procedure for beginning a professional relationship:

1. Describe his/her professional role with me.

2. Describe his/her expectations of my role with him/her.

3. Explain what is needed of me as a Gen-ed teacher to ensure the best environment for

the interpreter to be effective for the needs of the student.

    4. Establish a friendly relationship that contributes to the efficacy of the professional

relationship.

Conducting introductions of this nature at the start of the school year would also assist in

establishing role delineation, a critical piece of the collaborative effort, noted by Antia and

Kreimeyer (2001).

    Because study data showed that the "silo effect" (Linton, 2009) apparently begins early in

the OEP experience, cross-curricular training during educational professionals' undergraduate

education would possibly be beneficial as well. Training programs could invite instructors from

other disciplines to speak as guests in order to introduce basic information to trainees. For

example, interpreter trainers and/or Deaf education instructors could guest lecture for College of

Education survey courses which cover material pertaining to special education programs and

students. Similarly, secondary education instructors could guest lecture in interpreter training

courses which cover material pertaining to educational interpreting. In this way, the seeds of

collaboration would be planted early in a professional's training experience and would be more

likely to grow during their real-world practice.

Interpreter as "Communication Conduit"

    This study uncovered an interesting finding regarding how some speech-language

pathologists and teachers of the Deaf characterized the role of the interpreter in the classroom

(See Figure 2). The majority of OEPs characterized interpreters as either "colleagues" or

"professionals," descriptors that align with the current conceptualization preferred by the

interpreting industry which presents the interpreter as a professional bicultural-bilingual mediator

(Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014). However, 15% of respondents in this study, all of whom were

speech-language pathologists or teachers of the Deaf, chose the descriptor "communication conduit." To the average interpreter who follows current industry trends, that characterization is outdated and mildly derogatory, implying that the interpreter is simply a machine through which messages flow (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014). This discrepancy may lead to damaged rapport and subpar collaboration, as it may covertly communicate to interpreters that they are not valued as professionals or that they have no latitude for their own role-space (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014).

Viewing this difference in labeling through the lens of collaborative effort can help to mitigate the damage it might otherwise cause. When speech-language pathologists or teachers of the Deaf enlist the services of an educational interpreter, they are not always solely communicating conceptual information to the student for the purposes of teaching curricular material. They also interact with the student for the express purpose of gathering data, which is used to evaluate the student's language and communication skills and to develop and meet skill improvement goals. In these moments, the interpreter is actually relied upon as a diagnostic tool or a means to a diagnostic end. Interpreters would benefit from framing their services in this way, acknowledging that the interpreted product is not only for relaying outgoing information messaging ("as the interpreter, if I see a sign, I must immediately say it in English" and vice versa), but a useful source of linguistic information. Seal (2000) and Antia and Kreimeyer (2001) noted that speech-language pathologists in particular may require this conduit service model, and this was supported by comments made during the interview phase of this study regarding the role characterization disconnect:

A: [In a session with two students] one was profoundly Deaf, and one had hearing aids and could pick up and benefit from sound. I wanted to give each of them the opportunity

to respond to questions, so I did not want the interpreter to voice the profoundly Deaf

child's response until the child with more hearing could also respond. And I just couldn't

somehow make that understood… [the interpreter said] "I'm here to interpret."

Q: …what was the end result?

A: Well, it minimized the opportunity for me to collect data. So, I may have only had half

of the responses that I was hoping to get, and half of the opportunities for the other child

to give a response.

(SLP)

The speech-language pathologist needed the interpreter to be a willing partner in providing

services which could result in meeting an established goal of the interaction. In this case, the goal

was unbiased data collection. Flexibility on the part of the interpreter regarding the performance

of role responsibilities would have more effectively supported collaboration.

Face-to-Face Time

Study participants claimed that face-to-face communication was the most common

format employed during collaborative interactions, both as a way to establish rapport and to

perform collaborative activities. However, lack of available time for meeting and collaboration

was one of the top inhibiting factors mentioned throughout this study, as it was in earlier studies

(Antia, 1999; Drake, 2001). This is a disconnection which needs to be purposefully addressed by

interpreters and OEPs because it indicates that the most effective avenue of collaboration

available in the K-12 setting is not actually very available. Only through intentionally scheduling

time to discuss issues, strategies, and goals will this problem be solved. However, as one

interviewee put it, "Nobody wants more meetings!" Another stated, "Occasional face-to-face

meetings could be conducted, but we are so overwhelmed with so many meetings that honestly it

gets in the way of us actually being able to teach." For these reasons, it may be most effective for

interpreters and OEPs to find short, regular gaps in their overlapping schedules to have

constructive mini-meetings, and to make it standard practice to conduct them along with a

prepared agenda or talking points so that the meetings have goals and a purpose, and therefore

would feel productive and useful. In the same way that simply working together without shared

goals does not constitute collaboration (Drake, 2001); meetings are not collaborative without

stated goals or common objectives.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This two-phase study utilized a nationally distributed survey instrument along with one-

on-one interviews to gather quantitative and qualitative data from educational interpreters and

other professionals working in K-12 education regarding their collaborative practices. Data

gathered during Phase I of this study, which involved 121 survey participants, indicated that

collaboration was not only taking place in K-12 settings but appears to be a critical element of

the work done by educational interpreters and OEPs in service of DHH children in public

education. In total, 98% of survey respondents cited collaboration as being "extremely" or

"very" important to them in their work, the highest ratings available on the survey item offered

on that topic. However, only 53% of educational interpreters and 61% of OEPs responding to the

survey item regarding frequency of collaboration reported that they collaborated every day. Only

a portion of that percentage of general collaborative interaction was specifically between

interpreters and OEPs, so it follows that collaboration is not happening each and every time the

two subgroups work together. Simply working together in the same environment does not

constitute collaboration.

Through the analysis of survey data from Phase I and interview data from Phase II, this study detected factors which may support or inhibit successful collaboration between educational interpreters and OEPs, and also reported current perspectives and experiences of those professionals. The data gathered suggested that collaboration with interpreters in K-12 settings necessitates coordinated and strategic efforts on the part of interpreters and OEPs in order to form a solid rapport from the start of their working relationship. Introducing themselves to each other at the start of the school year or term can set up a positive personal and professional dynamic which allows all parties to be aware of their roles, responsibilities, and areas of expertise or specialization. Purposeful, goal-oriented time must be invested toward collaborative activities in the form of planned meetings, team huddles, brief check-in chats, and email updates, for example, so that educational team members feel valued, useful, and contributory. The onus for establishing times or routines for these planned meetings should not be left solely to one subgroup or the other; therefore it would be appropriate for educational interpreters to initiate the meeting process. Collaboration must be recognized as an ongoing and continuous process of goal setting, service delivery, and evaluation with all educational team members contributing their unique talents in pursuit of the goals set for the student who is DHH. Any factors that arise which inhibit the collaborative effort must be acknowledged and dealt with through constructive and respectful problem-solving, without which the collaborative effort may be impossible to continue or may never begin.

Further examination of the "silo effect" (Linton, 2009) as it pertains to interpreters and educational professionals could illuminate wider paths to improving collaborative effort success probability. More should be known about how educational professionals become isolated from their peers who practice other specializations, and about how to prevent that isolation from

starting or festering. It would also be beneficial to educational interpreters and SLPs specifically

for research to be conducted regarding patterns of collaborative practice evident in their

interactions during therapy sessions. Seal (2000) delineated some suggestions for procedures and

practices that could be implemented by these two groups of professionals, but it is not readily

apparent whether those suggestions are commonly known or practiced. Furthermore, it would

benefit the interpreting industry for a study to be conducted determining whether or not

interpreter training programs identify and teach collaboration explicitly as a crucial skill in the

interpreter trainee's toolbox. During professional training, interdisciplinary exposure to

commonly overlapping systems would benefit learners by familiarizing them with the best

practices of collaboration with specialists from outside of their areas of expertise.

Educational interpreters do not perform their services in isolation. They work within a

system populated by other educational professionals who are interdependent on interpreters for

delivery of curriculum to students who are DHH. Educational interpreters rely on OEPs to

provide their expertise as the originators of curriculum content. As one special educator

interviewed put it, "Without [the interpreter], this kid fails. Without me, this kid also fails." This

study strongly indicated that successful collaboration must take place between professionals in

order for students who are DHH to receive essential services which will aid them in living up to

their greatest potential.

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Appendix A

Survey Invitation Flier

Announcing a
Research Study Examining
Collaboration with Interpreters in K-12 Education

Please consider participating in this graduate research study which will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Feel free to forward this information to other potential participants.

Why is this research being done?
This research will identify the common patterns of collaborative practice reported by K-12 educational interpreters working in concert with other professionals in the educational system.

Who is eligible to participate?
Interpreters and educational professionals who fit the following criteria:
- Professional ASL-English interpreters age 18 and over who reside in the United States, and who have been working at least three days per week on average in the K-12 educational setting for *three years or more*, and who describe themselves as having satisfied their state's requirements to be considered a "qualified interpreter" in accordance with standards under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Eligible K-12 educational professionals to include teachers of the Deaf, general education teachers, special education teachers, and speech-language pathologists who are currently qualified to practice in their position and who have worked on an educational team with an ASL-English interpreter.

<u>Please click here to begin the survey.</u>
Thank you for your participation!

Karen Brimm, RID Ed:K-12, VQAS III/III
kebrimm@stkate.edu
Graduate Student
St. Catherine University, MAISCE Program

If you have any questions about this project (IRB#965), please contact Karen Brimm at kebrimm@stkate.edu or the Institutional Review Board Chair: John Schmitt, PT, PhD, 651.690.7739; jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

About the Researcher:
Karen Brimm is a nationally endorsed educational interpreter with 5 years of experience working primarily in Virginia.

Appendix B

Survey Questions

Q1.1 Thank you for participating in this graduate research study focusing on Collaboration with Interpreters in K-12 Education. This research will identify the common patterns of collaborative practice reported by K-12 educational interpreters and other professionals working in concert in the educational system. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this survey serves as your consent. Do you wish to continue with the survey? Yes No
(If no, end survey)
Q1.2 Are you at least 18 years of age? Yes No
(If no, end survey)
Q1.3 Which of the following best describes your job? (choose one):

- educational interpreter
- general education/classroom teacher
- special education teacher
- teacher of the Deaf
- speech-language pathologist
- none of the above (If chosen, end survey)

Q1.4 Indicate your years of experience at your current position:

- 0-2 years (If chosen & (Q2a) chosen, end survey)
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- More than 15 years

Q1.5 (If Q1.3a) Do you fully satisfy your state's minimum requirements to be considered a "qualified interpreter" in accordance with standards under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?

- My state has no minimum qualifications
- Yes
- No (if no, end survey)
- Don't know

Educational Professionals Branch
Q2.1 Indicate your years of experience at your current position
Q2.2 In which state do you WORK? (select a state from the list)
Q2.3 On average, how many different interpreters do you work with during a single week?

- 0 (If chosen, end survey)
- 1
- 2

- 3
- 4 or more

Q2.4 Your school district would be considered (choose best answer):

- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban

Q2.5 Do you work in a school with an in-house Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) program: yes no

Q2.6 How many total years of experience do you have working with educational interpreters?

Q2.7 I see the interpreter as (chose one answer)

- An assistant
- A colleague
- A professional
- A "one on one"
- A para-professional
- A resource
- A related service provider
- A communication conduit

Q2.8 What is your definition of "collaboration in the K-12 setting"?

Q2.9 Given your definition of collaboration, how often do you participate in collaboration at work?

- everyday
- almost every day
- several times a week
- once a week
- once a month
- several times a year
- once a year
- never
- other (text box)

Q2.10 Given your definition of collaboration, how often do you participate in collaboration specifically with educational interpreters?

- everyday
- almost every day
- several times a week
- once a week
- once a month
- several times a year
- once a year

- never
- other (text box)

Q2.11 (Using a scale of 0-5 ranked not important at all to most important) how important do you feel collaboration is to the success of your work?

Q2.12 What percentage of your planning time is used figuring out how to access and deliver the curriculum to a DHH student? (slide indicator)

Q2.13 Educational interpreters attend teacher staff meetings at your school (check all that apply):

- Don't know
- Never
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Yearly

Q2.14 Educational interpreters attend teacher staff meetings at your school which could be described as (check all that apply):

- Departmental
- Grade level
- Full faculty
- Staff
- Individualized education plan (IEP)
- In-service training
- Other (text box)

Q2.15 Have you attended an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting where an educational interpreter was part of the IEP team present?

- Never
- They don't attend, but they contribute notes/feedback/comments for the record
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- always

Q2.16 At the beginning of our working relationship, the *most* successful way for an educational interpreter professional to establish a rapport with me is _____.

Q2.17 At the beginning of our working relationship, the *least* successful way for a colleague to establish a rapport with me is _____.

Q2.18 What tools do you employ to support collaboration between interpreter and educational professional? (check all that apply)

- Shared online curriculum content
- Shared online lesson plans
- Hardcopy curriculum content

- Hardcopy lesson plans
- Emailed conversations
- Shared Deaf Education resources (pamphlet, booklets, books)
- Access to closed captioned/subtitled videos
- Planning meetings
- Conferencing before or after class
- Textbooks
- Other (text box)

Q2.19 My school has offered the following types of in-service training in the past (check all that apply):

- How to work with an interpreter
- Deaf culture and communication
- Special Education with a focus on DHH students
- Assistive technology for DHH students
- Accommodations for DHH students
- Other DHH related training (text box)
- The school has not offered DHH related in-service training

Q2.20 Social relationships between me and the interpreter in the classroom are

not important……..extremely important (1-5 scale)

My awareness of current educational principles is

not important……..extremely important (1-5 scale)

My awareness of current Deaf education principles is

not important……..extremely important (1-5 scale)

My understanding of the education system that I'm working in is

not important……..extremely important (1-5 scale)

Q2.21 If an educational interpreter wants to share expertise with me, I prefer that they

_____.

Q2.22 If I disagree with an educational interpreter about an educational matter concerning the DHH student, I find that the most effective way to settle that difference is to

_____.

Q2.23 If an immediate/urgent need arises in the classroom not related to interpreting, I expect the interpreter to _____.

Q2.24 Have you problem-solved with an interpreter?

Yes (give example)   No

Q2.25 When there is an interpreter(s) working in the room with me, I feel…_____.

Q2.26 If I want to collaborate with an educational interpreter, I might do collaborative activities such as: _____.

Q2.27 What factors inhibit successful collaboration for you?

Q2.28 What factors support successful collaboration for you?

Q2.29 Is there anything you would like to add regarding collaboration?

Educational Interpreter Branch

Q3.1 In which state do you WORK? (select a state from the list)

Q3.2 Your school district would be considered (choose best answer):

- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban

Q3.3 Do you work in a school with an in-house Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) program:
yes no

Q3.4 What is your definition of "collaboration in the K-12 setting"?

Q3.5 Given your definition of collaboration, how often do you participate in collaboration at work?

- everyday
- almost every day
- several times a week
- once a week
- once a month
- several times a year
- once a year
- never
- other (text box)

Q3.6 (Using a scale of 0-5 ranked not important at all to most important) how important do you feel collaboration is to the success of your work?

Q3.7 What percentage of your planning time is used figuring out how to access and deliver the curriculum to a DHH student? (slide indicator)

Q3.8 As an educational interpreter, do you attend teacher meetings at your school (check all that apply):

- Don't know
- Never
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Yearly

Q3.9 Educational interpreters attend teacher staff meetings at your school which could be described as (check all that apply):

- Departmental
- Grade level
- Full faculty
- Staff
- Individualized education plan (IEP)

- In-service training
- Other (text box)

Q3.10 From whom do you take direction regarding your daily work? (check all that apply)

- no one
- Self-directed
- Lead interpreter
- DHH teacher
- Interpreter supervisor
- Interpreting service coordinator
- Interpreting agency
- Building administrator
- Speech-language pathologist
- Other (text box)

Q3.11 Have you attended an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting where you were part of the IEP team (not there to interpret the meeting)?

- Never
- I don't attend, but I contribute notes/feedback/comments for the record
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Always

Q3.12 At the beginning of our working relationship, the most successful way for an educational interpreter professional to establish a rapport with me is _____.

Q3.13 At the beginning of our working relationship, the *least* successful way for a colleague to establish a rapport with me is _____.

Q3.14 What tools do you employ to support collaboration between interpreter and educational professional? (check all that apply)

- Shared online curriculum content
- Shared online lesson plans
- Hardcopy curriculum content
- Hardcopy lesson plans
- Emailed conversations
- Shared Deaf Education resources (pamphlet, booklets, books)
- Access to closed captioned/subtitled videos
- Planning meetings
- Conferencing before or after class
- Textbooks
- Other (text box)

Q3.15 My school has offered the following types of in-service training in the past (check all that apply):

- How to work with an interpreter
- Deaf culture and communication
- Special Education with a focus on DHH students
- Assistive technology for DHH students
- Accommodations for DHH students
- Other DHH related training (text box)
- The school has not offered DHH related in-service training

Q3.16 Social relationships between me and the teacher(s) in the classroom are
not important……..extremely important (1-5 scale)
Social relationships between me and other school professionals are
not important……..extremely important (1-5 scale)
My degree of success in utilizing interpreting industry standards in the classroom is
not important……..extremely important (1-5 scale)
My awareness of current education principles is
not important……..extremely important (1-5 scale)
My awareness of current Deaf education principles is
not important……..extremely important (1-5 scale)
My understanding of the education system that I'm working in is
not important……..extremely important (1-5 scale)
Q3.17 How empowered do you feel to do your job
not at all empowered……..extremely empowered (1-5 scale)
Q3.18 Regarding how empowered you feel, why do you feel that way? (text box)
Q3.19 If another educational professional from a different specialization wants to share expertise
with me, I prefer that they do so by _____.
Q3.20 If I disagree with another educational professional about an educational matter concerning
the DHH student, I find that the most effective way to settle that difference is to
_____.
Q3.21 If I notice an immediate/urgent need arise in the classroom not related to interpreting, I
_____.
Q3.22 Have you problem-solved with an interpreter?
Yes (give example)   No
(if yes to Q3.22) Q3.23 How frequently do you problem-solve with another educational
professional?
Q3.24 Interpreters often work in spaces that are not their own. How do you feel when you
interpret in someone else's space (e.g. classrooms, offices)?
Q3.25 If I want to collaborate with another educational professional, I might do collaborative
activities such as: _____.
Q3.26 What factors inhibit successful collaboration for you?
Q3.27 What factors support successful collaboration for you?
Q3.28 Is there anything you would like to add regarding collaboration?

Q3.29 Indicate your interpreting certifications and/or credentials (check all that apply)
- State Quality Assurance Screening
- EIPA 3.0-3.4
- EIPA 3.5-3.9
- EIPA 4.0 or above
- EIPA Written Exam
- RID Ed:K-12
- RID National Certification
- BEI
- Other (text box)
- I have no formal credentials

Closing Message: Thank you for your participation in this research survey! If you would be willing to be interviewed regarding your experiences with Collaboration in the K-12 Mainstream Educational Setting, please click here to access the Interview Participation Form. Your results from this survey will not be linked with any identifying information.

If you have any questions about this project (IRB#965), please contact Karen Brimm at kebrimm@stkate.edu or the Institutional Reviewer Board Chair: John Schmitt, PT, PhD, 651.690.7739; jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

Appendix C

Interview and Videotape
Informed Consent Form
ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY

Statement of Consent:

I consent to participate in the study and agree to be videotaped.

YES, I give permission for my video-recorded data to be used in scholarly presentations and publications. I will approve any video-recorded data that will be used (i.e. the researcher will contact me and show me the clip(s) to be used).

NO, I DO NOT give permission for my video-recorded data to be used in scholarly presentations and publications.

YES I give my permission for my recordings to be kept indefinitely for future research purposes.

NO I DO NOT give my permission for my recordings to be kept indefinitely for future research purposes.

YES, I give permission to be contacted by e-mail about future experiments.
My e-mail address is: _____

NO, I DO NOT give permission to be contacted by e-mail about future experiments.

My signature indicates that I have read this information and my questions have been answered. I also know that even after signing this form, I may withdraw from the study by informing the researcher(s).

_____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____

Signature of Researcher   Date

Appendix D

Interview and Videotape
Informed Consent –
Frequently Asked Questions

Study Title: Collaboration in Mainstream K-12 Interpreting

Researcher: Karen Brimm, RID Ed:K-12, VQAS III/III

You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is called "Collaboration in mainstream K-12 Interpreting" The study is being done by Karen Brimm, a graduate student at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN. The faculty advisor for this study is Dr. Erica Alley, Program Director, Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity at St. Catherine University. This research will identify the common patterns of collaborative practice reported by K-12 educational interpreters and other professionals working in concert in the educational system. The findings from this study add to the body of knowledge in the field by informing interpreter education curriculum and working ASL-English interpreting colleagues, could aid in future research, and enhance best practices that will improve the effectiveness of educational interpreters practicing in mainstream K-12 setting. For other educational professionals, the findings from this study may provide insight into how to more effectively collaborate with their interpreter team members. Approximately five people are expected to participate in this research. Below, you will find answers to the most commonly asked questions about participating in a research study. Please read this entire document and ask questions you have before you agree to be in the study.

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

You have been selected because you have identified yourself as either:

A professional or post-professional ASL-English interpreters age 18 and over who resides in the United States, and who has been working at least three days per week on average in the K-12 educational setting for three years or more, and who has satisfied their state's requirements for being described as a "qualified interpreter" in accordance with standards under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Or as

A teacher of the Deaf, general education teacher, special education teacher, or speech-language pathologist who is currently qualified to practice in their position and who has worked on an educational team with an ASL-English interpreter.

If I decide to participate, what will I be asked to do?

If you meet the criteria and agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview that will be recorded for transcription purposes. In total, this study interview will take approximately 1 hour.

What if I decide I don't want to be in this study?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide you do not want to participate in this study, please feel free to say so, and do not sign this form. If you decide to participate in this study, but later change your mind and want to withdraw, simply notify me and you will be removed immediately. You may withdraw at any time until the end of the interview. Your decision of whether or not to participate will have no impact on your relationship with St. Catherine University, nor with any of the student or faculty involved in the research.

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?

There are no anticipated risks to your health or welfare if you participate in this study; however, you will be sharing information regarding your experience as an interpreter or educational professional in the mainstream K-12 educational setting. This is considered minimal risk because the information that you provide on the survey cannot be associated with you. The interview information is also minimal risk since strict protocols will be in place to maintain the anonymity of each participant and the confidentiality of all information shared.

What are the benefits (good things) that may happen if I am in this study?

The benefits of this study are indirect. For interpreters, the findings from this study add to the body of knowledge in the field by informing interpreter education curriculum and working ASL-English interpreting colleagues, could aid in future research, and enhance best practices that will improve the effectiveness of educational interpreters practicing in the K-12 setting. For other educational professionals, the findings from this study may provide insight into how to more effectively collaborate with their interpreter team members.

Will I receive any compensation for participating in this study?

Interview subjects will be offered a $10.00 Amazon gift card as a token of appreciation.

What will you do with the information you get from me and how will you protect my privacy?

The information that you provide in this study will be recorded via an online video platform for analysis purposes. Your interview will be transcribed, at which time it will be anonymized by substituting your name with the pseudonym that you have chosen, and any scenarios described will be edited if necessary in order to protect confidentiality. The data will be stored on Google drive which is password protected. Any downloaded data and transcription will be stored on a password protected computer. Any printed data and transcription will be stored in a locked box in my home office. Only I and the research advisors will have access to the records while I work on this project. I will finish analyzing the data by May 2019. I will destroy all original recordings and identifying information that can be linked back to you within three years unless you have given permission to keep them for the purposes of further analysis or later research.

Any information that you provide will be kept confidential, which means that you will not be identifiable in written reports or publications.

How can I get more information?

If you have any questions, you can ask them before you sign this form. You can also feel free to contact me at 804-396-2848 (ph/text) or kebrimm@stkate.edu. If you have any additional questions later and would like to talk to the faculty advisor, please contact Dr. Erica Alley at 651-690-6018 or elalley@stkate.edu. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739 or jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Appendix E

Verbal Interview Consent Script

My name is Karen Brimm and I am a graduate student in the Masters of Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity program at St. Catherine University under the supervision of Dr. Erica Alley. My thesis examines collaboration between educational interpreters and educational professionals in the K-12 school setting. As part of my study, I am interviewing K-12 educational interpreters and professionals to gain insight into their experiences.

Today you will be participating in an interview which should take approximately one hour. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, you may stop at any time. As you may recall from the Informed Consent and Video Release Form you completed, all information shared during this discussion will remain strictly confidential.

The information that you provide in this study will be recorded for transcription purposes. All reference to you will use only the pseudonym that you provided. Additionally, any personal information described (e.g., names of school, students) will be edited if necessary in order to protect confidentiality.

Appendix F

Interview Questions

Interview Questions for an Educational Interpreters
(For the purposes of the study, "educational professionals" are teachers of the Deaf, general education teachers, special education teachers, and speech-language pathologists.)

1. How long have you worked as an educational interpreter?
2. Do you work in an urban, suburban, or rural school district? In what state do you WORK?
3. What are your credentials?
4. Describe your typical daily/weekly schedule.
5. How often do you team with another interpreter and how does this work?
6. What influences your daily professional practice, and how did you decide what your daily practices are?
7. Which educational professionals do you interact with most frequently?
8. Do you ever go to meetings with staff members? What kind and how often?
9. What kinds of questions do fellow educational professionals ask you about your work?
10. How well do you understand the education system, and where did you learn about it?
11. How do you inform other educational professionals about the DHH student's academic progress, social progress, language level (comprehension and production)?
12. How is the effectiveness of your collaboration impacted by the fact that you often work in someone else's room as compared to a neutral space?
13. How empowered do you feel to "get your job done right" in your current environment, and why?
14. Describe a time when you were unsuccessful in collaborating with an educational professional
15. What does "professionalism" look like for an interpreter?
16. How does being seen as a "professional" impact your ability to collaborate?
17. Is there anything you would like to add to our discussion today about collaboration?

    Thank you very much for allowing me to interview you……

Interview Questions for Educational Professionals
(For the purposes of the study, "educational professionals" are teachers of the Deaf, general education teachers, special education teachers, and speech-pathologists.)

1. What is your current job title?
2. How many years have you worked in K-12 education? With educational interpreters?
3. Do you work in an urban, suburban, or rural school district?
4. How often do you work with educational interpreters?
5. How well do you understand what educational interpreters do, and where did you learn about it?
6. Describe a typical interaction with an educational interpreter.
7. What kind of meetings have you had with educational interpreters? How often?
8. What is your definition of "Collaboration in the K-12 setting"?
9. Describe a time when you collaborated successfully with an educational interpreter.
10. Describe a time when you were unsuccessful in collaborating with an educational interpreter
11. What does "professionalism" look like for an interpreter?
12. How does their level of "professionalism" impact your ability to collaborate?
13. How have you been impacted by working with an educational interpreter? (clarify this can be positively or negatively) Has working with educational interpreters impacted your professional practice? If so how, if not why not?
14. How do you feel about educational interpreters collaborating with you/in your room?
15. Are there things you wish the interpreter would do to collaborate more effectively with you?
16. What could you do to collaborate more effectively with interpreters?
17. Is there anything you would like to add to our discussion today about collaboration?

Thank you very much for allowing me to interview you……